

# *Supervisor Support is the Key to Contact Center Success – A Simple Strategy to Align Frontline and Senior Leaders*

Written By Greg Salvato

There is a vast body of research exposing the direct link between strong frontline leaders and higher levels of workforce engagement, retention, and business success. But despite the evidence and the voices of determined team leaders around the globe, contact centers have been slow to acknowledge this connection and that the outdated approaches, processes, and technologies currently in use won't deliver success in today's highly competitive, rapidly evolving, labor-constrained digital age.

In a recent CCNG Town Hall, I shared some insights and analysis of feedback gathered via a survey conducted by TouchPoint One in which supervisors were asked for their perspectives about the support provided to them by their employers, and senior managers were asked similar questions regarding the support they provided or wished to provide to their supervisors. The discussion was intended to stimulate serious thought and action by contact center executives interested in better understanding and fulfilling the needs of their frontline leaders, their most vital human capital asset, and improving their organization's stature, influence, and value to its customers, employees, and stakeholders.

For example, even with the growing perception that non-monetary and intrinsic incentives surpass financial rewards as effective and preferred motivators, 36 percent of supervisor respondents cited higher wages and financial incentives as the one thing they wished their employer would provide to help them succeed. Only 5 percent of respondents stated that existing compensation and related programs were adequate. No senior manager mentioned compensation as a "most useful thing that you or your organization provides specifically to supervisors to help them succeed."

The strongest point of alignment between senior management and frontline leaders revealed in our survey was a consistent appeal for more training. Structured, frequent, varied, and continuous were recurrent qualifiers used to articulate the ways each party sought or intended to enhance supervisor skills development. Twenty-two percent of senior managers in our survey named training as the most useful thing provided specifically to supervisors to help them succeed. Thirty-one percent of supervisors surveyed said that training was the one thing they wish their employer would provide more of, second only to higher wages and financial incentives.

Sustained inattention to the needs of supervisors gives rise to absenteeism, turnover, disengagement and other undesirable conditions that lead to failure for many customer contact organizations. If your contact center isn't achieving the level of prosperity that you know it's capable of, try diagnosing it from the perspective of your supervisors. Begin the journey with a simple survey like the one used for this report. Assemble representatives for all relevant stakeholder groups to evaluate the feedback and create and implement a plan that corrects the deficiencies and capitalizes on strengths. Make the procedure a permanent component of your continuous improvement process. Your supervisors are the linchpins of your contact center's success, and they are depending on you for the support they need to deliver.

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