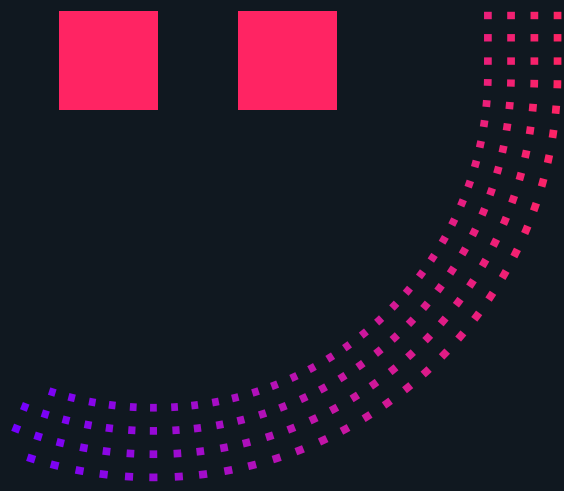Case Study

Republic Services Operationalizes its Customer Focus with Enlighten AI for Customer Satisfaction

Republic Services embarked on a cultural and operational transformation to prioritize the customer experience. Serving 14 million customers with 40,000 employees, Republic Services partnered with NICE to measure, assess, and improve customer sentiment with a comprehensive organizational restructuring to add essential services and capabilities.
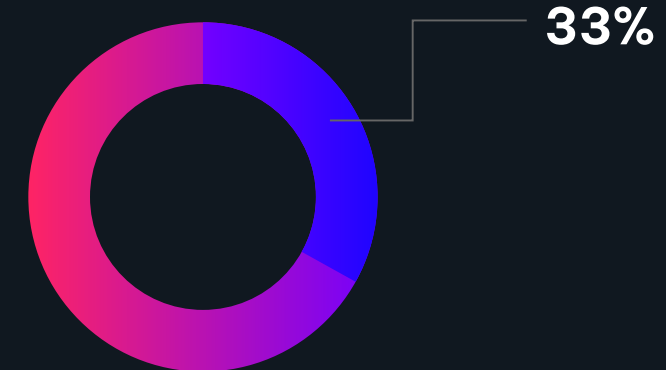
30% REDUCTION
In repeat calls

30%
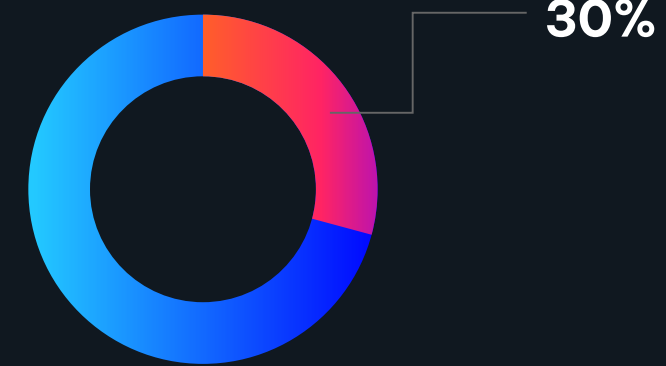
33% REDUCTION
In negative to extremely negative customer sentiment

33%

120% INCREASE
In coaching actions in 3 months

CUSTOMER PROFILE

ABOUT — Republic Services is the second largest provider of waste disposal in the United States (by revenue). Its 40,000 employees serve 14 million customers throughout North America. The company's 1,200 agents manage all aspects of Republic Services' internal and customer-facing support work. Its frontline customer insights are filtered to essential functions, including sales, IT, and marketing/social media, to fuel data-driven, customer-first business operations enterprise-wide.

INDUSTRY — Waste management

WEBSITE — www.republicservices.com

LOCATION — Headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona

SIZE — 1,200 agents

GOALS
- Fuel the business with robust customer insights
- Improve customer sentiment scores
- Establish and support new QC and knowledge management capabilities
- Create formal coaching program
- Improve agent performance and retention

PRODUCTS
- NICE Enlighten AI for Customer Satisfaction
- NICE Quality Management
- NICE Interaction Analytics
- NICE Value Realization Services (VRS)
- CXi Jumpstart

FEATURES
- AI-enabled omnichannel speech and chat analytics
- AI-enabled agent soft-skill behavioral analysis
- Data-driven quality management
- Sentiment measurement and analysis

01 THE BEFORE

Realigning to the customer-centric mission

The previous customer support system for Republic Services was largely manual. "Tracking and reporting were pretty much non-existent. It worked, but we were missing a tremendous volume of calls and insights," said Morgan Gray, a senior manager in Republic Services' Customer Experience Field Management department.

As the company shifted to put the customer experience at the center, its expectations for service evolved. It needed knowledge management, a quality management program, and precise case management —all capabilities a manual based process couldn't support. "We were in the midst of an evolution within our organization that really put customer perception front and center. We call it 'customer zeal' and in order to execute on this new mentality, we had to refocus on quality," said Gray.

