

Focusing on people and
their performance matters:
measure less encourage more



Today, companies are facing fierce competition. Brand-agnostic customers and stressed-out employees increase the pressure. With contact centres even more on the front line, this paper explores six key areas in which CX strategists and service leaders must stay ahead of the game.

1. Be clear on metrics that count

In a world where customer experience is the credo we need to live by, it's hard to imagine a company that doesn't believe in putting the customer first. That's why contact centre supervisors realise more is required than simply tracking old-fashioned productivity metrics like average handle time (AHT), first contact resolution (FCR) and occupancy rates. In fact, the old saying 'take care of your employees and they'll take care of your business' has never been truer.

Thankfully, things are changing. According to a [callcentrehelper](#) survey only a third of responders viewed AHT as the most important metric. Rather than using KPIs as a stick, today's carrot is to nurture and get the best out of people. While the line between encouragement and overburdening can be a fine one, getting it right quickly pays off.

Now, most contact centre performance management guidelines recommend reducing the number of metrics. It's advisable to aim for a focused combination of experience trackers like customer satisfaction (CSAT), customer effort score, net promoter score (NPS) and employee net promoter score (eNPS). Also, consider a reputational KPI such as Trustpilot, which resonates strongly with digital shoppers. And seek stats for capturing website and mobile app behaviours.

It also pays to keep a balanced view when it comes to interpreting and acting on metrics. For example, increasing AHT can be countered by intelligently raising call deflection, so agents deal with fewer calls but of greater quality.

2. Assure brilliant employee experiences

Studies repeatedly show that contact centre absence and attrition rates rise when staff become detached and demotivated. To earn their loyalty, managers must stop pushing people to the limit. Instead allow them more time to reset and make them feel energised, recognised, and rewarded.

[McKinsey](#) research shows that engaged and satisfied contact centre employees are four times more likely to stay than dissatisfied colleagues, 8.5 times more likely to stay than leave within a year, and 16 times more likely to refer friends to their company. The impact in terms of reducing attrition rates becomes even more significant given the high cost of recruiting and training replacement staff. Failing to encourage or record positive customer reviews equally so.

The key is making better use of technology to be sure of the right agent experience. So, for example, don't make everything task-based. Think instead about things that trigger agents' passion and commitment to perform while going above and beyond. Eliminate barriers that hinder both agents and customers. For instance, siloed data and complex systems that don't talk to each other lead to embarrassing pauses as staff search for the right information. Hardly the ideal customer journey.



Instead, play to people's different skills and comfort zones with solutions like [predictive routing](#). Then use machine learning to ensure agents only receive calls, emails, and messages they are best equipped to manage, increasing job fulfilment and satisfaction while improving KPI success.

Next, consider introducing [gamification tools](#) to make jobs more interesting and enjoyable, while enabling people to see how they measure up through scorecards and leader boards. Competitions and prizes can easily be linked to many of the metrics mentioned above. And it becomes easier to spot employee best practices and share behaviours that drive excellent results.

3. Maximise personal development opportunities

Investing time in training and development also plays a major part in employee retention. However, that doesn't mean waiting months to give feedback via appraisals and continuing to carry bad work practices and behaviours.

An [Officevibe](#) report revealed that four out of 10 workers feel actively disengaged when they get little or no feedback. Whereas companies that provide regular-and-often performance reviews have 15% lower staff turnover rates.

When employees are not adequately supported, it creates a bad experience for everyone. They get frustrated as they're forced to scramble around for information. Customer issues might go unresolved. And such poor experiences make it hard to retain either. Providing agents with timely support keeps knowledge levels high and avoids rushed learning. The result is greater customer satisfaction and assured repeat business.

