

# Newsflash

FROM LINDA SWERLING

**October 28, 1999** - If you haven't visited our new web site at [www.level2solutions.com](http://www.level2solutions.com), make time soon to take the interactive Red Flag Test to see how your own management performance measures up to successful organizations' best practices. E-mail Level II Solutions to tell us how you scored!

## NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY PROVOKES CALL CENTER PERFORMANCE INCENTIVES IMPROVEMENTS

### PROBLEM:

A blended inbound/outbound call center in the health care industry had come to an impasse when negotiating a contract for a new, large client. The call center, over ten years old, had grown its sales to \$5 million and had over 50 agents. The prospect wanted the contract to include stringent performance incentives around service levels such as average handle time, hold time, and callbacks.

In order to meet the requirements of the new contract, they asked Level II Solutions to help them develop the requested performance incentive program. It became clear very quickly, however, that instituting these performance incentives would actually diminish the call center's effectiveness based on its current operating philosophy of non-standardized problem solving. The incentives would require a cultural change from an organization that was flexible in its response to client situations to a "stop watch" mentality that would decrease customer satisfaction.

### SOLUTION:

The agents work in a culture in which they are encouraged to increase customer satisfaction by working to provide a solution rather than

merely answering questions. In that environment, incentive programs based on standard performance measures work as a disincentive to problem solving and customer service.

Instead, the call center began developing a recognition program to reward top performers. Then, with the help of a detailed budget, Level II Solutions and the call center CEO determined what level of risk they were willing to accept against their projected profit for this particular proposal. Those numbers became the counter offer to the prospect.

### RESULTS:

The call center closed the new business based on the proposed **incentive program**.

From the work that the call center did with Level II Solutions, they not only clarified and confirmed their **business model** but also recognized a **branding** opportunity. They plan to market themselves as a blended health care call center that provides nimble, flexible, non-standard solutions to their clients' needs.

In addition, they now also have a **method** to use to develop attractive incentive programs for future business.

*As always, Level II Solutions is a resource for problem solving, strategic planning, business start-ups, operations, finance and accounting, cash flow management, information technology, and human resources. Until the next News Flash . . . My best wishes to you for a smooth and festive transition to the new millennium!*

LEVEL II  
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