CX AND THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

A manifesto for implementing Workforce Engagement Management to meet the challenges faced by the 21st-century contact centre

EVALUAGENT

Contents

"We stand on the brink of a technological revolution that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work, and relate to one another. In its scale, scope, and complexity, the transformation will be unlike anything humankind has experienced before.

The First Industrial Revolution used water and steam power to mechanize production. The Second used electric power to create mass production. The Third used electronics and information technology to automate production.

Now a Fourth Industrial Revolution is building on the Third, the digital revolution that has been occurring since the middle of the last century.

It is characterized by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres."

Professor Klaus Schwab
Founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is already here

We are now fully engaged in an era that has been dubbed: **The Fourth Industrial Revolution**.

Many businesses are under the illusion that this revolution applies only to specific sectors such as engineering and manufacturing, but the truth is that it's difficult to name an industry that will be left unscathed by its impact.

The speed and scale of the emerging technological breakthroughs is not only challenging entire business models, but redefining the notion of a workforce and work itself.

As this new industrial revolution continues to make its impact, leaders and workers alike are being challenged like never before.
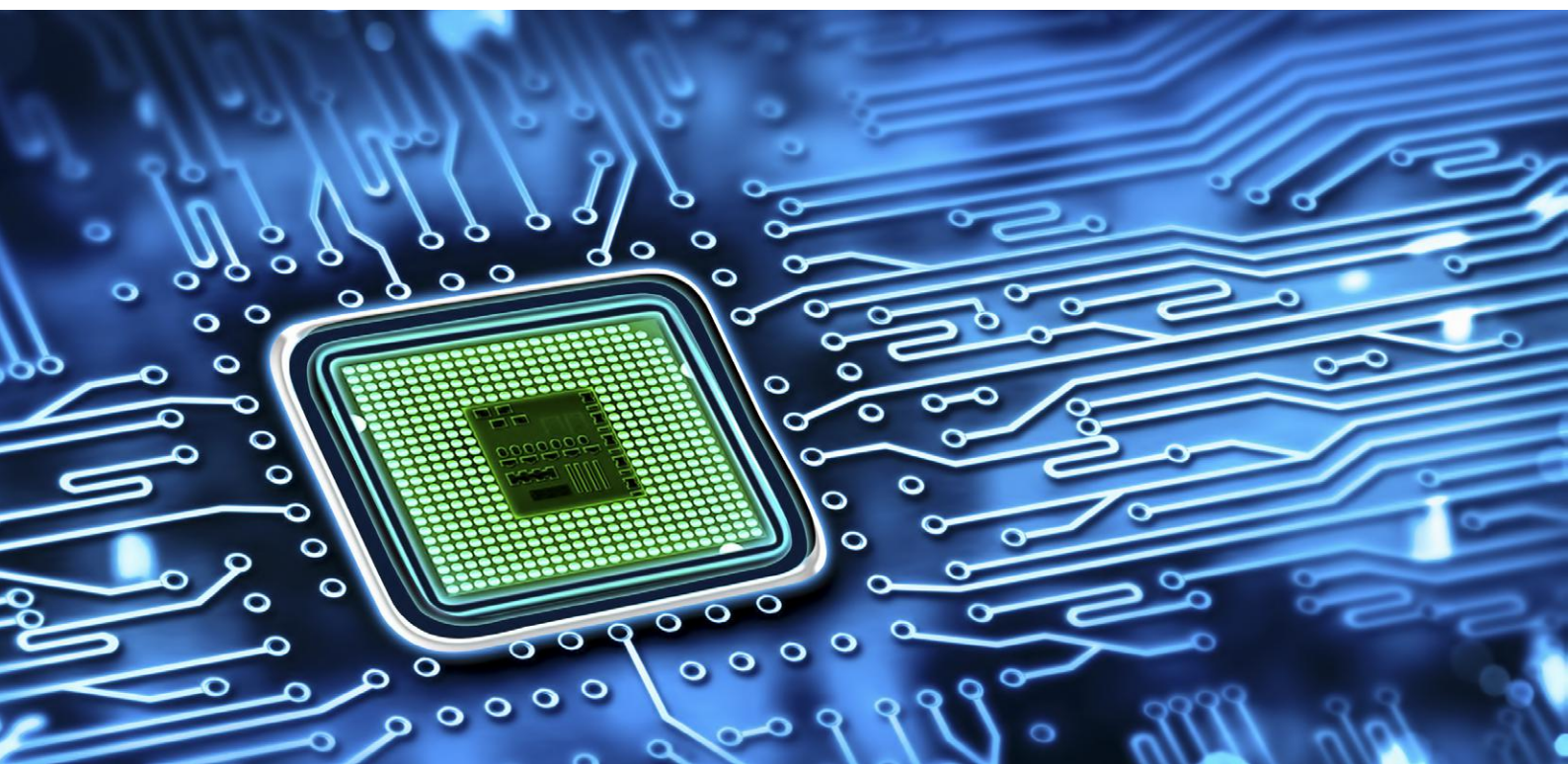
But as technology makes us more productive, (by taking over the more simplistic, mundane tasks), it will lead to a growing requirement for human initiative. Human intervention will be called upon, not just when technology fails, but also when technology is unable to solve complex challenges. As a result, companies will depend more on human creativity, not less.

