

Implementing Varney - The Performance Framework Performance Indicator Measurement by Post-Contact IVR Surveys

May 2008

This white paper has been put together by Teleperformance - the world's leading provider of outsourced contact centre and back office solutions, in conjunction with Square Systems - a leader in automated telephone and web surveys.

Giving Citizens a Voice

In December 2006 Sir David Varney issued his review of public sector service delivery. The Varney report focused on the opportunities for change in the channels through which services are delivered to citizens and businesses: 'Over the next ten years, there is an opportunity to provide better public services for citizens and businesses and to do so at a lower cost to the taxpayer.' It went on to recommend clear measures to improve the performance of contact centres.

The Varney report says:

'Contact centres have an ability to provide significant enhancements to the service provided to citizens and businesses, as well as create more streamlined and efficient organisations, especially if well coordinated with back office activities. In the private sector it is commonly understood that failure of contact centres and the back office transactions that underpin them can have a significant impact on customer trust and the organisation's brand.'

'Private sector organisations that have modernised their contact centres are finding that improved understanding of customer needs and drivers of contact are resulting in efficiency cost savings of 20%.'

In response to Varney's recommendations, the government established the Contact Council in February 2007, to oversee improvement in contact centres operated by - or on behalf of - any organisation that is funded by public money, including helplines, emergency services, and central and local government. The Contact Council has published detailed guidance and a framework for how to drive service improvement. Citizens and businesses will judge the quality of public services they receive by each contact they have with a public sector employee or organisation and in comparison to the services offered by the private sector. Citizens and businesses will be able to judge relative performance, creating more challenges for government to provide services that meet the standard of the best of the private sector.

There are 7 foundation characteristics that need to be measured and reported on within the contact centre operation:

**Each contact is easy
Each contact fulfils a need
Each contact is valuable
Contact delivers policy
Government is a trusted point of contact
Government knows its customer
Government is a world leader in delivering public service contact**

Obtaining citizen and business feedback against the set measures and Indicators is not difficult for contact centre operations, but the difficulty lies in implementing a cost-effective, reliable and best-fit solution.

This paper summarises the Contact Council guidance issued to date, looking in detail at the Performance Indicators devised to encourage customer-centric services. The paper takes the 'Insight' Performance Indicators and considers whether post-contact IVR survey technology can be used as an effective measurement tool.

The Contact Council

The Contact Council is a body of senior executives with oversight of customer contact across local and central government. Their remit is to oversee the implementation of Varney's recommendations in public sector contact centres. Since being established, the Contact Council has published:

- **Performance Indicators:** Detailed guidance on a set of PIs with which all publicly funded contact centres should start measuring performance on a quarterly basis
- **Accreditation guidance:** The Varney report recommended 'that all taxpayer funded contact centres are required to undergo formal published accreditation by December 2008.' The purpose of attaining accreditation by an industry recognised body is to provide some independent evidence that the publicly funded contact centre is fit for purpose in relation to the services it is delivering
- **A 'Blueprint'** for publicly funded contact centres with examples of good practice in specific aspects of public sector contact centre operations such as HR (recruitment, training, performance-related pay, reducing absence, managing performance) as well as maximising accessibility, managing call volume, reducing avoidable contact, planning emergency hotlines, personalising customer service and improving call quality.

The Performance Framework

A framework of Performance Indicators has been set out by the Contact Council. Contact centres who wish to comply with this framework need to review and amend existing measurement structures to comply with the framework. The first full quarter's submission will be by 31st January 2008, but contact centre managers should have returned basic details to the Contact Council by the end of October 2007. Not all Indicators need to be submitted every quarter, though they should be measured on a continuous basis. Details of which Indicators are to be measured each quarter will be provided on the [Contact Council website](#).

The Council will issue a general overview of performance trends to all contact centres who submit their performance data. There will also be an assessment of areas of recurring weakness, with workshops to provide help to those that need it with input on best practice in a specific area.

The performance framework is constructed around 4 competencies of performance management: Insight, Measurement, Planning and Delivery.

Indicators in the 'Insight' section focus on understanding your market and target audience and anticipating future demand. 'Measurement' Indicators are aimed at being able to predict demand. 'Planning' is about resources and readiness for the future and 'Delivery' is about meeting customer demand. ***This paper focuses on Indicators in the 'Insight' section, which are about understanding the service from the customer's perspective.***

The 6 'Insight' Performance Indicators

Teleperformance has taken a sample of key Performance Indicators, the 6 'Insight' Performance Indicators, to analyse if post-contact IVR surveys can be used as a measurement tool.

