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CONTACT CENTRE RECIPES FOR SUCCESS

Easy and simple recipes to build a strong,
multichannel Contact Centre environment

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1. The Contact Centre Efficiency Plan
2. The Right Ingredients – collaboration across your business
3. By Hand or Machine – automation versus agents
4. Measuring is everything

The Contact Centre Efficiency Plan

To stay ahead of the pack, businesses need to ensure their contact centres are focused on driving efficiencies. Here, we outline a recipe for success that will help you map the best possible customer journeys and deliver an optimum customer experience across multiple channels.



Ingredients

Customer journey review

Multichannel activity

Seamless first call resolution

Manage your workforce

Method

- 1.** First, work out how your customers want to communicate with you. Ask yourself: do we give the customer what they want quickly and easily? You'll need to know their age and profile; the devices they use and the problems they are trying to solve. Next, work on serving up the perfect blend of systems, solutions, people, policies and processes to drive efficiencies in your contact centre to keep your customers happy.
- 2.** Think about the channels you offer your customers today. Have you got the right combination? Do you need all of them? Make sure you get the mixture right by integrating different channels so that customers don't have to expend effort in providing information in one channel, only to have to repeat it when they switch to another.
- 3.** Make it as easy as possible for your customers to achieve first contact resolution. Put in place a universal queue so whatever the demands coming into the organisation from whatever channel, you have a single place to manage it from and distribute it out to the relevant subject matter experts within the organisation. Back this up with SLAs for your different digital channels and priority audiences. Build a connected enterprise by integrating your contact centre solution with your CRM and then link it to the middle and back offices.
- 4.** Create a rich blend of skills within the contact centre in order to efficiently support your customer base. Add a workforce management optimisation capability so that you can align all the channels and the different times of the day with the resource you have to make sure customers always receive a consistent level of service across all channels. That way you get happier customers and happier and more productive agents. And finally, mix in real-time speech analytics tools to ensure that productivity levels remain high across all customer interactions.

The Right Ingredients

Any good recipe needs to have the right blend of ingredients. Similarly, every good contact centre operation also needs to find 'that perfect mix' to deliver the ultimate customer experience. Here, we look at what different elements need to be brought to the table by businesses today to give their customers the best possible experience.



Ingredients

Technology

Resources

Processes

Collaboration across your
business

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Method

1. Technology is a vital ingredient of any modern contact centre recipe. Look to implement a platform that helps you quickly respond to customers from any channel at any time and that delivers actionable intelligence to drive ongoing improvement. Make sure you buy in high-quality products that allow you to differentiate your company's service, as well as gain feedback and build customer loyalty. The solutions you choose should allow you to add applications, as your finances dictate, so that you don't have to purchase everything on day one, but can add capability as and when you need - and have sufficient budget - to do so.
2. Think about the resources you have today. Do you have the right blend of skills? Are agents being scheduled in correctly. Are you matching their skills and experience to your contact centre queues and serving up each interaction to the most appropriately skilled agent available? Do your agents have a pathway to each other and the wider business so they can route enquiries to the relevant expert? If you want to end up with great results, you'll need to have all of this in place.
3. You might have the best contact centre technology and the best resources in the world but you still won't achieve very much unless you have the right processes in place. To get it right, you will need to check that each process is working as smoothly as possible to ensure efficiency. Ultimately, it is all about mapping and then testing the customer journey; ensuring systems are integrated and well connected to allow seamless handoffs and building a culture that fosters collaboration between departments and with customers, suppliers and partners. It's often difficult to bring all that and more to the boil at the same time - but without it, your contact centre recipe will fall flat.
4. Getting the right combination of technology, resources and processes will help you to turn your business into a connected enterprise. It's about bringing all your ingredients together to achieve the perfect mix. Collaboration is the key. The Presence functionality in UC applications such as Microsoft's Skype for Business can help agents access help from staff working in the front and back office to help resolve complex customer queries quickly and efficiently.

By Hand or Machine

In cookery, some tasks, typically those that are more dependent on touch and sensitivity such as kneading dough, folding flour into batter, or adding icing to a cake, are most effectively carried out by hand, while others like blending soups, whisking egg whites, or roasting meats are best done in an automated fashion. The most successful recipes tend to strike a happy medium between the two: a formula for success that also applies to most contact centre operations.



