

THE ROLE OF THE CONTACT CENTRE MANAGER

BEST PRACTICE REPORT



AUSTRALIAN
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION
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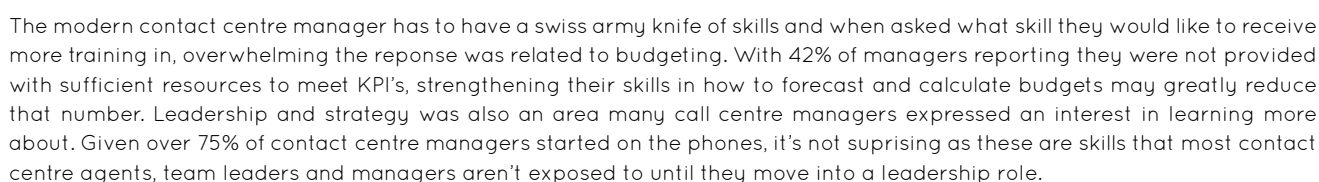
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WHAT DO YOU EXPECT TO BE YOUR SINGLE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AS A CONTACT CENTRE MANAGER IN 2022? (IDEALLY LIST JUST ONE THING)



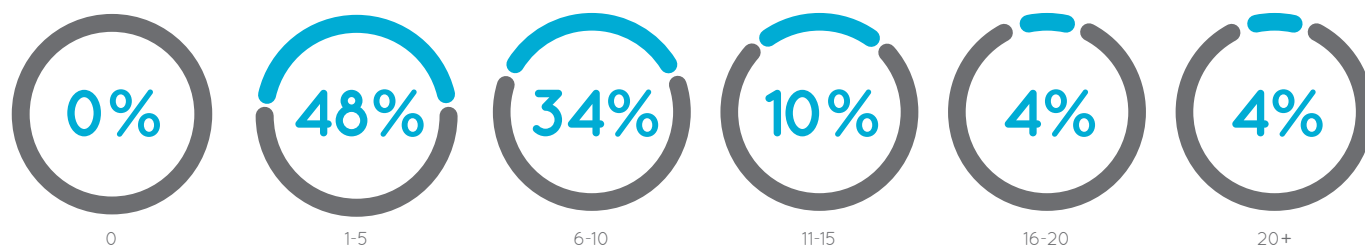
Not surprisingly given the continuing challenges with COVID, contact centre managers faced numerous challenges with employee related issues leading the charge. Recruitment/retention/attrition lead the way with mental health and employee engagement also high priorities. Again perhaps reflective of the current global pandemic, change management has also been a challenge with technology, operating processes and COVID working arrangements all undergoing significant change in the past 12 months.



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HOW MANY DIRECT REPORTS DO YOU HAVE?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
0	0%
1-5	48%
6-10	34%
11-15	10%
16-20	4%
20+	4%

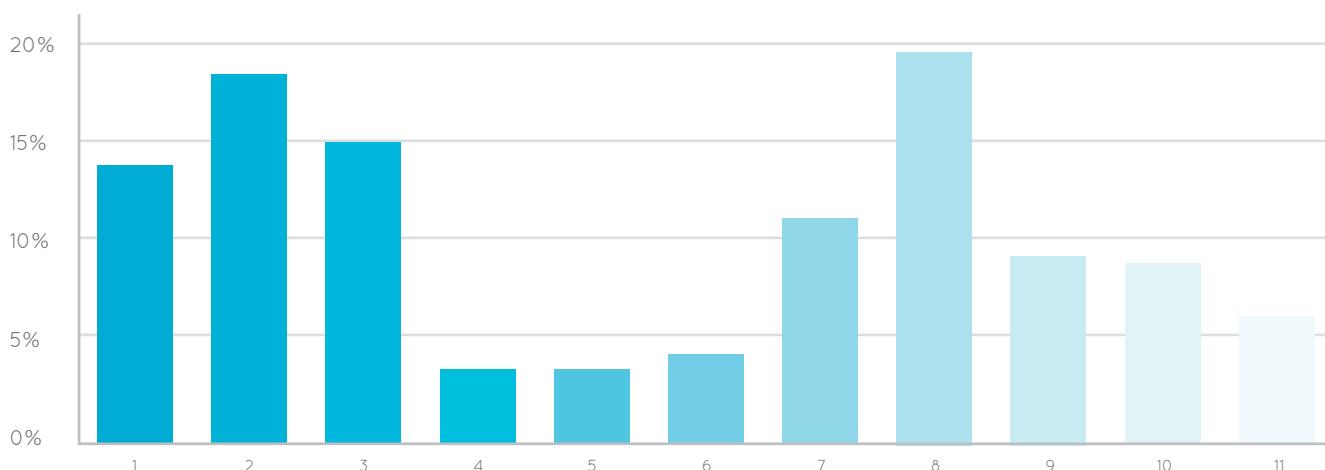


WHAT CHUNKS OF TIME IN YOUR WEEK FIT INTO THESE BUCKETS (% OF YOUR TIME PER WEEK)

ANSWER CHOICES	#	% OF TIME
Strategy	1	13%
Stakeholder engagement	2	18%
Coaching & development	3	15%
Personal development	4	4%
Direct interaction with customers	5	4%
Regulatory reporting	6	4%
Internal reporting	7	10%
Running meetings	8	19%
Engaging in HR related matters	9	9%
Resource planning/work force planning	10	8%
Recruitment	11	6%



Given the diverse nature and functions of contact centres it's not inconceivable that a contact centre manager's time could be consumed in a variety of different ways that were reflective of their working environment. The data however suggests that there is consistency across the majority of contact centre managers with running meetings, engaging with stakeholders, working on strategy and internal reporting the most common tasks.

