Network Homes

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Insights lead to exceeded CSAT targets, improvements in agent utilisation and increased employee engagement by 10%

92% **CSAT**
Utilising insights see CSAT increase and a 12 point increase in NPS in the first 12 months

12% improvement in utilisation
Achieved by benchmarking against industry best practice

10% increase in employee engagement
Listening to employees see Network Homes awarded 1 star accreditation

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Since 1974 Network Homes has been acquiring and building homes for affordable rent across London helping individuals and families from all walks of life.

In 2016 the business restructured, bringing four distinct housing associations together under a single organisation. With that came a new approach to customer service.

> Our vision is to provide a first-class service every step of the way. We're aiming to achieve at least 90% satisfaction with our overall services by 2021.
>
> Gerry Doherty, Executive Director of Customer Service

With this very clear and measurable objective, the team in the contact centre knew that they had to do more to really discover what customers want and to use insights to explore this further.

The Challenge

The vision was 90% CSAT by 2021 and to get Best Companies accreditation. The contact centre was gathering data against customer experience metrics and they were good, but more had to be done to achieve the vision. Network Homes needed to use the insight to change behaviours, improve processes and focus on what was important to the customer.

The Solution

Network Homes introduced Bright Index to benchmark its performance metrics. They also deployed Bright Navigator to monitor ongoing Customer Satisfaction, analysing the verbatim comments to use as evidence to identify and prioritise improvement projects. Bright Employee Engagement was implemented to understand how the employees were feeling and to focus efforts to improve the employee experience.

The Results

CSAT consistently exceeds 90% in the contact centre. There is a strong correlation between empathy and general satisfaction of 0.87. NPS increased by 12 points within a year and advisor utilisation improved by 12%. Employee engagement survey leads to Best Companies 1 Star accreditation and an overall 10% increase in employee engagement.

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Building evidence

Freda Owusu, Head of Customer Contact Centre at Network Homes, explains: "In 2015 we benchmarked customer satisfaction with Bright Index because we had no evidence of how the contact centre was performing and we weren't listening to our customers. The only other solution we had was an outsourcer monitoring customer satisfaction following a repair.

"Using Bright did the trick," Freda continues. "We knew we were doing a good job and now had valid data to prove it. The system is so easy to use so we started to measure many different areas, and the performance metrics are available in real time to team managers and individual agents."

Right from the start Network Homes measured answer time, agent knowledge, empathy and first contact resolution (FCR). But during 2015 they were simply monitoring performance.

"We had access to so much insight but we weren't utilising it," said Freda. "It wasn't until we had a clear directive in 2016 that we started to dive deeper into the insights and deployed Bright Navigator to drive up CSAT performance."

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> With a clear purpose and the insight needed to change behaviours, improve processes and focus on what our customers wanted us to do better, FCR went up to 84% in 2018, empathy increased to 95% and CSAT now exceeds the target at over 92%.
>
> Head of Customer Contact Centre
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From good to great

In 2015 customer satisfaction metrics demonstrated that the contact centre was delivering a good customer experience with CSAT at 87%, empathy averaging 92% and FCR was 79%, although the scores were a little unpredictable.

"With a clear purpose and the insight needed to change behaviours, improve processes and focus on what our customers wanted us to do better, we saw FCR grow from 80% in 2016 to 84% in 2018, empathy increased to 95% and CSAT now exceeds the target at over 92%," said Freda. "What's more, in the last two years the scores have remained steady and increasing, removing the volatility that we were seeing previously.

"Because the agents have their own performance data available to them, they have total ownership of their performance. There is immediate real feedback and the agents are using it to their advantage. As well as being made aware of customers that were not satisfied, agents are getting access to all the positive comments that were given. It is the latter that creates a huge morale boost for the advisors, which also had a positive knock on effect."
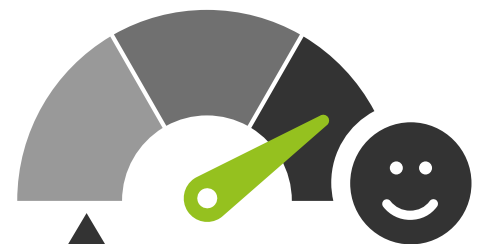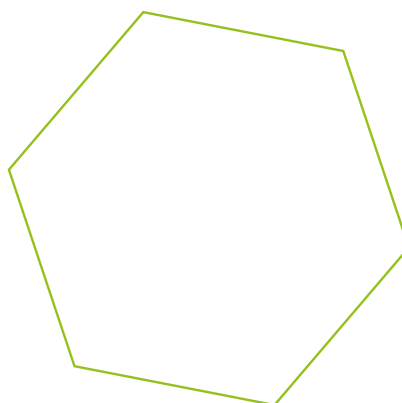
+7%
84%
FCR

