



Best Practices for Remote Contact Center Agents

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Work-from-home is the new normal for both employees and contact center agents. In their "CX Technology Trends" report published in May 2021, Metrigy Research reveals that contact centers of all sizes will see a 33% growth in the number of employees working from home. A work-from home contact center model offers many benefits including improved work/life balance, higher employee engagement, increased customer satisfaction, reduced attrition rates, and lower infrastructure costs.

Six Best Practices for Success with Remote Contact Center Agents

Best Practice #1 — Equip Remote Contact Center Agents to Succeed

Hardware

Remote contact center agents generally need a hard phone or headset (noise canceling headset is best) and a computer. If your company provides the PC or enforces system requirements up front, your Help Desk will thank you later.

Applications

Remote contact center agents need the same access to applications, tools, supervisors and peers as they do when in the office; likewise, supervisors working remotely need access to their contact center management tools for their agents.



With each remote contact center agent, the manager and agent should review the policies and procedures together. Focus on job responsibilities, organizational and departmental goals and objectives, customer impact, and employee's work performance.

Connectivity

Connectivity is also another key consideration. Using a second analog phone, or a cellular phone line, provides consistent quality without network engineering. There is, however, an up-front activation cost and ongoing monthly expense. Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) eliminates those costs — as well as toll charges for remote agents but may require either Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) voice connectivity via the internet or virtual-private network (VPN) support, depending on your country's rules and regulations. Regardless of SIP or VPN, VoIP relies on a solid internet connection which may not be available — do not take broadband for granted. In addition, for VoIP, ensure your IT department can evaluate each remote contact center agent's internet performance before deploying the remote agent program.

Provide easy-to-use documentation and job aids regarding how to log into remote network services like VPN, telephone services, etc., including password procedures.

Best Practice #2 — Ensure a Good Working Environment

Prospective remote contact center agents may not picture themselves working at home. Based on your experience, the written policy should tell them what works, and detail what you expect of their workspace. These guidelines should be carefully discussed with every remote contact center agent. Almost any room can serve as an office but selecting the right work area is essential for success. A dedicated office maximizes the contact center agent's efficiency and comfort.

Best Practice #3 — Make Experts Readily Available

Remote contact center agents need access to the same subject matter experts as those who have supervisors and expert resources in the office.

Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) and Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) solutions can empower contact center agents to easily access company subject matter experts, regardless of job title or location, to help solve customer problems or inquiries in the moment while customers are on the line. Easy-to-use tools enable customer service, sales and backoffice employees to call, text, share files and meet via video with a single click.

Best Practice #4 — Monitor and Manage

Remote contact center agents need to meet the same continuous improvement goals that apply to all agents. As you manage a group of remote contact center agents, you will learn from their collective experience and gain perspective that you can feed back to the group. Predictable management check-in times are reassuring to remote contact center agents.

You Can Do This!

To create an effective remote contact center agent program, all you need to do is think through the people, policies, and procedures. And remember, you're not alone. Avaya can help you with every step of the process.

For more information on how Avaya can make remote contact center agent programs work for your enterprise, contact your Avaya Account Manager or Avaya authorized partner or visit Avaya at www.avaya.com/en/remote-contact-center.



Remote contact center agents need to be included in team meetings and events so they can stay connected socially and culturally. Finally remember to keep training and mentoring remote contact center agents and to reward good performance.

Best Practice #5 — Select the Right People for the Job

Some employees are terrific people and good workers but may not be best suited to work at home. Personality is only one aspect of this. Most remote contact center agents will have access to customer-sensitive information, such as credit card numbers. For those reasons and more, make it a part of your selection process to do thorough background checks.

Best Practice #6 — Document Remote Work Policies and Procedures

A written policy should govern remote contact center agents with clear and uniform rules. This policy should also make clear that all company policies apply — not just those specifically for remote contact center agents. With each remote contact center agent, the manager and agent should review the policies and procedures together. Focus on job responsibilities, the customer experience vision, organizational and departmental goals and objectives, customer impact, and employee work performance.



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