# Build your Case for a Proactive Contact Center:

## Leverage Analytics as an Early Warning System

**NICE · inContact**

**CONTACTBABEL**

# CONTENTS

# INTRODUCTION: Proactive Contact Center

A proactive contact center constantly looks for ways to reach out to customers, acting early to manage situations rather than simply reacting to events.

This White Paper looks at six business issues that analytics solutions can optimize, providing organizations with an early warning system to identify issues before they become problems, helping them reach out proactively to customers to improve their experience and maintain profitability.

Analytics solutions can be used to address various business issues, including:

- agent improvement and quality assurance
- business process optimization
- avoidance of litigation and fines
- customer satisfaction and experience improvements
- increases in revenue and profitability
- improvements in contact center operational performance, and cost reduction
- conduct churn analysis and increase customer retention.

## What effect does interaction analytics have on your customers' experience?

3%
2%
16%
31%
48%
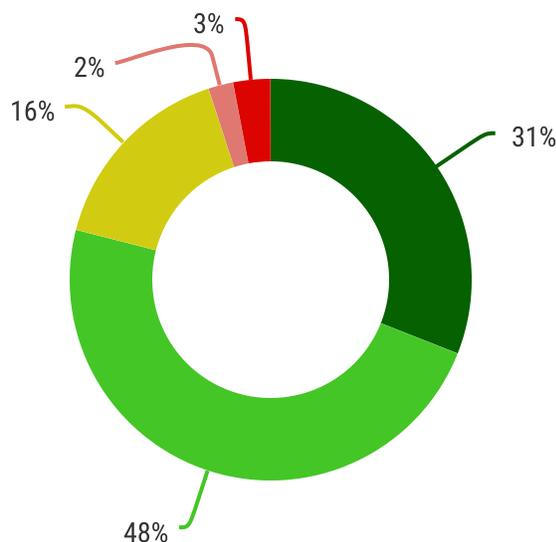
Source: ContactBabel

● Strongly positive  ● Positive  ● Neutral  ● Negative  ● Strongly negative

As the chart shows, the effects of analytics solutions on the customer experience are generally very positive. This White Paper shows the effect that proactive analytics can have on cost, revenue, quality and insight, as well as improving customer experience.

# REDUCE COST PER INTERACTION

## Optimize call handling times

Long call durations may be linked with poor agent abilities; lack of knowledge; lengthy navigation between multiple systems; complicated calls, and of course, will impact on cost, queue times and the customer experience.

Short average handle times can be as bad, as they could indicate a lack of agent capabilities: agents may simply be passing on the call to a colleague, or even deliberately losing the connection. Or the contact center could be handling too many simple calls that would be better off handled by self-service: a quick and easily resolved common issue could be proactively added to the IVR announcement, put up on the website or sent to customers via email/SMS.

The problem for businesses is that they often don't know with any level of confidence why call durations differ. Agents may flag up issues to their supervisor if they see something happening in recent calls, but that does not provide enough information to act upon. Analytics helps to find out whether these issues are taking place throughout the entire call volume, and allows businesses to quantify and prioritize issues.

## Cut quality assurance costs

By monitoring and categorizing 100% of interactions, only the most relevant can be passed through to the supervisor, greatly reducing the amount of time, and in some cases headcount, required to carry out quality assurance.

Some businesses report that automating the quality assurance process has enabled large contact centers to decrease headcount of these teams by as much as 75%, making very significant cost savings.

# Optimize self-service

Improving self-service optimization is often a quick win that can provide immediate economic benefit to businesses: almost 1 in 4 calls that go into an IVR system are 'zeroed-out' - rejected by the customer in favor of an agent.

**23%**
of IVR self-service calls are abandoned

Source: ContactBabel

Use analytics to review these failed self-service sessions and categorize them to improve the IVR process. Common findings are that the IVR system is poorly worded, menu choices are not intuitive or don't match current service choices. There may also be problems with a lack of customer awareness that various activities can be carried out by self-service.

Analytics can identify what customers are most likely to search for in a self-service application, and proactively provide them with this earlier within the engagement. IVR menus can be optimized, with options rearranged, removed or introduced to reflect customer demand.

# Proactive crisis management

A real-time analytics solution with automated root-cause analysis capabilities - constantly looking for anomalies and new patterns - can identify spikes in unusual activity shortly after it happens, alerting specific users to the key issues so as to handle them before they run out of control, damaging the brand and driving up call volumes and service costs.

