

Seven best practices to build a better contact center workplace

Improve your customer experience by improving your employee experience.



Focusing on a positive employee/agent experience can help you build a stronger business.

The workplace, especially the contact center, has shifted dramatically in the last couple of years, yet for many organizations, more change is needed.

A recent [survey](#) of global business decision makers (BDMs), IT decision makers (ITDMs) and employees/agents revealed that an alarming degree of “organization myopia,” or corporate shortsightedness, is prevalent in many organizations. The survey, conducted by Omdia on behalf of Verizon, found that BDMs were twice as likely as employees/agents to say that personal productivity and employee well-being had improved since the COVID-19 pandemic. And BDMs were three times more likely to say that customer satisfaction had improved during the same time period.

Such a large perception gap between leaders and employees/agents should set off alarms as finding and retaining good agents is essential to delivering good service and meeting business goals.

Business decision makers were about twice as likely as employees/agents to say personal productivity and employee well-being had improved since before the pandemic.

To create a more inclusive workplace, organizations should borrow a page from customer experience (CX) experts and provide agents with a positive employee experience (EX).

EX represents every touch point across an employee's/agent's tenure with an organization. It typically targets three areas—people, process and technology—and requires a multidisciplinary approach.

Here are seven best practices for creating an excellent contact center agent and customer experience:

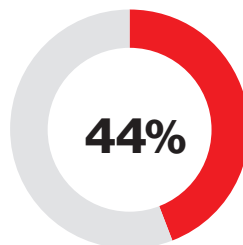
1 Focus on the employee journey.

Map out events in an employee's work tenure—from new-hire training to addressing life events to becoming a first-time manager—holistically. Consider touch points and activities such as onboarding, benefits, growth and development, performance management, and team collaboration.

Make sure you're providing tools that meet employees'/agents' needs at each stage of the journey. For instance,

for a new parent who needs to spend more time working remotely, ensure that they have the right contact center and collaboration tools to respond to customer queries and collaborate with subject matter experts.

Communicate with agents about the tools they need so that technology decisions aren't made in isolation. Ensure that appropriate training is provided to agents on existing and new tools so they can do their job better.



of employees/agents said manual processes prevent them from getting the best out of their business systems and technology.

2 Take work style into account.

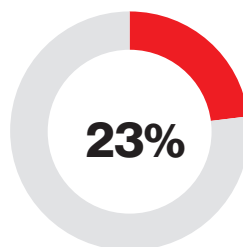
Segment workers much like you'd segment customers in a CX campaign. Correctly segmenting your workforce can help empower and engage agents.

Consider segmenting agents by role or work style:

- **Tethered.** Workers based in a single location, such as an office, store or factory
- **Nomad.** Workers frequently on the move across multiple locations, such as delivery drivers or field service workers
- **Hybrid.** Workers who spread their time between remote locations and the office, such as contact center agents or business administrators

Segmentation can also be based on personal preferences, such as a desire to primarily work on site, work remotely most of the time or some combination of the two.

Give agents the tools they need to perform well no matter their work style. You may need a portable communications hub with ruggedized devices for nomads or a cloud contact center so agents have the tools they need to provide excellent customer service anytime from virtually anywhere.



of employees/agents surveyed find their tech solutions difficult to use.

3 Work across disciplines.

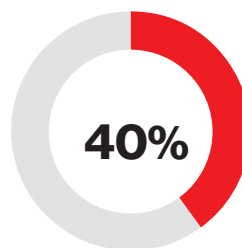
EX is not just an HR responsibility. Our research shows that outdated business systems and technology are an important factor hindering employees/agents from doing their best work, so IT clearly has a role in improving EX.

By the same token, technology is not just an IT responsibility. A multidisciplinary team (incorporating senior leadership, department heads, HR, IT and facilities management) should ensure that planned purchases align to the needs of your business, departments and employees/agents.

We recommend a holistic solution, where technology investments center around agent work styles. Applying design thinking, i.e., a formal process that can help you understand your users and the problems they face, to EX provides a way to challenge assumptions and create innovative, user-specific solutions.

Use “pulse” surveys to measure success and understand how the agent experience can be improved.

Align current technology with new technology to enable a more seamless transition toward less manual solutions—for instance, automatic call routing, smart-meeting technology or integration with Google® Glass™ for hands-free collaboration and access to applications.



of agents said a lack of systems integration leads to duplication of effort and prevents them from being successful.

Contact center agents rarely have the opportunity to play a part in the decision-making process. Our survey showed that IT makes unilateral buying decisions in 52% of organizations.

4 Give your contact center agents the tools to succeed and feel good about their work.

Providing high-quality customer service requires knowledgeable, experienced and well-trained agents. You can help improve job satisfaction and retain good agents by making sure they're equipped for success.

Contact center agents have often been underserved by modern technology and services. While many office workers can access multiple applications on their desktop and/or mobile devices and can switch easily from one source of information to another, this is rarely the case for contact center staff.