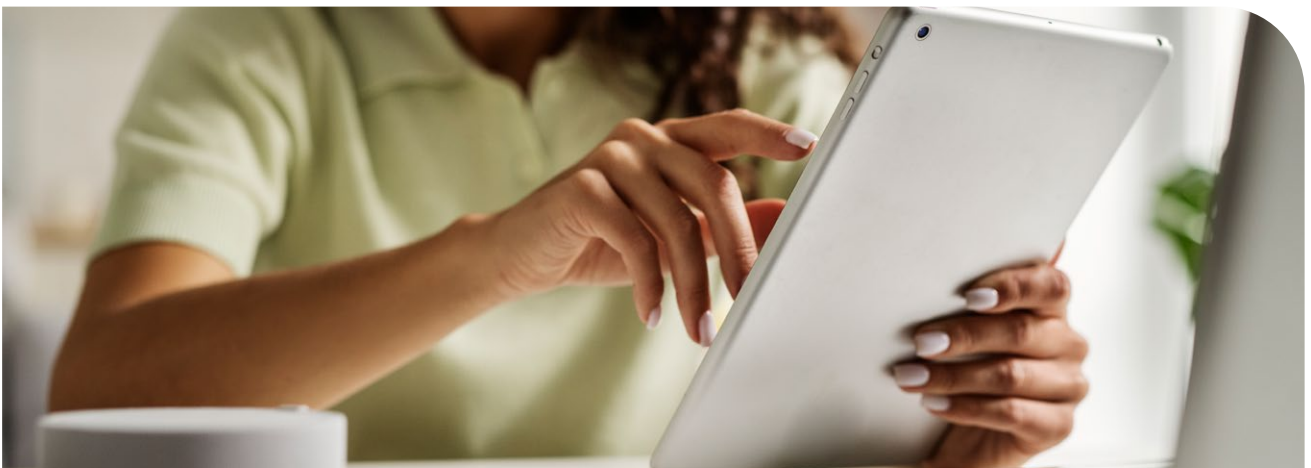
In today's hybrid workplace that requires [empowering coaching from anywhere while making it less onerous](#), one can create a central knowledge base while enabling supervisors to listen in, guide answers, and suggest helpful content – onsite or remotely from home. Not just on calls but across all channels. So, they're better equipped to tell agents what they do well and address training needs by instilling targeted personal development plans.

4. Replace guesswork with data-driven customer intimacy

Track customer sentiment during live interactions with tools like [speech and text analytics](#). For instance, to spot if the customer's tone changes during a call from neutral to frustrated or upset. At this point, the agent gets a digital cue or reminder to help steer the conversation back on track. That could be something as basic as not asking the customer to repeat information already provided, or not forgetting to remind them of certain product or service features. (There are tech fixes for both these common errors.)

Then extend the bounds of the analytical model. For example, it's easy to automatically provide agents with transcripts of bot conversations and previous case notes as a matter of course. Or develop AI-driven insights (from the current conversation or historical records) into what customers care about and what they want to achieve. And use that data to identify and design-in automation opportunities when designing bot and call flows.

In addition, look to integrate your cloud contact centre platform with [knowledge management](#) and [intelligent add-ons](#), surfacing personalised content that helps agents steer conversations for better outcomes.



5. Identify the right AI and automation tools

Automation strategies have become even more vital at a time when employees are harder to hold onto and customers more difficult to please. [Gartner](#) predicts one in 10 agent interactions will be automated by 2026.

Capitalising on that trend, popular use cases for deploying AI-powered bots, automations, and analytics (some of which we've already highlighted) could include:



Predicting customer intent

Maximising data from every recorded phone call, chat interaction and email to train machine learning models to understand customer intent inside conversations.



Making smarter routing decisions

Flag up-sell and cross-sell suggestions for advisors during customer conversations, or interactions presenting potential fraud and compliance risks.



Reducing customer churn

Combining all feedback, sentiment, and historic data to predict the propensity for customers to leave or offer a next-best action like a discount or promotion code.



Tracking customer effort

Joining the dots on unstructured feedback to uncover hidden frustrations and friction points within customer journeys.

Outside the contact centre, marketing departments are using AI and machine learning to convert more website visitors into customers. It's all about proactively engaging at exactly the right moment.

Yet, it would be wrong to think AI implementation is a walk in the park. It's not. IDC identified a shortage of skilled personnel and lack of relevant self-generated data as among the top five challenges. However, such gaps are easy to plug subject to selecting the right partner (see Final Thoughts).

6. Manage resources more accurately with less effort

Hybrid working as mentioned has now become part and parcel of contact centre life. A [survey](#) found that 44% of staff still operate 100% remotely, while 45% visited the office once or twice a week.

The shift has created new challenges in keeping employees engaged and managing training and performance from a distance. Extra communications and support mechanisms may be needed to monitor health and wellbeing, while ensuring remote workers don't start to feel isolated from colleagues and the wider team.

