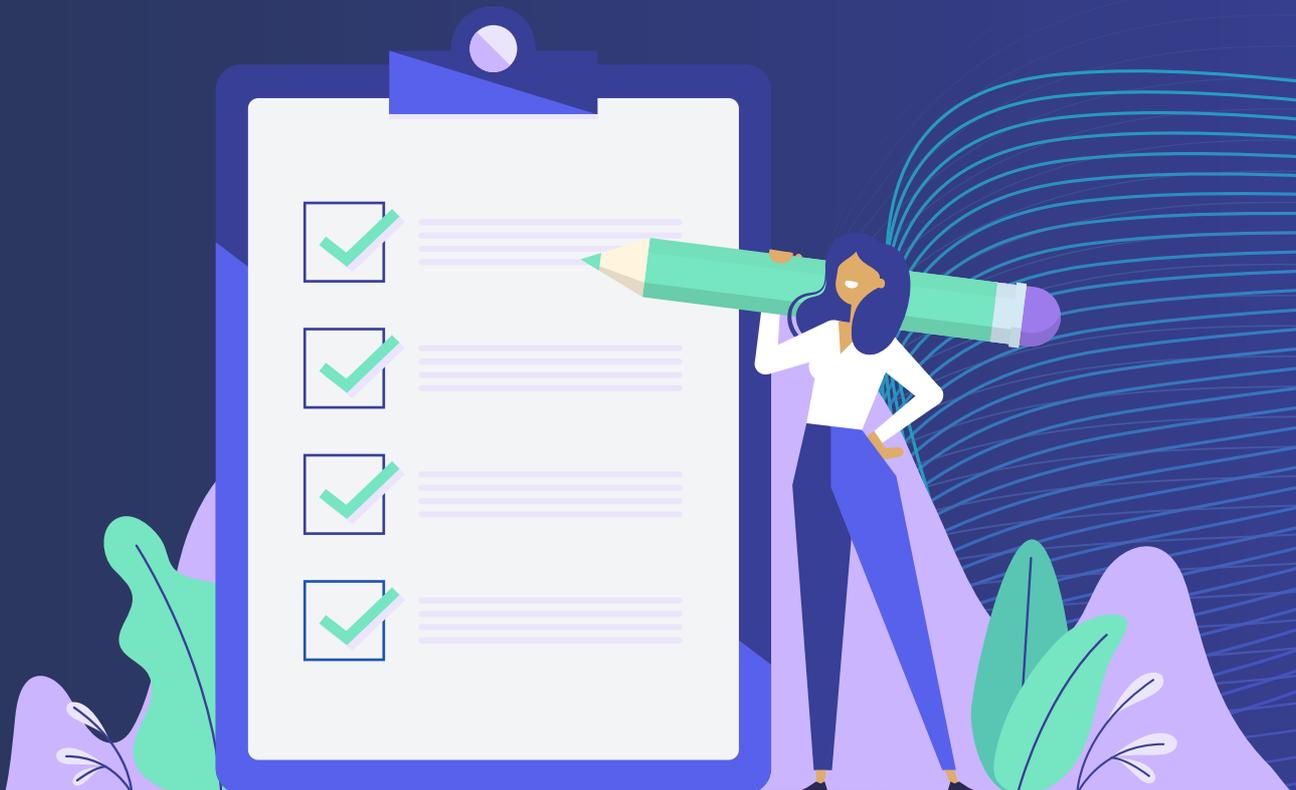


Your Checklist to Survive the Contact Center Labor Crisis





Hiring shortages, high agent turnover, and unpredictable surges in call volumes are just a few of the challenges facing contact centers today.

As a result, workforce management (WFM) has never been more difficult. The available pool of qualified agents is shrinking and the risk of training new employees comes with the possibility they will quickly churn.

As WFM challenges persist in 2022, most contact centers are accelerating their plans for automation — but knowing where to begin can be the hardest part. This checklist will help you navigate the contact center labor crisis and come out stronger than before.





1. Utilize agent capacity wisely

High utilization rates can lead to burnout and further exacerbate turnover issues. Many organizations have seen this affect their [most talented employees](#), as they're often given the largest workloads. Create a culture that encourages breaks between conversations, and predictable shifts that minimize overtime.



2. Plan for seasonality

Forecasting in today's customer service climate is nearly impossible. But you probably have a sense of your organization's "busy season." Now is the time to prepare for it. Use your next high-volume cycle as a goalpost to have an automation solution in place for at least one use case to minimize the impact of call spikes on your live agents.



3. Prepare for unpredictable demand

If you had asked yourself if you were prepared for the future in 2019, what would you have said? How would your answer be different today? Unpredictability is inherent to contact centers. Plan for it now by exploring technologies that can automate customer service requests to alleviate unpredictable spikes in volume, and begin to add them to your contact center automation strategy.



4. Collaborate with your agents

AI and automation solutions lead to obvious concerns from agents. When you evaluate solutions, focus on those that relieve agents by automating the requests they dislike. Communicate clearly the agent-side benefits of automation and get their input on which parts of their day-to-day responsibilities take up the most time to better serve them.



5. Upskill your agents

One of the biggest benefits agents see from automation is greater career satisfaction. It's never too early to start thinking about the upskill opportunities and development plans you will be able to offer agents once tier-1 automation is achieved, including certifications and downstream call analysis responsibilities.



6. Create a scheduling plan

These days, there are infinite factors that can make scheduling your contact center staff an impossible task. Forecast your call volumes, taking into account seasonality, and plan your staffing around projected spikes. Begin to also explore contact center automation solutions that can scale with call volumes 24/7 or act as overflow redundancy.



7. Analyze why your customers contact support

Conversations can tell you a lot about your efficiency. Analyze your most common customer requests and identify gaps in how they're addressed with contact center analytics. Trends like volume spikes and calls that commonly get stuck or misrouted in your IVR are great candidates for automation to cut down on AHTs, abandonment, and misutilized agent time.



8. Identify use cases that can be automated

It's never too early to start identifying conversations that can be automated. Look for conversations that are low-emotion, low-to-mid complexity, and high-volume. Conversational AI-based automation uses CRM information and other points of connection to authenticate, personalize, and completely resolve these requests with the same speed and quality as human agents.



9. Don't forget your customer

Throughout it all, don't forget your customer when addressing WFM challenges. Hold times are high, expectations are higher, and today's customers can only remain empathetic to staffing shortages for so long. There are plenty of agent assist tools and self-service options out there — but make sure to find a solution that benefits your customer as much as it does your agents.



10. Choose the right technology partner

Contact centers have plenty of options when it comes to automation solutions. Make sure you work with a partner who is experienced in a range of unique contact center use cases and customer personas, and can help you identify the right roadmap with [forecastable ROI](#).

There's no better time than the present to start reaping the benefits of contact center automation.

Download our free guide [The Great Resignation: Why Your Contact Center Won't Survive Without Automation](#) or [schedule a demo](#) to learn more.