POINT OF VIEW

Best Practices of Setting Up Case Management Programs

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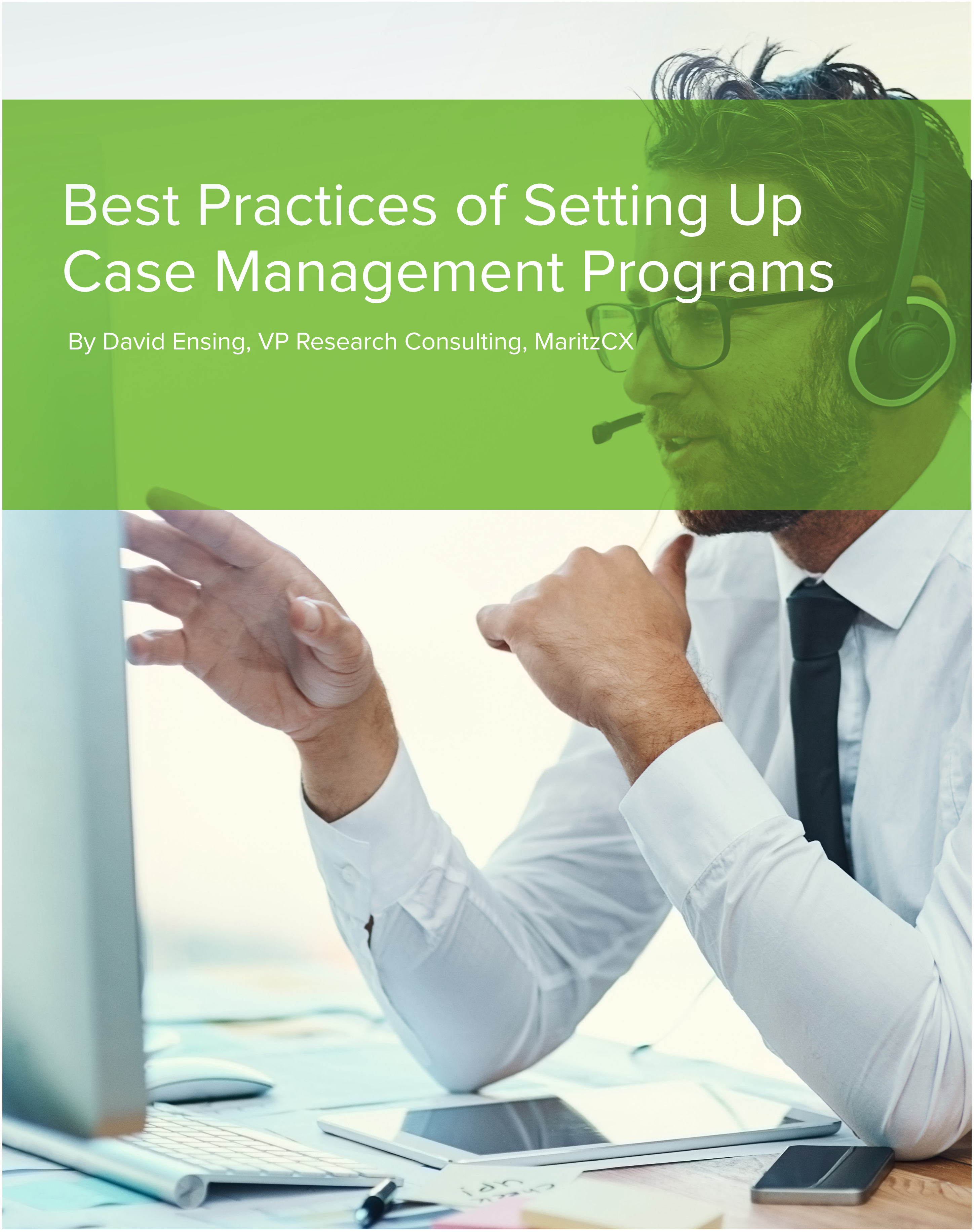

Customers who complain and receive good resolution to their complaints are usually more loyal than customers who never complained at all. With that in mind, how do we identify and properly follow-up with customers who return a customer experience survey that indicates they had a problem?

Our research shows that frontline personnel use customer experience information for four primary purposes:

1. To track progress towards goals and rewards
2. To identify at-risk customers and engage in one-on-one problem resolution efforts
3. To identify and work on opportunities for improvement in various aspects of the customer experience and
4. To measure and coach employees' performance in various aspects of the customer experience

The MaritzCX platform has components to facilitate each of these functions: Dashboards for tracking progress, Case Management for customer resolution, and Action Planning to improve both process and employee performance. Here we will focus on setting up the Case Management System and provide recommendations for how to do it well.

First, we know that case management is important because we have strong evidence that customers who complain and receive good resolution to their complaints are usually more loyal (in terms of actual repurchase behavior) than customers who never complained at all. Of course, if customers receive poor resolution to their complaints, their loyalty is worse than everyone else's. With that in mind, how do we identify and properly follow-up with customers who return a customer experience survey that indicates they had a problem? There are 6 basic steps that we will discuss: Alert Generation, Alert Notification, Alert Follow-Up, Alert Closing, Remeasurement, and Reporting.