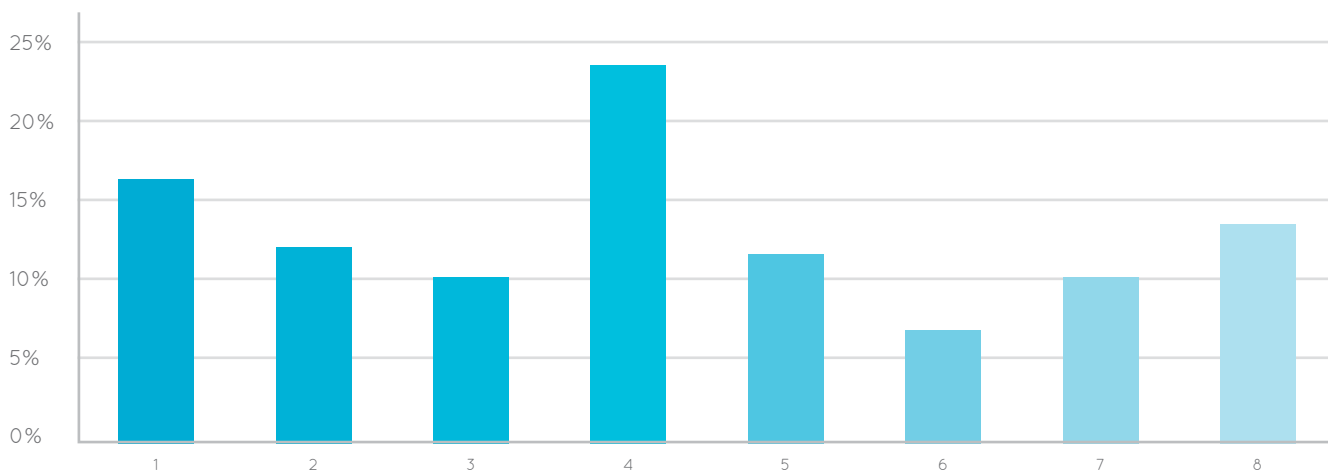


HOW OFTEN DO YOU MEET WITH THE MOST SENIOR EXECUTIVE IN YOUR BUSINESS? E.G. CEO

ANSWER CHOICES	#	RESPONSES
More than once a week	1	16%
Once a week	2	12%
Fortnightly	3	10%
Monthly	4	23%
Quarterly	5	11%
Twice a year	6	6%
Annually	7	10%
Other	8	13%



With contact centres continuing to be a critical function for most businesses, it's now commonplace for contact centre managers to have regular meetings with senior executives. The majority of contact centre managers (23%) meet monthly and 16% meet more than once a week.

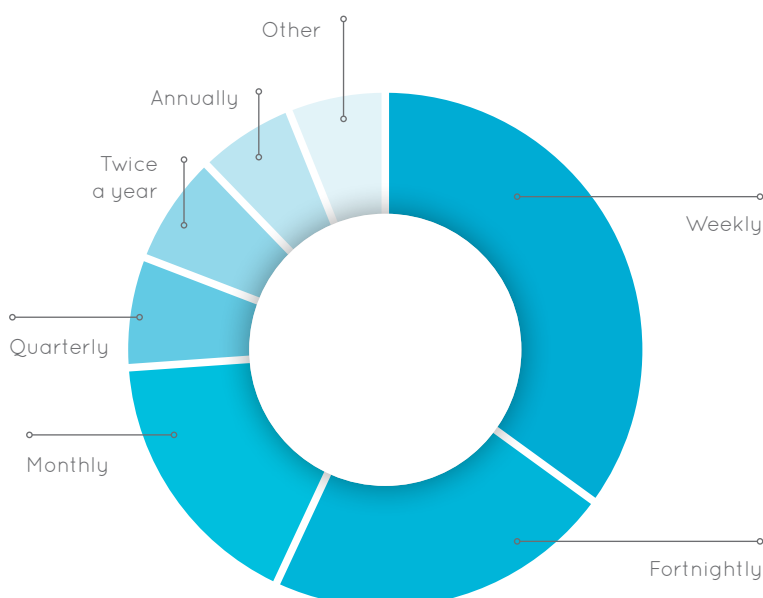


HOW OFTEN DO YOU HAVE A FORMAL FEEDBACK MEETING WITH YOUR MANAGER?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Weekly	35%
Fortnightly	22%
Monthly	18%
Quarterly	7%
Twice a year	7%
Annually	6%
Other	6%



With the fast pace of contact centres and the role they play in the broader business, most contact centre managers (35%) meet formally with their manager once a week, 22% fortnightly and 18% monthly.



