



Performance Consulting

Case Study 1

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A Case Study By OnTrac

Situation: One of the largest, diversified IT companies in the world has a captive center that provides level 2 tech support to callers from across the world. Level 1 calls are answered by many outsourced tech support providers. The objective of this center, is nothing less than perfection. The belief is that this center needs to maintain an aspirational standard for the outsourced service providers. Therefore, the focus on performance and other enabling factors is very high.

The management of the center realized that the way feedback was being given by the subject matter expert (SME) to the tech support personnel was directly related to the performance of the team. Also, this feedback played a direct part in people issues that were arising from time to time.

The company decided to use OnTrac's services to improve the way feedback was given. OnTrac already had a successful track record with this company on previous assignments.

Solution: The first step in the process was to create a way to measure the effectiveness of feedback.

Survey

OnTrac developed a survey that was administered to the tech support personnel. In this survey, they evaluated the effectiveness of the feedback given to them by their subject matter experts. This

survey provides us a baseline against which we needed to improve in the next 2 months. The survey consisted of 10 questions. Responses were classified under 4 categories i.e.

- a. Yes Always
- b. Yes Most of the time
- c. Yes Sometimes
- d. Never

The questions were framed so that the response “Yes Always” reflected the most desirable behaviour and the response “Never” reflected the most undesirable behaviour.

Diagnostic

The next step was to conduct a diagnostic study to understand the challenges that SMEs faced while giving feedback to the tech support personnel. The OnTrac consultant spent 2 weeks observing multiple sessions on how feedback was actually given on the floor.

This provided a deep insight into what the actual problems were. The issues primarily revolved around the following:

- a. The SMEs were providing the right feedback, in the wrong way. For example, feedback was given on the floor in public. Feedback was loud and harsh with a significant amount of emotional and judgmental components.
- b. The ratio of negative to positive feedback, was overwhelmingly in favour of negative feedback.
- c. While feedback was given, there was a lack of respect shown by the SME, who frequently used derogatory terms to describe a non-performing team member.

- d. In many instances, the SME took over the job from the tech support personnel and completed it himself, as he believed that the tech support personnel was incapable of doing the job.
- e. There was a perception that SMEs are biased because they tend to support some people more than others.
- f. The SMEs are responsible only for technical competence of the team and not for people management. Yet they get carried away and involve themselves in people management activities, which they are not trained for.
- g. The SMEs did not look at their role in larger terms. For example they need to first identify the gap between the team's and their own technical competence. Once this is identified, they need to work on reducing this gap and show continuous improvement in the competence levels of the team members. If this is not done, the dependency of the team members will never come down and the SME will become indispensable in the team. This will limit the SMEs growth. In order to do this, they need to possess analytical skills such as pareto analysis, root cause analysis etc.

Training:

Once these issues were identified, OnTrac created a solution for the client that involved training and coaching SMEs on certain skills. The areas in which the SME's competencies were built are:

- Feedback delivery
- Coaching skills
- Performance Management
- Performance Analysis

- Time management and prioritization
- Business etiquettes

These were focused modules that did not exceed 2 hours of classroom time each. The OnTrac consultant kept these sessions very practical and provided the SMEs with ways and means to implement concepts.

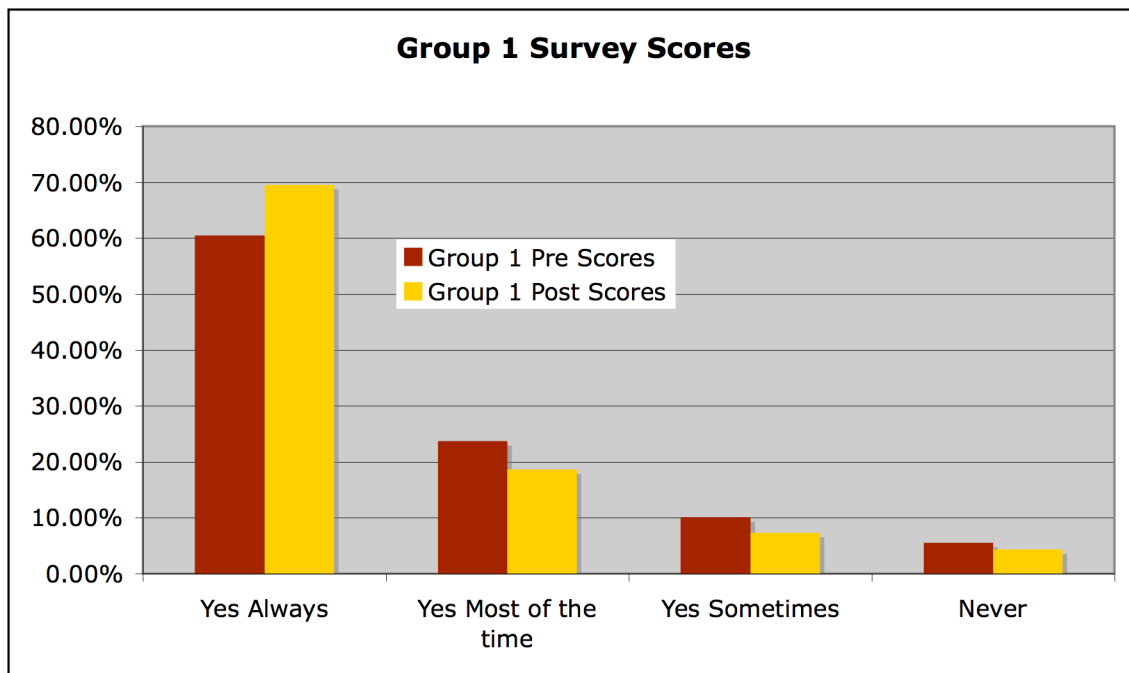
Coaching: The consultant then spent time on the floor providing one on one coaching after observing the SMEs give feedback. He also coached the SMEs on a variety of data analysis techniques and other pre-requisites that helped the SMEs eventually provide better feedback. The consultant maintained data on who was coached and what their challenges were, so that these could be resolved systematically. The record keeping was meticulous.

