



## The Contact Center Trifecta: Strip Costs, Reduce AHT, Improve Customer Experience.

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A recent Gartner survey about the top five business processes for 2009 shows that attracting and retaining customers dropped from second to fifth place. More than 1,500 businesses responded to the question: "What are your most important processes?" Although still highly placed, customer service is receiving less emphasis than cost cutting. Cost cutting is essential, but knowing how to cut costs without damaging the customer experience is critical.<sup>1</sup>

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When the contact center is the main channel to the customer, it's imperative to look beyond easy answers to reduce costs. Agent monitoring technology from Knoa lets you see inside agent behavior at the desktop to pinpoint cost savings, decrease AHT, improve agent performance and simultaneously enhance customer experience. Knoa's solutions address one of the core challenges of call center operations — the complexity of many customer-facing processes and the myriad software solutions that underpin those processes. That complexity has been proven to extend average handling times (AHT), decrease first call resolution (FCR), and decrease customer satisfaction. Knoa's solutions improve the way your agents use your servicing, sales, CRM and FS&D applications. And, they have been proven to strip 15 to 40 seconds of time from every call, resulting in significant improvements in agent productivity, call center operations and customer experience.

<sup>1</sup> The Future of the Contact Center: Service Is Key to Customer Strategy, Michael Maoz, 5 March 2009

## The Contact Center Conundrum – Complex Technology Helps and Hurts at the Same Time.

Today's contact centers are far more complex than earlier call centers. Multi-channel support requires greater proficiency in e-mail, live chat and web service often requiring an agent to toggle back and forth throughout the day. Agents must handle a variety of different interactions and business transactions ranging from support to sales. And increasingly, agents are being called upon to make independent decisions when interacting with customers who are demanding a higher level of service. The complexity of the contact center business system is increasing as companies are aggressively acquiring new applications ranging from agent productivity tools to business intelligence and customer analytics.

This complexity increases the need for a new strategy to see inside the agent/customer interaction. During a single customer interaction, such as changing the customer's service plan, an agent may have to access multiple software applications – a CRM application, a “soft phone”, accounts receivable, order management, a knowledge base, etc. Effective use of this myriad of applications has a direct impact on the agent's productivity, the cost of the transaction and the customer experience. If the agent does not make the experience seamless, it could cause customer irritation and possible loss of business. The agent experience and agent performance deliver the customer experience.

*Target business value gain (revenue lift, cost reduction) from effective usage of current technology, people and process:*

- *Increasing Agent Productivity*
- *Improving FCR Rates*
- *Reducing Customer Attrition*
- *Decreasing Operating Costs*

## Raising the Bar for Agent Performance

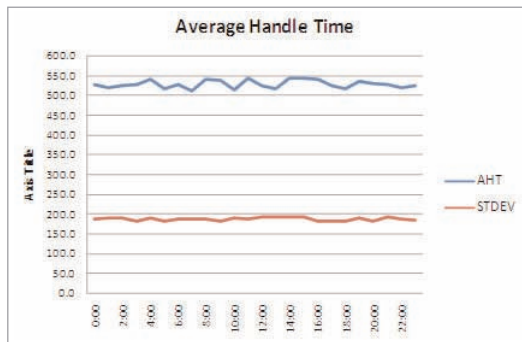
Peter Drucker, one of the most influential business thinkers of the past century, said, “You cannot manage what you cannot measure.” The phrase has become a common business bromide, but at the time, it was the kind of insight that raised the bar for professional corporate performance management. In the contact center, it's time to raise that bar once again – by delving deeper and measuring the experience received and the performance achieved by the agents who use contact center applications that deliver the customer experience and business results.

Despite the seeming glut of metrics, most contact center managers do not have visibility into agent behavior and agent performance during each and every customer interaction. Every customer interaction will be different. The agent has a transaction flow designed to lead to a number of outcomes, but the customer can derail the process. Each agent uses the technology and applications differently – sometimes well, sometimes clumsily, and sometimes not at all. The technology itself often presents barriers to agent performance – which is usually transparently shared with the customer when the agent apologizes, “sorry, my system is slow today”, or vents frustration, “why isn't it letting me do this today – it let me yesterday”. Your contact center is the venue for thousands of customer interactions across hundreds of agents. Each interaction is a data point in your composite customer satisfaction index; each a factor in your AHT; each impacting your contact center performance; and each impacting your contact center costs – when inefficiencies in the process ratchet up contact center costs, with higher repeat calls from customers, unnecessary escalations and increased traffic.

