SUCCESSFULLY ONBOARDING CALL CENTER AGENTS RAISES retention, improves performance and accelerates the time to full productivity. But in many contact centers, new-hire orientation can be downright disorienting to the agent, and a big challenge to the contact center manager. The results can be costly: Without adequately trained agents both customer service quality and agent productivity suffers. Combine this with a typically high annual churn in contact centers—between 20 and 50 percent—and you have a major challenge, no matter what business you are in.

This brief outlines the key challenges around onboarding and retaining new agents, the impact on customers, and how Oracle Service Cloud customers approach this with success.

TRAINING AGENTS TAKES TIME AND INVESTMENT
Call center managers are investing more time, money, and effort into the development of training programs so that their call center agents will be prepared to meet the increasing expectations of customers. The deluge of information, policies, and resources thrown at them over a short time often leaves new agents with their heads spinning. They are trained on everything from company mission and vision to products and services, to etiquette, to adherence of KPIs. It quickly becomes clear that training new agents is a big endeavor; not only in terms of productivity loss, but in terms of the programs and resources involved.

Impact on Customers
Frustration is the number one thing customers feel when they are not routed to a skilled agent ready to resolve their issue. When an agent doesn’t know what to do, interactions take longer than necessary and negative customer feelings deepen. Even worse, when trust erodes, customers will switch to another brand for a better service experience.

Oracle’s Solution
Businesses can allow new agents to ease into cases by routing the easiest ones first. By setting up agent profiles, queues, and business rules, they can make sure only a subset of simple queries are routed. Once the agents have gained experience, they can be moved to different queues and get different profiles. The Oracle Service Cloud platform makes it easy for business users to configure and change on the fly.

Agents should also have a different agent desktop depending on their experience level. New hires will have a desktop that is more simple and prescriptive. Businesses can design and deploy different agent desktops based on profiles and experience levels without dependency on technical resources or IT.

THE WRONG TOOLS NURTURE THE WRONG SKILLS
The contact center is known for being a difficult place to work, which makes attracting and retaining quality customer service agents a tough undertaking—especially if you aren’t setting agents up for success. Agents need easy access to relevant information and tools to ensure every interaction goes smoothly.

Impact on Customers
Customers don’t want to spend time waiting for answers to their problems. If they receive incorrect or inconsistent answers, they’ll need to contact customer service again, which can be costly for the business. Plus, if unhappy customers take to social media, a brand can lose customer loyalty and social followers.
Oracle’s Solution

Scripting can guide agents through the necessary steps to resolve issues—they can go screen-by-screen, reading the script out loud and clicking through the process. Additionally, contextual knowledge automatically delivers answers to agents, without them having to search for them. Agents can even create and navigate decision trees to triage and solve issues effectively. Not only have Oracle customers retained top talent using these tools, they’ve seen a significant reduction in training time.

SUPERVISORS LACK INSIGHT INTO AGENTS’ SKILLS

With so many separate contact center systems and technologies jumbled together, getting accurate and consistent reporting poses a colossal challenge to contact center managers. Supervisors may not be able to monitor and report on agent metrics to understand the impacts of service quality. Even worse, they may not be able to view performance across all channels, teams, and locations.

Impact on Customers

With large teams of agents, it’s often difficult to spot those who push down customer satisfaction rates. Meeting customer satisfaction (CSAT) goals can be especially challenging with new agents, as they have not yet gained the experience and skills to support customers. The impact of customers having to deal with inexperienced agents is significant, not only in terms of frustration and time, but because they’re often unable to voice frustration about the experience.

Oracle’s Solution

After initial training, new agents typically go through a transition period where supervisors closely monitor them until they’ve reached the desired skill level. Advanced reporting and analytics capabilities can help monitor and track the performance of new hires. It is easy to track KPIs like CSAT, AHT, etc. to individual agents. By using the automated post-incident surveys that are sent to customers and monitoring case threads and live chats, quality and consistency can be ensured. Comprehensive reporting and analytics also provide an audit trail, which is critical in many industries and allows for continued monitoring of service center operations so management can spot gaps and opportunities for reinforcement training.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW ORACLE SERVICE CLOUD CUSTOMERS ARE:

- Ensuring new hires get the easiest cases
- Offering multiple desktops for different experience levels
- Using agent scripts extensively
- Using contextual knowledge
- Tracking performance of new hires

cloud.oracle.com/service