



# **Services Company Case Study**

**ethosIQ, LLC**

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# The Customer

This U.S. based services Company is the leading provider of in-vehicle safety, security and communication services. The Company provides services to nearly 6 million subscribers in the U.S. and Canada, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year through its 3 main call centers.

The Company maintains several call centers, including a 24X7 inbound center that supports calls from customers who pay a monthly subscription fee. This fee covers various types of roadside assistance calls, including incidents of keys locked in the car, flat tires, break downs, and auto accidents. Because of the subscription based model, Average Speed to Answer (ASA) is a key metric that helps determine customer satisfaction, and Average Handle Time (AHT) is a key indicator of operating expense. Inbound calls were grouped into two categories: “emergency related” calls and “all others” which were information requests. The 1000 agents in the call center were divided evenly between the two queues, as the call volume and average duration of the calls were equal. Agents in each pool received extensive training in their respective skill requirement. They also received cursory training in their non-assigned skill set to ensure they could support overflow calls from the other queue if there was an unexpected spike in call volume.

# The Challenge

In an effort to increase productivity by way of decreasing ASA and AHT, the Company decided to combine the two queues of agents into one pool of 1000 agents to support both types of calls. Call center management, using well accepted queue theory, determined that by combining the two pools of agents they could provide their customers better customer service at a lower cost. Despite training the agents on both types of calls, emergency and non-emergency, management did not achieve a lower ASA or AHT. *In fact, the numbers actually increased, which lead to higher costs and lower customer service metrics.*

# The Analysis

After an internal analysis of call data did not yield an answer, this U.S. Services Company brought in EthosIQ to help them identify the underlying causes and recommend solutions.

After meeting with the call center management team to review center performance objectives and current call metrics from existing data sources, ethosIQ consultants determined that **Agent Optimization Analysis** would provide the answers to management.

The EthosIQ Optimization Analysts used **Call Path Analytics** to review call center data both before, and after, the queue consolidation. Analysis uncovered that despite adequate training, a significant disparity existed in the skills of agents handling one or the other type of call. Characterizing the two types of calls as Skill A and Skill B, a further breakdown of the analysis yielded that the typical agent, was 30% above average in Skill A and 30% below average in Skill B. That difference resulted in longer handle times across the call center, thus resulting in longer queues.

# The Solution

Identifying the underlying causes to the Service Company's degraded metrics was only the first step. Recommending a solution that would help the call center utilize their agents more efficiently, while achieving their center's performance objectives, was still needed. Once the Optimization analysis had determined the optimum skill assignment, it reviewed data around groups of agents and determined the optimum pooling of agents to achieve the desired metrics.

After extensive analysis, EthosIQ recommended, and the Company implemented, three queues to optimize their call center. Of the 1000 agents, it was recommended that 400 agents be assigned Skill A, 400 agents be assigned Skill B, and 200 agents be placed in a Skill C grouping. Agents in Skill C scored exceptionally high in their handling of both types of calls. This third queue acts as an overflow queue for calls from the other two groups. Since the agents in this group have superior skills, the AHT does not degrade when overflow calls are handled by this group of agents. As a result of decreased AHT, queues were shortened, and ASA was also improved.

*Path Analytics is an approach to data analysis which treats the call path of a process as the core object.*

*This patented mathematical approach goes beyond statistical analysis to gain a deeper understanding of the call path and call center metrics.*

# The Result

The implementation of the recommendations was relatively easy and simple. The result was an immediate 20% improvement in Average Handle Time which translated to \$10M in annual savings. Customer satisfaction levels also increased for the fee-based service. Additional research is being conducted to determine if this caused a subsequent increase in revenues for the Company.

Agent skill sets can be ever-changing and fluid, and business objectives will shift. Because of this, performing an Agent Optimization Analysis on a quarterly basis ensures that the call center continues to achieve optimum performance.

**For information on how EthosIQ can help you optimize the performance of your call center, contact us at 1-800-ethosiq, or on the web at [www.ethosiq.com](http://www.ethosiq.com)**