Business Process Improvement

First Call Resolution

Business Challenge

A TeleTech client with more than 30 million customers was experiencing customer service problems as a result of poor first call resolution (FCR). Survey data revealed that only 52% of customers reported having their online issues resolved on the first call, and 61% reported having to contact our customer management center (CMC) more than once regarding their original issue. Moreover, industry research showed a strong link between FCR and customer satisfaction and loyalty. As FCR is a key measure of TeleTech's service efficiency, we acted quickly to improve service quality.

TeleTech Solution

A core team of six employees at the CMC used TeleTech's STEP (success through enhanced performance) process improvement program powered by Six Sigma to analyze FCR rates by the type of trouble ticket code. Coached by a TeleTech Six Sigma expert, the team found that 80% of randomly sampled calls that were not resolved the first time were attributable to 20% of the trouble ticket codes. The team then proceeded to identify and verify the root causes of the FCR failures, which included:

- Miscoded trouble tickets due to incomplete customer service representative (CSR) training in the trouble ticket system

- An inability to code a call as an outage unless that outage was confirmed

- The lack of a Web page to provide the staff with online support

- The lack of real-time problem solving for customers with only one phone line

- The absence of a troubleshooting decision-tree to promote standardized techniques

By targeting these root causes, the team estimated that our client could save $123,000 the first month by reducing the number of repeat calls.

TeleTech's Six Sigma team evaluated potential solutions based on their influence on the specific problem, ease of implementation, cost and measurable benefits. The final solutions consisted of a decision-tree that aided CSRs in providing real-time solutions, a trouble code awareness program, a Web page with information that enabled the staff to more effectively direct customer calls, up-training for CSRs, and a transfer matrix that helped CSRs assist customers when problems were outside of CSR control. These solutions were implemented in the CMC within two months of the team's formation.

Performance

Within the first 60 days of implementing the solutions, FCR increased 10%, translating into a cost savings of $123,000 the first month after the implementation of the solutions. Moreover, customer surveys showed a 19% reduction in the percentage of customers who called more than once for the same issue.

Transfer Rate Reduction

Business Challenge

A U.S. company and TeleTech client with more than 25 million customers was experiencing a high transfer rate on calls. The rate was approximately 42%, which was 10% higher than our client's expectation. TeleTech began an investigation that would provide a clear understanding of the root causes of the high transfer rates.

TeleTech Solution

The Six Sigma team's investigation included gathering data from the Vantive Ticketing system and the automatic call distributor, which provided information on the point of origin of the original call, as well as where and why the call was being transferred. After examining nearly 80,000 transferred calls and performing a Pareto analysis on the reasons for the transfers, the team discovered that 73% of all transferred calls went to only four CMCs out of the 15 available. Moreover, the majority of the calls were related to service orders, CMC issues and payment arrangements.

Optimal solutions at the root causes of the problems focused on the following countermeasures:

- CSRs were empowered to manage service orders, CMC issues and payment arrangements

- New employees were provided with extensive CMC and service order training

- All employees were provided with two weeks of on-the-job training

The operations, training and quality departments completed their implementation of phased solutions within a few months of the formation of the team. The effectiveness of the solutions was tracked by following transfer rates at the CMC level and by tracking customer satisfaction scores.

Performance

The following results were achieved:

- Transfer rates decreased from a baseline of 42 to 21%

- Customers who had trouble reaching a representative decreased from a baseline of 32 to 12%

- The percentage of customers providing "excellent/very good" and "very good/good" ratings on overall client service increased from 52 to 75%

- The percentage of customers who answered "yes" to the question, "Did the first representative you spoke to resolve the call?" increased from a baseline of 58 to 79%

Email Response Quality

Business Challenge

A TeleTech client was experiencing poor solved on current contact (SOCC) rates, which is a key efficiency metric for customers with email queries. Our client was concerned that its acceptable SOCC rate of 56% had dropped to 49%. TeleTech's examination of preliminary data showed that customers were not providing clear information in the initial contact with our client. The examination also showed that a lack of real-time management of email inquiries contributed to large caseloads, and that coaching among CSR email management was inconsistent.

TeleTech Solution

TeleTech's Six Sigma team analyzed random samples of customer emails that were not resolved on first contact to identify the factors that contributed to low SOCC rates. A cause and effect diagram was used to brainstorm and verify root causes of undesirable SOCC rates. The team found the following problem areas:

- CSR misinterpretation of email problems

- CSRs were not thoroughly reading email threads

- CSRs were not provided with adequate coaching to manage email

- Quality assurance (QA) guidelines did not drive SOCC behavior

- Client's Web submission tool for customer emails did not flow naturally, preventing customers from submitting detailed information

The team created an action plan that targeted solutions at the root causes, with solution implementation beginning only two months after formal project kick-off. The following solutions were implemented:

- One-on-one sessions with operations managers and supervisors, combined with the training department, were aimed at increasing clarity and comprehension of customer problems

- QA resources were adjusted to allow all CSRs that answered email to benefit from monitoring sessions with CSRs that managed real-time chat sessions

- The training department created a new email composition training package

- The new hire test validation process was changed to increase the weighting assigned to email response quality

- The client redesigned a portion of the Web submission form to require customers to enter key information that would aid in diagnosing email inquiries

- QA guidelines were adjusted to include additional attributes that precisely measured email efficiency

Performance

After one month, the effect of the combined solutions:

- Increased SOCC from the original rate of 49 to 82%, the highest SOCC rate in channel history

- Resulted in a CSR satisfaction rate of 95%, the highest satisfaction rate in channel history

- Saved our client $8.50 per call and $58,000 per 10,000 transactions