How to build a successful Omnichannel QA Program That actually works

Content

What is Omnichannel and How Can You Benefit?

Omnichannel is making its way into customer support vocabulary. But what is it exactly? Omnichannel is not just about offering support beyond the voice channel. It's about providing a seamless customer experience from one channel to the next to help the client move along their customer journey.

You may be wondering why you should adopt another channel when everything seems to be working just fine right now. But with ever-changing customer needs, it's important we adapt to our customers and learn to be present in the communities in which they are already engaged and active. Forums, social media platforms, webinars, and YouTube are just a few examples of the places omnichannel can take you to meet you customers' needs.

Omnichannel support is not only more cost effective, but it also brings out the best in your agents and cultivates connections to your customers in more timely, convenient, useful, and meaningful ways.
In the next chapters, we'll help you build a successful omnichannel QA program so you can provide quality customer service across the scope.

Getting Started

Factors to Consider Before Creating Your QA Monitoring program

Before you get the ball rolling on your QA monitoring processes, here are a few things to keep in mind.

What do you want to achieve in every customer interaction?
Create objective and measurable goals by which you can hold staff accountable. Is your main focus on AHT? FCR? Cross-selling or upselling at least once during the call? Depending on your products and services, decide what the main goal will be when agents interact with your customers. Concentrate on one single goal that aligns with your mission and vision.

Anticipate your customers' needs

By foreseeing your customers' needs and knowing what they are looking for when contacting your customer service support staff, you will be able to better assist them and better prepare your team for the challenges to come. By now you probably know what clients call for and how to address their questions and expectations. With this in mind, create a customer- centric scorecard that grades agents objectively and pertinently based on customers' needs.

Prepare to evaluate top performers and underperformers

Some of your customer service staff will be awesome. Others will need a little bit more assistance. Learn to handle both scenarios. Don't let a job well done go unnoticed, but avoid downplaying the severity of poor results and hold all agents accountable for their actions. Communication is key, and knowing how to give proper feedback can stimulate or demotivate depending on how the message is delivered.

Building an Omnichannel QA Program

Providing Quality Email Support

Here are a few pointers to providing quality customer care via email

When starting to build your omnichannel QA program, catering to all channels in a consistent manner can be challenging. Agents who are well-trained to assist clients over the phone may not deliver equal quality via email. Email customer service presents its own set of challenges. Lack of voice removes an element of expression from our communication, making it more difficult to convey tone. In addition to using the right language, using well-written, well-researched and structured responses all work together to create an award-winning response.

Empathize

Embedded in the norms of phone interaction are personable habits such as a warm greeting. However, email responses often go straight to addressing customers' problem without appealing to the emotional side of customer service. But just because we aren't always directly speaking to the customer does not mean that it's alright to deliver just OK customer service. Taking the time to understand the emotional aspect of the issue with a simple: "I understand your concern/issue/dilemma with..." not only reiterates that issue for clarification, but also helps you connect with the customer.

Personalize scripted responses

It's OK to use scripted responses; email customer service would be extremely time-consuming without them. But customers don't really care for obviously canned answers. In a day and age where every client expects to receive unique and personal attention, it's important to leave room for improvisation and fill in the blanks to adapt your response to each individual client's case.

Stay on a first name basis

No matter how simple, every interaction must be taken as an opportunity to build a relationship with your customer. This can be as simple as having agents presenting themselves and addressing clients by their first name.

Research and synthesize

When a client reaches out to your brand, this action is already a big step on their part. Now it's your job to ensure your customer service agents can take it from there without the client having to answer back and reach out again (unless it's to thank you for your outstanding service). Thoroughly understanding their question and reviewing and researching their individual case history will eliminate back-and-forth email exchanges and guarantee a happier customer.

Be casual within limits

There's nothing wrong with sounding human. Using casual conversation and filler words like yep, OK, or sure as you would with a friend is perfectly acceptable and even appreciated. However, too much of a good thing can backfire, especially when dealing with complaints A customer could misinterpret casual language for carelessness on a matter they consider serious. Therefore, although a casual tone is welcome a bit of formality is expected when dealing with complaints or serious matters.

