

LEVERAGING COACHING AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

CONTACTS

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About NICE

With NICE (Nasdaq: NICE), it's never been easier for organizations of all sizes around the globe to create extraordinary customer experiences while meeting key business metrics. Featuring the world's #1 cloud native customer experience platform, CXone, NICE is a worldwide leader in AI-powered self-service and agent-assisted CX software for the contact center—and beyond. Over 25,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies, partner with NICE to transform—and elevate—every customer interaction.

Amid the “Great Reset,” organizations need to be nimble in addressing potential employee performance concerns and understand how to coach for performance improvements. The pandemic, ongoing social unrest and uncertainty surrounding job security and general business disruption have fueled a historic drop in employee engagement, especially around self-improvement – the most significant drop ever recorded, according to **Gallup**. Following a record rise, engagement dropped from 37% to 31% between March and June 2020—a seven-point decrease in already-low levels of employee engagement.

Now, more than half—54%—of employees are not engaged in the workplace. This matters because engagement plays a large factor in performance and can be directly linked to the effectiveness of coaching. If your employees aren’t engaged, overall effort is down. But by guiding them and focusing their efforts to the right behaviors and KPI’s to improve their performances, goes a long way to making them more engaged.

“Since employee engagement is highly related to many performance outcomes—even more so in tough times—this unprecedented drop in the percentage of engaged workers has significant potential performance consequences,” says Jim Harter, chief scientist for Gallup’s workplace management and wellbeing practices.

Amid this drop in engagement and heightened employee anxiety over the future, industry observers have noted a few key trends:

a. Performance is even more important than ever before

Objectives need to be clearly visible not only for managers but also across the organization. At all levels, employees need to be able to see how they are being measured, be able to view any evolving trends, and have effective coaching sessions that point them in the right direction.

b. Workplace isolation is adding to existing anxiety

Stress levels are high, and teams are feeling increasingly disconnected—in fact, an

annual Buffer survey found that one in five workers say loneliness is their biggest challenge when working remotely, and **Gallup** has found that workplace isolation can derail productivity up to 21%. When employees are working in the same physical spaces, it is easy to reach out for advice or help from peers and managers. With most people working from home currently, however, soaring levels of isolation and loneliness require increased communication, visibility, coaching and guidance.

c. There’s a greater need for data-driven insights

Insights that not only show trends visually but also allow employees and supervisors to connect the data, seeing how:

- One metric impacts other metrics or KPI’s
- The outcome of what is being coached and the actions being taken
- Employees may be spending time to improve on specific areas
- Performance is tied back to coaching and self-improvement

“The first piece of advice I’d offer a CEO is forecasts are out, dashboards are in,” says Kevin Sneader, global managing partner of **McKinsey & Company**.

“Now we’re in an environment where we’ve also learned that what you really need to have a handle on are the metrics, insights, and what’s actually happening on the ground—the dashboard of daily life.”

Changes are more common and the need to quickly modify or adjust objectives, has become the normal.

How Do You Measure Engagement and Its Impact on Performance? And What Should a Supervisor Do About It?

When it comes to driving performance improvements, there are a few common challenges regardless of whether employees are working remotely or in a brick-and-mortar contact center.

1. Improving performance starts with setting a standard—both for interactions with employees and also for coaching.
2. Coaching and engagement are not a one-size-fits-all undertaking. You may have one team of employees who are self-sufficient and self-motivated and another with employees that require a lot of hand-holding and need to feel connected. Supervisors need the tools and the ability to adjust as required, delivering coaching that is directly aligned to what individual employees need.
3. Change management and organizational culture are critical determinants of success. Often, we second-guess (or underestimate) the reports we expect actions to be based on. We don’t spend enough time creating the cultural shift our employees and managers need.

Ultimately, contact centers want to ensure that employees’ actions match the supervisors’ coaching activities and organizational goals. When it comes to understanding engagement, organizations need to be able to discover engagement or self-learning opportunities before they become bigger problems. How do you get in front of issues more proactively? How do you take care of employees in a way they most appreciate or a way that most resonates with them in terms of driving them to improve their own performance?

