

The logo for NICE nexidia, with "NICE" in a bold, white, sans-serif font and "nexidia" in a lighter, lowercase, sans-serif font, separated by a small white square. The background of the entire page is a vibrant blue with a pattern of concentric white circles and several solid blue circles of varying sizes scattered throughout.

NICE · nexidia

WHITEPAPER

The Future is Here

Leveraging NICE ENLIGHTEN AI Behavioral Models
to Maintain Customer Satisfaction with Work-From-Home Agents

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) was once portrayed in science fiction movies as the technology that powers robots to take over the world. Now the technology is ubiquitous and is being positioned as the driving force behind innovation as seen in several major network TV primetime commercials. The truth is that AI has been a part of our lives for some time now, providing data intelligence insights from vast amounts of unstructured Big Data that delivers personalized recommendations for books to read, movies to watch or food to order.

Machine learning, an application of AI, only gets smarter as it learns what we like and dislike, making the recommendation more on target over time. AI machine learning not only enhances our personal lives, but it also can accelerate the transition of contact center employees to a work-from-home environment by automating processes that increase efficiency and improve market competitiveness while maintaining superior service as customers have come to expect.

Contact center quality assurance is one example of how AI can transform a mostly manual operational program into a fully automated and adaptive agent performance program that is proven to move the needle on customer satisfaction metrics. This technology is now accessible to contact centers of all sizes via industry-first ENLIGHTEN Behavioral Models that provide unique insight from a massive data set by interpreting specific agent soft-skill behaviors that influence customer sentiment. The advantage of these AI models is that, for the first time, agent behavior can be scored accurately and objectively on every single interaction, no longer solely relying on subjective, random, and ineffective manual scoring.

“A Quality team’s greatest challenge is manual work, specifically when it comes to selecting an interaction to evaluate.” -ICMI Study Finding, August 2019

Contact Center Quality Program Challenges

During the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the role that the quality teams and supervisors play in assessing and coaching agent performance is more important than ever before. Agents are now having to adjust to a crisis that may cause some personal anxiety and feelings of isolation in a work-from-home environment. At the same time, many of them are having new conversations with customers on COVID-19 that they are not prepared to respond to properly. Quality assurance programs need to adapt to the changing times to assist agents with their performance during this transition. However, because these programs have remained mostly manual, businesses are challenged to rethink how to effectively measure agent performance. Some contact centers have been so strapped for resources that their quality programs have been suspended so that the quality team can assist on the phones due to a surge in calls related to the crisis, and these interactions take longer than usual to resolve.

Even before the pandemic, according to an ICMI study on the State of Contact Center Quality Management, quality teams cited their greatest challenge is manual work specifically when it comes to selecting an interaction to evaluate, completing evaluation forms, delivering coaching, and reporting on the program effectiveness. Currently, most quality teams use written guidelines when determining what constitutes good or poor agent behaviors during an interaction while listening to a call and completing an evaluation form manually. The team will then hold calibration sessions regularly to maintain consistency in the evaluation process. However, behavior-based quality evaluations are still a subjective analysis and it is often based on a small random selection of interactions that are statistically irrelevant. Quality evaluations that lack consistency and are based on an inaccurate sampling methodology can be costly to the whole organization, especially when quality scores are tied to an agent’s performance assessment and compensation. Getting this wrong can contribute to high agent turnover as agents feel unfairly measured and mistrust the quality process.

Augmenting Analytics Programs with NICE ENLIGHTEN Behavior Models

Speech analytics provides a comprehensive analysis of discrete events based on spoken words or phrases that occur during an interaction. For example, it can be designed to categorize dissatisfied callers into a single group of interactions based on the customer expressing that they are “unhappy” or they received “poor service.” This can greatly assist a quality team during the COVID-19 crisis because speech queries can be adjusted to identify COVID-19 related topics or the system can listen for extraneous noise that could indicate an agent is distracted. These calls can be sent to a queue for quality evaluation and coaching or reviewed for process and procedure improvements.

