



\$23 Million of Incremental Call Center Sales While Reducing Turnover, Incentive Costs, and Average Handling Time

case study



“What were the results? Incremental sales of \$23 million, decreased turnover, decreased incentive costs... And we took an average of 22 seconds off every single call.”

Glen Mitchell’s responsibilities include approximately 2,500 service representatives in Texas call centers who handle incoming phone calls from residential customers, take

orders for new service, transfer of service, etc. “People were not real comfortable with the sales process with which they were working,” says Mitchell. He also lamented an extremely high employee turnover rate.

Each service rep gets seventeen weeks of training, and within a year-and-a-half they were transferring because of a requirement that they have to stay in a job that long before transferring to another department. “It’s very expensive to train somebody and then lose them in such a short period of time,” says Mitchell.

This trend had to change. Mitchell’s mission was the execution of an MVT® project to improve the customer experience and make the service reps’ jobs more enjoyable at the same time. Direct feedback from service reps indicated extreme stress not only during sales presentations, but also when customers seemed disinterested.

“So,” explains Mitchell, “we brainstormed and came up with over fifty ideas that we felt would impact our key measures.” The ideas were then narrowed down to only those that were practical, fast, and cost free.

What were the results of the MVT® testing? Mitchell says proudly, “A conservative estimate is incremental sales of \$23 million. Decreased turnover: we saved an additional \$1.6 million on service reps staying in place. Decreased incentive costs: we saved \$1.1 million and put them somewhere else. We used that money more wisely to benefit service reps. And we took an average of twenty-two seconds off every single call.”

“It’s funny, I think morale increased substantially just because we were paying attention to these issues and getting service reps involved in solving them,” Mitchell noted. “Another behavioral learning was that people feel better and are more motivated when recognized as part of a group as opposed to individuals. In fact, many felt embarrassed and their co-workers humiliated when they were given individual recognition.”

Mitchell adds, “Another key result was having numerical objectives for the service reps. That is a big issue. We learned that they have no statistical impact. So what we are seeing in most locations is that numerical objectives are being put aside, and we are focusing in on the behavioral issue, how they were doing the sales process, and we’re appraising that, because that’s something that can be developed.”

“Test results are often counter-intuitive,” says David Cochran, Senior Vice President with QualPro Inc., the company that assisted Mitchell with this MVT® project. “We like working with call centers because it gives individual reps a voice that they may not otherwise have, especially with union shops like this one. “Tried and true” incentives and recognition programs may not get intended results without testing and quantifying their impact.”