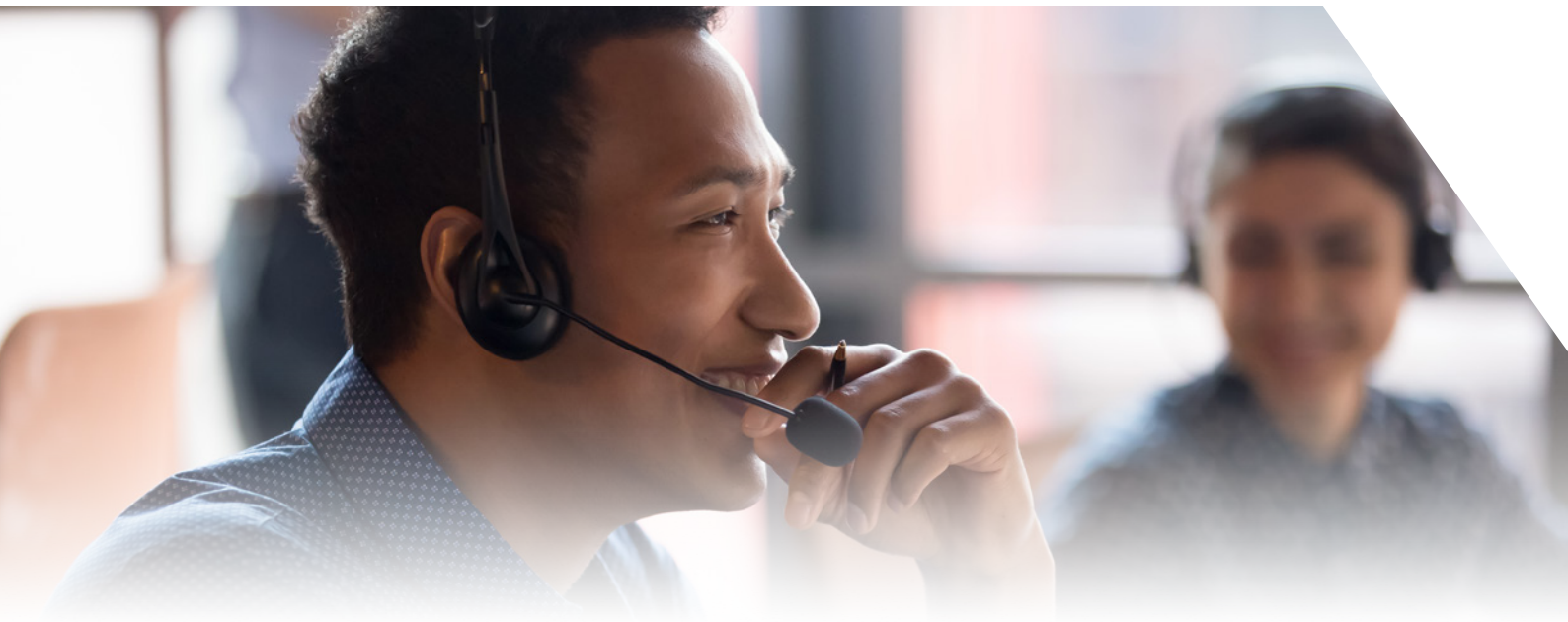


REMOTE WORKING

BEST PRACTICE REPORT



REMOTE WORKING



AT THE MOMENT, WHAT % OF YOUR CONTACT CENTRE WORKFORCE IS WORKING-FROM-HOME ON ANY GIVEN DAY?

75.8% people



This survey was completed during October and November 2021, during which time Victoria and New South Wales endured long lockdowns. This contributed to the high percentage, however many contact centres continue to have a high percentage of staff working-from-home after the lockdowns ended.

“POST COVID19” WHAT % OF YOUR CONTACT CENTRE WORKFORCE DO YOU EXPECT TO BE WORKING-FROM-HOME ON ANY GIVEN DAY?

