

Firstsource Case Study: Improving Intraday Performance *through* Intelligent, Real-Time Alerting



Background

A global business process management service provider (BPM), and an RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group company, Firstsource Solutions serves companies in the banking and financial services, telecommunications, insurance and healthcare sectors. With over 100 clients around the world and a 23,000+ strong workforce, Firstsource is a formidable name in the industry.

Despite the obvious success, Firstsource, like many of its competitors, found that certain employee performance statistics were falling short of expectations. The company partnered with WorkFlex Solutions, the industry leader in intelligent empowerment solutions for contact centers, to help devise a means for improving performance results.

Business Challenge: High AHT Rates and Leakage of Productive Hours

In its credit card and retail banking customer service programs, Firstsource faced a tricky situation for which the company had no readily available fix: agents were not returning from their two 15-minute breaks or from their 30-minute lunch break on time. They often took an extra 15 minutes leaving customers sitting in queue and thus detrimentally impacting customer experience and customer satisfaction. Additionally, agents were often spending too much time handling calls, pushing up the Average Handle Time (AHT). No amount of cautionary emails or instant messages had any impact, because, with a manual detection process in place, these alerts were inconsistent. Workforce administrators had to monitor a screen listing agents, their activities and the time they were spending on each of them. With many agents to observe, it was difficult to detect and respond to every deviation. Firstsource needed a precise means of monitoring agent behavior and an efficient way to alert agents immediately if they failed to adhere to the expected standards.

