

THE PEOPLE FACTOR



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UNDERSTANDING THE FUTURE NATURE OF WORK IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The megatrends shaping future customer service have been clear for some time. Automation and self-service, whether online or via the phone, are providing the means to drive efficiencies while meeting customer desires for speed, availability and independence. In many businesses, the lion's share of transactions now take place with minimal involvement from staff.

In such a landscape, it's generally agreed that the role of people will increasingly become one of problem-solving: dealing with more complex enquiries and transactions, responding to complaints, resolving issues with payments or delivery of mixed messages across channels.

But while that overall pattern is generally accepted, the implications of it for organisations and customer service staff have not been as widely explored. This problem-solving role fundamentally changes the nature of work – particularly in the customer contact centre. It requires staff to demonstrate different skills and qualities: imagination, creativity and conscience. It also requires organisations to empower their people in different ways, giving them the technological tools to support their problem-solving but also rethinking the way they recruit, manage, motivate and reward customer service staff.

This paper examines the implications of this change in customer service work. It starts by considering what the advisor of the future will be expected to do, and then explores how organisations will need to change to support them in terms of technology, working culture, recruitment and

training – drawing on examples of evolving approaches to customer service and people management.

The paper does not make the case for an overnight transformation; instead, it presents the issues that organisations will need to address over the next decade in line with their business priorities. The nature of work is inexorably changing; the question for organisations is how fast they wish to change the way they work and even how they do it: outsourcing some or all of the service function is an increasingly viable option.

Ultimately the timing will be dictated by changes in the way customers interact, and so the question really is: do you want to lead, innovate and disrupt amongst your competitors? Or will you aim to respond in an agile way to opportunities as they emerge? Or are you content to settle for being behind the curve, risk-averse, reflective and cautious in how you evolve?

There is no one right answer – each carries its pros and cons. But the crucial first step is to have a conscious and clear strategy, and Ember is now best placed to help you with this.

INTRODUCTION

The call centre has been a lynchpin of customer service since the 1970s¹ but over the last two decades its importance has soared. By 2003, following the rise of online businesses, there were an estimated 500,000 contact centre advisors in the UK, plus many more in off-shore contact centres serving UK businesses. By the end of 2015, this number had risen to more than three quarters of a million.²

Add in the management and support layers, and in total contact centre operations employ more people in the UK than the automotive industry.³

PERCEPTIONS V REALITY: WORKING IN A CONTACT CENTRE TODAY

Clearly in an industry of such size, the labour force is hugely diverse with some recent studies claiming that, due to current labour market conditions, 1 in 3 contact centre advisors are degree-educated.⁴

But in terms of the skills required, the UK's Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2010) describes 'call centre agent' as a low skill occupation. Salaries are located towards the lower end of the spectrum, and a common perception is that contact centre work is a means to an end rather than a career option: perhaps a stop-gap job or a way into an organisation. That's borne out by the fact that, according to ContactBabel, approximately 1 in 7 contact centre advisors are on part-time or temporary contracts.

Amongst permanent staff, turnover is high and retention a major challenge. Many outside the industry – as well as some working in it – view labour conditions as unpleasant,

¹ See <https://www.callcentrehelper.com/the-history-of-the-call-centre-15085.htm>

² See <http://www.contactbabel.com/pdfs/dec2016/UK-SOITP-2017-Marketing-v5.pdf>

³ The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders reported that in 2016, 814,000 people were employed in the UK automotive industry. See www.smmmt.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/SMMT-Motor-Industry-Facts-2016_v2-1.pdf

⁴ See <http://graduatefog.co.uk/2010/1060/call-centre-workers-degree/>



characterised by long hours dealing with surly colleagues and surlier customers under the constant scrutiny of demanding performance targets. It's a perception that in turn shrinks the talent pool available to contact centres.

Indeed, many organisations try to sidestep the issue by insisting they don't have contact centres; instead they have a helpdesk, support

operations, sales teams, complaints teams, front office desks, back office teams, reservations centres and the like as their more attractive alternatives. But the fundamentals remain the same: a volume of demand, a resource pool and technology to manage the demand, standardised processes wherever possible and sub-optimal outputs based on sub-optimal management.

