



# Unleashing frontline engagement and productivity

October 2023

A CCMA Research Initiative

Supporting Partner



# Unlocking the secrets to happier, more productive advisors and team leaders

Maximising frontline colleague engagement is a top priority in every contact centre. In a tight recruitment market, finding new people to replace leavers is difficult and expensive. Productivity is affected by attrition, as new people must be trained before they can be deployed. Valuable knowledge and expertise learned on the job disappears with each departing colleague. It's well established that engaged frontline colleagues deliver better customer contact experiences.

While some facets of colleague engagement will be specific to each operation, this research set out to uncover and document the universal considerations that are applicable to all, and to offer some answers for contact centres to the following questions:

- What are the drivers and barriers of colleague engagement and productivity?
- How to respond to rapid and profound changes in the operating environment and changing customer needs?
- Which potential engagement and productivity tools are the most desirable on the front line?

## Research methodology

This research comprised two distinct phases. In the first phase n=339 online interviews were conducted from 1-10 June 2023 with contact centre colleagues comprising:

- N=213 frontline colleagues
- N=126 team leaders/managers

In the second phase, we shared findings from the survey in discussion with contact centre leaders who provided commentary and context.

## With thanks to

We invited contact centre leaders representing a diverse mix of industries, contact centre types and experiences to a series of discussions to explore the themes uncovered in the consumer survey. The CCMA and Intradiem extend sincere thanks to these individuals for their generous participation in the study.

**Carl Bishop**, Head of Operational Excellence, The AA

**Liz Hicks**, Head of Operations, Ageas UK

**Neil Hirst**, Contact Centre Manager, Damart

**Elizabeth Lynch**, Sales & Service People Leader, AIB (Allied Irish Bank)

**Jo Nicholls**, Contact Centre Manager, Lkwize

**Janet Scott**, Customer Operations Manager, AIB

**Martin Storey**, Senior FS Manager, The Very Group

We also invited industry advisor Nerys Corfield, Director at Injection Consulting to offer her thoughts on the research findings and are delighted to feature her comments in this report.

## Foreword by CCMA

Across every industry and every contact centre, frontline colleagues are dealing with growing complexity. Not only do volumes continue to rise but queries are increasingly more diverse and more difficult to deal with, driven by growing customer sophistication, changing regulations and new products. As an industry, we have been hugely successful in helping our customers to serve themselves via digital channels, but an unintended consequence of this is failure demand from customers reluctantly forced to make contact after being unable to complete a self-serve journey.

All of this has massive implications for colleagues on the front line; how do we keep our people motivated and performing well? This research reveals how

helping our colleagues to navigate complexity is the cornerstone to unlocking their engagement and productivity. Recognition and rewards are incredibly important, and workplace technology can have a transformative impact if implemented well.

When aligned with the right tools and the right culture, complexity becomes a powerful positive force: it makes frontline jobs more interesting and delivers better customer outcomes. Read on to find out how you can maximise the benefits of 'good' complexity for your own workforce.



**Leigh Hopwood,**  
CEO, CCMA

## Foreword by Intradiem

For years technology has helped facilitate contact centre workflows and agent-customer interactions. Though never simple, these actions are becoming increasingly complex due to rising call volume, more intricate internal processes, and more demanding customers.

Without the means to address it, complexity produces chaos, dissatisfaction, and poor results. In the context of customer service delivery, that means agents dealing with excessive time pressure, insufficient support, and anxious customers can quickly lose motivation when they see no solutions under consideration to improve their situation. That contributes to chronically high attrition—whose effect goes beyond individual agent to impact budgets (onboarding replacement agents is expensive) and service level (constant turnover undermines quality and consistency).

But when complexity is harnessed and channelled into productive pathways, it can actually boost productivity and increase agent satisfaction. The good news is that this is possible, and technology will lead the way.

The expanded capabilities of new AI-powered technology make it possible to automate many of

the repetitive, time-consuming tasks that add stress without reward to the agent's day. The agent's focus can then be directed to more challenging and more rewarding high-stakes interactions which, though more complex, are more likely to yield a sense of satisfaction from an important job well done.

Fulfilling the needs of a higher-value role will require additional training, which can also be facilitated by today's more responsive technology. That new technology—combined with greater focus on the needs and priorities of human agents—can be leveraged to boost agent engagement, efficiency and performance. The result will be reflected in greater customer satisfaction.

This study—based on responses from contact centre leaders and agents—highlights the dynamics and challenges confronting today's customer service professionals. It represents a first step toward understanding the challenges they must overcome, which is of course the first step towards finding effective solutions.



**Matt McConnell,**  
CEO, Intradiem

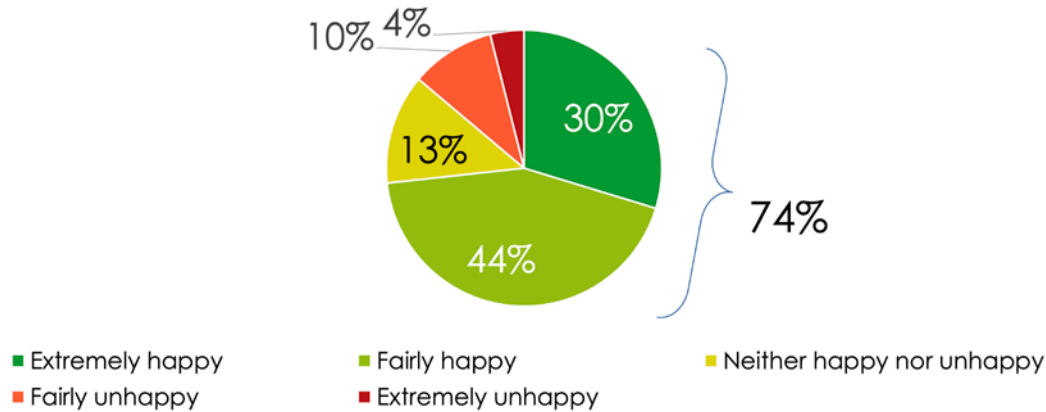
## How engaged are frontline colleagues today?

**Three out of every four (74%) frontline colleagues we surveyed said they are happy in their jobs, but 28% say they are likely to quit.**

A substantial majority of people (74%) working on the contact centre front line in our survey said they were 'extremely' or 'fairly' happy in work, compared with

14% who said they were unhappy and 13% who were neutral.

