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# Redefining agent performance: Is EX your CX advantage?



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# Introduction

For years, contact centers have centered their strategies around customer experience (CX) — and with good reason. Meeting customer expectations is essential to loyalty, brand perception, and long-term revenue.

But what makes a great customer experience? It's actually pretty simple. According to research, 80% of American consumers say they value four things: quick service, easy interactions, knowledgeable help, and friendly support. (1)

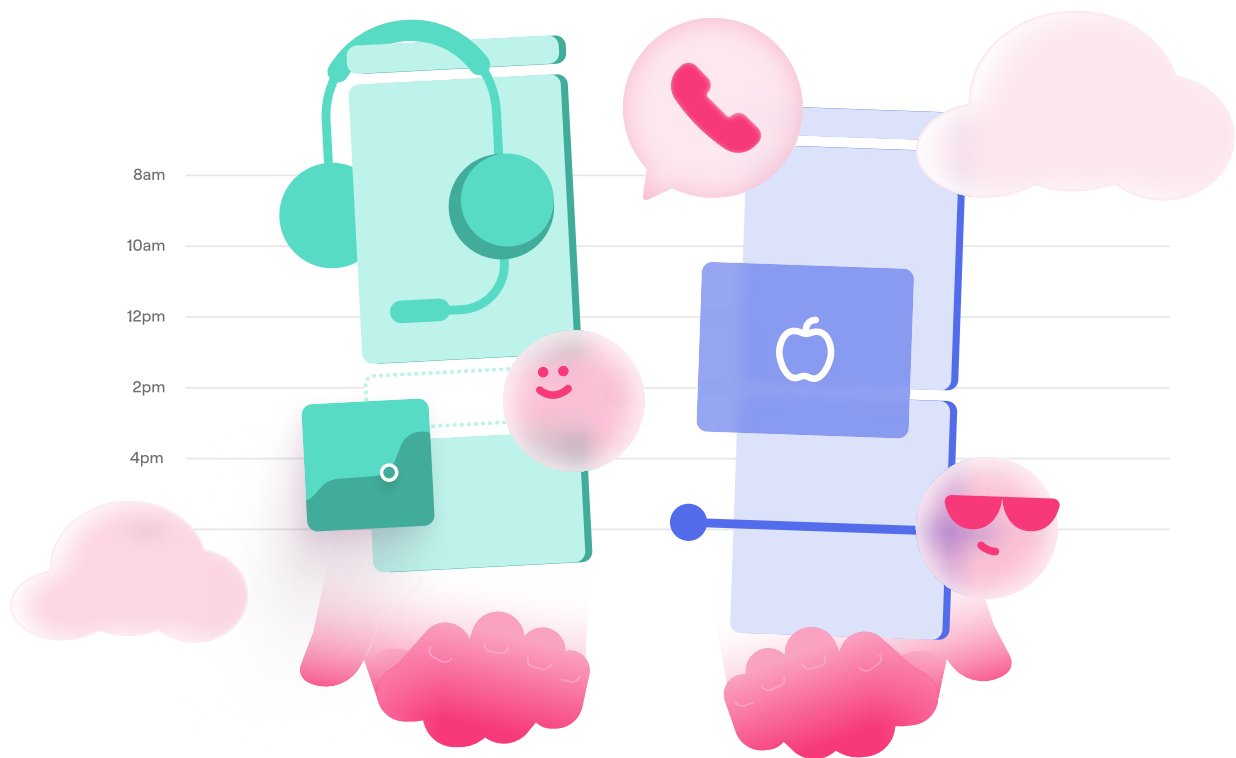
Yet, many companies struggle to consistently deliver on these promises — especially in high-pressure, high-volume environments like contact centers.

The reality is that nearly every element of a great customer experience is tied directly to the people delivering it. These employees are the voice of the brand. And when they're overwhelmed, disengaged, or unsupported, the quality of service suffers.

Still, many organizations treat CX and employee experience (EX) as separate — or worse, as competing — priorities. In truth, they're deeply interconnected. You simply can't deliver exceptional service without engaged, empowered employees.

When agents feel supported, they show up with more empathy and consistency. Even better: companies with high employee engagement are 23% more profitable than those with low engagement. (2)

Today, balancing operational goals with employee well-being has become a core leadership strategy. The question for workforce leaders is no longer if EX should be a focus — but how to build a working environment where agents can thrive and deliver great service.



(1) "Experience is Everything. Get it Right"; PWC.

(2) "What Is Employee Engagement and How Do You Improve It?"; Gallup.

