IBM

Call Center Operations and SLA Monitoring Performance Blueprint

Information Management

Cognos®
software

Achieving real-time efficiencies and enhanced customer satisfaction in call center operations

Corporate frontlines are experiencing unprecedented economic times. Difficult choices about cost cutting and the need to deliver additional efficiencies from already squeezed operations can present new opportunities–and challenges–for call center operations, Because a call center is often the first point of contact with the customer, that initial impression or interaction can determine the life expectancy of the customer.

We have all heard the promotion, "Fifteen minutes could save you 15%." The barriers to exit and fluidity in switching brands, service providers and so forth are almost negligible right now. It is critical that call center operations not give their customers any reason to be dissatisfied, consider alternatives and leave. In evaluating each change made in the name of cost cutting, it must be fully understood how that change will affect the customer experience. A short-term cost savings is not worth sacrificing the long-term loyalty of a customer. Every change that affects customer satisfaction and service will have bottom line implications.

There are multitudes of metrics monitored in call centers, and most often, the metrics are monitored in isolation, appearing in reports generated hourly or daily from disparate systems, such as the IVR switch, customer relationship management (CRM), dispatch, network and manufacturing system applications. Monitoring in such a fragmented, siloed manner provides far fewer insights and opportunities for responding quickly, decisively and cohesively. This is unfortunate because metrics serve as the leading indicators for the operation of a call center and help determine customer satisfaction and continued customer loyalty.

For example, in a recent Call Center Operations Benchmark report that surveyed over 250 *Fortune* 1000 organizations, the following operational metrics were ranked in terms of highest correlation to customer satisfaction by survey respondents.
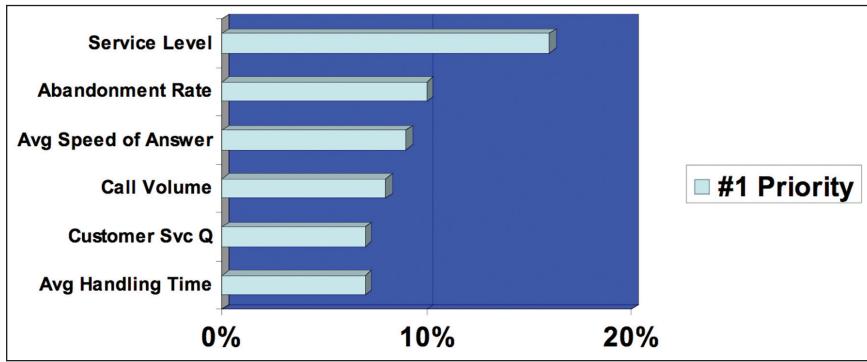
Survey Responses

It is clear, then, that for immediate, effective actions, there is a critical need for call center directors to have simultaneous line of sight for a vast array of key correlated system metrics. The *IBM Cognos® Call Center Operations and SLA Monitoring Performance Blueprint* was developed to help provide that line of sight.

Introducing the Call Center Operations and SLA Monitoring Blueprint

IBM Cognos Performance Blueprints are pre-defined data, process and policy models that help organizations accelerate their software deployments and drive faster return on investment. The *Call Center Operations and SLA Monitoring Blueprint* helps service and call center organizations:

- Increase operational efficiencies while ensuring enhanced customer service.

- Identify revenue opportunities.

- Maintain and grow customer satisfaction and retention.

With this *Blueprint*, call center management can view metrics on up-to-the-moment call trends and dynamics, agent performance and service level agreement (SLA) performance. In addition, with this solution, the call center can create reports on real-time key performance indicators and provides examples of corrective action taking to address immediate business issues.

KEY IBM COGNOS Now! Operational Business Intelligence Capabilities

In addition to the benefits specific to the *Call Center Operations and SLA Monitoring Blueprint*, the IBM Cognos Now! appliance integrates with your hardware, middleware, portal, databases and operating systems and offers many capabilities, such as:

- **Real time and continuous monitoring of operational KPIs:** An in-memory streaming analytics engine tracks aggregated events and metrics in real time from multiple data sources.

- **Closed loop business optimization:** Closes the loop from monitoring to alerting to initiating corrective action in support of immediate improvements on the operational frontline.

- **Autonomy for line of business:** A self-service dashboard enables business users to choose individual KPIs and alerting thresholds that matter most to their day to day responsibilities.

**How Call Center Operations SLA Monitoring Blueprint works**

The *Call Center Operations Blueprint* includes four key dashboards with accompanying metrics:

- Call Center Operations Dashboard

- Call Center Agent Dashboard

- Call Center Manager Dashboard

- Call Center Senior Manager Dashboard

Each of the dashboards provides role-specific metrics and real-time information that is relevant for the optimal performance of a call center operation on an hourly and daily basis. The dashboards are representative dashboards, primarily focused on an inbound call center environment, and are not comprehensive in their display of key metrics.

