

Why Kaizen™ and contact centres are perfect partners

Submitted by: PR Artistry Limited

Wednesday, 24 April 2019

Five ways to eliminate waste and re-energise your contact centre

According to Colin Hay, eliminating waste is a bit like clearing out the loft, you see what matters and you feel a whole lot better for it! In the first of a new blog series, he shows how to re-energise the contact centre by applying the Japanese principles of Kaizen™. Here are five ways to 'Target Zero Waste'

You know the feeling and it's a wonderful thing. You've finally cleared out the garage, taken the clutter from the loft to the dump and dropped off clothes that haven't seen the light of day for years to the local charity shop. It's very therapeutic, you can see what you have and you are full of zest and ready for anything life throws at you! Wouldn't it be great if you could feel the same way about your contact centre? Well you can, you just need to look to the East for inspiration.

Over 30 years ago, Masaaki Imai (i) sat down to write a ground-breaking book that introduced the word KAIZEN™ to the western world. The word means improvement – continuing improvement in personal life, home life, social life, and working life. Today, the five principles of KAIZEN™ (ii) are used by organisations the world over as a systematic approach for business improvement.

Over the course of this series of blogs, Puzzel will explore how each KAIZEN™ principle can be applied to the contact centre to create a continuously improving, fluid framework that motivates staff, boosts productivity and enhances customer satisfaction. In this blog, we focus on 'Let it flow' whereby everyone should aim to create value and eliminate waste.

Five ways to eliminate waste in contact centres

1. Have a clear goal – this provides focus while saving precious time, money and effort. First, discover what works for your customers. Speak to agents - their front-line feedback is vital. Be your own mystery shopper – how long does it take for someone to answer the 'phone? Is the IVR too long or complicated? Is it easy to find information on the website and if not, where is the chat button?

Then, maximise customer data. The latest cloud-based contact centre solutions link seamlessly to leading CRM applications to give agents a complete and instantaneous view of essential caller information while clear visibility of customer interactions aids decision-making and allows proactive management of response times for managers.

2. Zero out the "zeroed out to an agent" statistics - it is estimated that typically 17%(iii) of all calls that go into a self-service option are "zeroed-out" when the customer decides they would actually prefer to speak with a live agent - wasted time for the customer and a wasted opportunity to boost loyalty. It goes back to listening to what customers want and introducing the technology that really matters. If you know that 80% of your customers aged 65 years and over prefer the telephone, invest in voice rather than alienate them through Web Chat or virtual assistants.

3. Accelerate the onboarding process – today’s super-agents are an organisation’s most valuable asset so it makes sense to have them up and running in no time. First, share insights and build camaraderie. Pair up new recruits with experienced mentors and develop an online forum to help agents interact quickly with their peers.

Then, use cloud contact centre technology to accelerate the onboarding process. With intuitive user interfaces, powerful search functionality and the ability to respond to voice, email, social media, Chat, SMS and Web “call me” requests all within the same application, agents become productive quickly and with very little training. Wrap around with silent monitoring and state-of-the-art speech analytics to build agent confidence and promote continuous improvement of customer service techniques.

4. Build the right risk framework – heavy penalties for non-compliance with important industry regulations such as Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) are a drain on resources in every sense of the word. Including time wasted on discovering what went wrong, the extra effort needed to recover a damaged reputation not to mention a big dent to finances that could otherwise have been diverted to more fruitful projects. The deployment of a cloud-based solution eliminates the waste by promoting standardised processes and automatically capturing an end-to-end audit trail of compliance activities.

5. Add scalability – using the latest cloud technology makes it easy to add new users at the click of a button to scale with changing business requirements. Re-energise your ability to meet fluctuating customer demands by adding Workforce Management (WFM) to the mix. At a glance, view agent skills, availability and preferences to ensure the right agents are deployed to the right enquiries at the right time. Be ready for seasonal peak periods and upcoming marketing campaigns by accurately predicting staffing levels and associated staff costs.

These are just a few ways to eliminate wasted time, money and effort in the contact centre. But remember, the clue is in the word ‘continuous improvement’. Don’t be that loft crammed full of unused goods or the wardrobe with unwanted clothes. Be sure to check up regularly on people, processes and technology and constantly fine-tune them to deliver a lean, efficient contact centre that benefits agents, customers and the overall business. For more information, visit www.puzzel.com

Colin Hay is VP Sales at Puzzel UK (<http://www.puzzel.com>)

About Puzzel

Puzzel builds on over 20 years’ of heritage. It was one of the first pioneers to develop a cloud-based contact centre. Today, Puzzel combines omni-channel technology with Artificial Intelligence (AI) to provide complete customer interaction solutions in a digital age. Puzzel can be adapted to accommodate from one to several thousand agents using any device, in any location and integrates with multiple applications seamlessly.

Puzzel was named a Challenger in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Contact Center as a Service, Western Europe, Report 2018 for the fourth consecutive year for its strong growth, functional capabilities, strengths in standards and compliance, customer service and support.

Headquartered in Oslo, Norway with offices in the UK, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Bulgaria, Puzzel is

passionate about delivering innovative customer interaction solutions for contact centres and mobile environments.

For more information please visit Puzzel (<http://www.puzzel.com>)

Press contact: Mary Phillips/Andreina West

PR Artistry Limited

T: +44 (0)1491 845553

E: mary@pra-ltd.co.uk

(i) Founder of Kaizen Institute and author of 'Kaizen: The Key to Japan's Competitive Success' (McGraw Hill).

(ii) The Five Principles of Kaizen (<https://www.kaizen.com/what-is-kaizen.html>) - the five principles of KAIZEN™ are: Know your customer (creating customer value), Let it flow (targeting zero waste), Go to Gemba (following the action), Empower people (organising your teams); and Be transparent (speaking with real data.)

(iii) The UK Contact Centre Decision-Maker's Guide 2017-2018