



# Contact centre agent wellbeing

An Odigo eBook



# Table of contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>What does a workplace approach to wellbeing really change? .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Pay attention to agent pain points.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Satisfaction: building careers not just providing jobs.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The art of leadership.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Wellbeing, mental health, stress and the workplace.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Work-life balance.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Workplace culture.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Technology can support wellbeing initiatives.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>12</b>

# Introduction

The world has experienced perhaps the most seismic shift in working practices for decades. An opportunity exists to usher in a more holistic approach to customer services, one that focuses on wellbeing, empathy and human connection for employees as well as the customer. There are 3 new sets of factors which need to be balanced to ensure this new approach works for agents and businesses:



Should contact centre leaders react simply by problem-solving to target individual elements or by reinventing the approach to work with long term sustainability and employee wellness in mind? This eBook aims to explore the possibilities by considering the whole picture from several perspectives:

Putting forward the business and individual case for wellbeing.

Identifying measures to take in the work environment.

Valuing what agents do and helping them deliver more value.

Creating a flexible working system that operationalises best practices.



# What does a workplace approach to wellbeing really change?

“Good mental wellbeing doesn't mean you're always happy or unaffected by your experiences. But poor mental wellbeing can make it more difficult to cope with daily life.”

[mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk)

A no-stress work environment is fiction, but creating one that supports agents to develop resilience can mitigate the unavoidable pressures of the job. There are some stark figures that attest to the importance of helping support contact centre staff:



**40%** of UK adults aged 18-34 had experienced mental health issues over the previous 5 years and **28%** of those aged 35-54

[CCMA 2021 Vulnerable Customer report](#)



**59%** of contact centre agents feel confident about moving to a new job in the next few months.  
**46%** of call centre workers said they planned on leaving the industry within the next 3-6 months.

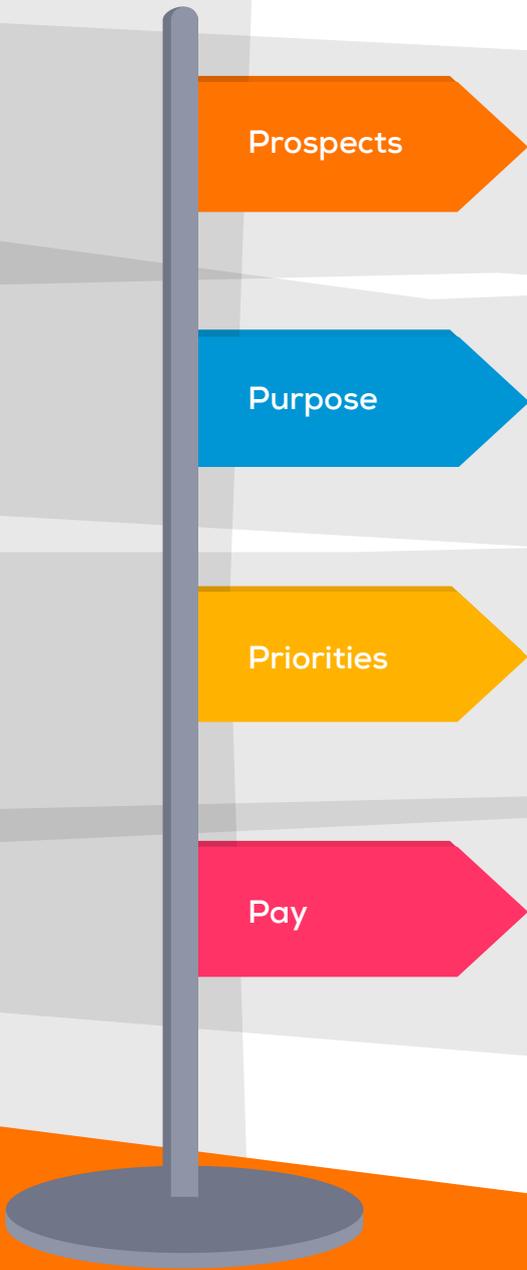
[Randstad UK 2021](#)

The benefits of workplace wellbeing initiatives are clear:

- Decrease levels of burnout and fatigue,
- Increase performance,
- Support a sustainable talent pool,
- Control costs related to **turnover and churn**.

# Pay attention to agent pain points

To promote wellbeing as well as productivity contact centres need to be aware of some general working-life pain points which have been **highlighted by the Great Resignation**;



## Prospects

No dead-end jobs, instead encourage continuous professional development. A **career path does not need to lead to management, but it can lead to purpose.**

## Purpose

Not the 'meaning of life' but a way to bring value to the time spent at work: sharing positive customer reviews and measurable contributions to team targets.

## Priorities

Sometimes family, childcare, or health issues mean a shift in priorities for agents. Flexible scheduling can help prevent a one or the other decision.

