

Contents at a Glance

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Part I: From the Ground Up: An Overview of the Call Center</i>	7
Chapter 1: A First Look at Call Centers.....	9
Chapter 2: Business Basics: Models and Drivers and Goals, Oh My!.....	19
Chapter 3: Developing the Cast of Characters	43
Chapter 4: Building a Call Center of Your Own.....	65
Chapter 5: Choosing the Outsourcing Option.....	85
<i>Part II: The Master Plan: Finance, Analysis, and Resource Management</i>	107
Chapter 6: Analyze This!	109
Chapter 7: Right People, Right Place, Right Time: Resource Management.....	143
Chapter 8: Call Center Scheduling: Not As Simple As 1, 2, 3	157
<i>Part III: Making Life Better with Technology</i>	185
Chapter 9: An Introduction to Call Center Technology	187
Chapter 10: Technological Enhancements: Getting the Newest and Coolest Stuff	209
Chapter 11: Using Home Agents.....	221
<i>Part IV: Creating High-Performance Teams</i>	241
Chapter 12: Hiring and Training.....	243
Chapter 13: Creating a Coaching Culture	257
Chapter 14: Creating a Motivated Workforce.....	265
<i>Part V: Ensuring Continuous Improvement</i>	281
Chapter 15: The Power of Process Improvement.....	283
Chapter 16: Mastering Change in Your Organization.....	299
Chapter 17: Quality-Control Programs and Certifications	313

<i>Part VI: The Part of Tens</i>	321
Chapter 18: Ten Ways to Improve Agents' Job Satisfaction.....	323
Chapter 19: Ten Questions Every Call Center Manager Should Answer	329
Chapter 20: Almost Ten Ways to Decrease Call Center Costs and Increase Efficiency.....	335
<i>Appendix A: Key Call Center Definitions and Concepts</i>	341
<i>Appendix B: Call Center Support Services</i>	349
<i>Index</i>	353

<http://www.pbookshop.com>

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
About This Book	1
Foolish Assumptions	2
How This Book Is Organized	3
Part I: From the Ground Up: An Overview of the Call Center.....	3
Part II: The Master Plan: Finance, Analysis, and Resource Management.....	3
Part III: Making Life Better with Technology	3
Part IV: Creating High-Performance Teams	4
Part V: Ensuring Continuous Improvement.....	4
Part VI: The Part of Tens.....	4
Appendixes	4
Icons Used in This Book	4
Where to Go from Here.....	5
<i>Part 1: From the Ground Up: An Overview of the Call Center</i>	7
Chapter 1: A First Look at Call Centers	9
Defining Call Centers	9
Inbound, outbound, or blended.....	10
Contact or call center: What's in a name?.....	10
Tripping Down Memory Lane: The Evolution of the Call Center	11
Moving from low-tech to high-tech.....	12
Moving from cost center to profit center	12
Meeting legal and image challenges	12
Today's call centers: Ringing up big numbers	13
Making Call Centers Work	14
Identifying good call center managers	14
Defining the culture	14
Understanding What Makes Call Centers Good or Bad	15
Characteristics of a good call center.....	16
Characteristics of a poor call center	17
Chapter 2: Business Basics: Models and Drivers and Goals, Oh My!	19
Creating a Call Center Business Model.....	20
Developing your mission	22
Dissecting a typical call center mission.....	23



Determining Your Business Goals 24
 Defining a good objective 26
 Avoiding misleading measures 26
 Considering service level 27
 Flowing goals through the accountability funnel 28
Measuring Progress with Performance Drivers 29
 Categorizing the drivers 31
 Balancing the drivers 34
Carrying Out Call Center Best Practices 36
 Focusing on people 37
 Focusing on process 38
 Focusing on technology 40
Reporting: Providing Feedback 41

