

Call Center Etiquette



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The call center is your enterprise's lifeblood. Providing a positive customer contact experience is critical to your business success. Ensure you prioritize call center customer satisfaction with these six strategies to enhance agent-customer interactions.

Customer satisfaction is a [key performance indicator of call center success](#). In planning to prioritize customer satisfaction, first consider common customer frustrations have in their interactions with call centers:

- Rude agents
- Prolonged hold time
- Uninformed agents
- Feeling as if the agent is following a script
- Too many transfers and having to repeat information again

You're likely already training, mentoring, and monitoring your agents to improve their performance and streamline their interactions with customers. These suggestions can help to enhance the callers' overall experience with your brand.

Strategies to Improve Call Center Customer Satisfaction

1. Educate agents

People often have a difficult time being courteous and having a positive attitude when they feel underprepared. Adequate training for your agents can make a big difference in their real-time interactions with your customers. Make sure training addresses:

- Product or service complexities
- Expectations for professional conversations
- Effective listening
- Relationship building
- Call handling best practices
- Challenges the agent may encounter
- Company values and goals
- Desired call outcomes
- How agents can find answers to their questions

Pullout: 85% of organizations anticipate contacts will become more complex in the next two years — [Deloitte's 2017 Call Center Survey](#)

2. Encourage authenticity

Sure, efficiency is critical to call center success. But since these agents are representing your brand to the consumer (perhaps a disgruntled one), allow them some amount of leeway to interact on a personal level with the caller. A scripted, formulaic response to every consumer's concern comes across as coldly impersonal and does not reflect well on your overall brand.

3. Enforce professionalism

Center agents are often called upon to interact with frustrated individuals expressing concerns or complaints. Stressed, the callers are not always able to communicate their problems in a polite or considerate fashion. They might take out their anger or upset on the human on the other end of the phone line. Use training time to equip your agents with tools to defuse conflict and not take any insulting behavior personally.

At the same time, contact center leaders can use [real-time controls and agent visibility tools](#) to ensure that agents are always showing customers — even the most abrasive ones — courtesy and consideration. Don't let poor behavior go unacknowledged. Take advantage of call

recording to address concerns directly with agents. In one-on-one sessions replay interactions that went awry and discuss other more productive approaches to problem-solving when under pressure from an angry or emotional caller.

4. Emphasize honesty

Customers want to interact with people, and by association, brands that they can trust. Remind employees of their role in building a relationship with the customer while being the face (or, in this case, voice) of your brand.

Encourage truthfulness, honesty, reliability, loyalty, and integrity among your agents. Your agents should not feel as if they need to guess, lie, or make something up to satisfy a customer. Provide them with clear instructions about where to find the information they don't know and when to transfer the call to someone who can better address the caller's concern or issue.

5. Empower agents

Expecting agents to stick to a single script, while focusing primarily on quickly resolving a contact so that they can move on to the next customer, is likely to lead to agent burnout. Trust your agents to discern when a personal question helps foster a more authentic relationship. Allow them to be flexible in making decisions to problem solve. You can expect consistency, and demand specific standards, but by empowering agents to make decisions about how to handle passenger situations, you instill a sense of confidence that translates well to customer interactions too.

As a call center leader, you might also invite agents to offer suggestions and feedback on a regular basis. Solicit their input. People who feel their opinions are valued are more likely to feel motivated, which will, in turn, translate into more positive interactions with your valuable customers.

6. Consider agent satisfaction

In your drive to prioritize customer satisfaction, don't overlook the importance of agent satisfaction. IBM estimates "the overall turnover rate for the call center industry is between 30 – 45%, and each individual turnover can cost a company upwards of \$6,440."¹

Overworked or overwhelmed agents are less likely to interact with customers in a respectful, friendly manner. At the same time, if your center is experiencing high turnover, you're putting more burden on your existing employees and losing the competence and confidence your more experienced agents will bring to interactions with customers.

Recognized in [Gartner's Magic Quadrant for Contact Center as a Service](#), Evolve IP offers a truly omnichannel solution for contact center providers. Easy to set up and simple to learn, Evolve IP's [Contact Center Solution](#) delivers a seamless customer experience. Optimize today with Evolve IP!

¹IBM (2017 October 23). *Top 7 trends for enterprise call centers and customer service in 2018*. Retrieved from <https://www.ibm.com/blogs/watson/2017/10/top-7-trends-for-enterprise-call-centers-in-2018/>