# The rising importance of EX

As automation and self-service channels become more sophisticated, they're increasingly able to handle routine, more common customer inquiries — password resets, order tracking, simple FAQs. That's a win for efficiency. But it also means the nature of agent work is changing.

Instead of resolving quick, repetitive issues, agents are now handling the most complex, and unpredictable problems — and doing it all day long.

These interactions require greater emotional intelligence, and deeper product or process knowledge.

**“Agents are now handling the most complex and time-consuming cases. The longer the handle time, the harder the work. And they have very little downtime in between those interactions to recover mentally.”**

- Kelly Person,  
Strategic Manager, Solution Architects, Aspect

Without proper support, even the most resilient agents burn out. And that's exactly what many workforce managers are witnessing: rising attrition, declining morale, and increasing pressure to fill knowledge gaps faster than ever.

## Training, coaching, and emotional resilience

Preparing agents for this complex work goes beyond initial onboarding. They require consistent coaching, real-time support resources, and targeted training to build both confidence and emotional resilience. This ongoing development is essential for maintaining performance and reducing turnover.

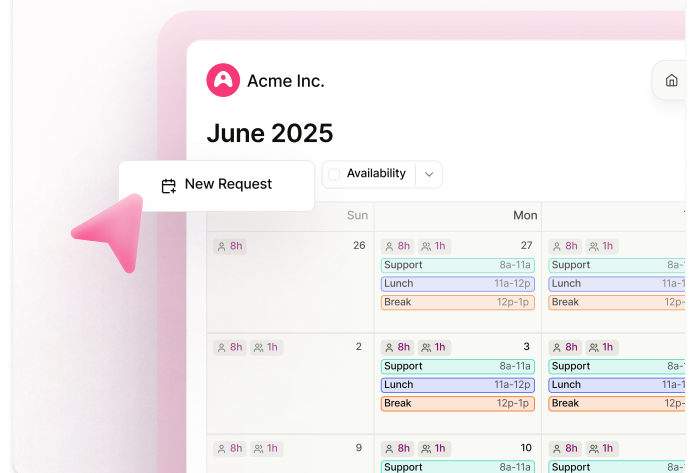
## The role of scheduling, breaks, and time to reset

One of the most overlooked factors in employee experience is recovery time. Agents need meaningful breaks to mentally reset, especially when handling high-intensity calls. Workforce managers can play a key role here — designing schedules that respect both business needs and human capacity.

Technology is also key when it comes to giving agents the breaks they need. Modern WFM solutions, like **Aspect Workforce**, have dynamic scheduling capabilities that address this critical need and work for both the business & the agents.

**Aspect Workforce** uses advanced forecasting and dynamic scheduling to match staffing with call volumes, making sure agents get proper breaks even during busy times. Agents can also manage their own schedules and breaks through a self-service portal, while automated rules ensure teams follow labor laws and requirements.

Workforce managers can track when breaks are taken and see who's available at any time. This smart mix of automation and flexibility helps agents stay fresh between difficult calls while keeping service levels.



# How EX directly impacts CX

Unhappy agents struggle to stay motivated and that disengagement seeps into their conversations with customers. Even the best scripts or well-designed service protocols can't compensate for an unmotivated workforce.

The result? Poor employee experience leads to disengagement, burnout, and turnover, and these effects manifest in every metric that matters to a contact center.

**“You might not feel the impact right away. But when attrition starts climbing and your customer satisfaction metrics begin dropping, you'll realize it's the direct result of not investing in your employee experience.”**

- Kelly Person,  
Strategic Manager, Solution Architects, Aspect

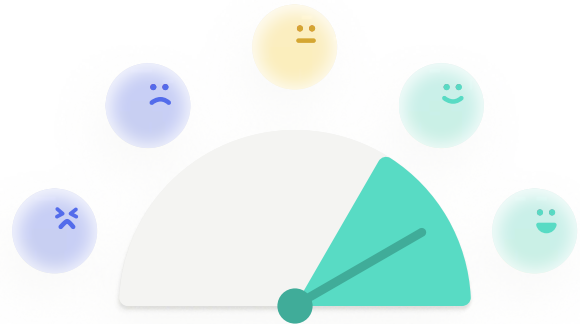
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## Attrition and the hidden costs of churn

Agent attrition is one of the most pressing — and expensive — challenges in contact center operations. When experienced agents walk out the door, they take product knowledge, customer context, and process familiarity with them.

