

Ensuring Workforce Optimisation Efficiency

By Steve Chaplin,
Head of Workforce Optimisation, Sabio



Delivering best practice operational performance through Workforce Optimisation

Realising the potential of Employee Optimisation tools

Extending Workforce Optimisation benefits to a broader audience

Cloud-based Employee Optimisation set to increase business agility

Enabling more strategic Workforce Optimisation activities

A leading independent Workforce Optimisation specialist

1 Delivering best practice operational performance through Workforce Optimisation (WFO)

In today's highly competitive customer service world, every contact centre operation needs to have a robust and efficient approach to optimising their employees' performance. Before organisations can start to address some of their more strategic customer management concerns, they need to be in a position to address the following questions – indeed they should perhaps be considered more as core requirements:

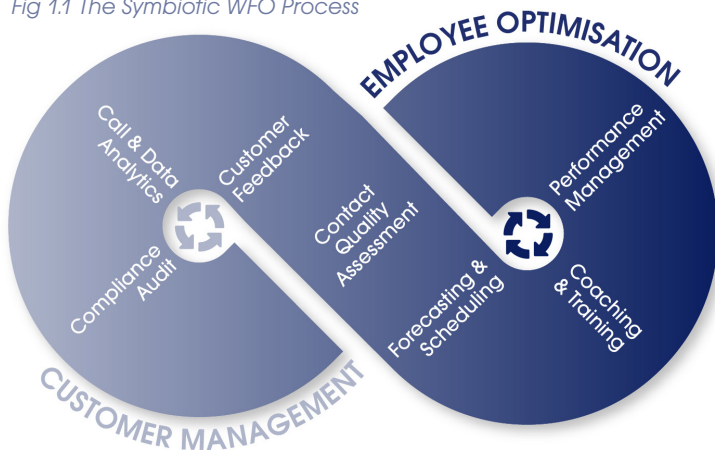
- Are my contact centre agents productive?
- Am I answering/responding to customer contacts within an appropriate and consistent time frame?
- Am I presenting a consistently good quality of service for each customer interaction?
- Are my agents adequately equipped to serve my customers and achieve the objectives being set for them?
- Am I targeting my employees appropriately, developing their skills in line with strategic business objectives, and offering them frequent support and feedback?

In each of these questions, the answer involves continuous focus and improvement and this is where the classical best practice operational Workforce Optimisation processes and tools - such as Workforce Management (WFM), quality monitoring, performance management and training - contribute significantly.

While benefits may well also be realised through improved customer management techniques, the business justification for Workforce Optimisation projects will still generally be focused around efficiency through improved business practices - essentially achieving more for the same or less staffing investment.

Deploying a WFM tool can help to reduce unproductive agent time through more accurate forecasting and optimised scheduling, and can help to cut back on lost time thanks to better tracking of real-time adherence. Using quality monitoring tools and coaching/training to focus on areas such as improved screen navigation will also help to enhance agent productivity, with optimised average call handling times and reduced call hold and wait times. Agent feedback tools such as desktop scorecards and more targeted training can additionally be used to help improve agent motivation, development and efficiency.

Fig 1.1 The Symbiotic WFO Process



2 Realising the potential of Employee Optimisation tools

Workforce Management particularly is seen as a core Employee Optimisation discipline, unlocking key areas where expense reductions can be achieved and allowing contact centres to cut their overall costs without impacting service levels.

WFM is quite rightly seen as potentially the most valuable tool in the contact centre manager's portfolio, as it effectively provides them with a platform for unlocking the potential of further Workforce Optimisation initiatives.

Implemented and operated correctly, WFO disciplines such as Workforce Management also play an important ongoing role in ensuring that contact centres schedule and manage their most expensive resource - their agents - efficiently. Traditionally when an organisation first deploys a solution such as WFM for the first time, they will make a point of scheduling classroom-based training sessions for their current

team of resource planners, schedule administrators, team leaders and agents. As a result, initial skills retention is strong and WFM tools quickly start to deliver across the contact centre.

