



# Analytics supports sales compliance

Discover how TalkTalk is using speech analytics to ensure sales consistency across 278 agents in three outsourced partners, both on-shore and off-shore.

## Summary

*Stretching growth targets, regulation and a spread of call centres has led TalkTalk to develop a strong focus on consistency in sales conversations. Previously, this depended on manual call sampling. Now, Nexidia speech analytics technology automatically provides a list of high-risk calls which the in-house QA team review. Every call that does not meet standard is referred to the relevant operation and reviewed with individual agents. A new scorecard gives visibility and focus to the top nine areas of compliance risk. With development starting in July 2011 and the new data used across multiple sites by January 2012, this extraordinarily rapid implementation reflects an absolute commitment by all levels of the business to ensure continued compliance and manage regulatory risk.*

## Key initiatives

### The need for compliant sales

TalkTalk is a challenger brand with stretching growth targets, operating in a sales environment with strict regulation. In 2010, the company worked closely with Ofcom to rectify issues following customer complaints and analysis by the regulator of calls between December 2010 and March 2011. Reading the Ofcom report in May 2011, TalkTalk's Head of Commercial Support, David Bird, identified the complaints that had been driven from conversations with sales agents in its contact centre estate. Furthermore, the report showed that Ofcom had used Nexidia speech analytics to review these complaints – and he was struck by the technology's power to verify compliance so quickly and accurately. "Historically, we did manual call sampling, maybe putting 2% of calls through QA" "We needed to analyse 100% of calls" "It was about mitigating risk".

### Rapid results from speech analytics

A pilot programme was commissioned with Nexidia in July 2011, by November the 12-strong QA team had been trained to use the technology and had started developing reports based on its findings and two months later the results were being used in the sales call centres. Five months on, in March 2012, the scale of calls assessed by the QA team had grown a staggering 6,250% (from 2,000 to 125,000 per month) yet were taking 37% less time to evaluate as conversations no longer needed to be listened to in full. Crucially, mis-sells had decreased 33%. This reduction has demonstrated the positive impact over a short space of time, resulting in a significant drop in customer complaints. "We're seeing fewer complaints from customers believing they've been mis-sold" "It gives rapid visibility of potential risks" "We operationalised the tool really quickly".

### Focus on areas for improvement

Nine areas were identified from the report as priority compliance risks within calls (see box) and these were tracked by a new compliance scorecard in the speech analytics solution. Queries were built by Nexidia's in-house experts, as part of a managed service, and they worked with TalkTalk to refine the

**TalkTalk**  
Group



*"We've quickly become targeted and focused. It's about the insight. We don't have to wait for the calls to be listened to. It's instant now."*

David Bird,  
Head of Commercial Support,  
TalkTalk

*"We've gone the other way round from other users. We've focused on compliance rather than quality first. But quality is what we're looking at next"*

Jane Slater,  
Quality & Compliance Manager,  
TalkTalk

*"Speech analytics sharpens the pencil. If there is a problem, it identifies that problem."*

Steve Dunn,  
Owner and Director, Clearanswer



Professional  
Planning Forum

## Results

- Sales compliance QA of high-risk calls now five times faster
- Scale of calls assessed increased from 2,000 to 125,000 per month
- 33% reduction in mis-sells
- 37% saving in time to undertake sales compliance QA
- Calls now intelligently selected according to corporate priorities



categories. Now these have been perfected, the sales compliance QA team are able to review all calls flagged by the scorecard, can verify whether they had been correctly coded, and can tag recordings at the point at which a compliance breach has occurred. Recordings are referred to the relevant operation (whether in-house or outsourced) so they can be reviewed manually by their own QA teams, and later with individual agents and their team leaders. A 360° feedback loop ensures that any anomalies identified by the contact centre estate are fed back to TalkTalk and Nexidia for adjustment. Applying speech analytics in this way has had a tangible and rapid impact. The use of compliance-breaching terminology such as “enrolment process” has been eradicated – sometimes in as little as four weeks. “Previously it was like finding a needle in a haystack” “It takes us straight to where we need to be listening” “It gives us a tool to show us how we can progress and make calls better” “Agents are now focused on selling in a compliant way”.

### Maximising sales potential

Having proven the benefits of speech analytics with compliance, TalkTalk is now using the tool for sales development. Crucially, using the technology has freed up more QA time for both TalkTalk and its outsource partners. Now, team leaders and senior managers in partner agencies such as the energetic and sales-focused Clearanswer in Hull are able to concentrate on maximising sales, because they are confident they are working within the prescribed guidelines. For example, it’s helping raise sales of mobile SIM cards to existing broadband or landline customers. Early findings have shown that some agents are not adequately skilled in pitching according to customers’ specific requirements, or in objection handling, and prompt-sheets have been prepared on both topics to overcome these problems at responsive partners such as Clearanswer. Agent-specific coaching is now also being provided to ensure individuals have the requisite sales techniques and are therefore more likely to hit their monthly bonus targets. “Before I’d be tied to the desk, listening to calls” “Managers can concentrate on helping their teams deliver more performance” “It produces synergies between TalkTalk, Nexidia and the outsourcer” “It’s helping us learn”.

### Compliance scorecard

On the call did you:-

- Confirm you were you speaking with the account holder?
- Confirm the correct contract length?
- Advise the customer they have a 14-day cooling off period?
- Was any reference made to a third party? (often an indicator that a sale may have been made based on a cooling-off period)?
- Advise the customer of next steps in the process?
- Advise of any applicable connection fee?
- Tell the customer that there would be no change to their existing plan?
- Go through the full marketing statement?
- Offer a 30-day trial, which is no longer available?

***“It’s protecting us and the customer... a safeguard to make sure I’m doing my job correctly and that everyone else on the floor is doing so as well.”***

**Chris Naylor,**  
Sales Advisor, Clearanswer

***“It’s made it a lot easier to investigate why certain products aren’t selling as well as others, and to say how certain pitches could be improved.”***

**Amber Clark,**  
Compliance Agent, Clearanswer

***“There’s no place to hide now. There’s full accountability.”***

**Jon Tunstall,**  
Quality Assurance Manager, TalkTalk

***“If an agent is under-performing, we can see all of the issues raised for that agent, rather than just any found in their standard two checks per week.”***

**Nathan Winstanley,**  
Operational Manager, Clearanswer

***“It’s allowed us to stamp out the big issues straight away... and put the smaller issues into categories of severity so we can deal with them appropriately. We weren’t able to do that before.”***

**Kayleigh Towler,**  
Senior Manager, Clearanswer

**TalkTalk Group PLC** is one of the UK’s leading providers of fixed line broadband and voice telephony services to consumers and business users, serving over 4.8million customers across the UK. Its sales operations include six outsourced call centres, including some offshore capability, and two in-house – with a headcount in excess of 1,200 agents. Nexidia is TalkTalk’s speech analytics supplier and OPAL is used for call recording.