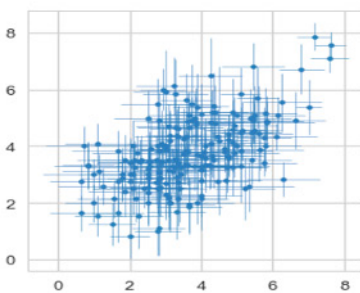
However, knowing a customer is dissatisfied is only part of the picture because what is still unknown is the specific behavior that drove poor customer sentiment. This analysis has typically been left to evaluators to interpret and it is based on their subjective opinion. ENLIGHTEN Behavior Models take an analytics program to a whole new level because it automates the objective scoring of sentiment and behaviors that impact customer satisfaction metrics across 100% of interactions. NICE ENLIGHTEN includes sentiment scoring which is a proven predictive indicator of customer satisfaction such as tNPS or CSAT surveys. It also includes scored behaviors that directly impact the sentiment score.

Leveraging NICE ENLIGHTEN Behavior Models for Customer Satisfaction

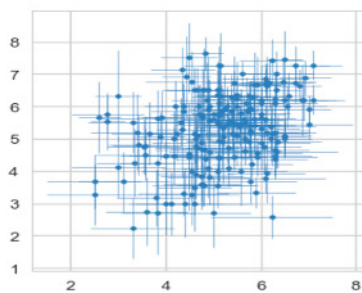
AI machine learning taps into the vast amounts of data being generated in a contact center to find patterns in unstructured behavioral data. Models are trained with these behavior patterns to monitor all interactions and identify and predict which conversations require a quality evaluation and coaching to improve contact center KPIs.

It is proven that behavior data models provide greater accuracy when analyzing a conversation between an agent and customer compared to the subjective human listening of an evaluator where subconscious biases may exist when rating agent performance. For example, when agents are required to handle complex issues, behavioral data analysis models automatically determine if agents questioned effectively to understand the issue, demonstrated a personal connection with the customer or actively listened to what a customer said. This graph demonstrates how the scoring of soft skills is inconsistent when it is based on human listening and analysis. The same set of interactions were scored multiple times by different evaluators for skills that include “Build Rapport,” “Demonstrate Ownership,” and “Listen Actively.” There was a wide scoring variance that only increased and became more inconsistent over the thousands of interactions that were evaluated.

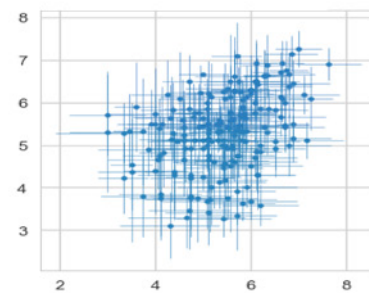
Build Rapport



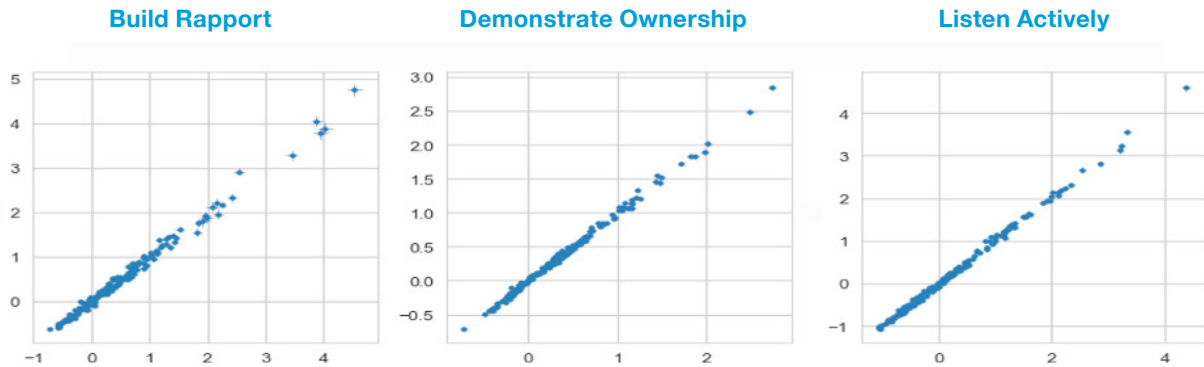
Demonstrate Ownership



Listen Actively



The same data set of interactions were scored by the ENLIGHTEN behavior analysis models with drastically different results. The straight diagonal line indicates that there was no variance in the evaluation of soft-skill behaviors. The consistency of the evaluation of soft skills across all the interactions improved agent performance and customer satisfaction in an efficient and systematic way that wasn't possible to do by simply adding more employees to perform the evaluations.