Consequently, organisations need to maintain their focus on people, or risk leaving their workers behind and undermining their company's core competitive advantage.

Over the following pages, we will examine how the Fourth Industrial Revolution is already affecting the customer experience (CX), and specifically the role of the agent at the frontline of your contact centre.

More importantly we present a new approach designed to ensure that your workforce keeps pace with a radically changing landscape.

How the Fourth Industrial Revolution is impacting the role of the contact centre agent

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has already left an indelible mark.

In just a few years, the complexity of delivering first-rate CX has increased exponentially, and much of this can be attributed directly to the rise of digital technologies.

Today, E-commerce sites such as Amazon Prime allow customers to order products online and receive delivery the very next day, while almost every financial institution offers the means to make financial transactions without ever having to enter a bank.

Within the contact centre, we have seen a rise in the use of Interactive Voice Response (IVR) services, chatbots, SMS service updates, online customer reviews, web-based collaborative tools and robotic process automation.

These are all examples of the fusion of communication and processing technologies that typify the effect of the Fourth Industrial Revolution across the sector.

The drive to adopt new digital multichannel capabilities and new ways of working in order to remain competitive, has also coincided with rising customer expectations, further ramping up the pressure. Cost also plays a huge role, as companies increasingly look to automation, in order to replace what is a very resource-heavy function.

In tandem with technological advances, societal shifts indicate that future generations, (led by Millennials), will have a huge effect on the way contact centres operate, and how they treat their workforce. Now add to this to the rise in performance metrics and targets aimed at further improving productivity and reducing costs, and it has created a perfect storm.

So what actions do companies need to take, in order to help their workforce keep up with a radically changing work environment?

With this in mind, Accenture surveyed 10,000 UK workers, to discover what key areas need to be addressed, and the results were clear and unambiguous:

1. Help workers learn new skills faster

Workers are well aware of the need to develop new skills to remain relevant. In fact, 85% of respondents said they would be willing to invest their free time to learn new skills.

2. Redesign work to encourage collaboration and flexibility

The shifts in demographics are as significant as the shifts in technology. Older workers are steadily retiring, so in less than a decade millennials will make up 75% of the workforce, supplemented by increasing numbers of the first true digital natives: Generation Z.

3. Strengthen the talent pipeline

Organisations need to strengthen the talent supply chain. They need to find new ways to align the education of people to the needs of industry.

What the above serves to underline is the need to place greater importance on the wellbeing of the workforce.

With the contact centre in mind, the spotlight falls on the role of the frontline agents who form the backbone of every organisation in the sector.

It's time to stop treating your agents like machines

Disengagement is now at critical levels.

The current levels of disengagement experienced by contact centre agents, can no longer be attributed solely to the repetitious nature of the work or the pressure to meet targets.

This disengagement comes from a sense of separation that stems from the uncertainty surrounding the job they are doing, why they're doing it, and how they can improve. All too often, contact centre staff simply do not have a means to understand how to consistently deliver the best possible outcomes for the customer, the organisation, or even themselves.

It's this disengagement that has led to low levels of motivation, absenteeism and churn, and ultimately has made a first-rate customer experience impossible to deliver.

As operational and customer demands continue to increase, the requirement to have a fully engaged and highly motivated workforce must rise to meet this challenge.

