

Staff selection and training are important aspects of every call/contact center operation and can be significant determining factors in their effectiveness and productivity. CSRs are the prime human resource focus of the call center, as they should be, because they are the first point of contact with the customer.

Recruiting the right people for your call centre revolves around so much more than placing a small ad in the local paper and hoping for some good candidates to come calling. Here, Paul Sharpe reveals how to change the call centre staffing cycle for good. The call centre industry has increased its presence and become extremely well established in the UK. Under the increasing pressure of offshoring and outsourcing, the demand upon service quality, staff retention and best practice has changed the call centre environment from what was a service-based principle into an ever more complex delivery method. In certain cases this has led to increasing job vacancies and a highly competitive landscape for call centres as local employers. To many, high staff turnover is down to potential candidates not being suitable or realistically aware of, or prepared for, the working environment they are entering. However, maintaining staff in callcentres is not all about getting people that fit, but about understanding the local job market and, more importantly, ensuring organisations adopt recruiting processes to fit these markets. Start by building a profile The heart of any company is rooted in its culture, values and business strategy. By being clear on what these are, an HR manager can build up a picture of the company and type of employee Key pointers for reducing call centre staff attrition Understand the local job market. Use multiple routes to market when advertising positions. Use an online tool to narrow down suitable candidates. Use assessment tools to consistently evaluate candidates. Look at the management and leadership structure “ are there any personality problems that are causing attrition issues? Match training and development to the needs of the workforce. Bring consistency to the recruitment process across selection, training and management. This helps the recruiter to sell the company to potential candidates while building up an understanding of the right type of person for the job. An HR manager has to understand what they are looking for and why if they are to find suitable candidates who will stay in the job. However, such an exercise is not solely inward-looking. HR managers have to understand the local job market from which candidates can be drawn in order to tailor positions and make them attractive to prospective employees. Call centres are often grouped together in regional hubs and competition between sites for staff can be high. By understanding the demographics of an area, a recruiter has a base indicator from which to compare themselves on things like staff turnover rates. It also provides a starting point from which to work out what steps are needed to bring prospects through the door. For example, if the demographics of the local population show a potential workforce of part-time mothers, shift patterns from 9 a. The final area of the company profile is understanding what current employees think. Although many companies do this through exit polls, this is arguably too late. Regular monitoring of what attracts people to positions, what retains them in their role, how they view their relationship with their line manager, and factors influencing why they may resign, all enable HR managers to analyse and understand the role better. This can help them to highlight the positive aspects of the role when recruiting employees. It also provides the company with added value information on their business practices and how to improve staff retention. With UK employment levels currently at a record high, filling vacancies can be difficult. Gone are the days of placing an advert in the local paper and waiting for people to walk through the door. Call centres often have large numbers of positions to fill in one go, perhaps for seasonal surges in demand, or they require a continuous stream of candidates. As such, an HR manager needs to adopt multiple communications routes “ for example, word-of-mouth, using a specialist agency and the local media. These methods increase the reach of the vacancies message with the aim of raising the potential pool of candidates, but also building awareness about the call centre. Word-of-mouth is always vital. A call centre with a good reputation will find it easier to attract better candidates while a negative image will have the reverse effect. One method of boosting word-of-mouth is to use the local media. Editorial coverage about the call centre and its recruitment process highlights what the site is doing while allowing it to differentiate itself from the competition. A good reputation is one thing, but to get candidates to register their

details, use of the Internet in the application process is crucial. Using an online application system is now the most popular method when applying for a job. Such technology allows candidates to be matched to job specifications easily, as well as keeping their details on file if something more suitable appears later. The power of consistent assessment There are a variety of different assessment methods used to select candidates for call centres, including personality and skills testing to determine whether candidates are suitable for the call centre environment. However, metrics and assessment tools are not used nearly widely enough in call centre recruitment. Ideally an assessment for a call centre candidate should be made up of personality testing, general ability testing and benchmarking against what works for the company and the regional area when it comes to staff. Using such procedures creates consistency across the recruitment process, ensuring that all staff can be assessed against the same criteria. And having such measures also allows the selection process to be evaluated. For example, companies can ask themselves why staff are failing the general ability test. Is it being set too high for the job market being targeted? Are they excluding the right sort of candidates as a result? However, recruiters must also remember that employees need to have the right attitude. If he or she has the right attitude and they want to develop, they are often more likely to stay longer because they feel valued. Again, this comes back to an understanding of the organisation and the job market it is hiring from. Training and induction programmes have to fit in with the lifestyles of the workforce. Small aspects of business management, which can be picked up through regular feedback, allow appropriate processes to be developed. In truth, one of the biggest challenges in retaining staff is during the induction and probation period. A successful method to overcome this is through the use of mentors. Mentors give employees a focus, allowing them to acclimatise and be introduced to the team. They can also be used to provide on-the-job development training and deal with any questions new recruits may have. In summary, then, the key to successful call centre recruitment is knowing the market and developing your recruitment process to meet changing needs. Only by understanding staff will sites be able to recruit and retain employees. Most call centre jobs are similar in nature. As such, it is easy for individuals to move and do a similar job somewhere else. By making the call centre different for the right reasons and ensuring staff are given the opportunity to prosper in a suitable environment, centres will be able to manage their personnel resources more effectively.

