

Case study: Lafarge Aggregates Ltd



Ground breaking new service for Materials Giant

About Lafarge

Lafarge are one of the world's largest producers of construction materials including cement, sand, gravel, hard rock, readymix concrete and plasterboard.

The Aggregates divisions, based at Syston near Leicester have pioneered a brand new level of customer service in the construction industry with the introduction of a Customer Service Centre where their clients no longer need to wait for a response from a small local depot. Instead they can get straight through to a dedicated geographical team based at head office.

This provides all the benefits of building relationships with named individuals but none of the frustrations of waiting for a single line to be answered or for a rep to call.

Lafarge invested in call centre technology in 2002 to enable them to make improvements to customer service levels by offering a single point of contact for sales enquiries and order processing.

To make sure that their investment paid dividends, Commercial Manager, **Richard Mallett** recruited local telemarketing specialist Alison Hercock and her company Absolute Marketing to test and measure the project

The Project: Call monitoring and analysis

The challenge:

A large number of in-bound calls deal with new sales enquiries as well as organising deliveries of materials to construction sites. These enquiries and orders range from a single driveway to a multi-million pound development, from the man in the street to national construction companies.

Lafarge needs to be certain that every customer is getting the same level of service no matter how detailed the enquiry. Similarly making sure a delivery arrives accurately and on-time is a vital part of the teams' performance targets. So the challenge to Absolute Marketing was not just "is it working?" but to provide analysis of the type of call, recording data like a time and motion study and providing concise information that Lafarge can feed back to the team supervisors.

The need for change:

In fact it soon became clear that the type of information that Absolute Marketing recorded was going to prove to be a real breakthrough for performance management and the service was soon extended from simple "call listening" to detailed individual scoring.

Now all members of the team are scored on 4 key factors: tone – pace – structure – language. This impartial appraisal is carried out to provide accurate data for supervisors in the training and development of each team member.

The solution:

Using Absolute Marketing to do this instead of their own staff gives Lafarge supervisors time to manage the people and not the process. Time that can be spent on developing skills, knowledge and behaviour is better used than sitting in an office listening to calls. Lafarge also now have irrefutable information which provides a far more sensitive way to coach and unite the team even when dealing with potentially contentious issues.

"Lafarge never envisaged the office simply being a contact centre, it had to be a service centre..... we believe it is service that makes a difference"

John Rees, Commercial Manager

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Out bound calls to clients are equally important parts of the Customer Service Centre daily routine and performance is evaluated on how team members deal with customers. **John Rees**, Commercial Manager is also impressed with the performance resulting from this detailed analysis.

The Benefits:

The information provided by Absolute Marketing has been used by John to shape the training programme and has been used to measure specific targets for the service team.

At the start of the project 50% of customers were notified if a load was late and Lafarge set a challenging target for the team to raise this to 80%.

Already they are achieving 70% of target and designing new training to continue improving performance and personal development. The service team were also carrying out customer satisfaction surveys and the monitoring system soon extended to cover internal customer experiences.

Calls to and from quarries, transport companies and drivers are also listened to by Absolute Marketing to help improve service and training in distribution and cash sales.

The programme was trialled by geographic region initially and due to its measurable success there are plans to roll the full call listening service out to all of the UK geographic teams.

In short, staying ahead of the competition by offering new levels of dedicated customer service and improving individual performance are all key objectives of the Lafarge Customer Service Centre. Having identifiable trends that show improving levels since the monitoring began is making a big difference to Lafarge, it's staff, its customers and supplier networks.

“Absolute Marketing provide an independent, flexible way of evaluating our staff’s performance and provides our supervisors with practical tools for training and development”

Richard Mallett

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For a consultation to discuss how call monitoring could help your business achieve target and set ever higher standards in future, contact Alison Hercock on 0844 779 6789 today.