Call Center Agent Turnover Problem: The Great Resignation and Quiet Quitting and Top 3 Tips To Improve It

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[The Great Resignation and Quiet Quitting](#)

The great resignation and quiet quitting in 2022 have brought us a seemingly-endless onslaught of call center issues, such as poor call center customer experience (CX) and higher operating costs. Furthermore, recent SQM Group research shows that 47% of managers feel their biggest problem operating a call center effectively and efficiently is high agent turnover and absenteeism.

Furthermore, SQM's CX research shows that Customer Satisfaction (Csat) and First Call Resolution (FCR) for the call center industry have significantly decreased in 2022. SQM also believes that the number one problem in 2022 to achieving a high call center Csat and FCR rate is the historically high agent turnover rate of 35%. Also, according to many industry experts, there are no signs of slowing down the employee turnover rate any time soon.

Agent engagement remains low for the call center industry and has been an achilles heel for the 25 years SQM has measured it. SQM's agent engagement research shows that only 27% of agents are highly engaged, 10% are engaged, 57% are indifferent to working in the call center, and 5% are highly disengaged. Agents with an indifferent or disengaged engagement rating are likely to be part of the great resignation and quiet quitting employees working at the call center.

So enough agents were hired to replace the agents that were lost. Now your new agents need to help deliver great customer service and get them to stick around to the historical industry length of service agent tenure is 42 months.

For most agents, compensation and benefits are viewed as important, and if not competitive or perceived as fair, they will likely result in the resignation or quiet quitting of agents. However, compensation and benefits are not on the top of the list for agent motivating factors. 75% of call center managers view encouragement and recognition as the top motivating factors for agents

to improve their performance.

Interestingly, the number one reason agents leave a company is due to a lack of recognition. In the call center, an agent's recognition needs can be met by customers, peers, and management, showing appreciation and recognition for the customer service provided. Agent recognition should not only be carried out by senior management but also by the peers they work with and, most importantly, by the customers they serve.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs can best describe the psychology of recognition. Josh Bersin (2012) noted that "two of the most valuable psychological needs we have as human beings are the need to be 'appreciated' and the need to 'belong." As Bersin stated, and SQM agrees, "compensation and benefits support basic human safety needs; however, recognition and career advancement support agent higher-level psychological needs."

Motivating agents to use the desired customer service behaviors to achieve great Csat and FCR performance and retaining agents are huge challenges. An effective recognition program greatly helps motivate agents to excel at providing customer service at a world class level and for retaining agents.

It is important to note that 46% of customers whose issue was not resolved felt the agent could have done more to help them resolve their inquiry or problem. In many of those cases, the agents were not motivated to use the desired customer service behaviors to resolve customer inquiries or problems. Put differently, from a customer's point of view; it was a will issue rather than a skill issue.

Agent recognition needs to be provided in a frequent, descriptive, and impactful manner so that agents know why they are being recognized. In turn, agents are motivated to continue using the behaviors that helped them achieve results.

[Top 3 Tips To Improve Agent Resignation and Quiet Quitting](#)

1. Rewards and Recognition
2. Service Hero Recognition
3. CX Certification Recognition

Based on our FCR and Csat benchmarking research with over 500 leading North American call centers, we have determined the top 3 agent tips for improving agent resignation and quiet quitting. For the top 3 tips to improve agent resignation and quiet quitting, many of our world class FCR and Csat performing call center clients use post-call surveys, quality assurance, and call handling productivity (e.g., AHT, utilization, schedule adherence, attendance) results as the basis to motivate, engage and recognize agent performance.

1. Rewards and Recognition Tip

The use of agent customer service management (CSM) software to help reward and recognize agent performance. For example, the CSM software captures and reports to agents the earned award points based on high FCR, Csat, and call resolution results and positive behaviors.

Based on agent post-call survey and QA results, mySQM™ Customer Service QA software automatically captures and awards points to them. Agents can also earn reward points for positive behavior and contribution from their call center leaders, supervisors, and peers. When agents are frequently recognized for positive behaviors and CX results, they are more motivated to repeat positive actions.