Figure 1: Overall, how happy or unhappy are you working for the contact centre?

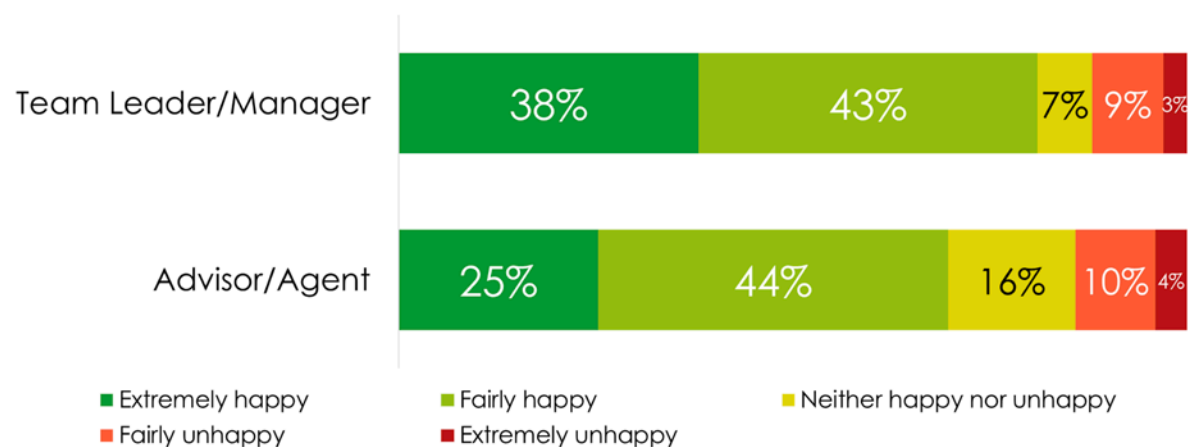


Base: All (n=339)

Not surprisingly job satisfaction is particularly high at manager level. Figure 2 shows that 81% of team

leaders said they were 'extremely' or 'fairly' happy at work compared with 69% of advisors.

Figure 2: Overall, how happy or unhappy are you working for the contact centre?

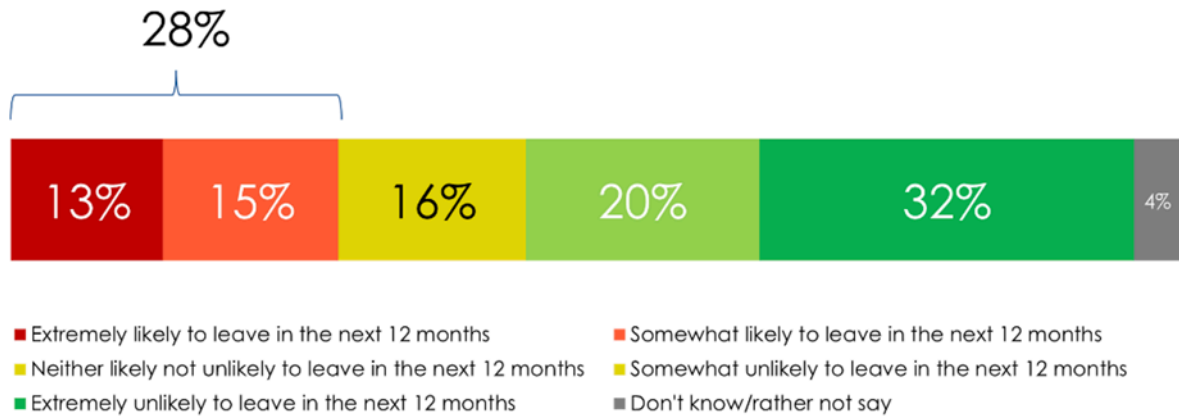


Base: Team Leader/Manager (n=126), Advisor/Agent (n=213)

When asked if it was likely they would leave their jobs in the 12 months, 13% of those surveyed replied

'extremely likely' and 15% replied 'somewhat likely', as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3:** How likely or unlikely are you to leave your contact centre job in the next 12 months?



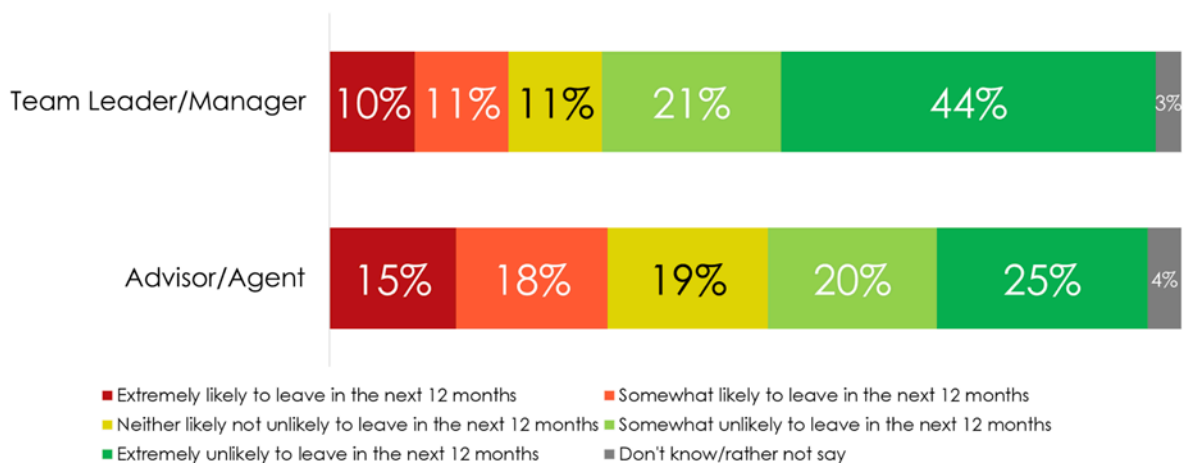
Base: All (n=339)

Our survey provides evidence to suggest that retention rates improve with job tenure and responsibility. Team leaders/managers are less likely

to want to leave their jobs than advisors, as shown in Figure 4.