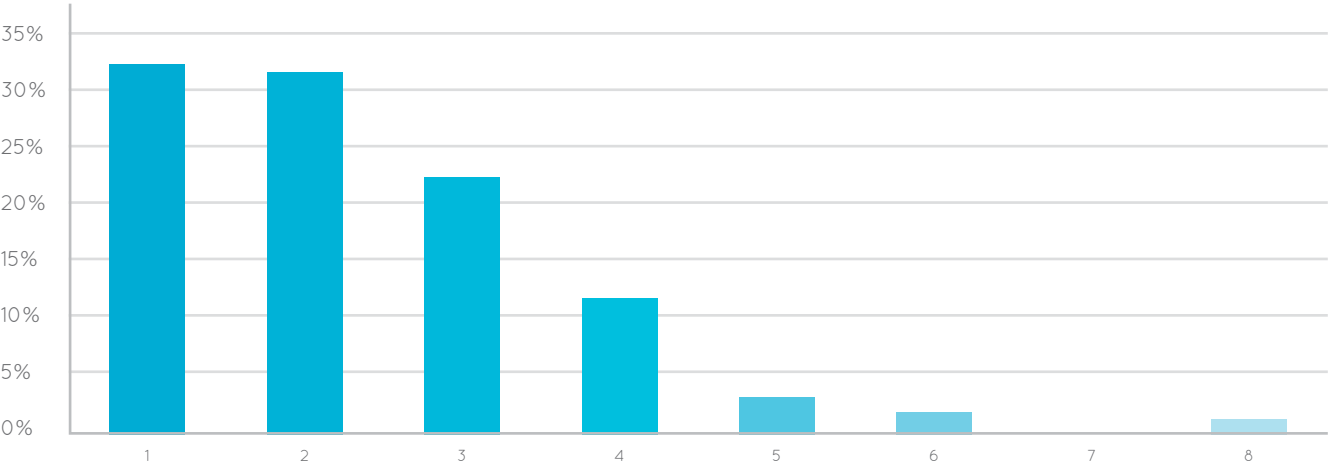
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HOW OFTEN DO YOU FORMALLY MEET WITH YOUR DIRECT REPORTS?

ANSWER CHOICES	#	RESPONSES
More than once a week	1	32%
Once a week	2	31%
Fortnightly	3	22%
Monthly	4	11%
Quarterly	5	2%
Twice a year	6	1%
Annually	7	0%
Other	8	1%

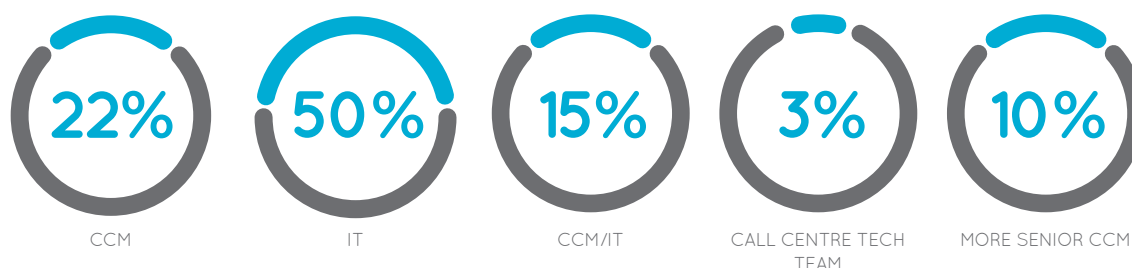


The majority of contact centre managers are actively involved in regularly meeting with their direct reports, with 63% of CCM's meeting with direct reports at least once per week. 22% meet fortnightly and only 10% meet once a month.



WHO IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR CONTACT CENTRE? (ACQUISITION, SELECTION, CONFIGURATION, OPTIMISATION)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
CCM	22%
IT	50%
CCM/IT	15%
Call Centre Tech Team	3%
More senior CCM	10%