However, change being the one certainty in contact centres, resource planners might get promoted, agents can move on,

and an organisation's original WFM training can quickly erode leading to inevitable skills gaps. That's why it's so important for organisations to supplement their original classroom-based training with flexible multi-channel and computer-based training to ensure that the right Workforce Optimisation skills levels are established and maintained across their business.

3 Extending Workforce Optimisation benefits to a broader audience

Employee Optimisation tools such as Workforce Management offer direct quantifiable benefits - such as the reduction in scheduled hours through an increase in schedule efficiency - it's hardly surprising that today's best practice contact centre operations are such committed WFM users.

According to the latest UK contact centre research from analyst firm ContactBabel, some 86% of larger contact centres (those with more than 200 agent seats) are current WFM users. This figure falls to 59% for medium-size operations (50-200 seats), and just 42% for smaller, sub 50-seat centres. While this might suggest an already saturated WFM market, particularly at the higher end, the market reality is quite different. ContactBabel reports that some 24% of WFM users are currently looking to replace their systems, reflecting the fact that many firms are still reliant on older resource management and scheduling tools that have been in place so long that they are fully depreciated, often many times over.

One of the reasons for this longevity is often the perceived replacement cost of core Employee Optimisation tools such as WFM, recording and quality monitoring. For some organisations, the benefits of tools such as WFM are clear, but the initial investment and often inflexible software licencing can make procurement challenging.

Now however, the latest on demand, 'cloud-enabled' Workforce Optimisation solutions are actively removing potential barriers to entry - offering minimal cost of ownership, accessible monthly pricing and significantly reduced time to deployment.

4 Cloud-based Employee Optimisation set to increase business agility

Today's best practice on demand WFO solutions offer scalability and modular configurations to meet specific and evolving customer contact requirements.

High cost of entry is always going to be a concern for smaller contact centre operators, however for many firms the primary driver for cloud migration is related far more to the level of business agility it can offer. For those larger contact centres still locked into legacy WFM tools for example, the opportunity to transition to a comprehensive on demand WFM option - with full real time agent adherence and advisor self-service features - can be compelling. Particularly as propositions such as the Sabio OnDemand powered by Verint offering also provides full Managed 24x7 Premium Support as part of the solution, directly

addressing the issue many organisations have with maintaining internal Workforce Optimisation expertise.

The opportunities presented by on demand WFO deployment also present customer service providers with a chance to reconfigure their workforce optimisation approach to address the rapidly-evolving customer service environment. With today's combination of social, mobile and online omnichannel engagement, the reality is that those still using legacy WFO tools will find it hard to manage their employee resources across both traditional and new customer interaction channels.

Adopting an on demand approach to Workforce Optimisation will also provide contact centre management and agents with a uniform experience across all their key WFO applications, helping to increase productivity while also empowering agents with self-service features such as holiday booking, shift swaps and overtime management, as well as detailed personal feedback and scorecard capabilities.

So for organisations looking to refresh the Employee Optimisation elements of their broader Workforce Optimisation strategy, an on demand approach can offer significant cost of ownership advantages as well as rapid deployment timetables. Providing such accessibility also gives service providers an ideal way to optimise their internal resource performance at a time when the contact centre and effective customer engagement is more important than ever.

5 Enabling more strategic Workforce Optimisation activities

It's increasingly clear that Employee Optimisation techniques such as workforce management are one of the greatest contributors to helping organisations ensure that they're managing their contact centre costs efficiently. At Sabio we're certainly seeing solutions such as WFM playing a key role as the first stage of a broader Workforce Optimisation approach – and a smart choice for those organisations looking to use the savings released by effective WFM initiatives to fund added value Customer Management investments.

The potential operational savings realised through approaches such as workforce management can also play a key part in enabling organisations as they transition their Workforce Optimisation activities to focus on more strategic Customer Management activities such as customer feedback and speech analytics. An essential element here is to make full use of your existing WFO investments such as Workforce Management and recording. For example, most contact centres record customer conversations yet many of them fail to go on and use that valuable recorded data as a strategic resource.

Adding speech analytics and customer feedback techniques can help to address why your customers are calling your contact centre in the first place, and also then provide callers with the ability to respond immediately to the service they have just received. The advantages of such a structured feedback approach are striking – particularly as research shows that

there can be a direct link between increasing an organisation's customer satisfaction index and an associated uplift in overall shareholder value.