Method

1. Simple tasks in the contact centre are often best done through automation backed self-service. Add in Interactive Voice Response (IVR) channels to handle routine jobs such as taking meter readings, or managing address changes. Mix in chatbots to kick-start customer conversations and provide basic answers quickly and easily. Set up FAQs or forums that allow your customers to find answers quickly and reduce their need to contact you directly.
2. Use self-service to be proactive and help call avoidance, for example – send reminders text messages, emails on renewals, payments or appointments. This not only helps reduce call traffic but also increases revenues and allows customer resolve enquiries them. In return, empowering customers to reduce cancellation of policy or appointments. Remember though to make sure you offer a call-back or speak to agent option to ensure that you are covering all scenerios.
3. Don't forget to add the human touch into your customer engagement recipe. Humans are great at dealing with those exceptional items that can't be automated. They are good at assimilating variables: information and facts that might not have been seen in a particular pattern before – and crucially they are good at showing empathy. That makes them a vital ingredient in any contact centre recipe.
4. Make sure you get the balance right. Don't just add them randomly into the mix though, place them carefully. All contact centres need to appreciate it does not just about understand that a problem is best solved by a human, it's just as much about knowing who within the organisation is best placed to resolve it in terms of skillset and experience.

It's clear then that the key to a well-balanced contact centre operation is getting the right mix of human and automated engagement. Getting the right ingredients in place and following the above recipe will help you achieve that goal.

Ingredients

Self-service for simple tasks

Proactive engagement

Humans for more
complex issues

Getting the balance right

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Measuring is everything

Measuring out all the ingredients in exactly the right proportions has always been critical to the success of any recipe. Get the quantities ever so slightly wrong and you are likely to end up with a culinary disaster. In the world of customer communications, it's equally important that measurements are accurate, but organisations also need to ensure they are measuring the right things. Traditional ways of measuring success, using such metrics as average call handling time (AHT) and the number of calls each agent manages to process during the day, are increasingly outdated. In the digital age, the recipe needs to change. With more interactions being passed through self-service channels, those engagements handled by agents are typically more complex and can also be more sensitive or often driven by emotion. Today's measurement tools need to be able to recognise that shift as well as accurately evaluating these new kinds of interactions.



Ingredients

Emotional Intelligence

Training and monitoring

Compliance and dispute handling

Method

1. It is very important that businesses can accurately measure the emotional temperature of every interaction and that they use emotional intelligence in the way they manage customer engagement. Real-time Speech Analytics (RTSA) has become a key part of the mix for organisations looking to assess how customers, and the agents interacting with them, are actually feeling. The pick of these systems can evaluate calls to identify if there is cross-talking or changes in tone, while carefully weighing up the speech ratio balance, call volumes and stress levels. This data can then be sifted through to see what behaviours deliver optimum results, enabling agents to adjust their approach accordingly, and offer emotionally intelligent service to end customers.

2. Make sure you blend in a real-time monitoring and training capability into your measurement recipe. With the right combination of quality management and real-time speech analytics, you can monitor your agents' customer interactions; identify areas for improvement and, if necessary, intervene in the calls themselves. You can also use information collected from the interactions to coach agents in real-time or, subsequently as part of training programmes, ultimately helping to ensure customer effort is reduced – and saving time and money in the process.

3. Compliance and dispute resolution are a vital part of the blend within any contact centre. RTSA tools can indicate – live during a call – if important or mandatory information has been missed or incorrectly said. This ensures script adherence and legal certainty – makes sure contract terms are explained correctly – and can stop agents giving advice that could be misconstrued. This all contributes to the delivery of compliance and reductions in cancellations and customer disputes.

The ability to measure not just performance but also the quality of customer engagement and the emotional element of any customer interaction is key to the success of any contact centre operation. After all, you can't manage what you don't measure. Businesses will struggle to deliver the high-quality service offerings their customers are looking for if they are not able to measure the results they are getting.

We hope you have enjoyed the recipes and found that following them has helped you get your contact centre into shape to make sure it is Fitin18. Throughout, we have looked at areas, including mapping the customer journey, putting the right skills sets in place, driving collaboration across the business; the importance of automation, and now the key role of measurement within the contact centre.

Get all these right and you will have gone a long way towards having a fully-fit and fully-functioning customer service offering today. But to achieve sustained success, these recipes must not be a one-off.

For long-term fitness, they need instead to become a sustained and regular part of an ongoing contact centre diet.



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