**One in three advisors (33%) say they are likely to quit in the next 12 months.**

**Figure 4:** How likely or unlikely are you to leave your contact centre job in the next 12 months?



Base: Team Leader/Manager (n=126), Advisor/Agent (n=213)

## Drivers and barriers of engagement

The surveyed advisors and team leaders who said they were unhappy in work were asked why.

Recurrent themes were **time pressure** and **lack of decision-making ability**, as represented in Figure 5.

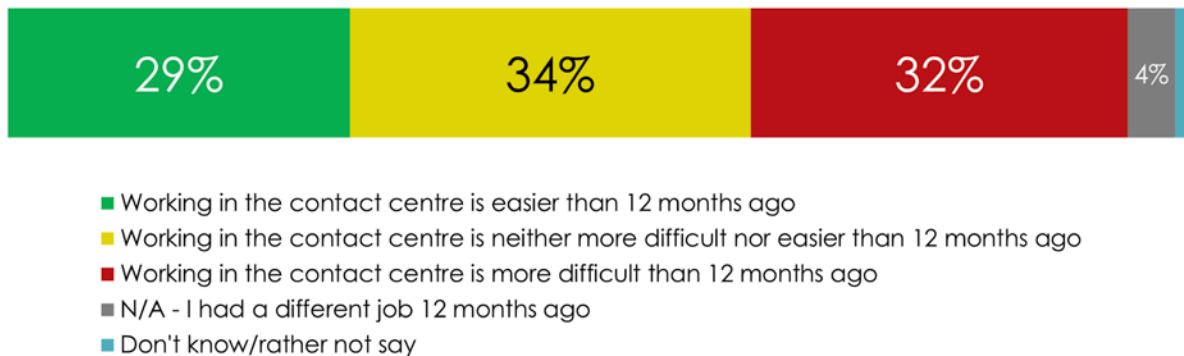
**Figure 5:** Why are you unhappy working in the contact centre? (Verbatim quotes from frontline survey)

- “Too much pressure to get it all right.”**
- “Very fast paced, pressure to not take breaks.”**
- “I am very frustrated by the limited actions I can take to help people.”**
- “I don’t have authority to make decisions.”**
- “Constant call queues mean I can’t coach or train agents to be better.”**

When asked whether the job has become easier or more difficult, opinions were divided. Figure 6 shows approximately one third of those surveyed

reported their jobs had become easier over time, another third said work has become more difficult, and the final third were neutral.

**Figure 6:** Would you say working in the contact centre is more difficult, easier, or neither compared with 12 months ago?



Base: All (n=339)

Those who stated that work has become harder were asked 'why?'. Three themes emerged in

the responses, as shown in Figure 7 illustrated with representative verbatim comments.

**Figure 7:** Why has working in the contact centre become more difficult? (Verbatim responses from survey, asked of those who reported their jobs had become harder over time).

Changes in operating environment not mirrored in process/KPI change	Changing propositions and customer needs	Not enough appreciation for good performance
<p>“More new products to offer which have to be brought up on phone calls, this makes it very difficult when a big focus is on call times being brought down with more to discuss.”</p> <p>“We have much more health and safety regs to abide by.”</p> <p>“Expected to pass quality control while working too fast. No time to wrap up call before the next one.”</p>	<p>“New technology causing customers to have more questions.”</p> <p>“People have become more volatile and we’re having to deal with much more aggressive customers and really vulnerable ones. The demand on the service has increased which is putting stress onto the advisors in order to achieve KPIs.”</p>	<p>“No recognition for doing a better job than your peers.”</p> <p>“Over-burdened. Under-paid. Under-valued.”</p> <p>“It’s hard work with little reward.”</p>

Among those who reported that work has become easier, the **positive impact of workplace**

**technology** being frequently cited as a reason. Example comments are presented in Figure 8.

**Figure 8:** Why has working in the contact centre become easier? (Verbatim responses from survey, asked of those who reported their jobs had become easier over time)

**“Easier to balance work/life by working from home.”**

**“A lot of new technologies to make work easier and better.”**

**“Technology has come a long way since covid and working from home you have a dedicated chat team to help out with queries. This is better than trying to find someone in the office to help out.”**

**“Call centres are now often equipped with a comprehensive knowledge management platform, where staff can obtain detailed information to solve problems at any time.”**

**“Implementation of advanced customer relationship management systems.”**

**“Improved call routing and prioritisation systems.”**

**“Advances in voice recognition technology allow call centres to more accurately identify customer intentions and needs, provide more accurate solutions, and reduce the work of manual operators.”**

## What influences retention?

Survey participants who said they were likely to leave their jobs were asked 'what might persuade you to stay'? As illustrated in Figure 9, the two most common themes in the responses were **more recognition** and more **autonomy and decision-**

**making authority** (the latter actually can be further sub-divided into two factors: ability to make decisions to help customers, as well as input in addressing root causes of customer issues).

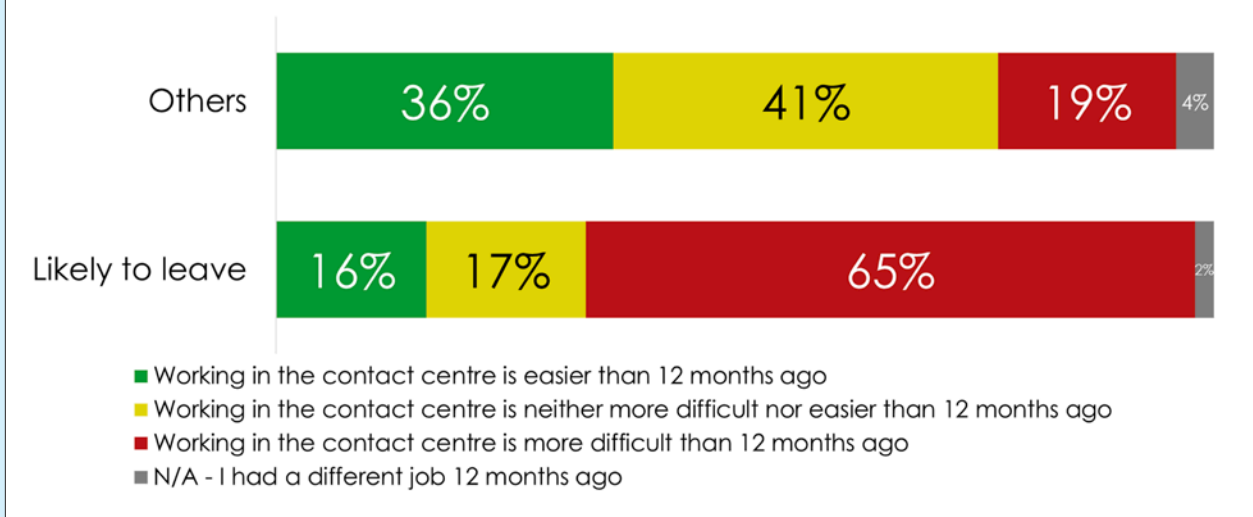
Figure 9: What might persuade you to stay? (Verbatim responses from survey, asked of those likely to leave their jobs).

