

Call Center Organizational Design and Process Improvement [case study]

Project Mission and Background

A North American B2B and distribution company (\$5 B sales) realized that their historically high growth rate and acquisitions had led to high costs and a lack of consistency in customer service. Management began planning a consolidation effort to centralize customer care from 50 different locales to a single care center. This effort involved several new IT solutions, including interactive voice response, call routing and sophisticated scheduling platforms. Hundreds of customer care employees were also affected, and so state-of-the-art training development was undertaken, and a prime location leased and built out. The business goals of the effort were to increase consistency and quality of customer care, increase sales and lower operational costs.

Challenges

Realizing the internal upheaval and organizational disruption due to the consolidation, and the potential impacts on customer service, Lewis & Fowler was engaged to lead an organizational change management process that would maintain morale and mitigate the effects of staff reductions, while helping to obtain the business results of improved customer care, up- and cross-sales, and lower transactional costs.

Four major challenges faced the client:

- An inopportune announcement (specifically a media leak) of reduction-in-force created an extremely sensitive employee situation
- Aggressive migration schedule required hiring and training hundreds of people within six months
- 100+ customer-specific processes needed to be adapted to work within the centralized support model and personnel needed to learn these processes
- A new technology platform and associated implementation issues were still under analysis.

Approach

Lewis & Fowler brought an experienced Organizational Change Management team on-site to help the client design and implement a successful centralized customer care organization. Our team worked with the training development, human resources, software, and facilities teams to ensure that key employees were retained and migration efforts were effectively paired with the personnel re-organization, retention and hiring plans. We helped the client define key job responsibilities and what competencies were required, within the center, to deliver the required business processes.

After the first locations migrated to the centralized center, client management recognized that response times, support quality and customer satisfaction were suffering. The client realized the need for immediate remedial action, and asked



- + North American B2B and distribution company.
- + Historically high growth rate led to high costs and lack of consistent customer service.
- + Improved customer satisfaction and sales, as well as significant cost reductions.

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Lewis & Fowler to lead a business process analysis of the revised procedures and training. Until this point, we were focused on the organizational design components of the migration.

To turnaround the customer satisfaction issues as quickly as possible, we formed a SWAT team of key support staff empowered to resolve all customer issues related to the new center. Concurrently, we led a management review and prioritization of issues, and then kicked off root cause analyses with several process improvement teams. We then documented recommended changes to people, processes and technologies to address these customer-impacting service issues.

Benefits

After implementation, customer satisfaction and sales have improved, and the client has realized significant cost reductions due to an efficient centralized process center. The client obtained most of the desired business results, but is still working to implement best practices in the center. Employee communications and retention plans developed by Lewis & Fowler, helped to maintain appropriate staffing levels through the nine-month process.

Because we were able to design and implement a SWAT team approach, customer impacts were mitigated in the short-term. Within a few months, the Lewis & Fowler approach identified the root cause of the most customer-impacting issues, and we were able to address these items in a systematic, focused manner. Our efforts led to improvements in response time, service quality and customer satisfaction, while helping the client reduce their overall cost of servicing customers.

About Us

Lewis & Fowler is a professional consulting firm focused on delivering business impacting results to corporations throughout the United States.