Result:

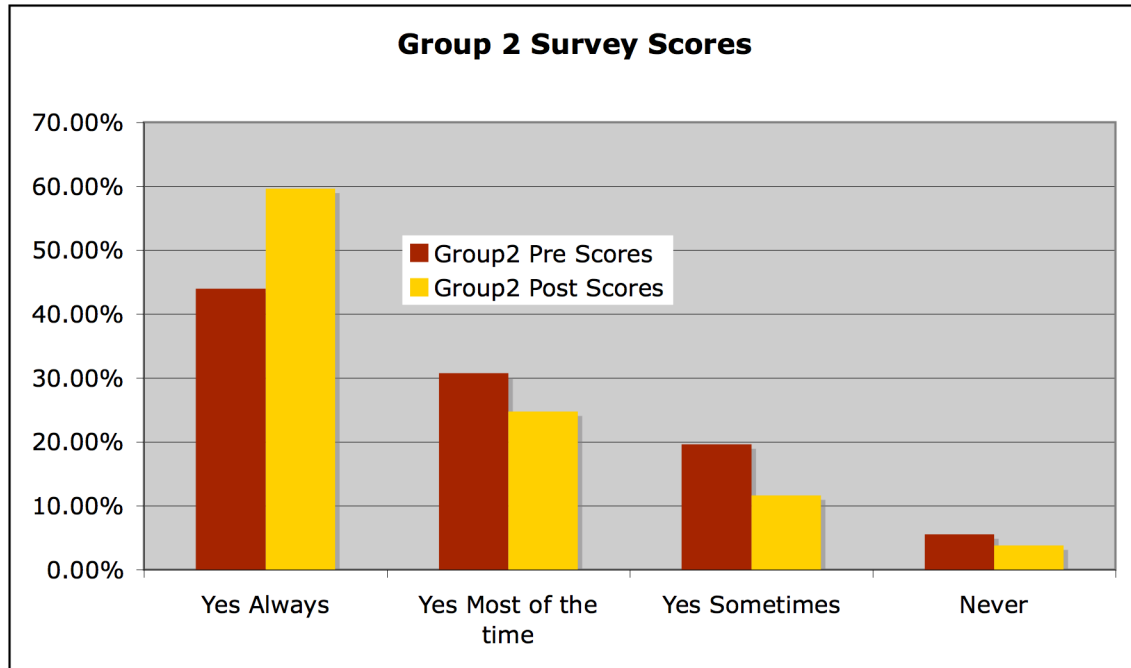
The same survey that was conducted before the intervention began was conducted again, at the end. The results have been split across two groups of SMEs supporting two different geographies:

	Group 1		Group2	
	Pre Scores	Post Scores	Pre Scores	Post Scores
Yes Always	60.57%	69.57%	44.04%	59.69%
Yes Most of the time	24%	18.70%	30.77%	24.77%
Yes Sometimes	10.14%	7.39%	19.62%	11.69%
Never	5.57%	4.35%	5.58%	3.85%

Group 1: The graph below for group 1 shows a distinct 9 % upward push towards the “Yes Always” responses.



Group 2: The graph below for group 2 shows a distinct 15.65% upward push towards the “Yes Always” responses. This group also shows a significant decrease in the “Never” responses.



The overall result of the intervention has been extremely encouraging, especially given the fact that the team was already at a fairly high maturity level, as compared to other industry peers.