It's time to reduce your reliance on pure efficiency metrics

In the desire to streamline performance and improve agent productivity, contact centres turned to Workforce Optimisation and performance metrics.

> While Speed of Response and Service Level have their place, what's becoming more important is that a query is resolved at the first time of asking.

Similarly, focusing on efficient call handling may help to increase productivity, but encouraging agents to process calls in the shortest possible time does little to enhance brand loyalty.

Contact centres are still relying far too heavily on pure efficiency metrics. Little wonder that agents have become disengaged; treat them like machines and you will get a machine-like mentality in return.

It's time to retire the carrot and stick

In an attempt to improve contact centre agent motivation, the sector introduced productivity-related incentives.

When used in isolation, this 'carrot' is also destined to fail. The reason behind this is that rewards work well for tasks where there is a simple set of rules and a clear outcome, as they narrow our focus and concentrate the mind. But for tasks that require you to think outside of a pre-set framework and find a solution, they simply don't work.

So as agents have to deal with the more complex queries, simple rewards will fail to increase motivation or productivity.

As for the 'stick', Gallup research recently highlighted that Millennials already have the lowest employee engagement and the highest likelihood (47%) to switch jobs within 12 months. So wielding the stick is most likely to result in increased churn, rather than increased productivity.

Most contact centre operating systems are built entirely around performance metrics supported by the carrot and stick. This may have worked in the past, but for today's growing requirement for a fully engaged and motivated workforce, this approach no longer works.

Engagement is the key

Accenture, Forbes, Gartner and Xerox have all championed the role of customer experience. In fact Gartner reported that the majority of CEOs they surveyed voted customer experience as one of the top three areas of focus.

Furthermore, the contact centre is recognised as the core driver of the customer experience, in most B2C sectors and in an increasing number of B2B sectors.

But what these leading organisations have also collectively highlighted are the challenges that contact centres currently face, and they are all saying the same thing: *contact centres must change and change fast*.

Yet even when faced with the current overwhelming situation, many contact centres are trying to overcome the challenges of the 21st-century, while still mired in 20th-century operational practices.

Far too many contact centres still rely on outdated management practices, such as spreadsheets, whiteboards, and wall boards showing 'calls in the queue'. While all too often the only help an agent receives, is the knowledge and expertise picked up from the colleague they happen to be sitting next to.

Another factor that urgently needs to be addressed, is that the next generation of agents will have a different expectation of their work-life balance. They will care more about how their job makes them feel, than simply the financial incentives on offer.

The very nature of contact centre work is to interact with customers: *listen, sympathise, empathise, pacify, direct, guide, explain.* All of these human interactions require creative and empathic thinking, and it's a requirement that is increasing by the day.

It is now an inescapable requirement that contact centres introduce management and motivational tools that can nurture a new generation of employee; engaged, informed, enthused and capable of delivering a first-class customer experience.

> Engagement isn't just about keeping staff focused on their day-to-day workload. 21st-century engagement is a sense of organisational connection and relevance, it's an understanding of purpose, of contribution and the opportunity to learn and progress.

Workforce Engagement Management is fast becoming an imperative for the future health, prosperity and even the very survival of your contact centre.
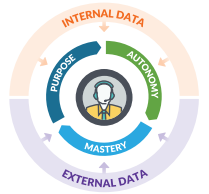
We need a new model.
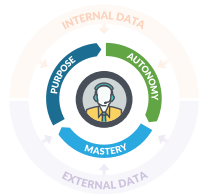
A new model for a new era

The key to a more productive, more capable contact centre doesn't lie in technology, incentives, rewards or Workforce Optimisation, but by ensuring everyone is fully connected with their job, with their colleagues and with the business as a whole.

But in order to increase this engagement, we need to introduce a new operating system, one that revolves around three elements: Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose.

This ground-breaking model is the brainchild of Dan Pink[1], one of the world's leading business thinkers.

PURPOSE:
People are eager to direct their efforts in the service of something larger than themselves

AUTONOMY:
People want more control so that they can direct their own lives

MASTERY:
People are driven to get better at something that matters to them

1 http://www.danpink.com/

For 'people' read 'agents' and you can see why we have placed it at the very heart of the EvaluAgent Workforce Engagement Management (WEM) solution.

