



Key Questions to Consider Before You Buy a WallBoard

A White Paper/Centergistic Solutions

Considering the full scope of software and hardware that go into running an effective contact center, a wallboard display is fairly inexpensive. You can buy a wallboard for as little as \$1,000, which is one reason many managers consider it to be a relatively inexpensive way to motivate and inform the workforce. But before you invest that \$1,000+, there are some questions you should consider. First a checklist to use within your company to assess your needs properly.

1) What is my goal?

Did you know that putting up an LED display can actually cause harm and disruption to your workforce? If you don't have a clear idea of what you want the board to communicate, then it will either be ignored or distracting, both of which you cannot afford. Putting information in front of your most valuable asset, your workforce, is critical. Every time an agent looks up from his/her desk to read information, valuable seconds are spent. If the information is not highly targeted and easily interpreted, those seconds are wasted. On the other hand, if the information is simple and quickly grasped, those seconds can be well spent and result in better performance. But first know the goal. Agents in blended centers with multiple goals and types of transactions need to keep their attention on the desktop. You may want to consider a screen pop as an alternative; one that does not take up much real estate.

Ask your vendor: Will they help you shape your display objectives? How does the software behind the wallboard help you target the information? If a wallboard is not the answer what other options can they recommend? Can they provide a combination of different display media? Do they have a good understanding of which environments are better for boards and which are better served using other methods?

2) What will I put on the wallboard?

Less is More: A topic of much debate, although most experts adhere to the science of display, which states that at any given time an agent cannot handle more than 7 pieces of information. That means that the wallboard should be simple, with as few text messages as possible. Metrics should be quickly grasped and not require the viewer to calculate anything or wait for data to refresh. Once again, those few seconds need to work for you team, not against them.

Metrics that work harder: Service level, number of calls in the queue, number of calls abandoned.....those are some of the metrics that we immediately think of when we imagine our new wallboard, blinking away. They are important metrics, to be sure, as they represent the heartbeat of the center. But today's technology enables us to deliver a richer set of metrics that can be a product of several sources of information.

Tight Thresholds: Thresholds should be created that cause the metrics to change colors as performance is impacted. You should always create an upper and lower threshold, so that you can reward positive goal-reaching behavior and adjust poor performance quickly. Don't ignore differences in call volumes for different times of the day and days of the week. Take the time up front to set intelligent thresholds and you will be rewarded by less data, but better data.

Light on messages:

Ask your vendors:

3) What will I not put on the wallboard?

Data overload: Eliminate more than six metrics at any given time. Information should be flashed, not scrolled. Scrolling requires the viewer to “wait and watch”. It wastes time and is tiring on the eyes. Keep it simple and consistent.

Dancing Ducks: The exploding stars and cute characters walking across the wallboard are so much fun. But they do one thing only....distract your expensive workforce. Either don't use them at all or save them for that after hours party to celebrate a goal met or a birthday.

One-size-fits-all thresholds: If you are not prepared to take the time to set proper thresholds, don't use a wallboard. Period. It is demoralizing for a team to sit and see all red or all green metrics. That tells them that a) they are not making a performance impact and/or b) you don't care enough to give them good information. The result is to ignore the display altogether and mentally “check out” on their jobs.

The Long and Winding Messages. Phew! What did that say again? Don't use a wallboard to teach or entertain! Think of the dollars you spend every second on your workforce. There are training videos and programs that can be scheduled, there are parties that can be organized. The wallboard should have no personality except to briefly correct or encourage. Keep messages short and clear. “Great job, keep it up!” Rule of thumb, messages should be readable in 2 seconds. Anything longer than that belongs in a phone call, report or memo.

4) Who is the intended viewing audience?

Generally the audience for a wallboard is whoever is sitting in front of it. Make sure that your agents can see the wallboard easily. Ergonomics can dictate higher cubicle walls or floor layouts that make viewing a wallboard more difficult. They should be mounted high enough on the wall so that they can be seen without moving the head. A quick glance should be all that is needed by the viewer.

If you have frequent visitors to the contact center, you might want to consider a plasma or TV monitor placed out of view of the agents but on a wall easily viewed by a visitor. These displays are great for showing an overall performance picture. The more graphics and movement, the better. In this case you want to dazzle and to impress.

5) Who else might want to know?

Today, the contact center must do more than run as a smooth, self contained department. There is a lot of valuable information that is accumulated with each transaction and there are others who need to know. If you are not already regularly providing updates to other departments, you will be soon. You might consider installing small wallboards in different locations throughout the building, or coordinating a network of wallboards that can be addressed with different types of real time information to fit the audience. There are other ways, however, to distribute critical information that might make more sense, such as an intranet, that makes the information available 24 x 7 x 365 anywhere in the world.

Ask your vendor: How do I publish information to other individuals? Can your software let me tailor my real time filters to collect and alert different people for different conditions?

6) How will it make me more efficient?

Wallboards should be used for your team. If used properly, they should be an extension of your leadership and the goals you've set. You will probably want a different set of information for you to manage effectively. You will want to look into individual performance and make some comparisons to past performance and between other groups. Consider your wallboard to be your voice piece. Your way of communicating group information without having to use a white board or personally inform each agent of changing conditions.

Ask your vendor: What kind of software is available to give me access to more detailed information on individual agents? Is there a way to compare across groups? Does the software provide a means to collect and combine historical data for reporting purposes? How does it all fit together?

7) How will it help my team?

Using a wall display with the right mix of metrics will provide the team with a quick "pulse" of the activity for their specific group or team. Thresholds set in context with call volume and patterns will ensure that the metrics remain fresh.

Beware the false sense of security: Remember that wallboards are hardware, nothing more. They are only a conduit for information. If the data and metrics behind that information are not accurate and reflective of team goals, the information on the board may hinder performance. Unfortunately, many managers are lulled into a false sense of security, "There, I have the board up, I'm all done!" Don't put the wallboard up until you have created very targeted data sets that will shape behavior to specific goals. Then, be prepared to monitor it constantly. Ask for input from the team regularly. Some managers let team leaders or supervisors assist with the process of setting and maintaining metrics.

8) How will I know it's working? Not working?

You will know by how often you change it. Most contact centers are by nature dynamic. Goals are ever-changing, campaigns come and go. Reward goals are raised or lowered. Your wallboard will be working if you have taken the time to answer question number one. Remember the wallboard is a communications device, an extension of a greater plan. It is used to communicate in real time very specific, simple metrics that will result in shaping behavior to meet desired goals.

Ask your vendor: Can you provide me with a custom ROI analysis? Do you have the resources to help me benchmark? Does your software work with a Balanced Scorecard system? How?

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