Call Center Operations Dashboard

The Call Center Operations Dashboard provides an up to the moment snapshot of the overall health of call center operations specific to each call center site. Call center managers can see—at a glance—multiple call center KPIs and agent performance KPIs as they relate to call volume and call handling activities. Call center specific KPIs, such as call volumes, call abandonment rates, calls in progress, calls completed and open calls are also provided as an example. These metrics are constantly being updated in real time with the patented in-memory streaming analytics engine of IBM Cognos Now!.
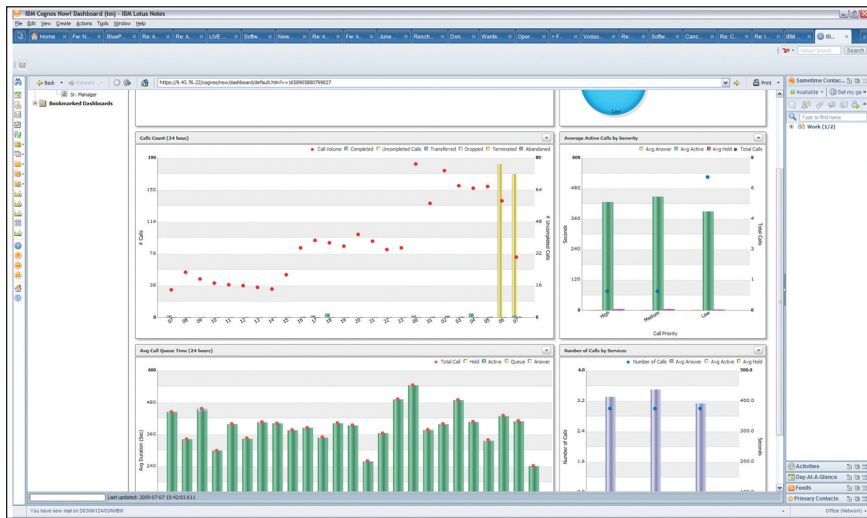
The Call Center Operations Dashboard summarizes up to the moment statistics for each of the following areas of management concern and can also serve as an introduction for other role-specific dashboards:

- Active Calls – key attributes

- Total Calls within SLA by Severity

- Calls Count across multiple categories

- Average Active Calls by Severity

- Average Call Queue Time (over past 24 hours)

- Number of Calls by Services

This dashboard is intended to provide a typical set of commonly monitored metrics in an inbound call center operation. This dashboard serves as a representation and should not be construed as a complete set of all critical metrics.

Call Center Agent Dashboard

The agent dashboard provides an individual, roles-based view for each type of agent in multiple call center sites. The agent has four key metrics available:

- Active call duration with a thermometer showing average time per call watchpoint

- Calls within SLA by severity specific to the agent

- Shift statistics

- Call Volume statistics
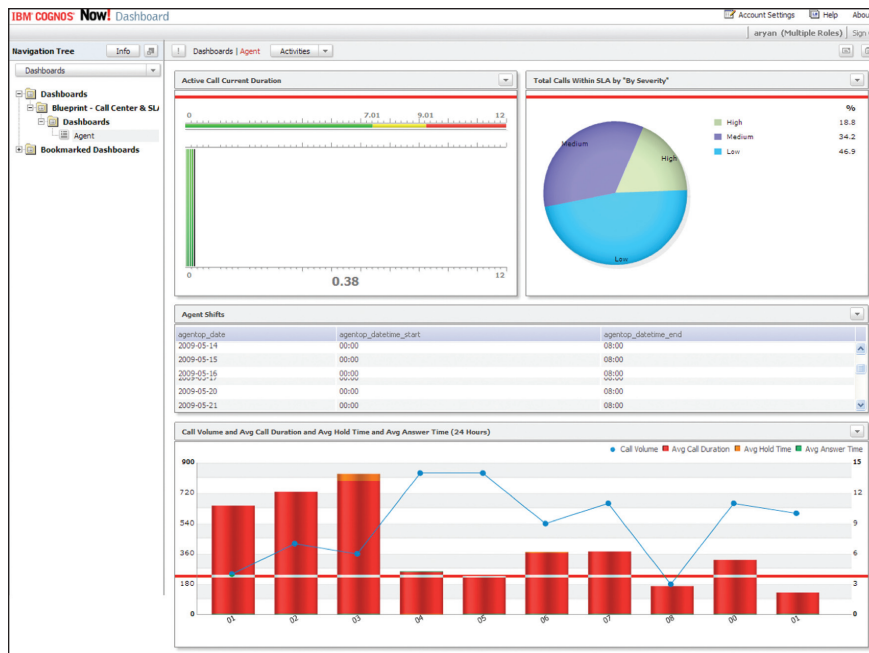
With this dashboard, an agent can:

- Monitor his or her current call time and average call time in real time over the course of his or her shift.

- Trigger a business process workflow in the system

- View call statistics over his or her shift.