## Illuminating the Last Black Hole in the Contact Center – the Agent/Customer Interaction

Continuous monitoring of the entire agent population, across all customer interactions, must be the baseline of a comprehensive contact center operations management strategy. Unfortunately most contact center managers are hampered in their efforts to implement holistic performance management solutions because they only have metrics on ‘some’ of the things that have happened to ‘some’ of the agents during ‘some’ of the customer interactions. Call-recording/Quality Assurance solutions provide a deep qualitative analysis of agent behavior and customer experience. However, while these technologies provide invaluable information, they are inherently a sampling technique; so many performance problems that impact customer experience remain undetected.

Existing agent management systems provide aggregate high level performance metrics, but when performance slips (such as when call handling times rise) the exact root cause is difficult, if not impossible to uncover. These tactics and technologies do not give the business stakeholders sufficient visibility into what is actually happening as agents interact with complex technologies that automate the customer-facing processes.



Knoa Software provides a family of agent-monitoring solutions that aim to simultaneously improve the overall performance of servicing applications and how agents use them. Knoa has two primary product offerings, each of which is focused on capturing the performance of individual agents executing specific applications. Knoa User Application Manager (UAM) Provides an analysis of all applications running within an agent’s desktop. It answers the questions: “What applications are my agents using and how are they using each of these applications?” Knoa UAM provides data about application utilization patterns, specifically usage and performance metrics for Windows/computer sessions, user and desktop environment information, Windows processes, Web applications, and individual user workflows during Windows sessions.

Knoa Experience and Performance Manager (EPM) is a stand-alone real-time performance management tool that provides very deep performance analytics for a specific application(s) for the contact center. Knoa EPM answers the questions: “How are my agents executing a specific servicing application and where are there specific opportunities for AHT and customer experience improvement?”

*Knoa’s end-user monitoring capabilities help gain visibility to system-related factors influencing consistency and quality of customer experience and agent performance:*

- *Real time performance trending of AHT (Average Handle Time)*
- *End-to-end business process and work flow*
- *Effective usage and value of functionality changes*
- *Recurring and isolated system performance issues*
- *Systemic and isolated agent/system interaction issues*

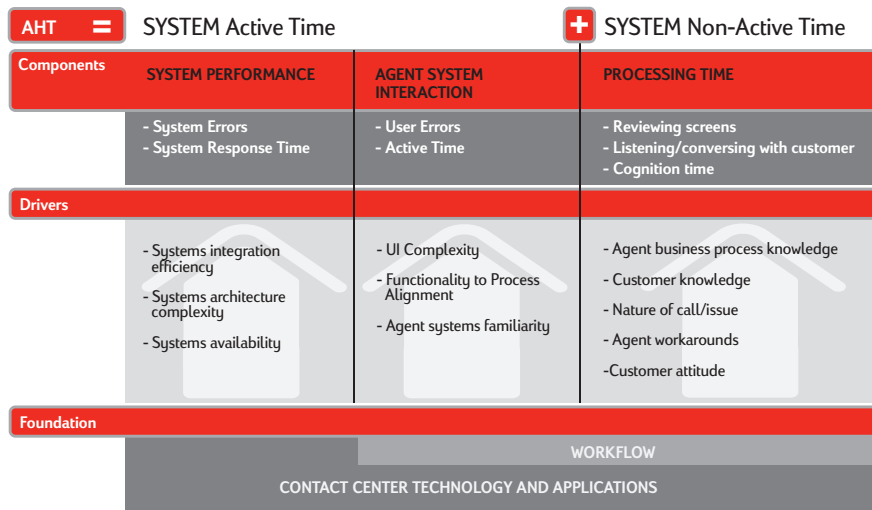
Knoa EPM collects and analyzes how agents interact with specific desktop servicing applications in real-time. It delivers a standard set of metrics including productivity, user proficiency (user errors), application run-time quality, transaction response times and user and computer information from all monitored systems. Metrics are presented in dashboards and reports through the web-based Reporting Console.

