



A BUYER'S GUIDE FOR CONTACT
CENTER EXECUTIVES

**PRIORITIZE THE AGENT
EXPERIENCE WITH
REAL-TIME IN-CALL
AGENT ASSISTANCE**





INTRODUCTION

Ever since the pandemic, the attrition rates in the contact center space have been high and between 30% to 45%¹.

Apart from the lack of flexible work arrangements, two of the other top reasons for the attrition are increased work, and a lack of training and support.

On the one hand, Call Centre agents have been grappling with high volumes of calls and even higher customer expectations. While on the other hand, they are expected to get up to speed quickly, stay up to date on constantly changing products and offers, and solve increasingly complex customer issues. All these have led to unrelenting pressure, burnout, and hence very high industry attrition levels.

Smart contact center leaders are taking action to stem the flow of agents leaving by transforming the agent experience.

They recognize that by focusing on ways to systematically improve the experience of every agent, they can achieve strategic outcomes including lower attrition, higher agent productivity and improved customer satisfaction and loyalty. Because when agents can do their job with more confidence, accuracy and efficiency, it reduces hold times, accelerates resolution, improves customer satisfaction and helps agents be more productive while reducing their stress.

To prioritize the agent experience, you need to give them real-time agent assistance tools that are proven to reduce the stress and complexity of doing their jobs while freeing them up to focus on the customer conversation. This guide can help you understand what you should be considering in choosing a solution to improve the agent experience.

¹ [Source](#)

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN IN THIS GUIDE

Why agents are disengaged and burned out

How to make the business case for in-call agent assistance

Which in-call capabilities are essential for contact centers

Why you should look for a solution that combines Conversational AI, Generative AI, Knowledge AI, and Automation

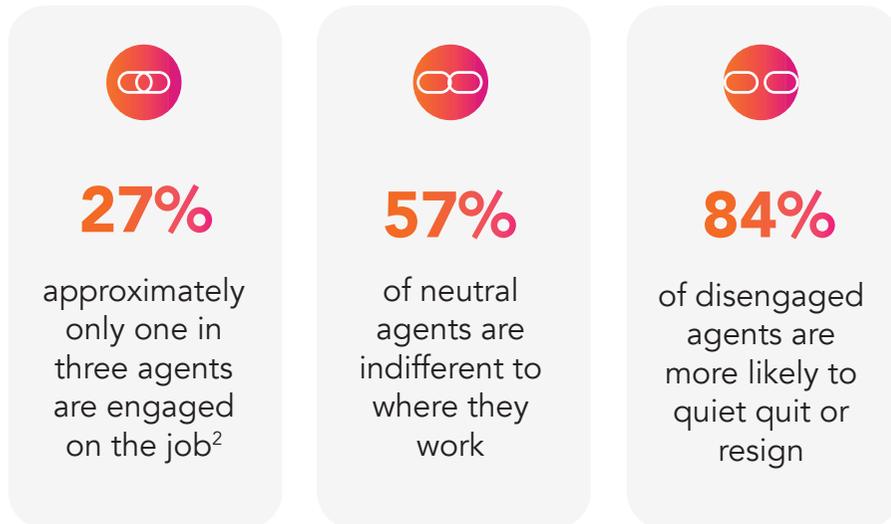
How to choose the right solution provider



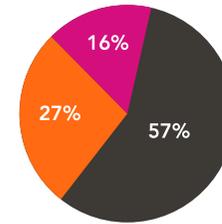
Acknowledging Agent Disengagement, Burnout and Attrition

The agent role has never been easy. Jobs in customer service require many skills, including empathy, persuasiveness, active listening, patience, time management, product knowledge, and more. Then there's the increasing complexity that rapid technology changes bring, growing expectations and frustrations of customers, and rising call volumes — all of which are not new problems, but were exacerbated since the pandemic.

The situation is becoming increasingly dire. Beyond high rates of agent burnout and attrition, customer outcomes and metrics are suffering as well. After all, if the agent experience and engagement are poor, how can agents deliver a good customer experience?



Low engagement teams typically have turnover rates that are 18% to 43% higher than highly engaged teams³.



Agent Engagement

- Engaged Agents
- Highly Disengaged Agents
- Neutral Agents

Disengaged agents are also three times more likely to engage in behaviors that prolong interactions and negatively impact customer outcomes.

