Contact Center Modernization: Assessment
Assessing Contact Center Opportunities

Service is now a crucial competitive tool in many customer-driven markets.

Companies spend heavily to identify, target and acquire new customers. They work diligently to serve, satisfy and retain those valuable and hard-won customers. To build long-term satisfaction and loyalty, companies must optimize service response and improve customer communication. They must introduce new programs, services or products. And they must do all of this while streamlining costs and maintaining their overall competitive positions.

That is why forward-looking companies see contact centers as a core competitive tool. And like any corporate asset, contact centers require revitalization and modernization if they are to be productive and cost-efficient. By modernizing their contact center operations, companies can gain the integrated capabilities needed to support high-touch, multichannel interactions for inbound and outbound customer care, technical product support, sales and marketing efforts.

Organizations modernize to reduce costs and improve user satisfaction, to support new technologies, and to drive process and operational improvements.

Research has shown that companies that restructure call centers can cut costs by up to 25 percent and boost the revenue by as much as 35 percent.

Assess First, then Modernize

Before you can improve the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of a contact center, however, you must first gain a clear and up-to-the-minute understanding of existing people, processes and technologies. For these reasons, a rigorous and professional contact center assessment is a vital first step in any contact center modernization initiative.

To gain the benefits of a contact center modernization, organizations must first understand their existing operations. A well-conducted assessment will:

- Evaluate the maturity of in-place contact center processes and technology
- Assess the training and capabilities of contact center personnel
- Develop a baseline to measure progress against industry standards
- Create a pragmatic modernization roadmap
- Identify opportunities to reduce costs, improve service and enhance overall customer satisfaction
Some organizations attempt to plan and manage an internal modernization-driven contact center assessment. These self-assessments typically focus on finding incremental improvements to support specific IT initiatives. While internal assessments can yield helpful insights, self evaluations present several limitations.

Assessments are time consuming and highly technical in nature, and few organizations have the specialized tools or personnel needed to adequately analyze the performance of a complex, high-volume contact center operation. Internal teams often lack the objectivity needed to identify faults in call center systems, processes and people.

For these reasons, customer-driven organizations increasingly rely on specialized third party providers to plan, conduct and present the findings of a call center assessment.

Elements of an Assessment

Organizations should apply a planned, phased approach designed to produce a comprehensive evaluation of all aspects of the contact center environment. A comprehensive contact center assessment will include an initial discovery phase, collection of onsite contact center data and the compilation of that evidence.

The assessment should address:

People. A full contact center assessment will examine staffing performance and management issues, job definition, recruiting and hiring, agent skills and knowledge, training and professional development. Other personnel-related issues include staff attrition and absenteeism, scheduling, staff satisfaction, touch point efficiency, and overall levels of customer service and satisfaction.

Process. Any good assessment will examine all processes that are relevant or related to the contact center environment. Process evaluation might include the study of key business people and support processes, such as quality and transaction monitoring, staffing and HR, training and performance management.

Technology. An assessment should examine key IT systems, such as hosting, network, interfaces, storages, applications, testing and other core infrastructure, contact center management systems, customer intelligence and customer self-service. Touch point channels – including inbound and outbound calls, email, fax, web chat, self-service, white mail and other communications – should also be examined.

Benefits of Assessment

Service-oriented organizations can leverage a contact center assessment to support the modernization journey towards a more agile enterprise. Assessments enable organizations to:
To remain competitive and profitable, contact centers must seek to optimize the performance of their people, processes and supporting technologies. But before they can begin that important modernization journey, service-oriented organizations must gain a clear and detailed understanding of their current contact center operations.

Forward-looking companies now see a full contact center assessment as the first logical step in the modernization process. A comprehensive assessment can reduce costs, drive greater productivity, and boost both service quality and customer satisfaction.