

**THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD CUSTOMER
INTERACTIONS WITHIN LEGAL SECTOR
CONTACT CENTRES©**

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On Behalf of



DIRECT RESPONSE

of closing down the conversation. Closing moves are often heard as general practice and not registered as containing anything of real significance.

Issue: As scripts are written, a formal version of English is often used, when in reality, speakers probably wouldn't choose to speak in this way. When conversations are broken down and examined it is often the most mundane features that move an interaction forward successfully.

Recommendation: To carefully consider the language used in the construction of scripts. It would also be beneficial to spend a significant amount of time listening to the scripts being used 'live' with a focus on how the interaction seems to flow after certain stages of the script and particular 'hot spots' of information delivery. It is important to do this, whether you use an in-house legal contact centre or whether you choose to out-source. Out-sourcing holds an advantage here, as they are more likely to be able to invest the time and hold expertise in this area.

Issue: The agents are crucial for whether they believe scripts sound natural, because they are using them most. The research also reflected that customers are less likely to respond to artificial formality leading to a decrease in rapport throughout the exchange- a factor crucial to an enjoyable customer experience.

Recommendation: When creating scripts it is of benefit to not only consider the goal of the exchange but also the caller profile and the legal organisation's target markets. In everyday, spontaneous interaction, we are constantly adapting our speech due to whom we are interacting with. Although it is impossible to tailor a script for each individual caller it would be possible to use features that would be relevant to certain types of groups.

Issue: Agents being asked questions that they are not equipped to deal with leads to stress on their behalf and inconvenience for the caller. It also provides the most obvious indications that the agent is not a direct employee of the legal organisation.

Recommendation: If a legal organisation chooses to outsource, it is very important that they supply their selected call centre provider with the most comprehensive background information about their service as possible. Any information that is not included in the script will be accessible in an FAQ section. Equally, if this information changes at any point, it is important that the legal organisation informs their contact centre to allow for the update of the FAQ section.

2. 'Constructed personalisation'

'Constructed personalisation' refers to the artificial relationship that is constructed between agent and caller during an exchange. Call centre work also involves 'emotional labour'² (Hochschild 1983) from the agents. Sometimes emotional labour can be an expression of performed emotions as opposed to genuine emotions. If not managed carefully, this can lead to an increase in stress on the worker and after longer periods of time, it can lead to emotional dissonance³.

Issue: Agents often prefer calls where they are required to perform a higher level of emotional engagement as this is more likely to allow for self-expression. If a caller has a problem, the agents genuinely empathise and wish to help and prefer this to the straight-forward data capturing. This aspect greatly contributes to their job satisfaction, which in turn improves the quality of the rest of the calls they will take during the day.

Recommendation: It is clear that agents feel the empathy that would be desired by management, although it does not seem to be the case that this has to be specifically engendered in the agents. Instead it appears that the agents draw on interpersonal skills already possessed before it was required in a professional capacity. This highlights that recruitment and selection processes are vital in selecting employees that already hold these soft skills.

² Emotional labour can be defined as the emotional display employees present, which is often an implicit part of successfully completing their job. This form of labour can be specified and monitored and it is a form of labour particularly prevalent in the customer service industry.

³ Emotional dissonance is the negative effect of displaying feelings that are not authentic with internal emotions.



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