Research shows that replacing a single frontline employee typically costs between **one-half to two times their annual salary**, depending on the industry (3). For contact centers, these expenses include:

- Time lost during training and ramp-up.
- Increased burden on remaining staff.
- Potential declines in service consistency and team morale.

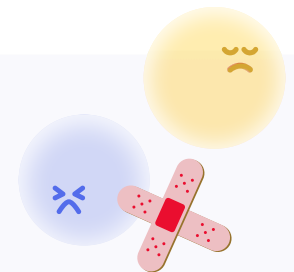


This impact extends beyond the financial costs. According to Metrigy, contact center turnover rates reached 28% in 2023 and continue to climb (4). With that level of churn, workforce managers are often stuck in a constant cycle of hiring, training, and rehiring — a costly and challenging pattern.

Additionally, high attrition can erode important metrics that CX teams usually focus on:

- **Customer satisfaction (CSAT)** may fall as inexperienced agents struggle to handle complex calls.
- **First contact resolution (FCR)** can decline as new hires more frequently escalate issues to seasoned team members or provide incomplete solutions.
- **Average handle time (AHT)** may increase due to lack of product knowledge.

**When agents leave, customers feel it — and so does the bottom line.**



(3) "Retaining Frontline Talent Through Career Mobility and Growth", Deloitte.

(4) "What Metrigy's Latest AI Data Reveals About Contact Center Staffing", Metrigy.

# Are you measuring what matters?

Most contact centers have no shortage of data — handle times, adherence rates, schedule efficiency, service levels. But when it comes to understanding the full picture of performance and experience, many organizations are still looking in the rearview mirror.

Metrics like average handle time (AHT) are often prioritized because they're easy to track and tie to costs. But optimizing for speed alone can come at the expense of service quality, agent satisfaction, and long-term customer loyalty.

Modern workforce leaders are shifting away from one-size-fits-all KPIs and instead focusing on metrics that connect agent performance, employee experience, and customer satisfaction.

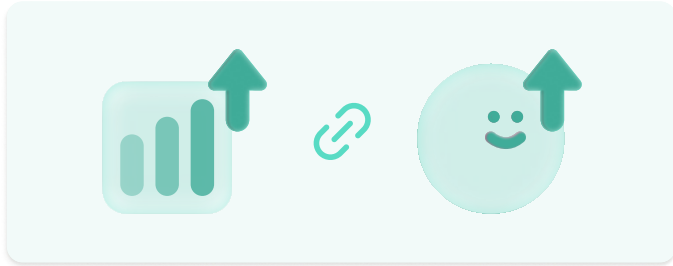
**“Yes, AHT is important to track. But should that be the KPI? What is the KPI that makes the most sense to your business — and your employee experience?”**

- Mary Ward,  
Strategic Manager, Solution Architects at Aspect



## Traditional vs. EX-CX aligned metrics

| Legacy metric                | EX-CX aligned metric                             | What it tells you  |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Average handle time (AHT)    | AHT + Agent sentiment score                      | Is efficiency coming at the cost of burnout or disengagement?  |
| Schedule adherence           | Schedule adherence + Flexibility index           | Are agents working when they're at their best?                 |
| CSAT (Customer Satisfaction) | CSAT + Agent effort score                        | How does agent experience shape customer satisfaction?         |
| Turnover rate                | Exit interviews + Time-to-productivity           | Why are people leaving, and how quickly can new hires ramp up? |
| QA scores                    | QA + Coaching frequency + Self-assessment trends | Are agents growing in skill or just checking boxes?            |



## Siloed vs. holistic insights

Traditional contact center reporting often looks at CX and EX in silos. Customer satisfaction on one dashboard, agent performance on another. But the reality is these outcomes are deeply linked.

A high first call resolution (FCR) rate, for example, might look like a win, but if it's driven by agents staying late or skipping breaks, it's not sustainable. Holistic performance dashboards should show not just what happened, but why — connecting performance to workload and even scheduling patterns.

## Building meaningful KPI stories

Data becomes actionable when it tells a story. Instead of tracking isolated metrics, workforce leaders are starting to correlate indicators across CX and EX:

- Is a drop in CSAT tied to recent agent turnover?
- Are longer wrap times connected to more complex case types?
- Is higher adherence masking burnout or disengagement?