ALERT GENERATION

The first step of the case management process is to identify survey returns that indicate the customer had some sort of problem in need of resolution. Many programs do this by choosing one or more key questions on their surveys that generate an alert if a low score is given. However, this is often not the best strategy because low scores on some questions may not be resolvable. Also, just knowing that a customer rated a question low doesn't tell the Case Owner (the person trying to resolve the issue) what the problem really was. For instance, if an alert was generated off of a customer giving a low score to "Overall Purchase Experience" the Case Owner doesn't really know what happened and the issue might not be resolvable at all (with the exception of calling the customer simply to apologize for the bad experience).

A better way to generate alerts is to actually ask customers if they have any concerns and if so, to explain the concern. Then, an alert can be generated off of the customer saying they have a concern. Furthermore, their specific concern can be incorporated into the Alert Notification that goes to the Case Owner, so the Case Owner is aware of and can potentially solve the issue *before* following up with the customer. In many instances this allows the Case Owner to present solutions to the customer instead of just getting more information about what went wrong. This is obviously a much better experience for the customer.

ALERT NOTIFICATIONS

After an alert has been generated, the next step is to assign it to the proper people. There are two types of case management roles in the MaritzCX platform: Case Owners and Case Watchers. Case Owners are expected to resolve the issue with the customer and they have full access to enter information into the system. Case Watchers can either be Full Access Watchers or Limited Access Watchers. Full Access Watchers have all the rights of a Case Owner. Usually, it is good to assign Full Access to watchers who may need to manage cases when case owners are on vacation, are otherwise unavailable, or fail to follow-up with the customer. Limited Access Watchers do not have privileges to write information into the system. Their role is to monitor case management activities within their organization.

It is usually best that a person at the frontline unit that dealt with the customer (e.g., store, hotel, dealership, bank branch, etc.) is assigned as the Case Owner and people higher up in the organization (e.g., unit managers, corporate field managers, etc.) are assigned as Case Watchers. In the MaritzCX platform, alert notifications are usually emailed to Case Owners and Case Watchers are copied on the email. Alternatively, MaritzCX also has a Case Management App that provides push notifications to Case Owners and Case Watchers.

In the MaritzCX platform, the case notification is customizable and can pull in any information from the prepopulated fields and the customer's response to the survey. The case notification should include customer contact information (e.g., phone number, email address), transaction information (e.g., date, type of transaction, etc.), deadlines for opening the case (one business day is typical) and resolving the case (typically 3 business days), the reason the alert was generated, and any verbatim comments left by the customer. This allows the Case Owner to follow-up immediately without having to gather additional information before contacting the customer. In the MaritzCX platform the notification instructs the Case Owners to go to their Case Inbox to manage the case and/or contains a link to the specific case management form Case Owners use to manage the case.

ALERT FOLLOW-UP

Frontline personnel should be encouraged to check their case management inboxes each business day. This inbox displays the cases that have been assigned to them and the current status of each case. Cases can have the status of New, In Progress, Closed, and Overdue. The inbox provides access to each case management form where the Case Owner manages the case. Here, the status of the case changes to In Progress when the case owner conducts any activity on the case form. While the case is being managed, the case manager can enter notes regarding case progress in the form and upload appropriate documents. Depending on the Case Owner's rights, cases can also be assigned to different individuals in the organization.

ALERT CLOSING

Ideally, cases are closed when case owners have followed-up with the customer and the issue has been resolved. However, cases may also be closed in an unresolved status if the Case Owner is not able to get in contact with the customer or for other reasons. To facilitate tracking of causes of customer problems, MaritzCX has the capability to include program specific root cause lists in our case form. When closing a case, Case Owners choose the closing status, select one or more root causes that they believe contributed to the initial problem, and enter in a final case note.

If Case Owners do not close a case (including if they have never opened it at all) within the designated amount of time to resolve the issue, the system can automatically escalate the case to a preidentified designee (usually the Case Owner's manager or a corporate field manager). This designee can then follow-up with the delinquent case owner, assign the case to someone else, or work the case.

REMEASUREMENT

Many of MaritzCX' programs also include a Remeasurement or "Double Closed Loop" process in their case management program. After the case has been reported as closed and resolved, a very short communication is automatically sent to the customer to determine their satisfaction with the resolution process. This process is important for two reasons. First, it provides information regarding the effectiveness of the customer resolution efforts. In combination with the reporting of root causes on the case form, information can also be learned regarding what types of issues are best and worst resolved. Second, due to the importance of customer resolution, some programs incentivize frontline personnel to engage in case management efforts. A remeasurement program prevents frontline personnel from just closing cases and reporting them as resolved without ever contacting the customer.

REPORTING

Finally, information from the Case Management System should be incorporated into reporting dashboards, essentially as a new data set. This practice serves two purposes. First it allows for the assessment of how well the case management program is performing. Second, and maybe more importantly, it allows a company to learn from their case management efforts and elevates the case management process from "curing symptoms" to "curing problems". In other words, the case management information (what type of root cause problems are most frequent, what types of problems are resolved well and poorly, etc.) can be used to diagnose systemic issues within an organization. Metrics that are shown on a Customer Resolution Dashboard typically include status of cases (New, In-Progress, Closed, Overdue), average time to close cases, frequencies of closed case status (resolved and unresolved), percentage of cases overdue, frequencies of root causes, and closed case status by root cause.

To demo a product or to contact MaritzCX call

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