+5%
95%
Empathy

+5%
92%
CSAT

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Using the metrics

Since 2017 agents have been measured on FCR. It became evident that Network Homes was getting repeat calls from customers, but it wasn't clear why.

Freda explains: "using the verbatim insight within Bright we could now see what was happening. The problem was in the communication between Network Homes, our contractors and our customers. The process left the customer in the dark and therefore they called us. We have been working with our partners to improve the customer journey and appear to have, in the main, eliminated negative feedback on this aspect of the process.

Bright insights also revealed that average call duration was extremely high caused by agents either putting customers on hold whilst calling contractors or transferring them to other people to resolve a query.

"We discovered that some of those queries were not too complex and if we increased agents' knowledge then they would be able to deal with the query much quicker and deliver a smoother experience," said Freda.

"So, we brought Housing Officers into the contact centre to do a knowledge transfer and provide immediate support. For one individual who had a low knowledge score, we focused their training and they saw an increase in their knowledge score by 20% in just one quarter. The results speak for themselves – knowledge scores across the centre improved from 86% to 90%."

The insights were like gold!
A strong correlation between empathy and general satisfaction

A distinct correlation

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> We didn't expect to find an extremely strong correlation between empathy and general satisfaction with a correlation co-efficiency of 0.87.
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> Head of Customer Contact Centre

Metric success

Although many contact centres measure NPS, for Network Homes this is not a key metric because customers don't have a tendency to be in a position to recommend Network Homes to others. However, it is used as a benchmark to determine performance against others in the sector. During 2018 NPS increased by 12 points as a result of all the initiatives that the contact centre had implemented.

The contact centre has also seen improvements in advisor utilisation. Bright revealed that 47% of advisor time was coded as 'other' and it was not clear how much of this time was leakage such as lateness or unplanned breaks. Armed with this knowledge, improvements were made and within one year it dropped by 12%.

There was an increase in their knowledge score by **20% in just one quarter**

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Awarded

Best Companies accreditation team workshops on specific themes

> " There is no doubt that Bright has been an essential part of our journey over the last few years. Their immense knowledge in customer contact measurement and techniques to make a significant impact on customer experiences means they will continue to be a core system in our drive to further improve the customer experience we provide. "
>
> Head of Customer Contact Centre

Employees 10% more engaged

As part of its new strategy, Network Homes decided to seek accreditation from Best Companies. It turned to Bright Employee Engagement to support its goal.

"We didn't really know how engaged employees were. We hadn't done any formal surveys and although we had a gut feeling that things were ok, we didn't know for sure. So, we deployed Bright Employee Engagement to do a temperature check.

The insights were like gold! We used the feedback to do team workshops on specific themes; we looked at the problems that were raised and worked together to find solutions.

One example was a trial of Freedom Breaks. The feedback suggested that advisors were unhappy that they didn't have freedom to take their breaks when suited them. So, advisors were given the responsibility to have their breaks when they felt it worked for them. Inevitably, it worked for a while and it was the feedback from employees that resulted in reverting back to scheduled breaks.

"As a result of the insights and initiatives, not only have we improved employee engagement in the longer term by some 10%," said Freda. "Bright Employee Engagement helped us to prepare for Best Companies where we were awarded 1 Star accreditation."

The future is Bright

"Looking forward we are starting to implement alerts in Bright," reveals Freda. "They will identify further FCR shortfalls which will give light to where there may be a people or process issue. If there is an agent knowledge issue, we will be able to solve it quickly with more directed training. And if it's a process issues, it will give us the specific evidence needed to improve the customer journey and work more closely with our partners to deliver a better customer experience.

"So, there is no doubt that Bright has been an essential part of our journey over the last few years," concludes Freda. "Their immense knowledge in customer contact measurement and techniques to make a significant impact on customer experiences means they will continue to be a core system in our drive to further improve the customer experience we provide."

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