

Customer Service Interactions That Improve Customer Satisfaction

Client - the world's largest information technology company

Strategic Goals

- Improve customer service when users call 800#s for technical assistance.
- Reduce customer complaints.
- Improve response time to email and phone calls regarding inquiries and problems.

Communication Challenges

- Duplication of research to answer technical questions because of unclear internal communication between the various technical levels of support
- Fewer supervisors to "turn problems over to" when first-line responders could not handle the call
- Lack of follow-up to "close the loop" when customer issues were escalated from first-level responders to more-technical specialists
- Excessive time required by service agents receiving calls to understand the customer issue and communicate solutions

Solution

Booher's solution included:

- Interviewing managers at call centers to determine specific customer issues and to identify skill gaps
- Observing and recording service agents as they respond to customer calls
- Interviewing service agents to determine skill gaps and frustrations
- Analyzing the job skills necessary for various levels of support
- Reviewing and analyzing written customer complaints to identify recurring issues
- Collecting actual customer situations and documents to use in training the staff
- Developing a 24-hour custom training course and job-aids to equip service agents to:
 - Write clear emails to communicate technical information to customers, to peers, and to their own management
 - Apologize and resolve customer problems without involving a supervisor
 - Handle phone calls quickly and effectively
 - Build rapport in face-to-face interactions when issues required a technical specialist to visit a client site
- Facilitating [e-Service](#) classes
- [Certifying](#) internal trainers to deliver the training

Results

Both written and oral customer complaints dropped dramatically within the month and customer satisfaction survey scores rose sharply. Response time improved as agents took responsibility for follow-through when escalating customer issues to the next level of support.

Stress among service agents also decreased as agents learned to use specific techniques. As a result, the company began to have waiting lists for the training.