Capturing Voice of the Customer
A New Role for Customer Surveys, Speech Analytics and Quality Management
Quality management has been a cornerstone of contact center operations for more than 30 years. It has served organizations well as a method of managing agent performance, while driving gains in operational efficiency and service delivery. However, while the traditional quality assurance (QA) process has been effective to this point, organizations are finding that QA alone is no longer enough. This traditional process makes significant assumptions on what customers really want and appreciate and relies too heavily on internal metrics and judgments.

While many organizations have utilized the QA process for gathering voice of the customer (VoC), a hyper-competitive environment has raised the bar on the level of service that must be provided. Advancements in technology have enabled organizations to more accurately capture VoC by combining QA, customer satisfaction data and speech analytics. New insights into how customers judge agent performance and whether the service experience meets expectations is now possible.

![Figure 1: Capturing voice of the customer](image-url)
The ultimate goal of a customer-centric organization is to provide a satisfying experience during each customer contact. However, organizations often struggle to define exactly what comprises a satisfying experience from the customer’s perspective. Understanding what customers truly desire during an interaction allows organizations to focus on the agent behaviors most important in shaping the customer experience.

Based on our experiences, we can make some reasonable guesses about what makes a satisfying experience – courtesy, accurate information, helpfulness, efficiency, respect and ready access. There are two very distinct types of behaviors in this list:

- Quantitative areas, which are fairly easy to assess and manage objectively with metrics and procedures. For example, accurate information, efficiency and ready access.
- Qualitative areas, which are subjective in nature and present bigger challenges when evaluating and managing agent performance. Examples include courtesy, helpfulness and respect.

Challenges When Measuring Soft Skills
Qualitative areas, often referred to as soft skills, create difficulties during the QA evaluation process, when a determination must be made on whether the agent met the performance standard. The subjective nature of soft skills exposes the performance score to second-guessing and questioning by the agent, and it can often be difficult for the evaluator to defend their judgment call. At the extreme, these subjective areas encourage argument and create an atmosphere of bargaining over the final quality score.

Removing the Gray Areas in a Traditional QA Process
Even carefully worded QA questions can still leave room for interpretation due to the subjective nature of the topics being measured. cc: Quality, CallCopy’s quality management module, helps remove these gray areas by allowing tips to be included on the QA form. This gives the evaluator additional instructions or details on how the question should be interpreted.

Agent demonstrated active listening

Active listening includes repeating information back to the customer, such as an address, as well as affirmations statements such as “OK” and “I see” that demonstrate to the caller that you are engaged in the conversation.
Tone of voice is one example of a soft skill that is traditionally evaluated in the QA process. There is no argument over its importance – a proper tone conveys a professional demeanor and a willingness to help. However, clearly defining what a proper tone of voice is can be challenging. Many organizations simply declare that an agent’s tone should be professional, use inflection and be enthusiastic; agents should also avoid being judgmental, condescending or speaking too fast. While each of these attributes is important, they can also be very subjective, making it difficult to achieve consistent scoring across QA evaluators. Using agent-specific VoC information alleviates this persistent headache.
Using Voice of the Customer to Align Internal Goals with Customer Expectations

To effectively create satisfaction, performance goals must be in alignment with the true wants and needs of the customer. Organizations do not usually have the time, resources or willingness to directly involve their customers in establishing quality standards. This creates a potential misalignment between what the organization believes the customer wants and what they are really looking for. This mismatch is especially likely in the soft skill areas. As a result, the organization’s QA program could be encouraging behaviors that customers find irrelevant, or worse, aggravating.

Avoiding soft-skill assessments in the QA process would seem to be a good idea, but they are too important to ignore. What if it were possible to let the customer evaluate the agent on these behaviors? Integrating VoC into the QA process does exactly that. Assessing agent soft skill performance using VoC drives subjectivity out of the QA process and works to avoid misalignment between encouraged behaviors and customer expectations.

Measuring Customer Satisfaction with Post-Call Surveys

Using a post-call customer feedback survey is an effective way to collect customer satisfaction information related to VoC. This method is easy for the customer to use and collects feedback while the interaction is still fresh in their mind. For maximum benefit, individual survey results must be linked directly to the specific agent and customer interaction.

cc: Survey | Customer Satisfaction Surveys

cc: Survey, CallCopy’s customer survey module, lets you measure customer satisfaction through the use of post-call surveys. Interactive voice response (IVR) surveys can be integrated into your phone system, or you can use your internal IVR applications. Web-based reporting reveals trends and combined with QM scores and speech analytics findings, gives a complete view of VoC.
Evaluating Soft Skills Using Customer Feedback

When constructing a survey, wording of the questions is very important. For example, “How satisfied are you with the service you received?” vs. “How satisfied are you with the service you received from the agent today?”. The first question may be interpreted very broadly by the customer. They may give a negative response because they spent a long time on hold, something that is beyond the agent’s control. The wording of the second question clearly focuses on the agent’s own performance, not the performance of the organization overall.

![Image of survey question]

Figure 2: Wording survey questions so they clearly refer to the agent allows the results to be used to measure agent soft skills in the QA process.

