

CONTACT CENTERS: REDUCE COST - REDUCE ATTRITION

Exploring the link between recruitment and attrition

Recent research by ContactBabel has shown that HR accounts for 75% of the operational cost¹ of a typical UK call center. This cost is split mainly between attrition, recruitment and training. While some recruitment and training will always be necessary, there is opportunity for significant cost saving by addressing attrition. Lowering attrition rates will decrease the number of new recruits brought on board to fill vacancies, and in turn lower training costs.

What is attrition?

Attrition refers to employees leaving the company (resignations, retirement or death). It is usually measured with a metric called attrition rate. Attrition rate is the number of people leaving the organization relative to the total number of employees, represented as a percentage.

Why is attrition bad?

In addition to growing recruitment and training costs, attrition also increases the number of new starters in the call center which negatively impacts the business:

- New starters need time to learn; this lowers the average agent proficiency.
- New starters will make mistakes, decreasing the quality of the customer experience.
- Team leaders and experienced agents get increased workload and demands.
- An unsettled team is bad for morale.
- New starters may need to learn current processes before new processes can be implemented.

What causes attrition?

"A very significant proportion of annualized attrition occurs in the first 90 days after recruitment."¹

90-day attrition can be caused by poor or outdated recruitment strategies. The recruitment process is responsible for ensuring candidates are suited to the role and have the ability to perform efficiently. This can mean a need to look beyond technical skills and experience, and implement more in-depth analysis on the candidate's personality and approach to work.

What is best practice for call center recruitment?

How you approach recruitment is highly dependent on your business needs; however, here are some fairly general concepts that are crucial to getting recruitment right:

Define the role - The first step to good recruitment is making sure you have a robust definition of the role and its requirements. From this you can build a person specification and it is important to consider the personality and behavioral strengths of the person. One of the best ways to build a person specification is to look at individuals who are already successful in those roles in your organization. It's also wise to reflect your organization's culture and values in the person specification.

High applicant volumes - Streamline the early stages of your recruitment process and

make it as automated as possible; this will quickly sift high numbers of applicants. The later stages of your recruitment process can then be more focused on matching talent to individual job fit. This will help save time screening out high volumes of applicants so you can focus your time more effectively on assessing the candidates with the highest potential to succeed.

Stick to the plan - Make sure you are only measuring candidates against the pre-agreed person specification. If you find yourself measuring candidates against attributes outside your specification, you may need to revise your person specification.

Keep evolving - It's important to learn and adapt your process. Measure the progress

and success of new starters. Feedback your findings into the recruitment process and make adjustments where necessary.

Useful tools:

Aptitude Assessments - Saville Consulting's Aptitude Assessments are a comprehensive portfolio of tests used for a range of roles. They clearly measure a variety of abilities depending upon the role requirements.

Personality Questionnaires - Saville Consulting Strengths is a powerful suite of behavioral screening questionnaires offering a cost-effective approach to volume recruitment. Measures fit against organizational values and/or culture. Can be used for structuring interviews.

1. *ContactBabel: The UK Contact Centre Decision-Makers' Guide 2013* (11th edition) www.contactbabel.com



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