AUTONOMY + MASTERY + PURPOSE = ENGAGEMENT

When combined, Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose provide the building blocks that lead directly to an increasingly capable, engaged and motivated workforce, all working together to deliver the very best customer experience.
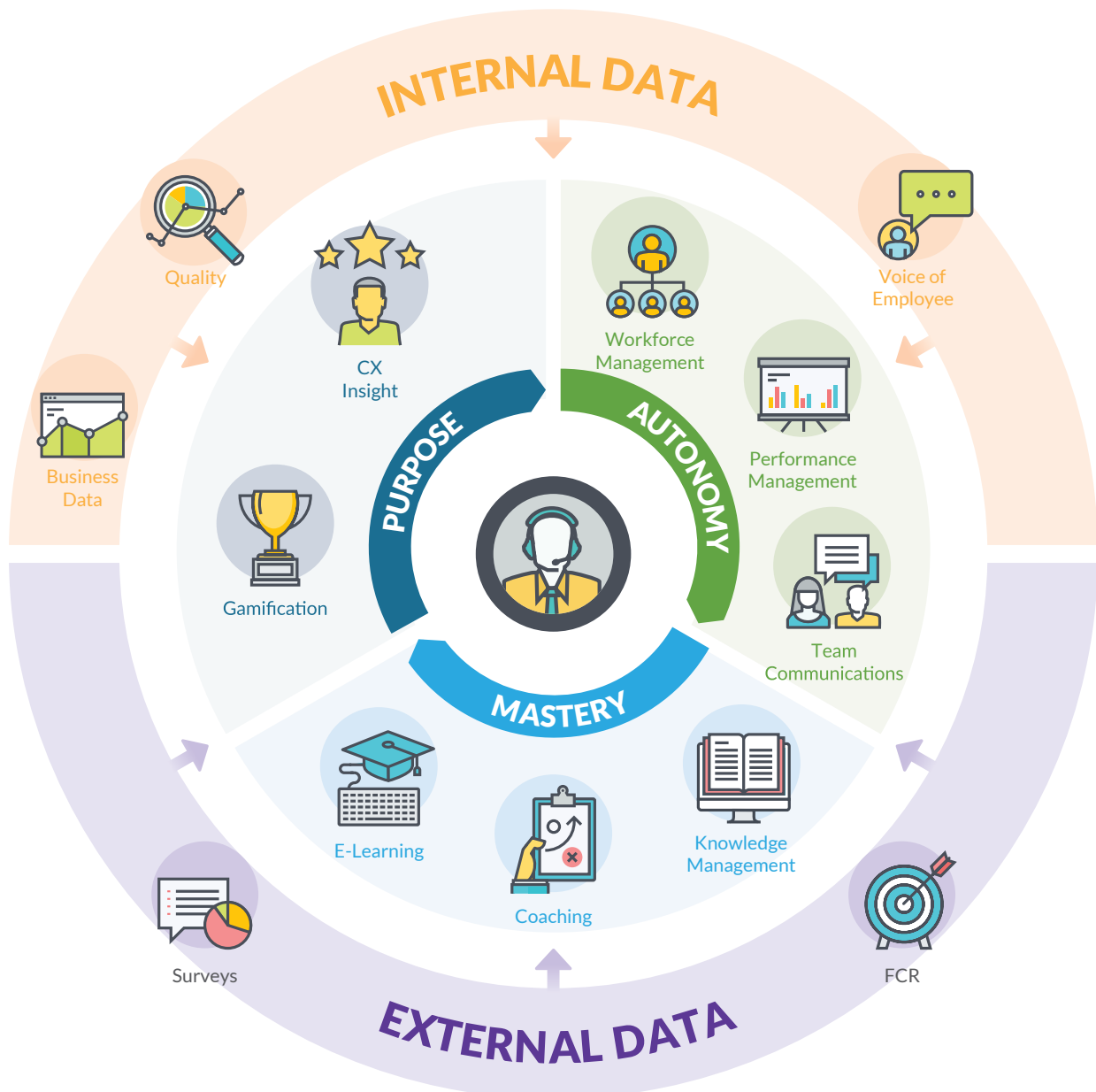
How the EvaluAgent WEM solution fits this new model

The EvaluAgent WEM solution combines a range of software tools into a single platform, designed to capture service feedback, support agent action and ultimately improve the customer experience.

It collects both internal and external data across all interactions, and then provides agents and team leaders with access to timely, relevant and actionable information.

