

## Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's Auto Service Center Health of Operations Blitz Strategy

*Increasing call center metrics and performance through focused communication, leadership engagement, master coaching and frontline coaching*

### The Challenge

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's (BCBSM) Auto Service Center division needed to improve its call center metrics. Until October 2013, BCBSM ranked third-to-last out of the Blues plans in areas such as FCR. The group, led by Orin M. Lewis, Auto Service Center Director, knew it needed to improve the service provided by the front line. And, once that happened, improved metrics would follow. Lewis's team met to develop a solution.

In a presentation given at a VP direct reports meeting, the Service Performance Improvement team offered a solution. They stated that the data revealed that service improvements could be gained in these scores – and recommended doing so by having leaders have honest conversations about improvement opportunities and by partnering closely with teams from ODLM (Organizational Development and Learning Management) and Ulysses Learning.

**“You can change many things, but until you change the culture and how people in the organization see things, which is done by having honest conversations, you won't really see results.”**

**– Orin M. Lewis, Auto Service Center Director**

### The Solution

Leaders from the Auto Service Center, ODLM and Ulysses Learning met to develop a strategy for improving the customer experience. They realized that in order for the organization's front line to change their service, the culture of change needed to start at the top.

This multidisciplinary team created Health of Operations Blitz to quickly make sustainable changes throughout the department. Starting on September 29, 2013, they began by instituting weekly meetings with Ulysses Learning, focusing on improving a number of areas, including:

- Training
- Rep Engagement
- Frontline Coaching
- Master Coaching
- Leadership Engagement and Development

The Ulysses Learning team began by concentrating on the reps' training, such as The 8-Step Call Strategy, along with coach and master coach training to make sure the reps and coaches were up to speed with what they needed. Ulysses Learning used call calibrations to show everyone in the department, from reps to leaders, what good calls

sounded like – along with how to refine ones that went off track.

Jcynthia Tory, Senior Analyst and Master Coach said, “The calibration sessions worked well, helping us see the plan in action. The simulations and the classes are great, but it really helps to hear the strategy working on real live calls. There's nothing like hearing it in action.”

“I can't say enough about Ulysses Learning – the partnership with them was really strong. They took the time we needed to talk about our strategies and listened to calls. They said ‘Let's talk about your strategies, let's identify and discuss what's going on and how to handle it.’ They gave us a strong foundation that made the whole strategy work.” – Orin M. Lewis

Meanwhile, Lewis's team worked overtime to engage both his front line and management team through the weekly touchpoint meetings, along with fun, positive reinforcements for the reps. Lewis and his team walked the floors listening for outstanding calls and rewarding them with everything from Blues Experts swag to candy

bars to meal tickets for the cafeteria. To encourage whole-department participation, he provided incentives such as pizza lunch parties for high-performing teams.

He said, “We did departmental competitions, because we realized we can gain a lot of momentum out of team-based awards and recognition as well. I’d listen to calls and when I recognized the ‘wow factor’ and ‘world-class’ calls, I’d give out rewards.”

“When we first rolled this program out, you could hear when each rep was trying to hit all eight steps, but once they were used to the process, it flowed naturally. The reps became more confident and they started feeling

better about how they handled calls. Once they saw how they were doing on their monthly health reports and they could see their results, it helped improve their scores on a consistent basis.” – Jcynthia Tory, Senior Analyst and Master Coach

“We needed to find a way to teach our employees to be effective leaders and coach them on how to have effective conversations. Our leaders need to be motivators, as well as coaches and mentors. By focusing on that, along with the behaviors, performance and needs of our people, we have seen better results in just two months,” said Lewis.

## Results

Calls Resolved: Increased from 77% in October, 2013 to 82% in December, 2013

World-class Calls: Increased 68% in October, 2013 to 76% in December, 2013

World-class Calls Daily Average: Increased from 16.6% in October, 2013 to 35.5% in December, 2013

Action Alerts: Decreased from 21 in October, 2013 to 2 in December, 2013

**“We’ve made herculean efforts in how we communicate with our staff. They recognize that we’re all in it together and we can’t improve unless we have honest dialogue,”**

**– Orin M. Lewis, Auto Service Center Director**

Since 1995, Ulysses Learning has helped organizations of all sizes improve their customer service, sales and coaching performance. Using online, role playing simulations, Ulysses helps build decision making and advanced interaction skills in contact centers and at all points of customer interaction through the organization. We spent four years in research and development to create the validated content and proven methods to help companies effectively train their frontline, engage their leaders and ultimately boost their customer base.

Our simulations deal directly with the different type of emotions and challenges that customer service agents face today.

**For more information how Ulysses Learning can help your contact center and leadership thrive, call 800.662.4066, e-mail [info@ulysseslearning.com](mailto:info@ulysseslearning.com) or visit [www.ulysseslearning.com](http://www.ulysseslearning.com)**