

Case Study: Value Innovation for Indian ITES Off-shoring Operations improving customer satisfaction

Context: A leading Financial Services Organisation from UK had off-shored their operations both voice and data to India. There was significant difference in the customer satisfaction and advocacy scores for Voice Operations between UK Centers and Indian centers. While because of culture, language and social differences 5% gap was build in plan, with the anti off-shoring sentiments building in UK this difference became critical blockages that needed to be removed for off-shoring of voice processes to continue. The Indian management was completely committed to improving the customer satisfaction scores and increased the management focus on soft skills training and quality. Although there was some improvement reported it was not sustainable or good enough to justify off-shoring.

Interventions: This was a unique situation where voice of customer was available to everyone and also the efforts for improvement were visible. The voice training and soft skills training were actually at saturation. It was believed that everything that can be done was done. However the results were not achieved. After analyzing the various strategies we decided to use Value Innovation. The Voice of Customer was looked in from: Customer Orientation, Customer Interaction and Customer enabler's point of view. We heard some 1000 calls between UK and India and did benchmarking. On further analyzing the connecting links with employee climate and leadership survey, we realized:

There was significant gap in terms of perceived and actual value add to customer service:

- The customer service executive could not relate or empathize not because he was low on empathy, it was because he was not aware of customer social-cultural reality, lifestyle requirements, life stages determining product requirement.
- In the urge for quality and first time resolution the Customer Service Executive was supposed to follow some 70 add parameters. This made it impossible for him to have a relaxed, empathetic conversation with customer.
- Contrary to earlier belief, UK customer is habituated to listen to various different accents because of the regional accent difference. So it was not the accent that was troubling the customer, it was the customer service executives inability to listen and comprehend multiple UK accents.
- The fear of going wrong on quality parameters yet maintaining the low average handling time created so many burdens on the call handler that he was never relaxed in the conversations.

It was clear the customer centricity could not be driven without employee centricity. Management focus has to be removing blockages in performance and creating work environment that facilitate great customer service.

The some of the major interventions were designed and implemented:

- Customer Empathy and Joy of interaction: Integrated Learning Modules that focused on understanding customer life-stage, lifestyle requirements and then product and services fulfilling them. Understanding of moments of truth and designing interventions to make each interaction point a pleasant experience. Listening and comprehension given equal emphasis as voice.

- Focusing on what is important: Only critical parameters for quality shifting the focus on end customer experience. Building new habitual patterns of interaction with inbuilt quality parameters.
- Conversation ability and service attitude given due focus at the time of recruitment
- Being there where the need is : Managers performance requirement to spend minimum 50% time on the floor with people.
- Increased focus in people management, development and coaching.

Results:

1. Customer Service Satisfaction Scores for both the India centers were comparative to that of UK. From the third quarter the Bangalore centre became top performing centre on Customer Service Satisfaction Scores.
2. The same process was replicated for Canadian Off-shoring Operations and became crucial attraction point Irish off-shoring operations.
3. The staff engagement and retention improved across all the voice process.