Chapter 2 : 50 Call Centre Training Tips

Apart from choosing intuitive and easy-to-use call center software, call center managers are also investing more time, money and effort into the development of training programs so that their call center agents will be well prepared to meet the increasing expectations of their customers.

Continental breakfast is served at 8: Business casual attire is appropriate. No jeans or sneakers please. In-House Training Option In-house, on-site training offers the added benefits of facilitated team interaction; a confidential environment where plans, processes, and policies can be openly discussed; minimized travel costs; and little or no travel time. For support centers with a number of managers, supervisors, and team leads, on-site training can maximize your training investment. Pricing for an on-site course delivered at your location is determined based on a "Base Fee" for up to four attendees, and a per person fee for each attendee thereafter. On-site fees are all inclusive: The customer site must provide suitable meeting space, any desired meals or refreshments, and the following presentation supplies: What some past attendees say The instructor was phenomenal. This class should be the bar that others need to meet. As a new manager, attending this event made me feel so much more prepared for my new responsibilities, and I honestly feel like my managerial skills have jumped ahead by about 4 years. In particular, I found the coaching section to be most helpful and the KPI and Metrics framework really simplified a daunting task for me. This education could be, for now, the main ROI driver for my business. Materials are very useful and thorough. RCCSP is very professional and educated. I would attend another RCCSP training or certification program, because the education provided is priceless. This is honestly the first call center training course I have taken where the subject matter was taught in a way that could be applied to our existing call center. Also, I liked the fact that there was no wasted time. This was well worth the cost. This course rates higher than most of the courses I have attended. I wish I could have attended sooner. Excellent tools and resources were provided. This training will decrease any confusion about how procedures and tasks should be done. I gained a lot of useful information that I could immediately apply to my call center. The organization has already realized a return on this investment in education by using several of the templates on the resource CD. This course will benefit anyone who works in a call center whether they are a novice or a veteran. Not only did I learn additional call center lingo, it further equipped me with the necessary tools to effectively run a call center. As one who manages a call center manager, this was extremely valuable as a survey course, and it was helpful to get the perspectives of call center managers that were in the course. I will be able to use this knowledge to begin to make immediate positive changes. After this class, I realize how much we have been missing by not looking at all the necessary data. I learned so much, I cannot wait to start implementing what I have learned. Great instructor, great manual and information provided. Lots of resource material. RCCSP is specialized, professional, and has qualified staff and trainers. The instructor was on-point and the material and recommendations provided were relevant to the subject matter. The overall experience was informative, inspiring and rewarding. I rate the course as excellent. This course was very well planned and outlined. Truly the best seminar I have ever attended. By the way, I was not sponsored by any company. I definitely would recommend it to others. I actually already have. This will be a big return on our investment. The class was much more than I expected. I would definitely recommend it to others. It provides the knowledge base for a successful operation, and it has personal value to the participants because of the certification aspect. The certification and training class met and surpassed my expectations by giving me the tools to better oversee my operations and a deeper understanding of why actions in the call center impact the overall water utility operations in the ways that they do. By far the best!! The course is excellent! Very high ratings from me. This is real life working knowledge. I am very satisfied with the training. We expect to realize a return on this education. Certification improves our ability to support our business case. It gives us more credibility and expands our knowledge.

Chapter 3 : Call Center Made Easy: Staff selection criteria

Training call center employees is more effective when they understand why their training is important for their job, for customers, and for their own personal development. So, communicate the goals of training (and the business goals they serve) to learners from the start.

