


Tasha's Evaluation Memo





Memorandum


To: Dmitri


From: Tasha

 Subject: Serious Decline in Call Center Performance

 You asked me to give you a snapshot evaluation of the call center performance. As you know, the center has had some problems recently, and both of us have had concerns about their effect on performance.

 I broke down call center performance into three categories: service quality, financials, and human resources. We have used these in past evaluations and have been satisfied with them.

 As we feared, performance this year has been slipping; more worrisome is the possibility that it will worsen.

 The quality of service is still high but eroding. Although there are some bright spots in managing costs, the department is significantly over budget. The human resources situation is dire because of unsustainable turnover, which is driving most of the cost increases. Understaffing of bilingual reps seems to be the main factor in a chain reaction that leads to turnover.

Service Quality

The quality of our customer service is still high but declining.

Positives

We have one of the highest rated call center operations in the industry. Because the center was recognized as a strategic asset, not a cost center, the department has improved on most measures of quality. A core of experienced reps continues to provide excellent service, and these reps are leaders and mentors to new reps.

Negatives

Nevertheless, quality is on the decline. Here are a few indicators of quality problems:

- The number of callers put on hold is up 15 percent.
- The number of hang-ups is up 13 percent.
- The average call length is up 2 minutes.
- Customer complaints about service are up 27 percent.

Service calls (phone, email, and live chat) currently exceed our daily capacity an average of 15 percent. Eighteen months ago, we had the small percentage of unused capacity we always budget for. It gave us a buffer for temporary surges in call volume, absences of reps, meetings, and other reasons.

Customers who request a Spanish-speaking rep account for more than half of the increased call volume. This explains the worst call bottleneck: lack of capacity for Spanish speakers.

Two years ago, the company decided to market more aggressively to Spanish speakers. The campaign has been successful. Sales to other segments have also increased, although at a slower rate. We are seeing the results in the call center.



Financials

While the call center has reduced expenses, it is now running over the budget.

Positives

On the positive side, the department has found ways to cut costs in other areas, continuing a grassroots effort that began in the center about four years ago. Without the savings, the budget picture would be much worse.

Negatives

The call center is running over budget. Final numbers for the year aren't available, but the best estimate is that the department will exceed our cost target by about \$303,000. Most of the increase, \$200,000, is attributable to overtime and hiring and training expenses far in excess of what was budgeted.



Human Resources

We retain quite a few well-regarded reps—for now. But we are losing experienced reps in unprecedented numbers.

Positives

We retain a core of experienced reps who rate highly each year on internal performance reports and receive positive customer

comments. The long-service employees exert leadership and mentor new hires. Training takes new hires only so far; on-the-job learning has to do the rest. The senior reps fill this need every day.

Negatives

Nevertheless, turnover has surged in the last year: It is 100 percent higher. This sudden spike wouldn't be so alarming if we were losing only new and inexperienced reps. But some of our most experienced and productive reps have quit: Hiroko, Jack, Agata, Rosa, and Ursula. I'm told that more are considering leaving.

According to exit interviews and my observations, our most valued reps are leaving due to overwork, stress, and the belief that no steps will be taken to make the situation better.



Conclusion

The evidence tells me that we have a serious problem that needs attention. I'd like to go over the review with you and answer any questions you have. I can email some possible meeting times.