First Contact Resolution

Get it Right the First Time

A Pega eBook
First Contact Resolution is More than Just an Answer

Contact centers have perfected the art of capturing and tracking customer inquiries with powerful and sophisticated techniques for measuring the performance of individual customer service representatives (CSRs) and service centers as a whole. Additionally they have spent a great deal of money trying to reduce service time and costs through automation, analytics and outsourcing.

Yet despite these investments, one of the most important measures of a contact center’s productivity – first contact resolution (FCR) – remains stubbornly difficult to achieve. The statistics tell the story with 52 percent of customer calls not resolved at first contact,* while 30 percent of calls are repeat requests that end up requiring expensive rework.**

The problem lies in the fact that contact center technology focuses only on giving an answer as fast as possible, not empowering CSRs to actually resolve issues. However achieving FCR on a consistent basis requires not just an answer – it requires a resolution that truly solves the customer’s problem.

Don’t Just Answer – Resolve

FCR is not about the first contact answer – it’s about fulfilling the issue to the satisfaction of the customer and your company. Consistently achieving FCR requires technology that can deliver the following capabilities to:

- **Know your customer.** Provide CSRs with immediate understanding of the customer and issue before the call even begins.
- **Just do it.** Don’t just tell the customer what will happen: act in order to fulfill the request at the time of the call.
- **Use the right channel.** Use the channel that ensures the best outcome on the first contact – and use multiple channels at once if that is what it takes.
- **Fulfill the request and sell more.** The best resolution for the customer may involve complimentary products or services, so combine service fulfillment with relevant offers.
- **Make it a better experience.** Learn from past interactions to continuously automate, refine and improve the experience for the customer and the CSR.

*SCM Group
** Yankee Group
Know Your Customer

One of the stumbling blocks to optimizing FCR is knowing what is best for your customer and your business. It is crucial to understand the context of the call before trying to resolve it.

Fulfillment in a single call starts with understanding who your customer is and what it is he or she wants to do. You must be able to anticipate the customer’s need and give consideration to the specific situation and the individual in order to react appropriately.

Incorporating context requires technology that can identify the customer and intent of the inquiry by:

- Leveraging existing enterprise data in its native environment. Back-end system data about customers, their purchases and past interactions serves as potential context, enabling you to dynamically identify how you should treat this customer and similar customers. By automatically prompting the CSR before the call even begins, you enable faster and more successful outcomes.

- Applying predictive analytics to the customer and the interaction. By analyzing enterprise data, you can identify patterns as to which resolution is most appropriate, who might leave, who is most likely to buy more or who is a compliance risk, for example.

- Using adaptive analytics to refine the customer treatment. With the ability to leverage additional data obtained during the interaction – such as the customer’s responses to questions, apparent sensitivity to pricing, even mood – you can adapt the planned strategy in real-time to more successfully respond to this particular customer and situation.

- Continuing to improve subsequent interactions with “self-learning” analytics that automatically relate raw data to other pertinent data based on successful outcomes.

With these capabilities, you can dynamically manage the interaction, personalizing it and responding appropriately with a resolution based on the flow of the interaction, the customer and the particular need.

Using enterprise data combined with predictive and adaptive analytics, you can rapidly determine your customer’s intent to deliver a treatment appropriate to the individual and the situation.
One of the keys to optimizing FCR is not only knowing what to do, but actually fulfilling the customer’s request. When customers need help, only telling them what needs be done leaves them skeptical and unhappy – and likely to call again to find out if the problem is solved.

Shifting customer interactions from telling to doing requires an “orchestrated” process that connects all applicable groups and systems required to fulfill the request. Real-time access to back-end data then needs to be combined with dynamic guidance that helps the user through the process, providing step-by-step assistance and recommending the next best action. By applying real-time analytics and decisioning that take into account the customer’s intent and business objectives, you can dynamically create a process that delivers the right action at the right moment and leads to fulfillment.

For example, when self-service customers apply for insurance policies on your website, you should be able to guide them through the application process while accessing the appropriate systems, such as product, account, credit rating and underwriting systems, not only to help the customer select the best policy, but also approve or deny the policy at that moment. Real-time analytics and decisioning allow eligibility to be determined automatically and immediately, enabling the customer to get a new policy in a single, “one-and-done” interaction.

**Orchestrated Processes Boost FCR at TD Visa**

Because TD Visa’s customer service had evolved through merger, acquisition and expansion, operations were fractured as every new product introduced its own processes, service levels, and infrastructure. These complexities resulted in service delivery where manual handoffs, re-work, and unnecessary delays in responding to customer requests were common.

**The Solution:** TD Visa transformed its service operations using Pega for a service “backbone”.

- Orchestrated processes enforce corporate best practices and regulatory standards with automated guidance leading CSRs through review and decision processes to make sure requirements are met.
- Automated case management provides a centralized repository for all service issues across products, enabling CSRs to provide real-time status on outstanding issues.
- Automated handoffs have eliminated re-work and increased process control as Pega drives handoffs with pre-defined SLAs and escalation paths built in.

**Results**

- 30% increase in one-touch service resolution.
- 70% reduction in average resolution times for requests requiring back-office intervention.
- Training and ramp-up time significantly reduced because CSRs no longer have to memorize keystrokes.
- 50% of back-office dispute staff redeployed by eliminating manually handled simple and redundant tasks.
Use the Right Channel for the Right Process

When customers visit your website, send an email or pick up the phone, they expect their issues to be resolved regardless of their chosen communication channel. This demands a common process that coordinates seamless interactions over every channel and across multiple channels. By managing communications through an intelligent, unified process, you can provide consistent responses, ensuring that effective resolutions are used over every channel.

