

Steps 1 and 2 (of 5) to Establish Benchmarks

With all the interest in Benchmarks and Benchmarking, there doesn't seem to be a great deal written about how to establish sensible ones. So here are practical five steps you can use with your contact centre to set initial benchmarks or re-establish new ones.

Step 1- Identify present benchmarks

Even if you don't actually believe you have benchmarks, you do, so identify the types and repetition of tasks your staff are performing in your centre and categorise them by type and frequency of occurrence

Review all tasks, etc., review them over time to ensure you observe and make allowances for seasonality or regular spikes and valleys in volume or type of responses.

Create illustrations of the pathways from your customer contacts to their final resolution or destination (this can be with a formal process map or have your staff be as creative as they can be to show how things move from your area throughout the rest of the organisation and to the customer) Identify the number of people/departments involved with each transaction. This is where many areas of savings have been realised especially when you see duplication of effort

Categorise by frequency and establish where your 80-20 break is (Pareto's Principle or "80-20 rule". Where 80% of results or effort tends to come from 20% or less of the activities or customers)

Invest in a stop watch (usually Dick Smith or Radio Shack have them for under \$10 nowadays).

Time all parts of the tasks that fall into the "20% category" – usually a minimum of the top 10 (and time them with a variety of people handling the tasks), so you can establish a more realistic time average

Step 2 - improve targets

Analyse what you've found and categorise the findings into sensible activities, tasks, figures, etc.. Be sure the information is not only easy for your area to understand quickly but also that it communicates your message to other potentially affected area (or that affects your results).

Be sure to include the person who holds your budget so they can track improvements. You may even wish to have a selection of reports tailored specifically to their intended recipient.

Contact an organisation such as callcentres.net or "e-Value" (used to be TARP in Australia) for a variety of international and national benchmarks for similar types of industries and tasks within them.

Read about the author, Darlene D. Richard, at www.CallCentreINTEGRITY.com/articles.htm