More recognition	More autonomy and decision-making authority	Other mentions
<p>"I would like more recognition and understanding from management. They don't appear to appreciate how draining it can be on the phone all the time."</p> <p>"Recognise and reward outstanding performance."</p>	<p>"Allow more flexibility, if people are getting the job done then there's no need to micromanage them."</p> <p>"Have more authority to make changes."</p> <p>"Create opportunities for employee involvement in decision-making processes."</p>	<p>"Career advancement through hands on training."</p> <p>"Breaks from the phone to work on other things."</p> <p>"Solve day to day technical issues which cause frustrations with agents and customers."</p>

Figure 10 illustrates the impact of job 'difficulty' on retention. Two thirds (65%) of those who said they

are likely to leave also reported that the job has become more difficult, versus 19% among the rest.

Figure 10: Would you say working in the contact centre is more difficult, easier, or neither compared with 12 months ago? (By 'Likely to leave' = Very likely or Somewhat likely to leave job in next 12 months VS 'Others' = Very unlikely or Somewhat unlikely or Neither unlikely or likely).



Base: Others (n=231), Likely to leave(n=95)

## Grappling with complexity

Since the turn of the decade the operating environment for contact centres has changed massively.

**Escalating compliance requirements**, especially in regulated industries, necessitate training and increase the cognitive load required of the advisor. Even in less strictly regulated sectors such as travel and retail, frequent changes in policies and rules have become the norm, placing an added burden on training needs and on those on the front line to stay abreast.

**Constantly rising customer expectations** and diminished customer patience are a day-to-day reality for many on the front line, particularly as household wallets are being squeezed by rising prices.

**Helping customers to complete self-serve journeys** has emerged as a significant demand driver as investment in digital self-serve channels accelerated during the pandemic years to ease pressure on human-assisted lines. In some contact centres the role of advisor is shifting from solving customers' problems for them to teaching customers how to stay on the happy path. This requires frontline colleagues to be intimately familiar with digital journeys and to have advanced problem-solving skills. Soft skills and empathy are prerequisites as customers are more often than not delivered to the front line in an agitated state, having been forced to make contact reluctantly after a failed self-serve experience.

.....

***“ The more customers that use mobile banking, the more technical issues they can encounter. Our contact centres have transitioned from customer support to technical support.”*** - Janet Scott, Customer Operations Manager, AIB

.....

***“ Gone are the days where call centres were all about registering claims, because lot of customers are self-serving that online now. We've moved away from being claims administrators to being problem solvers. The vast amount of calls we***

***receive are where the customer's claim hasn't gone down that happy path, and there's been a little bit of a bump in the road.”*** - Jo Nicholls, Contact Centre Manager, Likewize

.....

***“ There is compliance, certain straplines and questions to be covered off with the customer on the calls. Advisors need to go in and out of certain tools to complete the task which can be time consuming. Advisors strive to get things right first time on every call to deliver a good customer experience. We are bringing in compliance on call recording in the office which will help.”***  
- Elizabeth Lynch, Sales & Service People Leader, AIB (Allied Irish Bank)

.....

As noted above, colleagues at risk of attrition were also much more likely to report that their jobs have become more difficult over time. However, **added complexity does not always mean added difficulty**. Complexity is omnipresent, yet in our survey for every frontline staff member who had that their jobs had become harder, there was another who said their job had become easier.

In fact, complexity can be a positive force. When supported with appropriate culture, processes and technology, it is possible to ask more of the front line at the same time as delivering more rewarding experiences for colleagues and better outcomes for customers and employers. We define this as 'good' complexity. On the other hand, the lack of appropriate support inevitably leads to detrimental 'bad' complexity.

The difference between 'good' complexity, which drives engagement, and 'bad' complexity, which reduces engagement, is described in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Good versus bad complexity

Good complexity	Bad complexity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More variety and multi-skilling = intellectually rewarding work, widening and upgrading skill sets and enhancing career opportunities</li> <li>• More involvement in change and improvement initiatives = sense of ownership</li> <li>• More scope to influence customer outcomes = satisfaction in closing the loop</li> <li>• Flexibility to choose place and hours</li> <li>• Individual recognition of a job well done.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fragmented systems/process friction = unwanted cognitive load and stress</li> <li>• Not enough time to stay up to date with updates and changes</li> <li>• Difficulty accessing knowledge/resources</li> <li>• Fear of getting it wrong</li> <li>• Greater responsibilities without extra recognition or pay.</li> </ul>

.....

**“ A lot of our guys like the autonomy to get stuck into stuff. The culture has changed. Rather than just do a quick call and move on, you've seen this case through to resolution. You get great feedback. And you are more trusted and empowered to get your teeth into cases.”** - Helen Richardson, Head of Telephony - Intermediary Mortgages, HSBC UK

.....

**“ Younger team members in particular don't just want to sit in the chair and take calls for eight hours a day. They want more variety. At first this was a challenge to keep people engaged. But it's actually a real opportunity. As our customers change how they get in touch, we've now got a workforce that are more trained on all the different channels, which has given us a great base to be able to go where our customers want us to be.”**

- Neil Hirst, Contact Centre Manager, Damart

.....

Underpinning good complexity is recognition and compensation commensurate with the escalating demands of the frontline job.

.....

**“ When I look at what we ask of our colleagues now from a compliance perspective, to be able to resolve queries, log complaints and all in a regulatory environment, we must recognise that call centres are shifting away from being minimum wage jobs. We pay above minimum wage and have done for some time.”** - Jo Nicholls, Contact Centre Manager, Likewise

.....

