

Building a Center of Excellence

Eight Areas for Optimization

Overview

In order to establish and maintain a successful contact center, you need to focus on optimization in eight key areas. By implementing the best practices outlined in this white paper, you can turn your contact center into a true center of excellence. We'll cover everything from recruiting and staffing to reporting and data analytics, so you can create a contact center that meets the needs of your business and your customers.

Here's what you can expect:

The first area we'll cover is [recruiting and staffing](#). In order to build a successful contact center, you need to staff it with the right people. This means finding agents who are not only skilled in customer service, but who are also a good fit for your company culture.

Once you've found the right candidates, it's important to provide them with adequate [training](#) so they can be successful in their roles. This training should cover not only the basics of customer service, but also your company's specific products, services, policies, and procedures.

Next, we'll discuss [quality assurance](#). Quality assurance (QA) is an essential part of any contact center operation. QA ensures that calls are being handled properly and that customers are satisfied with the results. By implementing a QA program, you can identify areas where your contact center can improve and make the necessary changes.



Workforce management is another important aspect of contact center operations. Workforce management includes activities like call routing, schedule adherence, and performance monitoring. By properly managing your workforce, you can ensure that calls are routed to the right agents and that they're able to handle customer inquiries in a timely manner.

We'll also cover **operations and vendor management**. Operations management is the process of overseeing contact center activities on a day-to-day basis. Vendor management, on the other hand, is the process of managing relationships with external vendors who provide services to your contact center.

Tools and technology are also crucial for contact center success. The right tools can help you automate call handling, track customer interactions, and generate detailed reports. When combined with best practices from the other areas, the right tools can help you optimize your contact center operations.

Reporting and data analytics is another area where contact centers need to focus on optimization. By generating reports and analyzing data, you can identify areas of improvement and make the necessary changes.

Finally, we'll discuss **culture and people practices**. Creating a positive contact center culture is essential for attracting and retaining top talent. Furthermore, by implementing the right people practices, you can ensure that your contact center is providing the best possible experience for your customers.

By focusing on optimization in these eight key areas, you can build a contact center that is truly a center of excellence. Implementing the best practices outlined in this white paper will help you create a contact center that meets the needs of your business and your customers. Alright, let's dive into the details!



Recruiting & Staffing

Hiring the right people for your contact or call center is essential to its success. With the right recruiting and staffing strategy in place, you can optimize your center and turn it into a true center of excellence.

Your recruiting and staffing strategy might be holding you back if:

- *Your team is fatigued, understaffed, and under-prepared*
- *There are disconnects between job descriptions and actual responsibilities*
- *Compensation isn't attracting the right candidates, internally or externally*
- *The career advancement path isn't clear and is hurting potential leaders*

In order to turn your strategy around, you will want to consider the following factors: forecasting and scheduling agent needs, evaluating agents to determine the right profile, and creating a consistent flow of new applicants.

First, forecasting and scheduling agent needs. This is important to ensure that you have the right number of agents on staff at all times. To do this, you will need to consider the volume of calls or contacts expected, as well as the average handle time. With this information, you can then determine how many agents you will need and when they will be needed. This is an ongoing process that should be revisited on a regular basis to ensure accuracy.

Next, evaluating agents to determine the right profile. This step is essential in order to find the best fit for your contact center. There are a few different ways to go about this, but one method is to use pre-employment assessments. These assessment tools can help you identify candidates with the skills and personality traits necessary for success in your center. Another way to evaluate agents is through post-employment reviews. This process should be ongoing and should



include regular check-ins with agents to see how they are doing and if there are any areas of improvement.

Finally, creating a consistent flow of new applicants. This can be done by recruiting from a variety of sources, such as job postings, online job boards, employee referrals, and recruiting firms. It is important to have a steady stream of new applicants so that you can fill positions as they become available. Additionally, consider using social media to reach out to potential candidates. LinkedIn is a great platform for this, as you can target specific groups or individuals with your recruiting message.

Training

Though hiring the right people for your contact or call center is important, what happens next, training, is absolutely critical in order for those candidates to be successful in their roles. Staff needs to be trained not only in the basics of customer service, but also in your company's specific products, services, policies, and procedures.