For example, you can automatically determine the best channel to leverage during each customer interaction and the one that will most likely deliver FCR. You can also use multiple channels, such as emailing a needed document to the customer while discussing the issue on the phone.

In addition, a common process will help you understand your actual FCR rates because it makes customer interactions reportable across channels. With a central process, you will know that a customer who sent an email two days ago and is now phoning your contact center is still discussing the same issue, revealing an addressable gap in FCR.

A centralized, orchestrated process will ensure the most effective channel is leveraged for each interaction, ensuring higher rates of FCR and customer satisfaction.
Fulfill the Request – And Sell More

Often, resolving a customer’s issue can involve additional products or services. Consider the customer who calls into his bank to complain about transfer fees. The typical response might be to grant a one-time waiver, especially if the customer has been identified as at risk of defection. Of course, the customer may decide to call and complain every month.

A better resolution may be to offer an upgraded account that allows multiple transfers each month. This is a win-win for the bank and the customer as it increases revenue, eliminates follow-up contacts and satisfies the customer.

The key is to recognize situations that are ripe for cross-selling or up-selling and respond appropriately. Adaptive analytics and real-time decisioning shine in this situation, as these capabilities automatically recognize a sales opportunity, align the company’s objectives with the customer’s intent and guide the CSR through a next-best-offer (NBO) conversation that not only facilitates FCR, but a superior (and profitable) outcome for all.

Integrating NBOs into your service operations enables you to take advantage of inbound interactions to present offers that are directly relevant to the individual and the situation. By making these offers at the moment when the customer is most receptive, you can drive revenue from service calls, as well as increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

To do so, you will need the following technology capabilities:

- Predictive models, business rules and real-time decisioning to create segment-of-one campaigns that ensure propositions are relevant and appropriate to the individual.
- Self-learning analytics to continuously update offers in real time as customer response is captured or new insight is gathered via dynamic Q&A.
- Dynamic guidance that empowers CSRs to deliver offers during service interactions.
- Real-time dashboards and simulation capabilities that help you fully understand the impact of strategy changes, making it easy to implement and adjust campaigns instantly.

Telecommunications giant Orange relies on Pega to determine the optimal retention strategy for each customer. CSRs are automatically presented with all relevant details about the customer, a calculator that shows how much they can spend to retain the customer, and all of the potential products and tariffs that can be bundled into the offer.

As a result, Orange is now retaining an additional 4 percent of their most valuable customers each month with gross operating margins increased by £2 million monthly.
Make it a Better Experience with Continuous Improvement

While FCR demands one-and-done resolution, it does not mean each interaction is an isolated event. The way in which an interaction is handled and its success – or failure – offers insight that can be used to guide subsequent interactions and provide the vital “know your customer” information that helps CSRs fulfill customer requests.

Leveraging knowledge about previous interactions can help you determine the best action and content to use the next time a customer contacts you. When you can plan, execute and monitor personalized strategies and goals, you can build on past outcomes in ways that continuously refine the customer’s experience.

This requires intelligent tools that enable business users to simulate and test the potential impact of customer strategies before putting them into production, and to then monitor performance in real-time. With these capabilities, you can predict and control the impact of experience strategies on the bottom line; ensure adherence to operational constraints and SLAs before going live; and forecast specific metrics such as volume and costs over a longer time period that will improve your planning.

A complimentary technique for continuous improvement is “design-by-doing” case management which allows manual or automatic ad-hoc additions to a case that can be saved as a new case template. The next time a similar scenario occurs, the new template can be applied. This facilitates dynamic — even “organic” — case management that continuously improves and always reflects the reality of the work needed.

Pega’s Visual Business Director allows you to simulate a business scenario and graphically view its impact on SLAs, revenues, volume, profitability targets or any other desired benchmark.

It also enables a global view across propositions, providing visual insight into the revenues generated by a new offer as well as its positive or negative effects on other propositions.
The Pega Approach to First Contact Resolution

Pega solutions for customer relationship management provide a broad and deep set of capabilities that can help you optimize your service operations. Pega delivers the ability to apply real-time, adaptive processes, connect your front- and back-office, deliver seamless multi-channel service, automate next-best-actions and offers, and enable business-level modeling, monitoring and control. Pega helps you empower your CRS to enhance their proficiency and productivity, increase customer satisfaction and dramatically improve FCR.

The Benefits of Pega for First Contact Resolution

- Improve CSR proficiency by providing insight into the customer and the intent of the interaction.
- Increase one-and-done calls by empowering CSRs with real-time orchestration that assembles all of the information and processes needed to fulfill customer inquiries.
- Personalize resolution by pushing the right content at the right moment in the context of each specific interaction and customer.
- Increase customer satisfaction by automating processes with next best actions that correctly and consistently fulfill requests regardless of channel or CSR.
- Turn service centers into revenue centers by resolving the issue and automatically incorporating relevant offers into service interactions.
- Continuously improve the service experience with real-time monitoring, simulation and business configuration.

Across industries, Pega customers have optimized their service operations to:
- Increase productivity by 40%
- Increase revenue by 30%
- Increase retention by 5%
About the Author:

Steve Kraus has more than ten years of experience designing and implementing CRM solutions for some of the world’s largest customer focused enterprises. As Senior Director, Product Marketing, Steve leads Pegasystems CRM product marketing initiatives. Prior to joining Pega, Steve held leadership positions in professional services, marketing and sales with Cap Gemini, KANA Software and Chordiant Software.

About Pegasystems

Pegasystems, the leader in business process management and a leading provider of CRM solutions, helps organizations enhance customer loyalty, generate new business, and improve productivity.

Our patented Build for Change® technology speeds the delivery of critical business solutions by directly capturing business objectives and eliminating manual programming. Pegasystems enables clients to quickly adapt to changing business conditions in order to outperform the competition.

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