All Knoa products are powered by a single monitoring architecture, which includes a universal monitoring agent with the capacity to sense a number of user behaviors, application attributes and desktop/pc conditions. For specific customer implementations, Knoa pairs this universal monitoring agent with an application and/or purpose-specific template. This template identifies and maps the specific system information that is to be collected for all of the applications being monitored. Once deployed, the monitoring template dynamically adapts to GUI changes and automatically discovers new transactions, screens, dialogs, etc. All Knoa applications come with a predefined set of metrics, called key performance indicators (KPIs), to measure user errors, system errors and transaction response times against user-defined thresholds. Alert thresholds and severity levels are assigned in the administration environment; Console users “join” (subscribe to) alerts and can select the severity level at which an email alert is sent to them. Email alerts can also be sent to users not licensed on the system.

*Continuous monitoring of the entire agent population, across all customer interactions, must be the baseline of a comprehensive contact center performance management strategy.*

Knoa UAM and EPM work together in the following manner. UAM is implemented to obtain a very accurate utilization profile of all of the applications in use on the agent’s desktop: how long is the application open, how much is it actively used by the agent, and how the agent transitions from one application to another – the flow through the applications. With UAM, the customer can identify the primary applications that can drive AHT and customer experience improvement opportunities. Next, the customer implements EPM on their key servicing applications. EPM provides extremely specific information which enables the breakdown of individual call flows and provides visibility into specific areas of usage that can be targeted for AHT improvement.

### Another Perspective on Average Handling Time



Knoa agent monitoring solutions provide a very detailed perspective of the agent experience and performance when using contact center servicing applications.

**Within an application:**

- Number of instances of the application being monitored
- System error messages
- User error messages
- User activity as defined by screens, operations and messages
- Utilization Time of individual screens (time the screen was opened to time closed)
- Agent Processing Time for individual screens (time the screen experiences no user interaction)
- Active Time for individual screens - time the user interacts with the screen via mouse, keyboard or other input device
- Utilization Time = Active Time + Agent Processing Time
- System Response Time of screens, operations and messages (from screen usage)

**Across all applications on the desktop:**

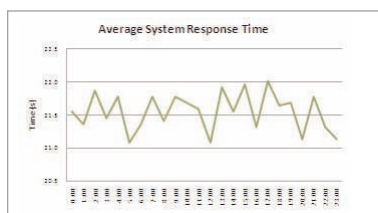
Movement from one application to another based on user activity data

Together, these two products identify factors that influence the consistency and quality of customer experience and agent performance to improve productivity, reduce operational costs, lift revenue and optimize business performance. Secondary benefits are derived via cost reduction gained from more efficient application support processes.

*Actionable metrics to improve agent performance distinguish those firms that achieve their contact center goals from those that struggle.*

## Agent Experience Plus Agent Performance Equals the Customer Experience

Knoa EPM monitors application execution from the perspective of the end-user and provides comprehensive metrics in two dimensions. First, EPM systems monitor the agent experience to highlight barriers to effective performance that are being created by the technology itself. Then EPM systems analyze agent behaviors and work-flows to pinpoint agent performance issues.



Agent Experience: Are the transactions slow? Is the agent being presented with incomprehensible system errors? These are clear impediments to agent productivity that are all too often invisible. These metrics are used to identify and eliminate impediments that technology is presenting to the agent. Forrester research reports that up to 80 percent of system errors experienced by end-users are not reported, and that only 25 percent of performance problems are caught by existing monitoring technologies.



Agent Performance – Are agents using the correct transactions for the process? Are they following the prescribed call flow? Are they using the applications effectively or making errors? Are they utilizing all the tools available, such as the knowledge base? These metrics give managers insight into the problems with agent performance that are impacting business results. Any lack of proficiency is transparently communicated to ensure that the problems are identified so that resolution – possibly in the form of one-on-one training or coaching – is taken.

Knoa EPM provides a rich source of insight to enhance a contact center performance management strategy because it addresses one of the core challenges of agent performance management - the complexity of many customer-facing processes and the countless software solutions that underpin those processes. Effective use of contact center software applications has a direct impact on both the agent's productivity and the customer experience.

