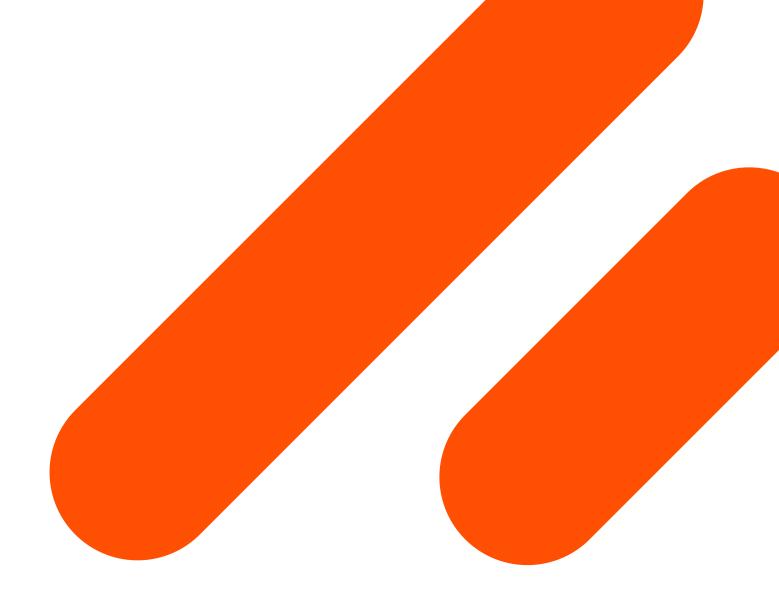# CallMiner

Five Secrets of Top-Performing Contact Centers

From real-time to post-interaction analysis, customer insights can drive business value in the contact center and beyond

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Introduction

Motivating and improving the performance of contact center agents is top-of-mind for every customer service department. As self-service channels increasingly take care of customers' basic requests, contact center agents are fielding more complex customer inquiries. At the same time, many agents are handling high volumes of requests, with little constructive feedback for improvement. The result is high turnover and low morale, with organizations having to absorb the costs of replacing lost agents and their productivity.

Winning contact centers realize the value of data-driven feedback, both in real time and post-interaction. They equally weigh customer experience (CX) and employee experience (EX), providing feedback to emphasize the positive and point out constructive areas for improvement. This approach puts agents on a path toward career advancement, reduces attrition and increases job satisfaction – at the same time, it improves outcomes for customers.

These forward-thinking organizations rely on technology like AI-powered conversation intelligence to strategically enhance the capabilities of their existing workforce. Through a balance of real-time guidance and post-interaction analysis and targetted coaching, they drive a culture of continuous improvement, while reducing costs and driving efficiency.

Let's look at the five best secrets of top-performing contact centers, including how you can implement these strategies to improve agent performance and satisfaction and deliver better customer experiences.

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Secret 1

They start with quality assurance (QA)

Many organizations implement sophisticated technology, without considering the immediate benefits of at least partially automating their QA. Today, most organizations have a large gap between the number of QA analysts and contact center agents. This means QA is predominantly done via manual call listening or transcript reviews for a random sample of interactions. Typical QA analysts often only can listen to **3 to 5 random calls per agent, per month — less than 1% of overall interactions**. Manual listening takes time that could be spent coaching agents or deploying them in more strategic areas.

The top contact centers focus on automating key parts of their QA process – this helps to set a baseline for target performance, while allowing them to leverage human attention if and where it needed. Conversation intelligence captures and analyzes 100% of omnichannel interactions, rather than just a random sampling. Once the interaction is complete, analytics kick in to help you understand every part of the conversation, not just the keywords. This includes key factors, such as whether agents said the right compliance statements, adhered to other scripting requirements, and more.

The result is actionable information presented to agents, supervisors and even department or company leaders via a dashboard with customizable scorecard metrics based around your organization's needs and standards. Quality metrics from conversation intelligence systems enable contact centers to identify exactly where agents need help, and continuously measure progress across key performance indicators (KPIs). As a result, quality supervisors can make informed, data-driven decisions when it comes to process adherence, best practices and need for supplemental coaching or training.