The CSM software gamification feature enhances the motivation and engagement of agents' to improve their Csat, FCR, and CX and makes the working environment more fun. As a result, high Csat, FCR, and CX behaviors become an ingrained part of the culture and experience of the call center working environment. Adding contests and recognition creates motivated and engaged agents that propel your entire call center to deliver high Csat, FCR, and call handling performance (e.g., AHT, schedule adherence, attendance, utilization).

Points earned by agents are converted to dollars and can be redeemed using an SQM debit card, and that can be used at most retailers. Agents can redeem reward points for things they want to reinforce their motivation and engagement to repeat positive behaviors in customer interactions.

In addition, delivering high Csat, FCR, and call handling performance allows agents to earn rewards that can be redeemed and used in day-to-day life (e.g., coffee, lunch, merchandise, movie, etc.). Finally, using their SQM debit card gives an agent instant gratification knowing the great Csat and call resolution they provided allowed them to pay for something they wanted.

mySQM™ software helps to reward and recognize agents in a frequent, descriptive, impactful, and personal manner, making it a powerful practice for improving FCR, CX, employee retention, engagement, and lower operating costs.

2. Service Hero Recognition Tip

The Service Hero recognition program was introduced to SQM by Regence BlueCross BlueShield. Agents are recognized as Service Heroes for providing outstanding customer service.

Agents receive frequent, descriptive, impactful, and personal feedback about being a Service Hero. This program has been used for many years and has a long legacy, which can be a hallmark of an effective agent recognition program.

The Service Hero recognition program highlights great CX stories delivered by agents, which are shared with the company's C-level leaders. Every quarter, great customer service calls are

identified and vetted by supervisors and managers working in the call center.

The supervisors and managers will listen to as many as 20 calls and then discuss rank and select the top 5 to 7 calls that the President and the senior executive team will listen to each quarter. The senior executives will also discuss, rank, and debate their rankings, which creates great discussions and new thinking about how to deliver great customer service.

Each call center location celebrates the quarterly winners during an all-employee meeting, and one of the winning calls is played to allow the entire customer service team to hear an example of great service to inspire them to be a Service Hero. The winners are recognized in front of peers with an enlarged check personally signed by our CEO for five hundred dollars and a personally engraved gold star statue.

At the end of the year, the twelve quarterly Service Hero winners are flown to Portland for a two-day trip. The executive team listens to the twelve quarterly calls again to select the annual Service Hero winner, and it is announced during the luncheon. The annual winner is awarded a prize of four thousand dollars, and their story is showcased on the company intranet site.

3. CX Certification Recognition Tip:

SQM's agent CX Certification Program is designed to determine if agents are performing at the world class call resolution and customer satisfaction performance level. Our CX Certification program is the most credible and recognized certification program in the call center industry because certification is based on post-call survey CX results. Put simply, the customer is the judge of their CX.

Of all the recognition practices used for agents, the one that has been the most effective at helping call centers improve or maintain their great FCR, call resolution, and Csat performance is our agent CX Certification Program.

The agent CX Certification Program is very conducive to providing frequent, descriptive, impactful, and personal Feedback because most agents have 4 to 10 post-call surveys completed in a month on how they handled customer interactions. Using customer feedback to certify agent performance is very motivating to them, and they highly value being recognized for their Csat and call resolution performance based on customer feedback.

For agents who achieved CX certification, SQM provides them with a certificate certifying that they achieved world-class customer service distinction. Medallions are available for purchase upon request.

Certified agents are eligible to be nominated as one of the Top 50 finalists for the Agent of the Year Award. In addition, agent finalists are identified on SQM's call center industry award winner's website registry.

For many agents who have achieved CX certification, they view it as validation of the great customer service they deliver and the proudest accomplishment of working at the call center. Furthermore, many agents are highly motivated to provide great customer service, so they get CX certified and get a chance to win SQM's Agent of the Year or a Finalist Award.

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