Marchex Institute Study Finds Hotel and Cruise Industries Lose Significant Volume of Customers Due to Poor Call Handling

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SEATTLE--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jul. 24, 2018-- Marchex (NASDAQ: MCHX), a leading provider of call analytics that drive, measure, and convert callers into customers, today released a series of reports that measure the call-handling performance of hotel and cruise brands. By analyzing 5.8 million calls to 13 hotel brands and 84,000 calls to four cruise lines, the Marchex Institute identified key call handling challenges the industries are facing, resulting in lost sales opportunities and negative customer experiences.

A set of key performance indicators were evaluated for each brand, including unanswered calls, calls abandoned by customers due to interactive voice response (IVR) or reaching a voicemail, calls abandoned due to being put on hold, and calls abandoned when being transferred to an agent. Key findings include:

- **Cruise lines experience a higher rate of failed calls** with 24 percent of inbound calls going unanswered or abandoned by customers. Hotel brands had a 14 percent failed call rate.
- **Both hotel and cruise brands lose the most callers when a human touchpoint isn't involved.** More than 19 percent of failed calls to cruise lines and 5 percent of failed calls to hotels resulted from customers being trapped in an automated IVR menu loop or reaching the brand's voicemail.
- **A significant percent of failed calls simply go unanswered.** Hotels left an average of 5 percent of calls unanswered compared to 2 percent of calls to cruise lines going unanswered.

"By 2020, it's projected that 169 billion calls will be made to businesses from mobile devices. For industries, such as travel, that rely heavily on inbound phone calls to generate bookings – this is a critical channel to invest in," said Brian Craig, VP of analytics marketing and product management at Marchex. "By using call analytics to measure the quality of these calls and pin point why calls fail, businesses can take the necessary steps to improve call management, which ultimately leads to increased sales and customer satisfaction."

Marchex also has recommendations to improve call handling in the travel industry based on these findings:

- **Streamline the call routing process** and eliminate unnecessary or duplicative steps. Small improvements like shortening voicemail greetings can also help encourage callers to leave a message instead of hanging up.
- **Reduce unanswered calls** by staffing up during peak hours of operation and when your business receives the highest volume of calls.
- **Avoid placing callers on hold**, or if necessary, keep hold times to a minimum, aiming for less than 90 seconds.

The Marchex Institute leveraged its proprietary Call DNA® technology to analyze millions of anonymized calls that were placed to hotel and cruise brands in the U.S. throughout 2017. Visit the Marchex blog to view the complete call-handling benchmark reports and discover additional call intelligence insights.

About Marchex

Marchex understands that the best customers are those who call your company - they convert faster, buy more, and churn less. Marchex provides solutions that help companies drive more calls, understand what happens on those calls, and convert more of those callers into customers. Our actionable intelligence strengthens the connection between companies and their customers, bridging the physical and digital world, to help brands maximize their marketing investments and operating efficiencies to acquire the best customers.

Please visit the Marchex blog or @marchex on Twitter (Twitter.com/Marchex)) to learn more.

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