

# Taking ownership of a Enquiry to Have a Satisfied Customer

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# 1. abstract

Call and contact centres aim to employ people who have a high customer service orientation. They then train them in appropriate industry and company product knowledge, customer service and communication skills relevant to the requirements of their job.

Recently it has been acknowledged that if a recruit has the right attitude/temperament/disposition, then giving them the required skill set is relatively easy.

This project models the ability to take ownership of a customer enquiry to produce a satisfied customer. It explores the beliefs and strategies of three exemplars selected from two different call centres in different industries and geographical locations.

As author I am interested in identifying the 'difference that makes the difference' for my work as a training consultant and as part of a doctoral research project.

By studying untrained subjects it is hoped this study will be of interest to those seeking to recruit and train staff in a customer service role as well as practitioners of NLP.

## 2. method

Eight meetings were carried out at two research sites with four exemplars. The two call centres were: a university with a call centre facility in the North of England and a telecommunications company with a call centre facility in the South of England. Both are regarded as major organisations within their sectors.

The four exemplars had been put forward by their managers as being top performers in providing customer service, although they were each credited with different attributes, skill sets and knowledge.

After meeting the managers I was allowed to observe each person at their workstation, taking and making calls, and completing their administration. This gave me an ideal opportunity to identify personal possessions - like photographs of family members and motivational affirmations that contributed to the subjects' ability to maintain a positive and resourceful emotional state,(see appendix).

I was able to listen in to customer telephone calls and in some cases record them for reference.

All subjects received calls where customer's content was obviously different from each site as were the major strengths attributed to each person. (For example, rapport/flexibility for Susan, warmth and enthusiasm for Amanda, ambition for Richard, positivity for Jennifer.)

Having data from four subjects gave me an additional source of information which was a precautionary measure. For this project only three profiles were required, and I have therefore selected Susan, Amanda and Richard, on the basis of them being most data-rich.

The ability to be modelled, taking ownership of a customer enquiry to produce a satisfied customer, emerged through observing the subjects at work and was subsequently verified by the exemplars in their interviews. They confirmed the experience of being at cause rather than a passive victim as fundamental, although each exemplar had their own criterion, definitions and beliefs surrounding it.

I discovered that the state of ownership was both an initial act of commitment and an ongoing state and process that could begin with speaking to the customer or prior to that, in engaging with their query by e-mail.

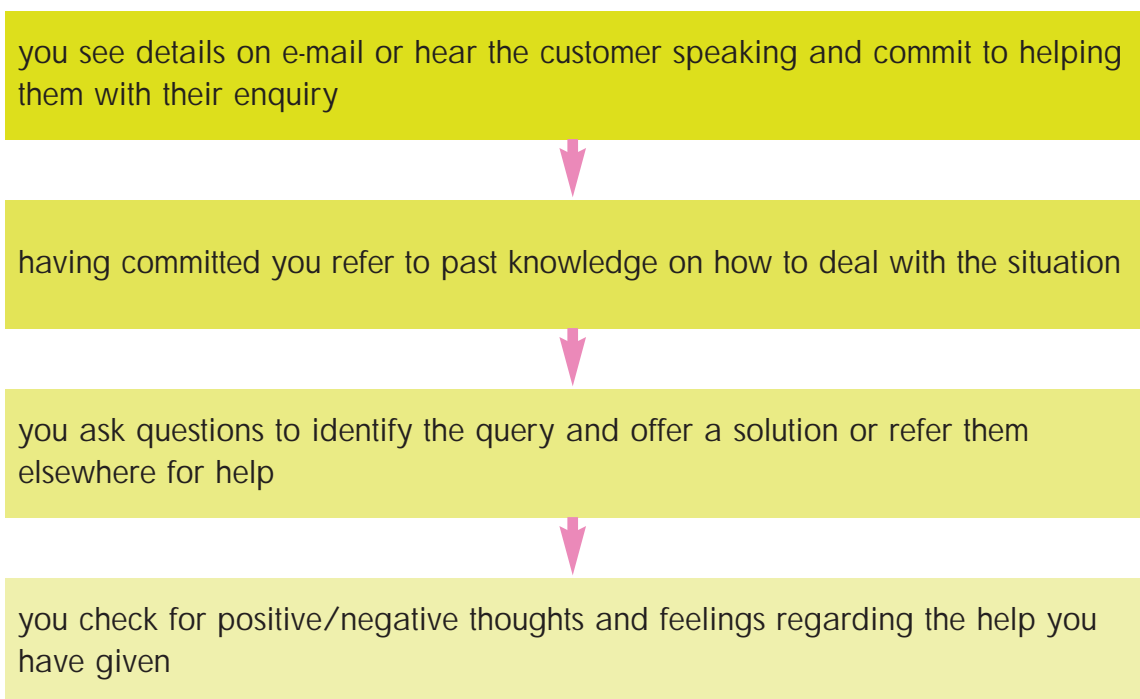
The first part of the interview involved a core dump, followed by the completion of David Gordon's and Graham Dawes' 'Experiential Array' which elicited the belief template and TOTE.