Of course, the industry is alive to this perception and there are plenty of contact centres which disprove it: places where staff satisfaction is high, where advisors build careers and take on additional responsibilities. It's no coincidence that these are often the contact centres where customer satisfaction scores, other customer measures and financial results overall are higher too.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF CUSTOMER CONTACT

But from the happiest advisors to the most harassed, the contact centre environment is changing. The rise of different communication channels has not only necessitated advisors developing skills to manage more types of interaction – written as well as verbal, social as well as formal – but is also changing the nature of those interactions.

An ever-growing proportion of transactions are conducted using automation, digital channels and customer self-service. Furthermore, these are not only the simple processes – making a payment, placing an order, etc. – but also some broader aspects of customer assistance. Online guides have become the first port of call for solving IT problems; tools like natural language interactive assistance and web chat can be performed by computerised assistants, using a database of standard answers and phrases. In fact, some businesses have found that they actually need to slow the automated response in web chat down to make customers believe it's a human response, rather than a robot, to preserve credibility of the answer.

For businesses, the benefits of this shift are readily apparent. It reduces the cost of each interaction and increases the volume of transactions that can be managed, simultaneously, around the clock. There are also, arguably, gains in terms of the consistency of the customer experience.

It's no surprise therefore that most businesses and analysts expect the shift to automation in customer

service to increase over the next few years. But where does this leave the advisors? What role will they play?

A NEW ROLE FOR ADVISORS

By common consensus, advisors will increasingly be tasked with the more complex interactions: problem-solving, complaint handling and purchases involving a series of choices.

In some businesses, this will be seen as the 'residual share' – the left-overs that they simply can't code. In others, it will include the high value interactions which either directly require or just benefit from human involvement – and may indeed be dependent on the uniquely human traits of creative thought and careful application of conscience to a sensitive issue.

This was borne out in a recent survey of contact centre professionals, which found 42% of contact centres are now focused on more complex interactions (Fig.1).

The deciding factor, in Ember's view, will often be whether the interaction requires the human qualities of imagination, creativity and conscience. While automation has already achieved vast amounts, these qualities have not yet been successfully programmed and there are no signs of that changing.

But of course, such qualities are not only required in contact centres: they are highly prized and valued in every profession. In fact, Professor Arturo Bris from IMD Business School in Switzerland observed that "Knowledge was the key asset of the 20th Century; imagination is the key asset of the 21st."⁵

For the customer service and contact centre sector, perceived by many as a low-skill and low-value place to work, attracting and retaining people with these qualities will clearly be a challenge. Add in the other skills requirements of the service advisor, and the challenge becomes clearer still.

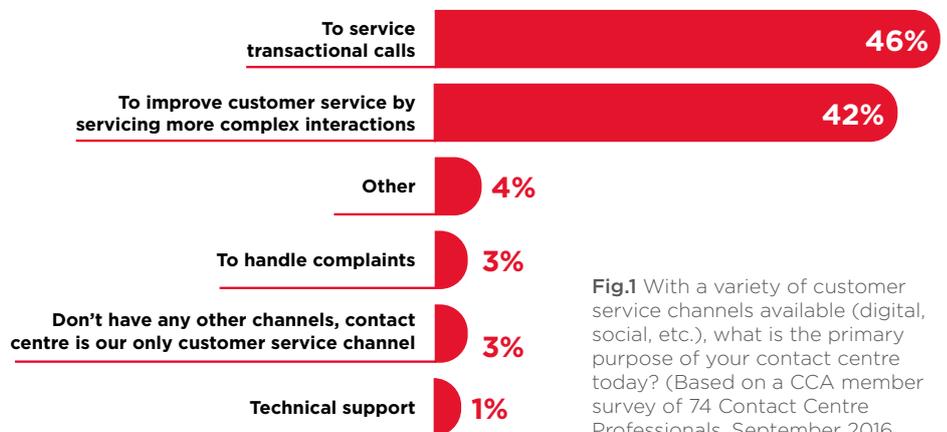


Fig.1 With a variety of customer service channels available (digital, social, etc.), what is the primary purpose of your contact centre today? (Based on a CCA member survey of 74 Contact Centre Professionals, September 2016)



⁵ Cited in www.standard.co.uk/business/anthony-hilton-how-to-survive-work-in-the-21st-century-a3372291.html

A recent Contact Centre Association (CCA) member survey, sponsored by Kura®, found that 74% of contact centre professionals believe that contact centre advisors will need to be skilled to handle multi-channel interactions. 60% agreed that advisors will need to be trained to service more complex interactions and 52% believe advisors will need to have empathy and emotional intelligence for different demographics in society.

