

# Call Center FCR Best Practice Award Winner

**Gold Award for CSR Coaching:  
MedSolutions**

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## MedSolutions

### Company Info

MedSolutions began in 1992 as an owner/operator of diagnostic imaging centers, but quickly saw an increasing need in the managed care industry for intensely focused radiology benefits management. In 1997, MedSolutions sold their diagnostic imaging centers and set out to focus solely on managing the cost of imaging and helped pioneer the new industry of radiology benefits management. They were soon established as an industry leader, helping healthcare payers control the soaring costs in radiology.

Today, MedSolutions has taken the clinical knowledge, proprietary technology, and forward thinking perfected in radiology management and applied it to other areas of healthcare where there is opportunity for significant improvement, both in quality of care and in cost savings to health plans. MedSolutions continues to evolve to meet the challenges of the healthcare industry through Intelligent Cost Management, developing and introducing new services that extend beyond utilization management to capture maximum savings, reduce overall treatment costs, and ensure diagnostic accuracy.

### Call Center Description

#### Locations

Melbourne, Florida  
Franklin, Tennessee

#### Call Types

Inbound case creation for pre-authorizations, follow up on pre-authorization status, and inbound calls to nursing for clinical review

#### Customer Types

Health Plan Representatives, Rendering Providers, Ordering Providers and Patients

#### CSR Headcount

604

#### Contact Channels

Phone, website, fax

#### Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 pm  
Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m. to noon for limited clients

#### Contact Volume

Approximately 5 million calls, 3 million web cases, and 1 million faxes annually

## **Problem / Opportunity Statement**

The feedback from our callers proves that, due to the nature of the healthcare industry, they are seeking accurate yet expedited service. MedSolutions' processes are built and optimized around the fact that a patient is waiting for evidence-based input on treatments and tests that are important to their health. First Call Resolution (FCR), accuracy and client, provider and member satisfaction are very critical aspects of these processes. With this in mind there was a need to build a strong customer service representative (CSR) base, as this is our frontline representation. FCR and Customer Satisfaction (Csat) are most effectively attained at this level of interaction.

## **Best Practices Used**

We engaged Ulysses Learning to help us enhance the way our CSR handled calls. A key component of our success for improving our customer satisfaction results year-over-year (2012 - 2013) has been our improved customer service and coaching process. We utilize vital VoC information, provided by SQM, to target opportunities highlighted in the feedback data. Using the Ulysses 8 Step Strategy™ and real time coaching practices, proved to be the perfect chemistry for the World Class Service we are striving to provide. Real time coaching became a part of our culture. We engaged the Quality Accuracy team in these practices as well, giving agents more than one perspective in feedback. Ulysses encourages a 3/2 ratio of positive/constructive feedback. Agent feedback suggests that the opportunity to be coached immediately after the call gives them the opportunity to identify exact behaviors being addressed. Team lead and Quality coaching also gives recommendations on how to improve the behavior and gets CSR buy in by asking them to identify next steps to improvement. Each team lead is required to observe and give real time coaching on 5 calls per CSR per month. Quality team also performs 5 observations per CSR per month.

The first three steps in the Ulysses 8 Step Strategy™ revolve around acknowledging the customer and his or her needs. This acknowledgement phase not only includes the issue and emotion of the customer, but tailored to MedSolutions' needs; this also means gathering the caller's name and pertinent information. Within the acknowledgement phase strategy, we also put into place what we call "Intake on a page". This feature requires the agent to enter the caller's name and relationship to the case on their initial screen and populates areas of the case that require the same information. This gives the agent reference points throughout the call that serve as reminders of the caller's name, making the call more personable and less robotic and it also reduces time to handle the call, driving a more efficient customer experience.

In the acknowledgment phase agents repeat back to the caller what they heard to be the reason for the call in an "I can" statement. This gives the caller confidence that the agent is headed down the right path and "can" help them; in return giving our agents control of the call which helps them move the call along more efficiently for the caller.