Your training strategy might be holding you back if:

- *Your training doesn't cover specific products and services*
- *Your staff don't understand company policies and procedures*
- *There isn't a central location to reference training materials when needed*

If any of these sound familiar, don't worry, you can turn things around by following some best practices for call center training.

First and foremost, instructional design should be tailored to your audience with content that's specific to their needs. Materials need to cover topics such as empathy, first call resolution, new products, promotions, process changes, and more.



This material needs to be delivered in an engaging and interactive format by a skilled facilitator using proven methodologies. Online learning can be a great option to consider as it's flexible and can be accessed anytime, anywhere.

Finally, certification is key to ensuring that your staff are completely ready before they start interfacing with customers. This process should include an assessment of their knowledge as well as practice sessions where they can put their skills to use in a safe environment.

Feeling overwhelmed? The Call Center Power team can help! We delivered over 100 hours of training to 500+ call center agents in less than 50 days for a global multi-level marketing company. The training modules covered basic topics including empathy as well as company specific topics such as new products and process changes. The team also created a comprehensive training curriculum used for retraining, translating and organizing over 800 pages of technical and process documentation into a user-friendly library.





Quality Assurance (QA)

In order to have a center of excellence, you need quality assurance (QA). QA is an important component in optimizing a contact center as it ensures communications are handled properly and that customers are satisfied with the results.

Your QA strategy might be holding you back if:

- *You don't have an emphasis on first call resolution*
- *There isn't a proactive problem solving strategy in place*
- *Customer engagement and value added services aren't a priority*
- *There isn't a focus on eliminating negative interactions with customers*

If any of these sound familiar, it's time to take a step back and assess your QA strategy. A strong QA program ensures soft-skills are in-line with given requirements, protects all parties involved through call compliance, addresses quality oversight of contact channels, and sets behavior expectations with accountability.

To ensure soft-skills are in-line with given requirements, you need to conduct regular training sessions on what those requirements are. This not only helps new hires, but also serves as a refresher for those who have been with the company for a while.

Call compliance protects all parties involved by making sure everyone is following the same rules. This includes things like recording all calls, adhering to script guidelines, and using proper language.

Quality oversight of contact channels is important to ensure customers are getting the best possible experience. This means monitoring things like email response times, social media interactions, and chatbots.



Finally, setting behavior expectations with accountability holds everyone in the contact center responsible for their actions. This could include monthly performance reviews, customer feedback surveys, and mystery shopping programs.

Success Story!

When working with a global multi-level marketing company, Call Center Power's advisors were able to support the improvement of quality and satisfaction scores to over 95%. This overall improvement was reflected in other performance categories, including a 30% improvement in First Call Resolution, 90% decrease in executive complaints and a 25% improvement in NPS performance.

Workforce Management

Successful workforce management practices create a healthy environment that fiscally benefits the organization and the agents. When these practices are in place, your contact center will be a well-oiled machine running at peak efficiency.

Your workforce management strategy may need optimization if:

- *You are not meeting service level goals*
- *Your agent utilization is low*
- *Your center is overstaffed or understaffed*
- *You are experiencing high employee turnover*



By following workforce management best practices, you can turn things around.

Start by researching and implementing tools and functions to optimize staffing. Workforce management software can help you create schedules that balance service levels with agent utilization. You should also consider automating processes whenever possible to reduce the burden on your staff.

In addition to the right tools, you need the right people in place. Be sure to hire workforce management specialists who are experienced in the industry and have a deep understanding of call center operations. These individuals will be instrumental in helping you implement best practices and achieving optimal performance.

When you have the right tools and personnel in place, you can achieve remarkable results that not only optimize the operations of your contact center but also optimize the return on investment.

Operations & Vendor Management

Both operations and vendor management are important components of optimizing a call center. They need to work together effectively (alongside all other areas) in order to achieve the best results. Through seamless partnership, they can drive key performance indicators and turn the call center into a center of excellence.

Whether or not you are achieving your key performance indicators is going to be the main indicator of if your operations and vendor management functions are optimized.

To optimize operations management, think about the day-to-day operations of the call center. This includes staffing, scheduling, forecasting, and real-time management. Those involved in this area work closely with vendor managers to ensure that they are getting the most out of their vendors.