Working with Sabio, major organisations such as Yorkshire Building Society, Office Depot, Leeds City Council, P&O Cruises and Cunard, Home Retail Group and Sage have all successfully secured significant savings through their Employee Optimisation and Customer Management projects.

For example, P&O Cruises and Cunard, had reached the stage that it was considering replacing its entire WFM system. However, after initial consultancy with Sabio's WFO team, it was able to reconfigure its original WFM system, stabilise performance and then upgrade to the latest Workforce Management, call recording and quality monitoring versions. Sabio's specialist WFO expertise meant that P&O Cruises and Cunard were able to shelve what would have been a six-figure WFM replacement investment.

For Home Retail Group, Workforce Management also plays a key role in the home and general merchandise retailer's 'Contact Centre of the Future' strategy. As part of a major contact centre transformation project that is set to unlock some £4.4 million of operational savings, Sabio is deploying an extensive Verint Workforce Optimisation suite incorporating Impact 360® Workforce Management (WFM), Recording, Quality Monitoring, as well as powerful Speech Analytics technology. It's estimated that Sabio's proven WFM deployment expertise will help realise a performance improvement of some £1.1 million over the next two years.

Given the results achieved by organisations like these, it's clear that Employee Optimisation has a valuable role to play in unlocking benefits for the broader contact centre operation.

6 A leading independent Workforce Optimisation specialist

Sabio is a leading independent contact centre technology specialist. Transforming customer contact, Sabio helps organisations significantly improve customer experience and reduce costs. Sabio also operates a dedicated hub in Singapore to support its expanding international contact centre technology design, delivery and support operations.

Sabio is distinctive in that the company addresses all aspects of the Workforce Optimisation lifecycle, with in-depth industry and technical knowledge. Our experience, gained through the delivery of hundreds of successful projects for organisations of all sizes - from smaller customer service centres through to deployments across 20 countries involving thousands of agents – means that your organisation can benefit immediately from our best practice workforce optimisation capabilities.

Key Sabio strengths:

- Sabio has been a Verint Premier Partner since 2000, and is certified to deliver the latest V11 Enterprise Workforce Optimisation suite, consultancy and training via its dedicated Workforce Optimisation centre of excellence
- Award Winning - Sabio's unique combination of proven Verint expertise and in-depth Employee Optimisation and Customer Management skills ensure that the company is a multiple award winner, most recently as winner of Verint's prestigious 'Project of the Year' award for a major unified WFO project for one of the UK's leading financial services companies
- With Sabio OnDemand powered by Verint, the company provides a comprehensive Workforce Optimisation offering, including WFM, Call Recording, Quality Monitoring, Advisor Coaching, Speech Analytics and Performance Management – all via a secure and reliable hosted service that can be integrated directly with an organisation's legacy contact routing platform
- Sabio has the experience and skills to design and deliver integrated solutions that meet the specific challenges of the contact centre, from Workforce Optimisation to speech-based self-service applications to major virtualisation projects
- Sabio takes full accountability for a project by delivering an end-to-end solution using its own people and not relying on third parties to provide skills and knowledge
- Sabio has developed a comprehensive Workforce Optimisation modelling approach that allows businesses to find out exactly how much business value could be unlocked from an effective Employee Optimisation or Customer Management deployment
- Sabio can also offer a consolidated support contract, with the ability to genuinely offer third line end-to-end support for all elements of an Employee Optimisation or Customer Management solution from its specialist Support Centre in Glasgow
- Sabio's in-house team of 20 highly-skilled WFO support staff and specialist WFO Consulting professionals mean that the company can bring direct experience to every customer Workforce Optimisation scenario
- Sabio also has over 10 consecutive years' experience as an AvayaConnect Platinum Business Partner, ensuring in-depth understanding of the broader contact centre technology environment
- Sabio operates without external investment, debt or reliance on external finance – ensuring the freedom to develop its business in the best interest of customers

EMEA

+44 344 412 3000
info@sabio.co.uk
www.sabio.co.uk

APAC

+65 6812 0560
info@sabio-apac.com
www.sabio-apac.com

sabio

@sabiosense