48.1% people



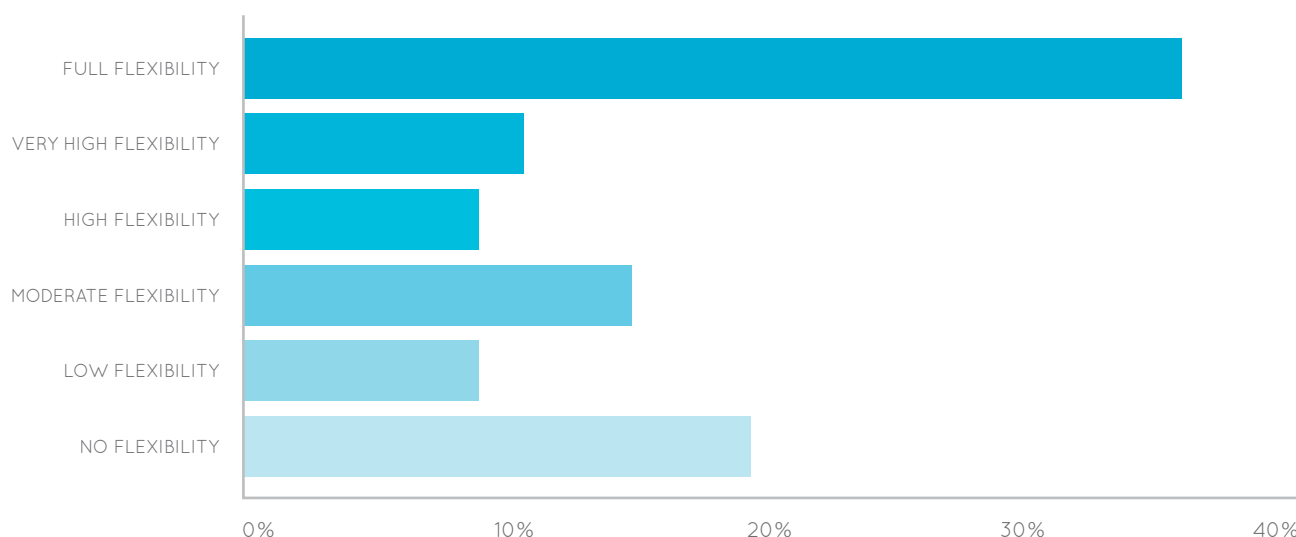
It is clear that the contact centre industry has experienced a change like never before. For many contact centres they will never return to their pre-Covid workforce, highlighted by the expectation that 48.1% of employees are expected to be working-from-home post-Covid. Later in the report we learn that Frontline Agents are heavily in favour of this.

AT THE MOMENT WHAT LEVEL OF FLEXIBILITY DO YOU GIVE YOUR CONTACT CENTRE AGENTS WITH REGARDS TO WORKING FROM HOME?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSE
Full flexibility Agents choose where to work at least 90% of the time	37%
Very High flexibility Agents choose where to work at least 80% of the time	11%
High flexibility Agents choose where to work at least 60% of the time	9%
Moderate flexibility Agents choose where to work at least 40% of the time	14%
Low flexibility Agents choose where to work at least 20% of the time	9%
No flexibility Agents do not get to choose where to work at any time	20%



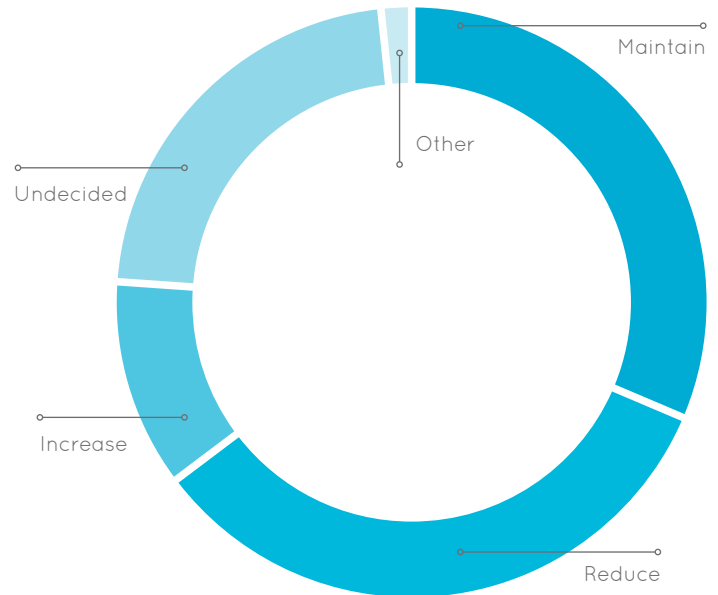
58% of contact centres are offering high-to-full flexibility. This is now a sort after requirement for many people when changing jobs.



