

IBM Cognos Software Demo Transcript IBM Cognos Now!

Welcome to this online demonstration of IBM Cognos Now! In this demonstration, I'll show you some proven practices for the continuous monitoring of service level agreements within a typical support organization.

This continuous monitoring solution is based on multiple disparate sources of data, and it enables me to have real-time visibility into my customers' key SLA requirements to help optimize the efficiencies of the customer support center, to ensure continued customer support renewals and account retention, to increase customer satisfaction...

And overall, to manage successfully to my customer service centers' contractual service level agreements driving corrective action where necessary to avoid financial penalties. As the demonstration progresses, keep in mind that this is only one possible application of IBM Cognos Now! as a powerful continuous monitoring solution for operational business intelligence.

The concepts you see here can be applied to any organization that needs real-time continuous monitoring of operational metrics in a highly visual, intuitive graphical display -- for example, in the energy sector for monitoring power demand and supply across the grid.

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The IBM Cognos Now! solution provides insight at all levels of the organization. In a support center, the operational challenges encountered vary from one user to the next. The support vice president has different informational needs from the support agent; those needs likewise different from the call center management. And I'll show you the solution through the viewpoint of different functional roles to help you better understand the broad capabilities of the solution.

The demonstration will show how continuous real-time monitoring of key performance indicators provides the ability to maintain service level agreements while also providing real insight so quick decisive actions can be taken to support business objectives. These performance indicators like average call handle time, first call resolution percentage and the number of repeat dispatches are leading indicators for the health of the call center's operations on an intra-hourly and an intra-daily continuum.

Containing Support Dispatch Costs

In this scenario, I'll assume the role of the vice president of support operations, and one of my key metrics is that of dispatch costs: the costs associated with dispatching mobile technicians on support calls. I want to investigate some of the underlying drivers of my support costs across support centers.

My executive operational dashboard shows that dispatch costs are too high, above plan and eating into my service profitability. To begin understanding what may be going on here, I'll look at the calls coming into my four call centers simply by accessing my call center activity dashboard.

Here I can see the actual call volumes and I can start investigating whether there's a possible relationship between these volumes and my dispatch cost issue. First, I'll see which of my call centers is fielding the most calls, and it appears to be Atlanta.

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Next, I'd like to see which parts and even more importantly which part suppliers, are associated with my support costs. To do that, I'll look at my part failure summary dashboard which shows me that there are clear spikes for several products and for specific part suppliers in terms of my annual costs. Specifically there are spikes for products from Avilant, Chami and Finale.

And looking at my cross tab here, this information is corroborated: the total cost for each of these suppliers is high. But so, too, are the costs for my Yaha and Doom suppliers, which may not have any large spikes for individual products but rather consistent expense across multiple products. I can quickly go back down to my chart to validate this by hovering over the chart, and I see that indeed Doom and Yaha are at least moderate cost contributors across multiple products.

So now I know which call center is taking the most calls and which suppliers are likely contributing in significant ways to my elevated dispatch costs. In this next scenario, I'll check incident call details where I can see recent trends.

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IBM Cognos Now! delivers views into any data time sliced how ever you need it: from the annual levels you've just seen, to recent daily trends, right through to real-time monitoring of things like call volume. This dashboard focuses on the past five days, although the time trend period can be set to whatever's required, hourly, daily, past week, whatever baseline is used in your organization.

Here I see my five-day trend of dispatch calls and costs versus total calls. Over those five days, which products have been major cost contributors as well as which suppliers providing those parts have been costing me the most in terms of dispatch costs. Within this view I can easily see which products or suppliers are contributing this week, and as well as the details underlying the calls, the actual cited reasons customers are calling.

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As a VP of the support organization, I've quickly identified several contributing factors to my unsatisfactory dispatch cost performance. I know which call center's receiving the most calls, which suppliers and products are contributing most significantly to the cost of dispatch calls.

And while executives do not typically use reporting tools to dig into the underlying details, let's for a moment assume the role of a business analyst reporting to the support VP. Because IBM Cognos Now! is integrated with IBM Cognos 8 Business Intelligence, it's a simple matter to create supporting reports that can then be reused in any Cognos Now! dashboard.

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Let's create a new report for part failures. We want to see the details for suppliers and all products. And at this point, I'm interested in controlling overall costs, not averages, so I have total cost per call as my measure. If I section the report on supplier, I can see summaries for individual suppliers. And based on what I've already learned from my IBM Cognos Now! dashboard I can filter on the suppliers I know to be problematic, Avilant, Chami, Doom and so on.

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Now, to see the trend over time, I can add months from the time dimension and then create pivot tables with the costs on a per supplier basis. The next thing I might want to do is add some exception highlighting to isolate and highlight costs in whatever bands I wish to apply. The interface for this is very intuitive, I only have to specify my thresholds.

And then, select from a list of predefined styles to highlight the data as excellent, above average, average and so on. Interestingly, the report corroborates what we suspected about our Doom supplier: no real spikes or exceptions, just costs incurred at low to moderate levels pretty much across the board. And the result is a formatted report I can use in any of my dashboards. The last thing I need to do is give the report a meaningful title, and then save it so it can be reused.

