



Why the Quality Listening program Should Not be a Performance Review

Let's look at the numbers. In a customer service call center where the quality assurance program requires the evaluation of 4 calls per month. The average agent will handle approximately 1,600 calls in the month. This means that the 4 calls evaluated represent only a quarter of a single percentage point. Or put another way we are evaluating and assessing only one out of each 400! How representative was the second Tuesday of August? To employ that Tuesday in August of last year as being representative of the past fifteen months likely doesn't make sense. Neither does basing an opinion of an agent's performance on every 400th call. No matter how we try to examine these individual call assessments, the sample size is just too small to have meaning. This is the fundamental problem with attempting to employ quality assurance scores as mini-performance reviews.

Attempting to use your quality reviews as a performance assessment tool misses the primary objective of quality management. **Quality assurance is about assuring the quality of the service being delivered. To who is this assurance being made? The answer is to senior management.** The practice of assessing quality allows center management to gauge the performance of the center and individual agents within the center. The value to the center and senior managers in knowing the relative performance of the center and comparing and contrasting the performance with previous months is significant. But perhaps the ability to identify how individual agents are performing is more valuable. By knowing where agents are at can help us direct our efforts to improve the overall performance and quality of the center.

The objective isn't just to identify problems and what agents are doing wrong, but also to identify what they are doing well. Both the areas for improvement; through coaching leading to improved individual performance and sharing best practices improves the overall performance of the center.

Performance reviews have a place and time, and that is your regularly scheduled performance review. The agent's individual performance reviews may play a small role here specifically related to improvement over time as their skills improved. Remember that a failure of an agent to improve or be able to overcome performance deficiencies is as much a censure of the coaching and skills development staff, recruiting and staff selection and processes as it is of the agent in question.

The correct positioning of the Quality program, its strengths and weaknesses, function and goals is key to gaining a well functioning center. This positioning needs to be known by both the senior management but also the agents. So that each can recognise their contributions and how all can help with the centres success.