

# Agent training tips for productive-from-anywhere contact centres

The modern customer spends **17 hours on screens a day**,<sup>1</sup> 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**.<sup>2</sup> But when they do want to talk to a person, **59% expect to connect easily**<sup>3</sup> 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

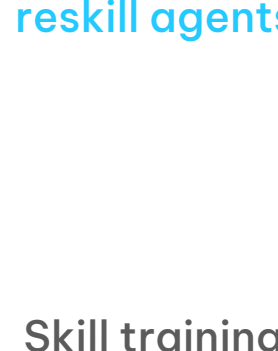
## SOFT SKILLS.

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 agents' long term success depends on people skills<sup>4</sup>



but **35%** of companies struggle finding experienced agents<sup>5</sup>

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 skills<sup>6</sup>



**82%** improvement in new-hire retention for organisations with strong onboarding<sup>7</sup>

**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.**

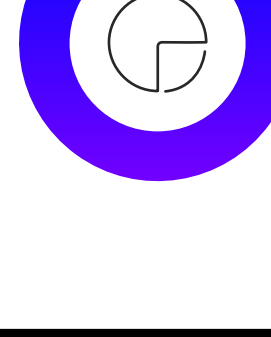
Provide real-life experience from a seasoned peer with virtual-friendly shadowing. Pair top performers with new agents, mutually benefiting professional growth for both.

03

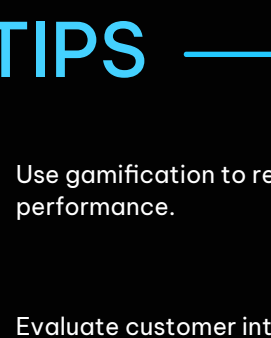
## EVERBOARDING.

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

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 well<sup>8</sup>



And, only **9%** of contact centres have **formal ongoing training**<sup>9</sup>

## TIPS



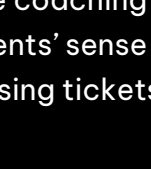
**Level-up.**

Use gamification to recognise and incentivise positive performance.



**Eight days a week.**

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



**Reinforce in real-time.**

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

04

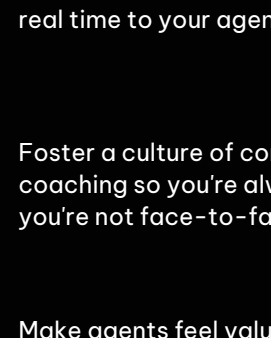
## COACHING.

Use coaching to foster your agents' 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 management<sup>10</sup>



**21%** business results improvement from leaders who **coach effectively**<sup>11</sup>

## TIPS



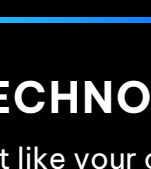
**Be there in spirit.**

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, personalised 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

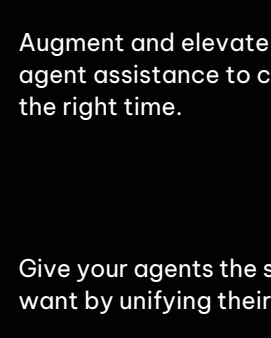
## TECHNOLOGY.

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 CX<sup>12</sup>



**50%** of organisations report **dramatic shifts in responsibilities** due to adding channels<sup>13</sup>

## 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+ years<sup>14</sup>

**Agents**



**80%** say the experience a company provides is as important as its product or services<sup>15</sup>

**Customers**



**60%** more profitable than companies not focused on customer experience<sup>16</sup>

**Business**

## Get more out of your most valuable resource.

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

[Get your guide!](#)



<sup>1</sup> Vision Direct: [How much time do we spend looking at screens](#) (2020)

<sup>2</sup> Salesforce: [State of the Connected Customer](#), 3rd Edition (2019)

<sup>3</sup> Havas Worldwide/Market Probe International: [Prosumer survey](#) (2019)

<sup>4</sup> American Management Association: [The Hard Truth about Soft Skills](#) (2019)

<sup>5</sup> Metrigay Research: [AI improves customer experience, call center efficiency](#) (2020)

<sup>6</sup> ICMi: [State of Agent Experience and Engagement](#) (2019)

<sup>7</sup> Glassdoor: [The True Cost of a Bad Hire](#) (2015)

<sup>8</sup> Salesforce: [State of Service](#), 4th Edition (2020)

<sup>9</sup> ICMi: [State of Agent Experience and Engagement](#) (2019)

<sup>10</sup> TINYpulse: [The 2019 Employee Engagement Report: The End of Employee Loyalty](#) (2019)

<sup>11</sup> Deloitte: [Coaching an Imperative for Leaders](#) (2018)

<sup>12</sup> The Taylor Reach Group, Inc.: [Contact Center Industry Stats - Technology](#) (2020)

<sup>13</sup> ICMi: [State of Agent Experience and Engagement](#) (2019)

<sup>14</sup> TechJury: [29+ Startling Employee Onboarding Statistics to Know in 2020](#) (2021)

<sup>15</sup> Salesforce: [State of the Connected Customer](#), 4th Edition (2020)

<sup>16</sup> Deloitte: [Customer-centricity: Embedding it into your organization's DNA](#) (2014)