Call Center Manager Dashboard

The Call Center Manager dashboard provides an aggregate view of site-specific call center metrics including individual agent statistics for multiple dimensions. These metrics include:

- Active calls by agent statistics

- Call count

- Average queue time

- Calls by severity within SLAs

For example, a call center manager can see at a glance all agents' active calls in progress, understand their severity, the customer's identity and understand which calls are nearing or in excess of the average call duration during that shift. Most importantly, this real-time view also helps the manager understand the call category – support (with associated severity level), sales closure, direct response, upselling and so forth.

Senior Manager Dashboard

The final *Blueprint* dashboard provides an executive perspective for all call center operations. Although the executive dashboard can provide real-time information, the dashboard metrics present a more historical perspective for trending and analysis over a longer period of time. Dashboard metrics include real-time call count, call volume and call statistics.
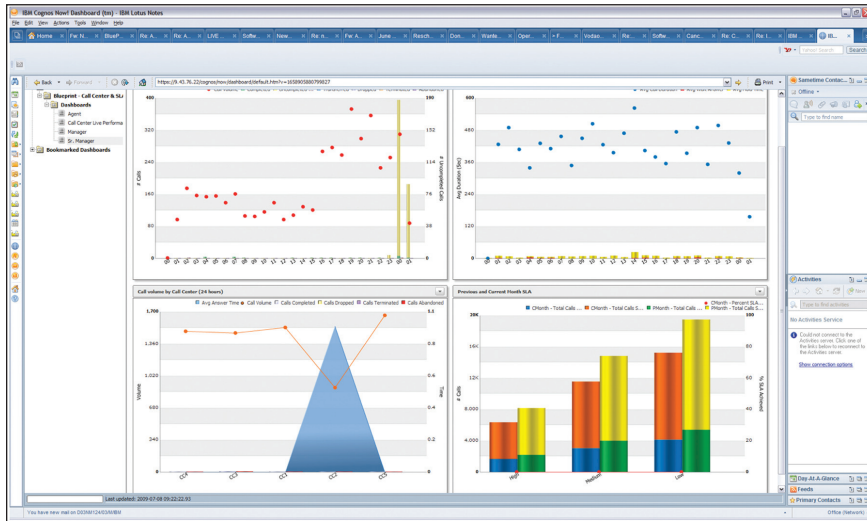
Call Center and SLA Monitoring Blueprint benefits

The *Call Center Operations and SLA Monitoring Blueprint* provides call centers and customer service organizations with metrics that help improve real-time efficiencies for a call center's most valuable assets—its customers and agent organization.

Other benefits of the *Blueprint* include:

- Improved customer service, satisfaction and retention because there is timely, line of sight visibility to call center management on site and senior management levels

- A multitude of key call center performance and activity metrics from all types of different datasets with alerts so that call centers can address immediate concerns and anomalies

- Immediate and continuous insight into key call metrics from any call switch vendor with multiple perspectives, including by agent, severity, customer type, incident and more

- Continuous trending of aggregate call metrics in real time, including completed, uncompleted, transferred, dropped, terminated, abandoned and more.

- Increased agent productivity because visibility into the times that agents are idle is immediate, which can help call centers improve how they use their workforce and their forecasting capabilities

- Reduction of SLA jeopardy because service level violations or slowing response times are immediately visible

Conclusion

IBM understands the importance of providing technologies and solutions that can address performance in the customer call center for all of the following business concerns:

- Agent optimization for inbound call centers

- Call handling

- Service resolution

- Dispatch productivity

- SLA performance

When placed against the backdrop of agent costs and fluctuating customer attrition rates, these metrics become even more significant.

With the *Call Center and SLA Monitoring Blueprint*, companies can

- Improve customer service, satisfaction and retention.

- Address immediate concerns and problems.

- View key call metrics immediately and continuously.

- Improved workforce allocation and forecasting.

- Enhance their forecasting capabilities.

- View SLA violations as they happen.

- Drive operational efficiencies throughout the frontline of the call center.

About the IBM Cognos Innovation Center For Performance Management

The IBM Cognos Innovation Center was established in North America and Europe to advance the understanding of proven planning and performance management techniques, technologies, and practices. The Innovation Center is dedicated to transforming routine performance management practices into "next practices" that help cut costs, streamline processes, boost productivity, enable rapid response to opportunity, and increase management visibility.

Staffed globally by experts in planning, technology, and performance and strategy management, the Innovation Center partners with more than 600 IBM Cognos solutions customers, academics, industry leaders, and others seeking to accelerate adoption, reduce risk, and maximize the impact of technology-enabled performance management practices.

About IBM Cognos BI and Performance Management

IBM Cognos business intelligence (BI) and performance management solutions deliver world-leading enterprise planning, consolidation and BI software, support and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance. IBM Cognos solutions bring together technology, analytical applications, best practices, and a broad network of partners to give customers an open, adaptive and complete performance solution. Over 23,000 customers in more than 135 countries around the world choose IBM Cognos solutions.

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