



Customer Profile:

Travel and Tourism

Website:

www.aa.com

Locations:

Worldwide

Business Needs:

- Employee Engagement
- Engagement analytics
- Comprehensive performance evaluation
- Developmental coaching

NICE Solutions:

- Interaction Analytics
- Quality Management
- Interaction Recording
- Performance Management

The Impact:

- 100% call monitoring and analytics
- Comprehensive documentation
- Increased employee engagement
- Collaborative coaching to improve CX
- Self-directed performance improvements

On The NICE Solution

“The NICE-inspired and Analytics-driven coaching process we’ve adopted has had a tremendous effect on employee engagement.”

– Kari Franklin, Global Reservations
Quality Analyst, American Airlines

About American Airlines

American Airlines (American) is one of the world’s largest commercial airlines. Together with its regional partners, the airline operates an extensive international and domestic network with an average of nearly 6,700 flights per day to nearly 350 destinations in more than 50 countries. American has nine hubs in the United States: Charlotte, Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, Phoenix, and Washington, DC.

American operates contact centers worldwide, with nine international and five US domestic locations, as well as remote home-based representatives. A total of approximately 6,500 agents provide airline reservations and customer support on a 24/7 basis. American contact centers have an annual contact volume of approximately 50 million.

The Challenge

The declared mission of American Airlines’ contact centers is to focus on customer service, efficiency and revenue, while ensuring team member engagement.

Ensuring the quality of contact center rep interaction with the customer involved a traditional approach of evaluating two random calls per rep each month. Supervisors looked at eight call competencies, defined as: Regulatory Compliance, Customer Service Plan, Accuracy, Acknowledge Be Present and Care, Use Positive Voice, Proactively Communicate, Give Options, and Revenue. Each competency was evaluated according to four mastery levels: Elevated, Effective, Emerging, or Novice.

Team leaders responsible for a representative’s performance calculated the results from the two observed calls and – as it is in traditional call monitoring programs - they periodically presented each representative a list of expected behaviors that the representative missed in their customer interactions.

As a result, American saw very little change in behavior and contact center representatives had a perception that team leaders only sought out the worst of their calls. This approach to Quality did not produce the intended results, nor did it encourage employee engagement or growth. In fact, there was no true mechanism to measure employee engagement, other than direct communication and, indirectly, through performance and related data.



The Solution

Early in 2017, American Airlines decided to review and redesign its contact centers' quality assurance processes. The "Reservations" Group was reoriented to adopt a systematic approach to improving representative interactions with customers. In this context, the contact center Quality team participated in the NICE Business Consulting webinar hosted by Peg Peterson entitled, "Advanced Coaching, Understanding the 'Data + Behaviors' Coaching Methodology", on June 22, 2017.

That NICE webinar inspired the contact center leadership to create and implement a four-step CARE (Connection, Accuracy, Revenue, and Elevate the customer experience) coaching process. The behaviors American Airlines representatives are coached on are based on metrics and analytics from the NICE Performance Management (Compass) solution. The specific calls selected for evaluation are identified using NICE Interaction Analytics.

Rather than a periodic top-down, binary evaluation, the CARE approach opens a performance conversation with the airline's contact center representative, presenting questions for self-discovery. Each agent becomes responsible for their own performance, with specific areas for improvement: accuracy; creating a connection and customer satisfaction; revenue performance; efficiency; and first call resolution.

Coaching sessions are conducted using three possible methods: Live Calls with Leader, Recorded Calls with Leader, and Recorded Calls with Leader and Peer.

The New Coaching Approach 'Sells Itself'

Members of the Quality team developed a curriculum and materials for a two-day training course, and CARE was deployed in the fall of 2017. Over 300 American Airlines contact center leaders came together to participate and learn, sharing strategies and ideas with each other.

After the training course, those leaders multiplied the impact of the new approach by bringing the CARE coaching methodology to their teams. They maintained the same coaching commitments as before, but repurposed their time into more impactful and meaningful sessions that inspired frontline performance improvement.

Adoption of the CARE program was collaborative, with focus and test groups throughout American's global contact centers. While senior leadership support was key to the initial success of CARE, as word spread across the company, contact center representatives began requesting implementation of the new method themselves.

Rapid Results: Better Coaching and Engaged Reps

Although the CARE system of coaching and performance improvement at American is, to date, only half-a-year old, results from the field have been positive. The feedback has come from both contact center leadership and representatives alike.

Contact center leaders reported that implementing the coaching principles and practices covered in the CARE training have been very effective. It has motivated and encouraged excellent customer service, while the frontline representatives find the approach a productive learning experience.

As Debra D., DFW Reservations Customer Care Manager, wrote to the Quality team regarding the CARE program: "Thank you for continuing to ignite and inspire AA Reservations to produce superior customer service!"

Increased employee engagement was rapidly and clearly indicated by representatives initiating requests for the CARE program in their own contact centers. The consistently positive reactions and increased motivation among representatives is due in large part to three major factors:

- Joint effort by team leaders and representatives to reach the customer and elevate their experience.
- Control over reporting successes.
- Self-directed performance improvement.

"I have seen firsthand how reps correcting themselves and coming up with their own action plans create so much more commitment on their part," according to Corey C., DFW Reservations Customer Care Manager.

Inspiration to Continue Succeeding

American Airlines has already seen the effects of the NICE Analytics- and NPM-driven coaching solution, with representatives implementing the coached guidance they received during live interactions.

While hard data is still being collected, American's Quality team fully expects to see measurable performance and CX stats as time goes on.

About NICE

NICE (Nasdaq: NICE) is the worldwide leading provider of both cloud and on-premise enterprise software solutions that empower organizations to make smarter decisions based on advanced analytics of structured and unstructured data. NICE helps organizations of all sizes deliver better customer service, ensure compliance, combat fraud and safeguard citizens. Over 22,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 80 of the Fortune 100 companies, are using NICE solutions. www.nice.com