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Call Center Quality Assurance Guide

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Call centers handle hundreds (and sometimes even thousands) of customer calls every day.

And whether you like it or not, your business' success depends on the quality of your agents and their responses.

However, while the majority of companies are quick to say, "Quality matters to us," only a few of them strategically use call center quality management to make sure they reach the desired outcomes for both your agents and your customers.

In this guide, we'll discuss everything you need to know to perform call center quality assurance, make your process more efficient, and more profitable.

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What is Call Center Quality Assurance?

Quality Assurance (QA) or Quality Management (QM) is a process that makes sure call center customer service is up to the standard a company has set, both in terms of efficiency and customer satisfaction.

90% of consumers say they are likely to stay loyal after a positive contact center experience.

⟶ **See report**

73.7% of consumers re likely to switch after a bad call center experience.

⟶ **See report**

45% of consumers who switched provider during the pandemic said they would have stayed if brands delivered better CX or connected with them on a human level.

⟶ **See report**

Providers could be saving $35.3 Billion per annum by focusing on keeping existing customers happy.

See it here

Problems Created by Poor Call Center Quality Assurance

When there are no processes or benchmarks, it's very hard to gain insight into what needs fixing or changing at a call center.

And just because there haven't been formal complaints about quality doesn't mean its what customers need. Just as we've seen from the statistics, customers may not be vocal about their dissatisfaction.Instead, they'll show whether they trust a company or not through the decision of buying (or not buying) their products.

In addition to lost revenue, poor call center quality management can also translate to:

Employee Turnover and Associated Costs

It's no secret that call centers have the highest annual employee turnover rates. According to a **QATC survey**, the call center turnover rate is between 30% and 45%.

Conversely, the average turnover rate across industries is around 15%. The numbers may be high, but it's no surprise. We can frequently read call center horror stories from agents. And when analyzed, the stories point towards the main problems being lack of job satisfaction and poor engagement.

The nature of the work itself is quite draining and when that's combined with lack of training, it results in the higher than average turnover rates. From a business perspective, the turnover costs keep growing. If the employee has a higher salary or if the training for their position takes up a lot of time and resources, the costs grow even more.

Improper or Incomplete Training

In their desire to reach more customers and increase their revenue, companies often forget to give call center employees all the training they need

- Employees' inability to perform their duties
- Poor quality of service
- Job dissatisfaction
- High turnover rates
- Even more costs for the organization

When the fact that employees aren't willing to stay with a company that doesn't provide them with enough tools and training to develop their careers is added into the equation, we see how turnover contributes to the poor quality of call center service.

After all, employees who aren't motivated to do their jobs well won't. Consequently, it's the customers and the company who will suffer.

Improper or Lack of Correct Tools

Finally, customers who reach call center agents need information. And if we expect our agents to provide them with it, we need to give them the right tools. In some organizations, this means using software that's integrated with other business tools so call center agents can reach the information customers are asking for.

A key tool a call center agent needs to be able to do their job efficiently is a CRM (customer relationship management) system. Ideally, it will contain historical data. This way, an agent can take customer information in stride, as opposed to asking questions the customer has already answered, frustrating them in the process.

Workflow management tools are also key to streamline the processes for call center agents and provide insight to managers so the process can be further optimized. If nothing is tracked or organized, it becomes quite impossible to improve on anything.

Fortunately, there are quite a few opportunities companies today can take to improve their call center quality management. And many lay with the calls they are already recording.

Opportunities for Resolving Call Center Quality Management Issues

The quality assurance process is complex. It includes both satisfying the employees so they can satisfy the customers and consistently improving the quality of service.

However, we can distinguish between the three most pressing problems:

1. Lacking or Inconsistent Call Monitoring
2. Tracking Metrics Incorrectly
3. Failure to Understand the Voice of the Customer

Lacking or Inconsistent Call Monitoring

While every call center monitors or records calls for compliance and legal reasons. The problem with quality assurance occurs when they do it inconsistently or improperly. In addition to using recorded calls to evaluate an employee's performance or resolve disputes, call monitoring should also be used for consistent evaluation of quality.

