



**How contact centres
can maximise product
and service knowledge
among employees**

Why's it important?



People's ears prick up when they learn that **knowledgeable employees can sell up to 87% more** than less knowledgeable colleagues[i], while **89% of customers get frustrated when they have to repeat their issues** to multiple representatives[ii]. These aren't fine margins. If you know more, you can sell more.

You can upsell and cross-sell more too. Figures vary but research in the retail sector suggests that **upselling can increase promotional purchasing by 200-300%**[iii]. That diminishes with poor knowledge, required to make relevant recommendations.

The impact of product and service knowledge goes beyond just sales though. **75% of customers believe that businesses simply don't offer excellent customer service**[iv]. Product and service knowledge training offers an opportunity for differentiation and, in turn, improved customer retention.

Employee retention is another benefit. We know that **customers are more likely to interact with sales associates who are passionate about the products they're selling**[v] and that's driven by strong product knowledge. The confidence that creates also improves employee morale; **more engaged employees are 59% less likely to look for a job elsewhere** in the next year[vi].

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Develop your training

Product and service knowledge training often starts and ends with an induction, but what happens if employees forget that knowledge? Or information changes? Or a new product or service is released?

Developing product and service knowledge should be an ongoing process. It ensures your employees can provide the best possible service to customers and, ultimately, helps to maximise revenue.

Experticity's retail research has shown that employees who participate in training and educational programs and complete a single module or form of training **sell 69% more** than those who don't[vii]. If they complete six or more modules employees are able to **sell 123% more** than those without training.

Identifying training need

Contact centres that have a considered programme in place or have developed a means of knowledge sharing organically may already be in a strong position. If one or more of the following signs rings a bell though, you may need to consider making changes to how your training is delivered:

- Employees lack clarity about the products or services you handle
- Sales conversations taking longer than they should
- Poor upselling or cross-selling successes within the company
- Prospects pulling out of a sale part way through the process
- Poor progression of prospects through the sales pipeline
- A greater than expected number of product returns or service cancellations
- A lack of customer understanding about the products or services you sell
- A lot of time spent on customer service conversations
- Poor customer satisfaction levels or feedback
- Lower than expected numbers of repeat purchases or orders

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More engaged employees

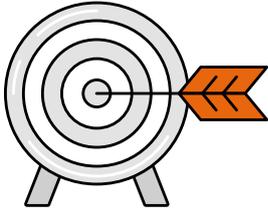
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Training considerations

As with any product and service knowledge training you need to give some thought to how to get the most out of it:



- **Goals:** More sales from upselling, for example? Or maybe better customer service? This helps to shape the content of your training and how it is delivered. •



Roles: What jobs do your learners do? Obviously, this dictates what the content will be, but it also shapes the delivery. For example, regional managers working across multiple branches may benefit from mobile access to training, while office-based salespeople might benefit from one-to-one, on-the-job input.



- **ROI:** For any contact centre, the bottom line should always be front-of-mind. It's important to know the cost of any training and to find a way to put a value of its expected output. If it looks like you'll get less value from, say improved higher levels of upselling, than it will cost to achieve it, then is it worth it? Or is there a way you can lower the cost?

Approaches to training

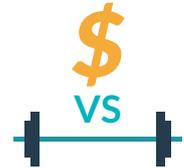
You can train in a variety of ways but approaches lend themselves to certain types of training. The whole point of product and service knowledge training is to ensure that employees are better equipped with information, so it's no good if training is ineffective and they're guessing at knowledge.

You can guard against this by testing employee knowledge with **Certainty Based Marking**. This doesn't just test whether an employee is right or wrong about a question, but how confident they feel in their answer. Using this technique allows organisations to verify the robustness of employee knowledge and identify where training might need to be improved.

Product and service knowledge training doesn't need to be a huge or time-consuming. It can be effectively delivered in short, digestible chunks which is more effective. **Microlearning** delivers quick pieces of info or short quizzes to employees' mobile devices, they can be trained without a big loss of time and at times of their choosing.

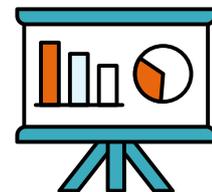
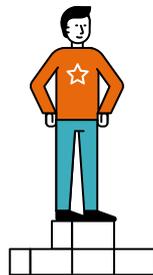
Calculating training ROI

When sourcing training, the potential return on the investment is often overlooked. Even if training proves to be successful, the cost is more than the value of the resulting benefit. Therefore, it's important to get an idea of the potential ROI beforehand. It can be tricky and it's not always an exact science, but it is always worthwhile.



1. Identify a quantifiable goal (e.g. increase upselling by 33% from £3,000 to £4,000 per month)
2. Set KPIs for tracking performance against goal (e.g. upsale value per week)
3. Calculate annual value of achieving goal (e.g. $\text{£}1,000 \times 12 = \text{£}12,000$)
4. Cost up annual product and service knowledge (e.g. 50 learners at $\text{£}10 / \text{learner} / \text{month} = \text{£}6,000$)
5. Consider cost versus training value (e.g. Value of $\text{£}12,000 - \text{cost of } \text{£}6,000 = \text{£}6,000 \text{ credit}$)

Some useful tips



- **Keep it quick:** Our brains are not geared up to remember big chunks of information in one go. Instead, deliver product and service knowledge training continuously but in short, digestible chunks.
- **Make it fun:** To improve employee engagement, keep training informal and introduce game-like elements, such as prizes and leaderboards.
- **Track results:** To understand the impact of training, you need to know what metrics to watch. These should be based on the goals of your training. For example, the results of regular short tests are a simple way to track knowledge retention, while customer satisfaction surveys can give any insight into how well employees' knowledge is being put to use.

[i] <https://www.retailtouchpoints.com/features/trend-watch/knowledgeable-empowered-associates-sell-87-more-survey-confirms>

[ii] <https://www.superoffice.com/blog/customer-experience-statistics/>

[iii] <https://www.conveniencestore.co.uk/advice/your-business/service-with-a-sale/350826.article>

[iv] <https://www.boltlearning.com/blog/article/improve-customer-retention-employee-training/>

[v] <https://blog.wranx.com/people-buy-from-people-with-great-product-knowledge-training>

[vi] <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236483/enhances-benefits-employee-engagement.aspx>

[vii] <https://www.retailtouchpoints.com/features/trend-watch/knowledgeable-empowered-associates-sell-87-more-survey-confirms>



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