



## International Customer Representative Certification Program Methodology

Innovative Learning That Teaches Call Center Representatives  
To Recognize and Model Success

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Traditional e-learning and classroom training fall short in developing the behaviors and soft skills vitally important to success as a call center representative. The [CIAC International Customer Representative Certification Program](#) is designed to address this issue. Delivered on the Qcoach.com hosted platform, this web-based training and certification program's innovative, built-in learning tools and content replicate expert-level, one-on-one coaching that teaches representatives to recognize, understand and model the behaviors and traits that produce excellent service. Learning is experienced in an engaging, highly interactive, self-paced environment that facilitates growth and empowerment by guiding representatives on a path of discovery that leads to meaningful and sustainable learning.

The ability to recognize and understand service excellence is paramount because it enables representatives to make subconscious judgments on their performance and identify where improvement is needed in order to achieve success. Feedback given to representatives that do not understand or recognize the performance goal – i.e., what it is they are to attain – falls on deaf ears.

The [CIAC International Customer Representative Program](#) is the first to apply this learning approach to the call center environment. The effectiveness of this learning methodology, however, is well documented in published research, most notably in a landmark study by Professors Black and William from London University in the United Kingdom. This study concluded that *“an average performing learner when trained to effectively recognize the learning target and self-assess will improve their performance equal to the top third.”* This astounding conclusion led to what is now known as “Assessment For Learning” being adopted by schools and universities in most developed countries, including the US, UK, and Australia.

The [CIAC International Customer Representative Certification Program](#) is based on the premise that frequent, effective, one-on-one coaching is the key to developing great representatives. It responds to a major challenge facing the majority of call centers – a lack of coaching expertise and of time to commit to coaching representatives. Developed by a team of call center experts and authored and delivered on the Qcoach.com hosted platform, this web-based training and certification program has unique, embedded learning tools and content based on ‘expert coaching principles’ that teach representatives to understand their performance goals, assess what they need to do to achieve them, and how to adjust their performance to achieve success. It employs scenario-based learning using customer calls to establish the situational context that enables effective learning of required behaviors, knowledge and skills. This approach promotes internalized learning and awareness by involving representatives in real-world critical situations where they consider a wide range of factors, make decisions, and reflect on the outcomes and what they have learned.

The result is engaging life-like learning that requires representatives to draw-on and appropriately apply their knowledge and skills, while dealing with the contingency factors that normally arise in customer interactions. For example, rapport-building with a twenty-year old person requires a different approach than with an eighty-year old person. These one-of-a-kind capabilities make the [CIAC International Customer Representative Certification Program](#) far superior to traditional e-learning and classroom training.

How often have you observed a supervisor evaluate a call and give feedback to a representative who is dependent on this information to know how well he/she is doing? Think about how much more effective if the representative was equipped with the knowledge and skills to know during and after the call whether he/she is meeting performance objectives. This is the power of self-assessment.

### **Principles of Expert Coaching**

The coaching principles and processes underlying the [CIAC International Customer Representative Certification Program](#) include:

- Developing customer representative behaviors, knowledge, and skills that result in performance outcomes of value to the call center
- Use of customer calls (user organization's or generic) to establish learning scenarios
- Effective questioning linked to the call that guides representatives on a path of discovery of the answer and increases internalization of learning. For example: "Where in this section of the call did you hear the customer give a buying signal?" "In what way did the representative apply appropriate rapport building skills with this customer, recognizing their situation?" "How might you respond to this customer at this stage of the call?"
- Supplementation of questions with additional information (learning nuggets) that maximizes value and learning enjoyment
- Sharing of expert knowledge presented with the answer, to enable "compare and contrast" of the representative's answer against the learning objective
- Repeated feedback loop from the coach to the representative in the form of open ended questions and requests for demonstration of new knowledge and skills to assist depth of learning
- Dialogue between the coach and representative that is thoughtful, reflective and focused to evoke and explore understanding, and conducted so that representatives have an opportunity to think and express their ideas
- Empowering representatives to self-manage their performance, i.e., to self-assess how well they are performing. This requires that representatives have a clear picture of the performance goal – i.e., can recognize and understands the standards of excellence

## Built-In Learning and Assessments

The [CIAC International Customer Representative Certification Program](#) develops and validates the behaviors, knowledge and skills most important to success as a call center representative using an interactive learning and assessment workflow:

- Learning events are linked to customer calls (audio or video) that engage representatives in a scenario mirroring real-world customer interactions, with replicated side-by-side coaching
- Engaging, expert-level content accompanied by “bite-sized” learning nuggets
- Coaching feedback that enables representatives to compare their answers in order to reinforce learning
- Reflection following coaching feedback; i.e., representatives are requested to write about what they have learned, how this might affect their response in the future, any follow-up actions, etc.
- Representatives proceed through a logical flow of learning and practice assessments to verify comprehension and learning
- A certification assessment is administered at the conclusion of the course to validate that representatives have mastered required knowledge, skills, and behaviors (standards of excellence), and to attain the ‘*CIAC-Certified Customer Representative*’ designation
- Team leaders/supervisors relate to representatives as they progress through training providing support and encouragement and can access representatives’ responses and reflections for review
- Management can also track representatives progress
- Call centers can add custom content to the [CIAC International Customer Representative Certification Program](#), more specifically, the Qcoach.com platform allows for supplementary training content (i.e., company-specific training for new hires) to be added, as well as the center’s own calls, screen recordings and video clips (This functionality will be available in the general release version of the program.)