

Call Centres can be good for business

Why is it that call centres have such a poor reputation? The news is littered with stories of unhappy customers receiving poor after service care, with the general misconception that all call centres are packed with lines of de-motivated staff, with only a basic knowledge of the product or service they are supporting.

More importantly, bad call centres can have a negative effect on your brand, simply because ineffective strategies have been rolled out across that part of the business. It doesn't matter how innovative your product or service is, if your company doesn't have a well managed customer support area, you will find it difficult to hold onto your customers.

One of the most common mistakes, one which I have never understood, is moving consistent, well performing call centre staff into management roles and away from the front line of customer service. Often when these top-performers are promoted to managing others, they are replaced with less talented individuals. But many good call centre staff are wilfully independent workers, so can find management roles stressful and de-motivating. Ultimately, the result is the business loses out on two fronts.

Breaking the traditional call centre model and finding other ways of incentivising staff without incurring these business costs is something that we at Easynet Connect are proud of. We believe the best contact centre staff should remain on the frontline of any successful operation. Our UK-based call centre invests time and effort in constantly ensuring that staff feel valued and are offered suitable opportunities to progress and improve.

Our Skyline training system helps to regularly monitor employee development. With a yearly examination of skillsets, abilities and technical knowledge, we ensure only those better suited to line management are promoted in this way. The workforce is assured in the knowledge that we will help them find the best path in career progression according to the skills and interests they possess and build upon. We think contact with customers should aid and not detract from personal development. By using our Skyline system, the most successful frontline staff can often out-earn those in managerial positions.

Another way we challenge the typical call centre model is by placing technical experts on the front line. Customers speak directly to a specialist capable of answering their query immediately. This saves both the business and the customer time and effort. Customer satisfaction is enhanced further by allocating every customer to a team member who stays with them until their issue has been resolved. This ownership guarantees a more personalised service, business continuity and deeper knowledge of the customer's needs.

In a time when businesses are still unsure of the economic climate, retaining the best staff has never been more important. In an industry where a staff turnover rate of 30% is not uncommon, our rate of 2% proves the importance of challenging the typical call centre management model. Creating an environment where call centre staff are challenged, supported and valued is crucial to ensuring the success of the business. Service providers cannot expect to thrive in such a competitive industry unless all areas of their business are effective. We couldn't see ourselves further away from the ethos that staff should "serve time" in customer service. If we did, we'd be guilty of treating our customers as if they don't matter, and ultimately we'd be the ones paying the price.

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