# Conversational AI

Sophisticated chatbots or virtual agents encourage the visitor to engage with them using natural language rather than keywords, looking for the actual intent behind the customer's question. Answers marked by customers as correct and useful can be fed back to the knowledge base serving the AI, which means that similar future requests can be handled successfully through automation.

# INCREASE INTERACTION QUALITY

## Improve quality assurance

Interaction analytics tries to take the guesswork out of improving customer experience, agent performance and customer insight. By moving from anecdote-based decisions, from qualitative to quantitative information, some order is put on the vast quantity of interactions that many businesses have in their recording systems, improving the reliability of the intelligence provided to decision-makers.

The need to listen to calls is still there, but those listened to are far more likely to be the right ones, whether for agent evaluation or business insight.

## Support new hires and develop training

Analytics will also make the training and coaching received by agents far more effective and targeted. This is especially important for new agents, as many operations report that half of their overall staff turnover occurs in the first 90 days of the job, when agents are obviously less skilled or confident about their role or the organization.

Analytics can identify the types of behavior - good and bad - that lead to successful call resolution or otherwise, and these can be presented in a proactive and targeted way to the new agent to fast-track them to a level of competency that should reduce attrition and improve quality.

### How useful is analytics for identifying individual training requirements?

49%
44%
7%

● Very useful  ● Useful  ● Not useful
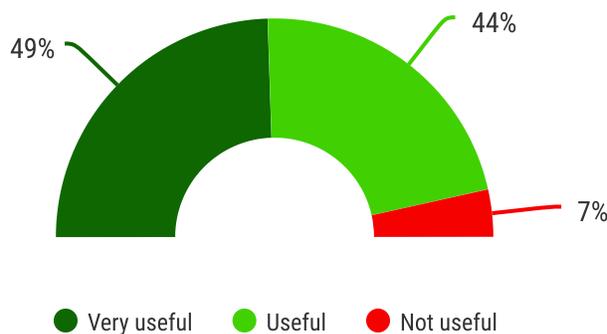
Source: ContactBabel

# DEVELOP INSIGHT

## Customer intent

Do you know **why** your customers are contacting you? Or whether what they are contacting you about has changed since last month?

Analyzing all interactions, categorizing them and looking for similar words and phrases can identify what customers are most concerned about. By listening to 100% of calls and adding metadata such as account status and purchase history, analytics can show you where and why customers are having problems. Then you can communicate with them proactively, driving down inbound service costs and volumes.

## Business intelligence

You may want to hear what your customers think about your competitors, or find out more about their offers and pricing. Analytics can seek out mentions of competitors, and collate them into actionable business insights.

For example, you may discover that a combination of issues mentioned by the customer on a call, as well as the mention of a competitor's name is correlated with an extremely high churn rate. If this happens, you can use real-time monitoring to trigger a customer offer to be made within the call, or trigger a post-call event, such as an email, phone call or SMS offering incentives to remain loyal.

## Rapid reaction

An agent may not notice a trend that something new is happening until they receive several calls about it, but even if they are proactive, they may not receive that type of call again for several hours or even days. Analytics identifies trends across the entire operation as they happen, instead of waiting on agents to realize something out of the ordinary is going on.

# REDUCE RISK

## Compliance with legal regulations

Many businesses, especially those in finance, insurance, public sector and debt collection, have become encumbered with regulations which they must follow strictly, with potentially expensive penalties for failure, including heavy fines and criminal prosecution. Contact centers have tried to reduce their risk through scripting, call monitoring and call recording, but these do not offer any guarantees or proof that compliance has definitely occurred.

Analytics mean that 100% of interactions can be verified as being compliant - and be proven to be so - preventing disputes or escalation of enquiries by monitoring the exact language used within each call, stopping the risk of significant fines.

## Adherence to script

Real-time analytics means that phone-based contracts can be seen to be completed first-time, with all relevant information provided to the customer on the call, and red-flags on the agent's screen if they have missed saying anything vital, or made an error. This reduces the need to call a customer back and avoids any future dispute over whether a legitimate contract has been made.

Analytics can also be used to optimize interactions: businesses that have identified the most successful terms, characteristics and behaviors for increasing sales conversions or debt collections can use real-time monitoring to check the agent is using the right terminology and behavior on the call.

