



## Creating a VOC Program in Your Call Center

by John Goodman  
September 5th 2013

### Why do you need a VOC program?

Even if your center is fairly small you MUST have a VOC program because it keeps your staff happy and it demonstrates your strategic worth to top management. VOC keeps your staff happy because it helps you recognize, improve and celebrate them AND it helps you prevent frustrating inbound calls. VOC demonstrates your strategic worth by fixing systemic issues and identifying emerging issues earlier. This post is based on the pre-session “Making Your Call Center the Heartbeat of Voice of the Customer” which I’ll be leading at Call Center Demo and Conference in Atlanta.



### How mature is your VOC process?

**Level 1: Basic- How are we doing?** - You must be doing call monitoring and at least periodic customer surveys. If you are doing these two activities you can start looking at the results not only by CSR but by reason for contact. While it may be counter-intuitive, focusing on your CSRs will not give you the biggest lifts in satisfaction; focusing on which response rules systematically leave the customer dissatisfied will.

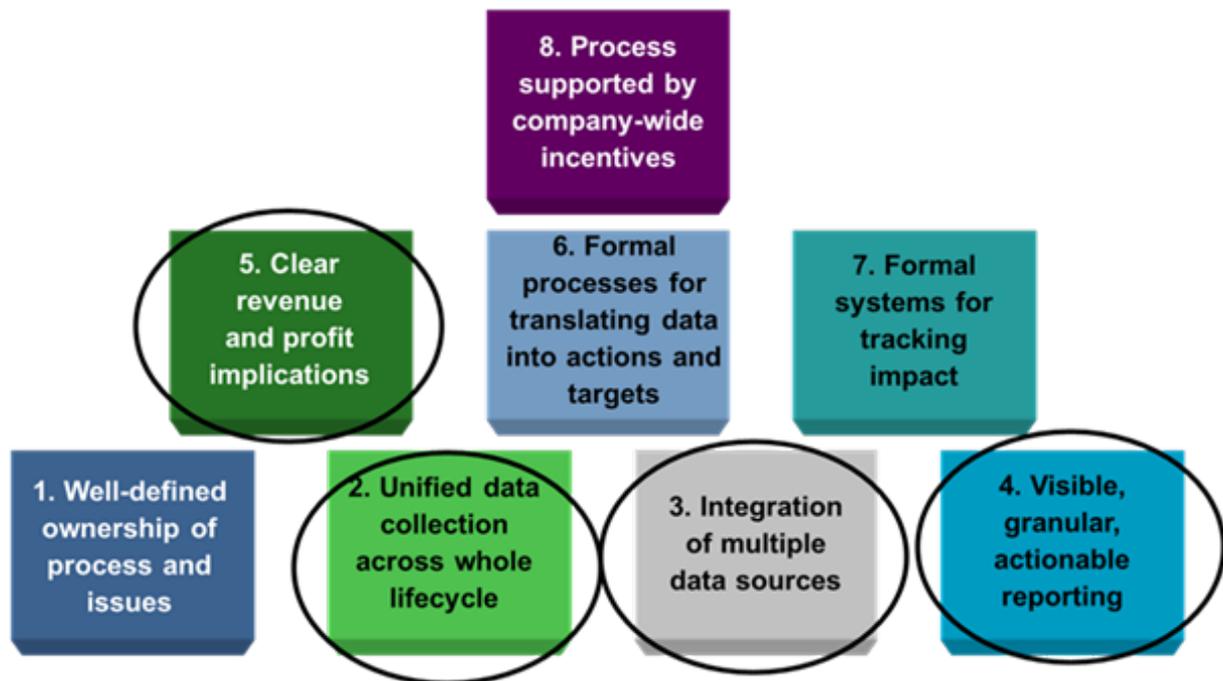
**Level 2: Moving out of firefighting** - Start identifying preventable calls and emerging issues. You can enhance this by asking your monitoring staff what preventable calls they hear while monitoring. You have short biweekly team meetings when you 1) recognize each CSR for a well handled call, using one or two to make teaching points, and 2) ask the CSRs what preventable calls and/or weird calls they have gotten. These preventable calls are costly and frustrating, and the weird calls may be emerging issues.

**Level 3: Moving to becoming an internal consultant** - At this stage, you start logging the types of contacts that are preventable and attaching revenue, word of mouth and cost implications to each granular type of preventable call.

**Level 4: Becoming the Chief Customer Officer (CCO)** – Once you can build data-backed financial cases for preventing calls and tying your call data to operations and market research data, you can make a case to become the informal or even formal CCO.

### Success Factors for VOC Processes

The graphic below illustrates the eight factors associated with an effective VOC process:



**The eight factors for success are:**

1. Unified ownership of the VOC process describing the entire customer experience by a single executive.
2. Unified collection and use of customer data from surveys, contacts, operations and employee input to support analysis and reporting of the end-to-end experience.
3. Integrating of the above data from multiple channels for a unified picture of the customer experience. This is a challenge in that the above data sources have different categorization and varying representativeness of the overall customer experience.
4. Timely reporting of customer data tailored to the stakeholder audience.
5. Linking the VOC data to revenue and profit implications to set priorities and create an economic imperative for action.
6. Formal processes for translating issue fix into specific actions and targets.
7. Enabling the company to track the impact of the action at both a process level (has the problem been reduced) and an outcome level (has customer satisfaction, loyalty and word of mouth improved) of the VOC process.
8. Linking the fixing of issues identified by the VOC process to strong executive incentives.

The second factor in this list is a critical one because most companies fall back on a few readily available, traditional data sources, surveys and complaints, as discussed below.

Very few companies have all eight factors in place. My mantra is , “Better a small success than a big disaster.” Pick one issue that everyone acknowledges is a source of both customer and company frustration and build the business case for action. You build this business case by quantifying the cost of inaction. Quantifying the cost of inaction precipitates action. Once you get one issue fixed, you start building a track record.

## Getting started

1. Talk to your CSRs and ask them to identify three candidate issues that are both costly (in time and or volume) and also preventable if there were better communication with the customer or a process change.
2. Talk to a friend in finance and get their rough estimate of the revenue value of a customer.
3. Spend two weeks capturing data on those three issues – how often, how much time spent and cost incurred.
4. Brainstorm with the CSRs on how you would prevent or better handle each.
5. Ask one friend each from operations and finance to meet for lunch and present the three issues and, using a value that is half the estimate you got from finance, your rough guess of the monthly financial damage of each of the three issues. Also, get their input on a simple, inexpensive action plan to fix the issues.
6. Pick one and finalize your business case as well as a simple, doable strategy to prevent or mitigate it. Better a simple, cheap fix to a small problem than a big fix that needs ten approvals.
7. Present to management and hopefully get support from operations and finance
8. Implement and measure your success – celebrate with the CSRs and make sure your friends in finance and operations get lots of the credit.
9. Move on to the next issue and build your track record.



John Goodman is Vice Chairman of [Customer Care Measurement & Consulting](#). His latest book is “Strategic Customer Service” published by AMACOM, available on Amazon.com



Customer Care Measurement & Consulting helps Fortune 500 companies from every industry get a better ROI for their investments in the customer experience.

Learn more about CCMC by visiting [www.customercaremc.com](http://www.customercaremc.com)

Cut/paste to read the full article:

<http://www.icmi.com/Blog/2013/September/Creating-a-VOC-program-in-Your-Call-Center>