With customers who had to call multiple times. Special circumstances will force agents to deviate from their scripts. These challenging situations will yield more interesting and impactful analyses. Exemplary calls should show how a problem was solved over the course of a single conversation. You should pay attention to: Start of the call: Agents should let the client talk first, and listen actively, to avoid the need for repetition later on. A climate of attentiveness and trust must be fostered immediately. For the entire call duration: The agent must be respectful, friendly, attentive, and professional. Wrap up the call once the customer is satisfied, part with a polite word, and thank them for their patience. Each call is like a self-contained case study. The best examples of high-quality calls should be saved as training materials. Monitor across several channels You may not just be operating over the phone, but also over live chat, email, or texts. Your call center quality assurance must extend to every channel you use to reach customers and vice-versa. While the medium differs, you must have the same concern for quality assurance. Bring on a quality assurance manager Call center managers already have a great deal on their plate. You should hire a call center quality assurance specialist to design training material, monitor calls and trends, and uphold the standard you set for your business. Besides that, every agent needs a period of training before they can start working. This represents quite a bit of time spent training new employees. Therefore, it makes sense to hire people you think will ace their training and go on to be high-quality agents. Present prospective hires with tests during the vetting process. A solid, well-crafted script reflects the results of your technical monitoring. The insight gained from monitoring analysis will let you know how to refine your scripts. Nevertheless, you should empower your agents to feel confident enough to go off-script when the situation calls for it. While a good script is a great safety net, being able to improvise with confidence can be the secret to exemplary service. This is where training comes in. Imposed sessions are sometimes necessary, but agents should feel free to ask for the extra coaching they require. The results gleaned from call monitoring will invite changes in the direction of your business. No matter what, coaching should be tailored to the agent as much as possible. If you include everyone in the process, it will feel less stressful for agents to be evaluated. During training sessions, give agents the opportunity to evaluate each other, to group with others of complementary strengths, and to self-assess. As a quality assurance manager, be flexible, and make yourself available for agents who seek out extra training on issues they have flagged themselves. During one-on-one evaluations of live-calls or recordings, consider starting from a score of zero and adding points for every success during the call, rather than starting at a full score and subtracting points. Provide clear goals and corresponding incentives Managers who display key performance indicators publicly notice improved agent engagement and productivity. Rewarding quality performance can also yield good results. You could also display impressive achievements in a newsletter or success story on your website. This will motivate your agents, and be good publicity for your business. Now you know the ins and outs of a solid call center quality process. Want to share what worked for your call center? Let us hear about it in the comments!

Chapter 4 : How to provide effective training for call centre staff - Personnel Today

center managementâ€™staff selection and trainingâ€™and the application of proven management techniques to ensure a productive call center environ- ment and the effective management of the all-important human resource.

This calls for innovative solutions. Effective training is vital to most call centres. Ensuring agents are sufficiently trained to be able to keep up is essential. But a growing number of call centres are finding solutions to each challenge. Peter Venn, a consultant at Academee , a provider of blended learning solutions, says: The trick is to do it at quiet times. Podcasts are also becoming more popular. This is a simple, delivery channel, enabling users to dial one number to pick up the latest learning snippet. Andrew Wallbridge, leadership consultant at HR consultancy Blessingwhite , says: It can do this by offering them training that interests them or actually improves their long-term career prospects. Grant Leboff, managing director of telemarketing firm Phone Intelligence, believes this rarely happens. We help them to understand why customers become defensive and how to set them at ease. Much of it is about empowering customers. This kind of more sophisticated training produces remarkable results. Caroline Dunk, principal at consultancy CDA , says: Staff are generally based in a relatively small number of locations, closely supervised by a team manager. There is normally good access to online information and there are plenty of performance metrics that can be used to track the impact of the training. If they manage it they will find that not only are staff more capable and clients happier, but also that staff are more motivated and likely to stay in their jobs. This reduction in staff turnover reduces expenditure on recruitment, and keeps skills in the organisation, leading to even more satisfied customers and healthier profit margins. Converso Converso Contact Centres provides a mix of inbound and outbound services to blue-chip clients. It employs about agents in its Essex headquarters. According to managing director, Dino Forte, training is a high priority: Our challenge is to deliver training that is useful to everyone.

Chapter 5 : 20 best-practices for call center agent training

Telephone interviewing of candidates for all three levels of call center jobs is an essential part of the selection process. The aim of the telephone interview is to establish candidates' work experience, communication skills, telephone voice skills, and selling ability (if applicable).

