



Zenarate Guide

Reducing Agent Attrition in
Contact Centers

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Overview

You're not alone in the battle for talent retention. In today's global market, employee attrition is a growing concern, impacting nearly 70%* of companies, with contact centers experiencing some of the highest turnover rates. Today's customer-facing teams in contact centers sit in a challenging role between the company's goals and the customer's needs. Turnover rates have increased to 86%* since the pandemic. The drivers are multifaceted, but the overarching reality is that agents are facing a more complex job, and yet their training and development remains antiquated and insufficient, rendering them unprepared to meet performance targets. We're here to help. Every day we work with organizations like yours looking to improve their agent retention. We've used that knowledge and experience to create this guide focused on stabilizing agent retention and creating continuous agent improvement. With refreshed focus on the entire learning journey, contact centers can turn resilience into a competitive advantage this coming year and beyond.

01. The Problem: Contact Center Trends Impacting Agent Retention

Increased Call Volumes, Intensified Calls, and Complexity in Issues

Shifts in customer expectations are translating into intensified calls, more complex issues, and increased call volumes. Combine that with requests coming in from a growing number of channels such as online chat and apps, and the agent role has become more challenging.

Responding to Increased Call Volumes

61%* of call center leaders report increased call volumes despite available self-service and AI tools. Yet most contact center teams aren't prepared to successfully handle the increase. Why?


- Few call centers invest in continuous agent learning post-onboarding
- Customers require support for urgent needs with tact and sensitivity
- KPI pressure coupled with skill stagnation leads to agent burnout
- Lack of competency to resolve emerging concerns prompts agent resignation

Rising Call Complexities & Customer Frustrations Drive Agent Stress

In addition to rising call volumes, agents today are facing new challenges with growing call complexities and more intense caller sentiment. Through the use of automation and technology, companies can now enable their customers to resolve the more mundane and simple issues on their own. This leaves the harder and more complex issues to be handled by live agents, which are not easily solved with scripts and traditional training methods. Given this increase, it's critical to agent retention that they're capable of effectively managing these unpredictable interactions with angry or difficult customers.

Recent research conducted by Arizona State University's Center for Services Leadership has brought attention to a significant challenge faced by customer service agents amidst rising levels of customer frustration. The study reveals a concerning trend: abusive and angry calls from customers have nearly doubled since the onset of the pandemic and associated restrictions.

- As consumers experience heightened stress, frontline staff are increasingly subjected to persistent verbal attacks, placing significant emotional strain on agents
- Given the already prevalent issue of high attrition rates in contact centers, this surge in mistreatment could further exacerbate exit rates if left unattended



Addressing this challenge requires proactive measures from center leadership, such as investing in additional training aimed at enhancing agents' ability to convey empathy during calls, ultimately prioritizing agent well-being.

The Challenge of Hiring with New Professional Demands

According to a 2023 McKinsey study, around 80% of global employees are reassessing their career paths, seeking opportunities that offer clear advancement trajectories and robust skill-building programs. As this trend reshapes the expectations of the modern workforce, it's crucial for contact centers to align their hiring strategies with these evolving demands:

- Employees are looking for employers with transparent career paths and robust training programs
- Contact centers need to adapt by expanding training, implementing career growth models, and prioritizing continuous upskilling
- Failing to invest in these areas risks losing top talent to competitors who prioritize professional growth

Strategic investments in AI Simulation Training can provide a powerful solution for improving agent experience and development across the entire agent lifecycle. For pre-hire screening, AI simulations allow hiring managers to hear candidates handle realistic customer scenarios before making hiring decisions. This provides an authentic preview into how they will perform on the job.



AI simulation training holds tremendous potential to positively impact the agent training journey by accelerating agent proficiency, retention, and engagement.

02. Driving Change Across the Agent Training Journey

The Right Methodology for the Job

Without reimagining agent experience, careers, and culture for modern workplace priorities, contact centers will fail to cost-effectively retain agents and meet customer expectations. Leadership must reconnect the dots between fulfilled frontline teams who feel securely supported with the world-class service needed to maintain customer confidence. Enter AI Simulation Training. This impactful training methodology focuses on building the skills needed on customer calls, not just memorizing scripts. With AI training simulations, agents improve throughout their journey:

New Hire Training & Onboarding: The immersive practice in this guided digital environment accelerates readiness by focusing training on real-world call competencies. Simulation training propels new hire capability while keeping staff engagement high even amid early struggles.

The Zenarate AI Coach Learning Model:



**STEP 1:
OBSERVE BEST
PRACTICES**

Learners observe a Best Practice Example

which allows them to see and hear a prerecorded roleplay that illustrates your custom call skills throughout the conversation & screen navigation.



**STEP 2:
PRACTICE GUIDED
ROLEPLAY**

Learners practice call skills in Guided Roleplay

which prompts them directionally (unscripted) on what to say to the customer, and what corresponding step to perform on their screen throughout the conversation.



**STEP 3:
PRACTICE UNGUIDED
ROLEPLAY**

Learners practice call skills Unguided Roleplay

which allows them to showcase the skills they learned navigating through both the customer conversation and corresponding screens on their own without any guidance. Zenarate AI Coach will step in to provide in-the-moment coaching where the learner falls short of expectations, until they master every skill and perform the simulation with no coaching moments.