Thank them no matter what

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Avoid hidden negative words

Words that may not seem on the surface to be negative can actually carry a negative tone in customer service situations. Words like but, actually, no and don't seem harmless but can negatively impact the tone of the message delivered to the customer and influence their perception. Through email customer support, agents are given a second chance to adapt their language before sending, tweaking the message and wording to perfection. Consider the following example:

Client: My order has not been received. **Agent:** Actually, it appears as if it has beendelivered in our system. But let me see what I can do about this package.	**INSTEAD** Agent: It appears as if it has been delivered in our system. Let me see what I can do about this package. **See the difference? Your clients will, too.**

Providing Quality Chat Support

The benefits of live chat customer support

Live chat should no longer be an innovative support channel. It's a must and is a strategic channel for your omnichannel strategy. Live support gives clients the chance to receive immediate answers to their questions, without having to wait 24-48 hours. Nowadays, everyone expects answers effortlessly and immediately.

Save money and increase efficiency

Live chat support allows agents to juggle more than one customer at a time. They can switch between multiple chat windows, putting fewer clients on hold and answering several customers at a time. This reduces the time spent on each customer interaction. Plus, as agents are able to handle multiple calls at the same time, you can save on staff expenses while maintaining quality customer service.

Increase sales

Live chat has been shown to increase the number of sales and average order value for businesses. Customers with doubts about the product or service can enter in a conversation with the company right away to have any doubt clarified before making their decision. It helps them move along the customer journey. It's easier to sway a customer who is on the fence and strike when the iron is hot, instead of answering the next day. Not to mention, live chat also helps to upsell, as agents can suggest other products that customers may be interested in based on what they have previously viewed on the website.

Connect with customers

You can enter in a conversation with customers on social media, but live chat somehow seems just a bit more intimate. Chat support offers an excellent opportunity to communicate one-on-one with customers. This kind of personal communication helps create a stronger bond between the company and the customer. Customers know they'll receive personalized help, creating happier customers and more repeat business for you.

If you're ready to make the leap to live customer service,

Here are a few tips to ensure a successful launch.

Tackle the challenges of written and live support

Just like phone support, agents need training for live chat. Apart from intact spelling and grammar, more subtle communication practices must be acquired. Things such as tone can easily be misinterpreted when writing, therefore clarity is key. Sarcasm and other nuances which can be picked up over the phone are hard to detect in writing. Agents should also be able to communicate to the client frequently and keep them updated on progress. If an agent must consult a question, it's important that they tell the client they are doing so and check back after a few minutes if they need additional time.

Adapt to the customer

Don't think you have to be connected 24/7. If you know your clientele and their shopping habits, you might only need to be connected within a certain time frame every day. Based on this, you can determine when you'll need more manpower and schedule agents according to traffic fluctuations.

Be human

Customers reach out through live chat support to contact a human, not a robot. Apart from agents introducing themselves and asking the client what they need help with, they should avoid scripted texts. Customers easily pick up on this and hate it. If it was obvious on the phone, it's even more so through chat. Scripted answers should serve as a guide, but agents should be able to improvise and be natural. By doing so, the conversation is made more personal.

Collect data

Live chat is great for improving and providing quality customer support thanks to the data it collects. Every conversation becomes a transcript which can be analyzed much more quickly than a phone conversation. Customer complaints and pain points can be spotted much more easily and acted on right away. Not to mention, inserting VOC surveys within chats gets a much higher response rate and allows managers to gain a well- rounded overview of how agents are doing.

