
Your Agents Mean Business

Envision's Agent-Focused Philosophy on
How to Achieve Peak Performance in the
Contact Center



Contact centers today are reinventing themselves. Where they formerly were cost centers focused on simply taking calls, they have evolved to become profit centers accountable for increased revenue, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and other enterprise goals. For the past ten years, Envision has maintained a singular vision about how to best make this transformation. Our beliefs can be summed up in a single sentence:

Developing your agents is the most powerful way to achieve peak performance in your contact center.

We have tested this theory by working closely with world-class organizations like Borders Group, KeyBank, Northwest Airlines, Office Depot and Provident. From them we discovered firsthand what challenges contact centers face, then developed integrated solutions that successfully address these issues. And our customers continually achieve significant, measurable results as a result of adopting our vision and solutions.

In this paper, we discuss the seven tenets of our agent-focused philosophy and describe how they guide our product development and set the stage for our customers' success.

Tenet 1: Coached agents drive revenue.

In today's competitive marketplace, price-cutting and marketing programs don't produce the results they used to. As a result, contact centers are under great pressure to achieve aggressive revenue goals, often with shrinking resources.

Envision customers repeatedly grow their profits by coaching agents to offer cross-sells and up-sells whenever appropriate. The contact center is highly effective at producing this form of revenue enhancement, far more effective than the Web. The reason is that agents provide a human touch that makes customers feel positive about a company and its products and services. And when agents are coached to manage this relationship effectively, customers are highly motivated to buy.

Tenet 2: Manage for effectiveness, and efficiency follows.

High-performing contact centers manage two competing objectives. They require effective agents who continually meet quality standards, thereby achieving high customer satisfaction and retention. Contact centers also need to operate at peak efficiency, with traffic volumes, service levels, costs and agent skills and preferences all balanced to perfection. Surprisingly enough, our customers find that when you focus on individual agent performance, before you know it, you've boosted the performance of the entire contact center.

According to Frost & Sullivan, agents represent more than 70 percent of call center costs, so improving agent performance is also a direct way to trim your operating budget. For example, expanding your agents' skill levels increases their job satisfaction, reducing turnover costs. When you ensure you have the right agents available at the right time, you manage your staffing costs effectively. And when your agents work more effectively, they can handle more calls per hour.

Tenet 3: Customer service is the key competitive differentiator.

Delivering effective customer service has never been so challenging and critically important. Customers want you to be available 24/7 — via phone, e-mail or the Web. And however they reach you, they want their needs met as quickly as possible by courteous, knowledgeable agents.

Increased revenue

- 2.5% increase in sales — for revenue gain of \$23.5 million, Northwest Airlines
- 97% increase in cross-sells, BOK Financial Corporation
- 15% increase in promise-to-pay ratio, Wachovia Bank

Increased effectiveness

- 33% increase in quality scores, Service Net
- 15% increase in evaluation scores, Borders Group
- 30% decrease in customer complaints, Wachovia Bank

Increased efficiency

- 2% reduction in call handle times — for savings of \$1.8 million, Northwest Airlines
- 25% reduction in training costs, Philips Oral Healthcare
- 75% reduction in time required for call monitoring and evaluations, BOK Financial Corporation

Because improving agent performance is the one sure way to provide better customer service, Envision has always believed that quality monitoring should be about more than just measuring call duration and saving time for supervisors. While these are worthy goals, what's more mission-critical is changing agent behavior, which results in increased revenues and greater customer satisfaction and loyalty. It's this fundamental belief that led Envision to the concept of marrying quality monitoring and coaching capabilities in order to improve agent performance, and that leads to our fourth tenet.

Tenet 4: Agents own the customer relationship.

No one in your organization knows your customers as well as your agents. They talk with them all day long. They know what customers want and what they don't want. They are dedicated to keeping happy customers satisfied and turning unhappy customers into happy ones, and that's not easy work.

The reality is that when your agents do a good job, your customers are more satisfied, more likely to buy from you again and more likely to recommend you to their friends. How do you ensure your agents provide customers with a positive experience? By developing your agents through coaching, which is the practice of providing them with the personalized training, objective feedback and information they need to perform at their best. It's a continual process of evaluating behavior, training to correct it and motivating for improvement.