## Pay

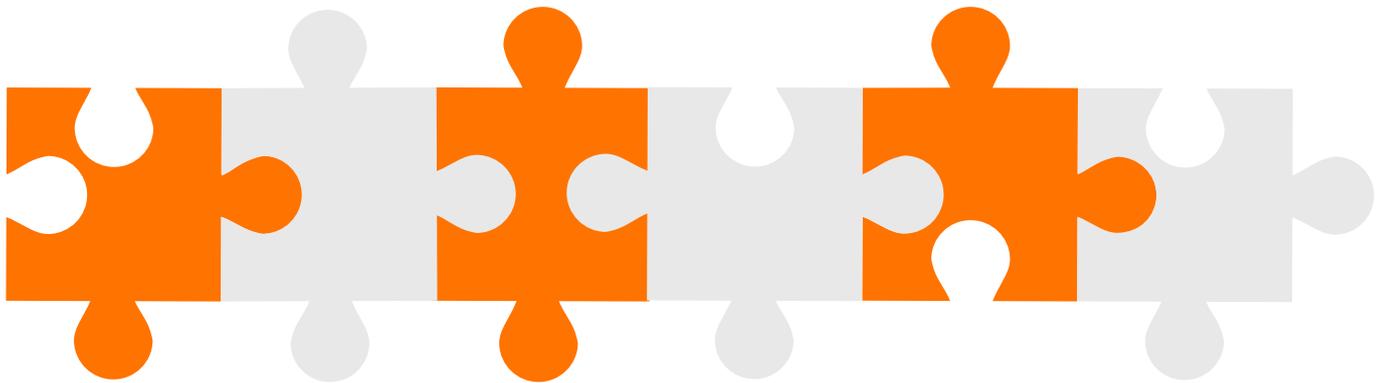
It is not always a reason to stay but stress about making ends meet can be a reason to leave.

Remember life changes, circumstances change so it's not a case of what matters most, supervisors and managers need to stay in touch with what matters most, right now.

# Satisfaction: building careers not just providing jobs

Job satisfaction is of course a component of wellbeing. When contact centres get it right, **agent satisfaction positively affects customer satisfaction**. There are also a host of other benefits like decreased turnover, increased productivity and reduced absenteeism. So is there a magic recipe? Not quite but there are some important components:

## Job satisfaction



Purpose    Challenge    Variety    Autonomy    Achievement    Self-worth

Contact centres are constantly adapting to customer expectations and outside pressures. Technology looks set to change things even further in the future with an increased reliance on agent soft skills while automation and AI deflect routine and repetitive tasks. As a result, agent training and development should be ongoing, and teamed up with recognition and sincere gratitude. Additionally, gamification strategies can introduce both the **instant and social rewards** which have been shown to be very motivational.

Job satisfaction is about motivating a team around their own priorities, and to do this supervisors need to ask! Career planning can be an opportunity to give powerful **unconditional positive feedback**, leave the constructive criticism for another time. By trusting people to rise to a new challenge, supervisors can help agents develop both autonomy and self-worth.

# The art of leadership

One in ten UK adults said their boss made them feel stressed!

CIPHR 2021

How can supervisors successfully lead whilst balancing the demands of the individual and business goals? As with many things, it's not always about what people do but **how that makes a difference:**



## **Lead by example**

Avoid being part of the problem by acting in the way expected of others including participating in self-care and wellness activities.

## **Keep a finger on the pulse**

It is easy to lose touch with what things are like for front-line agents and this means being less in touch with their day-to-day problems.

## **Cut the drama**

Toxic gossiping and bullying should not be tolerated.

## **Keep an open door**

Being approachable is key to finding out what is going on.

## **Positive mental attitude**

Unconditional positive feedback helps build agent autonomy and self-competence, which is linked to wellbeing.

## **Stay human**

Empathy, compassion and vulnerability promote authentic connection with agents.

## **Mind your Ps and Qs**

Don't take people for granted and express genuine gratitude.

# Wellbeing, mental health, stress and the workplace

Good mental health is a huge factor in promoting wellbeing. Ultimately everyone is responsible for their own mental health, but, ideally, places of employment should be supportive in several areas:

- **Education** about healthy lifestyle habits, be it courses, eBooks or knowledge articles.
- **Awareness** of team mates and self-awareness; knowing when to ask for and offer support.
- **Adaptability** to an agent's needs; altering break schedules or amending responsibilities can be crucial to healthy stress management.
- **Openness** encourages people to come forward and reduces stigma. A stiff upper lip culture of suffering in silence is a slippery slope leading to burnout.

## Not all stress is bad!

The key is **stress management** not eliminating stress. There is an optimal level of stress where the natural, physiological function of the stress response can help 'flow' or focus on important tasks. There need to be periods of recovery though, or chronic stress can lead to health problems. Encourage stress awareness, harness stress and improve resilience by making sure agents have the right conditions to rest and recover, too. For example:

- Microbreaks,
- Breathing exercises,
- Quiet or relaxing spaces.