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Featured company: State Collections Services

Healthcare receivable management leader State Collections Services (SCSI) helps its clients optimize the patient experience, achieve ideal outcomes and maximize financial recovery rates. To accomplish this, SCSI strives to attain the highest level of compliance with healthcare regulations to improve CX and reduce risk for its clients. The company continuously enhances QA and customer service processes, while improving its collection performance.To achieve these goals, the company implemented conversation intelligence technology. Today, the technology helps them:

Automate QA with agent scorecards: Conversation intelligence enables SC to access all the benefits of the insight provided by analyzing 100% of its interactions with patients. To assess its agents' performance more fairly, the company migrated to automated scorecards, reducing discrepancies and giving agents personalized feedback daily.

Target coaching: Automating scorecards allows supervisors to evaluate agents more objectively and effectively, freeing up QA hours for targeted coaching and training when it's needed most.

Measure compliance and collections effectiveness: Conversation intelligence scores agents on how well they are doing at following the correct call structure and the use of compliant language, such as: patient identification; Mini Miranda disclosure; and most importantly, financial negotiations with patients.

Provide real-time feedback for agents: Rather than relying on post-call analysis alone, the conversation intelligence system alerts agents with real-time guidance to both prompt corrective action and reward positive behaviors.

Read the full **SCSI case study here**.

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They value CX and EX

Nearly **70% of HR leaders still struggle** with their EX efforts. At the same time, retaining talent is a major priority, especially in an uncertain economy. **Replacing an employee** costs between 50%–60% of their annual salary, with overall costs ranging anywhere from 90%–200%.

Here's the secret: emphasizing EX can go hand in hand with CX improvements. Conversation intelligence can uncover insights from conversations that happen between employees and customers, giving managers and supervisors the unbiased data they need to provide coaching opportunities for customer-facing agents. This level of coaching and training provides employees with the opportunity for growth and helps them see their potential in the organization.

Beyond coaching alone, organizations can use conversation intelligence to uncover VoE insights that drive overall business improvements, including:

Analyzing feedback to improve experiences: Collect both solicited and unsolicited feedback to identify areas of opportunity to better meet employee needs and expectations.

Building cultures of improvement: Empower employees with clear direction and a path for improvement with real-time feedback and improved department communication.

Driving change to increase retention: Leverage emotion scoring, trend analysis and more to better understand what employees want, and take action to improve satisfaction and reduce turnover.

Prioritizing employee wellbeing: Contact center agents are on the frontlines, and that sometimes means handling difficult customer interactions. By understanding when an agent has interacted with a disrespectful, potentially abusive customer, supervisors can take steps to counsel and comfort agents, or even give them a break to reset.

Featured story: Building a "Coaching the Coaches" movement

A major home services provider analyzed its sales operations data with conversation intelligence. Using this data, the company found that successful sales representatives relied on empathy and understanding the customer's situation to prevent customer churn.

By analyzing the conversations of these successful representatives, the management team devised a strategy to coach every employee on empathy, and reward successful outcomes. Managers trained each person to use more empathetic statements, and provided new tools that empowered sales representatives to be more effective in their real-time customer interactions. Rather than focusing on what went wrong, mirroring what went right was far more motivating for employees.

Employees also give feedback to managers on how the training program is working or not working for them. They're encouraged to say what they need for growth, which provides opportunities for the management team to hear and respond to their needs.

As a next step, the company is feeding data into the conversation intelligence platform to determine attrition and retention trends by hire date/tenure across their sales force. They're comparing this data against sales KPIs, such as customer close rates. As a result, they'll be able to see job satisfaction trends, such as when agents are burning out.

The conversation intelligence program has led to a "coaching the coaches" movement, which encourages process improvements for supervisors to adapt to these new data-driven training programs. Knowing that supervisors trust the process has inspired trust in employees, and propelled this company's culture of continuous improvement.

Secret 3

They know how to work with vulnerable customers

A Forrester Consulting survey of call center leaders, commissioned by CallMiner, found 70% reported that their agents were dealing with more emotionally charged calls than ever before. With self-service options taking care of many baseline requests, it's no surprise that more complex issues comprise the majority of the cases agents handle. While self-service is good for cost-reduction, agents are under tremendous stress, and may require specialized training to handle vulnerable customer interactions with the empathy and respect they require.