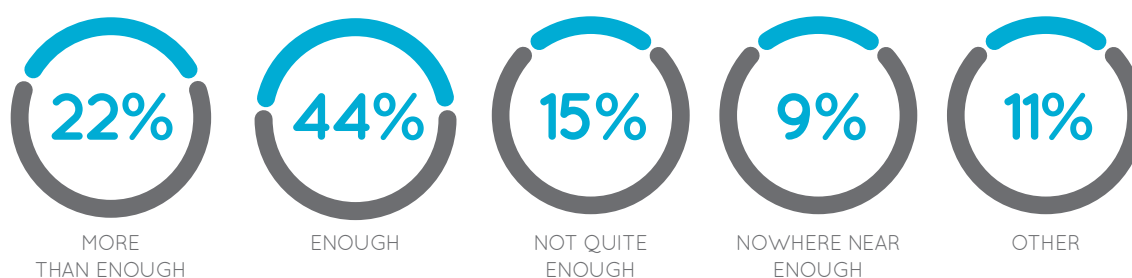


Ensuring the contact centre is equipped with the right technology and support is becoming an increasingly critical strategic and tactical decision for businesses. The responsibility of who is sourcing the right technology, ensuring it is set up and functioning efficiently and supported at all times, can often cross-over traditional lines with IT and the Contact Centre Manager the two most likely departments involved. But who ultimately has accountability? Of the contact centre managers surveyed, half (50%) responded that the IT team is accountable for the technology in the centre with 22% of managers handling it themselves and (15%) sharing accountability between IT and the contact centre.

With the continuing emergence of Customer Experience roles, this could be an area that undergoes significant change as a unified approach is becoming increasingly important for organisational success.

HOW MUCH INTERACTION DO YOU HAVE WITH CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE TEAMS IN YOUR BUSINESS (WHERE APPLICABLE)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
More than enough	22%
Enough	44%
Not quite enough	15%
Nowhere near enough	9%
Other	11%



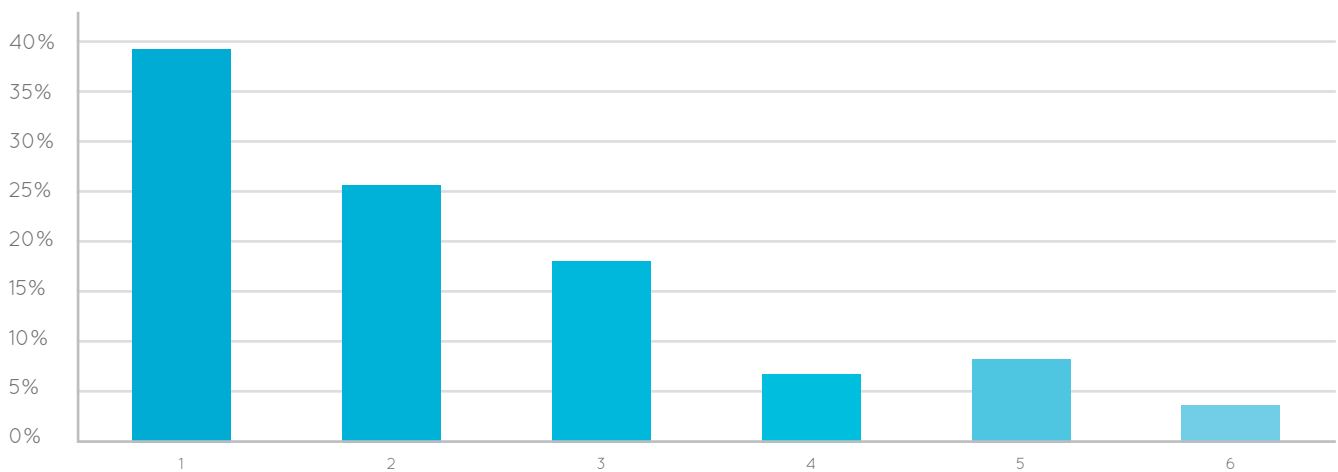
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WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME THERE WAS A CHANGE TO YOUR KPIS?

ANSWER CHOICES	#	RESPONSES
Within the last 3 months	1	39%
Within the last 6 months	2	25%
Within the last 12 months	3	18%
Within the last 24 months	4	6%
More than 24 months ago	5	7%
Other	6	4%



Perhaps due to COVID driving a range of changes within contact centres (working from home, changing customer demands, offshore call centre reliance etc) 83% of call centres have had some level of change to their KPI's in the previous 12 months.