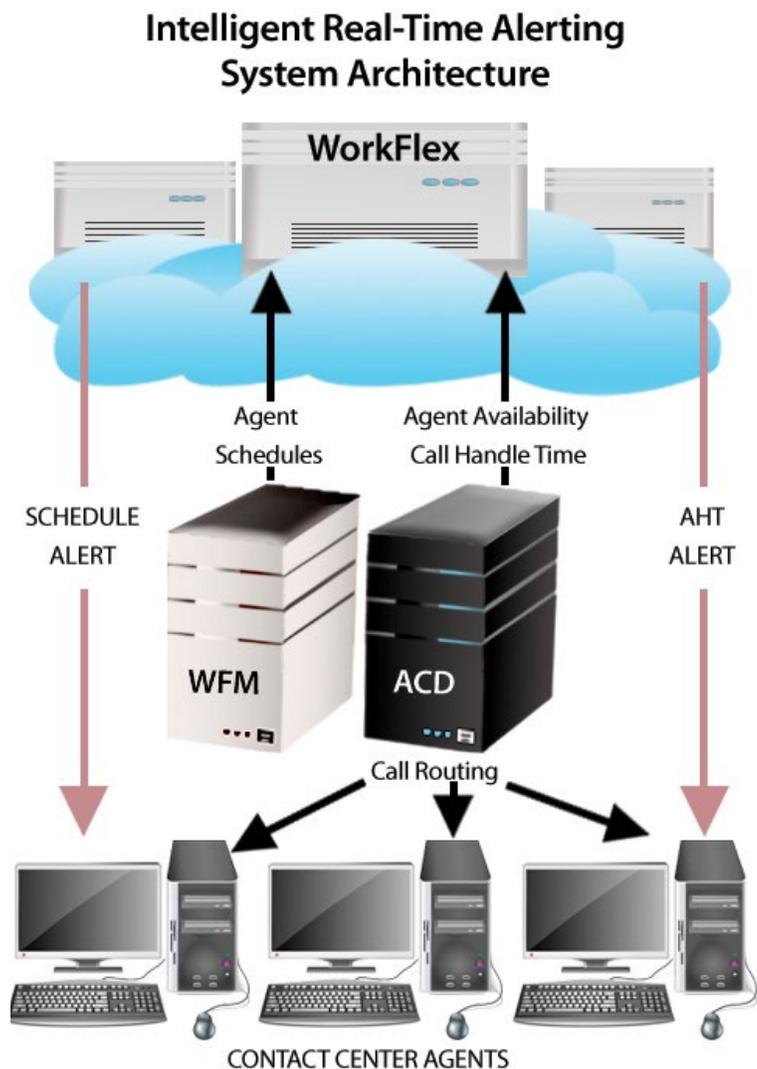
The Solution: WorkFlex Real-Time

Known for integration with workforce management (WFM) systems, WorkFlex also integrates with Automated Call Distribution (ACD) systems to enable real-time alerting. In order to notify agents in the creditcard and retail banking processes of prolonged AHT times and extended lunch and break periods, WorkFlex was configured to send an alert to any agent taking more than a specified amount of time to complete a customer service call or to take a break. Firstsource provided WorkFlex with the thresholds for triggering an alert. Agents returning five minutes late from lunch, for instance, would find an alert on their desktop announcing they had returned 300 seconds past the allotted time. An agent in the retail banking division spending more than 290 seconds on a phone call

would receive an alert stating “AHT trend is above the goal.” (In the credit card division, the threshold was 325 seconds.)

WorkFlex was also configured to escalate notifications as breaches multiply. A first offense would trigger an alert to the agent only. A second one would be sent to both the agent and a supervisor. A third would bring a workforce administrator into the loop, and a fourth would include the director of the division. For agents failing to adhere to the schedule, the risk of serious consequences would grow with each occurrence of non-compliance.

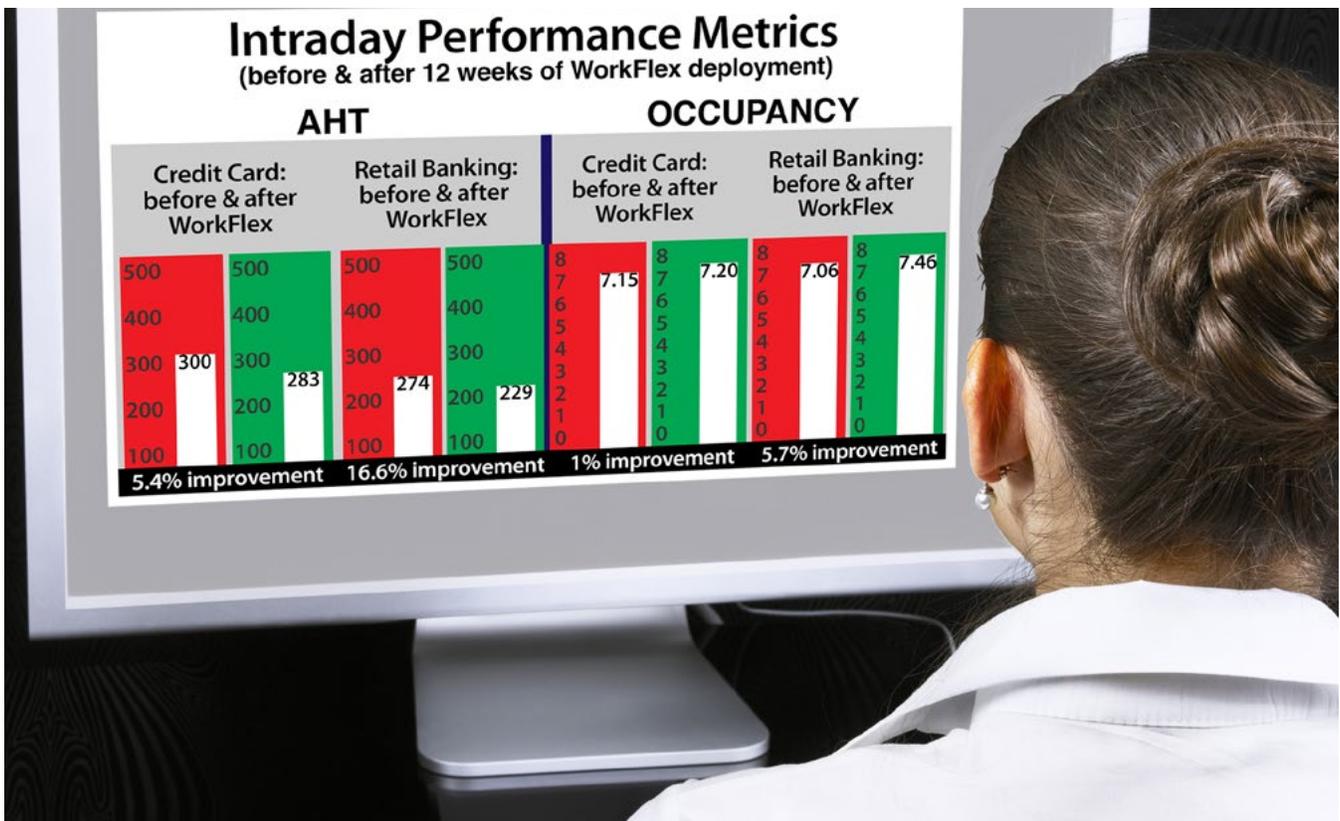
“The ACD system records the length of each phone call, so we configured WorkFlex to send a message to agents when they were taking longer on a call than expected,” says Shalabh Jain, President & CEO, Customer Management at Firstsource. “And if they use an Aux code to indicate they’re doing after-call work, so that no calls are routed to them, WorkFlex automatically lets them know when they’ve exceeded the average time allotted for a call. They use an Aux code to go on break or to lunch as well, so if they haven’t signed back into the system at the appropriate time, WorkFlex notifies them.”