Furthermore, as transparency and permeability underpin every aspect of our solution, it allows this information not just to be shared, but to be understood within context. This prevents 'silo mentality'; the situation in which regional offices, departments, different communication channels and teams become isolated, proprietary, and competitive.

It's this free-flowing, open approach that supports independent action, collaboration, aids learning, and improves skills; all of which are then reinforced by recognition and self-fulfilment.

With the agent and team leaders positioned firmly at the centre of the new model, the scene is set.

The benefits will be seen through a reduction in absenteeism, lower churn, increased motivation and higher productivity.

Most importantly, it delivers a first-class customer experience.
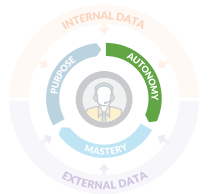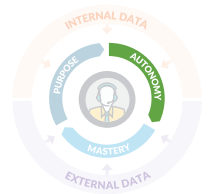
AUTONOMY

Agents and team leaders increasingly want to be able to direct their own efforts, with less intervention from their managers.

They want autonomy over tasks (what they do), time (when they do it), team (who they do it with) and technique (how they do it).

With EvaluAgent's WEM solution, agents are given more autonomy through 3 key elements.

Workforce Management

With greater understanding of customer demand together with the right tools, our solution gives agents more control over their work schedule. The system enables (and approves) an agent to self-select work patterns or shifts and swap with colleagues, without management approval. Furthermore, it facilitates the increasingly popular use of flexible home working as a viable source of overflow and backup.

Performance Management

This intelligent tool integrates data from multiple sources, (e.g. quality monitoring, surveys, your telephony system, CRM), and then presents it in one intuitive, clear and easy to understand format. The on-screen report can be configured to display a tailored view of performance, depending on whether the user is an agent, team leader or operational manager. Designed to show performance in real time, our dashboards can display a range of metrics, (e.g. Customer Satisfaction, Quality, AHT, FCR), then reveal the relevant insights quickly and easily.

Team Communications

Bring all your team communications together into a single place, with the benefits of real-time messaging, archiving and search functionality. Dedicated work channels allow agents to interact with other team members or even an entire department in real time. These collaborative team communications lead to the sharing of ideas, knowledge, best practice and expertise; while also providing a fast, efficient means of asking and answering questions.

MASTERY

It's in the very nature of people to want to improve and master something that matters to them, whether it be in their personal or working lives.

Agents, team leaders and operational managers are all driven by the desire to get better at their chosen role and to make the most of every opportunity.

The better you get at your job, the more you enjoy it, the more you want to learn.

Numerous opportunities for agents to learn and master their chosen role are delivered via 3 enterprising functions, all contained within EvaluAgent's WEM solution.

MASTERY

E-Learning

Coaching

Knowledge Management

E-Learning

An invaluable source of relevant courses is available online and can be updated at any given time. Topics such as 'How to handle sales objections' can be selected by agents to help with their learning curve. Furthermore, courses have been designed to finish with a quiz that tests the knowledge of the user, which on completion can generate points to further reward and motivate the learner.

Coaching

Mastering any job, requires the means to receive constructive feedback, supported by help and tips on how to improve skills. Our solution enables you to gather together the feedback from multiple sources, and then schedule sessions for coaching based on identified areas for improvement. As a result, expert advice and resources can be delivered to cover specific areas, such as advanced selling techniques or best practice when handling complaints.

Knowledge Management

To further enhance the opportunity to learn and grow, a wiki-style resource provides access to a wide variety of publications, documenting the areas such as best practice models, the latest business processes and a wide range of 'how to' guides. Used in conjunction with the Team Communication feature, agents no longer rely solely on the colleague sitting next to them, they can now benefit from the experience and knowledge of the entire department.
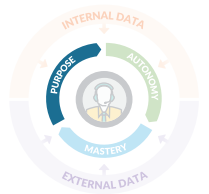
PURPOSE

Agents, like everyone else, seek purpose in their working lives. Far too many contact centres ignore this and expect agents to process calls in specific ways, without a clear understanding of the reasoning behind the instructions.

The forward-thinking contact centre explains the purpose behind every directive.

By introducing better working practices, agents not only have a better understanding of their contribution through recognition, reward and insight, it also empowers them to pursue purpose on their own terms.

