

SAN RAMON, CA, September 20, 2013 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- Ventana Research has released its latest Benchmark Research on Next Generation Workforce Optimization. The research evaluated the current methods companies use to manage the workforce handling customer interactions, how applications and technology are used to support agents and best practices for improvements in customer experience.

In the last two decades, contact centers have evolved into the hub for customer interactions and relationships. They now support multi-channel, multi-interaction, multi-stage customer communications. To be able to handle the volume and complexity of these new models, next generation technologies need to be implemented to support efficient and consistent handling of interactions. Our recent research shows that more than 90 percent of customer interactions still are conducted on the telephone. Therefore it is vitally important to manage the contact center workforce - the agents - to ensure it delivers superior customer experiences at reasonable costs.

The research found the vast majority (78 %) of the participants indicated it is very important to improve agent performance with the over-arching goal (86%) to improve customer satisfaction. Almost 80 percent use call recording and quality monitoring tools, more than half use workforce management and agent coaching systems, and more than 40 percent use e-learning and screen capture systems.

The research also revealed conflicting evidence that operational goals may get in the way of efforts to improve the customer experience. Ranked first in importance is to reduce the cost of handling interactions by increasing the use of self-service (by 27%) and to optimize agent utilization (15%). The results show that larger companies more often handle calls by self-service. Three in five organizations have implemented Web-based self-service systems, and nearly half use touch-tone interactive voice response (IVR). Previous research shows that such systems have had limited success with the majority of customers reverting to calling the contact center.

"This research reiterates that companies that have invested in a next generation workforce optimization systems see better efficiency and effectiveness in all aspects of handing customer interactions," said Richard Snow, VP and Research Director of Ventana Research. "In light of these findings we advise customer service organizations seeking to optimize performance of their workforce to pay more attention to how they manage their agents. We encourage them to use this research as a starting point to better educate themselves on a comprehensive set of best practices that help organizations improve customer satisfaction."

To learn more about Next Generation Workforce Optimization, please visit: www.ventanaresearch.com/NGWFO

This research was sponsored by Verint and VPI and supported by research partner ICMI, to help further the education on next generation customer services workforce optimization in the market. Ventana Research, a leading business technology research and advisory services firm, provides access to a free copy of the executive summary report and access to the educational webinar, available on October 4, 2013, on key findings from the Next Generation Workforce Optimization benchmark research.

About Ventana Research

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