Best practices include promoting an active spirit and culture of engagement throughout the organization and determining whether supervisor focus translates to the employee’s focus. Consider the duration of page visits to expose some hidden truths. Where is the employee spending his or her time? Are they the right areas that will drive their performance? If not, how do you address that?

Finally, ask yourself: Do supervisors understand what each employee might need and what they themselves need? Coaches have their own development needs when it comes to being great coaches. Look to see whether employees’ actions match supervisor coaching discussions.

Use NPM Engagement Analytics to Fuel Engagement and Improved Performance

NICE Performance Management (NPM) offers engagement analytics, centered around content usage or viewing, provide a series of reports centered around engagement, coaching and performance. Available pages and reports and dashboards include:

a. Welcome page

Users can start by launching what is new in performance improvement and keep supervisors tuned in to any process or cultural changes around performance through this home page. This page will provide access to interesting trends and tips and tricks for ensuring meaningful employee engagement, and enable your performance culture change to be a living, breathing, agile experience.

b. My team overall engagement

This gives supervisors easy access to the correlation between three key elements related to engagement and coaching impact:

- **System engagement** (Seen on the top line chart): the amount of time employees spend doing self-directed assessments (as an example: proactively logging into the system and visiting Root Cause Pages to manage their own performance).
- **Coaching engagement** (Bottom left corner): whether employees are signing off on coaching assignments in a timely manner.
- **Overall performance** (Bottom right corner): based on the cumulative team results, how does employees' engagement with the solution and coaching correlate with their overall performance trend? Do you need to shift your energy on what to target, perform additional sessions or encourage your employees to self-assess? Should you consider other activities, that may have a gaming element to them? What is having the biggest impact on overall performance and how can you change your approach to affect it?

- Is coaching required or motivation to self-assess?
- If coaching is working, is there an optimal amount?

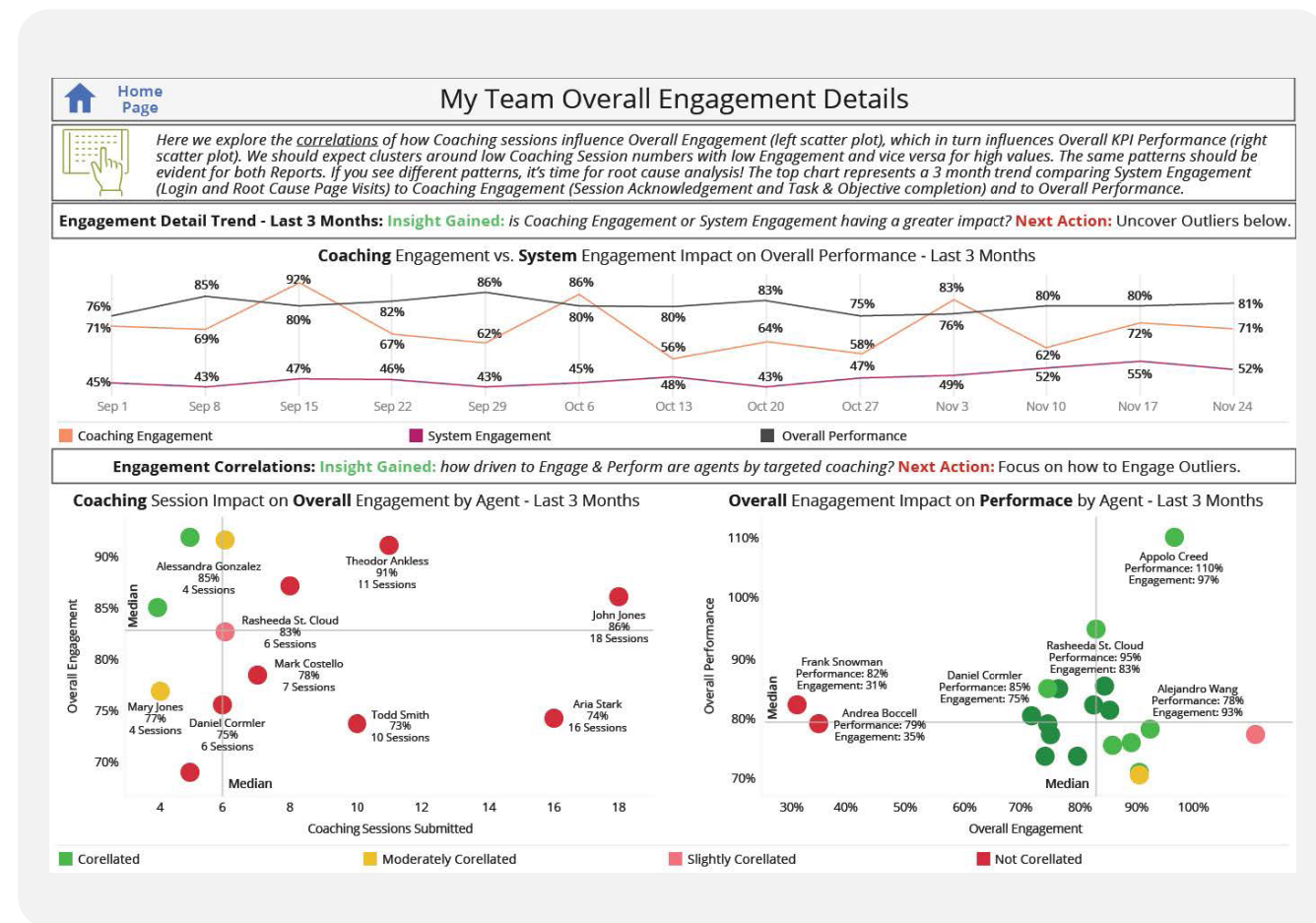
As a matter of best practice, organizations should focus change on low performers with learning engagement, changing coaching style and tactics as needed—in some cases, switching from spoon-feeding tactics to helping employees self-assess and self-improvement can be a catalyst for greater engagement. Using rewards and game like activities can also greatly help. High performers with low engagement could also become more highly engaged by being given mentoring opportunities. Low performers with high engagement should also be addressed via better guidance and possibly by combining them with mentoring from the high performers. They are highly engaged but perhaps in the wrong way (visiting Root Cause Pages where their performance is already good instead of the areas of opportunity.)