REMOTE WORKING

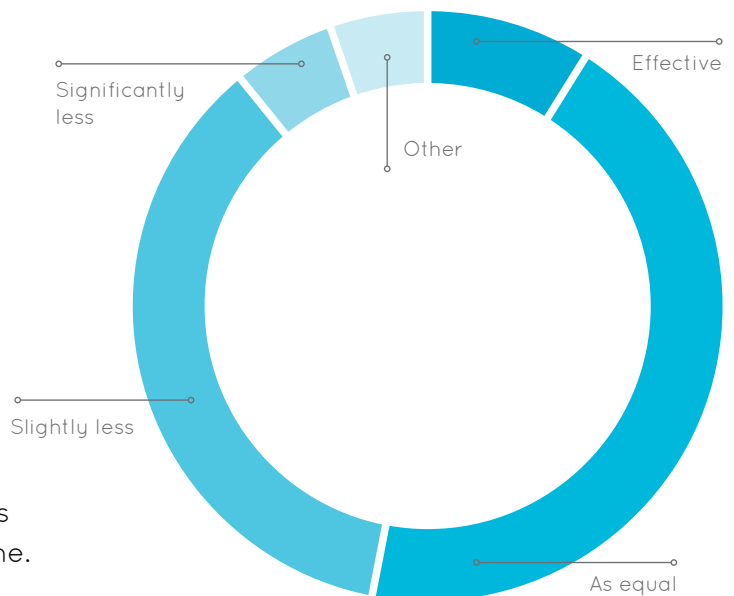
“POST COVID” HOW DO YOU EXPECT THE FLEXIBILITY OFFERED TO AGENTS TO LOOK?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSE
We will maintain the current level of flexibility (same as it currently is)	31%
We will reduce the level of flexibility and ask agents to come into the centre more	34%
We will increase the level of flexibility	11%
Undecided/under review	22%
Other	2%



WHEN OUR CONTACT CENTRE PERSONNEL PREDOMINANTLY WORK-FROM-HOME IT IS:

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSE
More effective than a work from office contact centre	9%
As equally as effective as work from office contact centre	44%
Slightly less effective than a work from office contact centre	36%
Significantly less effective than a work from office contact centre	6%
Other	5%



Overall, senior leaders feel the contact centre is slightly less effective when it is work-from-home.

Interestingly, this is in contrast with Frontline Agents reported, with only 19% reporting they are more productive when working from home (see page x)

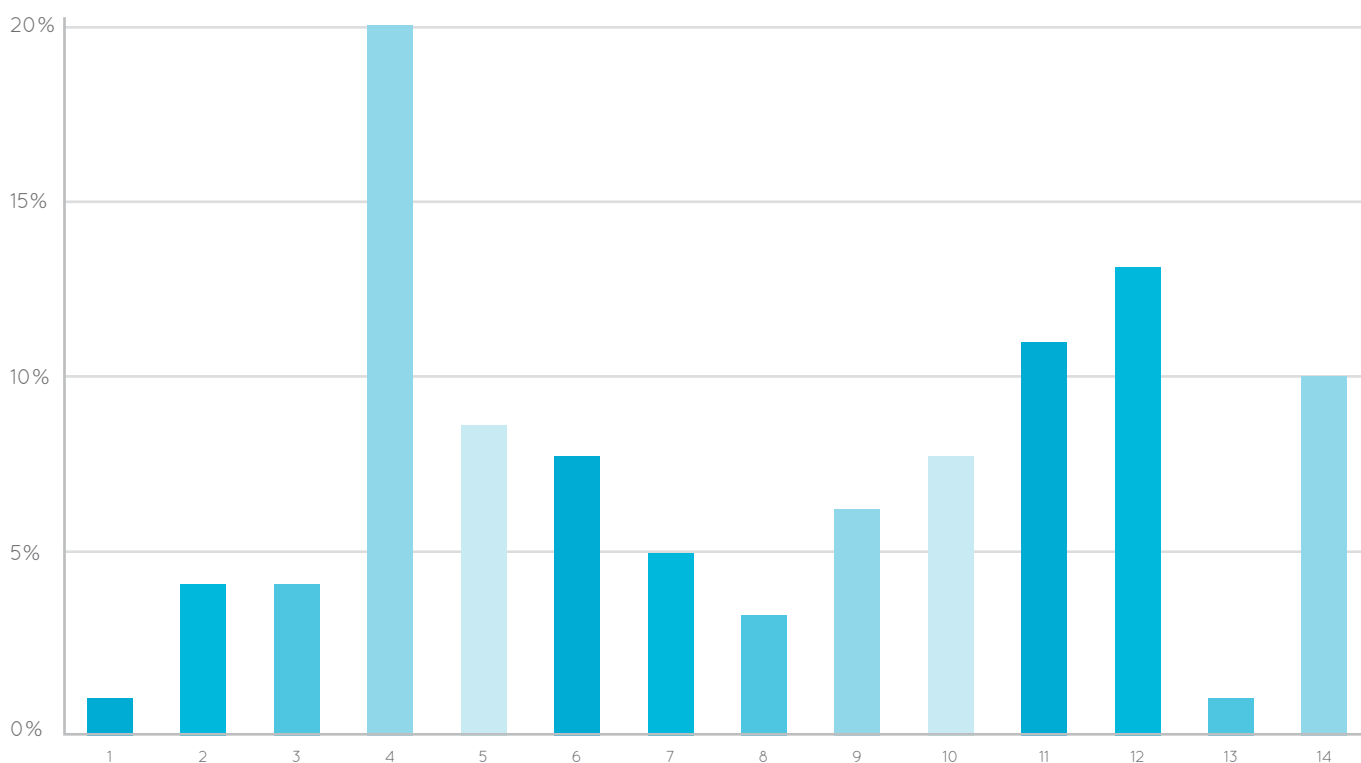
WHAT ARE YOUR TOP CONCERNS WHEN HAVING A REMOTE WORKFORCE?

