

# Making the Case for Adaptive Workforce Optimization

How Adaptive WFO Makes Business Better

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There is a common business challenge of balancing responsiveness to employee needs and adherence to corporate goals. NICE Adaptive Workforce Optimization (AWFO) overcomes this challenge by transforming sensitivity to your employees' needs into an integral tool for meeting your strategic business goals.

For the employee, AWFO uses analytics to assess their performance relative to their peers, rapidly and automatically informing them of areas in need of improvement. It then translates this assessment into operational steps that incent, empower, and guide each employee to take actions that drive goal-oriented progress for both your employee and your business. For the supervisor and manager, AWFO provides context-sensitive insights into the effects of these actions on specific key performance indicators (KPIs), for both the

individual employee and business processes. As processes and performance are refined in response, AWFO creates an adaptive feedback loop that ensures constant optimization.

We will take a look at a few key use cases highlighting how NICE AWFO can directly and positively impact your business, and your bottom line:



Goal Management



Coaching



Onboarding



Gamification



# Adaptive Goal Management

The adaptive workforce management approach recognizes that coaching, in-house processes and forecasting must take into account the fact that each employee has specific attributes and skills. One size does not fit all. This insight, of course, is key to cultivating agent success, employee engagement and, ultimately, customer satisfaction.

That is why NICE AWFO is designed for measuring and assessing agent performance in relation to multidimensional (or multi-factor) goals. That is, the solution defines the agent's goals based on who the agent is (their profile) and what they are doing (their work type). The agent profile includes relevant skill sets, experience and personal attributes. Their work type includes distinctions between performance demands for different tasks, such as handling billing, product sales and support, new or returning customers, application or claims processing, etc.

For true adaptive workforce optimization, though, you need to know precisely how your employees are currently performing. For that, we employ the concept of “relative metrics”. A particular employee's performance can only be meaningfully assessed in comparison to other employees with similar levels of experience, and performing similar tasks or activities (e.g., types of calls or processing). With NICE Adaptive Goal Management, relative metrics can be obtained for comparable skill levels, experience, shifts, calls or work activities, or any combination of these workforce characteristics, for fine-grain or segmented insights. A historical view of performance further enriches and completes the picture.

After the relative goals have been set, NICE AWFO can be configured to automatically trigger a set of actions to maximize success in reaching them. Predefined criteria determine

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which agents will be alerted to take which actions, as needed to progress toward the given goals. The goals themselves automatically update, as do the associated triggers, based on relative performance metrics within a given peer group. Thus, for encouraging action to meet performance goals, NICE AWFO takes note of team improvements, increasing task complexity, and the like. Goals could be set to automatically update as often as necessary, adjusting as time progresses to reflect changing circumstances, for more fair assessments.

NICE AWFO further empowers agents by providing a personalized dashboard displaying their relative performance for key metrics and goals, an overview of personal progress (with drill down analysis to get into the details), and straightforward graphs and charts to help employees understand their performance in context. They can easily identify the skills they need to improve and they are self-empowered to do so. This level of employee engagement in their own professional development is a hallmark of effective retention strategies.

## The bottom line

- Automated adaptive goal-setting saves time and resources on goal analysis and administration. This translates into an increasing ROI for performance management and related activities.
- Multidimensional and relative goal-setting has a greater impact on behavior, as highly defined goals can be more precisely linked to specific action and a defined pace for improvement.
- With the NICE AWFO agent interface and automatic performance triggers, agents have a fuller understanding of their employer's goal-setting and evaluation processes. People who do not feel they are operating in a capricious environment are far more engaged and positive employees.
- Relative metrics allow managers to optimize goals for effectiveness and attainability, as they are relative to the specific agent's current capabilities and constraints. Employees can also direct their own efforts at self-improvement more efficiently.
- Attrition is low and job satisfaction is high among engaged, happy and serially successful agents.



# Adaptive Coaching

What sets NICE Adaptive Coaching apart is a portfolio of solutions that generate and collect data from multiple sources (ACD, Voice and Desktop Analytics, Voice-of-the-Customer, etc.), leveraging relative metrics to assess the comparative performance of individual employees and teams. The NICE Adaptive Goal Management module then automatically identifies specific areas each employee or team needs to focus on to maximize performance relative to key business goals and KPIs.