Providing Quality Social Media Support

Social media is a more direct and personal way for your brand to connect with customers. However, customer service on social media has also become an outlet clients turn to when their issues are not being addressed or dealt with effectively through other channels. Because of the nature of social media being such a public and open space, for the sake of your business and brand reputation, it's best that every customers' cry for help be solved as soon as possible. Below, we lay down a plan of action for you to effectively handle social media with grace and professionalism.
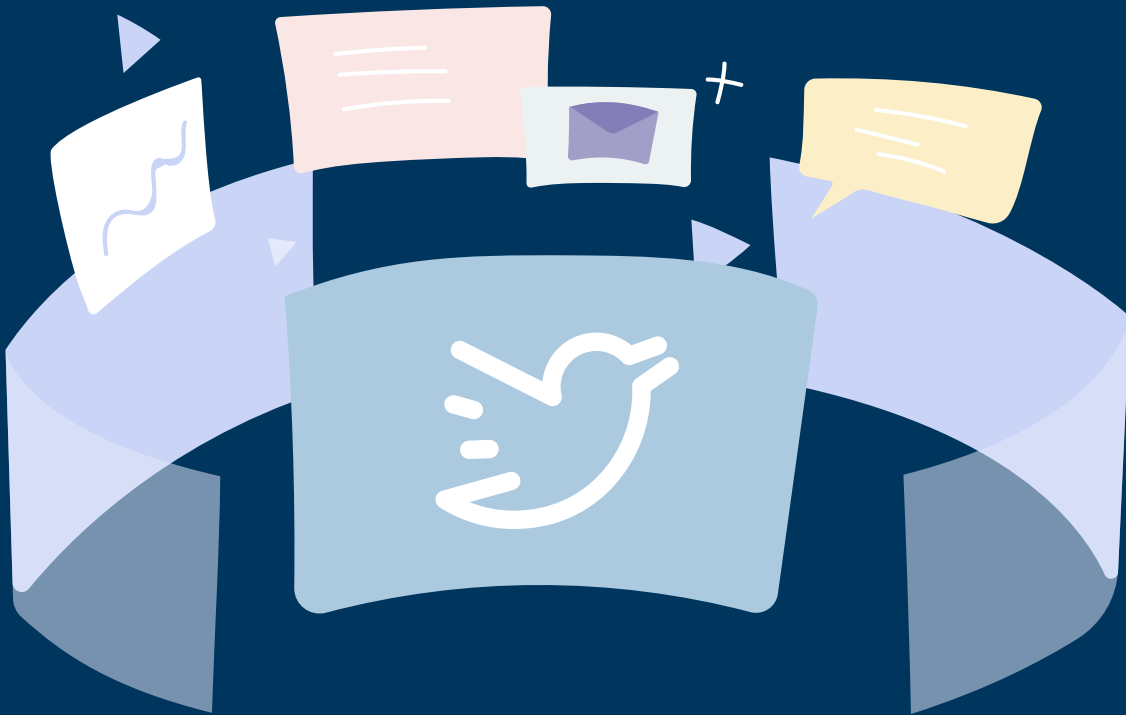
Take it elsewhere

If the case is too complex to be resolved on social media, offer to connect with your client on an adequate channel. By steering the conversation away from the public's eyes, you are able to better control the situation in case it escalates.

Recognize and ignore trolls

There's a difference between an unhappy customer and a social media troll. Social media trolls complain for the sheer pleasure of getting a reaction out of your brand and your followers. They are not looking for a solution and have no legitimate complaint. They can usually be spotted due to their poor grammar and punctuation, their use of capitalization throughout entire sentences, hate speech and personal attacks. Block, delete, report, and move on.

Correct missinformation

Sometimes customers make it look much worse than what it really is. While interacting in a public space, it's important not only to resolve the issue publicly, but to tone it down and share the reality of the situation if there is any misinformation. Don't paint the picture pink, but if your product was delivered two days late when the customer said it was a week, mention it politely when providing a solution.

Stay cool

Don't expect unhappy customers on social media to be polite. However, don't take it personally and lose your cool. No matter how rude, being empathetic to their situation always helps. It's the brand they're angry with, not you. By staying professional and maintaining the brand voice, you avoid feeding the fire and your followers will respect and appreciate you for it.

Let your advocates do the dirty work for you

Who doesn't love loyal brand followers? They know you better than you know yourself and always have your back. When someone asks a question about your brand, they'll answer, when someone trashes you, they'll defend you. Your love is rock solid..

Apologize

Sorry is such a powerful word, yet so underused. It's hard to admit wrongdoing, but when your brand is at fault, no matter the reason, it's important to acknowledge it. Customers don't care if your provider did not deliver or the post office was on strike. Apologize and propose a solution instead of giving an excuse.