As more onus is placed on their skill and discretion, colleagues expect to be rewarded and recognised accordingly. Figure 12 shows that 'better rewards for great service to customers' tops the wish list for frontline colleagues when asked to prioritise different types of 'good' complexity.

**How to read Figures 12, 13, 14, 18**

Survey participants were asked to allocate a total of 100 points across various options, with more points for options which they felt were more important to them. The scores represent the mean allocation of points for each available option across the survey sample, with higher scores denoting higher importance.

**Figure 12:** Imagine the contact centre is looking to make changes with the goal of helping you feel more engaged with your work. Please allocate 100 points across each of the following options.

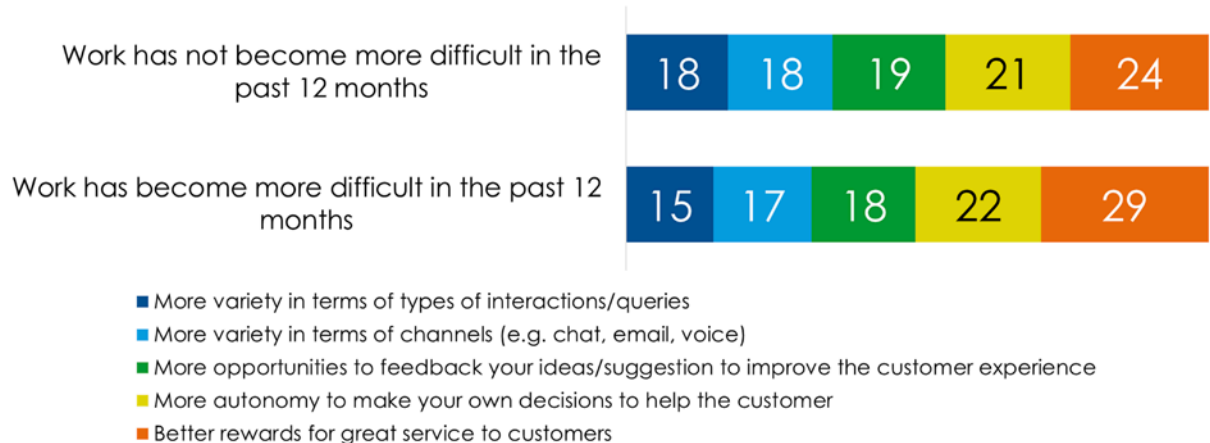


Base: All (n=339)

Figure 13 shows that 'better rewards for great service to customers' is prioritised especially highly among those who report that work has become

more difficult, which indicates that dialling up this factor would go a long way to addressing the concerns of those at risk of attrition.

**Figure 13:** Imagine the contact centre is looking to make changes with the goal of helping you feel more engaged with your work. Please allocate 100 points across each of the following options.

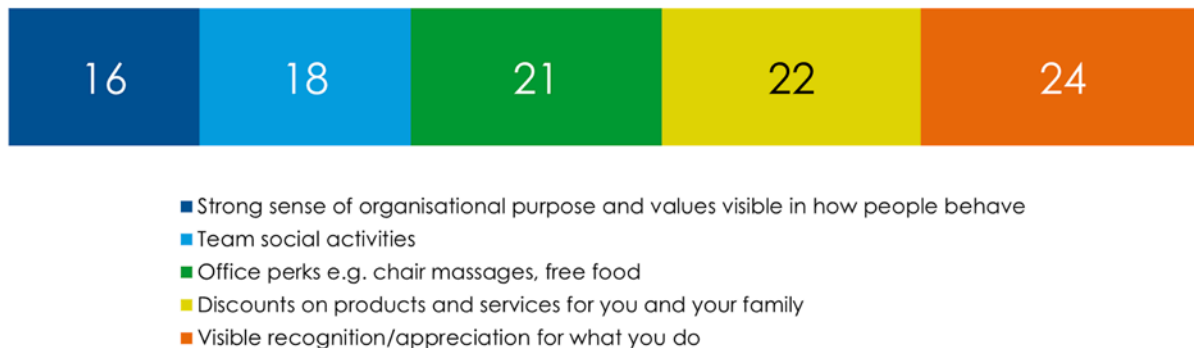


Base: Work has not become more difficult (n=215), Work has become more difficult (n=107)

When asked to prioritise 'cultural' elements including organisational purpose and values, social activities, office perks and product discounts,

recognition once again tops the list as evidenced in Figure 14.

**Figure 14:** Imagine the contact centre is looking to make changes with the goal of helping you feel more appreciated by your employer. Please allocate 100 points across each of the following options.



Base: All (n=339)

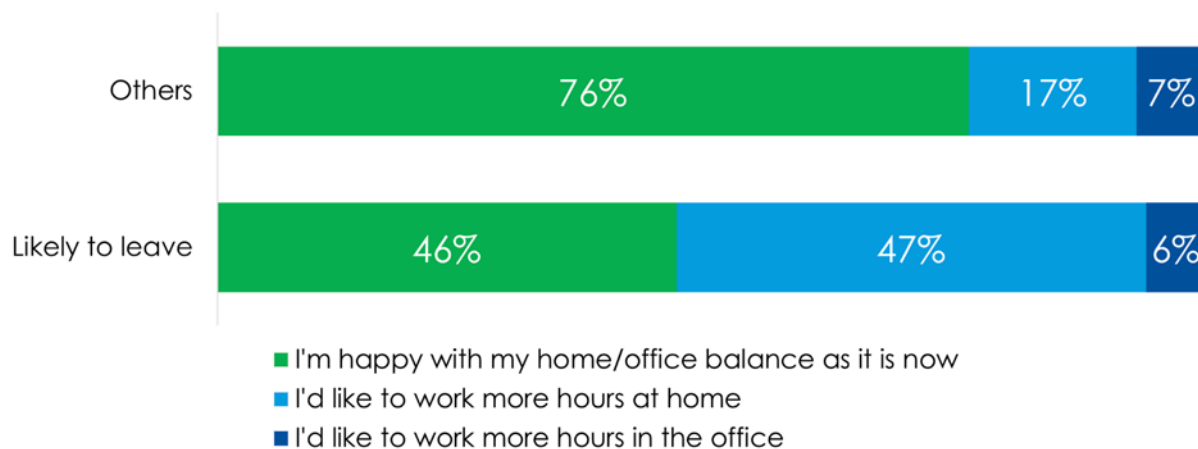
## The great hybrid debate

Hybrid working continues to be a hot topic in contact centres. Some employers are bringing people back to the office, citing the benefits in terms of intra-team connectivity and culture. Some have found it challenging to encourage people to return to premises, as colleagues have adapted their lives to home-working while rising fuel and transport costs have further incentivised people to stay home.

