A close-up photograph of a young woman with long, wavy brown hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a black headset with a microphone and is holding the microphone with her right hand. The background is a blurred office or call center environment with other people working at desks.

APPLYING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE CALL CENTER



BUILDING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

As soon as the concept of emotional intelligence was introduced to the business community in the mid-1990's, the question became, “**where and how can it be applied within the organization for maximum effect?**”

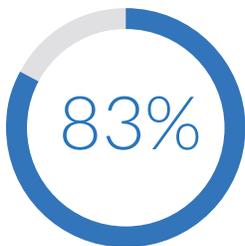
Traditional methods to help improve emotional intelligence have largely been manual and difficult to scale across an organization. While software has helped employees capture customer data and follow proper procedures, it has not provided assistance with what is often the most difficult part of the job: building effective relationships.

To build effective customer relationships, front-line agents need support in exhibiting emotional intelligence.

- 1 Enhanced emotional intelligence for customers results in better problem resolution, more streamlined operational expenses and increased customer satisfaction scores.**
- 2 Enhanced emotional intelligence for agents ensures higher engagement, more consistent voice within the organization and decreased churn.**

Today's modern technology is combining state-of-the-art machine learning with behavioral science to augment the emotional intelligence of contact center employees, resulting in more productive employees and happier customers.

CALL CENTER AGENTS REPRESENT THE VOICE OF THE BRAND TO CUSTOMERS



83% of consumers have had a conversation with a customer service representative or agent via telephone in the course of a year¹



56% of consumers have experienced rage with service received from a contact center²



69% of consumers claim customer service is "extremely important" in their choice of brand or in loyalty to a brand³

Most likely reasons for calling a customer service agent:



63% to resolve a billing issue⁴



45% to start, cancel or change existing service⁴



35% to add or remove account services⁴



31% to report a claim⁴



25% to complain about a visit, interaction or poor service⁴

1| Forrester Trends 2016 The Future of Customer Service.pdf 2| The 2017 National Customer Rage Study 3| The source is the 2017 Microsoft State of the Call Center Report 4| Frost & Sullivan

HOW TO INCREASE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION: TRAIN, COACH, GUIDE



TRAIN: Help Agents Recognize Emotional Cues

Training often requires an intensive 6-8 week program for new employees to learn the organization's policies, procedures and systems. The organization also embeds key brand values and messaging throughout the training – with the hope that new front line employees will exit training with a comprehensive understanding of the product portfolio as well as a more nuanced familiarity with the brand's core principles.

However, what's often absent from the training are the softer skills of working with impatient customers, navigating difficult calls and then immediately taking the next customer call after a poorly-resolved conversation.

Most training is based on the premise that awareness of emotional intelligence is critical to delivering it on a consistent basis. This sentiment is true, but it's only the first step. Motivation and instruction will not work in isolation. In reality, the best training provides both feedback about what's important and practical instruction to:

- 1 **Identify moments** when nonverbal cues are demanding empathy
- 2 **Practice** with feedback in real-time
- 3 **Vary the training** so agents are practicing both functional knowledge about their organization and softer knowledge about how best to communicate with customers

Artificial intelligence systems, powered by knowledge of human behavior, can help agents detect, interpret and respond to customer requests more efficiently and with faster resolution than traditional training programs.

HOW TO INCREASE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION: TRAIN, COACH, GUIDE



COACH: Discover Key Moments to Improve Emotional Intelligence

Agents who self-regulate during moments of frustration and confusion or when they've made mistakes will add value more quickly and, in all likelihood, remain more engaged within the organization. The best way for agents to acquire these skills is through high-quality coaching, and the best contact center supervisors regularly check in with their teams, advocate for team interaction and engage with their agents throughout the day.

“The signs of someone who is good at self-regulation are reflection, thoughtfulness, comfort with ambiguity, change, and not having all the answers.”⁵

In many cases, 1:1 coaching sessions with agents focus on specific moments from individual calls. Supervisors review compliance feedback and call these elements out to help agents communicate specific product features or procedures. Often though, supervisors do not have a standard, consistent or rigorous approach to providing feedback about the intangibles of conversation, including

tone, pace and energy. These are all aspects of communication that will impact the agent's self-awareness and the customer's perception of the call.

