

# White Paper

## How to Guide: Create a Continuous Process Improvement Method for Customer Satisfaction

*Align Your Organization to a Customer Centric Management Approach*

*March 2013*

## INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive market, more and more companies have come to realize the deciding factor for a customer is the experience they have in their ongoing interactions with the company. According to the Temkin Group, fifty-three percent of large companies have the goal to deliver the best customer experience in their industry within three years and seventy-seven percent of large companies plan to spend more on customer experience in 2013 than they did in 2012.

Customer Satisfaction drives choice over other company competitors. It has become critical for supplier partners to adjust to this demanding requirement by creating a great customer experience for their client's customers.

## THE CONTINUOUS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Improvements require ongoing attention. The customer's interaction changes all the time. For example, the use of channels changing from mobile, to online, to an agent. Proactively developing and putting focus on the development of tools, problem resolution methods and finally feedback is an effective environment for adjusting to change.



**Systematic Problem Identification (SPI):** This tool automates approximately 80% of problems. The tool enables continuous mining of CSAT data each week in a quick and efficient way and compares several data sources (CSAT, QT, etc.). On top of that feature, SPI offers a comprehensive view of the problems with the biggest impact to performance at one or more levels including the driver, call type or performer level (agent, team, split, account, etc.). Instead of spending hours analyzing data, focus is on improvement of opportunity areas and replicating good behaviors.

**Systematic Problem Solving (SPS):** SPI is complemented by a structured and disciplined closed-loop action planning method. This management approach allows attention on not only addressing the problems with the biggest lift to CSAT, but enables the team to diligently track actions, root causes and progress of tasks. In addition, there is a direct link created accurately measuring and reporting on the impact of action plans to performance.

**Visual Management & GEMBA Walks:** Through visual management and GEMBA walks, people connect and communicate; this is core to encouraging discussion on “**How we are doing, how do we know and what we are doing to make things better!**” GEMBA walks are literally walks around the floor to encourage on the spot feedback and idea sharing by discussing information on visual boards. This is an innovative way of presenting and communicating vision/mission, goals and objectives, current performance, value streams, root causes, action plans and bright spots to all levels of the account (agents, the management team, support areas and the client). Visible communication helps socialize action plans the program has in place. The regular communication and discussion of all these aspects of the business can align and influence:

- Individual coaching, the understanding of what is and isn't working, individuals and teams to identify solutions for defects
- Tapping into agents' wealth of knowledge about customers
- Appreciative leadership by celebrating and communicating success

**Agent Feedback Loop:** This communication channel and best practice provides the opportunity to tap into the agents' wealth of knowledge about the customers' experience. An understanding of what is and isn't working as well and what is holding back; whether it is tools, the product, processes or performance. Included is valuable direct input from agents on what they think can be done to improve CSAT according to what they are hearing on the phones. Closing the loop with the agents on the impact of their feedback and how it supports the overall account objective is an essential part of this process!



## CASE STUDY

One of our biggest financial clients made the business decision to work towards achieving a Number 1 ranking with JD Power. In partnership with that client, we looked to achieve the highest rating available from JD Power in the call center business. This effort included an unprecedented effort spanning multiple sites, vendors, Lines of Business and Call Types.

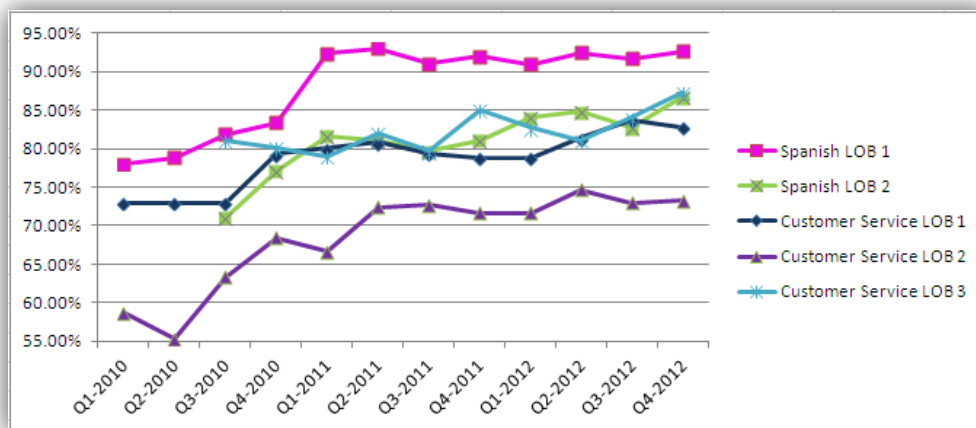
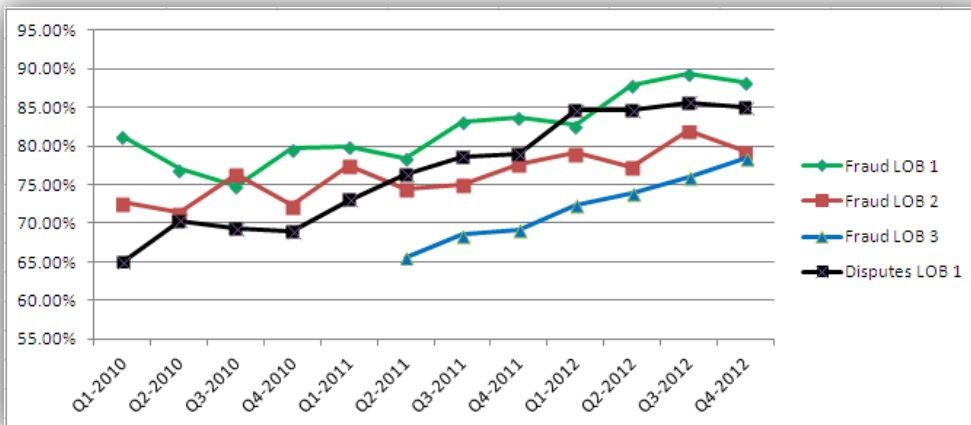
To meet that challenge, we focused our efforts on the effective use of the multiple tools we had developed and put in place and the new ways of thinking which allowed us to unleash even better CSAT through our solid Continuous Process Improvement process.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing this framework has been a true journey of continuous process improvement by itself by streamlining and adjusting the tools available to the account’s particular needs. We started out with very simple versions which we continuously evolved over time. It has been very much a “learning by doing” approach constantly improving the SPI tool and visuals with inputs from management, the client and agents. Over time, by refining our analysis and root cause categorization, as well as by asking the right questions and becoming more knowledgeable, we have fine-tuned greatly about how to effectively conduct GEMBA walks at all levels of the organization, the knowledge transfer, analytical thinking and highly productive brainstorming sessions. Those activities became more and more engrained in our culture and we transformed into a true CPI environment with our “Business As Usual” methodology of managing the account. Sykes has essentially transformed the program into a holistic customer centric operation.

## RESULTS IN OUR FINANCIAL ACCOUNT

We can see that taking 2010 as the baseline, over the course of the last two years we have successfully improved CSAT by an average of over 8% network wide and as much as 20% in some lines of business!



## IN SUMMARY

Customers want to be treated in a way that makes them stay – the challenge for contact is meeting these needs in an environment that is looking to be cost effective. When efficiency and effectiveness meet, Customer Satisfaction is achieved in the best possible way. The processes describe do just that—combining communication, planning, measurement, and feedback.

For Sykes creating this value is how we do business every day.

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