



Standardization for Profitability

A Case Study

Situation:

A Fortune 100 travel company with 40 offices across the US operated as if each office was a small, locally owned agency with intermittent call traffic. Travel agent schedules were not designed to accommodate the predictable peaks and valleys in call traffic. There was a lack of urgency in handling calls. Both the agents and their managers believed they were providing good service to their customers and could not envision any other way to operate. As such, they were resistant to internal change and unable to respond to external demands (industry, economy and customer-related changes). When the airlines cut back on the commission structure for travel agencies, the company became unprofitable. This led to a potential death spiral, diminished revenues, the threat of layoffs and low morale at each office. The low morale affected agent performance in ways that lowered customer satisfaction, leading to an escalation of diminishing revenues.

Problem: How to reverse the profitability spiral, enhance customer satisfaction, improve morale, increase efficiency and effectiveness, and regain profitability.

Our Expert Solution:

A team of Amtech Alliance Members performed a comprehensive assessment of the people, processes and technology of the 22 largest centers. The results of the analysis were presented to company executives along with a comprehensive Action Plan for Change. The key findings included ineffective call forecasting and staffing models, minimal performance metrics and accountability, and no ability to route calls between sites.

Upon acceptance of the Assessment Action Plan, a team of three consultants worked with the client's internal consultants during a five-month planning process to design a standardized set of plans:

- A Performance Management Plan
- A Workforce Management Plan
- A Virtual Call Center Network
- A Change Management Plan

Consulting teams worked in three of the most critical sites to implement these plans, which included:

1. Training of all personnel to effectively follow the new Performance Management Plan
2. Developing enhanced staffing schedules for the largest sites
3. Developing a motivating Rewards and Recognition Program
4. Designing the virtual network, acquiring the technology and managing its implementation

Result: Within the first week of implementation, calls were being handled more effectively, service levels were met, and agent morale improved markedly because they knew what to expect each day and felt in control of their work. Supervisors and Managers were effectively using ACD monitors to manage performance. Bottom line, **Customer satisfaction increased, agent moral improved, service level performance improved, ticket sales increased and the company returned to profitability.** In the next phase of this project, Amtech Alliance Members provided the same service and profitability improvement for the European operations of the company.