



The UK's most popular contact centre magazine



INTERACTIVE INTELLIGENCE®

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# 10 Tips for improving Average Handling Time (technology)

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# Pre AHT - Identify the contact

- Identify who's contacting you
  - Calling Line Identity (CLI); landline / mobile / work telephone numbers
  - Email addresses; work / personal
  - Chat identity; email address / entered account number
  - Short Message Service (SMS); mobile number
  - Or, ask for account number in Interactive Voice Response (IVR); dial tones / speech recognition
- **Tip #1 – Connect your contact centre to your customer information systems**
  - Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems
  - Billing systems
  - Order management systems
  - Often known as Computer Telephony Integration (CTI), Screen Pop or Database Lookup

# Pre AHT – Understand why are they contacting?

- Know the reason for the contact
  - Based on number dialled, SMS number or email address used; proactively set up in advance
  - Ask them in IVR; press 1 for x and 2 for y / “tell me what you need” in speech IVR
  - Scan emails for keywords
  - The moment we “invite” a Chat interaction
- For each of these contacts and types, do a database look up
- At the moment of presenting the contact to the agent;
  - We’re already in that customers account screen
  - We know what the contact is most likely to be about
- **Tip #2 – Keep your account, policy, contract numbers etc. numeric**



1 2 3 4 0 0 0 5 6 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 0 1

# Pre AHT – What do we (the business) need from the contact?

- Query multiple databases to find out more
- Is their account in credit?
  - Yes = proceed or no = re route to collections
  - Transfer contact with customer account screen and the reason why!
- Contract due to expire or renew?
- Have they a product that's valid for an upgrade offer?
- Product that's been recalled?



• **Tip #3 – Do multiple look ups at the same time and get proactive**

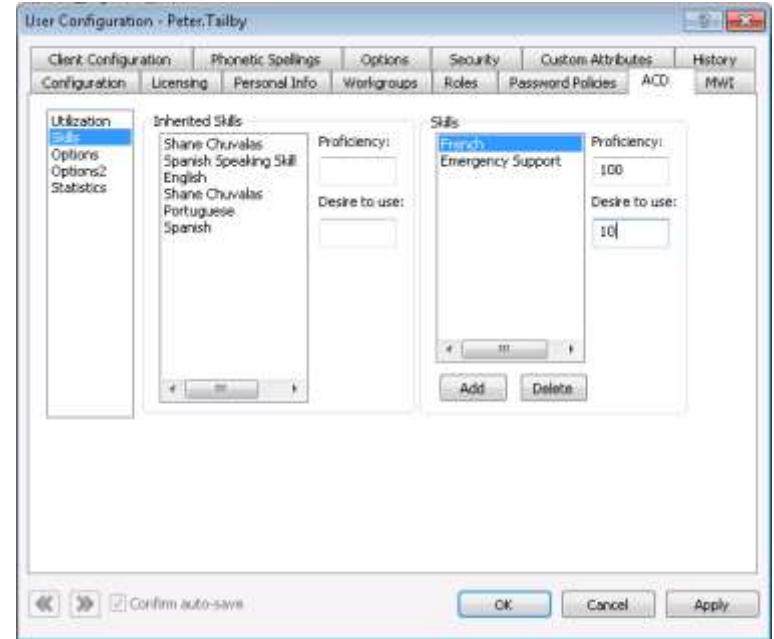
# Within AHT – Making life easier for the agent!

- Along with a Contact (any type) and Screen Pop
- Useful tools that help the agent
- Whisper message – audio reminders
- Auto Answer of calls – on presentation of the contact, a beep
- Agent greeting – pre recorded personal greeting saves the agent repeating and gives seconds to scan the screen pops
- Assistance – Or Help!, text chat to my Supervisor for guidance
- Wrap up Codes – Drop down menus with categories / sub categories
- **Tip #4 – Use all the tools that you have to help your agent**



# Within AHT - Skills based routing

- Rotating skills throughout teams builds resiliency against attrition
- Building agent skills increases their loyalty and stickiness to your brand
- See the example;
  - French speaker with good English
  - Wants English speaking practice
  - Proficient in French
  - But her desire to use French is set low
  - This drives mostly English work
  - French work delivered as the exception
- Happy agents work more effectively



- **Tip #5 - Help your agents develop new skills**

# Within AHT – Empower your agent with confidence

```
23 <script>
24 Is that <caller name>?
25 Good <evening> <caller name>
26 This is <my name> from the <company>
27 It is just a courtesy call to remind
28 your <type> policy is due to expire
29 <number> days time.
```

- Eliminate things that cause them to make excuses
- Provide a safety net
- Drive contacts to the outcomes we want
- Compliance
- Consistency

- **Tip #6 – Invest in good agent scripting tools**

# Within AHT – Empower your agent with confidence

- Remove latency and errors
- Agent kicks off the job fulfilment
- Software updates the customer on progress step by step;
  - Claim
  - Order
  - Query
  - Break fix request
- Enhance legacy workflow tools
- Any, absolutely any process



- **Tip # 7 – Investigate areas for using process automation**



# Within AHT – Assistance from your Supervisor

- Real-time alerts
- Words / phrase spotting
- Responding to agent assist requests



- Listen
- Coach
- Join

Name	Duration	State	User	Agent Score	Customer Score
Ferris Boulder	00:01:36	ACD - Assigned: Ted Meiri	Ted Meiri	47 (9 words)	-21 (7 words)
Ferris Sacramento	00:01:32	ACD - Assigned: Noemi Amortoso	Noemi Amortoso	44 (7 words)	-22 (5 words)
Ferris Carol Wilbur	00:01:29	ACD - Assigned: Matthew Autin	Matthew Autin	36 (5 words)	-23 (5 words)
Ferris Springfield	00:01:26	ACD - Assigned: Serena Cehvan	Serena Cehvan	32 (6 words)	-11 (3 words)
Ferris Irvine	00:01:23	ACD - Assigned: Fernando Hartler	Fernando Hartler	36 (5 words)	-17 (8 words)

- **Tip #8 – Keep your supervisors focused on team coaching and assists**

# Post AHT – Let the software gather feedback



- Agents should never be involved
- Survey every interaction type in software
  - Chat
  - Email
  - SMS
  - Calls
- Use the findings to validate areas to improve
- Check what your agents think of changes
- Automate the survey process
- Rotate survey invites throughout your customer base

• **Tip # 9 – Keep surveys short and fresh, little and often**

# Post AHT – Is our strategy on track?

- Listen to Agent feedback and complaints
- Act and improve on them
- Give to get, over and over again
- Develop your people
  - Skills
  - Careers
  - “I can see a future here”
- Use Quality Management to achieve Best Practice

## Real-time speech analytics

Providing contact center managers the ability to know what to pay attention to.



- **Tip # 10 – Build and commit to a culture of continuous improvement**

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