

The business challenge

AHT or Average Handling Time of a call is the most critical metric in a contact center business and the AHT must stay in specified limits as it has direct bearing on answering capacity, service levels as well as the customer satisfaction levels. Lower AHT translates into more number of calls answered, less abandon rate, less repeats for the business and improved Service Level and Customer Satisfaction.



The solution

To identify the composition of the various factors in the AHT, multiple location wise Time Motion study was initiated.

Some of the findings of the study were:-

- ▼ NVAs or Non value Adds were in the range of 7-11 secs across the sites studied
- ▼ Hold Time was an average of 27 secs
- ▼ The major reasons for hold were System slowness issues – 36% contribution to hold time
- ▼ This was followed by require assistance/ info check - contributing 27% - poor knowledge levels
- ▼ Third top reason was agent behaviour issues – 14% contribution

Some of actions taken in the project were as below:-

- ▼ AHT dashboard, MIS with agent and issue wise NVAs and Hold time were regularly published for ground level visibility.
- ▼ Soft Skills sessions along with top Call drivers of high AHT calls were conducted for the Bottom Quartile agents whose AHT were the highest in the floor. This was done religiously every week and the BQ agents closely monitored on their AHT performance.
- ▼ Product, system, tool and empowerment issues/challenges leading to higher AHT were immediately escalated to the clients for speedy investigation and rectifications – thereby reducing the incidental impact on AHT.
- ▼ It was made mandatory to refer to Knowledge Portal for every Query or Request or Complaint. This ensured the correct call handling script, problem identification and resolution is given on the calls, within the specified time limit/ AHT target. Usage of the Portal was tracked and maintained at 100%. Remote audits were done to ensure agents were adhering to the mandate of using the Knowledge Portal.
- ▼ A list of Bottom Quartile Agents on high AHT was published every week on the floor. This created a sense of embarrassment for the agents and they tried the best to reduce their AHT.
- ▼ On the other hand Rewards and Certificates were awarded to weekly top agents with lower AHT and high quality scores. AHT was to be reduced but not at the cost of Quality.

The results

The Time Motion Study and subsequent action plans on AHT reduction resulted in over average 22 seconds reduction in AHT, which increased the call handling capacity by 15%, thereby bringing in more efficiency for the client's business. Along with the positive financial and operational impact, the reduced AHT led to improved customer experience and CSAT levels.



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