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# How to transform contact centers from a cost center to a profit center



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# Introduction

Contact centers have traditionally been viewed as operational burdens—necessary cost centers that organizations must maintain.

However, we've seen a new wave of businesses transforming their contact centers to unlock unexplored business growth. These essential customer touch points now have the potential to become strategic growth engines that drive profitability, enhance customer loyalty, and create sustainable competitive advantage.

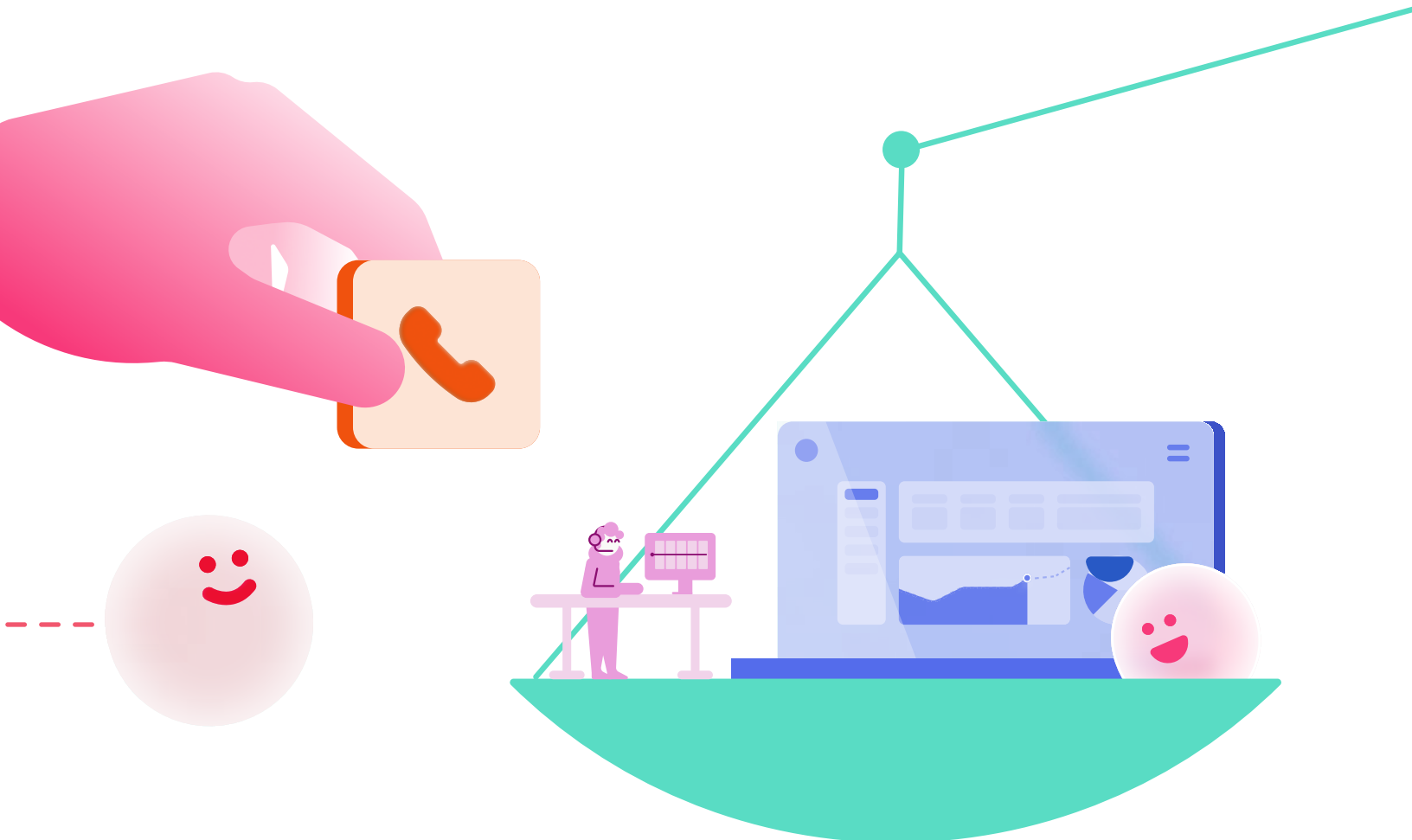
This strategic shift requires a fundamental change in how businesses approach their operations—particularly in how they invest in their most valuable asset: people.

As the service industry becomes increasingly complex, successful organizations are investing in their workforce. This approach extends beyond traditional staff management to create environments where employees feel engaged, valued, and empowered to deliver outstanding customer experiences.

The goal is clear yet challenging: cultivating engaged agents who transform transactional interactions into meaningful customer conversations.

In the following pages, we explore how leaders can achieve operational effectiveness and employee engagement through strategic workforce investments.

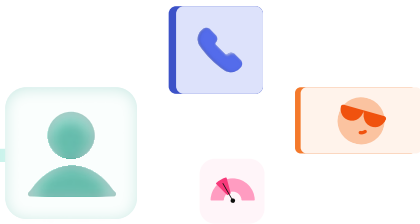
By implementing the right mix of technology, processes, and people, organizations can unlock their contact centers' full potential—transforming them from cost centers into dynamic growth engines that drive business success.