Frequency of behaviors that negatively impact customer effort and outcomes



² Turnover problem, SQM research, January 2023: [Recovering From the Call Center Burnout Rate Problem \(sqmgroup.com\)](#)

³ Gartner, 2023: [Gartner HR Research Finds Only 31% of Employees Report They Are Engaged, Enthusiastic and Energized by Their Work](#)

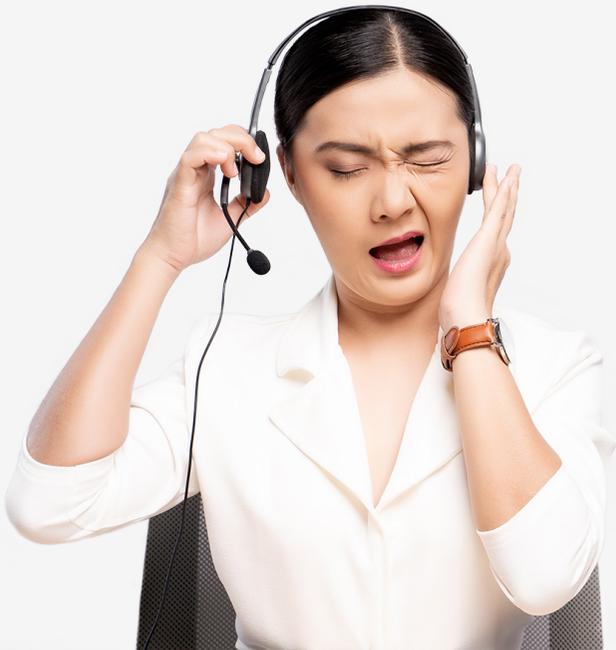
⁴ The Powerful Relationship Between Employee Engagement and Team Performance Gallup's Meta Analysis, 2020: [The Powerful Relationship Between Employee Engagement and Team Performance \(gallup.com\)](#) and Gartner, June 2021: [Gartner Says Only One in Three Customer Service Reps Are Engaged on the Job](#)



THE HIGH COST OF REPLACING AGENTS

Replacing workers that leave costs one-half to two times the employee's annual salary, according to Gallup. At an average new agent salary of approximately \$42,000 (per research from Glassdoor) in the U.S., the replacement cost of an employee is in between \$63,000 to \$84,000 per new agent hired.

Source: [Gallup Research](#)



Making an Impact Across the Agent Lifecycle

It's not only new hires affected by the increasing complexity and volume of customer interactions. Tenured agents and supervisors also suffer from stress and burnout as they juggle the increasing challenges of today's customer service expectations and requirements throughout the agent lifecycle.

Role	Pain Points	Needs
New hire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must search through fragmented, conflicting information across multiple sources• Difficult to find answers online• Waits for a supervisor for help finding answers• Lacks appropriate tools to effectively do the job	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find guidance quickly• Have all relevant information at fingertips• Feel confident about having correct answers• Become self-sufficient quickly• Reduce stress and anxiety and improve customer experience
Tenured agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must remember multiple scripts and transaction steps• Has multiple notes on desktop for each call driver• Expends different levels of effort based on call driver• Spends significant time documenting the call	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get automated guidance on next best action• Have knowledgebase search automated• Save time with automated task completion• Experience greater job satisfaction and improved loyalty
Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spends majority of time supporting new agents• Doesn't have enough time to help resolve complex issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can ensure new agents have the automated help and tools they need• Has more time to spend with agents solving complex issues



Any agent assistance solution you deploy must address all experience levels across the entire agent lifecycle — from hiring to training, nesting and operations.

Your Agent's Lifecycle



Making the Business Case for In-Call Agent Assistance

The only way to transform the agent experience is by giving your agents the guidance and coaching they need at the precise moment they need it — while they are helping resolve customer issues. Human coaches in the contact center can't possibly provide the depth and scale needed to achieve this level of direct assistance in every conversation. Instead, it requires conversational artificial intelligence (AI) and automation specifically developed for real-time agent assistance.

With in-call agent assistance powered by conversational AI and automation, agents can resolve issues faster, demonstrate empathy, focus on the conversation and be more productive. The right solution brings the incredible power of automation to assist agents during the call, combining process automation with conversational AI to provide personalized, dynamic guidance based on the conversation.

In order to help you understand the benefits of deploying real-time, in-call agent assistance this guide breaks down the following section into a tabular form covering: the use cases to be considered, the relevant questions you have to ask to uncover specific pain points related to the question, the solution capabilities needed to solve for the pain points uncovered and finally, the results your company can expect.