The tensions between some individuals' desire to stay at home versus some organisations' desire to bring people to the office is illustrated in Figure 15.

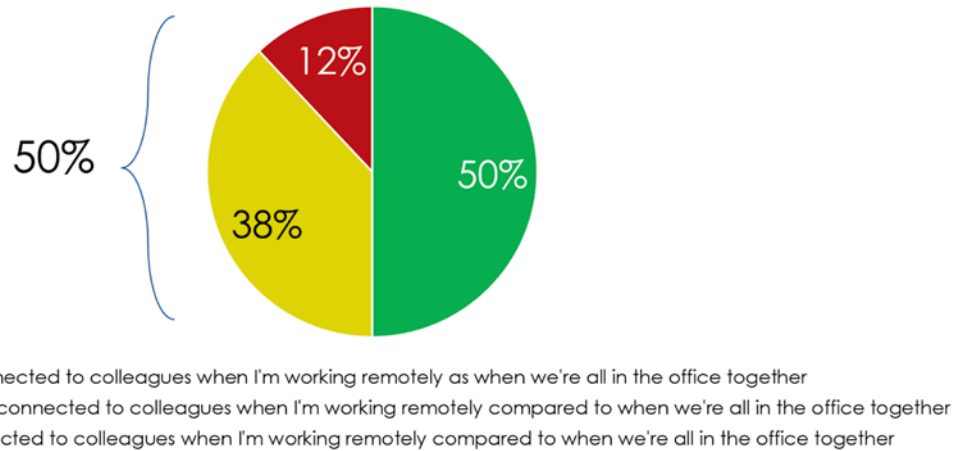
Figure 15 shows that those who say they are likely to leave their jobs are much more likely to want to spend more time working at home.

**Figure 15:** Given the choice, which of the following best describes your preference of place to work? [By 'Likely to leave' = Very likely or Somewhat likely to leave job in next 12 months VS 'Others' = Very unlikely or Somewhat unlikely or Neither unlikely or likely.



Base: Others (n=231), Likely to leave(n=95)

Figure 16: Which of the following best describes how you feel when remote working, generally speaking.



Base: Work both at home and office (n=101)

Contact centre leaders called out the importance of making office time feel meaningfully 'different' to working at home.

**" Prior to covid we would have 20-30 staff from our team in the building every day. Now post-covid and with the introduction of remote working we could have 10 staff in the office on certain days. Remote working was not something we thought we could ever do but it has been welcomed."**

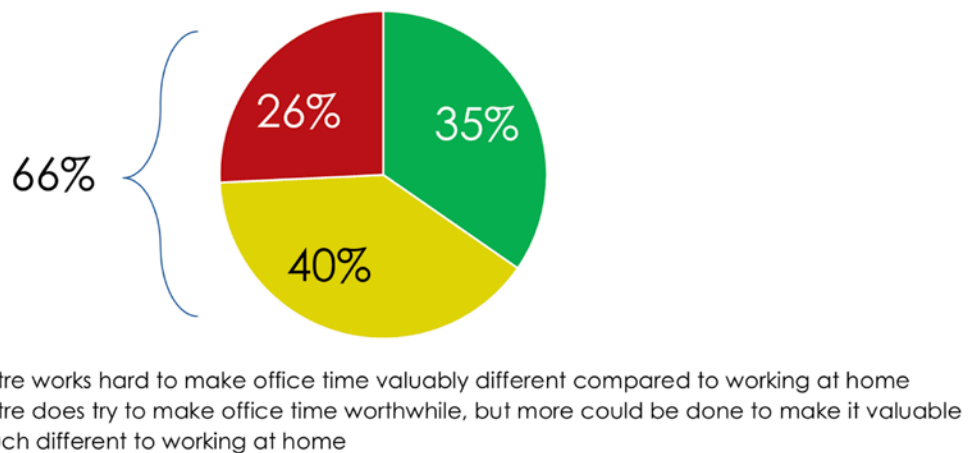
- Elizabeth Lynch, Sales & Service People Leader, AIB (Allied Irish Bank)

**" If you come into the office, it needs to feel different to when you're at home. You should be spending time with your teams and with your manager, collaborating together face to face. It's not that you don't do your normal job in the office, but it should feel like it's one of your favourite days of the week or month."**

- Liz Hicks, Head of Operations, Ageas UK

Does office time feel sufficiently different from working from home? Figure 17 shows that 66% of those surveyed who work both at home and in the office feel more could be done to make office time feel valuably different.

Figure 17: Which of the following best describes the time you spend working in the office?



Base: Work both at home and office (n=101)

## Flexible hours: what colleagues want

As well as home versus office working, flexible working hours continues to be a topic of considerable debate. Is the ability to choose their own hours important to people on the front line?

This research reveals there is indeed a desire for flexible hours in terms of having a say in setting one's own working hours up front, but less so for varying hours once agreed. Once a working pattern is set, people tend to stick to it. As such, shift swaps tend to attract limited uptake.

**“ People want fixed agreed shifts so that they can plan their life accordingly. We get very little in the way of people wanting to work varying hours. However, I think many people would like more control over what they do during the shift.”** - Martin Storey, Senior FS Manager, The Very Group

**“ For some the appeal of nine to five is fantastic, because they can stick to that. And for others it's not. Make sure you have the right conversations and that it's a good fit for both the operation and for the person to get the best out of both of them.”** - Helen Richardson, Head of Telephony - Intermediary Mortgages, HSBC UK

**“ We introduced the ability for consultants to be able to do shift swaps and take control of their own schedules, but demand has not been as great as we thought it was going to be. Those people that do use it really see the value, but it's not being used as much as we expected. That could partly be because we reduced our opening hours. It might be more popular in a 24-hour operation.”**

