

Empowering Employees Through Automated Scoring

Over the last decade, we've seen new technologies change the way we work in the contact center, making us more efficient and focused on how quality activities impact our employees and customers. From online quality platforms to more sophisticated solutions that can automate call selection, call distribution, and calibration, quality managers use these tools to modernize their programs and improve customer service.

It shouldn't surprise us that the next leap in the contact center's evolution is coming: automating the scoring of call evaluations. This new technology has the potential to transform how we operate, as we can move from evaluating fewer than one percent of all calls to understanding the quality of 100 percent of them.

But automation brings change, and with it, the potential for employees to be concerned about their jobs. Many workers believe that artificial intelligence (AI) or automation will eventually replace human jobs. Introducing a new way of evaluating calls can have performance management and scheduling implications that could heighten employee anxiety. Managers may also resist changes to long-established processes, fearing disruption in how work gets done.

These fears and opposition to change can impede your ability to adopt new autoscoring solutions for gathering more data on all your contact center calls and using it to improve the quality of service provided to your customers. But listening to your employees and proactively discussing these concerns and the benefits of automation can pave the way to success.

"Automation will take our jobs."

A common assumption is that automation will reduce headcount. Overcoming this employee fear is perhaps the biggest obstacle to successfully automating any process. Your employees' reaction depends on how you communicate the value to them. Rather than eliminating jobs, automation can create advancement opportunities by freeing up time for more complex and interesting work.

In the context of the contact center, automation can address two of the biggest issues. First, scoring is a time-consuming activity, yet results in only 30 – 50 calls evaluated out of the thousands each agent handles each year. Second, all processes have variation, especially those that involve humans.

In an effort to be fair, we spend hours each month trying to calibrate all of our quality assurance staff to ensure that calls are assessed consistently. Automation of call evaluations doesn't necessarily mean a reduction in the workforce: it means that same workforce can pivot and focus on higher-value tasks, such as agent coaching and development.

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Executive Perspective

“I don’t trust a robot to grade my performance.”

It’s natural for employees to be nervous about change. Automating scoring on quality evaluations — especially if those scores are used for more than skill gap identification — can create unease within your team.

But automation can actually benefit employees by increasing objectivity of evaluations while reducing or eliminating sampling errors. This can help ensure that automated scoring of all calls represents a more accurate picture of each individual agent’s performance. Favoritism, handling an unusual or challenging call, or even having an “off day” should no longer cause concerns.

Quality programs that use automation should have a process for an employee to dispute call assessments — just as they do today — and solutions should include options for manually overriding scores when warranted.

“This is going to break everything.”

Automation is revolutionary, and revolutions can create chaos. Your processes, workflows, and expectations may need to change, as everything developed previously was built around the challenges and limitations of manual call scoring. But all of this doesn’t need to happen on day one.

It’s better to introduce automated scoring gradually, build experience and refine scoring rules, set expectations on how quality scores may change as a result of automation, and share the reasons for any score changes. Some contact centers may find they need a brand-new quality program to match the powerful capabilities of their new quality automation technology. Other centers may choose to leverage the new technology to monitor processes and customer-impacting technologies in addition to agents.

The complexity of the business, its processes, and the content of its voice interactions with customers should dictate which call quality criteria should be automated, and which may still require manual evaluation to make an effective assessment. In short, there doesn’t need to be chaos — you can implement automation in a strategic, controlled evolution.

Automated scoring is coming. As your contact center considers how to implement this technology, it’s critical to listen to the concerns of your employees and provide as much transparency as possible. By engaging employees throughout the process, you can optimize the value extracted from automated scoring solutions and create a win for everyone.

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