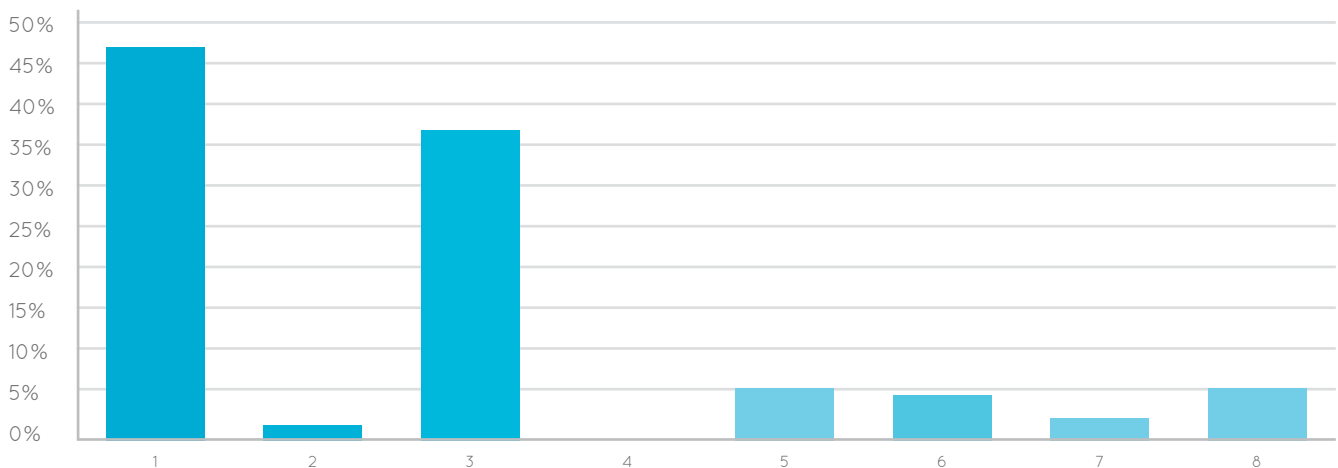


HOW OFTEN DO YOU REPORT ON YOUR KPIS?

ANSWER CHOICES	#	RESPONSES
Weekly	1	46%
Fortnightly	2	1%
Monthly	3	36%
Bi-monthly	4	0%
Quarterly	5	5%
Every 6 months	6	4%
Every 12 months	7	2%
Other	8	5%

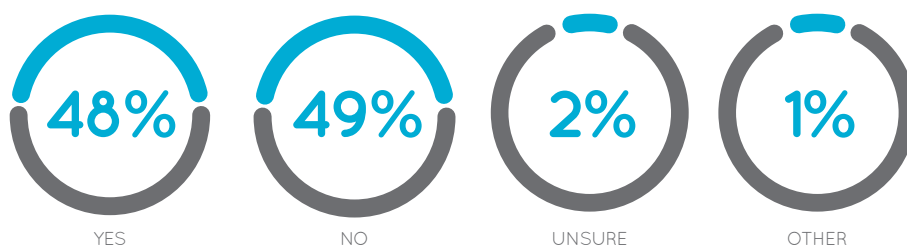


With contact centres often the main link between customers and the business, most contact centres are reporting frequently on their KPI's with 46% reporting weekly and 36% monthly the two most common reporting frequencies.



HAVE YOU EVER ATTENDED FORMAL TRAINING ON CONTACT CENTRE MANAGEMENT FROM AN EXTERNAL PROVIDER?

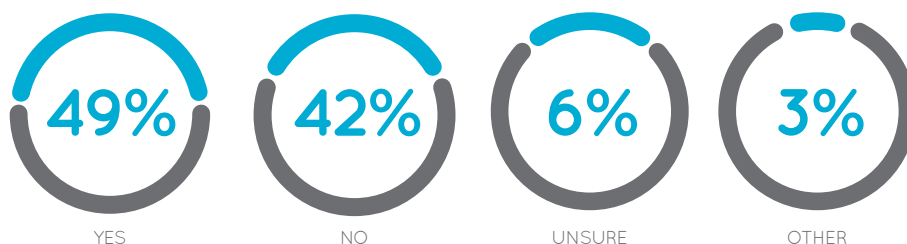
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	48%
No	49%
Unsure	2%
Other	1%



With the majority of contact centre managers starting on the phones (75%) it was surprising that only 48% have attended any formal contact centre manager training courses. While most contact centres are 'tailored' to their organisations, there are some standard best-practices that apply to any sized contact centre that can help contact centre managers improve efficiencies, employee engagement and the customer experience as well as calculate and forecast budgets, set up Quality Assurance Frameworks and lots more.

DO YOU BELIEVE THE CONTACT CENTRE IS PROVIDED WITH THE ENOUGH RESOURCES (BUDGET/FTE/TECHNOLOGY ETC) TO ACHIEVE THE KPIS?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	49%
No	42%
Unsure	6%
Other	3%



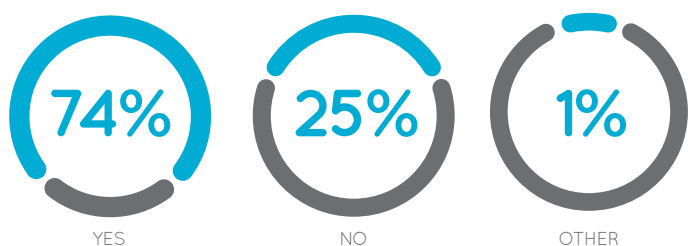
One of the biggest challenges in the contact centre is ensuring you have enough resources to meet the required Service Levels/KPIs. While there has often been a perception that contact centres are often under-resourced and expected to 'do more with less', 49% of contact centre managers believed they had sufficient resources to achieve their KPIs perhaps reflecting a growing importance in organisations investing in the customer experience.

42% of contact centre managers however did not believe their contact centre was provided with the right resources resulting in a less than desired experience for customers and a tougher environment for employees. Contributing to this could be the ability of contact centre managers themselves. Forecasting, calculating and managing budgets was identified as the leading skill contact centre managers felt they needed additional training and support on.

