

The Modern Call-Center: A Multi-Disciplinary Perspective on Operations Management Research

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Call centers are an increasingly important part of today's business world, employing millions of agents across the globe and serving as a primary customer-facing channel for firms in many different industries. Call centers have been a fertile area for operations management researchers in several domains, including forecasting, capacity planning, queueing, and personnel scheduling. In addition, as telecommunications and information technology have advanced over the past several years, the operational challenges faced by call center managers have become more complicated as a result. Issues associated with human resources management, sales, and marketing have also become increasingly relevant to call center operations and associated academic research.

In this paper, we provide a survey of the recent literature on call center operations management. Along with traditional research areas, we pay special attention to new management challenges that have been caused by emerging technologies, to behavioral issues associated with both call center agents and customers, and to the interface between call center operations and sales and marketing. We identify a handful of broad themes for future investigation while also pointing out several very specific research opportunities.

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