Focus on Best Practices- Customer Service
Joe Slater, President & CEO
September 17, 2015
About us:
- 1,150 square miles
- Over 160,000 customer accounts
- 66% Residential
- 32% Commercial
- 2% Transmission and Street Lights
- 525 employees

11th Largest Electric Cooperative in Country
JD Power Award Winner

• 8 Consecutive Wins: 2008 - 2015
• Rating Categories:
  1. Customer Service
  2. Communications
  3. Corp Citizenship
  4. Billing & Payment
  5. Price
  6. Power Quality & Reliability
Contact Center-
... a continuum of improvement
• From Call Center to Contact Center
  – Expanded to 24x7 coverage in 2005.
  – Increased FT rep staffing from 12 to 33.
  – Increased management staff from 2 to 6 with addition of:
    • Trainer.
    • Contact Center Manager (2nd).
    • Workforce Management Manager.
    • Quality Assurance Analyst.
• “Service Quality and Reliability Standards” implemented by State of Maryland in 2012 include standards for Customer Service:
  – Service Level Standard: Utility Contact Centers need to answer 75% of customer calls in 30 seconds or less.
  – Abandoned Call Standard: Utility Contact Centers need to have an abandoned call rate of 5% or less.
• Moved to new state-of-the-art facility in 2013.
Dedicated Training Center for CSRs
Key Elements of Quality Customer Service

1. Hiring Process
2. Training
3. Quality Assurance
4. Workforce Management
5. Teleworking
6. Enhanced Technology
   – Workforce Optimization- Automated Tools
1. Hiring Process

- Enhanced hiring process with implementation of web-based candidate screening. Candidates are run through an online simulator (via internet) that focuses on:
  - Customer Service Skills (2012)
  - Multitasking Skills (2013)

- Further enhanced with phone screening (2015).
2. Training

• New hire training program expanded from 2 weeks (2005) to 12 weeks (2013) and consists of:
  – Week 1–2: - Classroom Training.
  – Week 3–8: - Classroom Training.
    - On floor listening with seasoned CCRs.
  – Week 9: - Trainee navigates (computer) while seasoned CCR talks to customer.
  – Week 10: - Trainee navigates (computer) and talks to customer; Seasoned CCR listens.
  – Week 11–12: - Trainee takes live calls independently.
3. Quality Assurance Program

- Quality Assurance Program
  - Dedicated Quality Assurance Analyst reviews and scores 5 contacts per CCR per month.
  - Based on score, coaching could be recommended.
  - Reps asked to select one call.
    - Achieved buy-in when, to our surprise, CCR’s began to select a call they felt they needed help with versus one they felt they handled well.
4. Workforce Management

• Dedicated Workforce Management Supervisor manages the scheduling and forecasting process.
• Better match schedules with call volume.
• Implementation of automated tools for scheduling and forecasting resulted in:
  – 90% reduction in time to perform complex scheduling.
  – $61K annual cost savings.
  – 2 year return on investment.
5. Teleworking

- 5 CCR’s currently telework up to 4 days per week.
- Winner of *2015 Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Award* for our Teleworking Program.
  - Honor for exemplary commuter programs that help reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality in the Washington metropolitan region.
• Improved operations in the Contact Center by adding automated Workforce Optimization tools:
  – Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) – i.e. “screen pops” (2011).
  – Coaching (2011).
  – Advanced Scorecards (2011).
  – Lesson Management (eLearning) & Content Producer (2012).
  – Strategic Planner (2014).
• Scheduling & Forecasting (2008)
  – Accurately forecast daily & long-term workload to create optimal schedules to meet service levels.
  – Monitors adherence to schedule which Contact Center management reviews on a daily basis.

• Quality Monitoring/Screen Capture (2009)
  – Captures synchronized voice & data recordings of interactions between CCR’s & customers including corresponding activities on CCR’s desktops.
• Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) (2011)
  – Allows data collected via the phone system to be used to query our automated customer systems & populate the customers account record instantaneously on the Contact Center Reps screen.

• Coaching (2011)
  – Automated workflow for scheduling, delivering, & tracking coaching.
  – Integrated with Quality Monitoring, this facilitates counseling and training by supervisors.
• **Advanced Scorecards (2011)**
  – Displays key performance metrics for an employee.
  – Automatically triggers eLearning assignments & coaching sessions for highly targeted training.
  – Each CCR is scored daily.

• **Email Response Management System (2011)**
  – Centralized location for management and tracking of inbound emails. Can be expanded to include voice, chat, SMS, and IM.
Lesson Management & Content Producer (2011)

- Develop company-specific learning clips using recorded interactions.
- Based on strengths & weaknesses observed in other applications, delivers training directly to employee desktops.
- Optimally schedules learning breaks (enables Reps to learn with minimal impact on service level).
• **Speech Analytics (2013)**
  – Provides sophisticated conversational analytics to automatically identify, group, and organize the words and phrases spoken during calls into themes, helping to reveal rising trends and areas of opportunity or concern.

• **Strategic Planning (2014)**
  – Provides long-term capacity planning and optimized hiring and vacation planning.
• Realized steady improvements in our Contact Center Key Performance measures.
  – Adherence improved from 93.2% to 96.2%.
  – Service Level improved from 80.5% to 88.9%.
  – Abandonment Rate dropped from 2.36% to 1.07%.
  – Average Handling Time from 4.4 to 4.1 minutes.
  – Monthly Surveys from 89.2% to 92.3%.
Program Results

• Allowed us to set more aggressive targets.
  – Adherence: 90% (2011) to 94% (2013).
  – Average Handling Time: 7m (2011) to 5.15m (2013).

• In 2014, SMECO won the CS Week Expanding Excellence Award for this Workforce Optimization Program.
Workforce Optimization Lifecycle

**L1**
- Focus upon productivity;
- Basic technology stack
- ACD
- Call recording
- Silent monitoring
- Many Spreadsheets

**L2**
- Focus on quality defined internally;
- Quality Monitoring
- Scorecards
- Workforce Management

**L3**
- Focus on customer service as a competitive advantage;
- Lesson Management
- Speech Analytics
- Customer Feedback

**L4**
- Focus on enterprise customer centricity;
- Root cause analysis
- Business process analysis
- Extension of WFO into Back Office

Contact Center Maturity
• New IVR Scripting (2015)
  – Resulted in an increase in our IVR call containment percentage from 20% to 34%.

• Virtual Queuing Technology.
  – Allows customers who call our Contact Center, and are placed in the hold queue, to hang up the phone and receive a callback when an agent is available without losing their place in queue.
  – Also allows customers to scheduled a callback at a later time – up to 7 days in the future.
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Q&A

September 17, 2015

CEO Panel– MD-DC Utilities