

What agents want - the latest blog from Puzzel

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According to Colin Hay at Puzzel, employee engagement matters just as much as customer experience and here he shares 3 ways to keep agents happy.

In the words of Sir Richard Branson, “employees come first. If you take care of your employees, they will take care of the clients.” (i) As founder of the global phenomenon, that is the Virgin Group, he should know! Yet, when it comes to the contact centre, you’d be forgiven for believing otherwise. The focus remains predominantly on how to deliver an exceptional consumer experience. But what about the agent experience? With the power to make or break customer relationships, agents are arguably the lifeblood of the contact centre and should be nurtured as carefully as those they serve.

It seems the tide may be turning. When Contact Centre Helper surveyed readers to establish the most vital contact centre reporting metrics, 62% of respondents agreed that ‘advisor satisfaction’ is a very important metric pushing it into the top-ten league table.(ii) Focusing on agent satisfaction makes sound business sense. As consumers enjoy unparalleled choice when choosing their goods and services in-store, online and through auction sites such as eBay, customer service is now a serious competitive differentiator for organisations everywhere.

It’s time to acknowledge that your agents’ experience matters just as much as your customers’ happiness. Here are three ways to keep agents happy when combined with the latest agent application technology.

What makes a good agent experience?

Life for agents is complex enough. Today’s contact centre advisors need to be multi-tasking, multi-skilled super agents when confronted with the pressures of delivering round-the-clock service across a multitude of channels. Make life easier for agents and they’ll become high-performing corporate ambassadors. Here are three common-sense principles to keep agents happy:

- Spot the gaps – are your agents having a hard time executing some tasks? Can you spot inefficiencies, discrepancies and silos? If yes, then you need to rethink and redesign your processes and operations
- Set clear expectations – if agents have no idea what they are aiming for or what their priorities are then failure is inevitable. Make a habit of communicating customer service goals and then update agents on individual and team progress
- Keep the momentum going – only happy agents can make customers happy and it starts with good managers who lead from the front by showing they understand the demands of the job, inspire enthusiasm and take every opportunity to promote the strategic role of the contact centre.

Connect the dots with technology

Next, aim for connected agents and connected customers using cloud-based contact centre technology. The tried and tested elements of automation, integration and skills routing give agents the time and energy to delight customers, provide a complete view of each customer in a single screen without switching between applications. Ensure enquiries are routed to the next available or best-skilled agent. Boost your established infrastructure with the hottest innovations on the market, such as Puzzel’s new agent

application. New cloud-based technology is developed with your agents in mind. Look out for:

- Brand new widgets – not just a new design, these latest widgets are an entirely new concept that allows every agent to be presented with the information and functionality most relevant to them in any given situation. Highly customisable and flexible, they blend the functional needs of the contact centre, partners and customers
- Easy switching between customer enquiries – because in the new agent application each customer interaction is handled via a separate tab which is opened automatically switching between channels is made easier. Additional function tabs can be opened manually to see queue overview information or gather useful data from external feeds such as Google maps and real-time weather charts
- Improved direct integration with social media channels – means new channels can be added rapidly to respond flexibly to new customer communication choices
- Integration with partner systems for vital information – connect agents to third parties and knowledgebases to solve user or product queries such as information on orders, stock availability and delivery times. Agent screens can even support highly interactive methods such as co-browsing and videos. It's a bit like taking your friend shopping with you as agents and customers simultaneously view products or tackle enquiries together
- Future proofing for an omni-channel experience – the latest product developments are designed to support a variety of customer communication channels and systems, including advances in Softphone, enabling companies to provide a complete customer experience that meets the requirements of today as well as future innovations.

It's time to take a leaf out of Sir Branson's book to become truly successful. Ensure you understand what agents want to keep them happy and make their lives easier - and customers will get what they want too.

Colin Hay is Vice President Sales at Puzzel UK (<http://www.puzzel.com>)

About Puzzel

Puzzel builds on over 20 years' of heritage. It was one of the first pioneers to develop a cloud-based contact centre. Today, Puzzel combines omni-channel technology with Artificial Intelligence (AI) to provide complete customer interaction solutions in a digital age. Puzzel can be adapted to accommodate from one to several thousand agents using any device, in any location and integrates with multiple applications seamlessly.

Puzzel was named a Challenger in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Contact Center as a Service, Western Europe, Report 2018 for the fourth consecutive year for its strong growth, functional capabilities, strengths in standards and compliance, customer service and support.

Headquartered in Oslo, Norway with offices in the UK, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Bulgaria, Puzzel is passionate about delivering innovative customer interaction solutions for contact centres and mobile environments.

For more information please visit Puzzel (<http://www.puzzel.com>)

Press contact:
Mary Phillips/Andreina West
PR Artistry Limited
T: +44 (0)1491 845553
E: mary@pra-ltd.co.uk

(i)Overall Motivation.com
(<https://www.overallmotivation.com/quotes/richard-branson-quotes-employees-work-life/>)
(ii)Call Centre helper
(<https://www.callcentrehelper.com/the-top-10-most-important-contact-centre-metrics-30432.htm>)