Your 3 step plan to recruit and hire the right type of agents

You can't deliver great customer service without the right team members in place. However, many contact centers suffer from the constant churn of agent turnover and disengaged employees who only do the bare minimum.

Coaching agents to improve their approach addresses part of the problem. Recruiting and hiring the right people for the job in the first place, however, can make dramatic strides in improving your service level. Here's why: Most contact center managers hire the wrong type of people. That's not all: Job descriptions and realities are often misaligned, so the wrong type of people apply. Here's 3 steps to fix that.

01   Understand what personality traits make an effective customer service agent.

In a global study of customer service jobs, researchers identified seven personality types of customer service agents. Although thousands of personality profiling tools exist, this particular view only looked at how customer service representatives approached their job.

Their findings were groundbreaking. Most managers, 42%, preferred to hire "empathizers" over any of the other six personality types. It's no coincidence that empathizers were the most common personality type among the front-line customer service jobs, making up about 32% of the workforce.

Empathizers are good listeners, like helping people, and are service-oriented. The only problem?
They don't make very good customer service agents. They can struggle to make decisions quickly, articulate the situation, and work quickly.

Good customer service is efficient customer service. The people that delivered the highest level of service were what the study called "Controllers." They are opinionated, talkative, assertive, and problem-solvers. Also nearly as effective were the "Rock"s, who were unflappable, didn't take difficult interactions personally, and worked diligently toward a solution. To build a great team, you must first shift your focus to recruiting and hiring these people.

✓ **Learn more**

An AI-powered analytical study by Tethr found that agents' apologies and empathy hurt the customer experience. **Learn more**
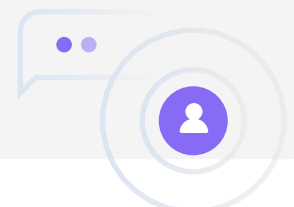
02 Adjust your job description to mirror your ideal candidate

Once you know who you want to hire, you need to adjust the language of your job description to accurately reflect the reality of the role.

Job description phrases geared toward empathizers:

+ "A desire to make things better"
+ "Customer service background"
+ "Knows how to listen"
+ "People-focused"

Job description phrases geared toward controllers:

+ "Problem solving and thinking on your feet"
+ "Sociable and outgoing"
+ "Assertive"
+ "Takes control"

03 Identify candidates who can approach the job correctly

When interviewing candidates, look for the characteristics that will help the person get the job done well.

⭐ **Proactive:**
Controllers are assertive in their decision making and opinionated. In a customer service setting, they are confident in guiding the customer to the correct pathway. They don't shy away from expressing their own ideas. They're someone who, if a group of friends can't decide where to go to dinner, will pick a restaurant and start driving there.

⭐ **Talkative:**
Many of the stereotypical customer service agents are people-focused to a fault, preferring to quietly listen to others. In a customer service situation, you need a person who doesn't tire of talking to others at length. They are comfortable talking to strangers like they are friends and willingly collaborate with others.

⭐ **Confident:** The best agents feel comfortable taking ownership of a project from planning to fruition. They openly talk about their achievements and accomplishments. These people have the confidence in a customer service situation to decide on what's best for the customer and make it happen.

Hiring checklist

☐ **Outgoing:**
They don't tire of talking to people all day and build relationships effortlessly

☐ **Intuitive:**
They can consider the context of the customers' situation and determine an appropriate response

☐ **Confident:**
They are willing to make a decision and stick with it

☐ **Problem-solving:**
Customize a solution that meets both the customers' and company's needs

☐ **Assertive:** They tell the customer what they should do to resolve the problem

↓ 25%

75%