## ***British Telecom Calls on Knoa***

To illuminate the potential impact of experience and performance management, consider this actual situation. Facing massive “rework” of its legacy systems for customer interactions to comply with changing regulations, British Telecom (BT) made the decision to migrate thousands of customer-facing employees to a more current Siebel-based CRM application.

The agents and sales reps impacted by this transition were responsible for all of the interaction (sales, support and service) with the company's entire consumer and SME (small business) customer base. The transition was large and complex. For example, when the contact center agents were migrated to the Siebel-based CRM application, there was a dramatic increase in transaction volume, moving from 2,500 concurrent sessions to 7,500 concurrent sessions and the number of concurrent users increased from 8,000 to 16,000. It was imperative that the CRM application management team know immediately if there were system or application glitches that were affecting agent performance and the customer experience.

To minimize business disruption, the contact center needed to begin to use the new application effectively and efficiently. Performance and behavioral anomalies and problems needed to be flagged for remediation immediately. BT decided to implement an EPM solution for its end-user management concerns in the contact center. EPM provided metrics for adoption and efficient and effective use of the application by the contact center associates. With such precise global metrics, the company gained the ability to identify and resolve critical issues that impact the agent's ability to execute efficient customer service and realize a return on its CRM investment.

Since implementing the experience and performance management solution, the company has experienced impressive performance improvements. Here are just a few:

- **Capturing Agent Innovation.** By analyzing agent behavior at one high-performing contact center, the provider was able to identify very specific agent behaviors that improved productivity by 25%. This innovation was implemented as standard practice for hundreds of advisors, a productivity improvement worth approximately \$3 million.
- **Reduction in Average Handling Times.** The EPM system highlighted countless ways to strip seconds from the AHT by streamlining the workflow and removing meaningless error and warning messages.
- **Faster On-boarding.** With real-time feedback on user errors during the crucial early stages, agents were fully operational four times faster.
- **Improved Agent Effectiveness.** The EPM system identified a number of errors that the agents were making because of a non-intuitive user interface or cumbersome process. For one particular error, it was taking 9 seconds, on average, for the agents to recover. Usually a small change to the user interface corrected the problem.
- **Improved productivity due to the rapid identification of technological bottlenecks.** The EPM system highlighted that the company needed to increase capacity for more than 600 desktops. The uplift enabled an increase in response times and increased application uptime, which enabled a 10% increase in productivity for its business service advisors. The company estimated the revenue protected to be more than \$2 million.
- **Reduction in the cost of managing application performance by roughly \$300,000 per year.** EPM solutions were able to identify that 25% of reported problems were not real application performance issues. Real issues are resolved 25% faster and comprehensive data has obviated the majority of on-site support visits.

## You Can Manage What you Can Measure

Actionable metrics to improve agent performance distinguish those firms that achieve their contact center goals from those that struggle. Contact center managers and supervisors tasked with improving efficiency will find it difficult to do so without end-user experience and performance metrics to identify system issues and pinpoint targets for improving the performance of servicing agents on an ongoing basis. By taking the guess work out of managing applications, and identifying problems from the agent perspective, EPM technologies gives contact center managers precise metrics on how effectively agents execute when using the call center technologies. EPM solutions provide the most accurate metrics possible on the performance of the application from the agent perspective, and deliver an unprecedented level of visibility into the actual performance of the end-users. With the help of EPM solutions, enterprises have actionable insight to improve the performance received and achieved by CRM and contact center application end-users.

### *About Knoa*

## Transforming Performance Management

Knoa® Software is transforming the performance management industry with end-user experience monitoring solutions that reach beyond infrastructure and application performance to monitor, measure and manage how end-users are utilizing the application to optimize business process execution. Knoa customers not only know if core enterprise applications are delivering an acceptable user experience, but also, if application users are executing key processes effectively and efficiently – the key to achieving business value and ROI. Knoa is headquartered in New York, NY.

For more information about Knoa, please visit [www.knoa.com](http://www.knoa.com), or email us at [sales@knoa.com](mailto:sales@knoa.com).

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