c. Page visits vs. coaching sessions page

What every good supervisor and manager really wants to know is whether their coaching is effectively translating into employee action. This is very important in creating effective performance programs, in which supervisors coach to a certain behaviors, and the associated KPI's, and then tries to determine whether the employee begins using the tips, tricks, and direction provided. With NPM's engagement analytics, the solution measures what targeted content/pages/activity the employee is focusing on within the solution. If you are coaching an employee to CSAT, then the employee should in turn be spending time on reviewing content, best practices and tasks associated with CSAT, as expected. Or is the employee spending time in areas where they have an easier time self-assessing or have a different perception of what to focus on, such as average handle time (AHT) perhaps?

To address these questions, this report provides a strong indication of where time and energy should be invested—or how a supervisor or manager might identify areas for individual development. Engaged employees that are focused on self-improvement produce results, but the variation in engagement methods produces variation in the results. My Team's Overall Engagement helps you answer the following questions:

- What is the best combination of coaching and direction does each individual on my team need to drive optimal performance results?
- What areas are the employees looking into to improve? Does it correlate with some of the potential performance gaps or opportunities?



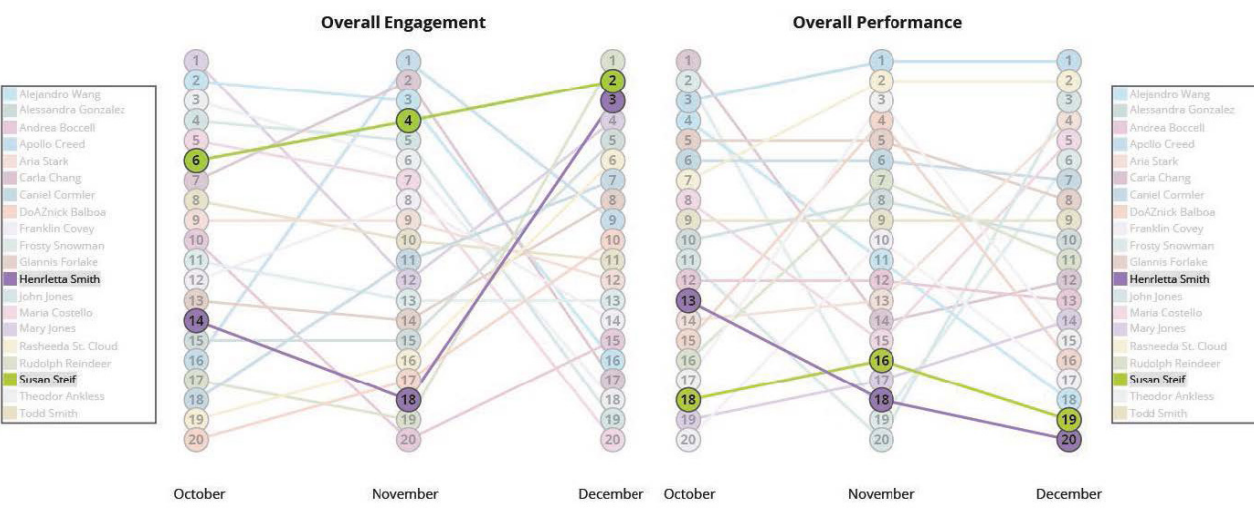
Home Page **% of Time Spent on Specific Root Cause Pages vs. % of Coaching Sessions on that Topic**

The bar length represents the percentage of Coaching sessions about a specific KPI. The circle height represents the % of time spent on the Root Cause Page for that KPI. The color of the circle, bar, and text (right above the month) represents the discrepancy between these two measures, and can indicate the difference between the Agent's focus (which Pages they wait) and the Supervisor's focus (messages shared during Coaching). For all measures, the color coding ranges from the worst to best according to this range: red -> pink -> yellow -> light green -> green. The bar color is more transparent but does not indicate any analytical difference. It's just for contrast.

Page Duration vs. Coaching Sessions: Insight Gained: Discrepancy between Supervisor Focus and Agent Focus. **Next Action:** Encourage Agent to Self-Engage in Focus Area.



Agent Rank within Team: Insight Gained: Which Agents are the most driven by a specific Coaching Approach? **Next Action:** Setup Peer Monitoring, Taylor Coaching approach to the individual.