INTRODUCING THE ADVISOR OF THE FUTURE

SAME CORE SKILLS, DIFFERENT BALANCE

The SOC classification of contact centre work may be “low-skill” but those inside the industry know otherwise. A good contact centre advisor today will offer excellent communication skills, be adept at information comprehension and be able to multi-task. Their attention to detail will be impressive and they need to be comfortable using multiple different IT systems and communication channels. These are the advisors that contact centres want to retain, often investing in their own people who display some of the required skills.

As the pattern of interactions changes, these same skills will remain vital. However, the relative importance of each will evolve.

Take the broad area of tech skills – today characterised by the ability to navigate and switch between multiple systems, sometimes within an interaction, to help answer a customer query or complete a task. It is our view that as more functions become automated and unified agent desktops become the norm, the number of systems an advisor will have to use will reduce. However, new service channels are emerging fast; ContactBabel has identified five key new channels in the last decade alone. The key tech skills will therefore be adaptability and a willingness to embrace new channels.

For example, advisors may have to become confident using Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems that assist them in locating and formulating responses to customer queries faster; more generally, they will be using the consolidated information available about the customer and their issue to make decisions and solve problems with creativity, imagination and conscience.

The core communication skills – being able to express themselves clearly and politely – will also remain fundamental, but advisors will increasingly need social intelligence, to put themselves in the shoes of the customer and adapt their way of communicating. Empathy with individuals from different age groups and socio-economic backgrounds will be essential not only in proposing and determining the best solution but also explaining it, and securing appropriate actions or commitment from the customer.

Take a simple example like delivery costs and knowing when to propose expedited, higher cost delivery instead of a free but slower service: the factors involved go beyond wealth or age, often depending on what’s being delivered and why it’s required. Advisors that can elicit that information can provide a better customised response – appropriate not only to the individual, but to the interaction; check the purchase history and find a loyal customer and there could be an opportunity to waive the delivery fee to turn that customer into an advocate – especially if known to be active on social platforms, for example.

Underlying this, of course, and beyond the systemic knowledge of the customer, is the ability to listen to the customer, paying attention not only to what they are saying but also their emotions: the hint of frustration, the moment when they appear to have switched off or lost interest, the excitement at the prospect of a new gadget or forthcoming holiday. Get this right, and brands can generate genuine connections with their customers – the kind that build loyalty and drive commercial performance.

FROM FOLLOWERS TO LEADERS: CHANGING BEHAVIOURS

With fewer administrative or basic transactions to perform, advisors will be liberated from some of the older, quantitative metrics – like average

handle time and call volumes – and instead can focus on first contact resolution, ease of engagement or solution and overall customer satisfaction. In a world in which consumers are four times more likely to be less loyal after a poor customer service experience⁶, the advisor’s performance can remedy problems with other channels, act as a balm after a failed transaction or simply provide the nous to navigate complex processes and connect siloed parts of the business.

But to do that, they will need not only access to information but also the autonomy to use it to make decisions. Instead of simply following processes, advisors will be required to make judgements about what is mutually best for the customer and the business. They may have to express an opinion or give advice, know when to apologise and when to reassure – becoming the conscience of the business. More than brand ambassadors, they are the brand itself: its primary expression in the eyes and ears of the customer, out-weighting words in a brochure or Facebook memes.

They need therefore to understand the brand and what it stands for; the business priorities and strategy and its target customers. They need to know what drives profit and where things don’t run as smoothly as they should. Only with that kind of insight can they solve customer problems in the right way; no matter how friendly or helpful the advisor, if the promises they make aren’t fulfilled, the customer remains dissatisfied.

That means not only do organisations need to seek advisors that are keen to engage, but that they need to take steps to engage them – just as they do with other parts of the business. For those clients who outsource their customer management this need for advisor ‘immersion in the brand’ and a high level of autonomy and trust is even more vital, if not a little daunting for clients to initiate.



