

Agent training tips for productive-from-anywhere contact centers

The modern customer spends **17 hours on screens a day**,¹ turning to social streams for advice and the web for answers. They order and return products online—often, without human interaction. In fact, **68% prefer self-service for simple support**.² But when they do want to talk to a person, **59% expect to connect easily**³ to an agent who already has the answer.

How do you train agents to be everywhere and everything whenever customers need them?

With these tips.

01

SOFT SKILLS.

The primary ingredient for today's agents.

Soft skills are a measure of emotional intelligence. Such skills include interpersonal traits that promote positive interactions with others.



75% of agent's long term success depends on people skills⁴



but **35%** of companies struggle finding experienced agents⁵

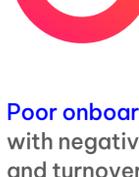
Instead of hiring new, **cultivate and reskill agents.**

02

ONBOARDING.

First impressions aren't just for customers.

Skill training should begin at day 1. **But...**



Only **2%** of onboarding is spent training high-value skills⁶



82% improvement in new-hire retention for organizations with strong onboarding⁷

Poor onboarding directly corresponds with negative employee engagement and turnover, which can lead to loss of valuable time, resources, and revenue.

TIPS



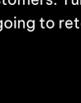
Have a heart.

Provide examples of interactions that demonstrate aspects of empathy and active listening. Reinforce learning with low-stakes scenario-based mock evaluations or role play.



Know your customer.

Integrate customer context into the agent desktop to help agents get it right the first time and empower them to establish more meaningful interactions.



Use the buddy system.

Provide real-life experience from a seasoned peer with virtual-friendly shadowing. Pair top performers with new agents, mutually benefiting professional growth for both.

03

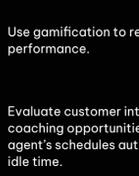
EVERBOARDING.

First impressions aren't just for customers. Turn onboarding into ongoing to retain agents.

Agents to resolve increasingly complex interactions, agents need frequent ongoing training to reinforce and develop their skills. **But...**

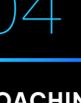


55% of agents say they need better training to do their jobs well⁸



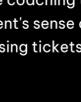
And, only **9%** of contact centers have formal ongoing training⁹

TIPS



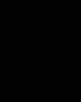
Level-up.

Use gamification to recognize and incentivize positive performance.



Eight days a week.

Evaluate customer interactions to identify training and coaching opportunities. Embed bite-size training into agent's schedules automatically to enhance skills during idle time.



Reinforce in real-time.

Agents need in-the-moment guidance to recognize, change behavior and see how changes improve customer satisfaction in the moment, which acts as built-in reward reinforcement.

04

COACHING.

Use coaching to foster your agent's sense of purpose beyond closing tickets.

How you treat your agents is how they'll treat your customers. Remind them they matter and help develop a lasting career at your company.

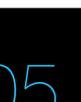


70% of variance in agent engagement scores and motivation stems from management¹⁰



21% business results improvement from leaders who coach effectively¹¹

TIPS



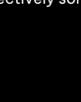
Be there in spirit.

Walk the floor even in remote environments and respond in real time to your agent's support and performance needs.



Make a formal date.

Foster a culture of connection with frequent, personalized coaching so you're always seeing eye-to-eye, even when you're not face-to-face.



Get personal.

Make agents feel valued by giving them clear, objective goals and showing them how their performance creates impact in real-time.

05

TECHNOLOGY.

Just like your customers, your employees want tools to effectively solve their problems.

The right tools enable frictionless experiences for agents, too.

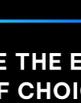


60% of agents lack tools they need to deliver meaningful CX¹²



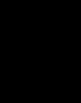
50% of organizations report dramatic shifts in responsibilities due to adding channels¹³

TIPS



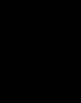
Smart self-service.

Use smart self-service and automation to remove repetitive tasks plaguing agent workloads and keep them engaged with more fulfilling work.



Phone (or message) a friend.

Augment and elevate agent performance by integrating agent assistance to connect agents to the right answer at the right time.



Encourage channel surfing.

Give your agents the same frictionless experience customers want by unifying their tools in a single environment.

06

BE THE EMPLOYER OF CHOICE.

Investing in your agents pays off.



69% who have a positive employee experience are more likely to remain at their job for 3+ years¹⁴

Agents



80% say the experience a company provides is as important as its product or services¹⁵

Customers



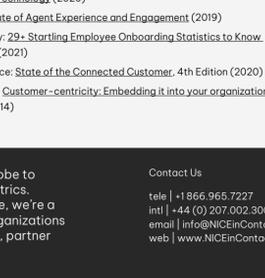
60% more profitable than companies not focused on customer experience¹⁶

Business

Get more out of your most valuable resource.

This comprehensive guide will help you formalize an agent training program that inspires customer and agent retention alike.

[Get your guide!](#)



¹ Vision District: [How much time do we spend looking at screens](#) (2020)
² Salesforce: [State of the Connected Customer](#), 3rd Edition (2019)
³ Havas Worldwide/Market Probe International: [Prosumer survey](#) (2019)
⁴ American Management Association: [The Hard Truth about Soft Skills](#) (2019)
⁵ Metrigig Research: [AI improves customer experience, call center efficiency](#) (2020)
⁶ ICM: [State of Agent Experience and Engagement](#) (2019)
⁷ Glassdoor: [The True Cost of a Bad Hire](#) (2015)
⁸ Salesforce: [State of Service](#), 4th Edition (2020)
⁹ ICM: [State of Agent Experience and Engagement](#) (2019)

¹⁰ TINYpulse: [The 2019 Employee Engagement Report: The End of Employee Loyalty](#) (2019)
¹¹ Deloitte: [Coaching an Imperative for Leaders](#) (2018)
¹² The Taylor Reach Group, Inc.: [Contact Center Industry Stats - Technology](#) (2020)
¹³ ICM: [State of Agent Experience and Engagement](#) (2019)
¹⁴ TechJury: [29 Startling Employee Onboarding Statistics to Know in 2020](#) (2021)
¹⁵ Salesforce: [State of the Connected Customer](#), 4th Edition (2020)
¹⁶ Deloitte: [Customer-centricity: Embedding it into your organization's DNA](#) (2014)