# Work-life balance



**37%** employees would like to work on site  
**52%** would like a hybrid model  
**11%** would like to work remotely

**McKinsey 2021**

Organisations cannot afford to overlook agent preference and make assumptions that can contribute to poor work-life balance. For some an office environment may be stressful:



**8% of UK adults** said commuting caused stress  
**11%** said work colleagues caused stress

Crucially, however, new issues have also emerged as a result of enforced remote working practices:

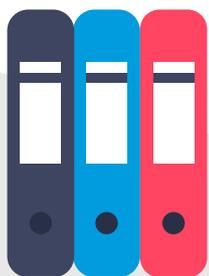
- Difficulty disconnecting from work,
- Deterioration of work-based social networks,
- Weakened sense of belonging.

A healthy balance is therefore not the same for everyone, or even the same year-in-year-out. Contact centres need to help agents achieve a dynamic balance via:

- Flexible working schedules,
- Customisable hybrid working,
- Clear end of day policy or routine to help agents disconnect.

# Workplace culture

If agents foster negative thoughts about the people or brand they work for it does not encourage a healthy mindset or hard work. Organisations can create the right environment for wellbeing and the development of brand ambassadors by attending to the 4 pillars of a functional workplace:



## Community

A community dynamic where employees are encouraged to cooperate and socialise across team, department and managerial levels creates a sense of belonging.



## Values

Taking the time to set company values, service statements and commit to charity help counteract the commonly reinforced opinions that it's all about targets and the money.

## Support

When your colleagues are supportive and understanding it can help decrease physiological stress.



## Healthy boundaries

Boundaries: physical, emotional and mental limits, help promote mutual respect within the workplace. Setting healthy limits help protect people from overcommitting, being taken advantage of or behaving unethically.



# Technology can support wellbeing initiatives

Contact Centre as a Service (CCaaS) solutions have capabilities that can be leveraged in 2 key ways to support wellbeing strategies:



Firstly, to support agents and increase satisfaction:

- Automate appropriate repetitive tasks to remove low satisfaction jobs from the workday.
- Route calls along multiple distribution rules so agents are matched with the customers who they are best suited to help.
- Harness artificial intelligence (AI) to transcribe details or fuel agent-assist suggestions so the next best step is always close at hand and reduce the need for scripts.
- Integrate all client interactions into a single history so agents have a 360-degree view of context and do not have to make customers repeat themselves.
- Provide all the tools agents need on a single interface so workflow is intuitive and not an extra hurdle to overcome.



Secondly, to operationalise wellbeing initiatives with:

- Workforce management for work-life balance and making time for wellness.
- Analytics can highlight agents who are struggling and underperforming.
- Widgets can link to a wellbeing knowledge base or resources.
- Integration of unified communications helps promote teamwork and spread messages of support.

## Conclusion

Business leaders now have a choice: 'They can continue to believe that they will deliver in the future because they have always delivered in the past. Or they can embrace this singular opportunity for change and work with their people—closely and transparently, with curiosity, respect, and a willingness to learn together instead of mandating—to discover a new and better way to work.'

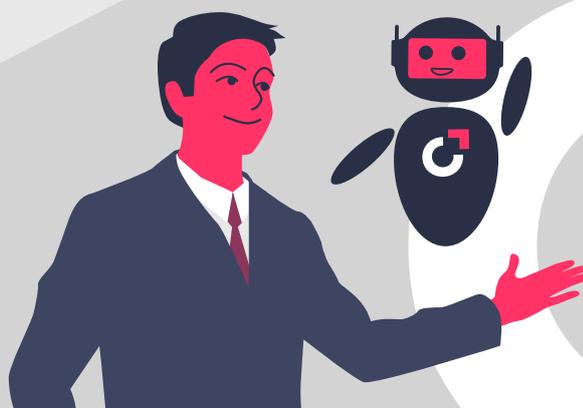
McKinsey

This process will require innovation, communication and organisation on the part of contact centre leaders. Technology can't lend a sympathetic ear but it can offer a helping hand. As these changes continue, **workforce management** will be a greater challenge but one for which **CCaaS solutions** are prepared. Furthermore contact centres can use this same customer service technology to empower agents to deliver greater value and experience greater satisfaction.

Customer experience  
inspired by empathy,  
driven by technology

To find out how Odigo can help you enhance the agent experience and build a future-ready contact centre contact an Odigo expert

Contact an Odigo expert





## About Odigo

Odigo provides Contact Centre as a Service (CCaaS) solutions that facilitate communication between large organisations and individuals using a global omnichannel management platform. With its innovative approach based on empathy and technology, Odigo enables brands to connect through the crucial human element of interaction, while also taking full advantage of the potential of digital.

A pioneer in the customer experience (CX) market, the company caters to the needs of more than 250 large enterprise clients in over 100 countries.

**Visit us:**  
[www.odigo.com/uk](http://www.odigo.com/uk)

**Contact us:**  
[contact.uk@odigo.com](mailto:contact.uk@odigo.com)



Odigo



Odigo



@odigo



@odigo\_tm

This document contains information that may be privileged or confidential and is the property of Odigo.  
Copyright © 2022 Odigo. All rights reserved.

Customer experience  
inspired by empathy,  
driven by technology