STOP AT NOTHING
VITALIZING LEADERS, TEAMS & CULTURE

CHALLENGES

This financial service organization recognized the strategic importance of improving its customer service offerings—realizing the impact these divisions can have on the bottom line. According to a 2013 survey of almost 300 global respondents, including those from the financial services sector, 62% viewed the customer experience provided through contact centers as a competitive differentiator (Deloitte, 2013).

While the culture was not ideal, there were several positive traits within the organization which could be maximized. Most employees excelled at the execution of tasks, especially in crisis mode. Leaders were results-driven, and there were many skilled and talented employees with strong work ethics. However, despite these positives, there were also several challenges that prevented employee satisfaction, and which therefore hindered superior customer service.

• **Fear-based, command-and-control, and micromanagement behaviors at the Senior Leadership level were mirrored at the Site Leadership levels and cascaded from there to front line employees.**

• **A highly-stressed work environment was the result of decisions driven primarily by financial metrics, which had little impact on employees' service to customers.**

• **Performance management over-emphasized too many metrics — some of which were contradictory – and neglected leadership, employee behaviors, and the resulting customer experience.**

• **There was deficient communication from senior management, very little upward communication, and low employee engagement for problem solving and creativity. At all levels silo behaviors were the norm.**

Many of these behaviors led to a culture of fear where employees were in survival mode and were doing the minimum amount of work just to get through the day. Research has shown that disengaged workers such as these cost their employers on average 46% of their salaries in lost productivity (CallMe! IQ, 2011).

Most importantly, the metrics-led management and poor communication resulted in unhappy customers who received poor service. These issues meant that calls were being handled incorrectly, often resulting in two to three calls with a customer where one call should have been sufficient, creating a negative customer experience.

SITUATION

A Fortune 50 global financial services organization was experiencing serious issues within its retail telephone customer service organization. The customer service levels of this 7,000-employee strong organization had fallen dangerously low, and employee turnover was excessive, suffering an attrition rate upwards of 30%. Employee morale was equally depressed following years of cost cutting and ineffective leadership practices.

The newly-hired Division Leader was charged with quickly addressing the main business concern: improve customer service quality while controlling operational costs.

Employee satisfaction increased by more than

25%

to world-class levels

Turnover decreased by more than

20%

The division became one of the key leading divisions in the organization, in terms of customer service and employee engagement improvement

Complaints from customers significantly declined, resulting in lower operating costs previously incurred from working with each customer multiple times

SOLUTION

a really clear understanding of what people wanted versus what they were getting," says Barry Robertson, Stop At Nothing Managing Partner. "That is the core of what we are trying to do – to drive awareness to very high levels, because in our business, awareness is the key. Once you have awareness, then you understand the choices available regarding behavioral directions you can take."

The findings identified the following key areas of opportunity that could significantly impact organizational effectiveness and cultural transformation within this call center:

- **Improving teamwork, collaboration, interaction and alignment – among the Senior Management Leadership Team members and individual call center location management teams – to drive customer-centric mindsets and behaviors**

- **Implementing positive reward, recognition and incentive programs to motivate employees**

- **Establishing enhanced training and coaching, and uniform accountability to drive employee engagement**

- **Improving communication and consistent messaging, beginning with the Senior Management Leadership Team and filtering down through the management and supervisory levels at the call center locations**

- **Executing more effective management and leadership techniques to enhance inclusion and empowerment which would generate buy-in through individual development and commitment**

Alignment: Stop At Nothing guided the leadership team through this information, helping them to understand the effects of specific certain actions on the larger team, and how that ultimately manifested in poor customer service levels. Through this discussion, the Senior Management Leadership Team identified the links between intentions, behaviors and outcomes, where the gaps existed in that process, and how cultural transformation could start to occur.

Action: To address these needs, Team Development Processes were cascaded to the client's site Leadership Teams at the six call center locations. These subsequent team sessions further identified opportunities for change at each site, and those actions that could ultimately provide long-term divisional success.

By creating action plans to address the newly identified opportunities, and by participating in communication exercises, the Senior Management Leadership Team became a cohesive group where each member understood and could communicate the organization's mission and the changes that were needed.

Leadership Development: The Division Leader attended and sponsored his top 24 leaders to attend Stop At Nothing's individual leadership program, the High Impact Leadership Seminar (HILS), to improve their management styles and leadership effectiveness.

Peak Performance and Personal Transformation (PEAK) seminars were conducted by Stop At Nothing at customer service locations for the site management and supervisory levels to cascade enhanced empowerment, emotional intelligence, teamwork, mentoring and coaching into the workforce.

BENEFITS

Each leadership team that participated in a Stop At Nothing Team Development session established and successfully implemented action plans, specific desired outcomes and team behavioral agreements to drive team performance and culture enhancement. This meant that the organization's mission and direction were clearly communicated so that all customer service employees finally understood, and could themselves articulate, the goals and the direction of the greater organization. This helped to change the culture from one of fear and command-and-control to a more authentic and honest environment where retaliation for speaking up had been eliminated. The end results were happier employees who stayed with the organization longer, reducing turnover and repetitive hiring costs, and happier customers whose issues were resolved in a "once-and-for-all" timeframe.

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BY THE NUMBERS – THE QUANTIFIABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

It takes time and effort to shift the culture and thought processes of even one department within an organization. Stop At Nothing worked with the Senior Management Leadership Team and their site teams to help them create new patterns of thinking and behaving. The first steps taken – creating awareness of the obstacles and issues, and assertive action plans to remedy those obstacles – provided significant long-term benefit that will be realized for years to come. In this case, after 20 months of engagement, this large customer service organization saw that:

- **Employee satisfaction increased by more than 25% and was competitive with customer service levels at other world-class organizations**

- **Turnover decreased by more than 20%, resulting in lower hiring and training costs while increasing on the job effectiveness**

- **The division became one of the key leading divisions in the organization, in terms of customer service and employee engagement improvement**

- **Complaints from customers significantly declined, resulting in lower operating costs previously incurred from working with each customer multiple times**

In addition, the senior and various operating site leadership teams reached peak performance levels. The Division Leader attributed much of the rapid improvement to the engagement with Stop At Nothing, citing significant changes and exponential improvements in the corporate culture, trusting and open communication, a better work environment, and improved customer experience metrics and financial results.

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ABOUT STOP AT NOTHING

We help companies make positive changes in their behaviors among individual leaders, teams and broader organizational cultures.

Our approach includes understanding the unique opportunities as outlined by key leadership in the company. From these, we customize an approach that can include:

Individual Leadership Programs

- **High Impact Leadership Series**
- **Peak Performance Seminar**
- **Executive Coaching**
- **Discover The Coach Seminar**
- **Trust & Relationship Selling Seminar**
- **Customized Leadership Development**

Team Effectiveness

- **Individual leadership teams**
- **Multiple leadership teams across a division or company**

Organizational Transformation

- **Cultural Effectiveness Process**

Our methodology looks at the underlying behavioral and cultural norms that impact organizational results. We look to discover the key behavioral tendencies of the executive team that drive or inhibit the overall bottom-line results of the company. From there, we help the team develop and create key strategic action plans to improve results, and we align leadership behaviors at all levels to support the strategy.

Services also available in Spanish.

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