Emotion analysis can help with training and support to improve agent responses to these dynamic situations. Also, emotion analytics can monitor agent performance to identify patterns, helping agents develop the skills they need (empathy, politeness, efficiency) to reach better CX outcomes. Further, emotion analysis can identify if an agent is receiving unfair, unwarranted treatment from customers – from there, supervisors can either take over the interaction while it's still in progress or more effectively support the agent in post-interaction coaching.

Paired with insight from sentiment analysis that depicts how the customer feels about something, emotion criteria can be used to build a more complete picture of vulnerable customers who might be facing financial or emotional hardships, as well as how agents are impacted by these type of interactions.

Conversation intelligence technology can both identify these types of customers and equip agents with the tools they need to respond accordingly, including:

Background information on the customer, such as previous touchpoints, issues, personal information and more.

Real-time alerts and in-the-moment guidance on identifying signs of vulnerability and how to communicate with vulnerable customers.

Direction to ensure agents stay compliant, as well as recorded, objective documentation to respond to audits and complaints.

Meaningful and fair feedback on their performance during the customer engagement to power improvement and learning.

Post-interaction training to support and drive better customer outcomes in future interactions.

Featured story: Leveraging scorecards to improve agent empathy

A top natural health and supplement company leveraged conversation intelligence technology to improve overall CX, and increase its customer support team's close rates for marketing offers. By analyzing customer interactions at scale, the team improved offer compliance rates and identified even more opportunities for business improvement in the future.

In the process of measuring agent compliance with offers, the team uncovered valuable insights on customer frustration and agent empathy. In the past, they may have never noticed agents that lack empathy or don't attempt to establish trust with a customer before making an offer.
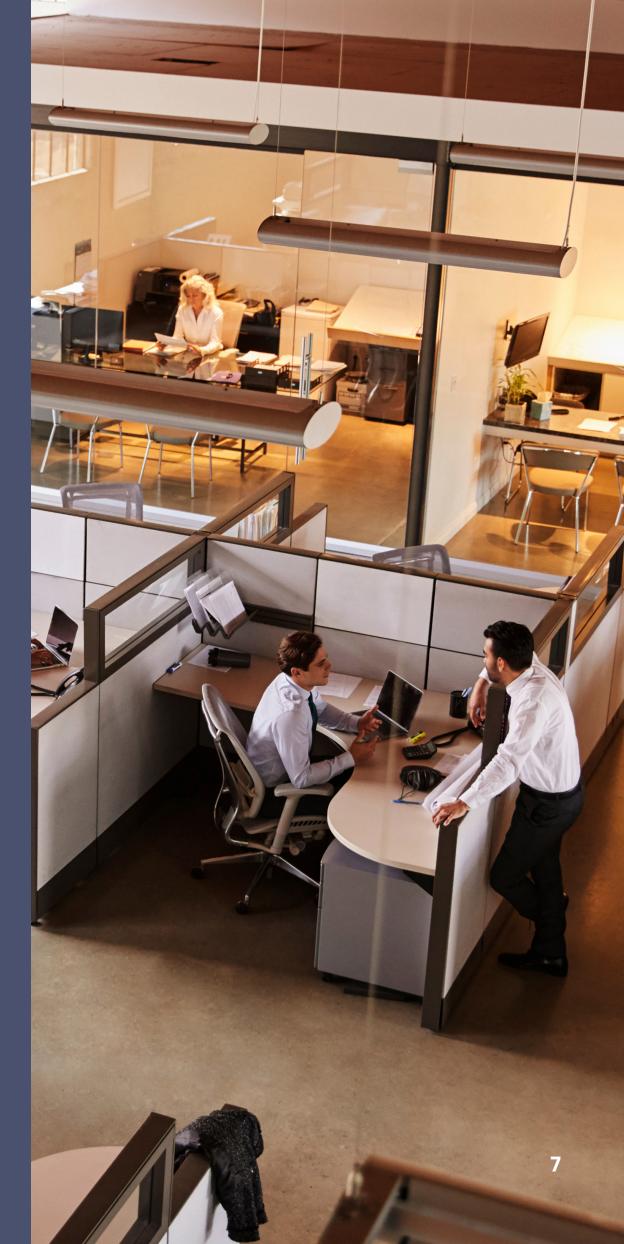
Now they can notice that behavior with certain agents, and address it specifically with one-to-one coaching. Today, agents feel empowered by data-driven coaching, and are well-aligned on expectations on compliance and conversion rates.