Contributing factors were verified, such as environment, and observable behaviours. I used the LAB profile worksheet by Shelle Rose Charvet to identify motivational traits. I video recorded all interviews with a cam-corder and analysed them for eye accessing cues, clusters of concepts, language patterns and meta models.

The exemplars were all happy to participate and contributed their ideas freely. One person was surprised at how much information he disclosed and sought reassurance that the content and his identity would not be used 'against him'. In line with this, I have changed the names of the exemplars and the locations. I have promised them a summary of my findings which I will send to them at the end of the project.

### 3. overview of state of ownership to produce a satisfied customer

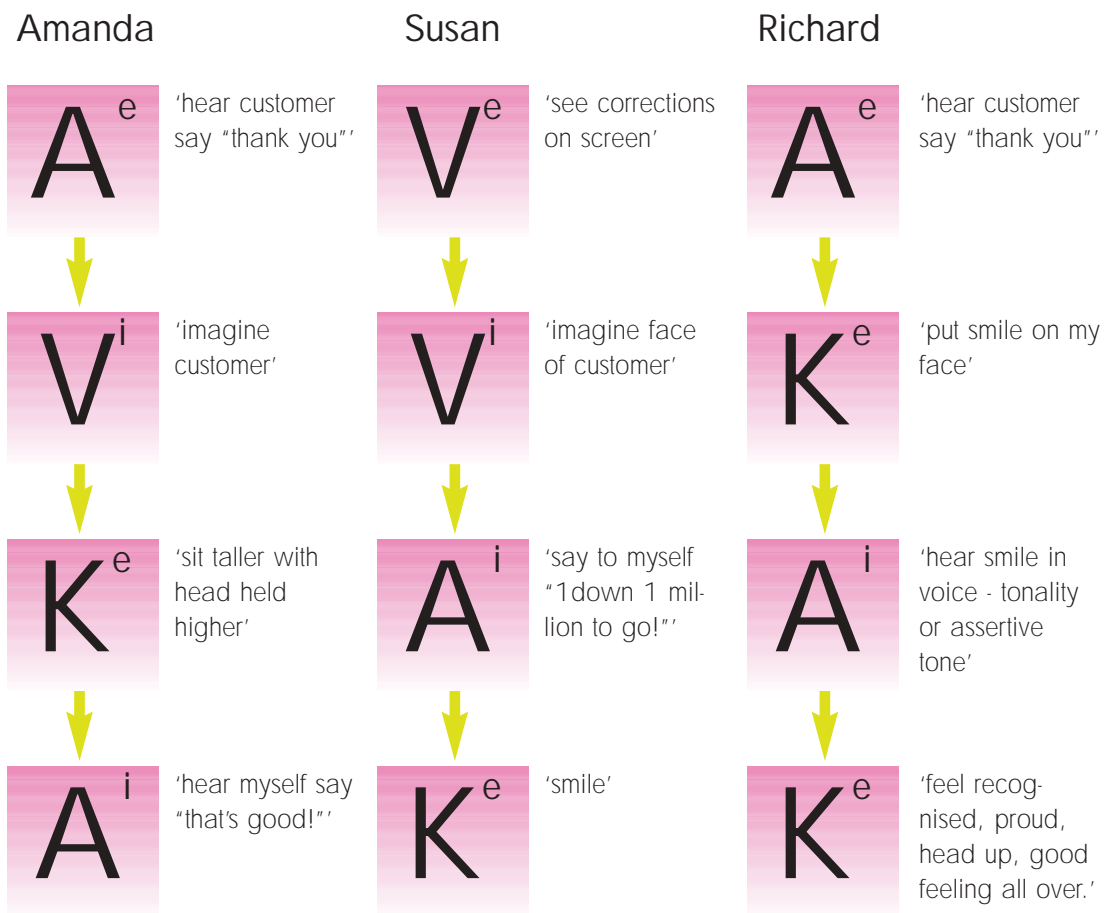
The state of ownership could be summarised as follows:



All three exemplars referred to the point of resolution of the customer's enquiry as 'taking ownership', although the elicitation questions used in conjunction with the belief template drew out a wider perspective.

The state being modelled therefore focuses on both owning and knowing the query has been resolved through sensory specific evidence.

