

eBook

# Rethinking Contact Center Training

13 Top Tips for 2024



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# Introduction

The landscape of contact centers continues to evolve rapidly. With post-pandemic customer expectations continuing to reach new heights and technology reshaping the way we communicate, the need for an effective and adaptable contact center training program has never been more crucial. In this era of change, organizations must not only keep pace with emerging trends but also regularly reassess their training strategies to ensure their front-line teams are well-equipped to deliver exceptional customer experiences. AI offers disruptive possibilities for improving productivity, but there will never, ever be a substitute for human-to-human interaction in customer service.

In this eBook, we present 13 contact center training ideas tailored for today's reality in contact centers. We explore the shift in mindset from traditional approaches to a more agile and forward-thinking methodology. In short, now is the time to seize the opportunity to elevate your contact center training program so that your center thrives in the ever-evolving landscape of customer service.

# 1

## Realize the importance of corporate culture

Understanding and representing corporate culture is extremely important for all employees - especially frontline customer-facing employees.. If the team doesn't know or doesn't believe in your company's culture, your customers certainly won't either. Corporate culture training doesn't have to be extensive, but it should be explicit and consistent. Every day, employees should be reminded in some way about your company's core values and how they contribute to that culture. One way to do this is a culture code that lists all of the company's values and what it expects from its employees. Enlist C-level leadership in communicating these values. This will help hold employees accountable and show customers that you're committed to creating a positive experience.

# 2

## Take a data-driven approach to training

You should know and be able to state the *why* of the training program(s) and initiatives you implement and include a way to measure training outcomes quantitatively. This means ensuring the goals and objectives of the training are as clear and as precise as possible. Consider implementing an A/B test or pre-training vs post-training measurement. What are some measurable KPIs for both Customer Experience and Agent Experience? There's a tendency to think of customer satisfaction KPIs as separate from agent satisfaction KPIs. But there's a strong correlation between high agent satisfaction rates and high customer satisfaction rates. Employer review website [Glassdoor](https://www.glassdoor.com) found that in customer service roles, every

1-star improvement in employee satisfaction resulted on average in a 3.2-point increase in customer satisfaction.

Some examples of metrics to measure the impact of training include:

- Change in quality assurance (QA) Scores by group/team or individual
- Individual employee survey scores
- First-contact resolution (FCR) count improvement
- eNPS
- Customer net promoter score (NPS), customer satisfaction (CSAT) or customer retention rates
- Agent attrition

# 3

## Recognize the link between training and attrition

More than half of the ~8.6 million recent occupational shifts in the United States involved workers leaving roles in customer service and similar roles, according to a [report by McKinsey](#). Attrition rates for the contact center industry are still above 40% within 90 days. The past few years have been a preview of trends we expect to continue through the end of the decade. Companies need to invest in learning programs to help their own workers make internal transfers into growing roles. They need to focus on retention by keeping current workers engaged. Workers value flexibility and a positive experience in their working life more than ever—and they are demanding more from

their employers. In the McKinsey survey, employees cited not feeling valued by their organizations or their managers as primary reasons for quitting.

Training that aims to improve employee investment and aids in helping the employee identify with the organization will increase overall commitment to the company.

Ultimately, this makes an organization better able to keep its employees. Research shows that a positive relationship exists between training and employees' decision to stay for a longer period. Identifying and addressing individual training needs lowers attrition because agents perform better at their jobs and therefore get less frustrated. They also see a commitment to their training as a reflection of their importance to the organization.

# 4

## Adopt a continuous learning culture

Create training programs that reflect a continuous learning culture by providing ongoing training, not just onboarding. It's easy for customer service reps to stagnate or develop bad habits and for skill mastery to atrophy. Consider [The Forgetting Curve](#). This is a mathematical formula that describes the rate at which something is forgotten after it is initially learned. German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus first researched the idea in the late 19th century but his findings are consistently confirmed by modern research. Essentially - *Learners rapidly lose their memory of learned knowledge in a matter of days or weeks unless the information is consciously reviewed and reinforced.* Studies regularly find that we forget approximately 50% of new information within an hour of

learning it. That loss goes up to an average of 80% within 24 hours! Overcoming the forgetting curve is about more than raw repetitions. There has to be space between the training. It doesn't work to just study a new fact 15 times in 1 hour and overcome the curve. If the fact is already at the front of the mind, no work is being done in recalling it. But if information is repeated at intervals via what is called *spaced learning*, the brain has to [reconstruct that memory](#), strengthening it like a muscle. Ensure that you're providing ample continuing education to reinforce what your people learned during onboarding and further the development of their skills.

# 5

## Create employee learning journeys

A key part of continuous learning is the creation of employee learning journeys. These need to be produced for both agents and supervisors. Instructional design includes the concept of [Universal Design for Learning](#) (UDL). This is an educational framework based on research in the learning sciences, including cognitive neuroscience. UDL guides the development of flexible learning environments and learning spaces that can accommodate individual learning differences. It grew out of [Universal Design](#), which calls for *"the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design"*. UDL applies this general idea to learning: the curriculum should, from the outset, be

designed to accommodate all kinds of learners and learning styles.

The ultimate goal of UDL is for all learners to become 'expert learners.' Expert learners are purposeful and motivated, resourceful and knowledgeable, and strategic and goal-directed about learning.