ANSWER CHOICES	#	RESPONSE
Loss of control	1	1%
Lack of visibility	2	4%
Internal communication	3	4%
Mental health	4	20%
Increasing challenges for Team Leaders	5	8%
Maintaining consistency across the contact centre	6	7%
Agent work from home setup	7	5%

ANSWER CHOICES	#	RESPONSE
Data security	8	3%
Cultural impacts	9	6%
Maintaining performance standards	10	7%
Disconnected workforce	11	11%
Employee engagement	12	13%
Customer satisfaction/ outcomes	13	1%
Training and development	14	10%



The top three concerns all focus on people: mental health, disconnection and employee engagement. Customer satisfaction scores are a very low concern.



REMOTE WORKING



IS ABSENTEEISM LOWER OR HIGHER FOR THOSE WORKING FROM HOME?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSE
Higher	6%
About the same	42%
Lower	52%



HIGHER



ABOUT THE SAME



LOWER



This is a significant finding, and is elaborated on in the Absenteeism and Attrition section of this report. The contact centre industry traditionally has struggled with higher than average absenteeism.

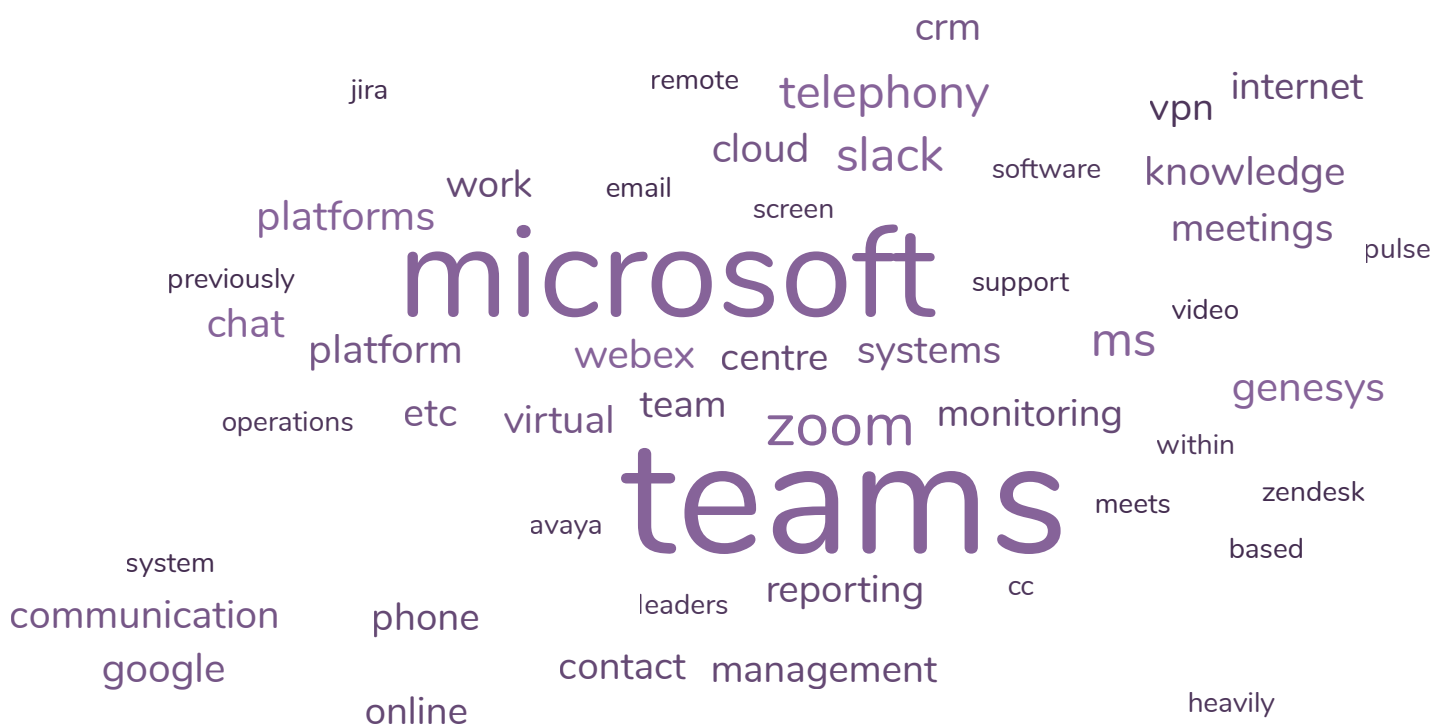
WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO IMPROVE (OR MAINTAIN)
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT FOR THOSE WORKING FROM HOME?



REMOTE WORKING



WHICH TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM OR SOFTWARE HAS INCREASED THE MOST IN ITS IMPORTANCE DUE TO WORKING FROM HOME?

