

Who wants a call center line that is engaged 24 hours a day?

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What is the one and only thing you want to do when you have a customer service issue? Speak with someone by telephone, right away. So an engaged line doesn't sound like your ideal option, but think again.

Despite all the marvelous technical evolutions such as self-service, automated-channels with cognitive tools, chatbots and more, ultimately contact center agents are still key for customers. People trust the human connection and real living, breathing call center agents are essential to an excellent customer experience.

Whilst many companies are working on how to achieve 'Customer Excellence' via this channel, they fail to take into consideration that customer service success is directly linked to employee engagement: happy employees make happy customers.

And guess what? If employees do not feel engaged, you are probably already offering a poor service - the line might as well be busy. Instead what you want is a line that is answered by staff who are *engaged*.

Here are some tips to promote employee engagement in contact centers and ensure customers get the best experience possible:

- Establish **the right competency framework** to ensure that you are matching current and future employees to the positions that best fit with their skills. This helps avoid lack of motivation and frustration, and promotes their confidence to enable them to deliver the best service.
- Empower contact center employees and give them **clear principles** (more than giving them strict rules) and authorization levels to discuss with clients. In that manner, agents will feel valued by the company and more clearly understand the company value proposition for clients.
- Offer employees the **best work environment**. This is not only about ergonomic chairs and good office equipment. This is also about providing employees with the right training, user-friendly tools, clear and humanized communications and support from supervisors; it is also about offering clear rules for professional career development and opportunities, as well as managing expectations honestly, transparently and objectively.
- Give competitive, **living-wage salaries** that are accompanied by a comprehensive range of benefits such as healthcare. There should also be an attractive incentives program to make sure that employees are fairly recognized and rewarded. Companies should provide dignity to the role of a contact center agent, whilst also promoting productivity improvements based on incentives.

All these tips will help companies to retain the best and most talented agents - and we've been following these for several years now at Hotelbeds Group across 9 hubs globally, who together cover 20 languages, 24 hours a day.

By motivating staff to do their best and improving the customer experience, the investment is already paying dividends.

And if you don't do this? Despite having a real person on the other end of the line, your customers

may end up with the impression that they are speaking with a robot anyway.

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