

Microsoft sees 10% increase in call center employee productivity

Microsoft B2C customers are served by a network of global support centers. To provide the best level of service consistently across all locations, Microsoft has to ensure its agents are highly proficient, aligned on process and above all engaged.

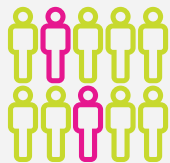
Using Central, Microsoft motivates thousands of outsourced agents daily to track their performance, learn about its services and feel emotionally connected to their work - the results for the business have been remarkable.



10%

Productivity increase*

* two more calls per shift on average per agent.



12%

Cut in absenteeism



89%

Of agents acknowledge new information and can apply it



DEE NILES

Senior Business Program Director



The platform motivates agents at a personal level to do more, do better, and grow.

Using gamification, personalized goals, and microlearning to improve behaviors

Microsoft's B2C customers are served by the company's global network of call centers provided by a group of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) companies. Although calls are monitored, only a small percentage are recorded and reviewed. Agents act accordingly and don't do their best on each and every call, counting on the fact that some won't be evaluated.

Microsoft wanted to ensure that all agents, across all sites and locations deliver a consistent level of quality service. It was researching innovative ways to get its agents engaged, aligned on process and knowledgeable about its products and services.



We wanted to find a solution that would help motivate our agents at a deeper, more meaningful level. One that would get them emotionally engaged to achieve their very best.

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Senior Business Program Director



New ways to recognize and reward

The existing programs for its service agents centered on monthly awards and tangible gifts. They tended to focus on top performers, the top 10% of agents.

Microsoft saw Central as a way to shift the focus - change behaviors, develop skills, and encourage sales in a fun way that motivates everyone equally. Agents could be rewarded and recognized for positive behaviors and outcomes with each customer interaction.

Microsoft had set clear goals for its Central implementation on agent engagement, satisfaction and retention. Furthermore, improving speed to proficiency, boosting agent knowledge and skills, along with sustaining a drive for excellence were set as additional program goals.

Approach

Microsoft made Central part of a larger initiative called "Making Agents Great". The platform uses gamification to engage and reward agents for participating in learning or going beyond the minimum requirements of the job.

Agents are invited to complete weekly challenges and hit daily goals aligned with every employee segment's performance or knowledge levels. Furthermore, the platform is used to deliver ongoing learning on products and process changes. Learning activities are dynamically assigned to employees. New hires receive basic training

aimed at bringing them to competency faster. With tenured employees the focus is more on knowledge updates and sustaining motivation.

Personalized Microlearning

With Central's personalized microlearning, each employee could be handled differently. Content and activities were tailored by performance and tenure. And helped to create a culture of continuous learning.

Real-time Performance Management

By presenting agents' goals visually, and, then, showing in real-time how each activity advances or delays them from hitting their objectives, motivation was elevated. It was also enhanced through instant recognition and rewards for demonstration of desired behaviors.

Advanced Gamification

Central had game levels and points tied to individual employee goals. Competitions were between same grade employees and centered on level of improvement, giving everyone a chance to win.



Results

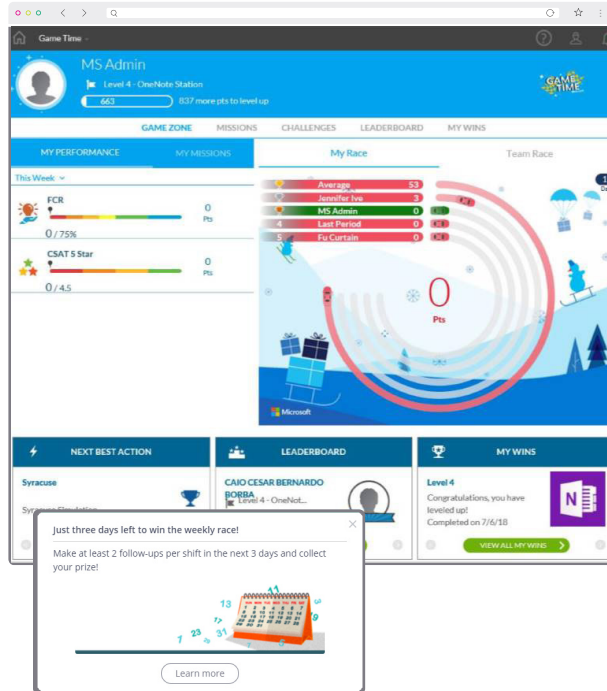
Results were impressive, reflecting an annual return on investment in the millions. Notably, instead of trying to make that last call of the day drag out or avoid taking another call, agents began trying to squeeze in a couple more calls to receive more points for the day, causing a productivity increase of 10%.

Agents' sales rates doubled because they'd be rewarded for citing related products and selling them during service calls. Absenteeism dropped 12% - for agents, missing a day of work, meant missing a chance to gain points and recognition. On learning, agent



The program is employee-centric and designed to focus on motivating agents and enabling them to be successful in their goals. Central puts control in agents' hands.

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awareness of new information rose from 23% to 89% with agents acknowledging in internal surveys that not only were they aware but also able to apply new knowledge in their work.

About Central

Central helps the world's leading companies make employees the center of business success by improving their engagement, learning and performance.

Its Better Together platform holistically blends advanced gamification, personalized microlearning, and real-time performance management to sustainably motivate employees to challenge themselves and strengthen skills while providing data-driven feedback in their quest to reach their full potential.

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