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DID YOU START YOUR CAREER WORKING ON THE PHONES?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	74%
No	25%
Other	1%



An overwhelming 75% of contact centre managers commenced their career working on the phones - a great testament to the career opportunities available to contact centre agents today.

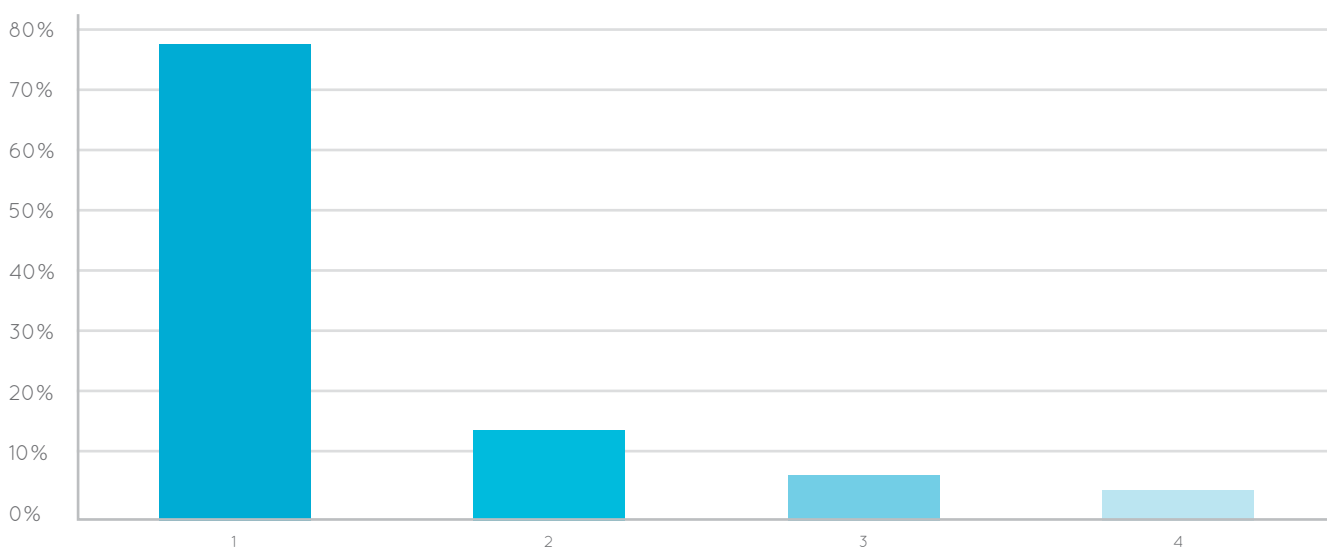
Notwithstanding, with 49% of contact centre managers having never attended any formal contact centre manager training, it represents an opportunity to ensure the managers are equipped with the right skills to help them excel in their current role and further progress their career.

DO YOU BELIEVE THE ROLE OF THE CONTACT CENTRE MANAGER IS VALUED IN YOUR ORGANISATION?

ANSWER CHOICES	#	RESPONSES
Yes	1	78%
No	2	13%
Unsure	3	7%
Other	4	2%



Contact Centre Managers are increasingly playing a critical function in businesses as Customer Experience continues to be a new battleground to win customers hearts and wallets. Over 78% of contact centre manager felt their role was valued by their organisation, reflecting the contribution a high-performance contact centre can provide to the business.