Purpose is continually conveyed and reinforced with our WEM solution, using highly informative and enjoyable methods.

CX
Insight

PURPOSE
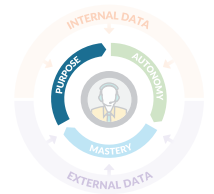
Gamification

Gamification

One of the key elements to our WEM solution. Gamification injects an element of fun into every single working day, through user-friendly dashboards, game mechanics, social interaction, peer acclaim and material rewards. Gamification provides agents with countless opportunities to display their resourcefulness and initiative, and has been proven to motivate them to resolve complex and sensitive queries that can make or break customer relationships.

CX Insight

Our WEM solution also gives you access to insight and detailed feedback from customer interactions that are relevant to the agent, such as how an agent helped a customer in a specific way. The feedback can be presented in a variety of formats, including direct feedback from customers in the form of a survey comment or even a personal letter of thanks.
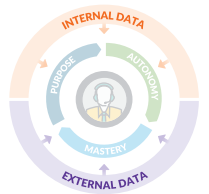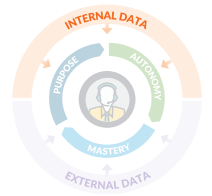
Why internal and external data are equally crucial to the new model

Engagement through Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose is only made possible by gathering timely, relevant customer interaction feedback; both from inside and outside of the organisation.

Internal data is collected through 3 main sources:

Quality monitoring

Provides a single, detailed and accurate view of agent performance across every channel. It allows you to identify opportunities for improvement, and coach agents with both customer and compliance in mind. In addition, it nurtures positive behaviours, encourages open communication and quickly identifies which agents or processes require your immediate attention.

Voice of the Employee

Listening to your employees on an ongoing basis is proven to be a key driver of engagement levels. In line with the fast, real-time feedback delivered by the other elements of our solution, it is recommended that you listen to your agents continually, rather than rely on sporadic appraisals. You can now drive momentum for positive change using monthly, bi-weekly, weekly or continuous micro-surveys.

Business Data

Provides you with the ability to integrate data from other systems into our platform, in order to display data in the dashboard and to generate points for Gamification, (e.g. your telephony platform which holds call meta-data such as the start and end time of every call and its duration). So in order that you can present this data to each individual agent via the dashboard, there is a mechanism that allows you to upload the relevant data quickly and easily.
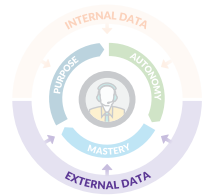
External data is collected through 2 main sources:

Surveys

We maximise the impact of feedback by making it easy for customers to share their views. Our multi-channel customer survey and analytics platform allows you to generate actionable insight across every contact channel. You can quickly identify important trends, reveal the weakest and strongest elements of your customer experience and recover at risk relationships.
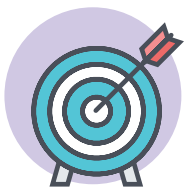
FCR

This important measure of first contact resolution can now be displayed on the dashboard to provide an insight into individual agent or team performance. To add to our solution's functionality, you also have the potential to use FCR data as an entry into Gamification, enabling you to award points and increase the motivation to improve the performance of this important metric.

Why the transparency and permeability of data is also vital to the success of your operations

One of the stumbling blocks that many contact centres encounter, is that all too often the information vital to maintaining and improving operations is fragmented, incomprehensible and confusing.

Furthermore, the delay in relaying this data means that it is either not actionable, or by the time it reaches its intended target, too stale to be of any real use.

And to exacerbate the situation even further, the steady increase in channels has led to an increase in silos and 'silo mentality'. Silos damage the customer experience because by their nature, they prevent valuable information from being shared.

If there is no clear, collective view of performance, how can you fix problems when you can't see what they are? How can a contact centre possibly expect to improve the customer experience, when their agents are in the dark about what good customer experience actually looks like?

Which is why the transparency and permeability of data is crucial to the success of your operations, and why you need a overview of every aspect of contact centre operations.

With EvaluAgent, one of the cornerstones of our solution, is our ability to provide everyone with a clear view of the whole picture; from operational managers, to team leaders, to newly recruited agents.

> The 21st-century contact centre demands intelligent tools that share relevant information in a clear manner, and reveal insights that everyone has access to and can easily understand.

