CallMe!

EMORY GOIZUETA BUSINESS SCHOOL

2011 State of Call Center Human Capital

***CallMe!** and **Emory University's Goizueta Business School** conducted the inaugural State of Call Center Human Capital Survey to provide the industry's leaders with the most up-to-date data on how to best leverage their most important asset…their people. Spanning 92 companies and representing over 330,000 agents in the field, the Survey equips these leaders with actionable intelligence that can be used to strengthen key areas such as agent recruiting, performance and retention.*

Study in 10 Findings

1. **Engaged employees perform 20% higher and are half as likely to leave.** Call centers with high employee engagement have agents that perform 20 percentiles higher than their disengaged competitors. These highly engaged call centers also enjoy turnover levels 48% lower than their less engaged peers.

2. **When hiring, don't rush to judgment.** Call centers that push their Time to Fill to the lowest levels suffer dire consequences in agent performance and retention. Centers that average 10 days or less to hire a new position have agents that perform nearly 10 percentiles lower than their peers who spend more time finding the right fit. Likewise, the probability of agent turnover in the first 90 days increases as Time to Fill falls below 30 days. Call centers that average 10 days or less to hire a new position face 40% higher agent turnover.

3. **Find time for job-focused coaching each day.** One of the most powerful drivers of agent performance is a supervisor's ability to provide fair, accurate feedback that helps them improve in their job. But how often supervisors provide this feedback makes a difference! Agents perform 7 percentiles better when managers provide job-focused coaching *every day*, rather than on a weekly or monthly basis.

4. **Voice Screens and Work Simulations are the most effective screening methods to improve agent performance, reduce Time to Fill, and decrease Cost per Hire.** Call centers that use voice screens and work simulations in their selection process have agents that perform significantly better than those that do not, improving agent performance by up to 12 percentiles. At the same time, these two screening methods reduce the *time* and *cost* required to hire new agents by nearly 30%.

5. **Decrease supervisors' Span of Control for better agent performance and retention.** Call centers that average 15 agents per supervisor or less have agents that perform 9 percentiles better than those with supervisors that manage larger teams. Likewise, these call centers have 39% lower agent turnover. *By investing in supervisor headcount, call centers actually come out ahead in terms of higher agent performance and lower turnover costs!*

6. **Agent turnover saps performance on the job.** Call centers with industry-average turnover have agents that perform 10 percentiles lower than centers with the lowest turnover levels. The performance gap widens as turnover increases. Agents in call centers with greater than 100% turnover perform 20 percentiles lower. The vacancies created by agent turnover place additional workload, stress and uncertainty on the remaining employees.

7. **Turnover rates increase with call center size.** Annual agent turnover rates are highly correlated to call center size, rising linearly from small to large centers. Smaller call centers tend to have much lower turnover (centers with <100 agents average 19% turnover) while larger centers consistently average turnover rates several times higher (>1,000 agents average 70% turnover).

8. **Mentor new hires to decrease turnover and boost performance.** Mentors provide new agents with the coaching and internal networks necessary to stay and excel. Call centers that provide mentoring opportunities to their new hires experience 28% less agent turnover during the first 90 days. Likewise, call centers that pair new hires with mentors have agents that perform 7 percentiles better than those that do not.

9. **Most call centers radically underestimate their cost of turnover.** 40% of call center managers don't know their cost of agent attrition. Among those that do, analysis of the data shows glaring gaps in how training and vacancy costs are measured. Call centers that provide more than 10 days of new-hire training and/or have a Time to Fill of 40+ days are at the greatest risk of underestimating the financial costs associated with agent turnover.

10. **Evaluate the fairness and accuracy of your performance management process.** Despite rigorous operational measures, most call centers inflate their evaluations of agent performance. Less than 10% of centers have average performance ratings at or near the median of their performance scale. The problem is most severe among smaller call centers (<100 agents), where the average performance was in the 73rd percentile. This indicates a need for increased focus on goal-setting, measurement and calibration.

The takeaways that appear above, as well as the detailed 20-page analysis for our respondents, are products of advanced statistical analysis combined with the insight that can only come from real-world experience managing thousands of call center professionals. More than data, CallMe!'s State of Call Center Human Capital Survey provides actionable steps to improve call center performance. With participants representing 92 companies and over 330,000 agents, the Survey is well on its way to reaching its goal of becoming the industry's most reliable and respected resource for call center leaders who wish to strengthen their human capital.

To order your copy of the full study – or to request to participate in the next survey – email us at ***info@callme.io***

