Strategic Lean Project Report

For Reporting Period: July 2016 through December 2016

I.   General Information:
Lead agency name: Department of Labor and Industries
Partner agencies: None

Improvement project title: L&I Employer Services phone enhancements

Date improvement project was initiated: 10/12/2015

Project type: New Project

Project is directly connected to:	**If applicable, specify the alignment:**
☐ Results Washington performance measure	
☒ Agency Strategic Plan	Goal 3: Make it Easy to Do Business with L&I Goal 5: Ensure L&I is an Employer of Choice
☐ Other	

Report reviewed and approved by: Randi Warick, Deputy Director

II. Project Summary:

The Department of Labor & Industries improved the phone system in its Employer Services Program to help get customers to the right resource the first time. As a result, callers spend less time on hold (on average, in-coming calls are answered within eight seconds); customers are more likely to get their questions answered on their first call; and account managers reduced the amount of time they spend on the phone each day from 47% to 11% – giving them more time for customers with complex issues and to complete their underwriting work.

III. Project Details:

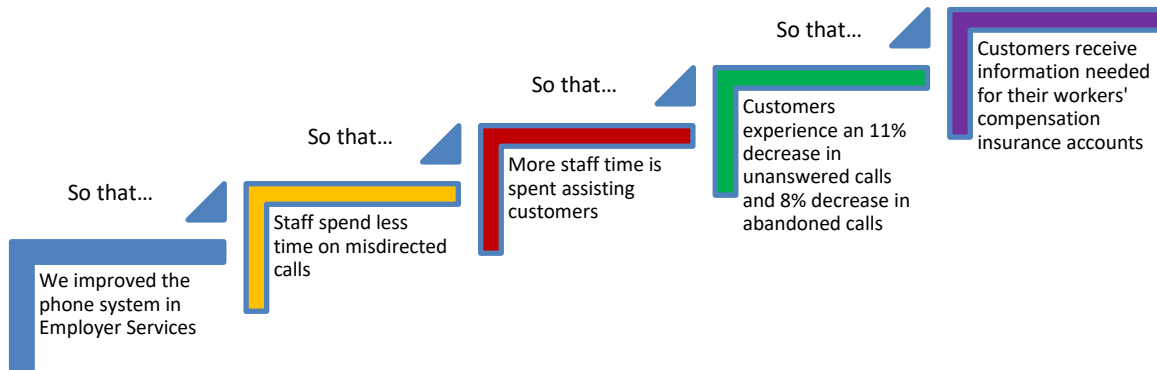|	
Identify the problem:	Historically, in-coming calls to L&I's Employer Assistance Program were routed to the next available team member, without any prior screening for complexity. If the employee answering the call didn't have the necessary expertise, the customer would have to wait on hold until a high-level account manager was available (or call back later or wait for L&I to return his or her call). Employer Services personnel spent a lot of time answering calls, ascertaining the employers' questions, then re-routing the call to the right expert – then the employers would have to explain their request/s all over again. It wasted time for the Employer Services staff as well as the employers themselves.
Problem statement:	Account managers are on the phones up to 47% of the day, although many of the calls do not require the expertise of an account manager. We needed to free up time for account managers to assist customers with complex questions and to complete their underwriting work.

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Improvement description: The project team mapped the current-state process and discovered several opportunities for improvement:

- Create a menu of options on the "general line" to route callers to the right resource (e.g., office assistants, account processors, account managers, etc.) – often for immediate assistance.
- Implement messaging that callers hear when on hold, using the top frequently asked questions.
- Update systems, websites and documentation that publish Employer Service's phone numbers.
- Develop standard work for phones, with performance expectations and metrics.
- Implement a change-management and communication plan.

Customer involvement: The project team included front-line staff who are internal customers of the process, representing all teams to ensure their pain points were recognized and they were actively involved in the solutions.

IV. Effect on Washingtonians:

So that… We improved the phone system in Employer Services

So that… Staff spend less time on misdirected calls

So that… More staff time is spent assisting customers

So that… Customers experience an 11% decrease in unanswered calls and 8% decrease in abandoned calls

So that… Customers receive information needed for their workers' compensation insurance accounts

Project Results:

Improved process as measured by: *(Click those that apply)*	Specific results achieved: *(Complete the narrative boxes below)*	Total Impact: *(Actuals; Current Reporting Period)*	Results status:
☒ **Customer Satisfaction**	Decreased calls from customers that rolled out with no answer from 30% to 19%. Decreased abandoned calls from customers from 10% to 2%.	11% Decrease 8% Decreases	Final
☒ **Employee Engagement**	This project was created from 10 suggestions received from front-line staff. The project team included front-line staff representing all teams to ensure their pain points were recognized and they were actively involved in the solutions.	Employee morale and satisfaction have improved.	Final

Updated: December 2016
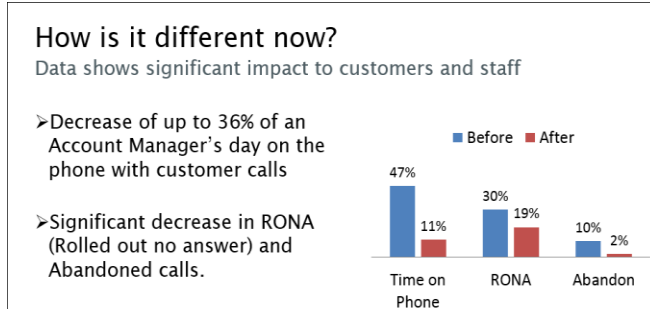
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V. Contact information:

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VI. Optional Visuals:

How is it different now?
Data shows significant impact to customers and staff

➢ Decrease of up to 36% of an Account Manager's day on the phone with customer calls

➢ Significant decrease in RONA (Rolled out no answer) and Abandoned calls.

Employer Services Phone Enhancements Project Team