⁶ See www.cebglobal.com/content/dam/cebglobal/us/EN/best-practices-decision-support/sales-service/pdfs/four-customer-loyalty-myths-busted-ebook.pdf

MORE COMPLEX WORK = MORE INTERESTING WORK

As outlined above, the advisor's role will increasingly be around solving problems. It will require higher levels of skills, creativity and imagination, and become measured on outcomes – whether the customer was happy, completed a purchase, etc. – rather than how quickly the call was completed.

Such work will mean the role of a contact centre advisor becomes more interesting, varied and ultimately rewarding than it has traditionally

been. The question is how quickly that becomes the common perception of the job.

We anticipate the change will become apparent quite swiftly. Already, customer service work is professionalising, with the likes of the CCA offering diplomas and qualifications at different levels of experience and specialisation. A new generation of outsourced providers is emerging offering greater opportunities for careers in customer service, backed by better rewards. Over time, the role of the advisor will become more exclusive and

competition for contact centre roles will increase.

Some have suggested this will in part be a consequence of a shrinking contact centre workforce: with increased automation and self-service, the number of advisors required will drop. But while the share of interactions left to humans will almost certainly decrease, the complexity will increase: each such interaction will take longer to complete. Rather than cutting the number of advisors, if an organisation wishes to maintain swift response rates, it may actually have to increase them.

TODAY'S WORKFORCE, TOMORROW'S WORK

But let us not slip into a reverie of a queue of highly skilled, motivated and hard-working graduates all seeking a career in customer service. The reality for most organisations over the next few years will be one that seeks to address a change in the nature of work with their existing contact centre workforce – high levels of churn included.

That leads to the pivotal question of what organisations can do to adapt the way they support and manage their contact centre operations to capitalise on new technology and channels, increase engagement and motivation and build a workforce ready for tomorrow's work.

CREATING A CULTURE OF SHARED INDEPENDENCE

As stated above, one of the features of the change in contact centre work will be that advisors are encouraged to take responsibility and make decisions on behalf of the business. They will be given autonomy – something that is the very opposite of how many contact centres currently work.

Today's advisors typically follow scripts and processes; if not actively discouraged from finding creative solutions, they are rarely incentivised to do so. Where they reach the limits of their authority, they pass

the customer on to a more senior colleague.

In a workplace full of short-term workers, this is perhaps understandable. Businesses neither want to make the investment in training new recruits, who may only stay a few weeks, nor to take the risk of letting unqualified advisors make financial decisions.

But there are some great examples from other sectors of where giving even entry-level staff a degree of autonomy can transform their engagement with the company – and shape the company culture.

Take Pret-a-Manger, for instance, and its policy of allowing shop staff to give free coffees to customers. The message to staff is simple: it's entirely at your discretion. It's a policy that makes the chosen customer feel good and undoubtedly drives repeat business, but equally importantly makes the staff feel good. They have the autonomy to lift someone's day. And while the policy is now well-known, there are very few reports of it being abused by staff: they act with conscience to a company that has trusted them with this freedom.

But this is not the only interesting aspect of Pret's approach to shop staff. On joining, each is given the phone number of the chief executive and assured they can call him up with ideas or concerns. Again, it helps create a sense of value amongst staff;

whether they use it or not, whether they ever see the chief executive or not, they have that direct connection – and a loyalty to a company that appears to trust them.

Outsourced contact centre provider Kura has a similar facility: **Ask Brian**. Delivered through its intranet, it gives advisors a direct web chat link to chief executive Brian Bannatyne. Answers may come immediately; they may take a few hours. However, it underlines to Kura's team that they are valued and trusted; crucially, suggestions are followed through and changes made where appropriate.



Ask Brian

Welcome to Ask Brian, where I'll answer all of your business related questions.



[Click here to ask your question](#)

Hi Brian, as this month we're focusing on the health and wellbeing of the Kura staff, I wondered if there would be an opportunity to exercise more during the day?

Vicky Smith Reveal Answer

Hi Vicky, great suggestions.

What type of activities did you have in mind? Why don't you put a list of activities together and share them with your line manager, I'd be happy to review the shortlist with the team and see if there's an opportunity for us to incorporate this during our working day.

Brian Bannatyne



Contrast the approach of Kura (and Pret) with that of many in-house contact centres, situated so far away from the company headquarters that directors never visit, constantly monitored against demanding targets, and it's clear there's a cultural gap.