Through the web-based NICE AWFO interface, employees gain direct and independent insight into their relative performance statistics, as well as immediate updates about coaching schedule options. Automated alerts regarding changes in scheduling and personalized recommendations regarding the best times for coaching, such as a reminder when customer demand is low, raise awareness of company needs, while recognizing employee preferences as well. With NICE AWFO's enhanced mobility, employees have the option to coordinate coaching and share scheduling updates remotely for better teamwork even when they are not in the office.

With this improved visibility, supervisors and staff shift from waiting for periodic one-on-one coaching with generalized "check-lists" to targeted coaching and automated feedback addressing specific areas for improvement. The adaptive combination of the interpersonal and the automated produces more immediate, purposeful and effective results.

Another optimization option that often positively impacts performance is group coaching. Adaptive Coaching identifies those employees with similar needs, so that supervisors can hold more efficient sessions in a group forum. Some employees also prefer learning in a setting with peers, as their understanding increases when they share insights, learned skills and experiences.

Alongside interactions with colleagues, many employees are highly responsive to feedback from customers and to recognition of their personal successes. The NICE AWFO solution has the adaptive insight to automatically highlight positive behaviors, such as reflected in customer feedback, by sending pop-up or email alerts directly to the agent.

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Another of the automated aspects of Adaptive Coaching is the NICE AWFO quiz feature, Trivia Tidbits. The feature quizzes employees regarding their knowledge of designated business or product information. With quick interactions, delivered in real time, the quiz adapts to ensure knowledge gaps are filled and positive behaviors reinforced by engaging employees wherever they are and whenever they need it. In addition to encouraging self-improvement, results from the trivia challenges can be a source of data for determining coaching strategies and post-coaching effectiveness.

Reporting and analytics on the impact of coaching is, in fact, an indispensable element of NICE Adaptive Coaching. With NICE AWFO, it is possible, for example, to determine how agent KPIs have been impacted by specific coaching sessions. This can provide the data necessary to formulate follow-up action plans and activities. It can also reveal where supervisors may need to improve their coaching skills.

## The bottom line

- Coaching prioritization based on deep insight into both absolute and relative agent skills, and their changing motivations, provides far more defined and attainable goals. This increases the likelihood of consistent adherence to coaching guidance, for faster and higher-impact gains.
- Adaptive and group coaching optimize how supervisors spend their time and where company resources are invested, for greater company cost-effectiveness and faster ROI.
- A combination of personal and automated coaching techniques reinforce initial one-on-one coaching and maintain employee skills.
- Automated employee feedback is frequent and rapid, empowering and motivating employees to independently improve their own performance.
- Coaching effectiveness analysis provides clear visibility into agent improvement paths, while ensuring supervisor accountability and identifying successful coaching strategies.



# Adaptive Onboarding

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A combination of gamification and comparative analytics in the NICE AWFO solution identifies the most effective onboarding practices.

Automatic adaptive goals during on-boarding are set according to highly fine-grained KPIs, measured with relative metrics that compare an agent's performance in comparison with peers of similar experience and attributes. As onboarding progresses, these goals can change in response to growing capabilities or better adoption, reflecting and encouraging incremental performance improvement during the entire process. Agents can then be recognized in some fashion for reaching specified onboarding milestones. Defined goals and their associated metrics are easily updated in NICE's Adaptive Goal Management module through a user-friendly wizard for system administrators.

But adaptive goal-setting during onboarding can only be effective if it leads to action. Adaptive Onboarding takes into account agent preferences, as well as an analysis of which

kind of action in specific circumstances and for a specific employee will best contribute to a desired result. Depending on the employee and the circumstances, the Adaptive Onboarding module may determine it to be more effective, for example, to use gamification than coaching sessions to reach a defined goal. If training is needed, however, the NICE AWFO interface empowers employees to manage their own scheduling requests and become more engaged in their onboarding experience.

