



Fresh Year... Fresh Eyes on Quality

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To their credit, most contact centers have jumped on the quality bandwagon and crafted plans to institute disciplined and effective practices. Yet we're surprised by the number of centers that don't take stock of their plans periodically to see if they still make sense. Somehow, they don't make the connection between quality and the annual cycle of adjustments to contact center budgets and strategy to align with enterprise-wide goals. They could be marching full steam on a quality path that no longer takes them where they should be going!

When was the last time you reviewed your scorecard?

As center goals change with the New Year, your quality scorecard may need refinement. Agents get confused when we send mixed messages – e.g., setting a strategic objective to outflank competitors in customer service, but measuring agents on Average Handle Time. Your scorecard is an important tool to communicate the center's goals and motivate behaviors that support them. If no scorecard change is needed in any given year, show everyone how all goals are covered on the existing scorecard. If a scorecard change is needed; make the change, call out how the revised scorecard supports *all* goals, and utilize a change management methodology to help your staff adjust.

How does your monitoring volume support quality evolution?

When it comes to quality assessment, the more you monitor, the more you learn. And what you learn can be used in individual coaching for performance improvement, team meetings, training, process improvement, and system refinement. If the volume monitored is too low, you won't get an accurate picture of performance or good data to prioritize initiatives. With the New Year, make sure your budget allows for sufficient investment in quality monitoring time (and resources!) to create the data you need.

What roles have responsibility for performance?

Shared roles are commonplace within centers. Quality Analysts balance contact monitoring and Voice of the Customer feedback responsibilities. Supervisors juggle operational responsibilities alongside call monitoring and coaching. While "piling on" may appear to be the answer to resource shortages, something *always* gets dropped. More often than not, it's coaching – the activity which actually delivers the best results for quality improvement! You may need dedicated QA staff so that supervisors can actually coach. If that model doesn't work for your center, consider reducing the supervisors' span of control to give them capacity to address QA and coaching *routinely*. Regardless of your approach, make sure roles are clear and each person has time to follow through on their assignments.

What's your continuous improvement process loop?

Monitoring contact interactions and holding coaching sessions are critical for quality improvement, but the process cannot stop there. You need to take what you find and *continuously* apply it to improve your training, streamline processes, and assess technology needs to bring even greater efficiency and effectiveness across your center. Factor continuous improvement into the performance roles definition as well.

What is your career path for Quality?

Effective QA requires sound processes and assigned resources, but not just anybody; you need *the right people*. To find and keep good quality staff, you must have a career path for QA. You want evangelizers,



not burned out QA robots. Think about a 6-12 month rotation with top performing agents moving into quality. The QA team is a great training ground for Tier 2 Subject Matter Experts, Team Leads, or potential supervisors as it teaches them to think critically about feedback, key theme analysis, and what is needed to enable performance improvement. Your QA pool may also be a resource for future trainers, process designers, and business analysts. When folks see QA as a stimulating environment in which they acquire skills and experience that the organization will reward and leverage, they'll bring their "A" game to the task.

As you head into a fresh year, put fresh eyes on your contact monitoring program to ensure it reflects quality through and through.