

Demand Management at Northamptonshire Police



Contact Centers in all sectors continually strive to optimize staffing profiles to meet peaks and troughs in call arrival volumes. This goal is a key component in effectively managing the trade-off between service level and the cost of service delivery.

Northamptonshire Police Force is no exception to this, with the added complication that the sheer variety of their 17,000 weekly calls brings. These can range from emergency 999 calls, less urgent crime reports through to general administrative enquiries and internal calls.



Current performance across four existing localized area control rooms is inconsistent. In order to realize economies of scale, the Force has decided to centralize call handling in a new 'customer contact center'.

In addition to realizing a step change in performance it is crucial to the Force that the new center is successful from Day 1, minimizing disruption to the public and ensuring internal acceptance of new working practices. It is therefore imperative that the correct number of staff is employed on appropriate shift patterns without the need for experimentation in the operational environment.

"Lanner offered a professional approach in assisting Northamptonshire Police to ascertain required staffing levels within our new Customer Contact Center"

Tina Favell
Systems Manger – Communications
Northamptonshire Police

Email: solutions@lanner.com
Web site: www.lanner.com

Company	• Northamptonshire Police
Industry	• Emergency Service
Application	• Call Center Resourcing
Benefit	• Staffing Levels & Right First Time

Lanner Group was commissioned to carry out a structured workload analysis for the contact center. The first stage was to process map existing and new call handling structures, ensuring that the means to deal with all call types was identified, together with sources for corresponding call demand data.

Lanner then built a computer simulation model that mimics the call handling processes and demand placed on them. This enabled Lanner to run a 'week-in-the-life' of the operation under varying process designs, shift patterns and demand scenarios.

Using the model, Lanner was able to investigate several elements of the new contact center:



Optimal Resource Levels

Resource levels needed to be adequate to cope with busy times and not over staffed during the quieter times, whilst observing the constraints imposed by the available shift patterns.

Results showed extra staff were required above those budgeted for, in order for performance to improve. The evidence provided by the model was critical to obtaining the additional funding necessary to employ the extra staff.

Alternative Process Design

The Force had been unable to reach consensus on how best to route the wide range of calls. For example, service levels for 999 calls are considerably higher than those of non-emergency calls.

The Force evaluated the use of a dedicated team solely to answer 999 calls, and determined its optimal size.

Robustness Testing

Once a preferred staff profile had been developed, its robustness to a range of operational conditions was tested. In particular, other Forces have experienced an increase in the number of calls, after undergoing centralization.

The model was used to perform numerous sensitivity analysis, to predict the impact on service of differing levels of suppressed demand, and the extra resource required to manage the increase.

Migration Planning

The migration from the four call handling locations involved combining the centers one at a time.

The model was used to investigate the resource levels necessary at each stage of migration, to ensure a seamless transition from old to new.