Instead of reviewing calls as necessary, call center management has to review and analyze calls periodically. In some cases, many companies record 100% of certain types of calls. The goals of consistent call monitoring are twofold:

1. Improving employee performance and job satisfaction to improve service and reduce turnover

2. Providing a better quality of service to customers

If management reviews calls often, they can understand how their current process is performing. This includes everything from call center scripts to information the agents did or did not provide. Using an automated tool like speech analytics software can help monitor every call and alert your team of quality issues.

Consequently, this kind of call monitoring can alert to problems before they've affected the quality of the provided service. Often, they can stem from improper integration with other tools (resulting in agents who don't have the necessary information for customers on hand) or alert to faults with training and onboarding.

Since it's impossible to monitor and evaluate every single call ever placed, managers can use real-time call monitoring or evaluate only the excellent or bad calls to understand the shared factors and apply new practices center-wide.

Tracking Metrics Incorrectly

While metrics are absolutely necessary for evaluating the quality of a call center and its employees, they have to be tracked, analyzed and assessed correctly.

Some of the most important metrics that can hint at the quality (or lack thereof) of a company's service are:

- Abandon rate
- Average talk time
- Cost per call
- Net Promoter Score (NPS)
- Average handle time
- First call resolution

- Customer satisfaction score (CSAT)
- Call quality
- Occupancy rate
- Attrition and absenteeism
- Customer effort score (CES)

The main mistake call center managers make is tracking these metrics in a bubble, and using them only to evaluate an agent's performance. If an agent is given the training, tools, information and freedom of choice when conversing with customers, then they would be applicable solely to their performance.

However, seeing as call center agents often have a limited amount of information at disposal and a script to follow, these KPIs should be analyzed holistically, keeping the materials and the rest of the metrics in mind, as well.

For example, a call center agent may have lightning fast average talk time, but they may also be transferring their customers to other agents (which would be visible from first call resolution rate). Or they may make customers feel rushed versus heard and empathized with for their reason for calling in

Failure to Understand the Voice of the Customer

Customer feedback is one of the most important things when it comes to call center quality assurance. However, many organizations misunderstand it. The right Voice of the Customer (VoC) program shouldn't just consist of call quality ratings.

It should also contain aspects such as omnichannel availability. The VoC program should be stretched across the majority of channels that customers naturally use. This can include social networks, as well. In addition to direct feedback, companies can also use social listening tools to better understand customer preferences.

Finally, when customer preferences have been accessed, organizations should encourage cross-departmental collaboration and employee feedback during the process of creating new quality strategies.

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Improving Call Center Quality Assurance

While there are many things companies can do to guarantee good service with tools and metrics, the main points of focus should be the call center employees.

After all, happy salespeople can **increase sales by 37%**. The best way to improve call center quality assurance is through continuous training of the agents.

It reduces turnover and increases job satisfaction rates, while also making sure that the service customers are getting is nothing short of excellent.

Training New Hires

The best way to make sure that the call center's attrition rate decreases while the quality increases is by investing into training new hires. Training new agents is the perfect opportunity to create the right foundations for long-term success and satisfaction.

The first thing the process of training new hires should be is engaging. This can include interactive materials, socializing with existing employees (preferably, top performers) and personalizing the training. And to make things easier for the managers expected to train them, companies should set up process workflows.

They should clearly outline all the steps that have to be taken, and outcomes that are expected from the new agent. A peer mentor is also a good idea, especially if new call center agents don't have a lot of experience.

Not only will the peer mentors show them "the ropes" of working at the center, but they can also help with long-term training, evaluation and career progress. For a really progress-driven environment, managers should set clear milestones and explain how the new employees' (training) performance will be measured.