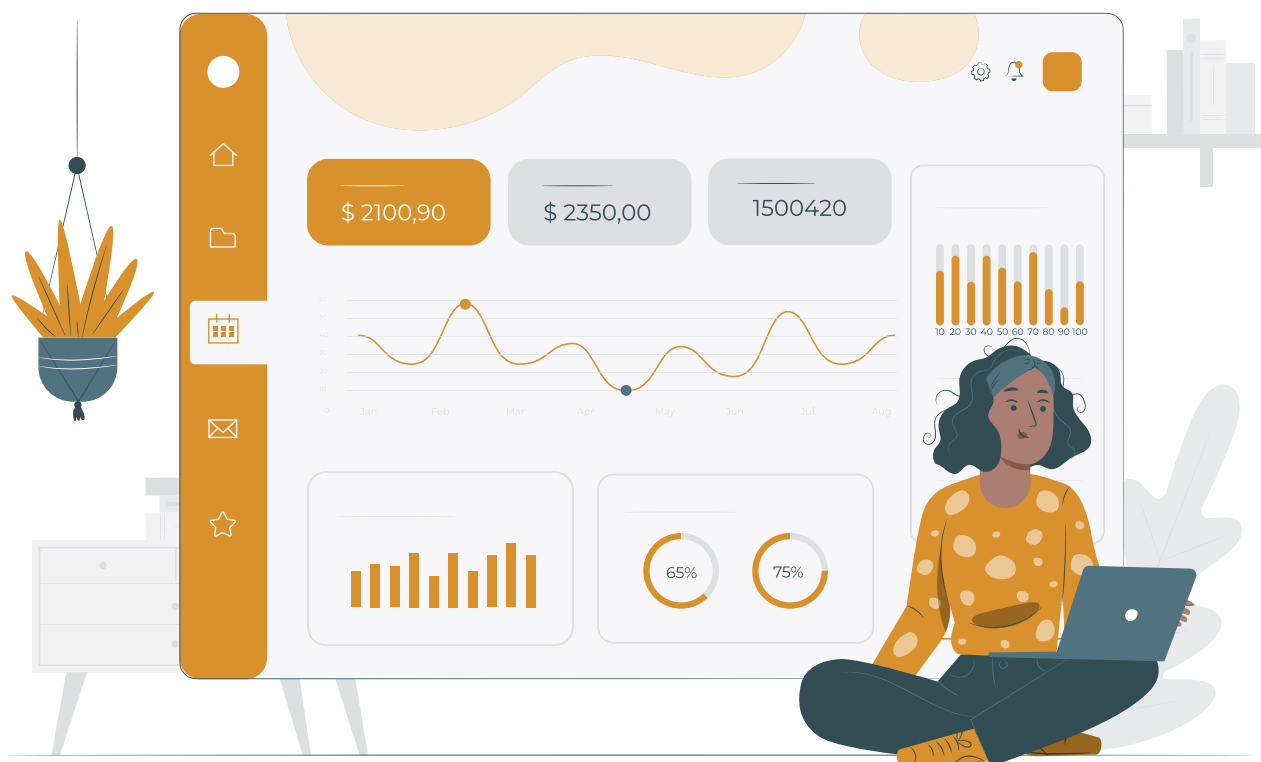
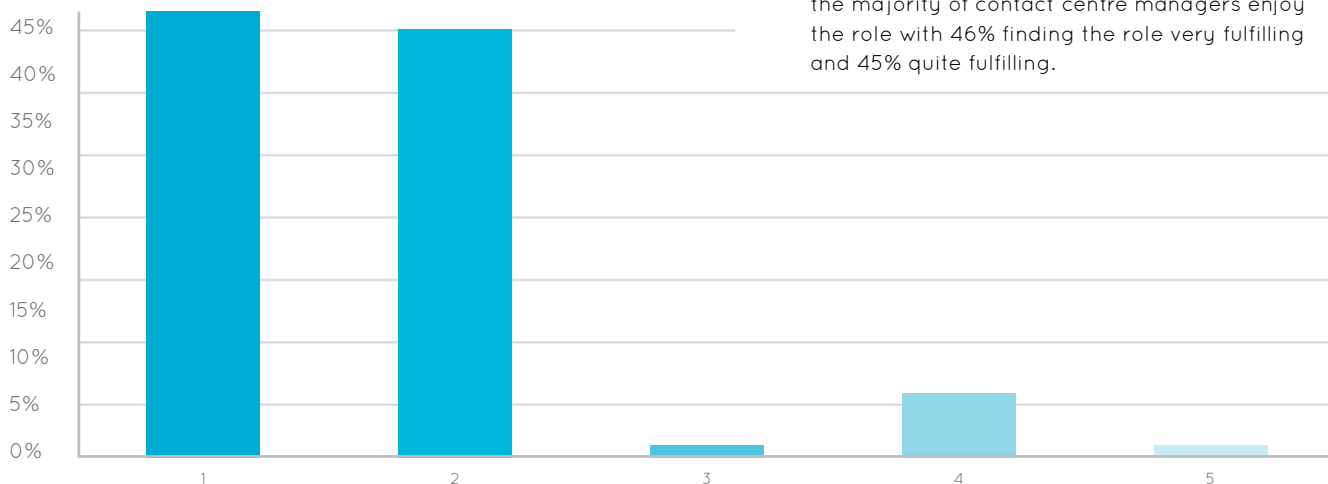


HOW FULFILLING IS THE WORK YOU DO?

ANSWER CHOICES	#	RESPONSES
Very fulfilling	1	46%
Quite fulfilling	2	45%
Unsure	3	1%
A little fulfilling	4	6%
Not at all fulfilling	5	1%



The modern contact centre manager requires a vast array of skills and has to manage a range of competing demands from internal stakeholders, direct reports, technology, customers and so on ensuring there is never a dull day. Despite the challenges with the role, the majority of contact centre managers enjoy the role with 46% finding the role very fulfilling and 45% quite fulfilling.



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SUMMARY

Contact Centre Managers Summary

Justin Tippet

CEO

Australian Customer Experience

Professionals Association

acxpa.com.au



Over the past few years, we've been able to uncover a range of interesting statistics and benchmarking data to assist contact centre managers in optimising their contact centre operations.

And in this year's survey we've taken it one step further – learning more about the role of the contact centre manager including their challenges, engagement levels, KPIs and more.

One of the most revealing statistics from this year's data was that 75% of contact centre managers started their career on the phones. It was a number I always knew was high (I started their too!) but to see it there in front of you was certainly a stark reminder of the incredible career opportunities available to agents starting their journey in the contact centre industry today.