Adaptive Onboarding also provides insight into the general onboarding process, by identifying correlations between onboarding methods and performance. The NICE Adaptive Coaching module tracks the actual effectiveness of specific training strategies and curriculum. With this empirical data, you can then determine what should be continued, what should be changed, and where training or content gaps exist. The result is an improved onboarding process for all new hires.

## The bottom line

- Relative metrics help define highly specific and adaptive goals, as well as better target employee coaching. As realistic milestones are clearly delineated and rewarded, new hires are more encouraged to reach higher levels of performance and onboarding success.
- Adaptive Gamification can be leveraged for positive reinforcement of desired behaviors throughout the onboarding process.
- Adaptive action during onboarding enhances employee engagement, as it takes their preferences into account (e.g., the ability to independently schedule coaching). This directly impacts the depth of integration of any new software, process or policy, ultimately reducing hiring and onboarding costs.
- With data-driven insights into the actual impact of training, it becomes possible to assess the effectiveness of incremental onboarding process refinements - down to individual elements of the curriculum and specific instructors.





# Adaptive Gamification

Gamification is an effective tool that positively encourages employee engagement, optimal performance and teamwork. NICE AWFO ramps up gamification with several features that adapt to the agent's knowledge, context and capabilities, as well as rewarding success and prompting continual growth.

The assignment of gamification points encourages employees to expand their understanding of your organization's products, services or policies. Armed with that improved understanding, they are then motivated to compete in the gamified pursuit of designated KPI goals. Adaptive Gamification analysis then compares and contrasts the different games each employee played, and measures the real-world impact they had on performance. In this way, Adaptive Gamification connects individual employee achievement with those growth pursuits you want to encourage over time by adapting gamification to reflect what has worked

in practice, as well as the preferences of the individual employee.

Trivia Tidbits is the NICE AWFO quiz feature designed to assess the current level of an employee's specific business knowledge. The quiz adapts in real time to ensure agent knowledge gaps are filled, integrating with the Adaptive Gamification scoreboard to make the quizzes more engaging.

With KPI Quests and Contests, Adaptive Gamification incentivizes the pursuit of performance goals, linking them to points, prizes and privileges. The multiplayer aspects of the gamified quests and contests promote teamwork, including through a virtual community where employees can use an online message board to share information, ask questions and discuss ideas freely. At the same time, they also encourage a bit of friendly and constructive competition, thanks to enhanced visibility into peer activities and performance.

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For the remote worker or telecommuter, whose numbers are growing all the time, the virtual community created in Adaptive Gamification and its associated forums is especially important. It is where they can connect with their colleagues more informally, and have a little fun at work, strengthening their sense of camaraderie – even though they can't always be there to hear the conversations around the office water cooler.

The real world and the virtual one of Adaptive Gamification meet again in The Marketplace, the NICE AWFO online store where gamification points can be redeemed for real-world prizes (a jacket, for example) and privileges (first choice in shift bidding, for example). Employees are thus rewarded for meeting gamified corporate goals, improving their performance and that of your organization even as they play.

## The bottom line

- Trivia Tidbits encourage self-development and improve long term retention, as well as increasing employee engagement.
- Trivia quizzes can be used to rapidly onboard agents for a new software or procedure, as well as to ensure a common knowledge base among all contact center agents. This, in turn, contributes to the consistency of service customers expect.
- The benefits of gamification – increased performance and employee engagement – can only be achieved if employees take part. NICE AWFO encourages participation by providing a personalized and adaptive gamification environment, which is particularly appealing to today's Millennial employee.
- Gamification generally, and KPI Quests and Contests specifically, is part of a competitive and fun workplace culture. A sense of community is created around the pursuit of company goals, with a window into peer practices, couched in the form of quests and contests.
- The real-world rewards in the Marketplace reinforce and incentivize greater goal-orientation in the workplace.

A woman with short blonde hair and glasses is smiling while looking at a tablet. She is wearing a yellow sleeveless top. A man is partially visible on the left, looking at the tablet. The background is a blurred office setting. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent yellow-green filter.

Visit: [www.nice/AdaptiveWFO](http://www.nice/AdaptiveWFO)