Positive customer experience is critical to the longevity of any business. A company’s call center plays a major role in creating and maintaining that positive customer experience. Historically, many top e-commerce organizations worldwide haven’t shown great interest in displaying call center phone numbers on their homepage, nor have they relied on assisted sales.

However, a shift is occurring in that philosophy as businesses rely on call centers to increase revenues through improved sales and conversion, and provide insights on customer interactions otherwise unavailable. This applies to health insurers and Medicare Advantage plans as well.

As such, measuring and understanding call center metrics is a major focus. Business models that require phone assistance for their customers should set up clear processes from the beginning to monitor call center metrics. Managing to the five call center metrics below for your business can provide improvements where it matters most. Specific benefits we have seen with Medicare Advantage providers when focusing on these metrics include:

**Cost per Contact**
Cost per contact is probably the most popular indicator within many industries. In pay-per-click campaigns, its equivalent is the Cost per Click, while lead generation marketers name it Cost per Lead. Therefore, do not confuse “contact” with “customer acquired within a phone call”. Calculating the cost per contact does not take into account if the call ended up with a conversion or not. In this case, conversion is the successful attempt of the company’s employee to close up the deal.

**Average Handle Time**
Call center agents should be familiar with metrics such as average handle time. The average handle time is the total amount of time to complete a phone call with callers. It involves the Average Talk Time and the Average After Call Work Time. Regardless of overall performance or conversion rates, it is important to track the after call work time because it determines opportunity for improved workflows, and potential staffing deficiencies. This metric is all about measuring efficiencies and not short changing the caller with their time to speak to a knowledgeable (and sales generating) call center agent. This can be achieved through CRM integration which will allow agents to have an instant access to information that they need while on call with the customer. This will reduce handle time as agents won’t have to waste time searching for an answer on customer inquiries or product information; resulting in increase customer satisfaction.
FIRST CALL RESOLUTION
FCR is a measure of quality because it relies on the person’s skills to give all of the required information during the first call only and to convince customers to complete the purchase. This metric is the percentage of completed transactions within a single contact-call from the total number of calls. Customer perception over the quality of a company’s services is highly influenced by their interaction with the call-center. First call resolution can be achieved by integrating your e-commerce platform with call center software. Agents can track the pattern and behavior of customer interaction; they can also refer to the previous query and the kind of purchase or the transaction done by the customer. This will help in increasing accessibility, boosting sales and providing top-notch support to growing customer base. Missing the mark on this metric can lead to increased costs over time.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SCORE
This metric is really critical for any contact center. Higher customer satisfaction means higher customer loyalty, revenues and agent’s performance. Customer satisfaction is defined as “the number of customers, or percentage of total customers, whose reported experience (ratings) exceeds specified satisfaction goals. Several methods of measuring customer satisfaction are available such as conducting customer surveys via emails or taking phone interviews after the customer interaction has completed. Additionally, contact centers have adopted IVR-based post-call surveys wherein the caller is asked a series of questions related to the interaction and are asked to rate each question which leads to easy calculation of customer satisfaction degree.

SERVICE LEVEL
This metric, also referred to as response time, is crucial for MA providers to deliver positive customer experiences (as well as CMS requirements) as it is the percentage of calls answered within a number of seconds. It is vital to monitor service level in real-time, as it provides insights on a call center’s current performance. It also helps in measuring how easily customers get into your contact center and how well you handle them so that it leads to long-lasting customer satisfaction and loyalty. Service level may be influenced by a multiple factors, such as unexpected call spikes, service outages, improper staffing or agent absenteeism.

Wunderman Health is a leading global direct marketing agency providing full service member acquisition, activation, engagement, and retention services for over 30 health plans. If there is interest in better understanding Wunderman’s ability to provide call center optimization services in line with key business management elements outlined in this article please contact:

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