True to traditional machine learning techniques, the ENLIGHTEN models for Customer Satisfaction also maintain and improve their accuracy over time – even with changing business dynamics – because the models can be trained for specific industry segments. When AI behavior models are combined with next-generation quality management technology, all quality processes can be automated, including:

- Accurate, unbiased selection of interactions best suited for evaluation or coaching based on monitoring of 100 percent of interactions by the system for agent behaviors within each defined KPI. For example, if an agent is demonstrating low sentiment scores, the behavior model results will help uncover a better understanding of what behavior is driving this trend. The interactions with the problematic behaviors are automatically queued for a manager to review and coach, reducing this process from hours to minutes.
- Suggest answers to questions on an evaluation form automatically to remove subjectivity in the process and eliminate mundane work that quality teams and supervisors are tasked with. This provides them with an opportunity to leverage the evaluation form as a coaching tool. Should the evaluator disagree and change the answer to an auto-answered form question, the AI-based behavior data model will learn from this action and will improve its answer accuracy over time.
- Track results of agent behavior scoring by a customer satisfaction metric. The behavior scores can be aggregated across all interactions and viewed by a supervisor's team or by the individual agent.
- Determine if coaching was effective with on-demand reporting as well as real-time performance dashboards that are visible to all stakeholders regardless of their location.



AUTO-SUGGEST AND SCORE EVALUATION FORM QUESTIONS

QUESTION	ANSWER	POINTS		NOTES
Building Rapport (hint)	Partially Demonstrated	3/4	PLAY	"Effectively Demonstrated" suggested. Behavior score is between 50-70
Demonstrate Ownership (hint)	Did Not Demonstrate	1/4	PLAY	"Not Demonstrated" suggested. Behavior score is below 30 Suggested Corrective Action: "Check all systems before decline assistance"
Acknowledge Loyalty (hint)	Exceptionally Demonstrated	4/4	PLAY	"Exceptionally Demonstrated" suggested. Behavior score is above 80
Active Listening (hint)	Partially Demonstrated	2/4	PLAY	"Partially Demonstrated" suggested. Behavior score is between 30-50

From the executive level to individual agents, all stakeholders benefit from a contact center quality assurance program that uses a quality automation solution powered by NICE ENLIGHTEN AI Behavior Models.

Quality Team and Supervisors

- Deliver a measurable impact on KPIs by demonstrating their specific contribution to these initiatives such as improvements in customer satisfaction metrics.
- Provide a greater focus on establishing processes and procedures for handling COVID-19 related interactions that ensure customer safety instead of being consumed with manual, repetitive work.
- Improve accuracy and consistency in the evaluation process with less time and resources needed.
- Increase coaching session effectiveness by providing recommendations for content guidance.
- Provide more time for in-depth analysis and agent coaching which must increase in frequency during the transition to prepare them for critical conversations with customers.

Agents

- Empower agents by linking their behavior directly to corporate objectives and results and provide them with self-improvement tools so they can clearly understand what actions to take to enhance their performance.
- Improve engagement with unbiased performance feedback on all interactions and not a small sample.
- Provide actionable and specific tasks to improve performance in a timely manner.
- Increase transparency and visibility with dashboards showing performance trends, ranked results versus peers, and coaching effectiveness.

Organizations and Executives

- Reduce agent turnover by improving communication and knowledge of individuals' performance.
- Improve response to customers during a time of crisis and beyond.
- Reduce contact center operational costs.

Summary

Contact centers and quality programs can address their greatest challenge of manual processes head-on during the COVID-19 crisis with automation tools that are driven by AI behavior models. These models systematically identify agent behaviors that directly affect customer satisfaction and remove the subjectivity from the quality program, making the whole evaluation process unbiased. As a result, it alleviates the mistrust that agents often feel toward their evaluations and it frees up supervisors' time to increase the frequency and depth of their coaching. In a time where agents are feeling anxious and uncertain about the transition to a work-from-home environment, an unbiased evaluation process with targeted behavior-based coaching improves agent engagement, enables agents to self-coach, and provides an incentive for continual improvement of each individual's soft skills.

About NICE

NICE Quality Central™ unifies fragmented, disconnected quality programs that use different data sources into a single application that automates all omnichannel quality operations, from evaluation to coaching and feedback. It incorporates NICE ENLIGHTEN Behavior Models into the evaluation and coaching processes to improve agent engagement and performance and increase customer satisfaction. Quality Central AutoEvaluate™ includes auto suggestion of answers to behavior-based questions on an evaluation form and scores them using the behavior models.

www.NICE.com/analytics



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