The four drivers of customer vulnerability

Macroeconomic factors such as rising inflation, paired with personal crises, have contributed to an increase in customer vulnerability. According to the UK's Financial Conduct Authority, a vulnerable consumer is someone who, due to their personal circumstances, is especially susceptible to detriment. The four drivers of vulnerability are:

- **Low resilience**
- **Low capability**
- **Suffering a negative life event**
- **Having an ongoing health condition**

To learn more about responding with empathy to vulnerable customers, read **The Vulnerability Blueprint.**

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Secret 4

They use real-time guidance strategically

Real-time coaching guidance delivered to agents via conversation intelligence can help achieve a number of goals related to driving in-the-moment CX guidance.

For example, real-time guidance can identify at-risk customers and equip agents with proactive steps to retain them. In instances where a competitor is mentioned, real-time alerts powered by integrations to knowledge base systems can also deliver detailed information, such as competitive battlecards, to agents to help handle potential customer objections.

In addition, real-time guidance can help de-escalate emerging issues as they happen, or automatically elevate situations to a supervisor to prevent formal complaints. Supervisors can either jump in and help by joining the call directly, or listen in and provide agent direction digitally.

In sales situations, this technology can identify customer retention and upsell opportunities with dynamic suggestions. For example, if a customer mentions a need for a product or service they may not know about, a real-time alert can help guide an agent toward an appropriate offering.

Finally, real-time alerts can be effective tools for improving job satisfaction – whether it's speeding up onboarding for new agents or reinforcing positive behaviors for high-performing agents. Many teams use real-time alerts to show agents when they've achieved certain goals or highlight exceptional outcomes.

Best-practices for real-time guidance

Setting boundaries: Determine both the negative (e.g. emotionally charged interactions) or positive (e.g. happy customers primed for upsell/cross-sell opportunities) interactions that merit an alert.

Getting the timing right: Help agents fix mistakes in the moment, such as forgetting to say required compliance statements in a collections setting. Alerts can also aid in de-escalations before involving a supervisor, linking agents to the resources they need, or alerting supervisors when they might need to assist.

Using praise: Gamification or alerts that include positive reinforcement help improve agent performance and morale. Sometimes, this can be simple as providing a thumbs up or smiley face emoji during a positive customer interaction.

Keeping alerts relevant to the individual: An experienced agent may not need as many alerts as a new agent, so fine-tune the system for relevancy. Even better, agents (with supervisor approval) can set the thresholds for their own alerts as they learn over time, ensuring the alerts that do get surfaced are actually valuable and being used.

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Featured company: Kelsey-Seabold Clinic

Kelsey-Seybold Clinic®

Kelsey-Seybold Clinic implemented conversation intelligence to provide deep insights and understanding into the patient experience through post-interaction analytics. What was formerly a manual process is now automated through CallMiner, allowing Kelsey-Seybold to gain truly meaningful results they can act on to drive business improvements.

The post-interaction analytics were so well received that 14 months later, Kelsey-Seybold rolled out real-time monitoring with CallMiner RealTime to help the contact center improve conversation accuracy and in-the-moment action.

Agents are trained to recognize the benefits and to see feedback from conversation intelligence as an opportunity to take full control over the conversation. For example, if a patient is calling to schedule a regular appointment, but mentions having chest pain, the agent can be prompted in real time to immediately route that call to a nurse practitioner for triage.

Read the entire Kelsey-Seybold Clinic case study here.

Secret 5

They value agent feedback

When an organization adopts any new technology, gaining agent buy-in for a conversation intelligence program is essential to a program's adoption and success. When agents are asked to adopt and embrace technology solutions like conversation intelligence, it's important to make sure they understand it's not about making their lives more difficult. It's about helping them do their jobs more effectively and efficiently, while receiving the feedback they need to advance their careers.

Using contests to drive employee engagement

For example, gamification contests are a simple way to drive metric outcomes that create employee engagement. Pro tips include:

Start with the end in mind: Understand what business objective you want to drive. That can include metrics or a desired behavior.

Create a timeline: This includes when the contest should take place, how long it should last, and how to keep employees focused on a specific metric for a certain period of time.