Universal Design for Learning looks different in almost every situation, but there are commonalities. To start with, there's always a focus on building expert learning for all. Other common elements of a UDL experience include:

- All learners know the goal
- As much as possible, there are intentional, flexible options for all learners
- Easy access is provided to resources from the start of the training
- Staff are allowed or encouraged to build and internalize their own learning

It's good practice to develop employee learning journeys for individuals or groups in the contact center. This is similar to the way sales and marketing professionals consider the 'customer journey'. These journeys are explicit

learning paths. They include a series of different learning experiences that occur over a period of time. They involve different methods and delivery modalities, and result in new knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors once the journey is complete. Obviously, the design of the journeys needs to meet the 'reasonableness' test in terms of cost and scale, but just having a learning journey mindset will help create a continuous learning culture.



# 6

## Utilize customer experience simulation

Customer experience simulation is essentially the reverse of role-playing. Instead of interacting with a mock customer, a service rep becomes the customer and goes through the experience of purchasing the company's product or service or describing a problem or issue. Reps will naturally want to behave like a difficult customer during this exercise. There's nothing wrong with that, but we should remember that good customers beget great customer service. Ask reps to simulate being a good customer, not just a problematic one.

# 7

## Make learning fun

Be creative and make learning exercises fun when possible. One such exercise is 'No 'Nos Allowed'. This teaches support reps how they can still be helpful even if they don't give a customer the answer they want to hear. There's only one rule: No saying 'no.' This includes all 'no'-oriented words and phrases, like "I don't know" and "We don't do that." This exercise will challenge support reps to reframe the conversation with a customer when, in fact, the answer truly is 'no.' But when customers are upset or frustrated, answering their requests with a flat-out 'no' might aggravate them and won't move the conversation forward. Team members could be put into pairs and take turns role-playing the customer and the support rep. 'Customers' should make big, bold requests that support

reps can't say 'no' to — but instead, have to figure out a solution-oriented response.

For example, if the customer asked for a discount that the support rep wasn't authorized to offer, instead of saying 'no,' the rep could say, "If you're looking to reduce the cost of your CRM subscription, I could help you consolidate your database to under 1,000 contacts. Would you like help setting that up?"

The support rep is essentially telling the customer that no, they can't offer them a discount. But, by offering alternative options, the customer might feel like the support rep is on their side, and won't get frustrated by what they perceive as stubbornness or inflexibility.

# 8

## Call your competitor

Your service reps are responsible for keeping customers from running to your competitors. This makes it only fair that your team should know what they're up against. Have your team call your competitor's customer service line, and if possible, purchase one of its products or free trials. Ask routine questions and pay attention to different details during the call, like the rep's tone, the cadence of their voice, how quickly they were able to provide an answer, what type of follow-up options they offered, etc. These interactions will set the standard that your team will have to surpass.

# 9

## Apply microlearning

Microlearning breaks down training into manageable chunks. This helps reps learn faster and apply each teaching more quickly. By using short training sessions, ideally, under 30 minutes, service reps will be more inclined to participate and will retain more information afterward. Microlearning can be used to cover specific training areas much faster than you could with hour-long training sessions covering several different topics. Microlearning training sessions can cover topics such as the most common customer complaint or the documentation process.

# 10

## Build product knowledge

Conduct rapid-fire product Q&A. Any great customer service rep knows their products like the back of their hand. Testing this knowledge can be a fun and competitive way to get the team on board for customer service training. Make it like a game show with prizes and a host to make it fun.

# 11

## Remember soft skills

Double down on communication training, also known as soft skills training. Customers don't simply want their problems solved for them; they want to be *heard*.

Practicing active listening and communication skills is paramount to delivering great experiences, and by cultivating these skills among your team, you're setting them up for success.

# 12

## Include your supervisors

Do not neglect supervisor training. One of my favorite sayings around supervisor hiring, training, and development is “availability is not a skill.” Most Supervisors arrive at their position as a result of being a “good agent.” They do not necessarily have the leadership and coaching skills required to be a good supervisor. We should give as much or more attention to supervisor training as we do agent training, especially in the areas of coaching and leadership. Shameless plug here for [The Call Center Training Supervisor training curriculum](#) - other training sources are available. Remember: A great agent does not necessarily make a great supervisor.

# 13

## Incentivize learning

Offer incentives for agents to do e-learning outside of work hours. Some of our clients utilize mastery certification of elearning from The Call Center School as a program for things like pay increases and promotions. While you may not require a certain number of courses to be completed, employees who seek additional professional development can at least be rewarded and recognized for their time. This reinforces the continuous learning culture.

# Conclusion

Embarking on a transformative journey with your contact center training program could be a departure from conventional or previous approaches. It will at least inject some new insights and vitality into the work. Consider cultivating adaptability and fostering a culture of continuous learning. As technology reshapes customer interactions, your training strategies should aim to not only *meet* but *exceed* rising customer expectations. By rethinking the overall training plan, organizations can empower their contact center agents and supervisors to navigate the dynamic landscape of customer service with confidence, ensuring a seamless and exceptional experience for every interaction.

# About injixo

You can't grow your business without growing your people. [injixo](#) provides scalable education programs that empower people to do outstanding work. By leveraging injixo's education content, powered by [The Call Center School](#), your people can gain the right skills and knowledge to grow in their roles, maximize efficiency, and serve your customers better.

We have a team of highly experienced experts who are passionate about contact center education and workforce management. If this eBook has inspired you to explore your training or WFM options, why not [arrange a no-obligation call with us?](#)

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