Kenyon can provide training courses for all levels of staff, in most world countries and in many different world languages. As part of our wider program of consultancy services, Kenyon can provide training courses for all levels of staff, in most world countries and in many different world languages. Our training philosophy is simple. If your staff are not day-to-day involved in crisis management activities then they need to be specially trained for these duties. Without training, you cannot expect your employees to be able to professionally respond and operate in a crisis situation. The following crisis management training courses are offered by Kenyon: Core Crisis Management Training Crisis Leadership Leading in a crisis is different than leading or managing normal business. Normal business is what you are good at, what you expect to happen every day and what you have planned and budgeted for. Crises are different; they are unwanted and unexpected. Key topics will include the importance of communications, understanding team dynamics in a crisis and the decision making process. Download Crisis Management Center Operations The corporate center for managing crises is only as good as the team that gathers to lead, communicate and manage resources. This training is for managers. It will assist them to understand the processes necessary to manage a crisis at HQ level and the essential interactions for the success of a recovery operation. By examining case studies, conducting role play exercises and by live camera work, we provide the knowledge, skills and confidence to perform effectively as spokespeople. The course can be delivered to small groups of managers either as initial or refresher training. It is also suitable for one-to-one training of senior executives or key-spokespersons. Download Call Center Agent Many organizations choose to run their own emergency call centers to manage communications to and from concerned family members, staff and the general public following an emergency incident. It will focus on the importance of consistency in call handling, data management and on dealing effectively with the many different types of caller. Download Emergency Response Plan Writing This training is for emergency response planning staff to help them understand the current best practice for the design, content and management of emergency response plans. At Kenyon, we encourage plans that concentrate on how to do things instead of lists of things that merely state what has to be done. This training will focus on establishing a center and maintaining continuous operations. The training is suitable for those management and supervisory staff that will plan for and activate a center. Delegates will consider the functions of administration, logistics, communications, security and data management and the associated manpower, equipment and finance implications. Our training also helps delegates to understand their part in the bigger picture of responding to accidents. Download Humanitarian Assistance Team Management Leading a Humanitarian Assistance Team requires additional skills and knowledge to ensure that the team members have all of the information, support and encouragement that they require. This Kenyon course will include the selection and training of team members, deployment procedures, administration and data management. Download Aviation Crisis Management Training Commercial Aviation - Twelve Principles This workshop-based training provides the overview and the detail of the full scope and scale of response operations following an aviation accident. It is suitable for all levels of personnel to understand their roles and responsibilities. We will follow the chronology of a deployment from first notification to return to normal duties. The training will also help team managers to select suitable team members, prepare internal training and assemble the appropriate deployment equipment. Download Airline Station Managers Airline station managers play a vital role in the management of emergencies. They will almost certainly have to act as the senior representative of the airline until they are relieved by support personnel from headquarters. During this time they will have to liaise at all levels, face the news media, prepare and operate crisis facilities, motivate staff and provide care and information for victims and their families. This training will prepare station managers and their support staff to undertake their roles and responsibilities following an accident. Download

Exercises for Aviation Crisis Management This training has been specifically prepared for single-company use. The aim of the training is to prepare emergency planning staff with the tools, techniques and knowledge to develop, deliver and debrief specialist exercises to rehearse emergency aviation scenarios. The course will consider several different exercise types and the selection criteria to make most efficient use of time and resources.

Chapter 6 : Call Center Quality Assurance: 15 Best Practices to Boost Customer Service

Help your call-center staff give first-rate service with this fast-paced and interactive call-center agent training course. Schedule this interactive workshop / program / seminar / class.

Learn how to establish clear guidelines for hiring and training based on the needs of your organization; get the hiring and training right every time. Why should you develop guidelines for hiring, orientation, and training? How do you develop guidelines for hiring staff? How do you develop orientation and training guidelines? Hiring the right people and training them properly are the most effective ways to ensure the success of your organization. In this section, you will learn how to develop guidelines for the hiring and training process, while later sections in this chapter discuss how to use those guidelines to design a position and hire and train the best person to fill it. Why do you need to establish guidelines for hiring, orienting, and training staff? The ways people are hired and trained constitute their first impressions of the organization, and will contribute to how they feel about it over the long term, and to how good a job they do. Developing guidelines will make you think about your plan and philosophy for the organization. Your hiring and training guidelines should reflect what you want the organization to be. An organization that sees itself as democratic or dedicated to empowerment might run a hiring process that gives applicants a chance to act naturally and show their true strengths, rather than to have to respond to pressure or intimidation. It might also involve members of the target population, other staff, etc. Having a clear set of guidelines to follow simply makes the hiring and training processes -- which are often time-consuming and difficult -- much easier and less stressful for all concerned. Developing guidelines accomplishes two purposes: Life is full of surprises, not all of them pleasant. Staff hiring and training are two of the easier things in life to prepare for. In developing guidelines of any sort for an organization, the first question that needs to be asked is who will work on them. As with so much else, the answer should reflect how the organization sees itself, although it will also depend on its stage of life. Hiring staff for the first time, at the startup of an organization, is somewhat different from filling ongoing positions that have gone vacant, or hiring for a new position in an established organization. Will participants be involved? Or will the guidelines be the work of one person? The real question here is how inclusive you want to be about who gets to make suggestions. There also may be external factors that affect what the organization can do. Is there a union involved, for instance, with its own guidelines? Sometimes a funder, particularly one distributing public money, will dictate some hiring conditions, or even push for hiring a particular person. What kind of people do you want as staff members? You may have a number of criteria, and those may involve the applicants? But it may be equally important to your organization that that person has particular interpersonal skills or personal qualities as well; and sometimes these may be more important than a body of knowledge which can be picked up as he learns the job. What can you afford? Will positions be full time or part time? Will there be benefits of some sort, particularly health, and do people get some portion of them regardless of how many hours they work? Are you willing to pay more for someone you really want, or for specific skills or experience? What will the hiring process look like? Who screens applications, who does interviewing, etc.? Other major issues in hiring are: The drafting of job descriptions and selection criteria. Who will be involved in coming up with a final job description and in deciding what standards will be used for deciding who best can carry it out? The format of the application and interview process. When does the hiring have to be finished, and have you allowed enough lead time for that to happen? You can always rush things, but the results might not please you in the long run. Where are you going to find candidates? What kind of advertising of the job will you do, and where? How many good candidates do you want to interview, and how will you decide who gets an interview? Who will read and make decisions on application materials? How many levels of this kind of screening do you want to do? At both the screening -- i. These can be highly formal -- scoring systems and the like -- or based on the more informal needs of the organization, but they must be explainable, applied consistently to everyone, and non-discriminatory. Unsuccessful applicants can be very unpleasant, and can even sue, if they feel they have been discriminated against because of their gender, age, race, etc. How many stages of interviews do you want to do? How much time will interviewers have to

