



How to Ensure Your Frontline Employees Receive, and Act Upon, CX Insights

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One of the most foundational elements of Experience Improvement (XI) in a contact center is ensuring not 'just' that you're gathering data, but that that data guides the actions that you want your frontline employees to take. It may be cliché to say that the rubber meets the road in the contact center, but frontline employees truly are the heart of a company's ecosystem. They contribute to the organization in many more ways than simply creating a quality customer experience (CX), and brands need to ensure that frontline employees get access to and understand the data that informs and impacts their role.

But, the wrong data can be either irrelevant or overwhelming, and finding the right balance can be much easier said than done. It's up to leadership to work through the complexities of the data and to simplify it. It's about setting frontline employees up for success—effective interactions, efficiency, and greater self-awareness. When data aligns with frontline actions, employees will get great value from it instead of being distracted by it, and companies will build an organizational culture that

is developmental rather than punitive. Achieving that alignment, and reaping all its benefits, are what we're going to get into with today's conversation!

LEVELING UP

If you're not sure where your organization is on the frontline data alignment journey, we've put together some questions that will help you get your bearings (answer honestly!) For starters, do you think your organization sees its employees as entrepreneurs who own their customer interactions, or as scripted executors of a task? Entrepreneurs own their actions—executors carry out what someone else owns. Understanding (and acting on) this difference is key to identifying the right metrics to drive the best frontline actions.

The next question to think about here is what you're currently sharing with frontline employees; what data, what cadence, and what modality. The idea is to make sure that you're giving your employees enough information to clear the obstacles in their processes without inundating them with information. This

balance with simplifying and amplifying is never easy to strike, but getting it just right will help your employees not just act on CX insights, but do so in a way that creates Experience Improvement.

Finally, how well do you think employees understand their roles? (I feel the need to once again remind you to be honest!) Another vital element to communicating insights to frontline employees is making sure they know their lane and understand that their lane is critical to achieving the big goal. Ensuring that all employees have that same big-picture understanding creates a more consistent customer experience (and a more consistent chance that all frontline employees will meaningfully execute on the insights they're given). Put even simpler, treat your frontline employees like owners of the company.

THE FRONTLINE OLYMPIANS

If you want to build a stellar CX reputation, you need to think of your frontline employees as olympians. In other words, don't treat your employees like they need to earn their way into a supportive culture; hire them into it. Your frontline employees won't 'just' return the favor with greater personal investment/passion in their work; they'll also endeavor to match their actions to the metrics and initiatives you derive from your CX insights. They will not be satisfied just to participate—they will aim for the podium!

What exactly does that supportive culture look like on the ground? Well, much like an olympic team, a contact center is made up of much more than its most visible stars. An effective organization supports its contact center with quality management teams, training, reporting and analytics,



etc. The best contact center organizations have mastered this ecosystem to create an environment that has a conscious goal of supporting and uplifting frontline employees rather than driving compliance and punitive practices that result in high churn and low engagement.

Another process that organizations need to build is to constantly reward and recognize successful metric-action alignment. This helps to both maintain that balance and keep employees knowing why their behavior matters. Make it fun, too! Start things off with a bang whenever a new quarter kicks in. Do things in real time. Shout successes from the rafters! Remind your employees that you see them as entrepreneurs, as humans, and they'll reciprocate by maintaining a world-class experience for your customers.

DAY-TO-DAY ALIGNMENT

We've discussed why achieving alignment between metrics and frontline employee action is important, as well as the abstract principles to bear in mind to get

to that goal on a big-picture level. Now we're going to take a bit of a deep dive into the tactical execution of enabling alignment on a day-to-day basis.

First, if you don't have one already, create an agent-facing dashboard that is easy for your employees to access and that digests data in an easily understandable way. These dashboards do not need to be elaborate; in fact, keeping them simple will make them go further for your alignment efforts. One of my clients, for example, deploys a dashboard to its frontline employees that has just a couple of metrics and some qualitative themes derived from our leading text analytics capability. It's quick, easy to understand, and enables these olympians to understand their metrics, then align them to actions.



Next, use a Voice of Customer (VoC) program to assess how customers feel when interacting with your employees. Do they get the sense that your employees feel empowered to meaningfully improve the customer experience? Getting that customer perspective is vital to understanding whether employees are executing on the metrics and goals the organization strives for. For example, some practitioners might dislike an employee-aimed question like “would you work with Ian again,” but I like it because it humanizes the agent to the customer.

STRIKING A BALANCE

The philosophies and best practices laid out here are not easy to achieve, especially continuously, but driving this discipline in your contact centers will empower and instill confidence in frontline employees. This, in turn, will enable them to better match their actions to the outcomes you want to accomplish. They’ll also have a direct impact on your customer experience and Experience Improvement (XI).

To recap: aligning metrics to frontline employee actions will meaningfully

improve experiences across the board. You can create a culture of Experience Improvement by vigorously supporting your frontline employees with the right teams and by demonstrating that they’ve earned the right to both support and recognition from the moment they step through the door. Finally, the right dashboards, VoC initiatives, and in-the-moment recognition encourages further employee passion, culminating in transformative experiences for everyone in your brand’s universe.

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