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Calibration of Subjective Valuation Systems

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Many companies have programs for providing technical support services to their customers and for evaluating how well they are doing in providing these services. However, the evaluation of service performance in the area of voice communication is basically subjective. The situation becomes even more difficult to control in the case of outsourced service call centers. So the question arises; how can we be sure that our subjective measurement systems are reasonably calibrated and reflect an accurate and precise assessment of what our customers think about our services?

Since measurement is the foundation of all science. You will not be able to understand much or improve much if the measurement system is incapable of providing accurate and precise results. In our case the calibration program necessary to assure reasonable capability of our service measurement system might look something like the following.

Complete Program for the Calibration of Service Systems

1. Calibration of Call Center Agent to Call Center Agent

The call center's quality department representative selects a recording, at random from a large database of typical customer voice recordings, and plays this canned scenario to their agents. Agent A listens to and logs down their responses, then agent B listens to the same scenario and logs down their responses. The Call Center's quality department ranks each agent's responses on a Binary scale (i.e., 1 = Correct and 0 = Incorrect) and subtracts agent A's results from agent B's. The results are plotted on a Difference Control Chart. The mean of this control chart should be zero and if there is any indication of instability, then we know with high confidence that there is a significant difference between agents and they need to be calibrated.

2. Calibration of Company Auditor to Company Auditor

The Company's Quality Audit department representative selects a recording, at random from a large database of voice recordings, and plays this canned scenario to their auditors. Auditor A listens to and logs down their responses, then auditor B listens to the same scenario and logs down their responses.

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The Company's Quality Audit department ranks each auditor's responses on a Likert scale (i.e., 1 = Very Poor ,…, 5 = Excellent) and subtracts auditor A's results from auditor B's. The results are plotted on a Difference Control Chart. The mean of this control chart should be zero and if there is any indication of instability, then we know with high confidence that there is a significant difference between auditors and they need to be calibrated.

3. Calibration of Company Auditor to Customer

The Company auditor has monitored a call and logged their impressions on the customer response database. The record is then sent to another (randomly selected) Company call auditor. That person calls the same customer and records the customer's actual evaluation of the service experience on the customer response database. The first Likert scale inputs (the measurement system being tested) are subtracted from the second (the subjective standard) and the results are plotted on a Difference Control Chart. The mean of this control chart should be zero and if there is any indication of instability, then we know with high confidence that the measurement process needs to be calibrated. That is, the Company auditor is more or less critical than the customer. If the difference is positive, then the Company auditor is too loose, or if the difference is negative, then the Company auditor is too tight. These charts need to be generated on an individual base until such time as we know that variation between the auditor's and the customer's perception of the service experience is small.

This process establishes calibration with the Customer, i.e., it graphically illustrates that our audit measurement system reflects the voice of the customer.

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