spend on this process, and do they have that time? How will you actually choose and notify the successful candidate? Will there be a contract or some other form of agreement with the new staff person? Will there be a probationary period? How will the hiring process be evaluated, and how will new ideas for improving it be incorporated into the guidelines? There are really three areas of training that effective organizations pay attention to. Orientation is aimed specifically at new staff members, and is meant to help them become familiar and comfortable with the organization. What is normally called training helps new staff people do their jobs better by focusing on the particular skills and knowledge needed for the position, and on how this particular organization applies them. Finally, there is professional development: New staff members, regardless of their experience and skills, need timely and time-limited orientation to their positions and to the organization itself -- how it operates, who the other staff members are, what it considers normal, etc. Areas that need to be covered in orientation include the following: The structure and general functioning of the organization -- which positions cover which areas, the role of the Board, who supervises whom, communication channels, organizational policies and procedures, any specific rules or regulations the organization or staff might be subject to, etc. The philosophy and mission of the organization. How does the organization see its role in the community and the world? What does it actually want to accomplish? The stated goal of the organization may not be its ultimate goal. Providing preventive health information or adult literacy services, for instance, may be only a step toward increasing the political sophistication and power of a particular group of people or a community. The real mission of an environmental initiative may be profound social change, rather than just the defeat of a proposal for a particular toxic waste dump. The structure and general functioning of the position. What exactly is the staff member expected to do, especially those things in addition to the obvious duties that go with the job title? What exactly are the benefits that go with the position? What kinds of resources does she have access to in order to do her job? The role of supervision. How, and from whom, does she get supervision? When does she have to check with someone before she does things, and when can she act on her own? Who will she supervise, and what is the role of supervision in this particular organization? There are at least two ways of looking at supervision. One consists essentially of the supervisor as watchdog, making sure that the staff member does her job right, and follows the rules of the organization. Too often, this has been the model followed in education, the one that generates horror stories of teachers being fired because their skirts were too short, or because they were critical of an assigned text. The other view of supervision sees it as a mentoring relationship, aimed at improving performance through constructive feedback, suggestions, and discussion of situations. This is the model used most often in counseling and psychology, and more frequently now in education, medicine, and other areas. The people the new staff person will be working with, including other staff of the organization, staff from other organizations, and people in the community. The day-to-day routine of the organization and of the site where the staff person will be working -- where everything is; who to ask for what; the guidelines for the use of computers, copiers, and other office equipment; who answers which phones; when lunch and payday are; where to park; how to use health and other benefits; etc. This area would also include instruction in security procedures, the use of office equipment, software, phone and fax systems, etc. The organizational culture -- how people treat one another, and what kind of work behavior is considered "normal. Understanding of and familiarity with the population the organization serves. Understanding of and familiarity with the community and context within which the organization operates -- local supporters and detractors, local politics, funders, other organizations, etc. Regardless of his previous background, any new staff member needs to be able to employ his skills in the specific ways required by his new position and by the organization. There may be other issues here as well. The organization may expect participants to be treated in certain ways. Organizational vocabulary may be different than in other places. Many organizations refer to participants as "clients," for example, while others consider that term disrespectful. The purpose of training, after all, is to ensure that every staff member performs his responsibilities as well as possible. Many people and organizations believe that education is not a thing you get, but a process that continues throughout life. As a result, they encourage staff members to continue their training far beyond the basics that the organizations supply. Some organizations require that staff members spend a minimum number of hours a year in professional development; others leave it up to the

individual, but provide some kind of support. Many organizations work with staff members to design an individual professional development program for each one. The employee might draft his own plan, or it might be a joint endeavor. In forming guidelines for orientation, training, and professional development, there are some general questions that need to be considered. Who will actually conduct the training in each area?