Agent Assistance Use Cases	Questions to Ask	Solution Capabilities Needed	Benefits of In-Call Agent Assistance
Quickly identify why the customer is calling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do your agents have immediate access to customer information without having to manually look up information in multiple systems?• Do you have an integrated view of intent, emotion, and sentiment across all conversations and channels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AI-powered, real-time analysis of customer context including sentiment, emotion, and intent to provide personalized guidance specific to the call and customer• AI-powered automatic identification of new intents during the conversation to help agents understand and serve customer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased agent engagement• Reduced dead air and hold time• Reduced agent discovery time and average handle time• Faster time to agent proficiency
Resolve the issue faster	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How much time do agents spend manually looking up information across multiple systems?• Which tasks create the greatest frustration and poorest experiences for agents?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledgebase integration• Pre-programmed guided workflows and next-best action• Process automation that takes action on the agent's behalf	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Faster time to resolution• Reduced average handle time and shorter wait times for customers• Consistent handling of every call and adherence with business requirements• Reduced number of screens that agents need to log into during the workflow• Improved customer satisfaction



Agent Assistance Use Cases	Questions to Ask	Solution Capabilities Needed	Benefits of In-Call Agent Assistance
Reduce agent errors and missteps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which agent actions during the call are most likely to result in mistakes and omissions?• Are your agents required to memorize or look up manual workflows?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-programmed guided workflows and next-best action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced errors and repeat calls• Improved agent productivity• Faster time to agent proficiency• Improved customer experience
Personalize the interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are your agents engaged in the customer conversation?• Do you have a real-time conversational AI solution that can automatically identify customer sentiment, emotion, and intent on every call and guide agents to respond accordingly?• How much time do agents spend manually looking up information across multiple systems?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AI-powered next best action and personalized agent guidance• AI-powered predictive analytics that automatically identify patterns and changes to them to alert agents in real time about products and services that would be most relevant as customer satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased agent engagement• Optimized agent and customer experience• Improved sales effectiveness• Higher conversion rates and increased revenue• Improved customer satisfaction



Choosing a Real-Time In-Call Agent Assistance Solution

Given the rapid advances in conversational AI and automation, it can be difficult to know what capabilities exist and what to look for in a real-time, in-call agent assistance solution. For that reason, it's best to choose a solution that offers you the greatest flexibility and scalability as your organization matures in its use of AI and automation.

For example, companies just starting on their journey to optimize the agent experience often begin with rules-based automation before adding on AI to drive maximum impact. Choosing a solution that offers everything you need to get started quickly and then scale up with AI-powered assistance will enable you to address a wide range of use cases over time to transform the agent experience.

When evaluating and choosing a real-time in-call agent assistance solution, you should keep the following must-have capabilities in mind:



Real-time agent guidance

For rules-based automation, look for a solution that makes it easy to pre-program real-time agent guidance. By providing proactive and predictive help in the form of scripts, embedded processes, guided workflows, and next best actions, pre-programmed guidance helps agents resolve issues faster, reduces agent onboarding time and ensures consistency across calls and adherence to business rules and requirements.



Desktop automation

By automating tasks such as updating customer relationship management (CRM) systems, sending follow-up emails to customers and others, you can reduce the stress and anxiety that comes from agents rushing to complete many manual tasks to identify and resolve the customer's issue.



No-code designer and low-code integration

Look for a solution that makes it easy for business users to create, customize and update the agent assistance experience. Likewise, choose a solution with low-code integration that enables you to connect disparate systems to orchestrate and automate the agent workflow.



Domain-specific solution

With rapid evolution in AI, there has been a rise in sophisticated Domain-specific AI solutions in industries such as telecommunication, healthcare, travel & hospitality, and others. For optimal understanding of customer conversations, your company should look for an agent assistance solution that is specific to customer service and your industry.



Industry-leading speech and text recognition

AI-powered real-time agent assistance needs to understand your customers and agents with a high degree of accuracy. To do so, a solution must be able to listen for and automatically detect the language, including specific dialects. It should also support the languages used by your customers, including those languages used by your customers today as well as future language needs as your company expands into new markets.



Intent recognition and analysis

An AI-powered solution should be able to identify and understand why the customer is calling and what the customer wants to achieve. The solution should leverage machine learning to continuously tune and optimize algorithms to deliver the highest possible degree of accuracy in predicting true intent.



