



How your call centre can help your organization take advantage of the recovery

A conversation with Greg Leach, Senior Vice President, Ipsos Reid

Q. Is the recovery finally here? And if so what should we know before it swings into full gear?

Greg: Signs of an economic recovery are beginning to show. But before the economy gets back into full recovery mode, companies first have to ask two questions: 1) How fast will it take place?; and 2) which organizations will be able to capitalize on it the fastest? Those companies that do get off the blocks first will have the competitive advantage.

There is a consensus emerging that while a recovery is on its way, it won't happen overnight. Rather, this will be a gradual recovery, extending over a long period of time. During that time, organizations will be competing to adjust to what we at Ipsos Reid have identified as the 'New Consumer' – and in particular, they will need to focus on the needs of this New Consumer. The name of the game will be to hold on to the customers you already have while luring away the customers of your competitors. To do this, you'll have to do a better job of sensing and responding to their changing needs.

Q. What role can company call centres play in helping to meet the challenges ahead?

Greg: Your call centre can really help you get ahead. The call centre is in contact with your customers on a daily basis. In these volatile times,

that daily contact is the very thing that will help your organization detect emerging needs and preferences of the New Consumer, and respond and react quickly to those changing needs. The call centre offers an opportunity for you to better understand your customers and ultimately, better inform the decisions you need to make to grow your business. While the call centre has always

been an important link to current and prospective customers, there has never been a time when this link has been so critical to your organization's future.

Q. So, what can companies do to help the people in their call centre operate at their peak during this critical time?

Greg: Our researchers at Ipsos Reid have more than ten years of providing research assistance to call centres across Canada, and in that time, we have noticed some interesting patterns that will be especially relevant in the coming months. Some examples? One of the lessons we have learned is that when in-bound call centres conduct customer-satisfaction surveys, it is frequently the case that the ratings callers give to the Customer Service Representative (CSR) are higher than the ratings they give to the interaction overall. This is saying that while the caller felt that the CSR did their best to help, the overall outcome was less than what the caller had hoped. There is a gap.

“The call centre offers an opportunity for you to better understand your customers...”



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Q. How can companies close that gap?

Greg: Almost all in-bound call centres have a mechanism for monitoring the satisfaction of callers. So, let's say that your call centre has a survey that measures the satisfaction of callers, and your score shows that 78% of callers are satisfied. What keeps your call centre manager awake at night are questions like: Is that a good score? How does that score compare to the scores of other organizations who handle similar requests from callers? If your call centre manager could compare your scores to others, they would have a better sense of where to look to identify best practices that would help attack the gap.

There are two sources for this kind of information: 1) call centre associations where they could meet and compare notes (and scores) with managers of similar call centres, and 2) industry benchmark studies. But a word of caution about benchmark data. Many consultants to the call centre industry publish "benchmark" data, but the data they publish is an average of the scores of call centres which happen to be their clients – not a representative score that reflects the total population of call centres in your industry.

Want to know more about these benchmarks? Download our attached Score Sheet on Canadian Contact Centre Benchmarks.

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