# The human factor: Transforming contact centers through employee engagement

Frontline employees represent the foundation of customer relationships. They aren't only handling calls or responding to queries—they're actively delivering the brand promise while ensuring operational metrics and KPIs are met.

When agents have the tools, training, and support they need, they become the central pillar connecting operational efficiency with customer satisfaction. Their knowledge and skills directly influence customer retention, upsell opportunities, and brand reputation— factors that impact the bottom line.



## Meeting evolving employee needs

Today's workforce has evolving expectations about their relationship with employers. Agents now want a positive work environment, career opportunities, flexibility, and control over their schedules.

From a management perspective, supervisors and managers need better tools for quicker decision-making and reduced administrative burden, allowing them to focus on strategic tasks.

Organizations that recognize and respond to these evolving needs gain a significant competitive advantage. When employees feel valued and heard, they bring their best selves to work.

This positive mindset directly translates to customer interactions, creating a virtuous cycle of engagement. Agents who feel engaged and empowered often extend that same engagement to customer interactions, resulting in improved satisfaction scores and resolution rates.

## Fostering engagement to retain top talent

In an industry known for high turnover rates<sup>(1)</sup>, retaining agents represents a significant challenge—and opportunity.

Forward-thinking organizations are addressing this challenge by fostering engagement and empowerment. This means creating environments where agents have the right tools, receive continuous learning opportunities, feel appropriately challenged, and experience recognition for their contributions.

These engagement initiatives deliver measurable returns by reducing recruitment costs, preserving institutional knowledge, and maintaining consistency in customer experience.

Only one in three customer service representatives feel engaged in their roles,



while **disengaged employees** are 84% more likely to seek new job opportunities.<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) "Amplifying Agent, Supervisor Success with WFO", Metrigy, 2024.

(2) "Why Service Reps Disengage and What you Can Do About That", Gartner, 2021.

## Battling the hidden cost of agent disengagement

Agent disengagement has deeper impacts that go far beyond the usual statistics, affecting many parts of the organization.

When employees feel disengaged, the ripple effects surface in several ways:



### Deteriorating customer relationships

Disengaged agents are more likely to provide lower quality interactions, missing opportunities to build and strengthen customer relationships.



### Increasing customer churn

Frustrating service experiences can be the breaking point for customers, leading to higher customer churn rates and damaged brand reputation.



### Reduced revenue opportunities

Lower engagement directly impacts productivity rates and the ability to identify and capitalize on upsell/cross-sell opportunities during customer interactions.



### Escalating operational costs

Organizations face increasing expenses related to continuous training and recruitment efforts to replace departing disengaged staff.

Companies with high employee engagement are **23% more profitable** than those with low engagement. (3)

On the other hand, the financial impact of agent disengagement extends far beyond employee replacement costs — it affects every aspect of the contact center's operation and ultimately impacts the bottom line.

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

# Workforce evolution: From cost to profit

The strategic shift from viewing contact centers as cost centers to recognizing them as growth engines begins with investing in people.

This shift represents more than just reallocating resources—it's a pivot toward valuing human-centered interactions as the cornerstone of organizational success.

Employees need not only the right environment and tools to perform effectively but also meaningful support that enables them to bring their best selves to each workday. When agents feel valued and equipped, they naturally deliver superior customer experiences.

**An engaged workforce also results in benefits across key metrics: reduced absenteeism, lower turnover rates, improved adherence, enhanced operational efficiency, and improved customer experience metrics.** These improvements directly impact revenue, transforming what was once viewed as a cost center into a profit-generating asset.

The key is recognizing contact centers as unique opportunities to create value through human connection. By strategically investing in the people who power these critical customer interactions, organizations unlock potential for sustainable growth, innovation, and competitive advantage.

**“Imagine matching agents with customer calls based on employees' skills and the intent of the calls — moving beyond transactional interactions to create meaningful conversations that build relationships.**

**When we invest in agents, we can transform the contact center from a cost center into a profit center by enhancing the value of every interaction and reducing customer churn. That's what investing in agents can do.”**

- Darryl Kelly, CEO, Aspect



Engaged  
workforce

# How to create better workdays, every day

Understanding why investing in employees is key for transforming contact centers into growth centers raises another question: How can organizations increase employee engagement?

Modern WFM platforms have emerged as solutions to support this human-centered approach.

These platforms foster adoption by addressing real employee pain points, boost productivity through automation and workflows, and elevate engagement by giving agents greater autonomy over their work lives.

From a leadership perspective, implementing technology that reduces scheduling friction, facilitates feedback, and delivers performance insights, enables workforce managers to drive improvements in employee satisfaction and operational efficiency.

**“When we balance business success with work-life balance by giving employees the autonomy to manage their schedules, we create a win-win situation that benefits both the company and each individual employee.”**

- Royce Haynes, VP of Product at Aspect



(1) "Generation Disconnected: Data on Gen Z Workplace", Gallup, November 11, 2022.