In providing emotionally intelligent feedback, supervisors should focus on the following:

- 1 **Train for emotional flexibility and empathy.** Once agents have mastered all of the systems and policies of a contact center, they must rapidly develop the ability to emotionally connect with their customers in all interactions.
- 2 **Train for interpersonal skills.** Front line agents are often grouped into teams under their supervisors. Help them practice taking feedback and incorporating it into their workload; encourage them to be “team players”; and coach them on demonstrating cooperation and curiosity when speaking with a customer.

Computer processing power and the emergence of cloud storage systems have made it possible for new technologies to better support agents at the contact center with streaming coaching. This real-time behavioral guidance pinpoints the exact moments in calls where emotional intelligence is needed. Instead of selecting random calls and trying to identify moments within those calls for coaching, a far more efficient approach is to have technology that identifies those moments in real-time for streamlined post-call coaching.

⁵ Why Emotionally Intelligent People Are More Successful

HOW TO INCREASE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION: TRAIN, COACH, GUIDE



GUIDE: Provide Live Feedback to Immediately Improve Performance

Leveraging innovative technology for agent training and coaching is a great way to build towards true behavioral change where agents can recognize when and how to apply emotional intelligence. The last frontier towards creating a truly emotionally-intelligent service operation lies in the ability to provide agents with live in-call feedback. Specifically, real-time augmented intelligence solutions work by:

- 1 **Reminding and guiding agents in the moment of truth** with objective feedback on the agent and customer's behavior 100% of the time.
- 2 **Promoting awareness of how the agent and the customer are conversing** live during the call, which leads to more emotionally-connected and empathetic behavior when it is most needed.

**“The longer you wait [for giving feedback],
the less effective it will be.”⁶**

– Wendy Capland, executive coach and best-selling author (Inc.)

7 in 10 agents

want to be alerted when a customer is getting tense or frustrated during a call⁴

6 out of 10 agents

want to adopt technology to build better customer relationships⁴

Ultimately, humans are far better than machines at displaying emotion and at being compassionate, but machines (and, in particular, modern AI systems) can be extremely effective at highlighting salient moments and certain sub-optimal behavioral tendencies. By providing this data as feedback, agents can be nudged in the right direction to apply their emotional skills when they are most needed.

⁶ How Emotionally Intelligent People Give Negative Feedback

HOW COGITO CAN HELP

Cogito is the only solution that leverages AI and machine learning to augment emotional intelligence throughout the call center, driving efficiency and business outcomes for enterprise service operations. Cogito also enhances an organization's ability to scale emotional intelligence by allowing for better training, coaching and guidance for their agents.



During **training**, agents can participate in sample calls and act out various scenarios. This helps them identify moments when nonverbal cues are demanding empathy and practice how they apply emotional intelligence before taking real customer calls.



To help with **coaching**, instead of spot listening to a small number of random calls, Cogito allows supervisors to select particular calls and moments within those calls that are relevant for coaching, enabling supervisors and agents to pinpoint together the moments when emotional intelligence is needed.



For **guidance** purposes, Cogito's live in-call guidance ensures agents are equipped to recognize and effectively respond to emotional moments. Cogito also provides a more objective summary of the agent's speaking behavior and overall performance level on all of his/her calls.

In doing so, Cogito helps agents have better conversations and build deeper emotional connections with customers, resulting in:



Improved Executive Insights

Cogito delivered 43x more insights than traditional survey data. Cogito provides data on every customer call, providing transparency and insights that traditional survey data can't deliver.



Enhanced Customer Experience

Companies using Cogito have experienced an average Transactional NPS lift of 7 points in as little as 4 weeks of use.



Increase in agent engagement and productivity

12% reduction in average handle time (AHT)

6% improvement in first call resolution (FCR)

To find out how Cogito can help your business, visit: www.cogitocorp.com.



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