Our intuitive, easy to understand dashboards bring together data collected from multiple sources and then present it simply and clearly. As a result, customer metrics, agent performance and management overview have never been so easy to recognise and act upon.

Through Gamification our solution not only encourages, but rewards collaboration between teams. This empowers everyone to see how everything they do individually, also contributes to the overall customer experience.

By communicating clear information directly to agents, EvaluAgent enhances their ability to act autonomously which increases engagement and motivation, and in turn improves the customer experience. And lastly, but by no means least, it also helps senior management to stay more connected to the reality of the day-to-day business.
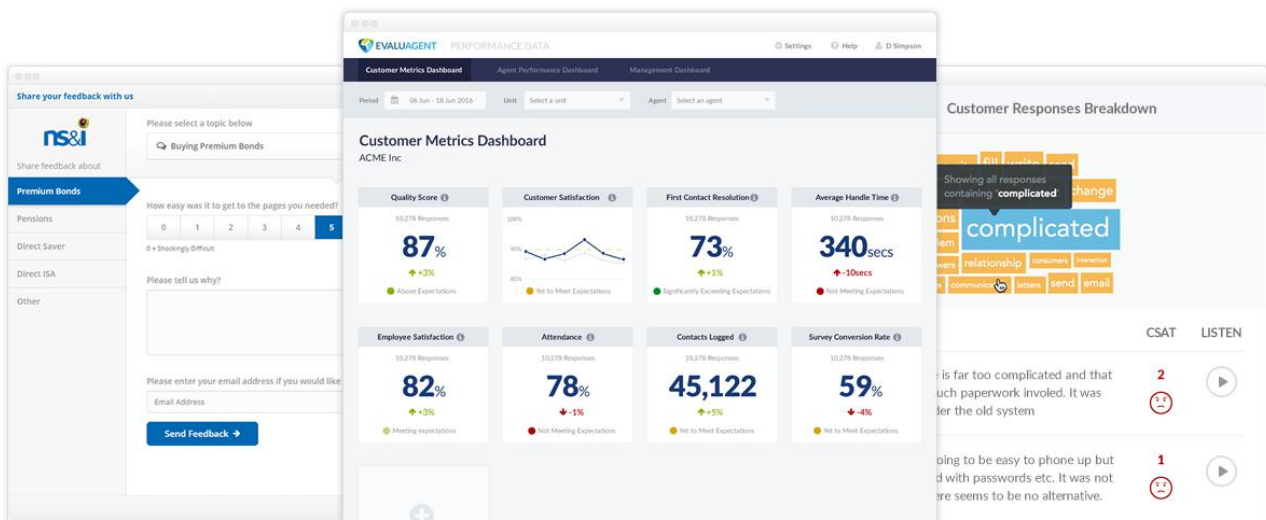
A single platform that provides the solution to multiple challenges and opens the door to numerous opportunities

While this solution has been produced through a complex series of thought processes and software development, the goal is simple:

To make contact centres home to great customer experience through Workforce Engagement.

There's a positive and encouraging paradox that comes with the arrival the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Agents will be free from the mundane work and can now partner with the new digital technologies, so that they are free to do more creative work. We need to learn how to collaborate with machines in ways that augment human skills so that they can take on higher-value, more fulfilling roles.

Automation has its limits. It's people who have the intuition, people skills, creativity, and complex problem-solving abilities that will ensure success.

Forward thinking contact centres will use technology to elevate, not eliminate, people. Agents of all generations and skill levels are ready to embrace the new reality of technology in the workplace, with the vast majority believing that it will improve their work experience in the next five years.

Contact centres and customer service organisations that offer this opportunity to their workforce, have been proven to outperform their competitors and truly differentiate themselves through the customer experience.

Cultural and organisational behaviours need to be introduced from the very top in order to drive change. But with the right toolsets, applied in the right way, culture can change rapidly and successfully.

With the EvaluAgent WEM solution at the heart of your operations, you will discover a new way of working.

It will elevate engagement and motivation to the very top of your business objectives, and raise the customer experience to new-found levels of excellence.

Want to find the key to delivering a superior customer experience?

Learn more

About EvaluAgent

We make contact centres home to great customer experience through workforce engagement management.

Our workforce engagement management platform makes contact centre employees better at delivering great customer experience.

Get your FREE demo of Evaluagent at www.evaluagent.net/demo

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