Providing Quality Phone Support

Do we learn the same way we did 50 years ago? Biologically, maybe. But the methods by which we learn has drastically changed in the last half- century with technology as the primary catalyst. Training call center employees is expensive, especially if the center has turnover issues (which most do). Managers spend countless hours onboarding employees, only for them to quit a month in.

Providing quality phone support is the heart of your customer service and key to a happy customer. Creating an engaging learning environment where employees want to stay is the true secret to providing quality phone support.

But not all employees learn the same way, and there's no such thing as a one-size-fits-all teaching method. To help you choose the best method for training contact center employees, consider the pros and cons of each training method and how it aligns with your generational demographic.

The traditional classroom

Best with: Traditionalists

Pros: The classroom setting is familiar to traditionalists who like direct instruction by experts. A classroom setting gives the opportunity to deliver key information all at once to a large group of employees. It's ideal for introducing new members to the company, sharing general company updates, explaining changes in procedures, or even giving a refresher on existing knowledge. The classroom setting can also be used for incorporating storytelling teaching, using real situations to make a point, or having employees break into small groups to analyze call scenarios together.

Cons: Traditional classroom teaching can be one of the most boring and ineffective training methods if used incorrectly, especially for Baby Boomers who are typically more social and hands-on learners. A monotone voice, endless lecturing and lack of interaction will put most Gens to sleep. Attention spans are shorter than ever and you may have to adapt your model if you have a mid age to younger crew.

Roleplaying

Best with: Baby Boomers

Pros: These generations didn't grow up in a tech-centered world and still understand how to connect with people face-to-face (and they enjoy it). Training through roleplaying is an excellent way to give new contact center employees the feeling of hands-on experience without throwing them into the lion's den. We learn much faster by doing and experiencing things ourselves, and roleplaying gives employees a chance to practice performing the duties of their job without the risk.

Cons: While role-playing can give employees an experience very similar to being on the job, scenarios tend to be more simplistic than real calls, and the pressure of the job is absent. Try using audio or scripts from real calls to give employees a more accurate experience and provide feedback. Gen X is typically more comfortable with self-directed learning and may need help to be drawn out to participate.

On-the-job training/shadowing

Best with: Gen X

Pros: Gen X prefers to jump right in and make mistakes as they go. They learn independently and thrive on self-directed tools. Providing on-the-job training is low cost and quick. There's no substitute for the authenticity of on-the-job training, and employees will learn quickly when given the opportunity to take real customer calls.

Cons: Just because on-the-job training has little to no downtime and gives new employees experience, don't assume it's the answer to all your training needs. Throwing new hires into the job too soon can be risky. They can easily become overwhelmed, and without proper support and guidance, they may develop bad habits.

Online learning management system

Best with: Gen X and Millennials

Pros: Millennials are self-driven like Gen X and extremely tech-savvy. It's innate to them to access on-demand learning. They have little patience for long, drawn out processes. Using an online learning management system (LMS) for your contact center training enables new employees to train at their own pace and availability.

Cons: Traditionalists and baby boomers may struggle with (and resent) the technology. They will likely need more guidance and some training on how to access materials. If you have older employees who are good with tech, use them as role models for other people their age to drive motivation.

Creating Consistent Quality Across the Scope

Let's take a look at how to drive consistent quality across customer service channels for an award-winning customer service.

The number one reason that customers stop doing business with a company is because of the poor service they received. Go online, and you'll find thousands of YouTube videos of people sharing the gory details of their customer service horror story at a particular business. With more selection and access to information than ever before, potential customers can be choosier than ever.

