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RESOLVE MY QUERY – FIRST TIME, IN TIME

Call resolution is the greatest indicator of customer service improvement

Johannesburg, South Africa, 21 May 2008 – Organisations that employ the right service fundamentals will enhance their customers' experience and retain them longer. That's according to new research published in the 2008 Dimension Data Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report.

The Report, which includes survey results from 300 contact centres in 36 countries across five continents, revealed that 38% of contact centre managers polled believe that a contact centre agent's ability to resolve a query during the first call is the most important factor in service improvement, while 74% rated it in their top three.

In addition, the time the customer waits before the call is answered had the second greatest impact on service improvement with 47% of participants ranking it in their top three. Furthermore, agent communication and service skills was ranked third with 34% of participants including this among their top three improvement indicators.

Alex George, Dimension Data spokesperson for the Benchmarking Report, says, "This year's survey confirms that when the basic service components are firmly in place, customer service experience improves, and client retention accelerates. When we compared these service components to the level of priority or attention organisations place on them, the results were enlightening."

Some of the service components measured in the survey included solving the caller's issue the first time, speed and ease of the interaction, knowledge of the customer's previous history, polite and professional communication when speaking to customers, and sticking to agreements made with customers.

"The choice of medium (or channel) was ranked among the lowest methods for customer service improvement: less than 2% of participants selected this option in their top three choices for impact on customer satisfaction," adds George. "Taking into account that call resolution is the greatest indicator of customer service improvement, we were surprised to learn that not all contact centres have aligned themselves to its measurement and targeting."

“Contact centres still rely on the standard efficiency metrics. Abandon rate is the most commonly used target with 90.1% of participating centres using it as a key metric, while only 63.4% of centres use First Call Resolution as a performance target. These findings indicate a discrepancy between what customers want and what contact centres focus their costs and energy on.”.

Meanwhile, the average number of hours allocated to teaching telephone communication skills during agent induction training is 11 hours. This equates to only 7% of the total induction time. In addition, contact centre agents receive an average of only six hours of coaching per month.

“Compared to last year’s Benchmarking Report, these figures highlight the ongoing trend by organisations to reduce investment in training, even though agent communication and service skills enhance customer satisfaction and the service experience,” says George.

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About Dimension Data

Dimension Data plc (LSE:DDT), a specialist IT services and solution provider, helps clients plan, build and support their IT infrastructures. Dimension Data applies its expertise in networking, security, operating environments, storage and contact centre technologies and its unique skills in consulting, integration and managed services to create customised client solutions. www.dimensiondata.com

About the Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report

First published in the UK in 1997 by Merchants, Dimension Data’s specialist contact centre outsourcing and operations division, this year’s edition is the tenth in a series of the industry-renowned benchmarking reports. The Report has balanced global and industry representation from 300 contact centres located across 36 countries and five continents, and is an invaluable reference for all contact centre professionals. It provides managers with a set of best practice standards and benchmarks, including staffing and training, performance metrics, technology usage, budgets and development plans. The Report is researched and published by Dimension Data. For more information about the Report, please go to www.ccbenchmarking.com