Clearly outline rules: How to participate and how to win. Some contests include qualifying metrics, so there isn't a decline in certain areas during the contest.

Emphasize consistent communication: Explain the 'why' to everybody that is participating, ensuring agents understand the importance to the business. It is also important to explain to stakeholders why the metric is important and how the contest helps to drive that metric. How will you communicate results? Scorecards, emails, TV monitors placed around the contact center, etc.

Drive clear ROI for participants and leadership: What improvements will you see? Why does it benefit the business? Why is it worth the time spent coordinating and executing the contest?

Featured Company: University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC)

UPMC LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE

UPMC adopted conversation intelligence to analyze and score 100% of its health system's member calls, instead of just a fraction of them. The team developed a "World Class Call Score" that concierges (their agents) received daily, instead of their regular weekly feedback, and measured them on key benchmarks.

To roll out the World Class Call Score with concierges, the team focused on informative and lighthearted engagement strategies that included newsletters, contests, incentives and rewards. Examples included CallMiner Kentucky Derby and March Madness incentives.

"We try to make it fun, and gamify their experience, while giving them tips and tricks on how to use the tool to their advantage. Our strategy pulls in a lot of engagement, and makes our concierges laugh and have fun," said Cori Hoff, customer engagement manager at UPMC.
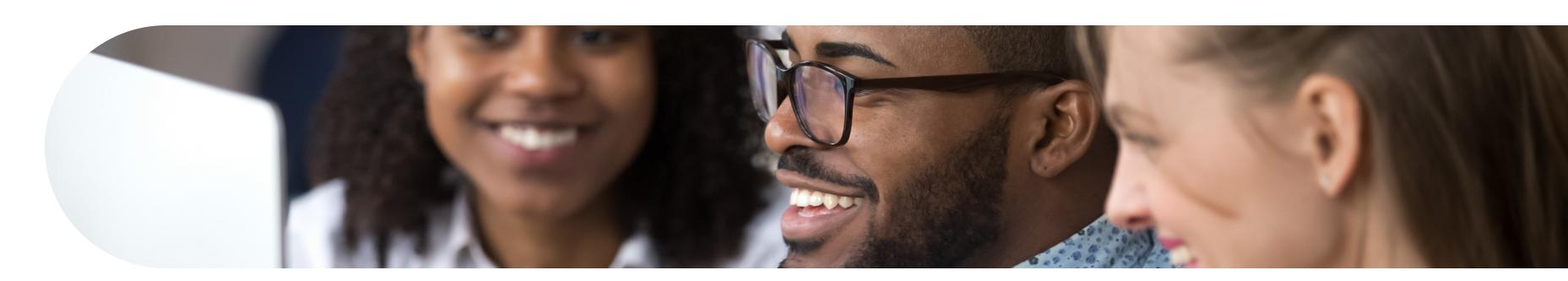
Read the entire UPMC case study here.

Continuously improving both agent and customer outcomes

Blending both real-time and post-call interaction analysis can improve both the agent experience and customer outcomes. A combination of both feedback mechanisms helps agents improve their skills, get recognized for positive behaviors, and react quickly to complex or emotionally-charged situations with empathy. The result is greater first call resolution, fewer escalations, lower customer effort scores, reduced average handle times, and ultimately better customer outcomes and improved (CX and EX) satisfaction.

Winning contact centers focus on driving baseline quality improvements first, then expanding to more sophisticated KPIs and metrics for continuous improvement. They're creative and intentional in the way they deliver data-driven agent feedback. As a result, agents enthusiastically adopt conversation intelligence and see it as a path toward self-improvement and advancement.

Above all else, organizations who see EX and CX on a similar plane achieve better overall outcomes and satisfaction, creating a positive and uplifting work environment.

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About CallMiner

CallMiner is the global leader in conversation analytics to drive business performance improvement. Powered by artificial intelligence and machine learning, CallMiner delivers the industry's most comprehensive platform to analyze omnichannel customer interactions at scale, allowing organizations to interpret sentiment and identify patterns to reveal deep understanding from every conversation. By connecting the dots between insights and action, CallMiner enables companies to identify areas of opportunity to drive business improvement, growth and transformational change more effectively than ever before. CallMiner is trusted by the world's leading organizations across retail, financial services, healthcare and insurance, travel and hospitality, and more.

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