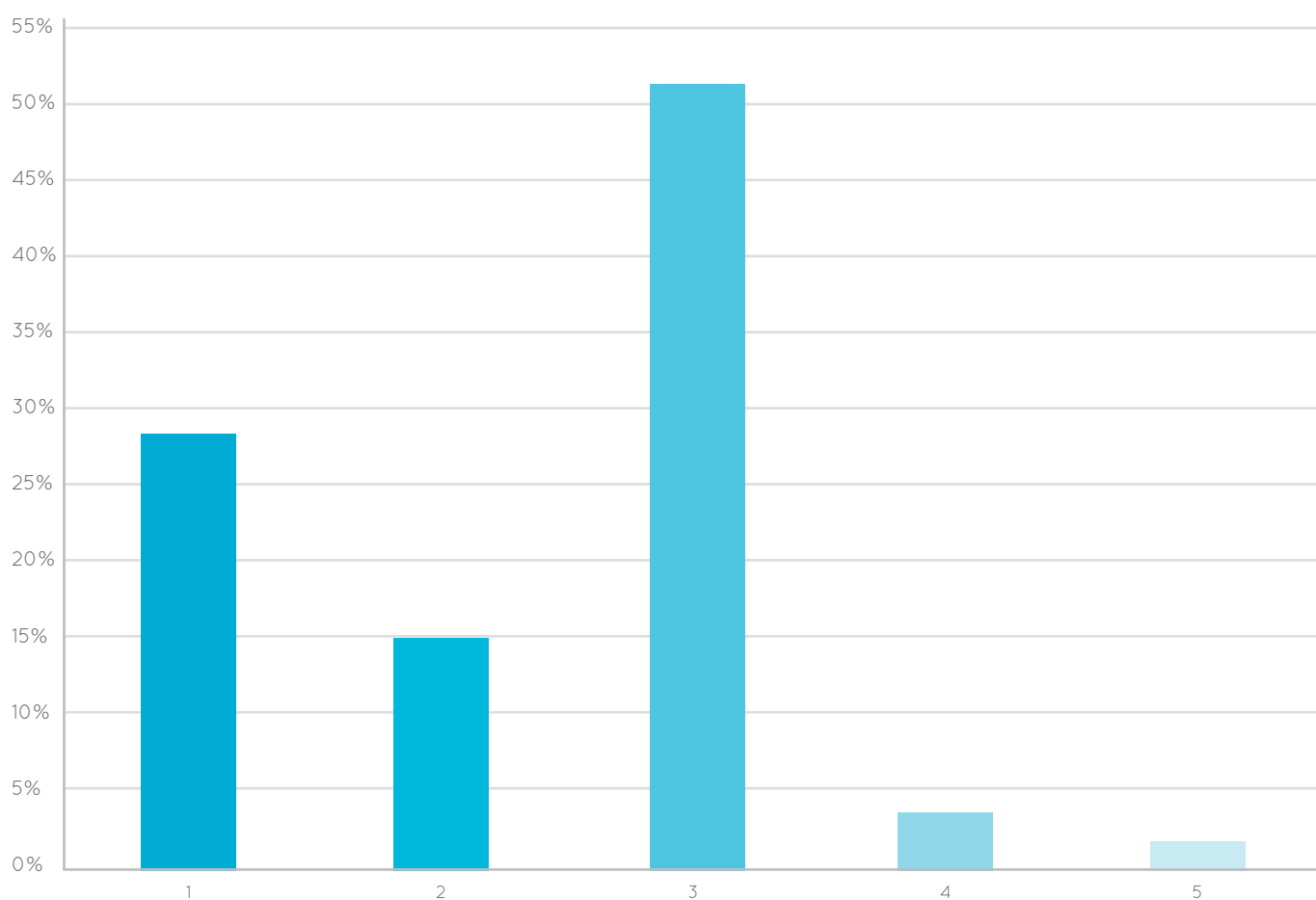


HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU THAT AGENTS ARE NOT ALWAYS WORKING WHEN WFH?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSE
Not concerned at all	28%
Slightly concerned	16%
Slightly concerned - but only about certain individuals	51%
Very concerned	3%
Other	2%