To optimize vendor management, consider who is responsible for managing the relationships with vendors. You need the right people in place to negotiate contracts, set SLAs, and manage performance. On the flip side, those involved in this area work closely with operations managers to ensure that vendors are meeting their commitments.

Are you looking to outsource these functions without compromising on the quality of interactions? [Check out our FREE matchmaking tool](#) that gets you paired with the right contact center partner in 60 seconds.

Tools & Technology

There are various tools and technology options available when it comes to optimizing your contact center. Where a traditional phone line was once all that was needed to engage customers, today, call centers must be able to provide their customers with real-time engagement, service, and support through multiple channels.

Your tools and technology strategy might be missing the mark if:

- *You're not using a Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) platform*
- *Your tools are outdated or lack features customer want*
- *You're not integrating your tools with one another*

A good place to start is with Contact Center as a Service, or CCaaS. This tool provides the foundation of the technology stack that functions as the main platform integrating with the customer relationship management system. By using CCaaS, center managers can connect all of their contact center software and tools into one cohesive platform, making it easier to manage and optimize the center as a whole.

In addition to CCaaS, there are other tools and technologies available that can help improve



efficiency and effectiveness within the contact center. These five types of technology are great to consider as you strive for real-time engagement in your contact center:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Omnichannel Software
- Self-Service Channels
- Customer Journey Mapping
- Reporting & Analytics

You can read more about these five types in [this article](#). Don't forget to [subscribe to the newsletter](#) to get all new editions sent straight to your inbox!

Reporting & Data Analytics

Reporting and data analytics is a critical component of building, managing, and scaling a center of excellence. Reporting and data analytics provide the visibility into performance that is necessary to identify opportunities for improvement.

This area of your contact center may need improvement if:

- *Lack of visibility into the performance of the business*
- *You are unable to get a clear picture of customer churn*
- *Pulling reports on customer satisfaction is difficult*
- *There are no root cause analysis or remediation procedures*

To improve this area of your contact center, you will need to build custom dashboards and business intelligence analysis that will help you optimize performance on an ongoing basis. Reporting dashboards and business intelligence analysis can help to uncover trends and patterns



that can be used to make operational changes that result in improved performance.

Examples of next steps might include:

- Defining KPIs and creating related dashboards to track their progress
- Analyzing data to identify trends and root causes of problems
- Developing action plans to address areas of opportunity

Culture & People Practices

It is essential to take care of the employees in order to ensure they are providing top-notch service to customers. By developing a positive culture and implementing the right people practices, you can ensure your contact center is operating optimally.

Here are some indicators that your culture and people practices might need adjustment:

- *You have high employee turnover*
- *Your employees are quick to complain*
- *Your customers satisfaction scores are poor*
- *There is a lack of engagement or motivation to improve*

If you're seeing any of these signs, it's time to take a closer look at your culture and people practices. In order to build a center of excellence, you need to focus on creating a culture of trust, development, and participation. This starts from recruiting, carries through the hiring process, and goes into development.

You want to be transparent and honest with employees, provide opportunities for growth and development, and encourage participation so that everyone feels like they are part of the team and invested in the company's success. By making these adjustments to your culture and people



practices, you'll see improved employee satisfaction, lower turnover rates, and increased customer satisfaction scores.

Success Story!

To rebuild the cohesiveness and closeness of a global multi-level marketing company amidst the shifts demanded by COVID, the Call Center Power team implemented a myriad of employee engagement and coaching tactics that were designed to get the leadership team closer to their staff. These tactics included Microsoft Teams chat channels, recurring team meetings, performance coaching practices and huddles, celebrated Customer Service Week, conducted holiday & engagement events, happy hours, recognition video calls, individualized career coaching sessions, and much more. These tactics, and many more employed by the Call Center Power team, reduced agent attrition by over 35%, saving the company over \$1 million in 2020.

Conclusion

It's no small task to optimize these eight key areas, but when you do, your contact center will be a center of excellence. If you want an instant benchmark on how you are currently doing [check out our eight-point inspection](#). This tool evaluates the eight aforementioned areas and gives you a rating in real-time.

If you know you need support, we are here to help. Our professional services offering is designed to optimize your center operations with ease. We customize solutions that meet the specific needs of your business and provide real results. [Reach out to us](#) to learn how we are a "One Stop Shop" for all your contact center needs.