02 DESIRE TO CHANGE

Starting from scratch

The implementation of a quality program became priority number one. With previous efforts focused on manual performance metrics rather than customer-centric metrics, management at Republic Services understood the best way forward was to start over. Attrition was high, calling for a redesign of its agent tier structure to offer specialized support to customers and create opportunities to build expertise among agents. Ultimately, the company sought to modernize operations and find opportunities for automation to improve the agent experience.

03 THE SOLUTION

Converting insights into action

Republic Services was already using the NICE Workforce Management suite, including Employee Engagement Manager, and realizing the benefits of reduced manual outputs and forecasts.

"We knew that restructuring and building a quality program from scratch was going to be difficult, but because we were already using a portion of the NICE suite, the decision to expand was easy," said Gray.

Armed with baseline data on agent performance and customer sentiment, Republic Services set objective targets to optimize customer zeal and automate interventions to ensure improved agent performance. "Through reporting and analytics we were able to very naturally raise the bar, and NICE Value Realization Services helped us to modernize our quality program," said Gray. "Whereas before we missed out on opportunities to improve agent performance, now we have Enlighten AI and Interaction Analytics insights to guide coaching. We've been able to set higher expectations and improve proficiency to really take our service and customer satisfaction to the next level."

Adding NICE Enlighten AI for Customer Satisfaction and Interaction Analytics provides Republic Services with the insights to create next-level, data-driven strategies for quality management and customer experience. With previous sentiment analysis limited to empathy and tone, Enlighten AI automatically scores nine agent soft-skill behaviors that are critical to improving customer zeal, including acknowledging customer loyalty and value. This objective and consistent analysis was embedded in the quality program helped them deliver more timely and effective coaching.

"Our service challenges are often region-specific; for example, one market may be struggling with retention, and another might be having trouble with bulk pick-ups, so the ability to identify and proactively target queries at a regional level has been incredibly helpful," said Gray. These advances facilitated the smooth establishment of robust quality and knowledge management capabilities. These automated insights helped Republic Services focus its capability-building efforts to reduce manual work and keep agents on track, in the midst of a major reorganization.

04 THE RESULTS

Improved sentiment, reduced attrition

As a result of VRS guidance, Republic Services increased the number of coached actions by over 120% in just three months post-go-live. A renewed focus on the customer enabled Republic Services to reduce its negative to extremely negative sentiment in approximately six months.

"We feel positive we have the correct evaluation questions in place because we continue to see improvement in sentiment month-over-month," said Gray. "We've also seen a 30% reduction in repeat calls and a decrease in average handle time and non-talk time despite a 17% increase in seasonal call volume." Republic Services attributes this to agents being properly coached so they can handle calls faster and more efficiently.
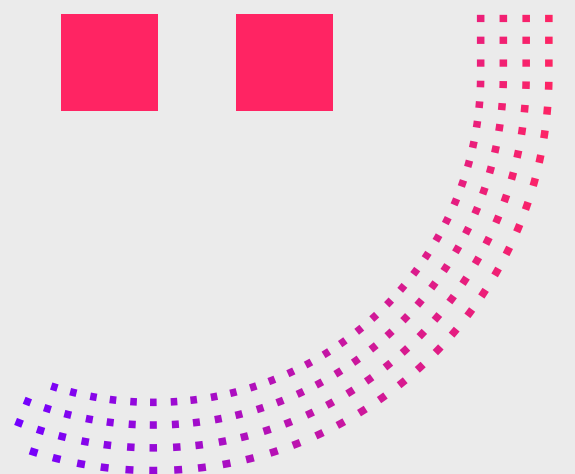
NICE

The company's quality and knowledge management teams are utilizing NICE Quality Management powered by Enlighten AI and Interaction Analytics to implement continuous, data-driven improvements that directly impact work outside the frontline customer support functions. This includes social media, digital marketing, self-service, IT, sales, and business analytics.

For agents' soft skills, (which were notoriously difficult to judge in legacy, side-by-side observation processes) are now objectively reported and benchmarked. Performance reports are delivered to agents in an easy-to-understand, color-coded format several times a week to support a culture of continuous improvement. Coupled with precise IVR and high-quality data-driven management support, the employee experience has improved, as evidenced by a reduction in attrition.

05 THE FUTURE

Enterprise-level influence

Republic Services participated in NICE's CXi Jumpstart program which focused on the Customer Care Center and provided a holistic view of the company's technologies, people, processes, and operational practices and included 60 executive, business, operational, and IT leaders. NICE VRS Transformation Consultants identified many opportunities that were positioned alongside the company's business goals and prioritized in a Transformation Roadmap to guide future strategic initiatives. By building on existing workforce, quality, and analytics programs, Republic Services plans to expand channel delivery for personalized and proactive customer service.