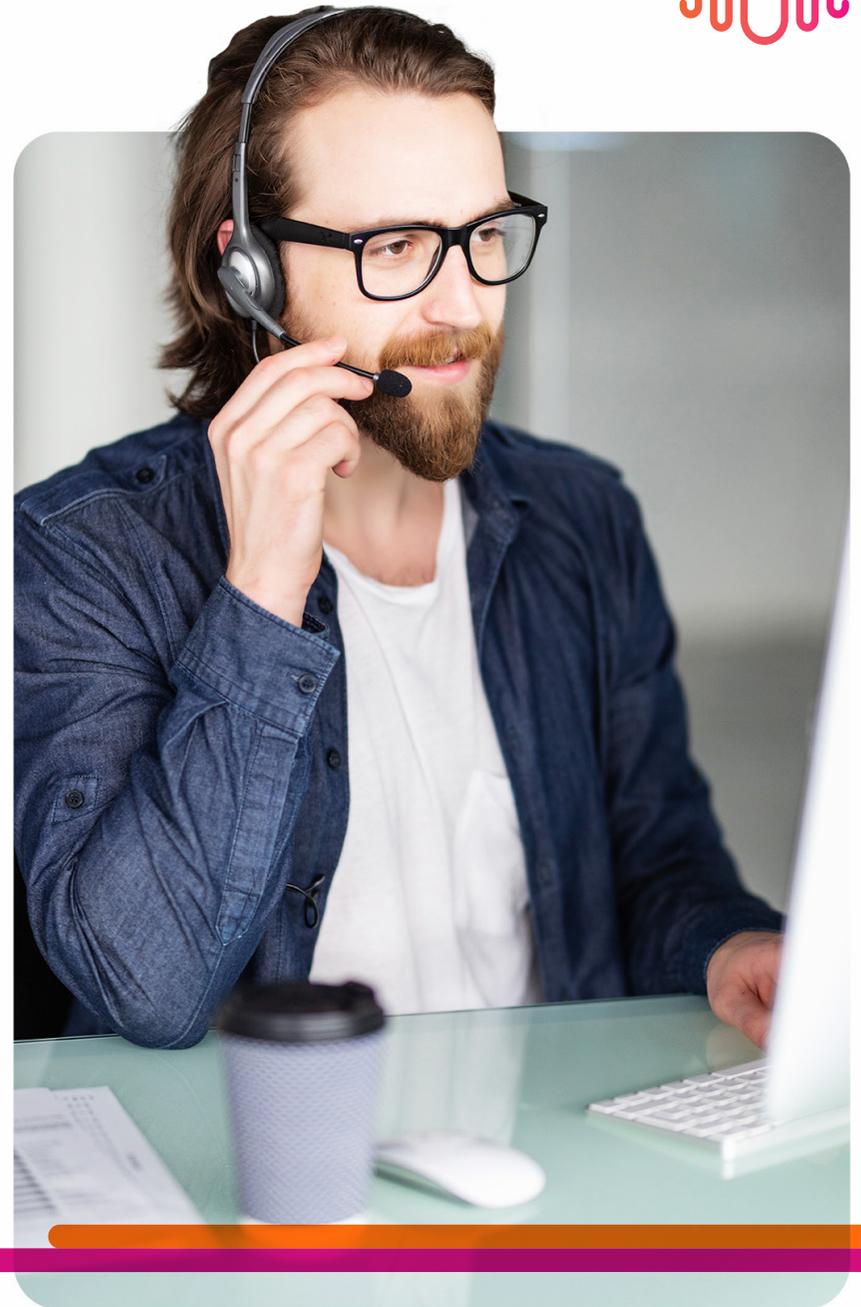
Sentiment and tonal analysis

Another important capability is sentiment recognition, which provides insight into the customer's state of mind. At a minimum, your AI-powered in-call agent assistance solution should recognize, extract and score customer sentiment as positive, neutral or negative. Better yet, the solution should also understand your customers' feelings within the context and intent of the interaction by identifying customer emotions such as sadness, frustration, anger and happiness.



Entity extraction

An AI-powered solution should also be able to correctly recognize and analyze entities such as a customer's phone number being given within the flow of the conversation. Accurate identification and extraction of entities helps the AI provide agents with the right information at the right time and automate steps within the agent workflow.



Maximizing Return on Investment With Add-Value Capabilities

Deploying a comprehensive real-time, in-call agent assistance solution is an excellent way to start transforming your contact center to achieve strategic outcomes. To make sure that you can build on these successes and realize transformative results beyond improving the agent experience, look for a solution that also offers:

- **Promises management:** Sophisticated platforms include the ability for the software to recognize promises (commitments) made by agents and automatically create and perform follow-up tasks.
- **Security and compliance:** Depending on your industry, look for a solution that supports the regulations that impact your company such as PCI-DSS, HIPAA and GDPR. In any case, the platform should support data redaction of personally identifiable information (PII).
- **Enterprise scalability and Automation of end-to-end conversations:** Prioritize a platform-based agent assistance solution that enables you to extend automation across the entire customer conversation, from intelligent self-service to post-interaction analytics.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT PROVIDER

Beyond evaluating the technology and capabilities you need for in-call agent assistance, you also want to choose the right vendor. The ideal partner should offer:

- Visionary leadership and a technology roadmap that aligns with the vision
- Deep expertise in AI, NLP/NLU and related technologies
- Domain expertise in optimizing customer experience/contact center operations
- Deployment methodology and services to help you achieve rapid time to value
- Security and privacy of customer data





> Next Steps

Deploying a real-time, in-call agent assistance solution can empower your agents to be successful, reduce their stress, and improve their experience. And when agents have a better experience, so do your customers. The result is happier agents, happier customers, lower attrition and higher customer satisfaction and loyalty scores.

We're here to help you make the best choice for optimizing the agent experience and take the next step on your contact center automation journey.

Contact us now

uniphore 

www.uniphore.com