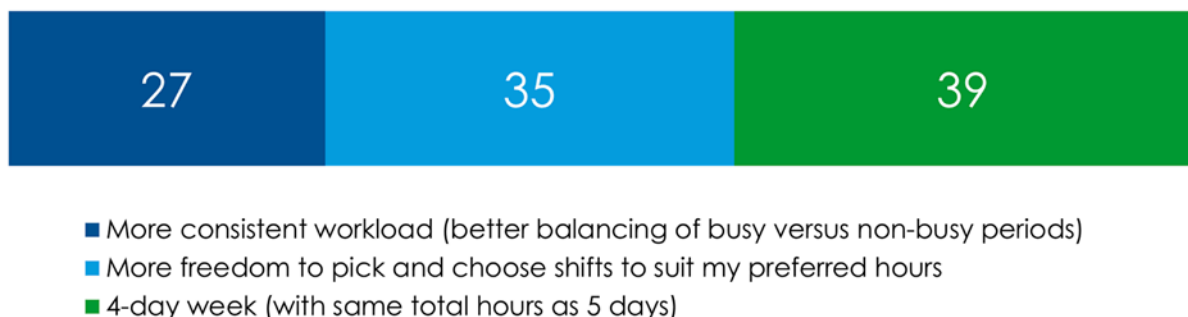
- Liz Hicks, Head of Operations, Ageas UK

**“ We had the option for shift swaps but it's become less appetising as our people now work between 8am to 6pm.”**

- Janet Scott, Customer Operations Manager, AIB

Figure 18 reveals there is stronger interest in a compressed four-day week (with longer days) compared with other shift-planning options (balancing busy versus quiet times and ability to self-select shifts).

**Figure 18:** Imagine the contact centre is looking to make changes to shift planning and is exploring a number of options. Please allocate 100 points across each of the following options.



Base: All (n=339)

Not every contact centre will be able to implement a four-day week: scale is a pre-requisite. Furthermore, contact centre leaders

should closely monitor productivity when employing people on four longer days compared with five shorter days.

“ We offer four-day weeks now. The uptake has not been huge, but it’s been welcomed by those who want it. It’s good to offer choice, and what will work for one won’t work for the other. The same applies for annualised hours as well, which is working well for us. We can get the hours at the peaks of the year where we really need it. And in the summer, when the sun is shining, when we’re quieter, they can have time off.” - Neil Hirst, Contact Centre Manager, Damart

“ Workforce Management are responsible for assigning breaks and lunches for our teams. This is a change as this would have all been scheduled locally prior to Workforce Management coming on board. There are pros and cons to this. From a business perspective our service levels have improved greatly and we have been better able to manage our call backs which has helped staff be more productive. However, the downside is that staff can’t always go on breaks and lunches as freely as they would have previously with colleagues (but we can arrange on an ad-hoc basis to support this).” - Elizabeth Lynch, Sales & Service People Leader, AIB (Allied Irish Bank)

An unintended consequence of modern workforce-management methods which assign personalised break times to individuals is this can limit opportunities for social interactions during breaks. The value of shared break times should not be ignored by planners: **shared group break times (especially when working in the office) for social time, wellbeing and recognition are vital.**

## Access to information and internal resources: a pillar of colleague engagement and productivity

The ability to deliver timely information to frontline teams has become a crucial factor influencing colleague and customer experience and is often cited by advisors as a reason why their jobs have become easier, despite growing complexity.

When asked in our survey to prioritise various aspects related to information provision, the most highly prized was the ability to immediately contact a manager or expert (as shown in Figure 19).

**Figure 19:** Imagine the contact centre is looking to make changes to help you better serve customers and is exploring a number of options. Please allocate 100 points across each of the following options.



Base: All (n=339)

Just as customers (if given the choice) would typically prefer to be connected to live human assistance, the same applies to support for

frontline colleagues. Such similarities between customers’ and colleagues’ knowledge needs and communication preferences are not going

unnoticed. Customer-facing and internally-facing platforms are converging: contact centres are discovering there are benefits in deploying the same tools and knowledge bases for both audiences.

**“ We’ve been really successful at using technology to help us understand customers. But all these tools could probably apply to understanding our people as well.”** - Liz Hicks, Head of Operations, Ageas UK

**“ We’ve been using a chatbot to serve knowledge to our people. We know what our customers are asking, we know what our staff are asking. There are going to be some commonalities in there.”**

- Carl Bishop, Head of Operational Excellence, AA

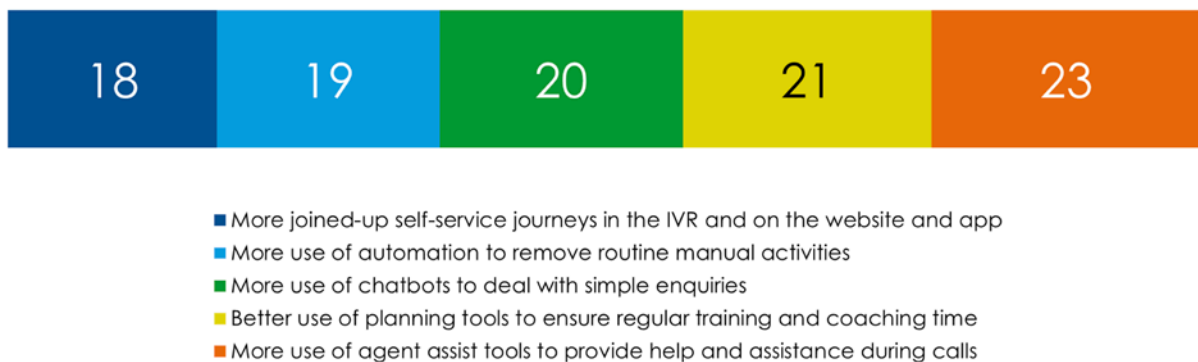
Some contact centres ring-fence time from their most experienced advisors and managers to support the front line. Naturally there is an overhead attached to providing dedicated resource, but in the absence of this even a simple group chat can go a long way.

**“ Technology has come a long way since covid and working from home you have a dedicated chat team to help out with queries. This is better than trying to find someone in the office to help out.”** - Advisor

Conventional wisdom dictates that there is no substitute for being in the office to be able to contact colleagues and obtain information quickly. This research offers evidence that for some contact centres have successfully implemented tools and channels so that working remotely presents no barrier to accessing information. In fact, the use of online platforms for information access are becoming the norm even in the office, as are digital channels for obtaining help and advice from colleagues.

