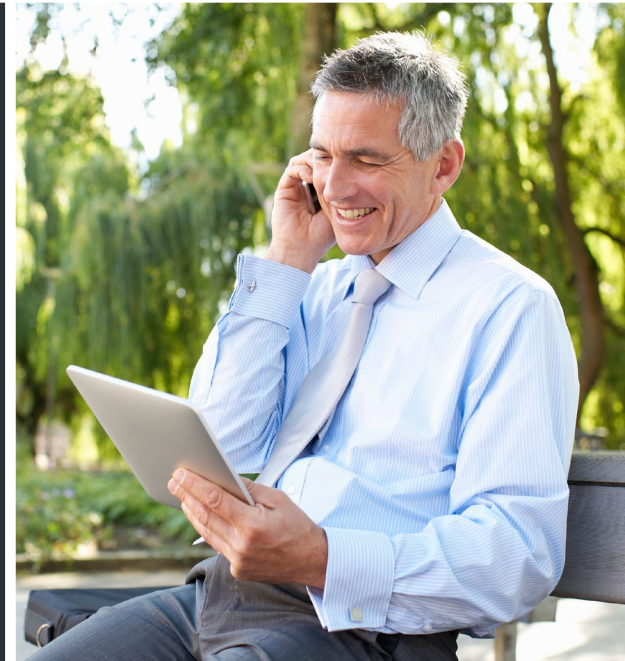




Managing Citizen Engagement

New Ways for Local Government to Engage Citizens through Contact Centers



Impact of first contact resolution:
Citizen satisfaction

“ ... The inability to reach the right person with the right information drives 60% of customer service dissatisfaction ... ”

Why?

- Dead/blind transfers
- Transfers to voicemail
- Being “re-queued”
- Inconsistent call backs
- Partial/unsatisfactory responses

Meeting the challenge of first-contact resolution (FCR) continues to be paramount to citizen satisfaction of government services. Engaging citizens is a primary function of the government - whether it's to pay a bill, request a service or obtain information.

Ken Landoline, a Principal Analyst at Current Analysis says:

“Our experience in citizen contact center operations confirms that the inability to reach the right person the first time is a major driver of citizen dissatisfaction in the citizen service contact center environment. Additionally, in many cases, poor first contact resolution performance has been shown to drive a significant share - in some cases, up to a third - of a contact center's overall operational costs.”

Industry research shows first contact resolution remains a key operating metric - driving both contact center productivity and citizen satisfaction. According to a landmark study from industry group Call Center Managers Forum, first contact resolution has been found to be the single most important challenge to improving citizen satisfaction.

Further, failing to achieve first contact resolution accounts for a minimum of 30% of a contact center's operating cost, due to repeat calls and the extra time and ‘churn’ spent trying to find the right person to help the citizen in need.



Impact of first contact resolution:
Cost reduction

“ ... the absence of first call resolution has been found to account for up to of 30% of a call center’s operational cost ...”

Why?

- Repeat calls
- Duplicate media contacts
- Additional call back(s)
- Misdirected touch points
- Costly escalations
- “Muddling through”

A cross-section of studies indicates typical first contact resolution rates are approximately 67%, meaning potentially one-third of inbound and outbound calls are repeat calls.

Delivery of citizen services via the web has increased significantly over the last few years, even though many citizens still prefer using the telephone and speaking to a “live” person. Web applications and IVR help transfer information and services, and with their rapid, growth and uptake over the next few years, government organizations must prepare for multi-channel first contact delivery. This is not to mention the impact Social Networks are having on citizen engagement

What this all means is that achieving first contact resolution often requires deployment of new technologies to enable citizens to interact with government services through new digital channels such as self-service portals to heighten citizen service experience; as well as mobile applications, and user centric IVR tools.

The contact handling challenge

Conventional thinking has been that more effective contact routing, improved agent training, and the use of knowledge and scripting tools will drive first contact resolution. This might be the case for routine or simple contacts, but as mentioned earlier, first contact resolution still hovers at only 67% on average. And, government organizations may discover that those routine or simple contacts may be more efficiently handled by an automated system such as an IVR or Web-based self-service. This can automate manual processes a government organization might be using, for example to run a mass outreach program for public information campaigns such as responses to heavy snow or announcing affected flooded areas.

