

Ticket Sales Soar with Agent Coaching

With the complexities in the airline industry today, it's more important than ever for companies to deliver great customer service. The reservations sales and service group at Northwest Airlines adopted Click2Coach® to improve their agents' skill levels. Now agents follow approved sales strategies more consistently, resulting in significant revenue increases and reduced call handle times.

Northwest Airlines has a widely heralded tradition of quality customer service. As Susan Edberg, vice president of reservations sales and service, explains, "We pride ourselves on providing the most courteous and positive reservations experience possible."

The fourth largest airline in the world, Northwest serves a huge number of customers. In 2001, they carried more than 54 million passengers and flew over 73 billion revenue passenger miles. Many of the company's non-business clientele, called leisure passengers, purchase tickets directly from contact centers in Baltimore, Detroit, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Seattle/Tacoma, Tampa and Chisholm, Minnesota. In fact, Northwest reservations sales and service is responsible for 15% of the company's annual revenue, or \$1.2 billion per year in domestic and international sales. This is the result of a team of agents answering 100,000 inbound calls per day.

With airline bookings under great pressure, Northwest reservations sought to improve service while also achieving revenue forecasts and improving efficiency. In order to achieve these goals, the company turned to Click2Coach, an award-winning solution offering Envision™ Quality Monitoring and Envision eLearning. Northwest Airlines deployed Click2Coach first in the Baltimore location and later in the other contact centers.

Part of the appeal of Click2Coach, according to director of planning and operations Dal DeWolf, is the reporting capabilities that demonstrate the viability of the solution from an operational and cost perspective. With just the call monitoring capabilities alone, Susan Edberg says, "Click2Coach has far exceeded our expectations, helping us achieve multi-million dollar improvements in revenue and efficiency."

How to turn wasted hours into productive ones

One of the reasons that Northwest invested in Click2Coach was because of its automated call monitoring capabilities. Across all contact centers, the company has about 50 supervisors — called assistant performance managers (APMs) — for approximately 2,600 agents. "That's a ratio of 67 to 1," says Lee Gemlich, director of reservations sales and training, "which is pretty high. We weren't about to change the ratio, so we needed to find a way to make our APMs more efficient."

Prior to Click2Coach, APMs had to perform monitoring live. This was an incredible time drain, requiring APMs to sift through calls that weren't sales opportunities and therefore couldn't be subject to scoring and reviewing. With the automated call



Overview

Results

- > 2.5% increase in sales — \$5 million for the Baltimore office alone — for an extrapolated revenue gain of \$23.5 million across all contact centers
- > 2% reduction in average call handle times for extrapolated efficiency savings of \$1.8 million across all contact centers
- > Three to five evaluations per month per agent, up from one or two per month

Purchase Decision Factors

- > Best value for the price
- > Seamless integration of sophisticated monitoring and training capabilities
- > Ability to capture agents' screen activity along with audio recordings of the customer interactions
- > Annotation of recordings with supervisors' audio comments
- > Ability to deliver training direct to the agent desktop

Overview

Deployed: August 2001
Calls per day: 100,000
Telephone system: Avaya Definity G3

Industry

Transportation

Web Site

www.nwa.com

monitoring in Click2Coach, APMs always get appropriate, complete calls that are relevant to the review process. Automated selection of calls produces a random sampling of agents' work, providing a platform for fair feedback.

Navigating agents to peak performance

Using Click2Coach, Northwest has been able to improve agent performance through coaching. In part this is due to the increased number of evaluations. Where agents used to receive one or two evaluations per month, they now get four or five. Further, Click2Coach makes it possible for APMs to provide a high level of quality feedback.

The chief reason for adopting Click2Coach was to improve the agents' skill levels in terms of increasing sales and reducing call handle times. About one-third of the calls concern inquiries about ticket purchases, and the department has a defined strategy for how to make the sale. Lee Gemlich explains the general process. "Our roadmap identifies the most efficient way of selling. This includes establishing customer needs at the beginning of the call, asking clarifying questions, presenting a schedule and fare that are accurate, attempting to overcome objections and asking for the sale one more time."

With Click2Coach, agents can listen to their recorded calls, a technique that makes it easy to understand where they can improve. As Dal says, "If an APM hands you an evaluation form, you can disregard it. But if you hear yourself on a call, it's very convincing." Lee also appreciates that "when agents are able to listen to their own calls, the coaching and performance review process becomes less confrontational. Instead, it's a two-way conversation between APM and agent."

Sales take off, handle times tail off

Effective coaching has enabled agents to better adhere to sales strategy, which has had many positive outcomes. One of the major improvements is in increased ticket sales. Because Northwest began their use of Click2Coach in Baltimore, Dal was able to compare Baltimore's performance over a six-month period with another contact center that didn't use Click2Coach. The result was a 2.5% increase in sales due to Click2Coach, which works out to a forecasted \$23.5 million increase in revenue across all six offices.

About Envision

Envision is a pioneer in delivering innovative team coaching and performance improvement products and services to the contact center. Envision's landmark and industry-renowned Click2Coach® fully integrates the value of quality monitoring and management, e-learning, automated coaching and robust analytics and performance management capabilities.

Envision marries the power of Click2Coach and Envision Workforce Management™ together on the award-winning Envision Centricity® Web-based workforce optimization (WFO) technology platform to deliver a full spectrum of ROI-driven efficiency and effectiveness gains that meet the most specific and unique objectives of customer-focused organizations worldwide.

A commitment to unparalleled customer-centricity is at the center of the company's mission and is what makes Envision the authority on delivering an uncompromising customer experience. Visit www.envisioninc.com, email info@envisioninc.com or call 206.225.0800 ext. 500 for more information.

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Dal states how valuable this knowledge was. "Using Click2Coach, we saw a statistically valid improvement in sales in terms of tickets sold divided by opportunities. That made it easy to justify our use of the solution across all offices."

Annual revenue gain in single office from Click2Coach

Percentage of sales increase — **2.5%**

Value of forecasted sales increase — **\$5 million**

Annual enterprise opportunity increase from Click2Coach

All domestic offices — **\$18 million**

All international offices — **\$5.5 million**

Total opportunity increase — **\$23.5 million**

Another improvement resulting directly from the use of Click2Coach was a reduction in call handle times (measured as the total number of seconds per call divided by the total number of calls). The company's contact centers have different call handle times, due to the nature of their calls. Using Click2Coach has reduced call handle times in all six offices — an average of 2% lower — for extrapolated efficiency savings of \$1.8 million. Dal is quick to add, "And this represents labor savings only. The reality is that by making our handle time more efficient, we're also reducing our telecommunication costs."

Rewarding agents for great work

Another key benefit of using Click2Coach is that it validates the terrific customer service that Northwest Airlines agents provide. "Our organization has always rewarded sales results, and Click2Coach gives us the data to reward those efforts," says Lee. "Equally important, Click2Coach enables us to accurately measure how well our agents are serving customers from a qualitative standpoint." As a result, the team has instituted customer service incentive programs that recognize great service and reward it appropriately.