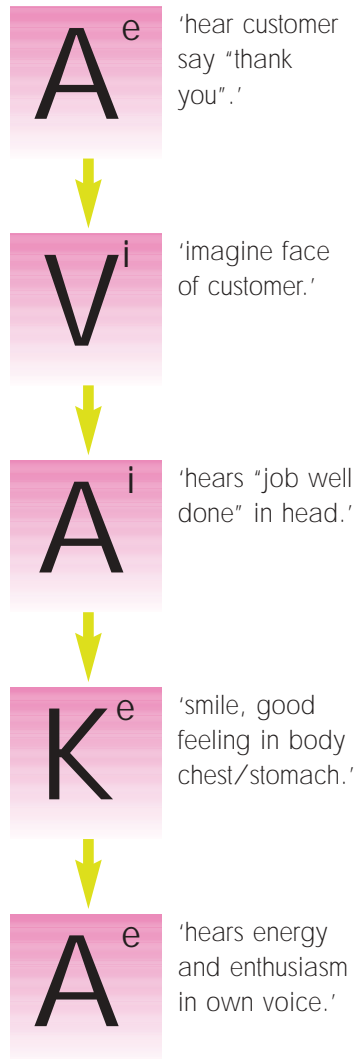
## 4. exemplars VAKO coding



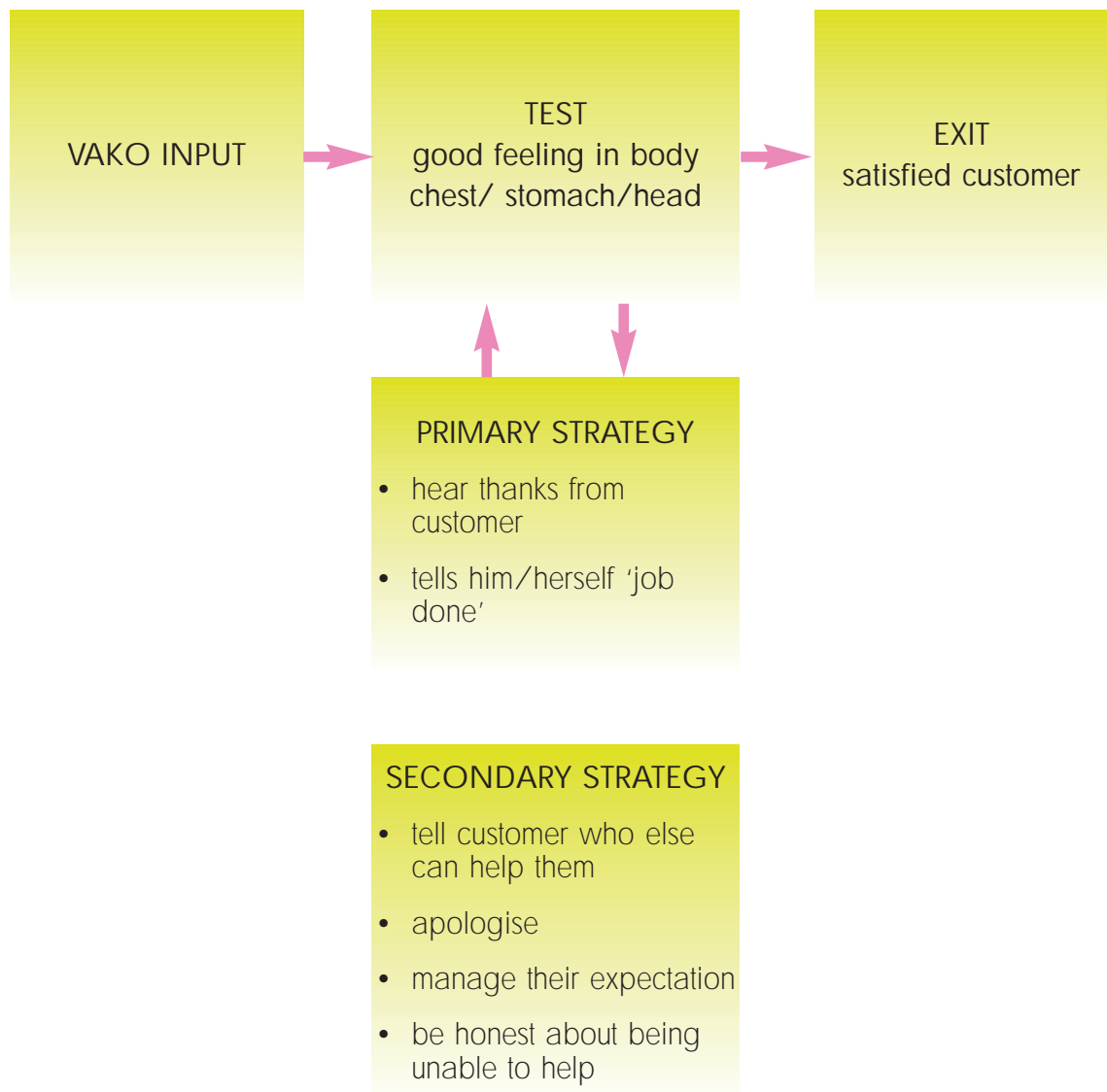
NLP notation from Bretto Milliner

representational systems	superscripts
A = auditory	i = internal
V = visual	e = external
K = kinesthetic	r = remember
O = olfactory/gustatory	c = constructed