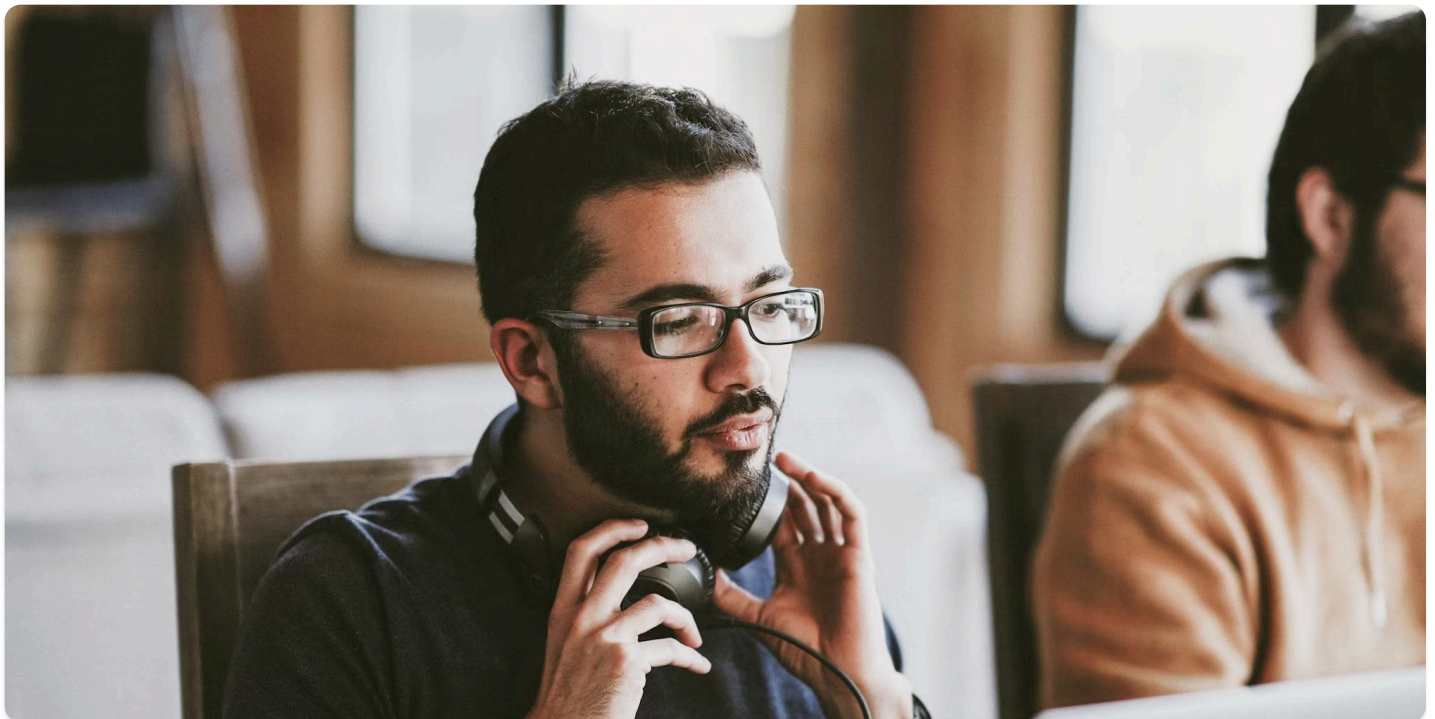
Asking these questions helps workforce managers move from reactive to proactive leadership, building an efficiency-driven and experience-led workforce.

## The role of scheduling, breaks, and time to reset

Integrating operational, financial, customer, and employee indicators are gaining traction in workforce management. The goal isn't to abandon traditional metrics, but to contextualize them within a broader framework that supports both business goals and agent well-being.

Tracking the right mix of KPIs can:

- Help identify root causes of declining CX.
- Surface early warning signs of burnout.
- Inform smarter staffing, coaching, & scheduling decisions.



# Tactics that elevate both CX and EX

Striking the right balance between customer expectations and employee needs isn't an easy task, but it's exactly where workforce managers can have the biggest impact.

Efficiency and employee well-being don't have to be tradeoffs. In fact, they work best when they support each other. Empowered, engaged agents deliver better outcomes — and smart workforce strategies make that possible.

**“If you want to continue to drive revenue and reduce costs, you have to respect that both CX and EX are equally important.”**

- Kelly Person,  
Strategic Manager, Solution Architects at Aspect

Here are three strategies that workforce leaders can use to balance CX, EX, and performance, in ways that scale & sustain.