There was extensive training around these behaviors and training for coaches around these behaviors. Agents get positive reinforcement when using these skills effectively and coaching

around ways to enhance their skills on a daily basis. This keeps agents focused on the behavior and keeps us as an organization from losing sight of the importance of acknowledging our callers. We have an IVR feature that will show the case number to the next agent when a call is connected to a different area; making the transition more seamless. After extensive research we found that we can eliminate the second validation of HIPAA information on all internal call connections, allowing the secondary agent to bypass repetitive HIPAA validation questions. This makes the call process more efficient and more customer centric. These enhancements were a result of feedback around call length that we gathered in our VoC surveys. Eliminating this part of the call shaves 23 seconds off of each internally transferred call. This feature has increased the effectiveness of our call transfers and increased customer satisfaction.

The Ulysses “Identify” strategies gave us a better way of getting to the root cause of a call. As a common practice, our agents were mostly asking situational questions such as, “May I have the CPT code you are requesting?” Ulysses training helped our agents identify times when they should also ask issue questions, helping them fully identify any issues the caller may have: “Did the patient already have the procedure done due to an emergency room visit or was it done as a request by the physician without realizing a prior authorization was required?” This contributes directly to our FCR numbers as it helps the agent get to the root of the problem within the first call and seek resolution immediately. Validation questions, such as “I heard you say the procedure was done in the emergency room, is that correct?” were also added to the agent’s knowledge base. This question type allows us to not only ensure that we have the correct information, but also builds the caller’s confidence along the way that we are on the same accord.

The MedSolutions’ IT team, in partnership with our Medical Management team, has worked tirelessly to enhance our intelligent clinical surveys that gather pertinent information that can lead to a decision on each case during the initial call. We were able to gain their buy in by demonstrating how this will reduce Nurse and Physician touches per case. This frees up some of our higher salaried resources, which in turn benefits the company as a whole. It also gives our Intake agents a greater feeling of accomplishment and empowerment by allowing them to meet their caller’s needs immediately instead of having to connect the caller to a nurse. With the new probing skills that the Ulysses training has equipped them with, the process is much more effortless. We are able to measure the success of these surveys systematically based on how many cases are completed after completion of survey. These results are shared with partnering teams to keep the success of the program visible cross different areas.

The agent’s training around the “Satisfy” portion of the Ulysses strategy has taken our calls to the next level of ensuring customer satisfaction. They’ve encouraged our agents to give “solutions with options” when at all possible, giving the caller a choice in their next steps. This gives the caller a sense of empowerment and control. Agents are to always seek the caller’s acceptance of the options and/or solutions presented before moving forward with wrapping up the call. Once the caller accepts, the agent then recaps the actions that were taken on the call and the status of the case. This brings the caller full circle on their requests and should answer any outstanding questions. Just in case the recap doesn’t address all outstanding questions or

needs, agents are required to ask “Is there anything else?” or “Have I addressed all of your needs today?” at the end of each call.

No call ends without our agent thanking the caller for their call. This enhanced close was rolled out immediately after each agent was fully trained on the Ulysses program. During the roll out there was an increase in number of call monitoring by both QA and Team Leads and real time feedback. This real time feedback helped agents quickly identify and relate the behavior to the most recent call they handled and quickly embrace improvements. There was a small expected increase to call handle time due to introducing these new call strategies. This increase was offset by the ability to better meet our customers’ needs and increase our FCR success rate. Once agents became more comfortable with the new strategy, the handle time began to level out as well.

### **FCR/CSat Improvements**

The results of all of these changes and process improvements had a strong impact on the critical measures (FCR, Csat and AHT) that MedSolutions holds itself accountable to meeting and exceeding. The agents handle calls that are highly personal and important to members and their providers who are in need of support related to evidence-based healthcare decisions.

First call resolution (FCR) improved from 72% in to 76% year over year, remaining in 2nd Quartile ranking. Customer satisfaction (Csat) improved from 78% to 82% year over year, improving from 3rd Quartile Ranking to 2nd Quartile Ranking. Average Handle Time (AHT) was reduced by 39 seconds for a 13% improvement year over year.

By increasing FCR, we will be able to take on many more customer calls each day, helping to better support our business as we grow in scale. Even more important, this increase is delivering enriched quality and efficiency, which leads to better outcomes for the over 33 million patients MedSolutions serves on behalf of their healthcare clients.