In this day and age contact centre managers should have full visibility of their agents work, so it is interesting to see that there is some concern.



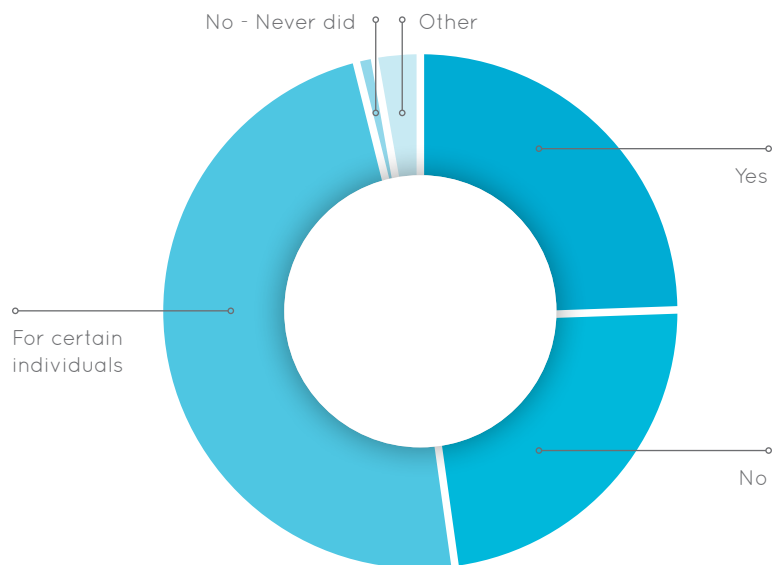
REMOTE WORKING

HAS YOUR MONITORING OF STAFF WORKING HABITS INCREASED FOR THOSE WORKING REMOTELY?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSE
Yes	24%
No	23%
For certain individuals	48%
No – we have never monitored	1%
Other	3%