Chapter 7 : Call Center Manager Certification Training - CCCM - RCCSP

Online Training. Nexstar offers online training that supports our classroom training and the ideology of Nexstar's Call Center Excellence coaches. CSRs and dispatchers have their own website to watch video modules, participate in e-learning courses and download scripts, tools and visual aids.

We asked for training tips and have been amazed by the response. Here are the 50 great tips we were sentâ€¦ 1. Start staff learning before they arrive A pre-induction learning portal is proving to be an excellent tool to dramatically improve engagement and productivity of new staff from their very first day. Lars Hyland Brightwave and Sky, the satellite television and media communications provider, worked together to build a pre-induction portal. Up to ten hours of learning covering product knowledge, compliance topics, as well as sales simulations, have led to staff arriving confident and competent. This has reduced induction training by one week and measurably improved sales and customer service performance. Use The Johari Window training tool Of course initial training of agents at recruit level is important, but so is continuous training, which should ideally be more than just quality monitoring alone. One training tool that can be used for continuous training is The Johari Window, an exercise that involves giving a group of advisors a list of job-related questions and asking them individually to categorise each question into the following grid. These questions can include anything from: To find out more on using this device, read our article: A Contact Centre Training Tool 3. This reinforces an emotional connection with customers. Training staff to create this emotional connection with the customer makes for memorable customer experience. This can be done through a variety of coaching, eLearning and group training methods. Use free online tools Kevin Stillwell Popular video-sharing websites such as YouTube are a cost-effective and brilliant way to keep your call centre training sessions interactive, fun and engaging. These videos act as a great discussion starter for training sessions. Staff can be given time to find their own examples of good and bad practice and share their learning with the team. Online video clips can also help to inspire other, more classic, training techniques such as role-play. Managers can show examples of poor customer service from YouTube and ask staff to role-play the way they think the call should have been dealt with. This ensures that the training is relevant to the trainee, and ensures that the trainees are more engaged. For example, those that already have an excellent knowledge level might only need a refresh e-learning, those that have an average level of knowledge could receive a half-day workshop, leaving those new to the subject or lacking in knowledge taking the full 1-day workshop. In addition, you are able to spend the training budget smarter by delivering training that has a bigger impact on the business. Thanks to Paul Wood, Silver Lining Solutions Ltd Call centres are great at training agents to be generic performers, and then we expect the cream of the crop to rise to the top once the employees are in a production environment. We can lose a prime opportunity to encourage superior performance from the first day on the floor. To build enthusiasm and make top performance an achievable goal, bring top-performing employees into the room to share their energy, passion and secrets for being the best in the business. Then you have a never-ending cycle of trying to break bad behaviours right out of the gate. This is especially true for training programmes that last for extensive periods of time. Get exceptional agents to deliver the training Finally, make sure you recruit agents with exceptional behaviour and performance to deliver on-the-job floor training. Are they hitting adherence targets and any other KPIs? Or are they mediocre performers? These agents will directly influence your trainees in a big way. Something to think about! Posted by Chris McCallister Follow the POPEA guidelines Be structured and let the delegates know what to expect, always engaging and ensuring everyone participates. Once the session is completed review the experience 1 â€” 10 and see if they feel the number has improved. If not, question why and ask for feedback and follow up. Ensure you have a lot of recap questions showing the session went well and everyone understood why they were there and what is expected of them going forward. Include a shadow visit as part of the recruitment process A work shadow visit is part of our recruitment process for our call operatives. They are issued with a questionnaire at the start of their visit. This is used as part of the interview process. Doing this provides 2 main benefits. Firstly, some trainees will come to conclusion that the job is not for them, thus lowering attrition rates, and secondly, it provides the