Table 1 offers sample survey questions and the areas on which they focus. It is important to keep the length of a survey short to obtain higher completion rates. A good rule of thumb is that the customer should be able to complete a survey in less than two minutes. Questions on organizational performance can also be asked, but the primary focus of the survey should be on the specific agent behaviors that are being assessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The agent was knowledgeable</td>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>Job Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The agent was helpful</td>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The agent was courteous</td>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The agent made good use of my time</td>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>Efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The agent understood the reason I called</td>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The agent clearly explained what they did for me</td>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My issue or question was resolved</td>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>On-Call Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the agent’s handling of my call</td>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>Customer Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many times have you called about this issue?</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>Calls to Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Company name] is easy to do business with</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you recommend [company name] to your friends?</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Sample post-call survey questions

Questions should be constructed using a five point response scale when possible. For example, Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. This provides the ability to assign partial credit when converting the customer’s feedback into a score, as opposed to a Yes/No response.
Table 2 shows one way of converting customer responses into scores. The customer’s score for the interaction would simply be the sum of the scores for the individual questions. This can be converted to a 100 point scale by dividing the customer’s score by the total number of possible points.

Once customer responses are converted into scores they can be used like traditional QA scores to identify top performers and areas needing improvement. Communicating this information to agents lets them view their performance from the customer’s perspective. Sharing customer feedback, as well as QA evaluation scores and productivity metrics (AHT, Adherence, Attendance, etc.), empowers agents to self-assess and self-manage their performance. This in turn improves the efficiency of the QA process and frees up supervisory resources.

Integrating the voice of the customer into the QA process does not remove the necessity to perform quality evaluations. With the customer providing an external assessment of agent performance, the evaluation can focus on internal performance areas such as compliance with policies and procedures, call classification and training needs. These areas are generally less subjective and easier to score consistently between agents, as well as evaluators.

### Empowering Agents with Customer Satisfaction Data

Customer satisfaction data and QA scores can be combined with productivity metrics to create a balanced view of agent performance. cc: Insight, CallCopy’s performance management module, can be used to deliver this information in real time.

### Speech Analytics

Several applications of speech analytics can also be used to obtain VoC information. At the most basic level, speech analytics provides an efficient method for mining through the large volume of customer interactions to locate all occurrences of specific key words and phrases of interest.

- **Categorization** – Most customer interactions can be categorized based on business drivers or call resolution. By leveraging speech analytics to determine which category each call belongs in, you can more effectively correlate QA and customer satisfaction results. For example, by identifying all cancellation calls, you may be able to uncover trends that occur on these calls that may not have been apparent had they been analyzed along with all other call types.
• **Identifying calls for QA** – Speech analytics enhances the QA process by detecting words and phrases that indicate outliers from the typical customer interaction. This helps evaluators find the most important calls to review, and enables additional trending and problem analysis.

• **Discovery** – Identify the reasons customers are calling and take steps to ensure their needs are more efficiently met. When combined with customer satisfaction data, this provides very powerful business intelligence that can be shared outside of the contact center. For example, marketing teams can benefit by using business intelligence to build more effective campaigns, measure which promotions drive the most customer responses, discover customer trends or acquire competitive information.

**Eliminating Subjectivity and Aligning Goals**

Expanding the QA process to include voice of the customer offers multiple benefits to a customer service organization. Reducing subjectivity in the QA process serves to increase agents’ confidence in the results. It makes it easier for evaluators to score an interaction, and to score more consistently across evaluators.

VoC information works to ensure that the behaviors agents are displaying closely align with what the customer desires. It can also provide clues on where internal processes may need adjustment to better fit customer expectations. Providing customers with the experience they expect when contacting the business increases customer satisfaction and boosts retention.

Providing customers with a way to express their opinions implies that the organization values their input. They feel important and feel like they have a say in how the organization treats them. This also contributes to higher customer satisfaction and retention.
Capturing voice of the customer through a combined use of quality management, customer survey and speech analytics technologies is a powerful tool for customer-centric organizations. Effective procedures must be in place to create change and drive improvements in performance. In some cases, the need for change may rest in areas outside of the contact center, necessitating the involvement and support of upper-level management.

Organizations that listen to the voice of their customers, and use that knowledge to drive continuous organizational improvement possess a distinct competitive advantage in today’s hyper-competitive environment. The traditional practice of using solely internal measures to gauge performance is no longer enough. Today’s customers demand a higher level of service, and are more than willing to look elsewhere to find it.
CallCopy, a leading provider of innovative call recording and contact center solutions, is dedicated to ensuring the highest standards of customer and employee satisfaction. The award-winning, enterprise-proven cc: Discover suite delivers advanced call recording, screen capture, quality management, speech analytics, desktop analytics, performance management, customer survey and workforce management capabilities to organizations of all sizes and industries across the globe.

CallCopy empowers these organizations to gather business intelligence, which is leveraged to maximize operational performance, reduce liability, achieve regulatory compliance and increase customer satisfaction.

For more information, visit www.callcopy.com.

cc: Discover, CallCopy’s workforce optimization suite, assists organizations in capturing voice of the customer. If you would like to learn more about how cc: Discover’s customer surveys, speech analytics and quality management capabilities can benefit your organization, please contact us:

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