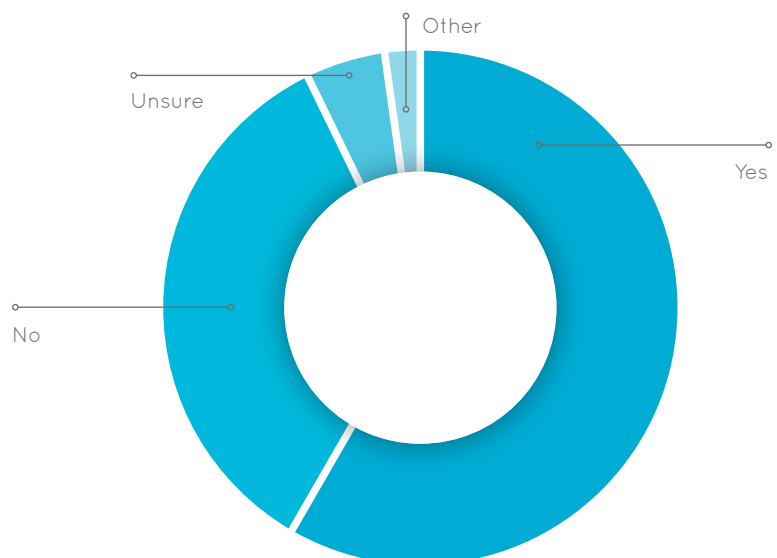


Team Leaders and Managers have lost the ability to walk the floor during the pandemic.



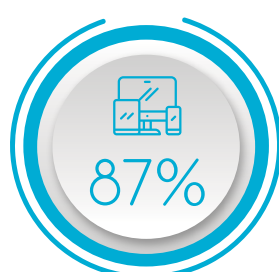
HAVE YOU IMPLEMENTED NEW POLICIES, PROCEDURES OR TOOLS TO INCREASE DATA SECURITY FOR REMOTE WORKERS?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSE
Yes	58%
No	35%
Unsure	5%
Other	2%



DO YOU HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY FOR TEAM LEADERS OR QA'S TO LISTEN IN ON LIVE CALLS AND THEN GIVE COACHING TO STAFF WORKING REMOTELY?

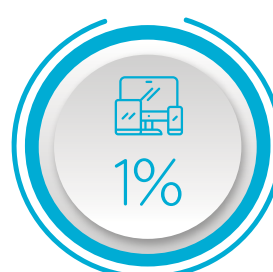
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSE
Yes	87%
No	10%
Unsure	1%
Other	3%



YES



NO



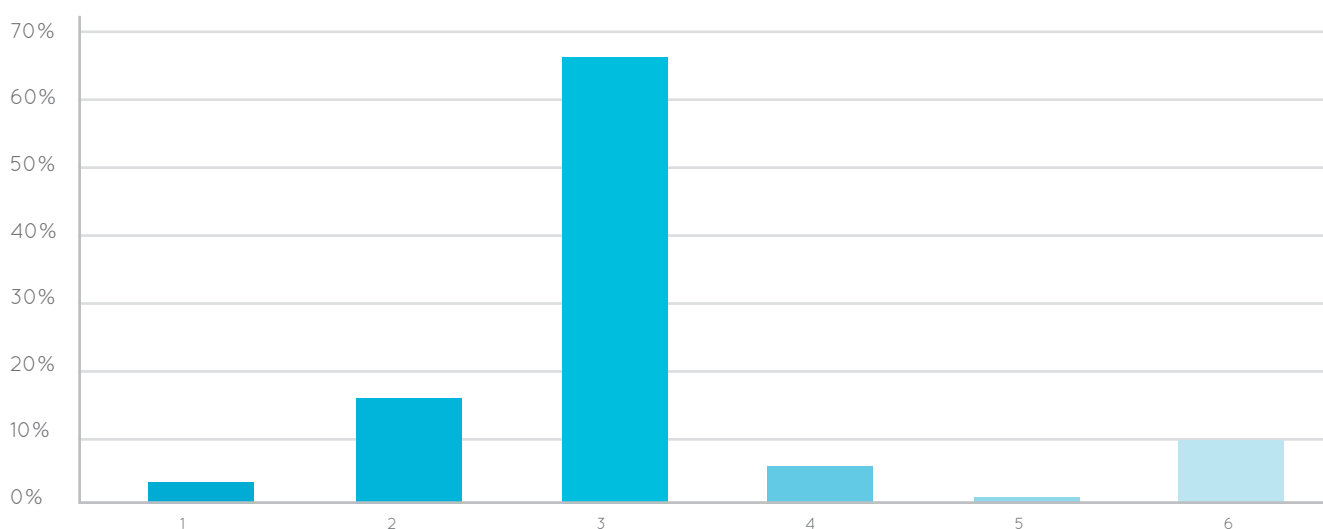
UNSURE



OTHER

HAVE YOU SEEN A CHANGE IN YOUR CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RESULTS (CSAT) AND IN WHICH WAY?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSE
CSAT results are significantly higher when agents work in the contact centre	2%
CSAT results are slightly higher when agents work in the contact centre	15%
No change	66%
CSAT results are slightly higher when agents work from home	6%
CSAT results are significantly higher when agents work from home	1%
Other	10%



REMOTE WORKING SUMMARY

Daniel Harding

Head of Australian Operations
MaxContact Australia



Since the pandemic raged through the world the normal working habits that had been created over many years were suddenly tipped upside down overnight.