IVR survey technology is mentioned as a good practice example in the Varney Review, the Performance Indicator guidance, and the Blueprint.

The quotes that follow are taken from the Performance Indicators for publicly funded contact centres issued by the Contact Council in March 2008.



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FIRST CONTACT RESOLUTION

The Performance Framework states: To measure FCR, contact centres should use a mixture of approaches, from 7 measures, using more than one to improve integrity of the Indicator where possible. The 7 measures are call monitoring, IVR surveys, voice menu, repeat contact, script, telephone / postal survey and case management / CRM / telephony system. Of the 7 options for effectively measuring FCR, IVR, script, telephone surveys and voice menus are the only measurement methods where the customer determines if their contact was resolved on the first attempt. An IVR survey is where the customer completes an IVR survey at the end of the call and is asked if their call was resolved. Script is where the agent asks the customer this question and logs the answer. Telephone surveys are when the caller is contacted after 1-3 days and asked if their query was resolved. Within the voice menu or IVR options the customer is asked if this is the first time they have made contact on this subject.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RATINGS

Customer satisfaction and advocacy ratings (i.e. extent to which they would recommend the service) need to be gathered on a regular basis, and at least monthly. The Framework states: 'This Indicator should measure the number of customers satisfied with the services provided by the contact centre compared with the total number of customers surveyed in the period.'

'Satisfied customers include all those that are classed as very satisfied, satisfied or acceptable/neutral. Satisfied customers should also include customers that say that they would recommend the contact centre service to others.'

'The survey should also allow customers to add comments against their rating and provide reasons why they rated the service as they did, particularly if they were dissatisfied and would not recommend the service to others.'

AVOIDABLE CONTACT

Avoidable contact is that proportion of customer contacts that is neither of value to the customer nor the public sector organisation handling the contact. These include contacts made for unnecessary clarification, follow-up contact to check on progress, repeat contact to pass on information already provided, rework, reassurance and wrong numbers caused by confused sign-posting. 'Avoidable contact is a measure of overall business, rather than contact centre, performance to its customers.'

Identifying avoidable contact first begins with understanding the reasons why customers are contacting the centre.

CUSTOMER CONSULTATION IMPACT

Customer consultation impact is measured by the number of customer consultations that lead to actions which positively impact the outcome of the contact centre's performance. Customer consultations are defined as providing 'an opportunity where customers are invited to freely express their views about the services provided and where these views lead to outcomes ranging from increased customer awareness to action plans that address customer feedback points.'

DEMAND FORECAST ACCURACY

This Indicator shows the contact centre's ability to accurately forecast contact volumes (by channel, customer segment, and type) by comparing forecasted demand against actual demand arriving in and leaving the centre. There should be processes in place to link up with other business areas to allow forecasts to take account of the impact from internal drivers (marketing, campaigns, new products/services, issues etc.) The impact from external drivers (environmental, economic, political events etc.) is harder to predict but should be factored into forecasts as much as possible. It is measured by calculating the difference between the forecasted contact demand (at the start of the quarter) against actual contact demand handled by the centre (at the end of the quarter).

INDUSTRY-RECOGNISED AWARDS

'This is the number of industry recognised awards which publicly funded contact centres won, or for which they were short-listed.' This Indicator acknowledges the regular achievement of industry awards and highlights centres to be used for wider sharing of best practice. Contact centres should count the number of new awards won or short-listed within the quarter and the number they hold within the current financial year.



Helping You Measure 4 of the Key 'Insight' Performance Indicators by Post-Contact-IVR Surveys

Having now reviewed the Indicators, we can conclude that post-contact IVR surveys can help you to measure 4 of the 'Insight' key performance Indicators - **First Contact Resolution, Customer Satisfaction Ratings, Avoidable Contact and Customer Consultation Impact.**

Taking Indicator 'Customer Satisfaction Ratings' as an example, contact centre managers can measure customer satisfaction on a regular or periodic basis, either as part of the post-call IVR or web survey, or on a one-off or periodic basis. Open comments can be left by citizens and are easily transcribed and categorised, giving quick quantitative analysis of qualitative feedback. The impact of action taken in response to this feedback can then easily be assessed using preconfigured Trend Analysis reporting which shows ratings over time. Follow-up notes can also be attached to individual responses seen as significant, allowing good ideas not to be lost.

