

Information Item

Date: August 9, 2022

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Ben Rowe, Assistant City Manager
Karen Witherspoon, City Link Director

Subject:
Report on Wake Forest University Data Analytics Project with City Link

Strategic Focus Area: Service Excellence

Strategic Objective: Ensure Service Delivery Efficiency and Effectiveness

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: No



One of City Link's Key Work Items this past fiscal year involved evaluating contact center best practices and providing real time data for analysis. City Link collaborated with MBA students from Wake Forest University to develop trend analysis of calls for the Contact Center.

The areas of focus for the practicum were as follows:

1. Call Data
2. Alternative contact methods
3. Optimized schedules

Data - The focus was on historical call data. Variables researched were calls presented, date and hour of inbound calls, and queue of calls (Spanish, English, Utilities, etc.).

Alternative contact methods - City Link has recently been promoting awareness for its app and alternative contact methods (website, e-mail, chats, etc.); doing so saves money for the organization and alleviate call center strain.

Optimized schedules - Answer 70% of calls within 30 seconds or rely on the mobile app and other methods of contact.

Based on analysis, it was determined that Monday is the busiest call volume day. Call volume peak on Monday and decline throughout the week until Friday.

Analysis also indicated that the call center is currently working at a high level of efficiency.

- Improvement over Q3 and Q4 of 2021 was significant.
- Last year's changes in adjusting staff schedules and recruitment are effective and having a positive impact on service levels when fully staffed.
- Spanish calls have increased and typically peak in the afternoon.

In conclusion, City staff found the data collected by the students to be informative and helpful. As City Link staff continues to improve efficiencies of the center and meet the needs of callers in the community, the department will focus on efforts to recruit bilingual personnel to address an increase in Spanish speaking calls. City Link currently has on staff three full-time bilingual agents. Additionally, City Link management is currently working on a brand campaign with Marketing and Communication. The intent is to bring awareness to the community about City Link as a resource for answering questions related to City services. City Link management will continue to spotlight additional methods to reach the call center to relieve the strain of hold times and call abandonment by conducting agent on duty events, marketing of alternative methods to reach the center, and educating callers.

Data provided from the study shows that call volume will decrease with the use of alternative methods of reaching the center. While the shift in contact methods implies staffing could be reduced, it cannot and should not. Staff will continue to be trained on alternative methods of contact to accommodate the increase in usage.

The focus in the coming weeks will be to respond to the chat queue and work e-mails more efficiently. City Link staff have seen an increase of chats into the center, and the goal will be to staff it with agents that are tech savvy and multi-task oriented. Additionally, City Link will be introducing Citibot to staff and the public in the coming weeks as well. Citibot will allow citizens to contact City Link via text, thus providing another method of contacting City Link.

Lastly, City Link will continue to reassess call volume each year and monitor the impacts of alternate forms of contact to the center.