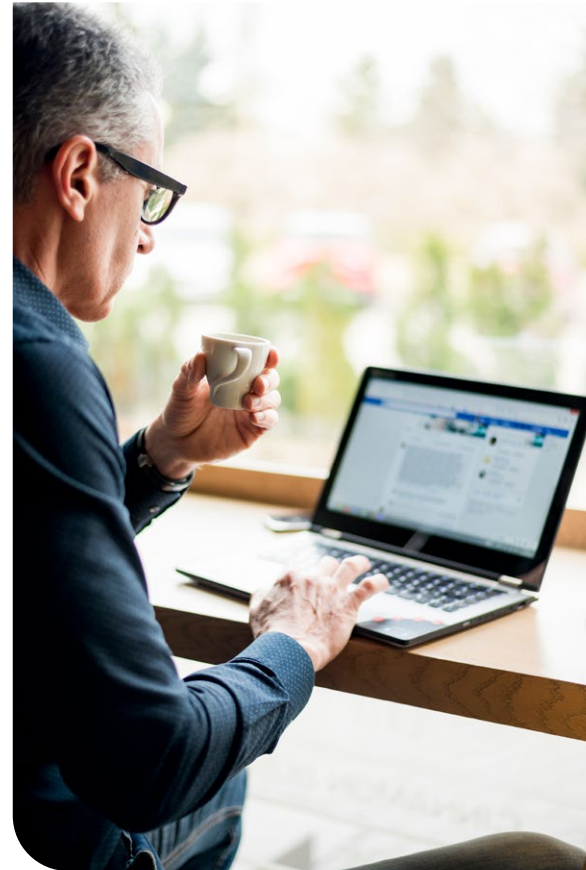
Companies adopting a full suite of workforce engagement management tools and processes are 60% more likely to have highly motivated employees according to [Frost and Sullivan](#). They enjoy greater profitability, productivity, customer satisfaction, and staff retention with less absenteeism, safety incidents and quality issues.

The organisations that seem to be getting this right are building a strong culture of value and trust.

Common features in their hybrid contact centre models include ensuring:

- ▶ **Transparent and unbiased work distribution**
- ▶ **Honest performance feedback supported by recorded facts**
- ▶ **Improved coaching and development by supervisors on-site or working remotely**
- ▶ **Fair reward and recognition systems**
- ▶ **Flexibility to trade shifts and holidays**
- ▶ **Clear career progression path**

So, when choosing a workforce management solution make sure it will do all the above and then watch your agents' superpowers appear.





Final thoughts: Select the right partner and technology

The chances of successfully achieving goals one to six greatly increase when building on a solid cloud foundation. In addition, making the correct choice of solution and partner can significantly reduce risks, expense, and time-to-benefits.

Look for an all-in-one cloud contact centre platform that comes pre-integrated with omnichannel features, AI automations and workforce management tools. Even better it should have pre-built integrations with leading tech companies like Google, AWS, Microsoft, Salesforce, or similar. Also make sure it has a strong R&D roadmap with regular new releases.

Having decided on the platform adopt guiding principles to ensure a successful, pain-free migration. Most important of all is not to rush. Make sure you allow sufficient time. Don't get forced into a big bang mindset, which invariably ends up shifting to the cloud legacy problems intrinsic to on-prem systems.

Choose a partner who understands the selected cloud platform inside-out and knows how to get the best from it. Ask to speak with their clients to hear their experiences firsthand. Check they have complementary expertise in networking, unified communications, and security along with digital capabilities like bot-building, software development and robotic process automation. And make sure these capabilities sit in-house and won't add more partner relationships to manage.

} About Kerv Experience

At Kerv, we leverage the power of technology to help our customers stay ahead, providing end-to-end cloud solutions and digital transformation. Our specialist CX practice, Kerv Experience, are an established Genesys Cloud CX gold platform partner. Kerv Experience's deep expertise helps you completely personalise your digital customer experience, improve customer insights, reduce effort with seamless integrations and automation and to deliver amazing service when it matters most. As the current Genesys EMEA New Logo Partner of the year, we help deliver exceptional CX to our customers through the deployment of cloud, digital, data and AI technologies.

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