Envision was not the first to come up with the concept of coaching agents. Contact centers have been doing it for years, but are hindered due to labor-intensive processes and a lack of effective tools. Envision brought the concept to life by delivering coaching content — including integrated work schedules, evaluations integrated with recordings of customer interactions and video training that can be targeted to individual needs — to the agent desktop via a browser-based interface. With this new coaching available at their desktops, agents quickly become more effective. At the same time, Envision freed supervisors to provide more one-on-one coaching by automating the monitoring and evaluation processes that previously commanded much of their time.

At Envision, we believe agents bear much of the responsibility for delivering effective customer service that drives revenue. We think they can handle it. Because as our next tenet shows, we also believe that agents are capable and deserving of great challenges and rewards.

Tenet 5: Agents need to be empowered.

There is a new breed of career-minded agents in search of advancement, appropriate work tools, two-way communication and job satisfaction. These agents are a gold mine. How do you motivate and retain them? By empowering them through good coaching.

Delivering content to the agent desktop is highly effective in this regard because it engages agents in their own development. With easy access to training and self-evaluation materials, agents learn at their own pace and actively manage their progress. On-demand recording lets them evaluate their own calls for self-improvement. The ability to review interactions integrated with evaluations helps them prepare for one-on-one coaching sessions with supervisors. And receiving coaching content during idle times gives agents the variety they need while also increasing their productivity.

Every agent is unique, and Envision enables customized, personalized learning based on individual need. As a result, training is more effective, it costs less because it's more efficient, and improvement occurs daily.

68% of clients cite poor service as the reason they stop doing business with a company.

— American Management Association

84% of CEOs surveyed say that customer service will be the most important source of their business growth.

— Coopers & Lybrand

"How do you become a trusted advisor? By building trust with your clients. And you achieve that by consistently delivering the highest-quality service."

— Terry Koubele, KeyBank

"Our CSRs really like being able to listen to their own calls and read evaluations at their desks. They are a very competitive bunch, and Click2Coach has the tools to help them improve and learn on their own."

— Kim Totten, Philips Oral Healthcare

"Our organization has always rewarded sales results, and Click2Coach gives us the data to reward those efforts."

— Lee Gemlich, Northwest Airlines

"Now we can provide midnight-shift agents the same quality training as our daytime agents, and I don't have to come in the middle of the night."

— James Morris, BOK Financial Corporation

Tenet 6: It's what you do with the data that counts.

Envision understands the power of metrics like call duration, call volume and call quality. That's why we include powerful reporting capabilities in our solutions and why we deliver call center statistics to agents. But we've never thought that agent performance is just about the numbers. Instead, it's what you do with the data that really counts. So with Envision's suite of integrated solutions, once you measure an agent's performance through quality monitoring, you can either commend a job well done or address that person's specific needs with personalized training.

And it's more than a matter of identifying how your agents are doing and making them better through training. You also need to make sure that you've got the right agents — and the right number of agents — on staff to begin with. That's why we added workforce management to our product family.

By combining workforce management with quality monitoring and eLearning capabilities, Envision ensures you have the right agents available and can coach them when the time is right depending on business needs, traffic volume and urgency of content.

Tenet 7: Customers require consistency.

Customers want the same experience no matter what time of day they call, how they contact you and which center or agent they reach. Envision is dedicated to helping you consistently cultivate, develop and manage your entire agent workforce, regardless of how many centers you have or where the agents are located.

Video training and coaching content make it fast and cost-effective to give agents individual attention. In addition, Envision allows multiple contact centers to operate as a single virtual organization, so your geographic boundaries disappear. As a result, you can share best practices throughout the enterprise, train every agent with standardized content, calibrate evaluation methods across groups and even use Web-based reporting for a single view of all centers.

Envision doesn't believe in optimizing people. We believe in optimizing technology and processes in order to develop agents. Over and over again our customers have proven the wisdom of this approach. They continually demonstrate that when you give agents the respect, tools and knowledge they need to do great work, customer satisfaction soars. And effective customer service leads directly to increased sales, increased loyalty and reduced operating costs.



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Envision is a leading provider of contact center software solutions that empower businesses to maximize every contact with their customers. Since its founding in 1994, Envision has focused on improving the effectiveness and performance of contact center agents to create measurable value for the enterprise. For more information on our solutions, please visit envisioninc.com.