Adding rewards and gamifying the process can also help. While the new agents have to be trained on the products, they should also be trained on the customers. If the company's marketing and sales departments have created buyer personas, they should be given to new agents and explained with practical examples.

Listening in on the calls that have been defined as typical for the call center's customers can also be incredibly beneficial. The same goes for calls that have been marked as excellent and above the call center's standard.

By focusing on the excellent calls, managers can help the employee understand how they can improve the quality of their own calls.

When it's time for the new hire to start answering their first calls, they should be given a script if that's applicable to the call center. Afterwards, they should listen to their call with the hiring manager and their mentor (if applicable) to understand what they did right and what they could improve in the future.

This way, the new hire will be motivated to improve while also having the right information and feedback they can use to do so. Finally, the training shouldn't just establish the baseline metrics for their performance at work. In order to reduce the turnover rate, the agents should also create clear career progress paths with their supervisors and mentors.

If possible, they should be given a roadmap that outlines how they can get promotions and rewards at the company. If that's not applicable, they can co-create skill and performance progress paths with their supervisors, and periodically meet to review their progress. This way, the focus isn't only on their performance which contributes to the organization's goals. A part of it is shifted towards them as well, and employees stay longer at companies that care about their progress

Continuous Coaching and Training

Continuous coaching is as vital to call center quality management as onboarding training. It encourages high longterm performance and increases job satisfaction. And as we've already seen, that leads directly to increased revenue and retention of top talent.

The newest trend in engaging call center employees is certainly gamification of performance monitoring. According to **TalentLMS' survey,** 80% of employees said they enjoyed using software with gamified elements and 87% of respondents felt gamification made them more productive.

Call center quality management can be "gamified" by introducing features such as:

- Points and badges for improvement
- Achievements and rewards
- Scorecards and leaderboards

In addition to work performance tracking, **gamification** can also be used to monitor skill progress of each individual employee. The second very important aspect of using continuous coaching and training as a means of improving call center quality assurance is feedback.

Employees should be empowered and encouraged to share their feedback with supervisors and other departments. As the ones talking to customers every day, they're the most equipped people in the company to alert other departments to changing customer preferences or potential problems.

