



BPA Quality White Paper – Customer Effort in the Utility Industry

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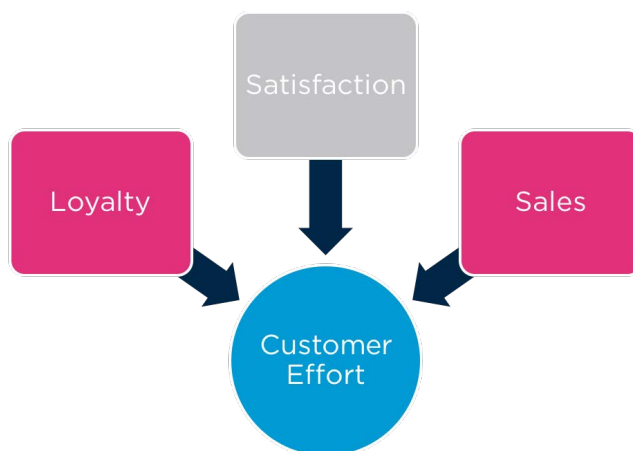
BPA Quality Monitoring White Paper

“Customer Effort in the Utility Industry”

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When you put yourself in the position of the customer every time, you begin to understand the journey required to be that customer. It takes effort to become a customer. It takes effort to use the product or service as it is intended. It takes effort to resolve issues when problems arise. It takes effort to pay for said products and services.

Some of the most successful companies in the world, not just utilities, use the Customer Effort metric as a key indicator of success. The less effort that can be created for the customer at every stage, the better chances you have in impacting all other variables including loyalty, satisfaction and propensity to purchase additional services. In realistic terms, it is best served to start by comparing effort to the expectation of the customer in terms of effort.



Customer Effort

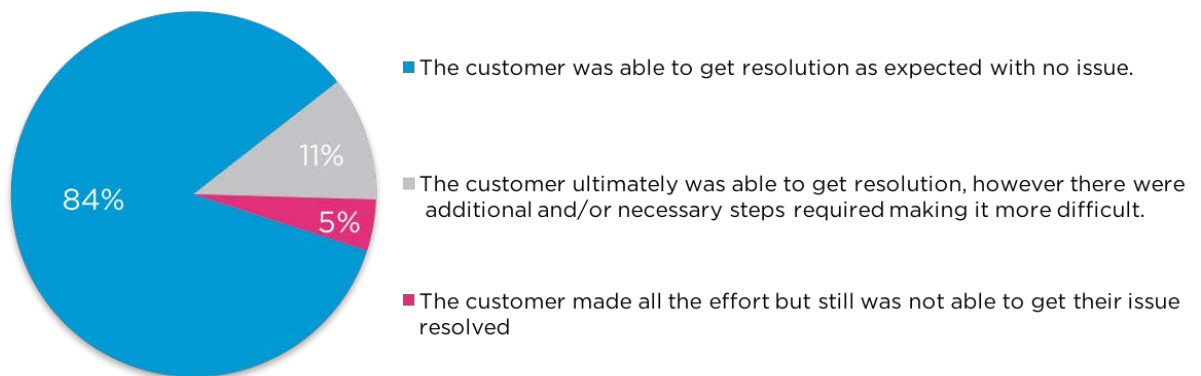
BPA Quality conducted a study as to the drivers of customer effort specifically in the utility industry, providing the industry insight as to effort it takes to be a customer of their company. We randomly selected interactions from several Utility companies across the country and measured them using customer effort metrics. The study began with the level of effort, asking the question below:



1

"What was the level of effort the customer had to make working with this company/agent (include any outside influences that are discussed, such as home visits, billing, access, etc)?"

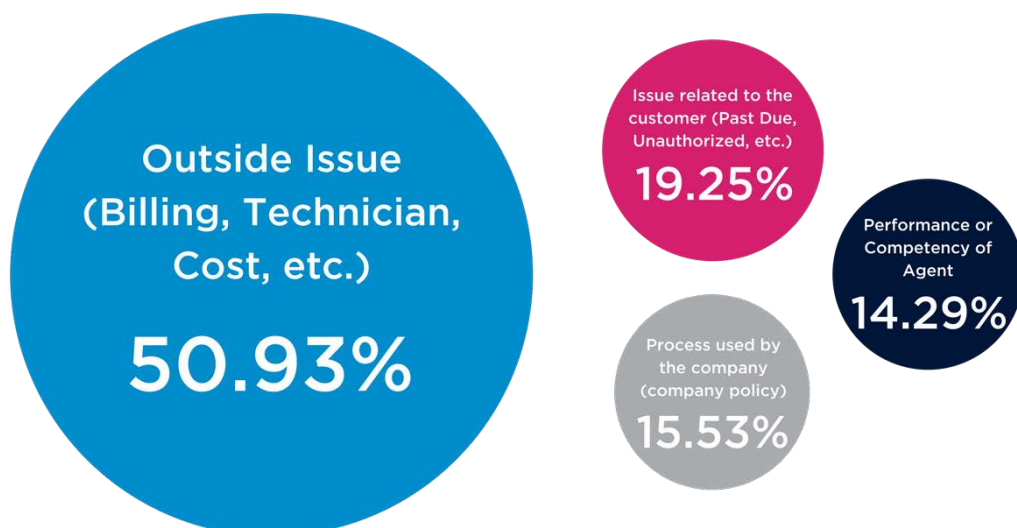
Customer's Effort



16% of all contacts experienced effort outside of expectations, regardless of the resolution of the call. The remaining interactions were able to obtain a resolution without effort, outside of the effort to make the call and inform the agent of the issue. For the 16% that experienced that extra effort, we wanted to learn what drove this effort, by asking the below question:

2

"What caused the customer effort in this instance?"





The above results outlines the drivers for effort in these utility calls. The largest driver of effort was totally unrelated to the performance of the agent. In fact, the actual performance of the agent only increased effort 14.29% of the time.

Wrapped up in customer effort is information that ties to many other metrics, most notably **call avoidance**. The data set suggests that variables related to the use of the service drove the most effort. Through the use of this intelligence and Quality Monitoring data, a utility could focus its operational strategies on resolving the drivers of these calls. The ultimate reduction in customer effort is to **make the reason for the call not happen in the first place**.

Finally, we wanted to study the impact of the contact center agent on the demeanor of these customers who experienced increased effort. For that 16% that experienced increased effort, we asked the following question:

3

"What was the difference between the customer's satisfaction before and after the call?"

44.10%

The customer was happy coming into the call and that did not change based on the agent's performance

31.68%

The customer was not happy coming into the call and the agent did not change that

16.15%

The customer was not happy coming into the call and the agent was able to change that for the better

8.07%

The customer was happy coming into the call and the agent's performance changed that for the worse

In these results, the most important metrics to note are the **bottom two**. The agent was able to turn around a bad situation over 16% of the time for these customers who were experiencing extra effort. Conversely, the situation worsened just above 8% of the time, about half the amount of those who improved it. This metric demonstrates the potential impact a well performing agent can have on an unhappy customer, in terms of effort.



Summary

All organizations need to manage the level of expectations and effort required to be a customer. The best organizations understand the drivers of the effort and channel solutions to reduce the effort for the customer. In the utility industry, three things were revealed as a result of this study:



If you would like to learn more about this study, or any of the work that BPA Quality does in the utility industry, feel free to contact us via the information below.

About BPA

With over 28 years experience, over 100 different clients, and millions of observations made worldwide, BPA Quality has the experience, knowledge and ingenuity to help you achieve the highest possible Call Center Quality Customer Experience. BPA is the most experienced and qualified provider of Contact Center Quality Services worldwide.

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