Organisational culture directly influences not only employee performance but also loyalty – both in terms of how long someone stays, but also how they speak of the organisation and represent it. It's part of the package: no matter how well remunerated a role, a negative workplace environment where staff feel powerless reduces the perceived value of the job. We've all spoken to an advisor who doesn't seem to care for the company's reputation, for the customer's needs or even the opportunity to make money for the business. It may not always be a result of the workplace environment, but where staff feel valued, and feel a sense of ownership, they will naturally have more of a stake in representing that organisation well.



Employees cannot be loyal to an organisation that isn't loyal to them. The know-how and expertise that must accumulate in an organisation in order to tackle tough problems in the moment cannot be pulled together quickly. It builds up slowly, when people bring their best ideas to work and trust the organisation enough to share what they know.



Liz Ryan, CEO/Founder of human workplace and author of Reinvention Roadmap

RETHINKING TRAINING

One in five respondents to the CCA survey stated that customer service advisors don't receive the correct level of training to manage complex interactions. Yet the same survey showed that 56% of workplaces train their advisors at least once a quarter, with 19% receiving training at least once a month. **(Fig.2)**

The obvious conclusion is that the training given is not meeting the needs of advisors.

Training for customer service work typically falls into one of three categories (other than onboarding and induction activities): technical training, to help improve use of the key systems, training for compliance purposes and skills training.

The latter might provide additional tips, ideas and value for dealing with common problems or conflict.

All of these are valid, but alone they are not enough in the coming era. To empower advisors to make decisions and solve problems, and to embody the brand, they need a wider understanding of the business. If they are to advise effectively on the differences between the company's similar products, they need to understand them.

Brewer Molson Coors recognises this. Its telephone sales staff are routinely invited to test new products and given a 'beer allowance' as part of their reward package. That means when they're talking to customers, they can genuinely enthuse about the new brews and provide valuable advice to buyers – typically retailers, pub chains and landlords.

Beer tasting sessions as training? It's the right approach for that company – and helps ensure its sales staff are not only ready but also motivated. Advisor retention levels, incidentally, are high.

Beyond this kind of corporate knowledge, which would benefit the whole team (and for that matter outsourcer contact centres which are tasked with representing the business and its brand), it seems likely that training will need to become increasingly dynamic and targeted. New technologies and channels will emerge at speed and organisations will need to work out how best they can capitalise on these. Instead of blanket programmes, it may mean training small groups of advisors. HR and development teams will have to be more connected to the strategic aspect of the businesses and follow industry trends more closely.

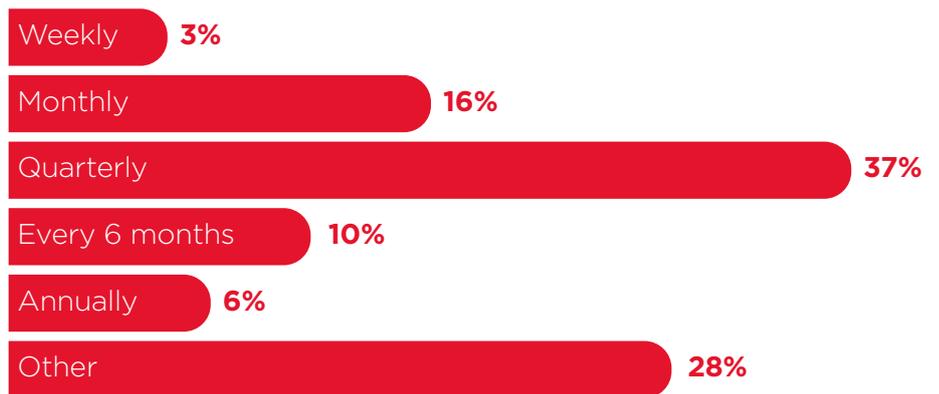


Fig.2 How often are agents given 'refresher' training?



HARNESSING NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND CHANNELS

One of the biggest changes in customer service is the rise of video communication. Leaving aside the basic fact that video has meant some contact centres have literally had to smarten up their appearance – normally a positive change in terms of the working environment – video is also opening up new opportunities to enrich the customer experience, drive efficiencies and increase sales.

A great example of the latter is Dawsons Music, which sells musical instruments and related equipment. Though famous for its huge range, it only has ten stores in the UK – four in the North West and two in Yorkshire – meaning many prospective customers would have to travel a long way to test out the guitars, keyboards and other instruments. To reach out to a wider audience, Dawsons has invested in virtual reality technology that enables shop staff to demonstrate equipment to remote customers in a real-time, two-way interaction.