introductory questions base at face to face interview. It gives a real insight into our world, the calls, and shift working. Thanks to Philly Hewlett Pilot groups A great place to start with developing a coaching culture is to have a small group of people who participate in a pilot of the scheme. Pilot groups provide valuable feedback on how systems are working in practice, and allow any changes to be made before a wider launch. Pilot groups often become the biggest champions for successful projects and are of significant value when implementing wide organisational changes. Coaching does not need to be formal Vandy Massey I think all managers find they need to listen, and the type of listening you do and how you respond can both be forms of coaching. Communication is an integral part of being a manager and how you communicate can form a key part of coaching. Coaching conversations can take place anywhere, any time, for any length of time. In fact, sometimes the most effective coaching conversations can be the shortest. A few ideas for training on a budget: Partner with other similar companies In the areas of people skills and team working, it may be useful to partner with other similar-sized companies in the same area as you. Staff from each company could attend, with costs being shared proportionately. Skill-up line managers Skill-up line managers to deliver training to small groups of their staff on key topics that will improve productivity. It has the added advantage that people get to know their team mates better. Provide a library Provide a library of books and DVDs that people can use to increase their knowledge in their spare time. The company could make an initial investment and the collection could then be grown through setting up your own version of BookCrossings. Lunch and learn Start lunchtime learning sessions where staff can elect to deliver a session on their topic of choice. Great for upping the energy levels. Great for engaging staff. Top Tips for Induction Training Programmes When thinking about training, look closely at what skills are needed within your team. In a customer service call centre, training will often focus on product knowledge, complaint management or questioning techniques in first-call resolution. In a sales-based call centre, training will also focus on ensuring employees are able to advise customers on the best-fit product or service. Training is an ongoing process It is crucial to understand that training is an ongoing process; as markets, the business or products change, additional training will be needed. Geoff Sims, Managing Director of Hays Contact Centres Refresher training is a great way to deliver additional training to working agents. Individual training tailored to individuals Whilst every agent in the contact centre will be using the same software and equipment, each one will have different skills and personality. Training should reflect this, developing their skills without over-emphasising any one particular area. If possible, incorporate relevant training into the working day, into the tasks and activities agents have to complete whilst dealing with customers. Mark Smith, Convergys Speed training Darren Benford The idea of speed training is based around engagement of staff in the call centre. This has been invented purely for the call centre market. Posted by Darren Benford " Business Development at Its a Career Thing Find out which activities and games are best to use when training call centre employees, read our article: We have created an online training simulation for a major US telecoms company, to train their staff in call handling, whether that be retention, troubleshooting or sales. All feedback can be printed out, allowing agents to refer to the documentation every time they have a similar real-life call. When recruiting, be clear about expectations One thing I believe is very important before any training is that you have to be sure everybody understands why they are there. Miguel Barcena You have to understand that the call centre environment is NOT for everybody before you provide training and then have recruits leave two months later when they realise it is not for them. After they understand this, you can train them in whatever you want. As a trainer on a combination team of operations, recruiters and trainers, we trained for six months with new classes every three weeks. This time period gave the opportunity to integrate new methods, techniques and strategies to improve and deliver a better product and process. Efficient use of time in training is essential. In other words, make every minute count. Utilise the time in training by integrating the new information with practice. Be flexible within the classroom. This often requires a prepared, experienced, connected trainer. Trainers should be held accountable for the trainees at least six weeks after training is finished Tracking new-hire classes for retention and performance should be done in order to improve the training curriculum and content as well as to place emphasis on the value of the training experience. Often trainers are guilty of standing and delivering material and not thinking of the impact of the training experience. Rarely have I seen the training department accountable for the retention and

performance of new hires. This is a must. Trainers should be involved in the transition from training to production. Often there are gaps in this process. The success of the training class often hinges on this transitional period. Many companies make the transition time a joint effort between trainers and subject-matter experts. Trainers should be a support to operations. Patricia Carroll This may be done by periodically handling calls on the Operations floor, or it could be done by helping supervisors with operational tasks. Monitoring quality would be an excellent way of support, and trainers must be involved in calibration sessions with Operations in order to make sure that quality is maintained. I can not emphasise enough quite how important it is to include the training department as part of the Operations Team. Trainers deliver a product that supports the production of the Operations team. The training process should be a tool that is used often and assists in the success of the entire centre. Handling calls during induction training Handling calls during the initial training session is an activity that can not be eliminated from the curriculum.

Chapter 8 : Call Center Training - Nexstar Network

Some call this On the Job Training (OJT) or side-by-side training. This strategy allows the new associate to see first hand the different facets of the position. Also, OJT allows the new hire the opportunity to develop a working relationship with an existing associate.