Smart companies understand the value of their current customer base, and recognize the power of delighting them in order to keep them coming back for more. It is by focusing on existing clients that companies are able to broaden their customer base through the ever-so- powerful word of mouth. Organizations should ensure that every point of contact and interaction with a customer ends on a positive note. These connections essentially strengthen or break a customer relationship.
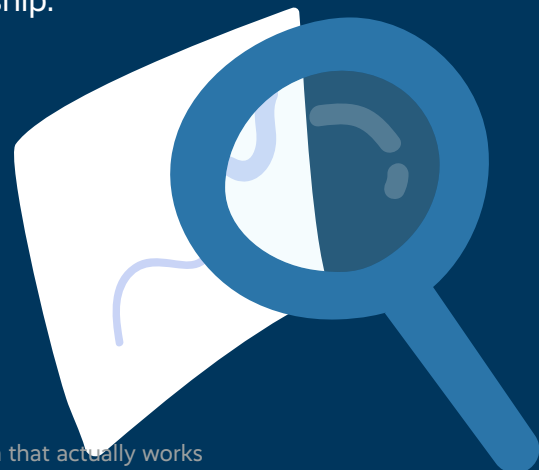
Prepare your agents well

Training provides a standard of quality across employees. Do they have an answer for how to approach different scenarios? Give them the tools they need to put a smile on every customer's face. Have a complete and up-to-date knowledge base for reference, continuous training opportunities, and regular feedback.

Locate your customers

A big challenge for companies is choosing what social media platform to be present on. Do you open an account on Google+, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook or Snapchat? Or all of the above? To make it easy and help you determine where to focus your time and energy: just be where your customers are. See where customers and potential clients are talking about your brand or similar products. Are they tearing apart the competition on Reddit? Join the conversation and provide the solution they are clearly looking for. To find out where your customers are, search each social media site for mentions of your brand or particular keywords of interest. Don't leave dialogue about your brand unanswered; be there to pounce on the opportunity when presented.

Have a good CRM system

Customers can't tell agents apart whether they contact your call center through email, chat or phone. You're all one brand. Therefore, when they are on the phone repeating the situation already discussed through email, they're understandably annoyed. With a good CRM system to record client history and information, your call center is guaranteed to provide quality across channels for an award-winning customer service. You'll be able to anticipate their needs and give more valuable information for consistent quality across the different points of contact.

Use VOC

In-house metrics are very important when it comes to quality monitoring. However, don't underestimate the voice of the customer. Through a few well-crafted questions, you can find out if they are thrilled with your service and what they would like to see more of. Call center scorecards and quality metrics are essential to have a positive VOC; therefore, let the customer be your guide to how good of a service you are giving. Has your team exceeded AHT? If your VOC is positive, all is in order.

Be quick to respond

Your agents are on the right channels and are busy connecting with customers and resolving queries. You have taught them well and have placed all necessary tools at their disposal. Now what? Your call center must continue analyzing ongoing conversations in order to continuously close the gap in the customer service experience. By monitoring the conversations across channels through objective metrics, you can provide actionable feedback to improve agent performance and customer service.

Conclusion

Management Determines the Success of your QA Program

Even if all channels are working well, the final touch to a successful omnichannel QA program lies within the inner workings of the contact center. Quality assurance can often be a disconnected process from the rest of the contact center operations. While quality managers are busy trying to improve agent performance, support managers are focused on keeping clients happy. Although both managers have different responsibilities, their end goal is the same.

In order to create a successful omnichannel QA program, it's time to bridge the gap. Even if QA and support managers have very different responsibilities, their individual results could drastically improve if they worked together to identify performance gaps. Complete cooperation between departments comprises of well-built trainings, continuous feedback, and coaching sessions that take into account both the ever-changing customer needs and agent performance gaps.

Aside from being able to master each customer support channel, transparency and a strong alliance between QA and customer support is essentially what enables the contact center to win at omnichannel customer support.

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PlayVox is a Quality Assurance Software created with one purpose: help you achieve complete customer satisfaction by empowering your work team. We have carefully thought out every feature to help your quality monitoring process be smarter, easier and faster than ever. Our three primary benefits are to help you find the tickets you need by creating filters, personalize scorecards for every scenario you need to evaluate, automatically create reports that help you find areas of improvement and give your agents recognitions for their good performance with our reward system: Karma Points. By using PlayVox you can finally get rid of spreadsheets. We have made Quality Monitoring processes easy for you and your team, so that you can focus on the rest.