



Case Study

Reducing Repeat Calls by 75%

The Opportunity

A large communications company was in danger of exceeding the state public utility commission requirements concerning how long customers had to wait on the phones for service. The company decided to make reps more available to answer calls by trying to reduce the percentage of repeat calls. Unfortunately, the company wasn't able to measure repeat calls, had over 25 service centers spread out all over the state, had 5000 reps and dozens of managers to contend with, including two unions, as well as a spate of forest fires. Finally, there were three market segments that needed customized solutions.

The Approach

Four QualPro consultants worked with various groups. First, a clever method was developed to measure repeat calls by manipulating data from several databases, providing the first ever measurement of repeat calls. Also, additional measures were tracked consisting of hold time per call, average handling time, and calls per hour.

The Test

Hundreds of ideas were brainstormed for improvement for each of the three market segments, and then the lists were narrowed down to 21 ideas (depending on the market segment) that were quick, easy, and inexpensive to use. Ideas from one consumer market were as follows:

<i>Idea</i>	<i>Old</i>	<i>New</i>
Check Guidelines on Problem Calls	No	Yes
Invite Customer Call Backs	No	Yes
Talk to Customer While Checking	No	Yes
Use Conference with Third Party	No	Yes
Customer Gets Pencil/Pen	No	Yes
Rep Quotas	Current	Aggressive
Provide More Concise Information	No	Yes
Play Music While on Hold	No	Yes
Ask About Jacks	No	Yes
Explain Dial Tone Activation	No	Yes
Refresher Rep Training	No	Yes
Keep Customer on Line to Completion	No	Yes
Access Rep Comment Data Every Contact	No	Yes
Ignore Call Waiting	No	Yes
Avoid Telephone Terms	No	Yes
If Don't Know, "Checking Resources"	No	Yes
Customer Provided Equipment Info	No	Yes
"Taking Care of Other Needs"	No	Yes
Explain First Bill	No	Yes
More Optional Feature Info	No	Yes
Increased Supervisor Transaction Reviews	No	Yes

The Results

Promising ideas were tested in a second test for each market segment and then expanded to all offices. The tests showed that repeat calls totaled over all three segments were reduced 75%. During the experiment, a new regulatory requirement added 30 to 60 seconds to the average hold time. Because the experiment was also able to significantly reduce average hold time, it allowed the company to revert to pre-regulation average hold time levels and in some cases even lower than that. The time savings during initial implementation alone produced an extra \$2.3 million per year savings. Ideas mentioned above that helped were providing more concise information, playing music while on hold, providing more information on optional features, and transaction reviews. Beginning implementation has already generated \$7.5 million in annual savings, and projected savings over all offices are estimated to be \$75 million per year.