Chapter 3: Developing the Cast of Characters 43

Designing an Organizational Chart 44
 Key considerations 44
 Key tasks 45
Introducing the Call Center Team:
 Roles and Responsibilities 46
 Senior management 46
 Call center manager 48
 Agent performance team 49
 Scheduler 52
 Analysts 53
 Compliance and procedures officer 55
 Call center agent 55
Finding the Best People for Your Jobs 56
 Locating a call center manager 56
 Picking an agent performance team: Recruiter,
 trainer, and team leader 56
 Hiring a scheduler 57
 Acquiring analysts 58
 Rounding up a compliance and procedures officer 58
 Recruiting agents 59
Creating and Managing Call Center Culture 59
Sizing the Organization 60
 Ensuring the best management span 61
 Planning for growth 63

Chapter 4: Building a Call Center of Your Own 65

First Things First: Asking Questions 65
 What are the call center's business goals? 66
 What functions will the call center perform? 66
 What support services will the call center require? 67
 What skills do you need on your planning team? 68

How big will the call center be? 68

Will the call center stand alone, or do you plan to network it? 68

X Marks the Spot: Situating Your Call Center 69

 Considering infrastructure 70

 Considering the available workforce..... 70

 Locating near other facilities in the corporation..... 71

 Getting close to your customers..... 71

 Being far, far away from your customers 72

 Going big-city versus rural 73

Setting Up Shop..... 74

 Beyond bricks and mortar: Planning the facilities 74

 Designing the ideal space 76

 Understanding environmental issues..... 76

 Taking special needs into account 77

Building a Call Center One Step at a Time..... 77

 Creating the plan..... 79

 Managing the project..... 80

Planning for Problems..... 80

 Multiple locations 81

 Stand-alone call centers 81

 Networked call centers 82

Chapter 5: Choosing the Outsourcing Option 85

Understanding the Benefits and Risks of Outsourcing..... 86

 Potential benefits 86

 Potential risks 87

Deciding Whether to Outsource..... 88

 Clarifying your internal costs 88

 Adding hidden costs to your outsourcer's cost 91

 Putting your comparison together 94

Picking the Right Outsourcing Partner 95

 Looking for outsourcers in all the right places 96

 Designing the contract documents..... 99

 Negotiating the contract 101

Planning the Transition 101

 Elements of a typical transition plan..... 101

 Roles and resources required 102

Developing a Strong Relationship with Your Outsourcer 102

 Setting expectations and creating operating guidelines..... 103

 Verifying the outsourcer's understanding..... 103

 Staying involved..... 104

 Knowing when to jump in 105

***Part II: The Master Plan: Finance, Analysis, and Resource Management*..... 107**

Chapter 6: Analyze This!109

Adding It Up: Call Center Math	109
Understanding the fundamental concepts	110
Using models in calculations.....	110
Analyzing Business Goals	111
Measuring Business Goals.....	112
Breaking down the operating budget.....	112
Measuring cost per contact.....	115
Measuring cost per customer	117
Measuring cost per resolution.....	117
Ringing up revenue.....	118
Scoring satisfaction	119
Performance Drivers: Managing the Results.....	121
Cost per agent hour.....	123
Call length.....	125
Contacts per customer.....	127
Occupancy.....	128
Conversion per contact.....	130
Dollar value per conversion	131
Accessibility	131
Agent professionalism and ability	132
Company and call center policies and procedures.....	133
Setting Performance Targets.....	134
Targets for accessibility/service level	134
Targets for call length	137
Targets for occupancy	141

Chapter 7: Right People, Right Place, Right Time: Resource Management143

Understanding Resource Management Tasks and Concepts.....	143
Forecasting	143
Scheduling	144
Full-time equivalent	144
Real-time management of resources	144
Forecasting: Timing Is Everything.....	145
Long term: Setting budget and capital projections	145
Midterm: Creating the schedules.....	145
Short term: Making adjustments.....	146
Tracking forecast accuracy	146
Using the Tools of the Scheduling Trade	147
Calculating with Erlang C.....	147
Planning with spreadsheets	148
Using workforce management software.....	148

Scheduling the Work That Your Call Center Needs to Do.....	148
Starting long: The first step in forecasting call volume	150
Breaking the forecast into intervals	150
Forecasting call length	154
Accounting for unique situations	154

