

CUTTING THE LEARNING CURVE

Nesting is a term in the BPO industry that refers to the transition period between training and the production floor.



Why does it take so long to get an agent to perform at the same level as the production floor?

"We hire to a success profile so **the issue must be in Training.**"

"We do comprehensive retention testing after every training module and people who cannot pass these tests or the final training calibration are let go. **The issue is in Nesting.**"

"We don't release anyone who isn't achieving minimal requirements. They are performing here so **the issue is that they are left to flounder when put in production**".

"We get people on the floor who **should never have been hired**".

Round and round we go. Sound familiar?

At 1840 & Company, we are continuously assessing and analyzing our processes to ensure we are improving and not just standing still. Our culture is built on using quality tools and processes along with data analytics across the entire spectrum of services we offer. When one of our clients came to us with a program that required only 3 days of ramp up we dug in to assess what we could do to shrink the learning curve even further.

Taking on The Curve

Using a cross functional team to measure and analyze the process from recruitment to production, and working with 1840's Quality Process Improvement Analysts, the team developed data capture and measurement criteria in order to quantify the impact the various phases have in hiring an agent and getting them to proficiency in as short a time frame as possible. The challenges of shortening the learning curve can begin at the very onset of the hiring process as well as in training or nesting. Identifying the root cause(s) and how to resolve was the objective.

A Group Effort

The Recruitment, Training, and Operations teams needed to identify how their procedures each contributed to the learning curve, and then design improvements to their respective processes. Using quality management tools, and analyzing data from 15 previous training waves, the team identified actions in each part of the recruitment, training and operations processes that could be quantified as having an impact on the learning curve. After reviewing the data and findings, each team provided a set list of concrete actions that would be put in place, as well as feedback loops to measure their impact and reduce the curve.



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The actions to be taken were:

Recruitment: Improve quality of hire

- Behavioral Interview Skills Training developed and implemented across all sites
- Internal Interview Skills Calibration conducted and Recruiters certified. Ongoing certification implemented
- Review and update existing Recruitment assessments to include critical thinking assessment

Training/Nesting: Improve quality of graduate

- Revamp New Hire Training approach including agenda, trainer and agent scorecards, post module retention assessments
- Ensure 1:10 ratios from Process Training to Nesting
- Trainers conduct 30-60-90-day touch base sessions and evaluations with trainees to provide ongoing measurement and data for continued improvement

Operations: Ensure agent support in transition from Training to Operations

- Team Leads and top agents assist in Top Call Drivers discussions and best practice sharing during nesting
- Operations assigned a Recruitment POC to conduct agent interviews thereby integrating Operations into the process
- Operations will provide Recruitment and Training post 90-day agent feedback and results as way of closing the loop for continued refinement

An additional finding was to expedite providing new-hires with their account Log-ins. This allowed the trainees to become familiar with their tools sooner, and thereby become more proficient quicker.

Measuring the Curve of the Wave

All of these actions were implemented for the recruitment of Wave 16. The group was closely monitored throughout their training and transition periods, as well as into their floor performance upon joining the 1840 & Company production team.

Their findings were then compared to those of the prior Waves.

How Long was the Curve?

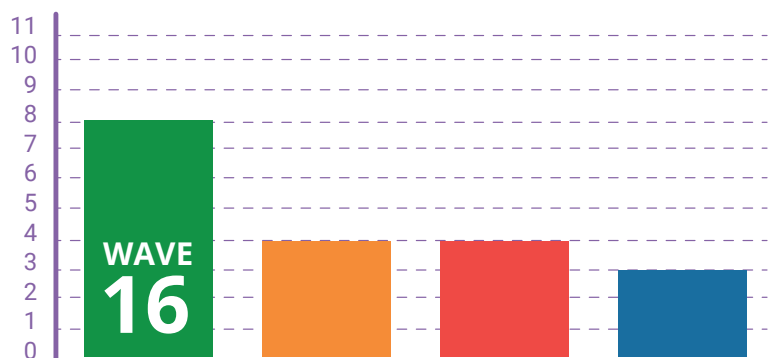
The team found that Wave 16 produced a higher than average score on training comprehension and retention assessments. Wave 16's passing rate on the final written assessment was double that of the original Waves measured. When Wave 16 graduated to production the learning curve had been cut in half.

It's clear that the coordinated focus, support and direction given to Wave 16 from the recruitment stage through to their transition into production allowed them to perform better than their predecessors. The members of Wave 16 also demonstrated better critical thinking skills when tested compared to previous groups.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?



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Based on these results, the recruitment, training, and operations teams have implemented all of the procedures from experimental processes to SOP's. Each of the listed actions are now ongoing and will continue to be measured and analyzed as part of 1840's continuous improvement process.

Wave 16 had highest average in 8 out of 11 assessments during process training.

OBSERVATIONS:

