

Raise your profile! How to turn contact centre sceptics into fans

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Fed up of negative contact centre perceptions limiting your budget, resources and potential? Nick Smith at Calabrio, discusses how you can overcome these concerns and reposition your contact centre as a “profit centre”, instead of a “cost centre”.

A Saddletree Research study(i) found that the biggest challenge for contact centres in 2022 and beyond is likely to be: “Transforming the contact centre into being a central component of the operations of the organisation.”

In fact, negative connotations still swirl around the contact centre despite the central position it has found itself in since the first quarter of 2020. According to a 2020 Call Centre Helper report (ii), 23.9% of contact centres believe that the wider business perceives their operation to be a “cost centre”. A further 10.2% also worryingly stated that their contact centre is seen as “a necessary evil”, while 2.6% even reported that they’re considered to be “a nuisance”.

These findings suggest that many companies are overlooking the value of the contact centre and the goldmine of insights it contains. Such insights, if shared with other departments, can reduce contact volumes, lower customer effort and improve the internal reputation of the contact centre. After all, while problems originate in other areas of the business, customers highlight these issues in their contact centre conversations. If contact centres can raise their profile and share this feedback with the relevant department – who then fix the issue – the entire organisation wins.

Just picture it. The product design team tweaking their models, marketing making changes to their campaigns and logistics altering their delivery practices, all based on customer feedback. The contact centre’s negative image will disappear.

On top of this, those common issues like low budgets, IT issues and the need for new technology will fade away. Why? Because they were all symptoms of ill-considered perceptions of the contact centre, which have now been overcome.

Okay, we might be getting a little ahead of ourselves. Here is a three-step guide to raising the profile of the contact centre within a business and capturing the benefits highlighted above.

1) Lead the brand by example

Become a top performer. Then, make sure that people stand up and take notice. To get the first part right, aim to create better customer experiences. One great way to do this is by turning the contact centre team into brand ambassadors. For example:

- Share a brand story - stories enable us to create a sense of purpose that is particularly powerful in motivating people. So, articulate the perfect brand story, using a compelling storyboard that engages people and provides a unique competitive differentiator
- Build momentum around the story – ideally, the story will become a central part of an agent’s

thought process, providing a continual source of motivation to help customers. This starts by hiring people who value the story, while reinforcing it in induction training, coaching sessions and morning team huddles

- Increase collaboration with gamification – Gamification (iii) creates a buzz that brings out the best in people. To improve results, teams will share best practices, creating a learning culture that cultivates great improvements in customer satisfaction.

If these tactics prove successful, shout it from the rooftops. Highlight how customer satisfaction has increased and make other departments aware that the contact centre is there to help them to deliver similar results.

2) Build better relationships

Relationships can be tricky to forge when other departmental heads are elusive and view the contact centre as an entirely different realm. So how can the contact centre capture their attention? Of course, start by leading the way, but then show the value of working together and engage in meaningful conversations.

Here are a few ways to do this:

- Engage others with your key messages – raise awareness of contact centre insights and connect those with key organisation-wide goals. Don't just send an email, put together a newsletter full of fabulous findings and provide short, simple and regular updates for the internal intranet system
- Offer a goodwill gesture – say “thank you” whenever another department does something that makes a positive difference to the contact centre – whether that was their intention or not. Also, try to take a lead role in organising company-wide events, which get different departments mixing
- Make internal knowledge easily available – move away from “knowledge management” and towards “knowledge sharing”. Consider what, within the contact centre knowledge base, may be of use for other departments and notify them. After all, they'll also be looking for improvement ideas.

With initiatives like this, lanes of communication open up, so that other department heads may even reach out to the contact centre themselves.

3) Create accountability for key contact drivers

By building better relationships with other departments, the contact centre can begin to make them more accountable for the contacts that they drive. This is not a “blame game”. That will not help to strengthen ties across the organisation. Instead, use contact centre data to create stories that illustrate the need for change, highlight the benefits for both departments and note how credit will be shared for the positive impact of that alteration.

Ideas for creating this accountability include:

- Sharing call recordings – playing call recordings from disappointed customers helps to paint a picture of the problem. Then, make it clear that these contacts are not rare occurrences

- Tagging contacts correctly – while this process can be automated with speech analytics, if agents correctly tag each call in their After Call Work (ACW), the contact centre can track how often a problem reoccurs. This will help to uncover the true extent of the issue, which takes us to our next point...
- Calculating the costs – how much money does the problem cost the company? Calculating this, based on the frequency of the problem and how much money a lost customer costs the company, will no doubt cause eyebrows to rise.

These ideas will work wonders in raising a contact centre's profile and sharing customer insights, while the addition of speech analytics can take this strategy even further.

Capture every possible insight, distribute the relevant ones

Speech analytics (iv) allows contact centres to identify the root cause of many additional issues that originate in other areas of the business.

By analysing 100% of customer interactions, across all channels, it becomes possible to gather more insights and fully get to grips with customers' moods, needs and wants to create a truly customer-centric company.

A value-driving contact centre business intelligence platform should help you take these insights and make them specific, immediate and digestible for the rest of the enterprise.

Calabrio Enterprise CXI dashboards (v), that come as a free value-add to the Advanced Reporting BI platform, does exactly that. Taking key insights from the contact centre, especially related to the unfiltered voice of the customer, Enterprise CXI packages them into out-the-box, function-specific dashboards that contact centre teams can share more broadly, in a variety of ways, e.g. to marketing, sales or product.

This becomes the ideal solution for every well-established organisation where the contact centre sits in an elevated, central position.

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About Calabrio

Calabrio is the customer experience intelligence company that empowers organisations to enrich human interactions. The scalability of our cloud platform allows for quick deployment of remote work models—and it gives our customers precise control over both operating costs and customer satisfaction levels. Our AI-driven analytics tools make it easy for contact centres to uncover customer sentiment and share compelling insights with other parts of the organisation. Customers choose Calabrio because we understand their needs and provide a best-in-class experience, from implementation to ongoing support. Find more at calabrio.com and follow @Calabrio on Twitter.

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(i) Saddle Tree Research

(<https://www.saddletreeresearch.com/research-briefs/right-for-the-time-calabrio-introduces-cxi-business-intelligence-platform.f>)

(ii) Call Centre Helper (<https://www.callcentrehelper.com/resource.php?id=987>)

(iii) Calabrio Gamification

(<https://www.calabrio.com/wfo/workforce-management/make-every-day-game-day-contact-center/>)

(iv) Calabrio Analytics (<https://www.calabrio.com/products/calabrio-analytics/voice-of-the-customer/>)

(v) Calabrio Enterprise CXI (<https://www.calabrio.com/products/contact-center-reporting/enterprise-cxi/>)