AI Simulation Training Outcomes

Agent Performance

Zenarate Customer Average

Faster Agent
Speed-to-Proficiency



56% over traditional
training

Increase in First Contact
Resolution Rates



23% or greater lift

Higher Customer
Satisfaction Scores



33% CSAT score
improvements

Source: zenarate.com

Drive Continuous Improvement with Live Agents

To further empower agents' growth, you need to evaluate live call performance and pinpoint development opportunities for each individual. Prescriptive, personalized coaching and targeted microlearning modules help agents refine their approach over time. This focus on nurturing tenure and expertise reduces attrition through connecting the entire training journey.

By investing in conversation intelligence-based training technologies, contact centers can unlock new levels of agent success, especially for tenured agents. By evaluating past recorded calls, AI-powered call analysis can uncover trends and growth areas at multiple areas.

- Surface each unique agent's proficiency across various call types to customize 1:1 coaching
- Recognize top performers and overlooked developing talent
- Help set individualized goals and recommend microlearning content based on agent needs

With multi-dimensional insights, leaders can design hyper-targeted training and coaching opportunities that specifically address organizational, team-wide, and individual agent development needs surfaced by the analysis – from policy or process refreshers to skills training tailored to frequent situational struggles agents face. Advanced speech analytics targets skill building priorities around both required and best practice opportunities.

Actionable Insights Drive Change

Leader Insights & AI Coaching	Agent Development
Deep-Dive Agent Performance & Compliance Analytics	Enables providing meaningful, context-based feedback based on call trends data instead of isolated incidents
Score 100% of Calls Against Over 40 Custom Parameters	Leverage the same criteria advisors practice in Call Simulator to benchmark real call performance
Trend Analysis and AI active listening	Identify call topic trends and flashpoints to better inform training and customer needs

Source: zenarate.com

From AI Simulation Training to Ongoing Coaching agents experience a seamless workflow. Onboarding, new hire training, tenured agent skill gaps, and ongoing coaching is simplified and personalized.

03. Getting Started: The First Steps to Better Retention

As we've explored, high agent attrition and inconsistent customer experiences often stem from inadequate training and support. To defuse these issues at the source, contact centers must focus on building better agent development - spanning from pre-hire assessments and ongoing development and advancement. The solutions lie in reimagining early skill-building with AI simulation training while also investing in agents' continuous growth trajectory.

Successfully deploying AI simulation involves more than just the technology - it requires choosing the right partner and approach tailored to your contact center's needs. Here are key considerations:

Expert Guidance

Work with an implementation team that provides ongoing strategic and technical support in building realistic scenarios mapped to your protocols, analyzing performance, and ensuring maximum business impact over time.

Robust Reporting

Collect structured feedback and aggregate performance analytics to identify coaching opportunities, prove ROI and showcase continuous skills enhancement.

The Path Forward

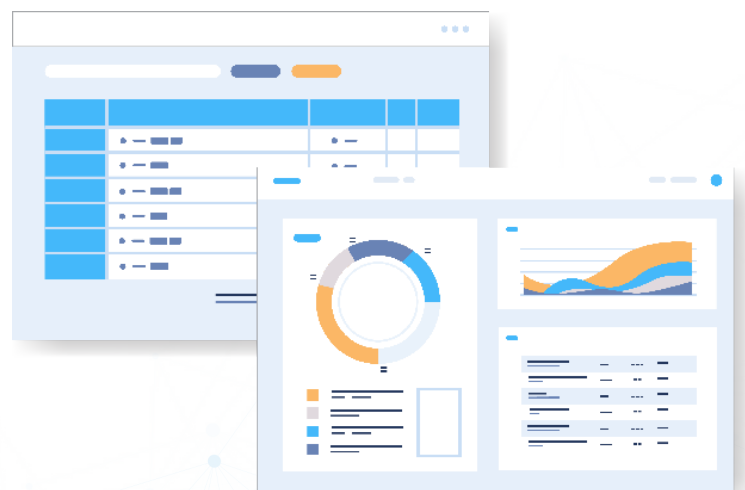
With the right solutions partner guiding configuration and providing continual enhancements, AI simulation can transform agent readiness through hands-on skill-building while providing leaders data-driven development insights.

Skill-based Learning

Look for simulation platforms employing Natural Language Understanding to evaluate free-form agent responses - not just keywords. This enables truly authentic, unscripted practice conversations.

Gradual Onboarding

Start with a pilot focused on priority scenarios, then gradually expand the catalog. Leverage external build services then transition to in-house editing tools. The goal is sustainable self-sufficiency



Sustainable Growth for your Contact Center

Strategic agent development supports the promise of long-term career development. For agents, the confidence and mastery that comes from skill-based training and ongoing investment in their development is invaluable. For leaders, the access to rich coaching insights and automated development plans makes agent management easier. All, adding up to meaningful improvements and KPI gains for the enterprise. If leadership can rethink their agent journey, the root causes of attrition can be addressed with research-backed strategies like AI Simulation Training.



**With our AI Coach agents are more prepared,
productive, and confident.”**

-Global Operations Leader

32% lower agent attrition from
agents experiencing early job
satisfaction and success.