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As you've seen, IBM Cognos Now! allows the people in charge of key success metrics like costs, revenue, quality, and so on, to engage quickly and easily in root cause analysis. The information delivered can be as you've seen here: annual targets for key metrics together with cached historical details.

Or real-time data to gain the perspective required like this continuous feed of call volumes updated in real time to show actual call volumes versus forecast, together with up to the minute displays of calls waiting and summarized views of related sales metrics.

By delivering this constantly updated view into both the short- and long-term values of service level costs, IBM Cognos Now! affords managers and executives the clear insight required to access the factors having the most immediate and serious financial impact on the customer service center and to quickly take corrective actions.

Monitoring Agent Performance

In this scenario, I'll again start from the executive or manager's perspective. In this case what I'm interested in is that our call centers each handle the call volumes anticipated within prescribed service level agreements, and that staff there have the expertise to handle calls within the boundaries laid out in the SLA.

A quick look at my dashboard shows me that there's some SLA slippage across all call centers. If I look at my call center performance dashboard, I see a lot of information

about my call centers. Before I look specifically at average call handle time, it's worth spending a moment to describe the information available here.

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First, my call center churn map shows me which of my call centers are experiencing high account churn percentages, which tells me where there may be resource or management issues. If I hover over any of my call centers, I see a list of key metrics, and in fact, any of these could be used as the metric to define the watchpoints for this map.

Besides the map are clear indicators of performance for first call resolution percentage for each call center. Note that in this way, keying the map on one KPI -- call center churn -- these gauges on another -- first call resolution percentage -- I can gain very quick information about a call center. If one in particular is red in multiple areas, it clearly merits investigation.

When I scroll down to the charts for my individual call centers, I can see that while there are problems meeting SLAs in each of my centers, currently the Georgia customer Service Center is missing on average the most SLAs, thus incurring the highest financial penalties for customer support center operations.

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From here I can quickly drill down to identify which employees seem to be having difficulty. This agent insight will provide me at a glance with critical information I need to decide upon a course of action. I can expand that insight quickly by opening the Agent Performance Dashboard. For the purposes of demonstration this dashboard is already filtered under my Atlanta, Georgia, call center.

I can quickly identify employees that need attention in terms of performance. For example, here's a case where a specific agent has very low idle time together with a fairly high level of calls handled and very low sales rates.

If I go back and look at additional information like the average handle time, I can see that every agent in this call center is having problems meeting the SLA target, not just the employee we just identified. Although that employee seems to be struggling somewhat more than the others.

Perhaps the employees with the most missed SLAs require additional training. Or perhaps they're being burdened with a high proportion of the more complex customer issues, increasing their average talk time.

Whatever the underlying reason, as a manager, I have some insight to begin the right kind of conversation with the employees in question or with their managers or their team leads.

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From here I may decide to institute additional training or some type of performance evaluation plan for the agent or agents that are currently under performing against the stated or contracted SLA for average call handle time.

This, again, can be monitored in real time, over an hour, intra-day, or within a weekly time period, to better understand agent handling times over the course of a day or within peak calling hours. If I wished, I could initiate a task to take corrective action for the individuals involved or initiate a standard process defined in my environment -- for example, remedial training or a management performance review process.

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So very quickly, IBM Cognos Now! has provided necessary insight into my call center performance both at a high level and down to the level of individual contributors and provided a path resolving issues I've uncovered.

Retaining High Value Customers

In this final scenario, I'll assume the role of a customer support specialist reporting to the vice president who must understand current support offerings in the context of customer profiles and value to ensure that high-value customers are having their needs methodologies.

In my customer activity dashboard, I can see immediately that many high-value customers are not having their calls answered. Calls and tickets are being abandoned, even for customers in my highest lifetime ranges for both business and individual customers.

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Now, that's clearly something to focus on. The last thing I need is to lose revenue from high-value clients because they're not receiving the service that my group's responsible for. So I'll expand my abandons and calls by lifetime value chart.

And then I'll slice my chart so that I see the locations for these high-value customers. And immediately I see that customers in Maryland and Florida are probably at the highest level of risk, as they have high call levels and high abandon rates. With this information, I can take action, possibly implementing an additional call queue or a platinum level of service offering for customers in these areas.

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But first, I need to know which specific customers are involved so the offer can be made, as well as which of my customer service call centers is implicated here. So again, I change my categories, this time to display customer business names which shows me the list of customers for whom a new level of service might be attractive.

And then, to call center city where it's clear that Atlanta has by far the highest abandon rates. This ties back to what we saw in the preceding section: high numbers of service level agreement failures in the Atlanta call center.

Based on this up to the minute information, I may initiate a pilot project in my Atlanta center to develop a platinum queue that handles high-value customers inquiries within a single business day in order to avoid further customer dissatisfaction and risk possible declines in revenue as these high-value customers refuse to review their service agreements. That concludes the final section of our demonstration for IBM Cognos Now! for SLA monitoring.

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In the past few minutes, you've seen how IBM Cognos Now! can provide continuous monitoring of operational metrics both over time and in real time for multiple data sources. The clear results are increased business efficiency throughout the customer service function as executives, managers and front line workers use up to the moment information to support their decisions that often must be made quickly to initiate time-sensitive corrective actions.

Thanks for taking the time to learn more about IBM Cognos Now! If you're interested in what you've seen here, please don't hesitate to contact us.
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