Dawsons Music virtual reality in action

Such an approach blends the power of the technology with the skills and knowledge of the in-store staff – but it could equally be applied in a contact centre environment. In fact, building society Nationwide has done exactly that for its mortgage business.

Mortgages are one of the highest value products banks and building societies offer. It’s not just the sums of money involved; a customer taking out a mortgage is in general embarking on a long-term relationship with the provider. So, in most banks and building societies, there’s a mortgage advisor associated with each high-street branch. These individuals

must be qualified. Appointments must be booked in advance, with some mortgage advisors working in different branches each day of the week, placing a natural limit to how many mortgages can be agreed and potentially inconveniencing customers.

At Nationwide, however, the approach is more flexible. Customers still have to make an appointment in the branch, but the mortgage advisor is not there in person: instead, he or she is on a video screen. These are high quality video links to a central contact centre. In the branch, the customer is in a dedicated, private room. Alongside the video screen, there’s a second display for documents that the advisor can talk through. In the contact centre, the advisor has a direct link to branch staff to request drinks for the customer, printed material and other support.

The ‘artificial’ nature of the conversation quickly dissipates and customers have expressed high levels of satisfaction with the experience. For Nationwide, it has meant they can give customers more choice of time slots and be more flexible. But it also reduces the total cost: instead of advisors in each branch, they can use a centralised, well-resourced and well-trained team.

The solution is perhaps hardest for staff to come to terms with. Typical mortgage advisors may be reluctant to move from their in-branch role to being based in a contact centre. Instead, then, it becomes a development opportunity for contact centre advisors; they will need to attain the right qualifications, but can expect higher levels of pay in return – plus a job that involves a greater engagement with a smaller number of customers.

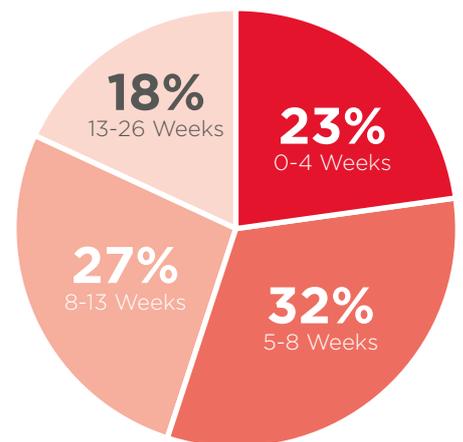
What both Dawsons Music and Nationwide are demonstrating in different ways is how technology can re-shape customer service; but what both also prove is the pivotal role of skilled, well-trained, highly motivated staff to harness that technology. The work itself may be changing, but the people factor is what decides whether the technology will succeed.

OVERCOMING THE RECRUITMENT CHALLENGE

As discussed at the start of this paper, the reputation of contact centre work does little to attract talent: long hours, low pay and aggressive performance monitoring. When competing for people who can bring creativity, imagination and conscience to their work, this reputation will need to be overturned. While there are contact centres that pay well and invest in their people, there are still plenty who take the inherently counter-productive approach of opting for ‘cheap’ labour and then expecting staff to meet demanding targets.

Even with a comprehensive training programme, this approach rarely delivers. Staff with limited skills are pressurised beyond their comfort zone, leaving them demoralised; the working atmosphere becomes toxic and the small proportion of recruits that do make the grade are themselves discouraged from staying. Churn is high, and the whole unprofitable cycle repeats itself.

The CCA survey found that in 45% of businesses, an advisor has to work for at least two months before they become a productive member of the team – and in 18% of organisations it takes 3-6 months.



So what's the alternative? Given that few contact centres will suddenly have the luxury of offering vastly increased wages, the solution must lie in addressing the other factors, such as turning a damaging performance culture into an empowering one and re-framing the issue of attrition not as a staff problem, but a leadership one.

An interesting case here is the retailer Timpson, which openly promotes itself as a business that recruits ex-offenders.⁷ More tellingly, it recruits "exclusively on personality"; in reality, this is a comprehensive selection process that seeks to find people who will engage well with customers and will be able to take responsibility for their work and the company reputation:



We trust our colleagues to run our business as they see fit.



