



Customer Profile

Niagara Mohawk, a National Grid Company

Industry

Utilities

Witness Systems Solutions & Services

- eQuality Balance
- eQuality Evaluation

Region

North America

Location

Syracuse, N.Y.

Number of agents

230

Results

- Raised customer satisfaction rating to 85 percent, the highest in company history
- Increased average quality score by 23 percent
- Raised monthly service level by 18 percent, increasing the number of calls handled within 30 seconds
- Reduced average handle time by 69 seconds, including talk time and after-call wrap-up

About Niagara Mohawk

Niagara Mohawk, a National Grid company based in Syracuse, provides electric service to approximately 1.5 million customers and natural gas to approximately 540,000 customers in upstate New York. Its parent company also has electricity distribution operations in New England. National Grid is an international, U.K.-based company that builds, owns, and manages electricity and telecommunication networks.

Opportunity

Niagara Mohawk wanted to enhance quality within its Syracuse contact center, which receives approximately 220,000 calls per month from residential and commercial customers inquiring about their service. The utility had been using tape recorders to capture customer interactions but needed a more sophisticated means of gathering customer intelligence and optimizing its workforce. With an automated customer interaction recording and performance analysis solution, Niagara Mohawk could help its customer service representatives (CSRs) increase their customer focus, which in turn would increase customer satisfaction.

Solution

Niagara Mohawk uses eQuality™ to train and coach its CSRs, as part of the company's revamped quality assurance program. Within the last year, the utility has seen improvements in all key metrics, including a 23 percent increase in its average quality score and a 69 second reduction in average handle time.

Most important, Niagara Mohawk's customer satisfaction rating has increased to 85 percent. The company randomly selected 14,000 customers to receive surveys via mail in 2001. The response rate was 45 percent. "Customer satisfaction is at an all-time high," explains Randy Cotton, Niagara Mohawk's customer specialist responsible for quality assurance. "eQuality had a lot to do with us achieving this increase."



"eQuality has had a positive impact on our customer service operation. We're a much more effective contact center today, and our best-ever customer satisfaction rating demonstrates that fact."

Randy Cotton, Customer Specialist, Quality Assurance, Niagara Mohawk, a National Grid Company

The Syracuse contact center stresses the importance of interpersonal skills. After recording the voice and data portions of customer contacts with eQuality Balance, Niagara Mohawk's quality assurance group then can analyze agent performance using the eQuality Evaluation online reporting tool. The evaluation is structured to reinforce customer focus, accuracy and courtesy throughout all parts of the interaction — from the greeting through verification and closing. Feedback is then provided to the team leaders, who are responsible for one-on-one coaching. "Our agents appreciate our investment in their continued development," Cotton says.

Agents are introduced to eQuality early on, as Niagara Mohawk uses recorded customer interactions in training classes to illustrate examples of call types and how to best handle certain scenarios. After six to eight weeks of initial training, the utility uses the software to record two hours of live calls to grade its new hires and ensure their readiness for the production floor.

"eQuality has been extremely valuable in improving our overall performance," Cotton explains. "It would be difficult to live without it now that we've seen what it can do for us." In fact, Niagara Mohawk plans to expand eQuality's use to its billing and collections departments in its contact center in Buffalo.

The eQuality product suite from Witness Systems offers an integrated solution for optimizing contact center performance

- **eQuality Balance** – Voice and data recording
- **eQuality Discover** – Web self-service recording
- **eQuality Response** – e-mail recording
- **eQuality Interactive** – Web chat recording
- **eQuality Evaluation** – Contact evaluation
- **eQuality Analysis** – Performance analysis
- **eQuality Now** – e-learning management



A WITNESS SYSTEMS INNOVATION

Witness Systems, Inc. Headquarters – United States and Canada

1-888-3-WITNESS 1-770-754-1900, outside of the U.S.

United Kingdom
+44 (0) 118 936 7100

Germany
+49 (030) 88 70 62 076

The Netherlands
+31 (0) 35 646 2621

Australia
+61 2 8907 0300

Japan
+81 3 6407 7420

Mexico
+52 (55) 91 71 14 19