Republic Services intends to build on its new quality and knowledge management program to expand its offerings and improve its performance. With NICE Enlighten AI and Interaction Analytics, the company will move from random evaluations into a targeted category- and question-level listening to better support customers, marketing initiatives, and varied geographical concerns.

Armed with those new insights, the company will evolve its quality management functions with expanded, in-depth agent reporting related to their performance. "We're at the point where we've tackled the low-hanging challenges, and now we're moving to focus on some of those bigger, hot topic challenges," said Gray. "The next phase of this for us is to start to broaden what we're communicating, how we're communicating, and who we're communicating with as well as continue to improve sentiment."

Republic Services also plans to build out self-service options on its website. While currently offering live chat and online bill pay, the company is actively building a backend database to bring its new knowledge management and IVR capabilities directly to the customer.

"**Enlighten AI and Interaction Analytics have given us the ability to cast a wide net to identify critical call types,** while NICE Quality Management allows us to evaluate and act in ways that really move the needle."

MORGAN GRAY
SENIOR MANAGER IN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
FIELD MANAGEMENT, REPUBLIC SERVICES
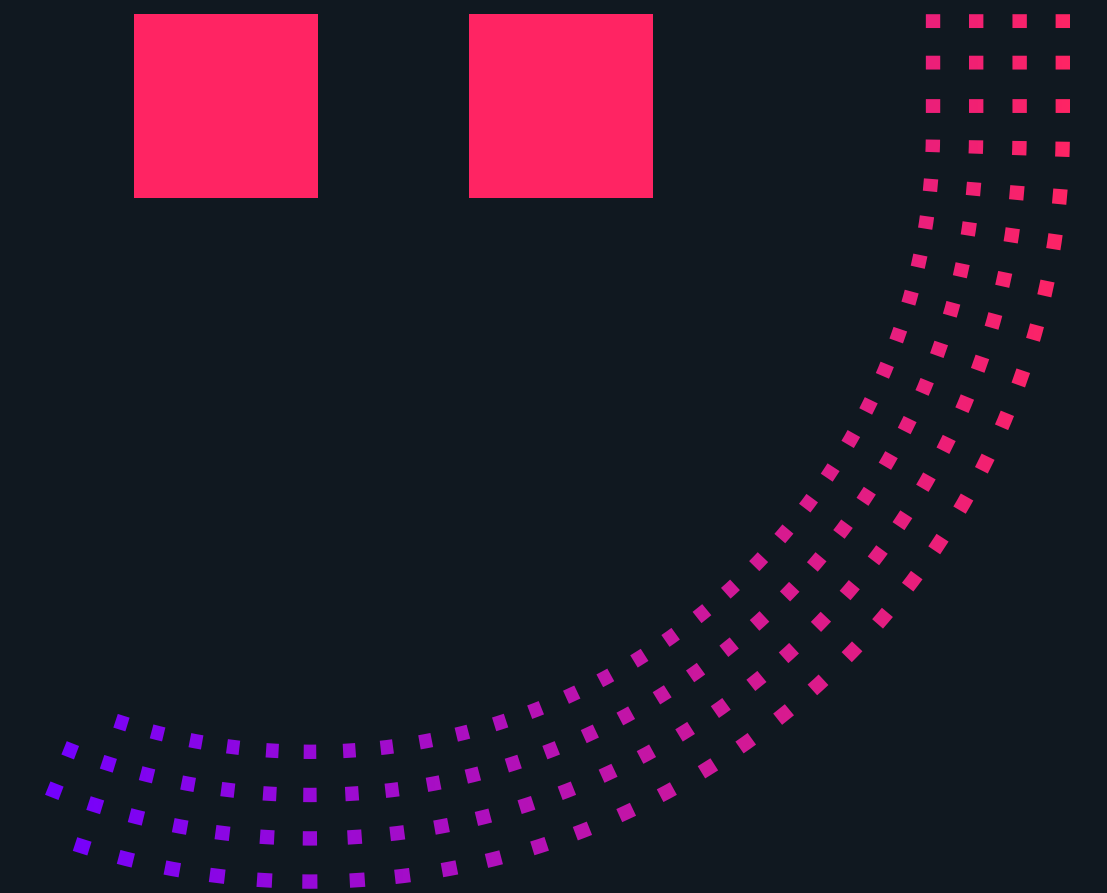
About NICE

With NICE (Nasdaq: NICE), it's never been easier for organizations of all sizes around the globe to create extraordinary customer experiences while meeting key business metrics. Featuring the world's #1 cloud native customer experience platform, CXone, NICE is a worldwide leader in AI-powered self-service and agent-assisted CX software for the contact center—and beyond. Over 25,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies, partner with NICE to transform—and elevate—every customer interaction.

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