



Monitoring Isn't Enough to Answer the Quality Question

By Dr. Jodie Monger – President, Customer Relationship Metrics

We are continuously asked how well the contact center is serving the corporate asset – how well is service delivered to customers who call to resolve a problem or to ask a question? In many centers, we must rely on a summary of operational metrics with the assumption that certain metric levels answers this critical question. We also rely on quality monitoring scores to answer the question.

If your monitoring program is like most, you have to conclude that most customers are extremely satisfied by the telephonic service experience. Scores naturally migrate to the upper part of the monitoring scoring scale. If you have 100 points available, the majority of your scores are probably 92 or higher, or even 95 and higher – essentially you use the top 10 points on the scale.

When attempting to answer the service quality question, basing such an important assessment on quality monitoring when it has the bias mentioned above diminishes the effectiveness of the response. All other departments within your organization can report on success with numbers that are not questioned. The contact center needs such a response – one that is accepted as valid unlike the monitoring results.

Let's review your Quality Monitoring program and begin the evolution toward providing a better answer. Who is doing the monitoring? Avoid the fox guarding the chicken coop. What items are scored? It's best to focus your monitoring form on objective issues related to call control, providing the correct response, and effective relationship building criteria. Why shouldn't the monitoring form include customer subjective assessments? Guessing at how the customer perceived the experience is not accurate and contributes to the inflation of the monitoring scores.

The customer is the best one to answer how their experience went. From a scientific standpoint you should immediately assess the level of service delivered on a particular call. While this rating appears to be subjective because it is not a hard metric such as ASA or a monitoring score related to the effectiveness of the response from the company's perspective, the customers' perceptions are the reality that we must deal with in our centers. If your customers are not satisfied all of those metrics are meaningless. But yet, if you know how the customers perceive the service delivered and you have a good set of metrics and monitoring scores, the answer of how well your center is performing becomes balanced and valid.

Customer Relationship Metrics conducted a research project that provides proof that monitoring scores do not equal the callers' perception of service. The monitoring form included 17 items, seven of which could be directly compared to the caller evaluations. We examined the monitor and caller evaluations over a five-month period. As presented in the table below, there was virtually no relationship at all between the caller evaluation of the experience and the

monitoring evaluation. The only statistically significant relationship was related to perceived interest in helping and tone, and this was not a strong relationship.

Do Monitoring scores = Caller Perception of service?		
Caller	Monitoring	Relationship
Knowledge	Knowledge	No
Confidence in solution	Proper solution	No
Courtesy	Courtesy	No
Interest in helping	Empathy	No
Interest in helping	Tone	Yes
Quickly understood request	Listening skills	No
Overall satisfaction	Overall satisfaction	No

2,000 agents, 5 months of data with 4 monitoring scores each month and 4-8 callers surveys each month
Proprietary research - Customer Relationship Metrics

The results of this research had a dramatic effect on the Quality Program. The proof from the customers' perspective that the call monitoring form was not effective underscored the need to have a valid answer to how well service was delivered. In addition to a better answer, a significant savings was now possible.

The original monitoring program included 17 items scored per call, 5 per month for 2000 agents. This equated to 170,000 scores given per month, with 4 completed per hour, taking 2,500 hours (not including the feedback time). To complete 2,500 hours of scoring, 17 FTE were used at \$45,000 per year for a grand total of \$765,000 (again, without feedback and coaching time). With the results of this research, the monitoring form was revamped to focus on objective measures. Scoring eight items allowed six to be completed per hour, requiring 12 FTEs at \$45,000 per year for a net personnel cost of \$540,000. The improvement in the process yielded a savings of \$225,000.

Your own situation may be on a smaller scale, however the relationship of the direct benefit would apply. Savings from the actual time spent on scoring is compounded by the result of having a more effective definition of quality. Your three part answer needs to include: 1. Call Metrics, 2. Quality Monitoring, and 3. An Immediate Evaluation by the caller regarding the call.

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