One way to alert both agents and supervisors to performance in real time, is to use automated scorecards. These scorecards automatically populate results for key metrics into a single dashboard, like the example image to the right.
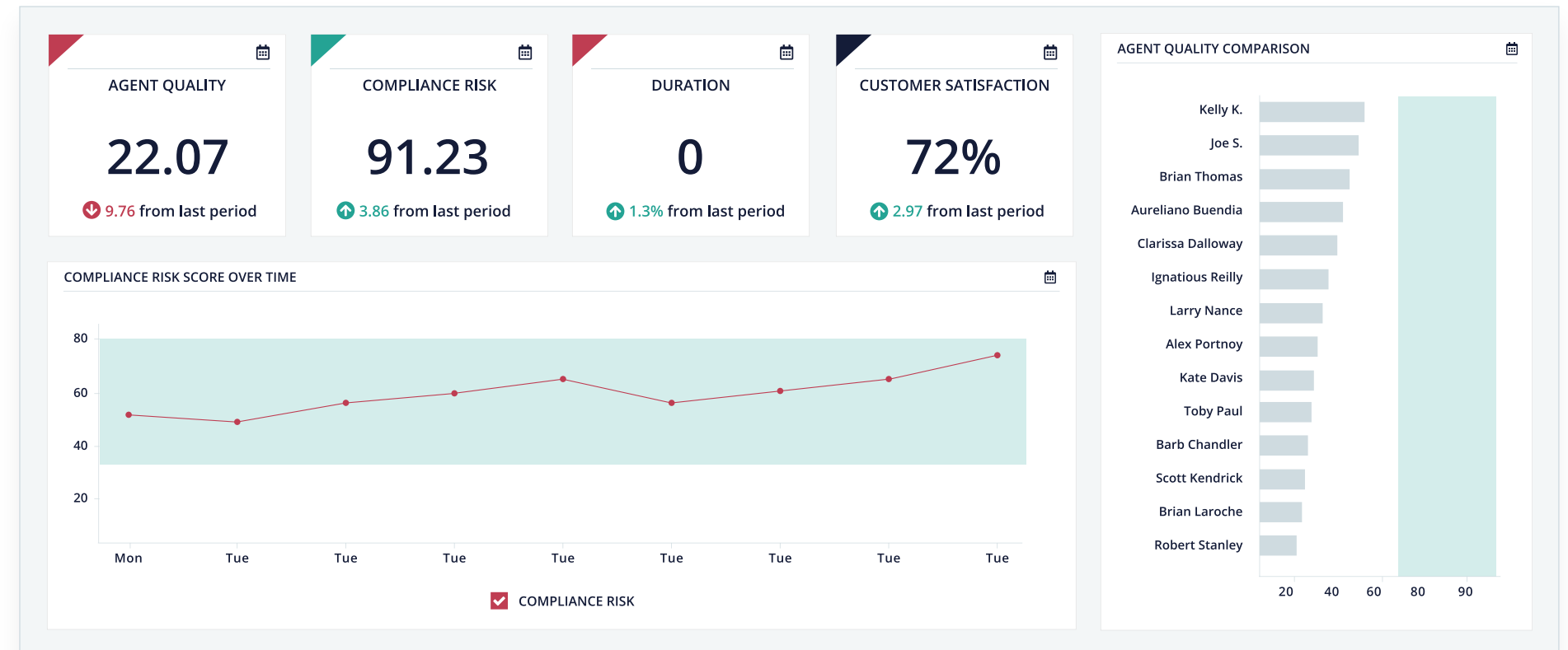
Companies should also recognize and reward excellent performance. This can help with positive reinforcement, which is one of the best techniques for improving work performance.

By recognizing and giving positive feedback, call center managers can motivate their employees to perform up to standard, as opposed to making them fear making a mistake or stepping out of line. In return, employees will be more motivated to serve customers better and come forward with feedback that can improve the company's productivity.

In addition to improved performance, recognizing quality can also help a company recognize talent in top performers. In that case, personalized training and coaching can be implemented to make sure the individual achieves their full potential.

Finally, after improving intrinsic and extrinsic motivation through gamification and positive reinforcement, companies and call center quality management stakeholders should use the right tools. Previously, everything had to be done manually.

However, the rise of speech analytics and **real-time call quality monitoring tools** has opened up a plethora of new possibilities for improving the quality of both service and workplace experience. And when new technology is combined with investing into employees' potential, call center quality assurance can prosper.

Benefits of Improving Call Center Quality Assurance

Improving the call center quality assurance process may not be easy to do overnight, but it's more than worth it if a company wants to improve its results.

But how does call center QA really affect a company's results?

Lower Overhead Through Longer Agent Retention

The costs of onboarding and replacing a trained employee are high. However, more and more workers feel as though they have to switch companies to get forward.

This can be avoided with call center quality assurance. When companies invest into their agents, they're more satisfied with their jobs and as such, more likely to stay at the company.

Continuous Improvement Through Tracking Metrics

When a company understands its performance metrics, it has the right information to make better, data-driven decisions. No two call centers are alike. The same goes for customers.

So when every team faces a different challenge, metrics are the one thing that can save time, alert to potential problems, and processes that could use improvement. Here is a short list of **common metrics:**

- Average Speed of Answering (ASA)
- Average Handle Time (AHT)
- Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)
- Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Improving Customer Satisfaction and Revenue Through Repeat Business

Finally, repeat customers make up for **40% of a business' revenue**. So, when they're consistently experiencing quality service, they will stay loyal to a company. It may not always be easy knowing how to improve.

However, when the call center quality management best practices are applied, a call center becomes so much more. It becomes a center for customer excellence. And who can say no to that?

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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