

What's next



Enterprise

Gold standard vs. good enough

It's time for the Olympics again! This year it's the athletes in the Winter Olympics who get to shine. Their talent is amazing, but the best part of the story is their commitment to be the best and not settle for good enough. There is no prize for finishing 12th in the downhill. It's top three or nothing, and athletes will train accordingly. Can you say the same about your customer service channels? Organizations looking to create great experiences for customer service can learn from Olympians and shift thinking about their channels from being "good enough" to "Gold standard" and get all their service channels podium-worthy.

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Every two years the [Olympics](#) come around and treat us to the best athletes competing and

showing us what excellence means. This year it's the [winter competitors](#) who will shine. Their talent is amazing and feats of skill breathtaking. But the best part of the story is behind the scenes. It's their commitment to be the best and not settle for good enough. There is no prize for finishing 12th in the downhill. It's top three or nothing, and athletes train accordingly.

Transferring this to the business world: are organizations taking the same approach with their customer service channels? Unfortunately, no. Organizations looking to create great experiences for customer service can learn two Olympian habits and shift their performance from being "good enough" to "Gold standard".

Excellence in all phases

The athletes we'll see in South Korea in the next two weeks only think about excellence in all they do. There is no area of their game or skill that can be average. Does anyone believe [Shaun White](#), snowboard master, thinks "I'll just focus on my flips and be good enough on my landings"? No chance. Dominance in his field requires all the pieces working together with equal strength for a strong, consistent run in the half-pipe. The end-to-end process requires excellence.

The same holds true for a strong customer service experience. Some organizations think about their customer service in a narrow, siloed approach. They put extra focus on a particular channel such as the web or chat while ignoring traditional channels such as IVR or text. Digital transformation is important, but it can't be done at the expense of some of your most important channels. A gold medal performance on the web or mobile app experience isn't any good if the customer then engages on an outdated, touch-tone-based phone system that wouldn't even reach the Olympics qualifying round.

Raise the bar across the board

Just like a figure skater who works on jumps, turns, and nailing the compulsories, enterprises must also raise their game in all channels. The technology is there today for top-podium experiences. Advances in text and push notifications allow for richer text messages, smart outbound communications synced with the IVR, and two-way SMS that allows customers to reply directly to a text and make updates. Taking it a step further in the IVR, natural language technologies and voice biometrics make calling the contact center a far easier and friendlier experience.

Balance speed with precision

Beyond always striving for excellence, Olympians show us the need to balance speed with precision. No matter the winter sport, speed is always a factor. Skating, downhill skiing,

bobsled, and, hey, even curling rely on speed. Seriously. In all the sports, speed must be executed perfectly but it must be balanced with precision. Precise movements on a downhill ski run prevent tragedy. Control on the ice rink helps skaters avoid hitting the wall. And precise use of the broom in curling ensures the right speed for the rock to land in the target zone. The speed may vary, but it must work in harmony with precision.

Precision is important in customer service, too. Simply trying to make everything faster may feel good, but if customers end up in the wrong location or can't find the right information, then nobody wins. Consider a website optimized for speed that is difficult to navigate or an enterprise so desperate to get customers through the IVR, that they don't know how to accurately route them or explore the benefits of shifting them to digital.

Thoughtful quickness

Proper planning and analysis can lead the way. The best starting point is to analyze all your service channel experiences from beginning to end. Be the customer. Learn the areas where blockers occur or where unnecessary information is getting in the way. For customer queries, examine if your website would benefit from the addition of a virtual assistant that can determine precisely what customers want, and quickly direct them to the right location. For callers to your IVR, do you thoughtfully consider the whole journey, or try to route them quickly to someone, something, anything to help expedite the resolution? Flip it around by offering other options such as live chat that may take the caller out of the IVR but will ultimately address their issue faster. Finally, use analysis tools on inbound calls or the IVR menus to put a spotlight on trouble spots.

Offer podium-worthy service

The Olympians that will rise to the top over the next couple weeks will exhibit all the qualities above. They can't get to this point without a deep commitment to excellence. They won't execute well if they blindly rush down the mountain or along the track without control. Customer service leaders that learn from Lindsey Vonn, the US hockey teams, or even the curling teams will raise their customer service game and get all their service channels podium-worthy.

Tags: [AI Virtual Assistant](#), [Customer Service Strategy](#), [Interactive Voice Response \(IVR\)](#)

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About Chris Caile

Chris Caile joined Nuance in September 2015 as senior solutions marketing manager for Nuance Conversational IVR (Interactive Voice Response). Before joining Nuance, Caile worked in various marketing and sales support positions at Microsoft and Motorola and has over 20 years of experience in the high tech industry. Caile holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Illinois State University with minors in mathematics and economics.

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