Another example is when looking at Performance Indicator 'Avoidable Contact'. The guidelines state: 'Identifying avoidable contact first begins with understanding the reasons why customers are contacting the centre.' Again, post-contact IVR surveys can be used to understand why people are contacting the centre. It is easy to ascertain the reason for contact as part of the survey. Analysis can then be carried out on the survey's findings, in order to review 'Avoidable Contact' in greater depth.

IVR surveys stand out as a cost-effective, objective and accurate method for gaining contact centre citizen feedback. Feedback from large numbers of citizens can be collected and analysed at very low cost with no staffing input. Because feedback is given immediately after the contact rather than several days later, feedback is extremely accurate and any bias or outside influence greatly reduced.

All citizen contact channels can be covered in one integrated survey system with unified reports. Alongside post-call IVR surveys, email or web surveys enable citizens who contacted the service by email or via the web to give feedback. Touchscreen surveys can be set up in citizen contact locations to gain feedback on face to face contact. Citizen comments can be easily transcribed and categorised so that qualitative feedback can be measured and analysed. Questions can be dependent on responses to previous questions. Follow-up actions taken in response to citizen comments can be logged, allowing logging and tracking of action taken in response to citizen feedback.

The whole process from set-up to implementation of survey can be done in less than an hour. This means that citizen feedback is available immediately, on any change in service, giving a real-time and real-life picture of services.

Citizens can be invited to participate in the survey by the contact centre agent and then transferred by the agent at the end of the call. To circumvent 'cherry picking,' citizens can also be invited to participate automatically before they speak to an advisor, and then transferred to the survey automatically at the end of their conversation. Or citizens can be dialled back immediately after they have finished speaking to an agent.

Results can be available to view online on a secure website accessed via a unique username and password. All survey management activities and reporting can be performed via any internet browser. No special software is needed. Most systems offer a set of easy-to-use graphing tools enabling managers to analyse results quickly. Results can be ranked by Agent, allowing easy comparison for performance management. Filters allow analysis of results by agent ID, contact centre team, etc.

Case Study - NHS Blood & Transplant Post-contact IVR surveys in practice

In 1998, Teleperformance began to work with NHSBT to deliver a centralised national contact centre operation, replacing the more fragmented, regional arrangements that existed. Today, a helpline is in operation and a comprehensive CRM system provides Customer Service Advisors (CSAs) with an immediate insight into the caller's history, as well as ensuring accurate confirmation or alteration of personal details.

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The use of this system allows CSAs to develop an on-going relationship with donors and make appointments through their preferred means of communication - whether this is SMS text, telephone, e-mail, fax, web or whitemail.

Citizen feedback is obtained through a telephone- and web-based feedback tool which enables real-time reporting. The feedback tool surveys random samples of citizens to determine their overall satisfaction with the service received and the clarity and accuracy of information provided. Citizens also have the opportunity to leave their own comments. Each month 120 customer satisfaction surveys are also mailed out.

NHSBT and Teleperformance have set extremely high caller satisfaction targets, using a ten point scale and then only counting a ten out of ten as a success; together they have set some of the industries toughest KPIs. The feedback is collated and the information is used to constantly develop and improve the service.

An example of this is when NHSBT became the first blood service provider in the world to offer appointments and non-appointments in the same session. Previously donors could attend a blood donor session but were unable to make an appointment. NHSBT knew from citizen feedback that this discouraged potential donors so took action.

Citizen feedback is analysed on a monthly, weekly and, in some cases, daily basis. This is then reviewed by Teleperformance and NHSBT, and based on the feedback given, Teleperformance and NHSBT are able to work together to introduce improvements to the service.

Introduction of the citizen feedback system shows how effective the CRM element is:

- Donors are donating more frequently than ever before - we know that this is a direct reflection of the service provided
- The on-line satisfaction survey shows that on average over 80% of people who complete the survey give a 10 out of 10 score
- 89% of callers surveyed stated that the contact centre experience directly affects their relationship with NHSBT
- First time call resolution of 98% has been achieved in the last 12 months
- A significant number of donor lifecycles have been extended.

Full NHSBT Case Study: <http://www.teleperformance.co.uk/publicsector.php?caseid=23>

Links / References

- Contact Council website:
<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/public%5Fservice%5Freform/contact%5Fcouncil/>
- Varney Report on Transforming public sector contact centres:
http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/4/F/pbr06_varney_review.pdf
- Performance Indicators for publicly funded contact centres:
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/public_service_reform/contact_council/~media/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/publications/contact_council/pdf/pmf_vs_definiton0803%20pdf.ashx
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