Other than ramping-up the availability of human assistance, there is interest on the front line for automated agent-assist tools that provide help and assistance 'in the moment' during customer interactions. When asked to choose between various types of automation and digitisation tools, 'agent assist' topped the wish list as illustrated in Figure 20.

**Figure 20:** Imagine the contact centre is choosing where to invest in better digital journeys and automation. Please allocate 100 points across each of the following options.



Base: All (n=339)

There is a huge opportunity for 'agent assist' to deliver a scalable, automated alternative to live assistance without the overhead requirements.

**“I’d place a lot of emphasis on taking the burden of responsibility away from people and making**

**it more systemic and automated. Our specialists have to remember an awful lot and I really feel for our people helping our customers. If we can automate more this will lead to better, more natural conversations with our customers.”**

- Martin Storey, Senior FS Manager, The Very Group

# 6 discoveries

## on colleague engagement and productivity

- 1** The majority of frontline colleagues are happy in their jobs, but a third of advisors (33%) say they intend to quit in the next 12 months.
- 2** About one third (32%) of surveyed colleagues said their job has become harder, whereas a roughly similar proportion (29%) report their job has become easier in the past 12 months.
- 3** Common factors underpinning increased job difficulty are changes in operating environment not supported by appropriate process/KPI/technology change, and not enough appreciation for good performance.
- 4** When external complexity is adequately addressed with right changes and tools, the job can become easier and colleagues more engaged. 'Good' complexity leads to more rewarding frontline jobs, whereas 'bad' complexity is detrimental to colleague engagement and customer outcomes.
- 5** The positive influence of workplace technologies such as knowledge management systems and CRM is frequently cited by those who say their jobs have become easier.
- 6** For contact centres looking to bring people back to the office, it is crucial to ensure that office time feels meaningfully different to working from home. 66% of hybrid workers surveyed said that more could be done to differentiate office and home work, while 50% say they feel less connected to colleagues when working from home.



## Afterword by Nerys Corfield, Director, Injection Consulting

This is such an interesting report to read and there is nothing better than getting both statistical insights coupled with real-world feedback from those at the forefront of customer service, particularly from the agent community.

The whole report is insightful. The anecdotal comments are somewhat disheartening though. In a climate where incidents of assaults on staff have surged, as witnessed by retailers like Tesco, it's no surprise that agents recount their challenges in dealing with demanding customers. The industry has often discussed the changing landscape of customer expectations, but there's an underlying truth that, particularly in remote interactions, customers are displaying increased impatience and irrationality.

Given the backdrop of a growing difficulty in handling customers and a third of agents finding their job more challenging today than a year ago, it's understandable that 33% of agents are presenting as a flight risk. While this paints a critical picture of our industry, the report does shed light on businesses that are doing things right.

It highlights that successful contact centres work hard to cultivate positive cultures and invest in technology to provide much needed supportive tools.

The unified plea from agents who are looking for a positive culture is straightforward:

**“acknowledge me, appreciate me, support me.”**

To fulfil these requests, contact centre managers should reassess the time allocated to acknowledging, appreciating, and supporting their agents versus fixating solely on daily metrics. This report points to the pressure to deliver daily stats being commonplace and this focus overshadowing the needs of agents. It is vital for businesses to recognise that prioritising daily statistics at the expense of agent well-being is not a sustainable strategy.

To validate this reasoning and assess the impact a healthier balance between stats and people a collective effort between the C-Suite; Operational Management and contact centres should model the impact (from a commercial and CX perspective) dialling back on the operational metrics and increasing the time agents spend in development, learning coaching and well-being. Implementing these changes and re-addressing the focus can set in motion a virtuous cycle of overall improvement across the board.

Agents' collective request regarding technology investment is equally straightforward:

**“do not burden us with the management of increasingly complex enquiries alongside a complex suite of (oftentimes) underperforming technology.”**

The concept of 'negative complexity,' detailed in this report, deserves serious consideration and should become a benchmark for businesses to measure themselves against. To drive down negative complexity specific to their desktop experience (tech stack) technology teams should develop tangible ROI models that emphasise how complexity at the desktop affects agent retention and job satisfaction.

By addressing these concerns and implementing meaningful changes, businesses can pave the way for a more positive and productive future in the customer service industry.

## About the CCMA

For nearly 30 years, the CCMA (Call Centre Management Association), as the longest established contact centre industry body, has been dedicated to supporting contact centre leaders across the UK. Founded on the principles of sharing best practice and networking to improve skills and knowledge, the CCMA is a thriving community that represents leaders from a huge cross-section of the industry.

Membership of the largest community in the industry offers unique opportunities, such as the opportunity to be an Accredited Contact Centre through the Contact Centre Standards Framework, free annual benchmarking of 25+ KPIs, free entry into the UK National Contact Centre Awards and free tickets to the UK National Contact Centre Conference, invites to Executive Networking Dinners and exclusive events for members-only. Members also benefit from discounted training through the UK National Contact Centre Academy, the industry's training partner.

To support the industry further, the CCMA conducts regular original research for download, including the annual Voice of the Contact Centre Consumer research, the Evolution of the Contact Centre tracking the industry's progress and Good Practice Guides on a variety of topics.

[www.ccma.org.uk](http://www.ccma.org.uk)

---

## About Intradiem

Intradiem believes technology should be used to empower workers, not replace them. Our patented, AI-powered contact centre automation technology integrates with WFM, ACD, and other systems and processes their data output in real time, revealing unused capacity that can be redirected to its most productive use. Through real-time monitoring of schedules, call volume and workflow, Intradiem delivers unprecedented call-handling support and identifies opportunities to deliver breaks, training, and other time-sensitive tasks within the flow of actual conditions. We help contact centres boost operating efficiency, enhance agent engagement, and improve end-customer experiences while delivering concrete savings and same-year investment return.

[www.intradiem.com](http://www.intradiem.com)

**Join  
us!**

## **Not a member?**

There is no better time to join us. The industry is changing and we are giving our members more opportunities to learn, to network and to support each other.

**[www.ccma.org.uk/membership](http://www.ccma.org.uk/membership)**



0333 939 9964 | [www.ccma.org.uk](http://www.ccma.org.uk) | [info@ccma.org.uk](mailto:info@ccma.org.uk)