Boost employee productivity and customer responsiveness by investing in collaboration tools for all employees, including contact center agents, and bring the employee and customer experience together.

5 Don't skimp on training.

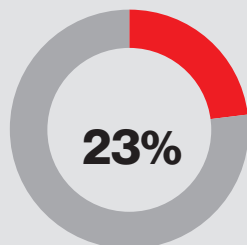
When you purchase new technology, be clear about how training will work and who is responsible for it. Make sure agents are aware of all the features that could help them work more efficiently.

If you aren't able to provide adequate in-house training, contract with a company that can. This can help promote user acceptance and drive faster and more complete adoption among your workforce so you can more quickly realize a return on your investments.

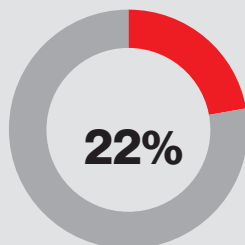
When training, be mindful of roles and learning styles. Some agents will need to know all the bells and whistles, but don't make everyone sit through extensive training they won't need.

Consider formats like interactive demos, gamification and microlearning videos. And encourage on-demand refresher training because agents may not master all the tips—or have a reason to use all of them—the first time around. Offer incentives to boost participation.

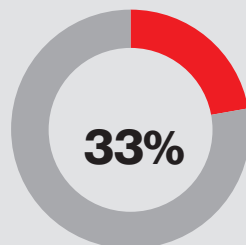
Remember, too, that agents often learn informally from coworkers, but that doesn't occur as naturally if agents are working remotely. Set up an online chat for workers to post questions and get answers quickly from coworkers. Encourage workers to share tricks they've learned that others may not be aware of.

Training is seen as inadequate by some agents.

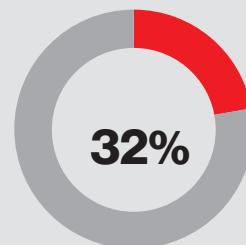
of agents find their tech solutions difficult to use.



of agents felt they lacked adequate training.



of respondents said lack of in-house skills was a barrier to achieving successful outcomes with current CX and contact center tools.



of respondents said lack of agent training was a barrier to achieving successful outcomes with current CX and contact center tools.

6 Revisit your CX strategy and ensure that someone measures it.

Your CX strategy helps define how you achieve your customer experience goals and the business outcomes linked with those goals. Without fully understanding your customers, your ability to meet their needs and grow revenue will be severely diluted.

You need a dedicated team focused on measuring CX. Unfortunately, this is only the case for 21% of businesses. If CX isn't measured properly, it can't be managed properly.

Involve contact center staff in identifying the KPIs, goals and technology that should be measured. Contact center agents are often your first customer touch point, so it's vital to get their input into the technology needed to support them. Today, there are a number of solutions that can help businesses track customer activity, provide behavioral insights and monitor social accounts so that agents can respond proactively to customer needs.

Consider using customer experience design services and contact center managed services to make sure you're doing all you can to meet customer expectations, provide better experiences and drive results.

Only 21% of businesses have a dedicated team focused on measuring customer experience.

Survey respondents said lack of budget, a lack of integration between different channel platforms and a lack of in-house skills are the most significant barriers to achieving successful customer service outcomes.

7 Select a technology partner with the experience to help you accomplish your CX goals.

Look for a partner with:

- Proven expertise in customer experience solutions
- Leadership in digital transformation
- Deep experience in unified communications and collaboration technology
- Insights into workplace innovation and hybrid work that can help you create a model that better supports the business, employees/agents and customers

Survey respondents said their top strategic goals were to improve productivity and improve operational efficiency.

Verizon can help you create a better employee experience—and consequently, a better customer experience.

We provide solutions that can help your contact center agents accomplish more, serve customers better and feel highly motivated to contribute to your organization.

Verizon is a proven leader in innovation and digital transformation, with a deep portfolio of communication, collaboration and customer experience solutions, all supported by our award-winning networks.

Verizon is rated as a leader for contact center solutions in GlobalData's Collaboration and Communications (U.S): Competitive Landscape Assessment

With 30+ years of implementing contact center solutions across the globe, we are well positioned to help customers with their digital transformation journeys.

Shifts in technology require contact center strategies that meet customer expectations and move at the speed of change. Using an outcomes approach, our experienced digital transformation (DX) consultants deliver individually packaged engagements for your business no matter where you are on the digital maturity continuum.

Our research around workplace transformation, hybrid work models and digital innovation provides a vast amount of insight for businesses large and small to learn how to adapt in ways that support their entire business.

Through our [Executive Briefing Program](#), businesses can receive one-on-one guidance from top executives, industry leaders and subject matter experts to help inform their strategies.

Learn more:

For more details on our workforce research and tools that can help you implement it, contact your Verizon Business Account Manager or visit verizon.com/business/resources/new-workplace/future-of-work-thought-leadership/