Chapter 8: Call Center Scheduling: Not As Simple As 1, 2, 3 157

Calculating the Resources Required to Do the Job.....	157
Considering occupancy.....	158
Calculating expected occupancy	159
Calculating expected occupancy versus optimal occupancy	160
Affecting occupancy	163
Give 'em a break: Accounting for off-phone time	165
Determining When the Resources Are Required.....	168
Calculating base staff requirements by half-hour intervals	168
Adding in the off-phone requirements	171
Using your forecast to determine call center size.....	174
Scheduling Available Resources to Meet Caller Demand.....	174
Starting to build your schedules with full-time shifts	174
Filling in the gaps with part time shifts.....	177
Creating a summary of schedules.....	178
Creating weekly schedules	178
Creating People-Friendly Schedules.....	179
Letting agents bid for shifts.....	179
Offering flextime.....	180
Accounting for Unique Situations.....	181
Scheduling for different types of work.....	181
Making contingency plans	182
Scheduling for multiple-site call centers	184

Part III: Making Life Better with Technology..... 185

Chapter 9: An Introduction to Call Center Technology 187

Seeing What Technology Does for Call Centers	187
Using Telecommunications Technology in the Call Center	189
Automatic number identification.....	189
Dialed number identification service	190
Dynamic network routing	190
Automatic call distributor	191
Predictive dialing.....	194
Interactive voice response	196
Voice over Internet Protocol.....	198
Hosted call center applications	200
Web tools	201

Getting Information to Agents.....	202
Giving agents the tools they need	202
Providing specialized call center applications	203
Connecting agents to the local area network.....	204
Generating Reports	205
Using multiple systems to generate reports	206
Pulling the data together	206

Chapter 10: Technological Enhancements: Getting the Newest and Coolest Stuff209

Integrating Phones and Computers.....	209
Screen pops	210
Mandatory data entry.....	210
Soft-phone functionality.....	210
Enhanced reporting.....	211
Idle-time training.....	211
Coordinated screen transfer	211
Call routing	211
Dynamic scripting.....	212
Call blending.....	212
Web-enabled call centers.....	212
Warehousing Data to Track Agent Performance.....	212
Monitoring Quality	213
Using Customer Relationship Management Technology	214
Putting CRM to work	215
Developing a CRM strategy.....	216
Employing a Knowledge Base	216
Surveying Customer Satisfaction.....	217
Getting Approval for Technology.....	218

Chapter 11: Using Home Agents221

Seeing Reasons for a Home Agent Program.....	222
Making your business run more efficiently	222
Providing an attractive work option for your agents.....	225
Deciding Whether a Home Agent Program Is Right for You	226
Figuring Out the Technology	227
Deciding where to host the network.....	227
Setting up a network in-house.....	228
Implementing the Program.....	231
Creating an operating plan	231
Planning the work.....	232
Building a management team	232
Explaining the program to your staff	233
Selecting and/or recruiting agents	234
Setting up the agents at home.....	235

Integrating Best Practices into the Program..... 235
 Delivering uniform customer service..... 236
 Aligning the workforce and quality teams..... 237
 Helping Agents Deal with In-House and At-Home Differences 238
 Training 238
 Isolation..... 238

Part IV: Creating High-Performance Teams 241

Chapter 12: Hiring and Training 243

Recognizing the Key Components of Optimal Performance..... 243
 Managing Employee Performance in Five Simple Steps 244
 Recruiting the Right People 245
 Evaluating skill 245
 Evaluating motivation 248
 Setting Agent Expectations 250
 Setting performance goals 250
 Establishing bonuses..... 250
 Doing the math on agent performance 251
 Balancing your expectations 251
 Giving specific directions 252
 Providing Appropriate Training 253
 Keeping the training simple..... 253
 Covering the basics 254
 Keeping the training short..... 255
 Encouraging continued training..... 255

Chapter 13: Creating a Coaching Culture 257

Seeing the Benefits of Coaching..... 258
 Financial benefits 258
 Performance benefits 258
 Understanding the Principles of Coaching..... 260
 Get the coach on the court..... 260
 Prioritize ruthlessly 260
 Distinguish among management, leadership, and coaching..... 261
 Ask, don't tell..... 261
 Put energy before value 261
 Build on strengths 261
 Focus on one skill and one step at a time..... 262
 Be specific..... 262
 Follow up..... 262
 Practice consistency, repeatability, and results..... 263
 Coaching the Coaches..... 263

