



Quality Customer Service:

Essential for Healthcare Marketplace Success

The ACA has brought dramatic changes to the way the health insurance industry operates – and those shopping for insurance can be [stymied](#) by these new complexities while feeling anxious about securing good coverage.

Meanwhile, the ripples of the legislation have had great impact on the [149 million individuals](#) who obtain insurance through their employer, and the millions more who are self-insured or receive insurance via Medicare or Medicaid. They need answers to questions and an understanding of how the ACA will impact them and the plans they are selecting.

While [healthcare.gov](#) and [medicare.gov](#) have improved greatly since their respective launches, no website is fully capable of navigating the intricacies of each individual or family's needs. Given how personal and intimidating these decisions can be, having hands-on help available to each customer is in the best interest of plans, beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

In short – the current climate in the health insurance marketplace calls for exceptional customer service, and customers still appreciate being able to [pick up the phone](#).

Beyond online portals, mailed materials and other channels or pieces are the agents – both licensed and unlicensed – that help consumers navigate their exact healthcare situation and purchase a plan.

These agents – and by extension, the contact center they work for – must be top notch and able to:

- 1. Focus on metrics** – regardless of the exact health plan or provider being served, metrics are key to success. From Star ratings to conversion statistics, a metrics-based focus, (e.g. 80 percent of calls answered in 30 seconds with a 5 percent abandonment rate), will help give health plans and providers an edge.

Another tactic is to have an opt-in survey given to each caller that measures the quality of interactions, which can track success from a holistic standpoint that considers “soft” customer perceptions. These kinds of metrics are important as well.

- 2. Focus on soft skills** – metrics alone will not guarantee success. Healthcare is a sensitive subject for many – if not most – Americans. Agents need to empathize with those they interact and be able to guide them to their coverage purchase in a way that is unscripted, familiar and on-brand for the client healthcare plan or provider.

- 3. Focus on simplicity** – helping to make interactions simple and understandable is a crucial skill that ties back to metrics and soft-skills. Simple, clear answers help drive first-call resolution, which in turn drives health plan ROI on their contact center. It also helps diffuse the already noted confusion and anxiety that consumers may be feeling.

Our very best to you as 2015 gets into high gear and beneficiaries start to make decisions!