## 78%
of businesses state that real-time analytics is useful or very useful for compliance

Source: ContactBabel

08

# INCREASE REVENUE

## Improve cross-selling and debt collection

Analytics provides two benefits for debt collectors: the ability to prove compliance, and through the analysis of successful and unsuccessful calls, the chance to understand the type of agent language and behavior that yields the best results, and share these with underperforming agents.

The same principle of matching successful outcomes with particular call traits can be used for improving cross-selling and up-selling rates in sales environments.

**70%**

of businesses state that real-time analytics is useful or very useful for cross-selling
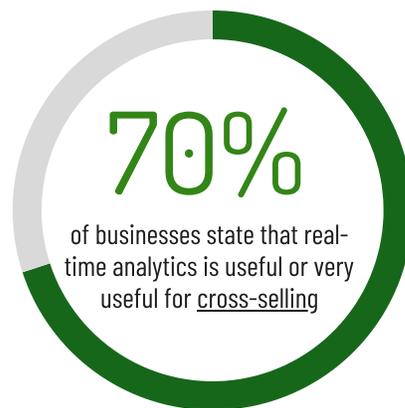
Source: ContactBabel

## Decrease customer churn

Using real-time analytics, linked with a company's own CRM systems, agents can be provided with up-to-the-second advice on how to handle customers identified as being at risk of churn, analyzing what the customer is saying on the call in order to update the best offer available for that customer.

Analytics can be used to identify customer phrases or behaviors that have been shown to indicate likely cancellations. Businesses can protect their profit margins by making sure that agents are only offering incentives such as discounts and money-off coupons only to those valuable customers who are at risk of churning.
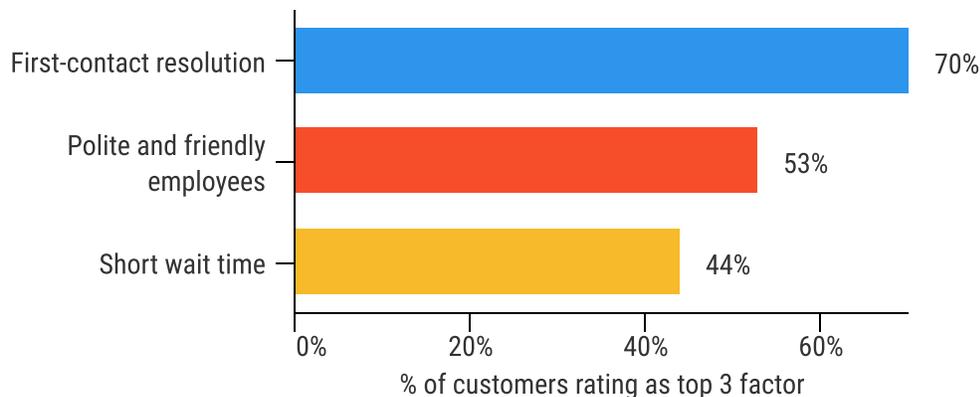
Integrating speech analytics with desktop analytics allows CRM information such as the value of the customer to be added to the decisioning engine, providing extra accuracy and confidence that any offer made will be the right one.

# BOOST CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

## First-contact resolution

The major driver of contact center and customer experience success, first-contact resolution (FCR) can be increased by identifying repeat customer interactions and eliminating the root cause.

### Top 3 most important factors to a customer contacting an organization

| Factor | % of customers rating as top 3 factor |
|---|---|
| First-contact resolution | 70% |
| Polite and friendly employees | 53% |
| Short wait time | 44% |

% of customers rating as top 3 factor

Source: ContactBabel

First-contact resolution rates have to be viewed in context: a very high FCR rate can mean that:

- A contact center is handling simple and repetitive interactions that could be moved to self-service, or which could be addressed on a website and through better marketing communications
- Callers are dropping out of self-service to speak with agents because the self-service application is failing in its task and should be re-engineered
- Unclear marketing communications are causing customers to reach out
- Interactions are being received that are actually driven by mistakes from elsewhere in the enterprise.

Analytics show **why** the FCR rate is what it is. A contact center with very high FCR may actually be using excessive resources and storing up problems for the future: analytics can provide an early warning that not everything is as efficient as it seems.