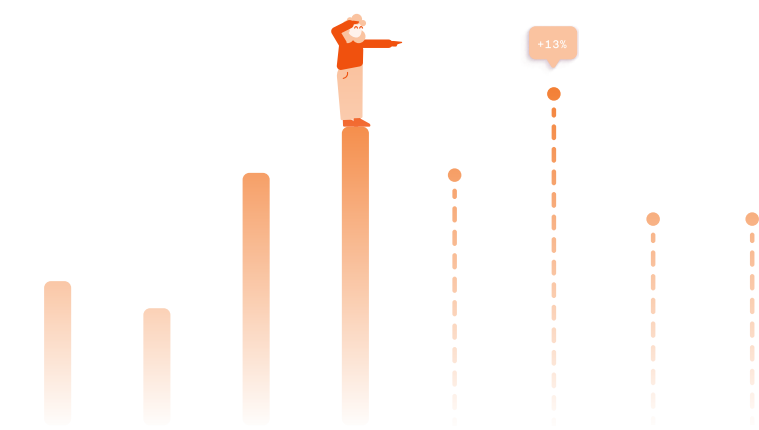


## Co-created scheduling

Give agents more input into when and how they work. This doesn't mean giving up control. It means introducing more flexibility and transparency into the scheduling process.

When agents understand how the scheduling process works, it builds trust, boosts engagement, and often results in better adherence.

Whether it's preference-based, shift bidding or flexible break placements, scheduling is one of the most direct levers to improve day-to-day employee experience.



## Experience-driven performance management

Traditional performance management often centers on rigid targets, but forward-thinking contact centers leaders are rethinking this model. That starts with:

- Recognizing effort as well as outcomes.
- Providing feedback regularly, not just during formal reviews.
- Celebrating wins, big and small.

Recognition reinforces the behaviors that improve both EX and CX, and helps agents feel valued for more than just metrics.



## Train leaders to lead with empathy

Team leads, workforce supervisors, and QA coaches are on the front lines of the employee experience. Their ability to motivate, support, and coach agents plays an important role in engagement and retention.

Empathy-based leadership helps workforce managers:

- Spot early signs of burnout.
- Create psychologically safe environments.
- Deliver coaching that builds confidence, not just compliance.

# Using WFM solutions to balance experience and efficiency

Modern WFM platforms, like Aspect Workforce, are designed not just for contact center efficiency, but for strategic impact. These tools give workforce managers the visibility and flexibility they need to create environments where both agents and customers can thrive.

By aligning forecasting, scheduling, and performance insights in one system, workforce managers can:

- **Optimize staffing** to match customer demand without overloading agents.
- **Build smarter schedules** that account for preferences, skills, and work-life balance.
- **Identify burnout risks early** through data on schedule adherence, overtime, and performance.

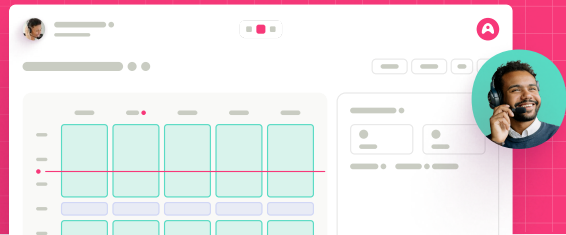
Instead of reacting to daily staffing pressures, managers gain the ability to plan proactively — balancing efficiency with employee needs. With self-service tools for agents, like shift management and time off requests, EX improves alongside CX.

Technology like Aspect Workforce doesn't just streamline operations. It gives workforce leaders the power to design a more sustainable contact center, where performance and well-being go hand in hand.

## Want to learn more?

See how [Aspect Workforce](#) can empower your team and elevate your CX strategies.

[Learn more](#)



## Our team of WEM Experts



STRATEGIC MANAGER, SOLUTION ARCHITECTS, ASPECT

### Kelly Person

Kelly brings over 20 years of contact center expertise to his role as a Strategic Manager at Aspect. As a trusted advisor, he helps customers get the most value from their workforce solutions, with deep knowledge of WEM, WFM, League, Performance, and Quality platforms.

Before joining Aspect, Kelly managed contact centers for large enterprises like Time Warner Cable, Electrolux, and Comcast, as well as smaller PE companies. His hands-on experience includes leading successful workforce optimization projects and extensive work with BPO selection and management.



STRATEGIC MANAGER, SOLUTION ARCHITECTS, ASPECT

### Mary Ward

Mary Ward has been with Aspect since 1998 and has gathered a wealth of workforce industry knowledge across several departments, leading customer engagement, training, tech support, and inside sales efforts.

In recent years, Mary has moved into a new role, Strategic Manager of Solution Architects. As a leader on the Solution Architects team, she works with existing customers to foster adoption across their workforce and find customized software solutions to each organization's unique challenges.

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