Next page This chapter describes recommended selection criteria for call center CSRs, supervisors, and managers as well as training course content and syllabus topics for all three categories of staff. The number of personnel in each of these categories and the training requirements in a given call center will obviously depend on the size of the call center, that is, how many "seats" there are in the center. CSRs are the prime human resource focus of the call center, as they should be, because they are the first point of contact with the customer. Supervisors are usually responsible for managing a certain number of CSRs, and managers may have the overall responsibility for the call center operation. Most centers do not train their supervisors in these skills, nor do they evaluate candidates for these skills during the candidate selection process. This chapter provides recommended evaluation criteria for new call center employees, as well as specific course outlines for staff training sessions. Supervisor and management training programs should not be the extent of the learning process, however. Ongoing learning should also include attending industry conferences and reading trade publications. Networking with other call center supervisors and managers is also a good source of learning and acquiring useful knowledge. Testing the waters It is easier for CSRs to make the transition to supervise if they have been well prepared during their time on the front lines. CSRs who exceed performance objectives, demonstrate leadership abilities, communicate well, are technically competent, and have high-level customer service skills should be offered the opportunity to learn other functions and to move into management positions. Call center managers should continually seek out CSRs who are interested in learning and should find learning opportunities for those CSRs who express an interest in a particular area. For example, for CSRs who express the desire to become trainers, managers should provide opportunities for these individuals to help out with the training group, either by assisting in training development or even conducting a training session. Other occasions for these CSRs to try out their management or training skills occur, for example, when a supervisor is out of the center for an extended period of time e. On such occasions, a senior-level agent could be asked to be an interim team leader. CSRs aspiring to management roles can also be encouraged to represent their call centers in organizationwide, cross-functional project meetings. Developing formal and informal methods of nurturing and growing aspiring CSRs into call center supervisors and managers may be time-intensive, but it is also necessary to ensure a successful transition into management. It is difficult for people to be placed in a leadership situation when they are not prepared for the role, either formally or informally. Motivating call center employees The aspects of the work environment that motivate call center employees are the same ones that motivate employees in any other work environment, plus some that take into account the special responsibilities of call center staff. These motivational factors, not necessarily in order of significance, can be summarized as follows:

Chapter 9 : Call Center Staffing & Recruiting Services

In the call centre industry, if the correct training packages are in place, a candidate doesn't necessarily need the right experience. If he or she has the right attitude and they want to develop, they are often more likely to stay longer because they feel valued.

View Customer Stories Share: Customers expectations for service are always increasing and call center training is a crucial part of the puzzle. Improving performance management and training best practices in the call center is key to keeping your customers happy. Customers rely only on those organizations where they get a quicker solution to their problems and get to interact with skilled agents. From taking orders to providing customer support, sticky situations are bound to arise. But how you handle these situations can mean the difference between creating loyal customers and losing business. Boosting agent productivity comes down to training and empowerment. Call center agent training best practices: Here are 20 actionable call center agent training tips and best practices you can use starting today: Empower your agents An agent that is provided with the appropriate tools to empower them to make decisions on behalf of the company is crucial. A highly trained agent with the power of decision will not only ensure higher customer satisfaction, but will also enable single call resolution and thus result in a more positive customer experience. Training should be varied and engaging Try and move away from monotonous training. Handling calls during induction training Handling calls during the initial training session is an activity that can not be eliminated from the curriculum. It is imperative that the new hires receive practice handling real-time calls. There is no substitute for this experience. Role-play is good, but real call handling is essential. Operations should make this a priority. Host monthly meetings with department representatives Schedule monthly calibrations with representatives from all of our different departments to review calls. The agents will feel incentivised to do their best. Make sure all feedback is clear and actionable It is really important that you deliver feedback that agents can respond to. Make sure all feedback you give is clear and actionable. Create opportunities for agents to discuss quality with their peers It is important to create opportunities for agents to discuss quality with their peers. Quality and best practice in the call centre should not be driven solely by manager-to-agent conversations. Lunch and learn Start lunchtime learning sessions where staff can elect to deliver a session on their topic of choice. Great for upping the energy levels. Great for engaging staff. Buddy-up your new starters with your best performers Use your best agents to support the training of new starters. Building relationships early with the top performers makes new agents want to be like them " rather than copying the worst performers! Offer incentives for achieving team goals Another call center customer service best practice is to offer incentives each month to our agents who successfully meet their team goals. For example, handing out tokens for prize draws. The resulting information not only creates training opportunities but also enables refinement of scripts, improving the overall performance of the contact centre. Align Performance Management with your wider strategy Make sure your whole approach to Performance Management is aligned to a wider customer service strategy and employee engagement programme. Your call center agents can then see the bigger picture and are more likely to buy in. Create an agent workgroup to set targets and KPIs This will help you set realistic and achievable targets that staff will buy into, as well as help change the perception of your senior management team as to the definition of high performers. Separate call accuracy from customer service Break your quality measures down to address specific focus areas for agents. For example, split call accuracy from customer service, as someone could be great at one but awful at the other. This will give you a greater ability to give agents praise where it is due, but also address any areas in need of development. Business Knowledge All good business people understand that knowing your customers increases your ability to serve them, retain them and grow your base. Business knowledge is power. This is because the only long-term competitive advantage for any organisation is the collective brain power of its people. Build an open and transparent company culture Being open and transparent with your agents over time will build a culture where feedback and coaching is the norm " and fear will subside. Always make sure your agents identify with your values In the training process, concentrate on how agents bond with the supervisors and identify with your core values. If you identify

someone who does not share your values during the training process, you may have to let the agent go right away. Ask your agents for feedback on their training session Provide your agents with feedback forms at the end of each training session to gain a wider understanding of how they feel the training session went and also to see if, how and what you can improve. Tell us your best practices for training your call center agents, do you have any tips you would like to share?