# Customer satisfaction and complaint analysis

Analysis of call characteristics, agent behaviors and interaction outcomes provide estimates of customer satisfaction scores or NPS on every call, and can also predict the attrition of customers based on what they have said and what has happened within the call, allowing the business to act proactively to manage possible customer churn.

14% of US calls received by contact centers are complaints, with around 80% of these actually being about problems elsewhere in the enterprise (rather than in the contact center). Understanding and acting upon the factors driving these complaints will clearly make a huge difference to cost and customer satisfaction, and large-scale analysis of these calls can provide the insight needed to rectify issues before they become widespread.

On an individual interaction basis, real-time analytics tracks words and phrases related to complaints (such as 'supervisor', 'manager', 'complain', 'unhappy' etc.), allowing escalation to a supervisor, or screen-popping to provide agents with suggestions of how to handle the call. Emotion detection and sentiment analysis may also be used to identify unhappy or wavering customers within the call, allowing the agent to take action at once.

# Matching agents with customers

Predictive behavioral routing uses insights gathered from historical interactions and the analysis of customer communication types in order to choose the agent whose skills and characteristics are most likely to achieve a positive response from the next customer in the queue.

Through analyzing historical interactions, each customer can be matched against a specific personality style. When this customer calls again, they are identified and routed to an agent who has had positive outcomes interacting with this specific personality type. This increase in empathy and the matching of communication styles has seen successful agent-customer pairings achieve significantly higher sales closure rates and better customer satisfaction scores.

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

Being proactive means that businesses can identify potential issues and act upon them before they become real problems. Analytics solutions help businesses understand what's happening in a business and why, leading to improvements in:

## Cost

- Long interaction times may be due to lack of agent experience: analytics helps to focus training
- Understand which interactions could be handled by self-service and avoid unnecessary calls
- Identify unusual activity and quickly alter processes to avoid spikes

## Quality

- Monitor & score 100% of interactions so that any agent or systemic issue is picked up early
- Avoid high levels of damaging new agent attrition by close performance monitoring

## Insight

- Understand why customers are contacting you and proactively communicate with them
- Immediately act upon real-time analysis of what customers are talking about

## Risk

- Prove compliance and check in real-time that the agent is following the script

## Revenue

- Identify customers at risk of churn and handle this within the call
- Improve cross-selling and debt collection outcomes through sharing best practice

## Experience

- Improve first-contact resolution rates by understanding why customers are contacting you
- Stop unnecessary calls at source, using self-service and proactive automation
- Predict customer satisfaction and handle complaints and churn-risks within the interaction

CONTACTBABEL

ContactBabel is the contact center industry expert. If you have a question about how the industry works, or where it's heading, the chances are we have the answer.

The coverage provided by our massive and ongoing primary research projects is matched by our experience analyzing the contact center industry. We understand how technology, people and process best fit together, and how they will work collectively in the future.

Free research reports available from **www.contactbabel.com** (US and UK versions) include:

- The Inner Circle Guide to AI, Chatbots & Machine Learning
- The Inner Circle Guide to AI-Enabled Self-Service
- The Inner Circle Guide to Cloud-based Contact Centre Solutions
- The Inner Circle Guide to Contact Centre Remote Working Solutions
- The Inner Circle Guide to Customer Interaction Analytics
- The Inner Circle Guide to First-Contact Resolution
- The Inner Circle Guide to Fraud Reduction & PCI Compliance
- The Inner Circle Guide to Omnichannel
- The Inner Circle Guide to Outbound
- The Inner Circle Guide to the Voice of the Customer
- The Inner Circle Guide to Workforce Optimization
- The European Contact Centre Decision-Makers' Guide
- The UK Contact Centre Decision-Makers' Guide
- The US Contact Center Decision-Makers' Guide
- The UK Customer Experience Decision-Makers' Guide
- The US Customer Experience Decision-Makers' Guide
- UK Contact Centre Verticals: Finance; Insurance; Outsourcing; Retail & Distribution
- US Contact Center Verticals: Finance; Insurance; Retail & Distribution

# NICE·inContact

NICE inContact works with organizations of all sizes to create extraordinary and trustworthy customer experiences that build deeper brand loyalty and relationships that last.

With NICE inContact CXone™, the industry's most complete cloud customer experience platform, we enable an exceptional agent and customer experience—every time and on every channel.

For more information, visit niceincontact.com