With an average base salary of \$124,500 + super for Contact Centre Managers and \$155,800 + super for Senior Contact Centre Managers (plus sizeable average bonuses) contact centre management can be a lucrative career choice, particularly given the limited barriers to entry with no degree or qualifications required.

Notwithstanding, the modern contact centre manager still requires a diverse range of skills to be successful and with most managers starting their career on the phones, it's not surprisingly to learn that they have identified a number of general management skills including budgeting, leadership, strategy, change management and stakeholder management as skills that they need additional training and support in.

Of course, knowing the mechanics of how a contact centre should operate is also a core requirement and less than half (48%) of contact centre managers have ever attended any formal contact centre management training.

With the contact centre industry several decades old, there are a number of global best-practices and processes that are applicable to all contact centres no matter how big the size, function or industry sector and they are completely transferable between contact centres (adding to the value of the contact centre manager).

With 42% of contact centre managers reporting they are not provided with adequate resources (i.e. budget, headcount etc.) to achieve their Key Performance Indicators, learning best practices around contact centre management including how to calculate workloads, Erlang C, Quality Assurance Frameworks, Coaching etc could significantly help better articulate their resource requirements, impacts to Service Levels etc. and help their own development, their employees and their customers.

Technology is also playing an increasing role in the modern contact centre with everything from the core contact technology platform through to more advanced tools and channels such as voice analytics, chatbots, live chat and so on. Perhaps recognising this complexity, the accountability of who is responsible for the technology in the contact centre is continuing to change.

Currently, accountability for the technology rests entirely with IT Managers in 50% of contact centres, 22% with the contact centre manager and 15% sharing accountability between IT and the contact centre. Contact Centre Managers have already indicated strong interaction with Customer Experience (CX) teams (66%) as companies look to streamline the end-to-end customer experience and with CX roles continuing to gain traction and taking a more enterprise-wide approach, the shift in accountability for the technology could undergo significant change over the coming years.

The role of the contact centre manager within an organisation has continued to increase in importance and over 78% of managers felt that their role was valued by their organisation. Further emphasising this, over 60% of contact centre managers now meet with the most senior executive in their business (e.g. CEO) at least once a month.

That value largely correlates to the interest in the performance of the contact centre given the impact it has on customers and ultimately, the bottom line. 46% of contact centre managers report weekly on their KPIs followed by 36% reporting monthly and over 76% of contact centre managers indicated that have a “large amount” of input into developing the KPI’s in the contact centre.

And it wouldn’t be a report if we didn’t talk about the impact of COVID! Perhaps reflecting the changing working environment and customer expectations, 83% of contact centres experienced changes to their KPIs in the last 12 months.

Contact Centre Managers also faced numerous challenges throughout the year with most managers consistently rating employee-related issues as the most challenging. Recruitment, retention/attrition, mental health and engagement all featured highly along with technology and working arrangements (working from home, vaccination requirements etc.).

But despite the challenges, job satisfaction was high with over 91% of contact centre managers finding their role either very fulfilling (46%) or quite fulfilling (45%).

So despite a challenging year for our industry, it’s exciting to see that the contact centre manager role, and the performance of the contact centre channel, continues to rise in value providing exciting opportunities for everyone involved in the industry!

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CASE STUDY

CX Skills Case Study

With most call centre managers starting their careers on the phones (75%), it's not uncommon for contact centre managers to have 'grown up' in the contact centre. From starting on the phones, moving into a Team Leader role or specialist position, and ultimately moving into the contact centre manager role.

Sometimes this involves a few sideway moves in and out of different organisations but more often than not, most people stay within the same contact centre or a similar industry or sector.

For the remaining 25%, most managers come from other areas of the business that end up responsible for the call centre and then try to quickly get their head around a lot of confusing acronyms, jargon and Key Performance Indicators etc.

Unlike many professions, there is no formal qualifications or standards that apply to the contact centre industry. Most Team Leaders and Managers learn on the job, and it's often a case of "you don't know what you don't know".

As most contact centres typically evolve to meet the needs of their business and with no standardised approach across the industry, it's rare that any two contact centres ever look the same from different processes, technology, naming conventions, Key Performance Indicators and so on.

Yet despite having no formal industry standards and contact centres conforming to meet their business needs, contact centres have existed for decades and over time there are a number of fundamental rules and best-practice principles that apply to good contact centre management regardless of the industry sector, location, size or function.

The leading contact centres try to leverage off the learnings from global best practice and apply what works for their call centre – whether it's through attending training courses, engaging contact centre consultants with decades of experience or attending industry functions, conferences etc.

For Digicall Assist, one of Australia's premium outsourced customer assistance organisations, staying ahead of the curve of rapidly changing customer expectations is critical. Digicall Assist is a technology-driven, human-centered business, so hard knowledge and soft skills are essential.

In 2019, Digicall Assist first approached CX Skills with a view to exposing their management team to different ways of thinking and to fast-track the adoption of global-best practice, as part of their mission to build an organisation that's famous for delivering customer experience excellence.