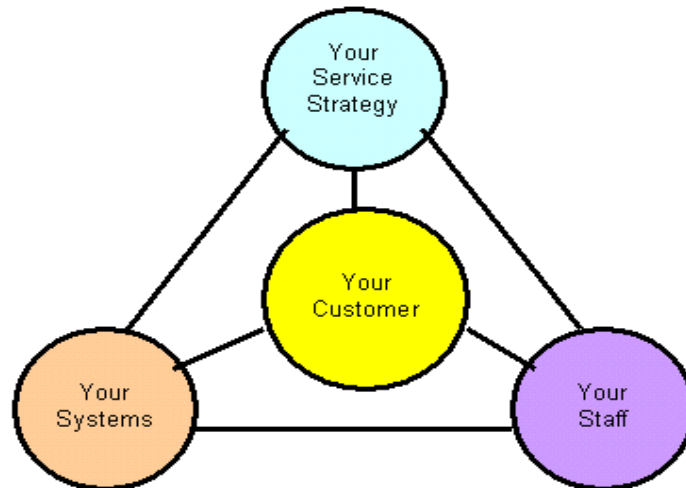


## Commonly Asked Questions for Leaders – Today: Benchmarking

One of the greatest temptations is to embrace industry standards or world-class benchmarks as gospel for your efforts. A more realistic approach is to review the industry and world-class standards to see what other similar organisations are measuring as criteria for success. Then monitor and measure your call centre activity within these categories. But don't restrict yourself to those measures alone; be creative enough to add others you believe are suitable for your culture, industry and environment. Review these over a minimum of three months (ideally 12 months so that any seasonality can be identified) and base some of your call centre goals on what you discover is typical for YOUR call centre.

Benchmarking should simply be common sense but instead it's become a fad and a costly exercise going all the way to ISO certification where the exercise to get there is seen to be more valuable than getting it right for the staff and customer.

In 1984 I attended a conference where Karl Albrecht spoke about the 'customer service triangle' and the simple definitions are as relevant today as they were innovative then.



For benchmarking, his three, interdependent components are still all that's necessary to be successful:

1. The strategy is the unifying idea where service is much more than lip service and everyone focuses on it as "job number one"! It becomes the emblazoned Vision on everyone's heart, the rally cry, an easy-to-commit-to memory-motto to unite everyone on every level!
2. Customer-oriented team of staff recruited, selected and trained to eliminate all distractions that keep them from focusing on the customer. They will be alert to opportunities, good listeners, careful and wise, responsive, attentive and willing to know when giving 'awesome' customer service is appropriate.
3. Customer- and staff-friendly systems. Nothing is worse than having either the customer or staff remark on the difficulty of using tools or processes they're provide with to effect a transaction or inquiry.

Your benchmarks will be unique to your organisation and your centre. Comparing yourself with international or national industry benchmarks alone can be as frustrating as trying to hit someone else's target in a competition. The focus must be on your own target!

***Read about the author, Darlene D. Richard, at [www.CallCentreINTEGRITY.com/articles.htm](http://www.CallCentreINTEGRITY.com/articles.htm)***