Tools that enables the agents to more effectively collaborate with peers, supervisors or experts outside the contact center are critical to achieving first contact resolution and driving higher value citizen interactions. The answering agent will also feel less frustrated and more satisfied with their ability to perform, if they have the communication tools that facilitate connecting the right information and people with the citizen, in real-time.

Given the range of questions, issues and opportunities each citizen contact may represent, today’s contact center agent job is very unpredictable. Often, they must rely on the broader skills and knowledge of local services such as education, repair contractors, garbage and recycling collection services, social care, transport and planning, and bill payment-- among others -- to handle a citizen contact.

However, it can be equally unpredictable for the agent to know who else is available at the moment of need, ready to assist or collaborate with the right skills, authority or knowledge to address the situation on first contact.

How does an agent quickly determine the availability status of particular peers in the contact center or other business users in the government organization? The cumbersome guesswork of trying different extensions, physically looking around to see who is or is not currently handling a contact, on lunch or on break can make efficient contact handling, consultations or warm transfers difficult. In a distributed environment (i.e. remote or home-based agents), or across departments, this becomes even more difficult, if not impossible. If the right person is not identified quickly, frustration ensues for the citizen and promised call backs may or may not ever happen on a timely basis.

Productivity and efficiency go down, along with citizen satisfaction.

New dimensions continue to grow: multiple channels and social media

As with voice communications, citizens who choose to connect with government services by media such as email, Web chat or social media are equally interested in getting immediate answers and resolution on the first contact. In fact, given the growth of instant messaging and social channels, expectations for rapid email responses may actually be increasing, driving the same need we saw for voice to quickly close interactions on the first contact.

Email and social posts in particular are becoming more 'real-time', where important citizens or sensitive situations are involved. Therefore, presence-enabled multimedia tools are needed for those handling citizen interactions, in order to achieve rapid resolution across all media.

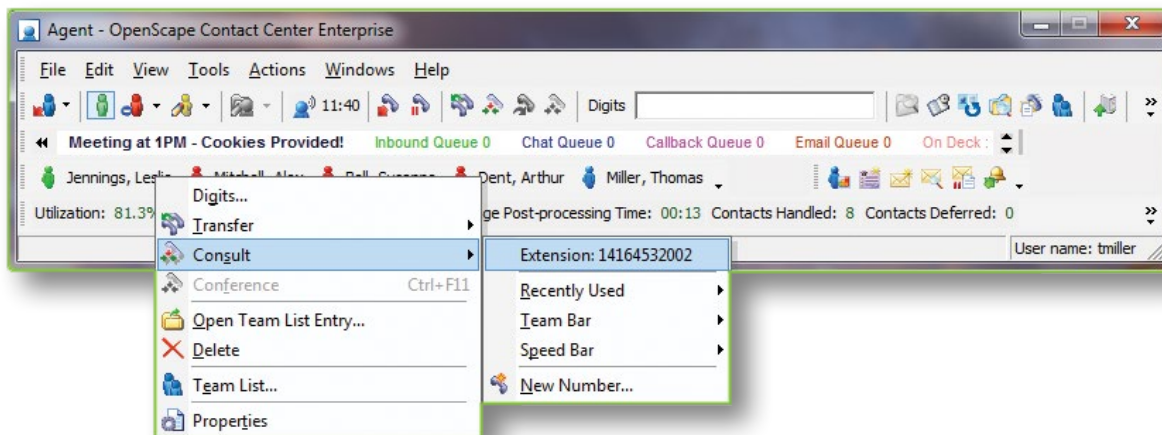
Introducing presence and collaboration tools to the contact center

Having looked at today's challenges, now let's introduce presence management and collaboration into the equation. The four scenarios that follow will illustrate how common citizen interaction dilemmas are addressed in new ways through presence management tools (which we call the "Team Bar" and "Team List").

" ... citizens who experience problems that are dealt with quickly and easily have a high satisfaction rate ..."

Why?