But while recruitment itself is based on these broader service skills, retention is then dependent on acquiring technical skills. Employees start knowing that if they cannot demonstrate the essential skills they were hired for in less than a month they will not be offered a permanent position. Though it sounds brutal, it is entirely transparent. There's no expectation that staff will do the job from day one, but learning is incentivised.

Instead of the common contact centre model of staff being consistently told they're failing, Timpson invites its recruits to take responsibility for their development.

There are also ways of using technology to support staff development within the contact centre, in a positive fashion. Cogito has developed software that provides advisors with instant on-screen feedback and coaching, to help them during calls. It describes its software as offering real-time emotional

intelligence: things like suggesting advisors might wish to speed up or slow down, introduce pauses, ask more questions or be a bit less wordy. It nudges them in the right direction and they can instantly hear the impact on the customer and the conversation. Instead of a detailed post-mortem analysis from a frustrated manager, the call becomes a success – and a learning opportunity.

HSPALTA (hire smart people and leave them alone) is a business maxim that enforces the idea of first making sure the right individuals are offered the positions and then providing them with the tools and environment to be productive. Instead of filling vacancies as quickly as possible without considering the repercussions, contact centres can improve their effectiveness and improve the working environment by finding people with the essential skills and empowering them differently. Senior leadership must recognise that high attrition is not an inevitable consequence of contact centre work; there are means to reduce it, and businesses need to take a commercial approach (ie one that recognises that costs and consequences of high attrition rates) to address it.

It's an approach outsourcers such as Kura have embraced. Their business depends not only on appointing high-potential people, but also on retaining them; they invest extensively in developing their staff so the business can provide the differentiated service it promises, so retention is key to ROI. In recognition of that, Kura puts its employee value proposition at the heart of its sales strategy – directly linking the investment in people through training and development with the impact on clients' customers. Of course, such an approach in itself makes staff feel they matter – a major asset to Kura in its recruitment but also crucially its retention of talented and committed agents.

⁷ See www.timpson.co.uk/about/careers-at-timpson

IT'S NOT JUST THE CONTACT CENTRE THAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

This paper is primarily concerned with the contact centre environment and the way changes in the nature of work will affect it. But as is so often the case, the contact centre is only part of the story. If the business as a whole does not value customer service, fails to join up the different channels and cannot fulfil its promises, investment in the contact centre will be wasted. Even the most talented, motivated and best supported advisor workforce cannot overcome shoddy products and services or constant delays in delivery.

The contact centre here can be the canary in the mine; it hears the voice of the customer, the first sounds of discontent and the emerging problems. Businesses need to become better at listening to this feedback – and acting on it. The contact centre is not just there to support the business: it's an integral part of the business. While the nature of its work may change, that crucial recognition won't.

CHECKLIST – SEVEN STEPS TO ADAPT TO THE CHANGING NATURE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE WORK

1. Recognise the nature of contact centre work is changing.
2. Identify the kinds of interactions your contact centre people will be focused on – the interactions that will deliver most value for you and your customers.
3. Consider what skills your advisors will then require, and how to develop them.
4. Explore where technology can support advisors and improve interactions.
5. Revisit the way you manage and motivate your contact centre staff.
6. Examine whether outsourcing to a provider with the talent and technology already in place might be a smart option for your business.
7. Ensure the contact centre is treated as part of the business – and its input is valued.





Ember

ABOUT EMBER

With an unashamedly commercial focus, we achieve tangible business benefits for our clients that deliver a material impact – building customer loyalty and retention, increasing net customer value and market share, and driving down costs and risks of customer management. We are specialists in our fields, innovative in our thinking, and unique in our proposition and capability, which address customer management strategies, technical and operational capabilities through four integrated business – all uniquely focused on driving long-term success through better customer engagements.

www.embergroup.co.uk

K U R A



ABOUT KURA

Kura provides award winning outsourced contact centre services from its four locations across the UK. Our software subsidiary, Inisoft, develops advisor desktop solutions with full Omni-channel capabilities, which are sold globally. Kura is in business because we want to help people to develop and reach their full potential. We're building a culture that shifts the mind-set from focusing on "things and stuff" to "people and behaviour". We call this process "Crossing the Bridge". Our vision is, to one day, be recognised as "Unrivalled in Developing People".

To find out more, please visit www.wearekura.com



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