

Case Study

True immersion results in continuous improvement cycle



Case Study:

BUILDERS

CHALLENGE

- Improving customer experience through correct training
- Formalising the customer experience review process
- Introducing data analytics

SOLUTION

- Redesign training material
- Developing a baseline for call and quality analysis
- Implement solution to improve AHT and FCR

RESULTS

- Complete brand assimilation coupled with measurable contact centre metrics
- Systems and process that deliver actionable data
- Evolved contact centre from cost to revenue centre

OVERVIEW

Leaders in the sales of DIY, home improvement and building material, Massbuild comprises 105 stores under the Builders Warehouse, Builders Express, Builders Trade Depot and Builders Superstore brands.

As the leader in this retail category, Massbuild had three key strategic priorities:

- Improve profitability
- Grow online
- Grow the Builders brand

They needed a partner who could assist them with these as well as future e-commerce and customer experience challenges.

Since the beginning of the partnership in 2015, the Merchants team servicing the contact centre interactions grew from 25 to 132 people (colleagues) including support staff. The colleagues assist customers across voice, email and social media enquiries. These include general information, stock availability, invoicing, quotes with associated outbound follow-ups, head office contacts as well as more specialist services such as key account manager support, high-level complaints and roof truss sales support.

The 90-Day inception plan became both the process and the solution as it transitioned from a once off 90-day event to a continuous cycle of improvement.

THE CHALLENGE

During the onboarding process of the contact centre, a full end-to-end review of processes, procedures and governance was undertaken and completed within 90 days. This review highlighted some key areas that required improvement:

- Amending the training modules and documents
- Formalising the customer experience review process
- Establishing a baseline for this process
- Introducing data analytics
- Providing a means of consistent optimisation

This became known as the 90-Day Inception plan – it was a labour intensive activity for all involved as Time in Motion studies were conducted, quality analysts sat side by side with agents, WFM specialists pulled FTE reports for analysis, and information was gathered to create greater efficiencies in the contact centre to support the key strategic priorities.

THE PROCESS AND SOLUTION

The inception plan became both the process and the solution as it transitioned from a once off 90-day event to a continuous cycle of improvement. The first element that was analysed was training. Merchants discovered that the training the colleagues undertook contained elements more suited to the in-store environment. This didn't translate well to the contact centre where soft skills and non-visual communication needs to be amplified. Merchants amended the training contents to reflect the Massbuild ethic,

ABOUT MERCHANTS

Merchants has over 38 years' experience in designing, building and operating great contact centres. As leaders in customer experience management, our success is built on the strength of our business partnerships. As pioneers in developing South Africa as an offshore destination of choice, we are committed to understanding your brand and customers' experience, and recommending solutions that best suit your needs.

Our tailor-made approach delivers unique customer service solutions that differentiates our clients from their competitors. As trusted advisors, our clients trust us with their most valuable assets - their customers - for long periods of time. service. Passionate about creating sustainable futures for our people, we are committed to skills development and job creation for South Africa's untapped talent pool through various partnerships.

branding and culture and included essential contact centre training modules.

In addition, there was very little analytics to work with. Merchants provided systems and processes to gain data and started providing these to Massbuild. In addition, Merchants developed a baseline for call and quality analysis. They migrated contacts to a new telephony platform that could record calls and synchronise with workforce management programmes.

Initially, the Merchants team sat side by side with the Massbuild colleagues, listening to calls to understand what every agent dealt with at any given time. The Merchants team then calculated how long calls should take on average and conducted a complete quality analysis and solution implementation to improve AHT and FCR.

The objectives were initially achieved through:

- Identification and finalisation of process mapping in sales, service and debtors
- Conducting time in motion studies in sales, service and debtors
- Creating follow-up trackers and distributing these to agents to track work load
- Sharing TIM and follow-up data with WFM to calculate FTE
- KAM workload analysis
- Analysis of transferred debtors' calls
- Introducing a continuous improvement cycle
The opportunities identified allow the teams to further improve the customer experience through:
- Focused supplier training for specific categories
- Building processes to improve system navigation
- Introducing a call logging process to ensure data accuracy
- Introducing a process to follow up with customers
- Building email templates
The focus on improving customer experience has remained at the core of the Massbuild/Merchants partnership, with the BI, Training and Quality teams (Shared Support Services) constantly monitoring and improving the efficiencies delivered by the Massbuild contact centre.

From the start, there were only two call types being managed by Merchants. This was increased to 11 call types in 2017 and with every new call type a review of the process is undertaken, and through collaboration any required changes are made to deliver the best process for the customer.

THE RESULT

The continuous business improvement cycle is the biggest benefit to both Merchants and Massbuild. The holistic view that the Shared Services team has of the contact centre allows for constant and consistent identification of gaps, from agent level to management as well as:

- Identification and implementation of opportunities to improve customer experience
- Identification of call types that can be resolved at first point of contact and the up-skilling of resources
- Freeing up Massbuild's highly skilled debtors team to focus on complex queries and take out simple transactional interactions
- Creating efficiencies in resources and processes to optimise cost

As Merchants has taken on new lines of work for Massbuild and successfully integrated the contact centre in to a reciprocal business, Massbuild has been able to consistently evolve their contact centre strategy to include store calls, head office calls and business to business calls - this has freed up in-store resources to focus on customers on the floor.

Since then the relationship between Massbuild and Merchants has matured, and the contact centre is now geared to maximise sales opportunities for Massbuild, evolving the contact centre from a cost centre to a revenue generating unit. In 2017, the Merchants-managed contact centre provided over R128 million assisted sales and 26 326 quotations.

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