- Issue is resolved
- Increased avoidable contact
- Opens door to offer other services



Typical drivers of first contact resolution:

- Access to the right skills and information
- Knowledge-based tools and scripting
- Agent decision making authority
- Citizen history and data integration
- Agent training and experience
- Citizen-centric processes and policies

Business scenario: Tax claim resolution

A citizen places a call to her local government to enquire about the status of an existing tax claim. The answering agent, Susan, finds that Thomas Miller, the Tax Officer responsible for the citizen's case, is the best person to help answer the enquiry.



Susan sees that Thomas is currently available by using the status display of her Team Bar. Susan then conferences in Thomas, which automatically produces a 'shared' screen pop of citizen contact details on Thomas' desktop.

Extending this scenario, imagine if the Tax Officer was currently in the field rather than in the office, and using a mobile phone. In this case, enterprise-wide presence tools become critical, as we need to collaborate with a broader range of mobile users using diverse communication devices such as mobile smart phones or tablets.

Business scenario: Satisfying a billing complaint

An agent in the housing group, George, receives a call from an upset citizen requiring special authorization to remove an over charge. George requires immediate authorization from a senior manager, Ross, to allow the removal of the service charge - there are four team managers on duty, of which only one, Ross, is currently available for consultation.



George then engages Ross in a real-time consultation and provides the approval required to resolve the citizen's issue on first contact. Possibly, a citizen situation may require a higher level of authorization than a team manager. For example, a departmental manager may be required - however, she is currently out of the office, but still connected via smart phone and mobile agent software. We could use broader enterprise-wide presence and collaboration tools with instant messaging capabilities to solicit the required approval and resolve the situation in real-time.

When the case is resolved, Susan enters a wrap-up reason(s) and disconnects.

The presence-enabled multimedia contact center

The Unify OpenScape Contact Center solution provides a customizable, presence-enhanced Agent desktop and mobile application that allows the user to visually identify the presence and availability status of other users in real time - across multiple media.

So, when the inevitable need for a warm transfer, consultation or collaboration is needed on a citizen interaction, the agent can visually confirm another user's status, and simply click on the available user to confidently initiate collaboration that will connect the citizen with the right person or information at the right time.

Tools such as the Team Bar that identify the presence and availability of peers or other in-house 'experts' that can help resolve contacts on first contact are also critical. When contact handlers can immediately identify who is available to help out in real-time, and conference or consult with them using a single mouse-click, productivity is greatly increased.

Likewise, citizen satisfaction can be greatly increased by avoiding cumbersome callbacks, unnecessary call transfers, or lengthy hold times while contact handlers search for an available party to assist in problem resolution. Beyond better contact handling, the operational costs are reduced through shorter contact handling times, fewer call backs required, and leveraging existing investments in PCs, networks and databases.

Beyond the core contact handling group(s), there are many users (such as knowledge workers, experts, back-office personnel, part-time agents or managers) who may need to both monitor contact handling activity and be accessible to collaborate on citizen cases or opportunities as they arise.

To help drive first contact resolution, users can leverage the Team List feature to view the real-time presence and availability of their peers, supervisors or experts across the company, and consult or include them on a call with just a mouse click. Users can be sorted by name, availability status, job role or department. Note also that presence status is provided for all eligible communication media.

For roaming experts, or those who are less frequently required to assist or collaborate in resolving cases, the Associate desktop and Mobile Agent application are a good fit.

Summary

As policies and engagement models evolve, many responsibilities that were previously executed face-to-face in the field by specialists are now consolidated in a government organization contact center. The good news is that if well executed, citizens have access to 'one-stop services' through the contact center for all government services. The accessibility and lower cost per interaction of the contact center also provide handsome benefits - assuming that citizens are fully satisfied when they choose to contact your agency or department by phone, email, Web or social channels.

When real-time assistance is needed:

- Visually monitor the availability status of other users
- Instantly identify who is available to assist, consult or accept transfer
- Initiate collaboration with a specific user or any available user from a group of peers or supervisors
- Share case data through shared screen-pops when collaborating

About Unify

Unify is one of the world's leading communications software and services firms, providing integrated communications solutions for approximately 75 percent of the Fortune Global 500. Our solutions unify multiple networks, devices and applications into one easy-to-use platform that allows teams to engage in rich and meaningful conversations. The result is a transformation of how the enterprise communicates and collaborates that amplifies collective effort, energizes the business, and enhances business performance. Unify has a strong heritage of product reliability, innovation, open standards and security.

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