Chapter 14: Creating a Motivated Workforce 265

Knowing What Motivating Your Employees Involves	265
Seeing the benefits of motivating agents	267
Identifying why agents leave	267
Figuring Out What Motivates Your Agents.....	268
Understanding what agents want	268
Surveying your agents.....	269
Comparing your call center with others.....	270
Motivating Your Agents	271
Making agents feel valued.....	271
Taking time to recognize agents	272
Paying agents appropriately.....	274
Offering incentive and bonus programs	275
Developing agents' careers.....	278

Part V: Ensuring Continuous Improvement 281**Chapter 15: The Power of Process Improvement 283**

Managing Complexity through Process Improvement	283
Considering complexity in call centers.....	284
Benefiting from process improvement	285
Developing a Culture of Improvement.....	286
Seeing your company through the customer's eyes.....	286
Checking the internal view	287
Mapping your processes.....	288
Involving the team	289
Charting the Flow: An Amateur's Guide to Process Mapping.....	290
Doing a root-cause analysis.....	291
Documenting policies and procedures	292
Staying Informed: Legislative Considerations	293
Law and order: Creating appropriate policies	293
Knowing the laws	294

Chapter 16: Mastering Change in Your Organization 299

Recognizing When Change Leadership Is Needed	299
Understanding common changes in call centers.....	300
Knowing how people react to change.....	301
Seeing why things go wrong sometimes	302
Improving Your Personal Change-Leadership Style	303
Avoiding change pitfalls.....	303
Following the Rule of Change Success	304

Reducing Resistance to Change..... 305
 Earn — and keep — agents’ trust 305
 Communicate well 306
 Show empathy 309
 Identify and work with influential agents 310
 Involve the team..... 311
 Launch a pilot program..... 311

Chapter 17: Quality-Control Programs and Certifications 313

Certifying Your Management Team 313
 In-house versus external programs..... 314
 A course is a course, of course, of course 314
 Who should attend management certification courses? 316
 Instituting a Quality-Control Program 316
 ISO 9001/2000 317
 COPC-2000..... 318
 Six Sigma 318
 Finding Other Sources of Help..... 319
 Consulting firms 319
 Trade shows 320
 Trade magazines 320

Part VI: The Part of Tens..... 321

Chapter 18: Ten Ways to Improve Agents’ Job Satisfaction 323

Recruit People Who Value the Work..... 323
 Clarify Expectations 324
 Provide Thorough Job-Specific Training..... 324
 Ask, Don’t Tell..... 325
 Remove Roadblocks to Success 325
 Calm Fears 325
 Don’t Ask Agents to Do Anything You Wouldn’t Want to Do..... 326
 Communicate Honestly..... 326
 Ask for Feedback 327
 Be Positive..... 327

**Chapter 19: Ten Questions Every Call Center
 Manager Should Answer 329**

How Does Your Call Center Fit into the Bigger Company Picture?..... 329
 Why Are People Calling You?..... 330
 What’s Your Ideal Service-Level Objective?..... 330
 What Does It Cost to Run Your Call Center for One Hour? 331
 Are Your Employees Happy? 331

What Will the Call Center Look Like in 12 to 18 Months?.....	332
What Legislation Affects Your Call Center?	332
How Does Technology Affect Your Call Center?	333
What's Your Disaster Recovery Plan?.....	334
What Are Your Three Initiatives for Improvement?.....	334
Chapter 20: Almost Ten Ways to Decrease Call Center Costs and Increase Efficiency	335
Improve Call Control.....	335
Map and Improve Call Processes	336
Achieve Your Service-Level Objective.....	336
Make Your Call Center Bigger	337
Use Skills-Based Routing.....	337
Turn Idle Time into Training Time	338
Eliminate Unnecessary Calls	338
Find Out What a Change in Agent Utilization Costs.....	339
Relocate Your Call Center	340
Appendix A: Key Call Center Definitions and Concepts	341
Appendix B: Call Center Support Services	349
Employee Testing and Evaluation	349
Management Certification	350
ISO Registration	350
Call Center Consulting	351
Index	353