## 5. integrated strategy



## 6. TOTE summary



## 7. observations and conclusion

1. It seems important to note that the experience of ownership in all three cases was described in relationship with the customer, not as an isolated state. This was triggered by hearing the customers' voice or imagining what they looked like.
2. Dealing with large backlogs of work may cause people to discount their own experience of satisfaction at helping the customer, e.g. 'It is a good job done but now on to the next.'. Taking time to recognise their achievements and create meaning may be an important motivational factor in the long term.
3. In terms of research, working with 'untrained' subjects may require additional time as some people are not used to thinking about how they think or feel in a work context or describing their experience in sensory specific terms.

# appendix

experiential arrays  
visit summary sheet  
winner's creed

# visit summary sheet

	amanda	susan	richard
<b>behavioural patterns</b>			
physiology	Leaning forward. Audible volume when speaking. Wears headphones. Clear articulation, enthusiastic tone.	Leaning forward, slightly slouched, but alert body posture. Audible volume. Happy tone of voice.	Upright posture. Clear articulation. Deep pitch. Leaning forward looking up at screen.
gestures	Holding mouthpiece. Writing notes or using mouse with right hand.	Using right hand to write notes.	Hands held together. Palms facing inward. Hand gestures to emphasise points made.
eye accessing cues	V <sup>e</sup> (screen) lots A <sup>i</sup> - some            A <sup>e</sup> - some K <sup>e</sup> - some	V <sup>e</sup> and V <sup>i</sup> - lots A <sup>e</sup> - some K <sup>e</sup> - some	V <sup>e</sup> - some A <sup>e</sup> - lots K <sup>e</sup> - some
predicates	Predominantly visual and some auditory.	Predominantly visual and some auditory.	Auditory and some kinesthetic.
meta-model	Some unspecified referential index 'People feel stupid asking questions'. Some modal operators of necessity: 'You can't remember it all.'	Modal operators of possibility: 'I can do anything with data calls'. Modal operators of necessity: 'I should be able to take ownership of every call and help every customer.'	Modal operators of necessity: 'You have just got to take their word for it.' 'What they need they should get.'
<b>cognitive patterns</b>			
strategy	A <sup>e</sup> - V <sup>i</sup> - K <sup>e</sup> - A <sup>i</sup> - A <sup>e</sup> 'hear customer, imagine their face, sit taller, hear myself.'	V <sup>e</sup> - V <sup>i</sup> - A <sup>i</sup> - K <sup>e</sup> see screen, imagine customer, say to myself and smile.	A <sup>e</sup> - K <sup>e</sup> - A <sup>i</sup> - K <sup>e</sup> - A <sup>e</sup> hear customer, put smile on my face, hear voice in head, feel proud - hear voice speaking.
critical sub-modalities	Visual - 'look, showing'. Auditory - customer's voice.	Visual - sees face of the customer 'no light at the end of the tunnel'. Auditory - 'give call back' 'where it says' 'callback'.	Auditory - customer's and own voice inside head. Kinesthetic - feel recognition (head up).
criteria and beliefs	Understanding. - to help, make everything clear - explain procedures - be polite and respectful.	Understanding. - should be able to take ownership of every call - should be able to help all.	Customer satisfied. - engineers' job is to fix fault - I need to meet customer's expectation - treat people as you expect to be treated.
meta-programmes	Proactive - towards - internal, then external - procedures - sameness with exceptions	Proactive - away from - internal, then external - options - sameness with exceptions	Proactive - towards - external, then internal - options - sameness with exceptions
<b>behavioural patterns</b>			
Neurological levels	Identity beliefs and capability.	Identity, beliefs and capability.	Identity, beliefs and capability.
Time-frames	Past and mostly present.	Mainly present and some future.	Past and present.
Perceptual positions	First and second position.	Mainly first with some second position.	First and second position.

## winner's creed

If you think you are beaten, you are;  
if you think you dare not, you don't;  
if you'd like to win, but think you can't,  
it's almost a cinch you won't.  
If you think you'll lose, you're lost;  
for out in the world we find Success begins with a person's will.  
It's all in the state of mind.  
Life's battles don't always go to the stronger or faster hand;  
but sooner or later the person who wins is the one who thinks 'I can'.

*Unknown*

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