

Call Center FCR Best Practice Award Winner

**Gold Award for Real-Time
CSR Support Queue:
VSP**

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VSP® Vision Care Profile

Company Description

VSP was formed in 1955 and was the first prepaid, not-for-profit vision benefit program. VSP is dedicated to offering affordable, high-quality eye care plans that promote visual wellness and improve their members' quality of life. As the nation's largest provider of eye care coverage, thousands of companies rely on VSP to provide a range of vision plans. VSP's plans meet overall eye health and wellness needs and cover advanced vision correction procedures, including surgery. In the U.S., VSP provides vision care to more than 68 million members with a VSP network of eye doctors more than 30,000 strong. As a full-service benefit provider, their members can receive a WellVision Exam®, great eyewear selection, and personalized care from any of their network doctors. Additionally, through VSP's Eyes of Hope outreach programs, VSP has invested nearly \$170 million in free eye care and eyewear for more than 935,000 people.

VSP Call Center Description

Locations

Rancho Cordova, CA
Columbus, OH

Call Types

General inquiries, benefit coverage, claims and enrollment for eye care

Customer Types

Members (50%) and providers (50%)

Headcount

Over 500 FTE CSRs

Contact Channels

Phone, email, IVR, Website and Social Media

Operating Hours

Monday to Friday 8 am to 11:00 pm
Saturday 9 am to 8:00 pm
Sunday 9 am to 7:00 pm

Contact Volume

Over 12 million calls/emails annually including automation

SQM Awards Won by VSP Vision Care

- Call Center of the Year (California) (2008 and 2009)
- Call Center of the Year Finalist (2010 to 2014)
- Call Center World Class Certification (California and Ohio) (2006 to 2014)
- Highest Customer Satisfaction for Insurance Industry (2004 to 2014)
- Highest Customer Satisfaction for Business to Business (2010 to 2013)
- Highest Employee Satisfaction for Call Center Industry (2008 and 2009)
- Highest Employee Satisfaction for Insurance Industry (2004 to 2010)
- Most Improved Employee Satisfaction (Ohio) (2005)

Problem/Opportunity

How to successfully onboard a high volume of trainees and sustain your long history of World Class performance.

VSP is proud of its 13 year history of achieving World Class call center performance. The call center's performance is recognized throughout the organization as a differentiating factor in a highly competitive market. With the strong belief that high performance in First Call Resolution and Call Center Satisfaction helps attract and win new clients, the call center takes its work seriously.

In 2013 VSP began to see a slight but steady decline in its call center performance year over year. This led to a detailed analysis and focus on factors influencing these results and a clear call to action from Kathy Rodine, VP of Customer Care, who stated, "We have a responsibility to our members, doctors, and the organization to sustain our history of strong performance. We'll do what it takes to ensure a world-class customer experience."

In addition, in 2014 VSP's call center experienced the onboarding of more customer service representatives (CSRs) than ever in its past. This meant that the call center needed to grow its real-time support as well. With a dedicated team of 20 agents, they temporarily grew this support area by 30% to meet the increased demand.

Best Practices Used – Maximize Real Time Support

An essential ingredient to VSP's call center success is its support queue (SQ) whose primary function is to provide real time guidance to CSRs in resolving customer inquiries in support of FCR. These agents are evaluated on their ability to quickly and successfully assist the CSR in identifying and resolving the customer's issues accurately and delivering a low effort experience for the customer. This includes identifying any potential downstream issues that may affect the customer. In addition to assisting the CSRs with FCR, the SQ handles escalated calls from members and doctors. They understand the importance of turning a negative customer

experience to one that is positive, and they take pride in not only resolving the matter at hand, but going above and beyond to solve the customer's problem.

This group of highly skilled agents handled more than 300,000 calls in 2014. Of these, 96% were agent consult calls, and 4% were escalations. The team focused heavily on knowledge sharing within the work group so they could strengthen the effectiveness of all team members. The SQ invested in wireless headsets, which has improved the team's engagement, learning, and ability to deliver timely customer service. For example, having wireless headsets allows team members collaborate with subject matter experts (SMEs) and quickly obtain the information needed for a complex consult call or escalated situation.

Using competencies that lead to a positive customer experience, internal call quality feedback is delivered to the agent weekly in the form of two evaluations: one assessing their performance on a consult call; and the other an escalated situation. On each consult call our quality assurance (QA) team performs a 360 assessment. It's an end-to-end view of the experience starting with the original customer contact. Feedback is provided to each CSR associated with the customer's situation. This has proven to be extremely valuable in assessing FCR opportunities when the SQ is involved. Professional competencies measured include: active listening, communication, product knowledge, issue resolution, next issue avoidance, and call management, among others.

The SQ is also responsible for providing feedback to the CSR's supervisor when appropriate. It serves as an additional data input to the supervisor in assessing a CSR's performance. This immediate feedback closes gaps quickly and builds agent knowledge and confidence. Through this data capture, VSP is also able to identify learning gaps across multiple agents, enhance knowledge tools, and improve business processes that have a negative impact to the customer and/or the organization.

FCR/CSAT Outcome

VSP achieved its goal to sustain World Class performance, keeping their 13 year track record intact. They remain in the 1st quartile ranking for FCR and CSAT. Additionally, they maintained employee satisfaction performance based on the annual SQM ESAT survey. Based on the most recent survey, 48% of CSRs are very satisfied with the SQ's assistance in resolving their calls, with another 35% being satisfied.

It takes the collective effort of every employee in the division and the company to create low-effort customer experiences that result in strong satisfaction, FCR performance, and organizational effectiveness. Creating momentum around an important goal allows everyone to focus on what is most important. For VSP, it was FCR, CSAT and World Class performance. The SQ is a foundational support mechanism that provides CSRs with an added layer of assistance. With more and more customers choosing self-service for routine matters, the more complex inquiries remain for contact center CSR's. The SQ serves as the subject matter expert for all things obscure and complex. They are an integral part of VSP's success in the call center.