Effective Training for At-Home Contact Center Agents:
The 'Why' and the 'How'

LIVEVOX

If recent developments have forced your company's contact center to suddenly shift to a primarily work-from-home set-up, you might be tempted to go into survival mode.

However, ensuring that you're investing in your most vital asset - your people - has never been more important. And, it can be done in a way that integrates into the core processes and workflows of your operation.

Here's the 'Why' and the 'How' of delivering effective training to your new at-home workforce.

WHY INVEST TIME AND EFFORT INTO TRAINING NOW?

- **New circumstances require new skills, support, and coaching.**

  A robust quality management process, that covers all interactions on all channels, will be vital as new circumstances lead to new performance and compliance trends. This process will have to include training and coaching if you're going to be able to respond to these trends.

  You'll also need to prepare and train your agents for new processes and workflows, so it's vital that you're able to provide that onboarding remotely.

- **This is exactly the time your agents need to feel most empowered.**

  A rapid change to a work from home arrangement could put agents out of their comfort zone. For them to carry out their jobs effectively, and deliver an excellent customer experience, they need to feel confident and empowered.

  Training and coaching can help to instill confidence by both onboarding new skills, and ensuring agents feel supported in their new circumstances.

- **Giving your agents a path forward is key to holding on to them.**

  Industry average agent turnover is 44%[1] and **42% of Millennials say they would likely leave a role in which they felt they were not learning fast enough[2].** And, now the genie is out of the bottle the demands and expectations for people to be able to work remotely are not going to go away.

  These two things combined mean that the ability to deliver training and coaching remotely is going to be key to holding on to your best people, now and in the future.

- **Stay competitive**

  According to a Salesforce study, **77% of service decision-makers are making significant investments in agent training** and **63% say that improving workforce skills is a high priority in the next two years[3].**

1. **Avoxi** - https://www.avoxi.com/blog/call-center-attrition-turnover-rates/
2. **Deloitte** - https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends/2017/learning-in-the-digital-age.html
3. **Salesforce** - https://c1.sfdcstatic.com/content/dam/web/en_us/www/documents/reports/salesforce-research-third-edition-state-of-service.pdf

Industry leaders are not going to give up on their commitment to training and development because of current circumstances, and neither should you.

- **Keep team spirit alive**

  In the office, colleagues are easily able to support, encourage, and congratulate one another. This sense of togetherness is vital for keeping teams happy and high-performing.

  Agent-to-agent chat, video conferencing etc. are good starters, but training will play a key role in ensuring that agents feel supported and valued and supervisors feel in control and in touch with their teams.

HOW TO GO ABOUT TRAINING AN AT-HOME WORKFORCE

- **Use quality resources (and they don't have to come at a premium).**

  Alternatives to expensive, third-party training resources may be close at hand - think about what system you have in place that will enable you to leverage internal expertise and assets as training resources.

  Adding a step into your current quality monitoring process to identify call and screen recordings that could double as learning resources can be an easy way to provide training materials to your team that are practical and bespoke to your business.

- **Distribute resources and assign tasks effectively.**

  Sending training out via email attachments very quickly gets messy, complicated, and almost impossible to track. Think about adopting a system that will allow you to distribute relevant resources to your team, and then track acknowledgment, progress, completion, assessment scores, and more.

  The best solutions also include a built-in discussion forum so that agents and supervisors can provide feedback and engage in a dialogue.

- **Be smart with targeted coaching**

  Good training addresses specific needs, but identifying these presents a challenge. Having easy access to actionable agent performance data is the key here. If you have access to metrics beyond standard contact center KPIs, you'll be able to gain deeper insight into how individual agent performance is affecting your business' bottom line.

  Here's where you can leverage other agents' expertise and call recordings - when their strengths correspond with coworkers' weaknesses.

- **Know that your efforts are worth it**

  You can track assessment scores, but if learnings aren't being reflected in the operations of your contact center, then it is a waste of time.

  Again, it comes down to having access to business insights. That means being able to track individual agent performance over time, as well as being able to see the overall performance, quality, and compliance trends that will spell success or failure for your operation.

- **1:1 coaching is still important**

  There are many tools and strategies out there all ready to help you, but, digital training can only get you so far. 1:1 coaching and support is still going to be vital. So get ready for lots of video calls.