This report shines visibility on where the targeted coaching translated or not into follow-through and self-analysis actions. Some of the questions that it helps address are:

- How much of a discrepancy is there between KPI coaching topics and the amount of time employees spend analyzing the impact pages for that KPI?
- Are the employees comfortable diving into the key root causing pages and self-assessing what they have to do for the targeted KPI's?
- Do they understand the expectation that was communicated or discussed during the coaching session?

The report also identifies the things the supervisor can put in place as tactical actions to drive a different behavior at the employee level.

The next coaching session then becomes more of an honest, practical conversation, because supervisors know in advance where employees have been spending their time: "I coached you on CSAT and I notice you are not spending time on self-analysis in this area. Is there something I can help with? Do you understand how to look at the root causes and drivers of CSAT?"

The opposite is also true. Do the areas where the employee is spending time tie back into some potential opportunities? Areas of self-analysis could serve as the focus for the next coaching session or drive the manager to assign certain tasks, possibly around some gamified activity, that challenge the employee and reward them for achieving the objective within the activity.

Ultimately, in the end, each operation wants to see that there is a positive trend for both engagement and performance, and if there isn't, then they need to dig into the activities and coaching methods.

d. NPM rank trend
Provides that visibility and trend guidance for each employee relative to their peers and team. This is just another great way to compare and contrast between different employees that may be on the track as far as focus areas and coaching. It also provides clear visibility into trends and the amount of impact on engagement and performance. Although it is shown over 3 months, the amount of time could be increased.

Summary

With teams working remotely on a large scale for the first time amid widespread uncertainty about the future, it has never been more important to be able to leverage coaching and to measure one of the key components of engagement, self-improvement, to improve employee performance.

By giving supervisors the tools to measure the consequences of their coaching through the employee activity, provides with the means to truly have effective conversations with employees. It also empowers them to make changes to their own coaching styles (guidance, motivating, activities, goal oriented, etc). Doing so, it can position your contact center to quickly and easily address potential performance issues through coaching that's directly aligned to an employee's unique needs.