Key Benefits: Substantial Improvements in AHT and Productivity

Performance improvements in the retail banking and credit card divisions after implementation of the WorkFlex real-time alerting system are substantial. The image below details the progress made from the pre-WorkFlex period to week 12 after WorkFlex deployment. For each week in between, the numbers varied slightly from those in week 12. Overall, the trend showed steady improvement.

The improvement in AHT by 5.4% and 16.6% respectively is notable. What may appear less obvious is the increase of 1.1% and 5.7% in login hours. In this instance, however, this increase is the result of agents logging in to the system and adhering to their schedules as required. With more agents at their stations and available to take calls, and improved call handling times, Firstsource can achieve the same service levels as before with fewer agents in the contact center. The real-time alerts are clearly impacting agent behavior. “Agents have responded positively to the new system,” notes Jain. “Knowing they’re being held accountable for their use of time helps them adhere to their schedule and gives them an incentive to engage with customers in a focused manner that results in rapid problem resolution. That makes customers happy and happy customers make our clients happy. We’ve seen nothing but first-rate results.”



Firstsource performance metrics before and after WorkFlex deployment.

Higher AHT and increased billable hours have also led to considerable cost-savings for the company. “We’re averaging savings of \$59 per agent per month, Jain declares happily. “Given the large number of agents we employ, that will ultimately lead to tremendous gains for us in the cost-cutting arena.”

Conclusion

Based on the success of the initial deployment of WorkFlex real-time alerting, it is not unreasonable to foresee an extended deployment in the future. “We’re definitely looking at a broader implementation,” says Jain. “We’d like to see similar ROI across the board!”



*Shalabh Jain,
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About Firstsource Solutions

Firstsource (NSE: FSL, BSE: 532809, Reuters: FISO.BO, Bloomberg: FSOL@IN) is a leading global provider of customized Business Process Management (BPM) services to the Healthcare Telecom & Media and Banking & Financial Services industries. The company's clients include Fortune 500, FTSE 100 & Nifty 50 companies. Firstsource has a "rightshore" delivery model with operations in India, Philippines, Sri Lanka, UK and U.S.

www.firstsource.com

About WorkFlex Solutions

WorkFlex Solutions LLC is the industry leader in intelligent empowerment solutions for contact center agents, supervisors and workforce administrators. Our award-winning Intelligent Intraday Automation technology maximizes scheduling flexibility, optimizes intraday performance and reduces administrative overhead. Designed to integrate easily with Workforce Management (WFM) and Automated Call Distribution (ACD) systems, WorkFlex enables clients to leverage their existing enterprise investments, and quickly generate a positive ROI. WorkFlex SaaS deployments span multiple industry sectors including financial services, communications, healthcare, automotive, cable/sat and government.

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