## Empowering frontline staff

Self-service capabilities address the evolving needs of frontline employees and empower them in several ways:



### Transparent scheduling

Transparency eliminates one of the most significant sources of employee frustration. When agents understand the reasoning behind shift decisions, they develop greater trust in the organization. This visibility helps employees feel valued and fairly treated, rather than perceiving that schedules are assigned randomly or that certain employees receive preferential treatment.



### Shift management and self-scheduling

Putting more control in employees' hands allows to better balance their work and personal lives, addressing the demand for flexibility. When employees can participate in creating their schedules—within parameters that ensure business needs are met—they experience greater job satisfaction and reduced stress levels.



### Approval predictions

One of the most common frustrations for contact center employees is the uncertainty surrounding time-off requests. By providing predictive insights about approval likelihood for schedule changes, organizations reduce back-and-forth communication and waiting times. This enables employees to make informed decisions about when to request time off, resulting in better planning and less frustration.

**“Scheduling remains one of the biggest pain points in workforce management. For years, contact center managers have sought to reduce complexity and simplify scheduling for agents. Modern WFM solutions now address this need by enabling flexible scheduling and true self-service capabilities for agents.”**

- Mary Ward, Strategic Manager of Solutions Architects at Aspect

## Enabling supervisors and managers

Equally important is how workforce management solutions transform the role of supervisors and managers, allowing them to shift from administrative overhead to strategic leadership:



### Streamlined administrative tasks

By automating routine processes like schedule adjustments, and absence management, supervisors can redirect their attention to higher-value activities like coaching, team development, and strategic planning. This reduces the administrative burden that prevents managers from focusing on team's development.



### Predictive schedule approvals

Advanced predictive capabilities deliver real-time feedback on schedule change requests, simplifying approvals and reducing the administrative burden on managers and supervisors.

(1) "Generation Disconnected: Data on Gen Z Workplace", Gallup, November 11, 2022.

# The future of workforce engagement

The transformation of contact centers from cost centers to profit centers represents more than just a shift in operational strategy—it's a fundamental reimagining of how organizations view customer interactions and the employees who engage with them.

Emerging WFM solutions play a pivotal role in this transformation. By addressing the evolving needs of both frontline staff and management teams, these solutions create environments where employees thrive and customers receive excellent service.

As organizations look ahead, those that embrace this people-first approach to contact center operations will gain significant competitive advantages, such as higher retention rates, informed decision-making, meaningful customer interactions and enhanced operations.

The future of contact centers is one where technology and humanity work together, operational efficiency and employee engagement reinforce each other, and customer interactions create lasting value for the business.

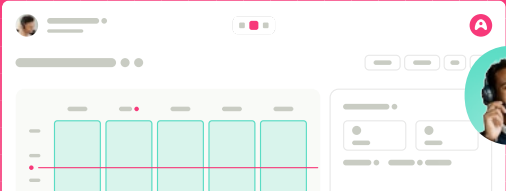
By investing in the right technology and embracing a people-first mindset, contact centers can become engines of profit, innovation, and competitive advantage.

Discover how [Aspect WorkforceOS](#) can empower your team, boost engagement, and turn your contact center into a growth center.

**Want to learn more?**

Let's connect

[Explore Aspect WorkforceOS](#)



(1) "Generation Disconnected: Data on Gen Z Workplace", Gallup, November 11, 2022.

## Our team of WEM Experts



CEO, ASPECT

### Darryl Kelly

Darryl Kelly is the CEO at Aspect. His focus is to ask great questions and find important opportunities. With his extensive background in marketing and organizational psychology, he understands how to measure progress indicators, identify strategic risks, and help to come up with strategies to reduce these risks before they become problematic.

Darryl started and sold his first company before he was 21 and has since launched and operated 7 global sites and 50k+ agents. Most recently, he was a turn around CRO at a CCaaS company which he successfully positioned and exited to RingCentral. As a lifelong learner, he was an independent analyst for Bain & Co exclusively taking inquiries and researching what's required for the next generation of CCaaS.



VP OF PRODUCT, ASPECT

### Royce Haynes

Royce Haynes is the VP of Product at Aspect, where he leads the strategic development and innovation of our product portfolio. With extensive experience in SaaS product development, he spearheads the evolution of Aspect's solutions, including our newest offering, Workforce Experience (WFX). In his role, Royce leads the integration of advanced technologies to enhance workforce management, drive product innovation, and create engaging employee experiences.



STRATEGIC MANAGER OF SOLUTIONS 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 Solutions Architects. As a leader on the Solutions Architects team, she works with existing customers to foster adoption across their workforce and find customized software solutions to each organization's unique challenges.

## References

(1) "Amplifying Agent, Supervisor Success with WFO", Metrigy, 2024. Retrieved at <https://metrigy.com/amplifying-agent-supervisor-success-with-wfo/>

(2) "Why Service Reps Disengage and What you Can Do About That", Gartner, 2021. Retrieved at <https://www.gartner.com/en/customer-service-support/trends/reduce-call-center-attrition>

(3) "What Is Employee Engagement and How Do You Improve It?", Gallup. Retrieved at <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/285674/improve-employee-engagement-workplace.aspx>