In an industry that has traditionally worked at on-premises locations and in teams and groups, it is unsurprising that the contact centre industry has been impacted. However as we look through the findings of this year's report we can see that the impact has not necessarily been negative and there are many positives to take. Who would not want to see a decrease in agent absenteeism? We have reported a decrease from 10% in the 2020/21 report to 9.2%. A small change in number, but a big impact in real terms. 35% of agents reported that the best thing about WFH is not having to travel to and from work – this could be the motivation to work rather than call in sick on those cold mornings.

With long term home working comes new challenges. Contact Centre Managers are stating that their top three concerns are mental health, employee engagement and a disconnected workforce. These challenges also correlate with the agents' responses that a lack of social interaction and boredom from living and working in the same place are the biggest challenges with working from home. So, what do we do as an industry to combat these? We have seen an overwhelming response for regular chats, hangouts, and other team-based activities such as quizzes, fun activities, and lunches to drive engagement. The challenge for WFH contact centres over the next 12 to 24 months is how they maintain this engagement as it becomes more normal.

The report does highlight a strange paradox whereby 51% of Contact Centre Managers are slightly concerned about certain individuals not always working when WFH, but 87% have access to technology that allows live coaching and monitoring. In fact, 48% say that they have increased their monitoring of certain individuals.

Agents generally enjoy working from home with almost 40% of agents responding that they are more productive at home. This is in contrast with management whereby 42% responded that their contact centre is less effective when working from home. It must be stated that a healthy 44% see equal effectiveness.

The report highlights that there is currently 76% of the contact centre workforce working from home on any given day. But what about the future? "Post Covid19" Contact Centre Managers expect this to drop to 48%. In fact, this report highlights that while 29% of the respondents will maintain the current level of flexibility, 34% will reduce the level of flexibility and ask agents to come into the contact centre more. It will be interesting to see how this decrease in flexibility effects agents considering that 46% currently have full flexibility and if they could choose, agents would opt to work from home 73% of the time. This could be the next big challenge for contact centres to navigate the journey back into the centre, or at least into a hybrid environment.

REMOTE WORKING CASE STUDY



Markus Pedersen

Contact Centre Manager

Surge Direct - surgedirect.com.au



Case Study: Surge Direct Powers Ahead With MaxContact

Surge Direct have quickly become one of the most successful and highly esteemed direct Fundraising companies across the country. Our business is built on quality conversations and transparency for our charity partners. The Surge Group work alongside several fantastic charity organisations, both Australia based and globally recognised. The Surge Group are thankful to be able to work with some of the World's greatest humanitarian organisations, animal welfare groups, and research-focused institutions.

Before

During 2020 we made the decision to build on the success experienced with our direct sales and marketing companies and expand into the tele-fundraising space. With the challenges of the pandemic, we found this area to be one that we could rely on in uncertain times. We strive to create mutually beneficial relationships built on trust, understanding, and complete transparency for our clients and as part of this vision we wanted to onboard a contact centre solution whose team met our vision and whose product could deliver.

I was fortunate enough to have seen the MaxContact platform in use in a former role and had gotten to know the product and the product owners. As a senior management team it was important we still do our due diligence on possible platforms and conducted extensive research, product demonstrations, and case studies of several platforms to ensure that we were partnering with a solution that could meet our needs to start with but also future proof the business.

The key areas that we focused on prior to launching a new contact centre were:

- 1 Location** – we have decided as a business to always operate at the contact centre and only use working from home in the last scenario.
- 2 Our people** – we have a low staff turnover in the overall business, and we wanted this to be the case in the contact centre too. We have focused on high quality recruitment and training.
- 3 Our culture** – as a new contact centre we had a fantastic opportunity to create the culture we desired from day one. We have sought a rewarding culture where our team want to be at work.
- 4 Our partners** – from the charities we work with to the suppliers we use, we wanted to ensure we were working with partners that shared our vision and beliefs.
- 5 Our technology** – it is important for Surge Direct to find technology partners that are willing to work closely with us, to understand our purpose and to be aligned with this.