

# “Please Hold”

## The Cost of Call Center Training

BY JUDY SCINTA MAGNESS



Everyone has experienced the frustration of trying to settle a billing or service issue over the phone. Being placed “on hold” or transferred from one department to another, or even being disconnected without any reason – let alone a resolution to a problem – is all too common.

While it is easy to blame a customer service representative on the other end of phone, perhaps inadequate training and company support are the underlying issues.

Customer Think shared the results of a recent survey by Benchmark Portal, who interviewed over 5,000 contact center agents in North America. The reports states that while over 90 percent of agents gave high marks to their new-hire training program, just 60 percent “felt their transition from training to the contact center floor was adequately supported.”

Experts say that that a well-trained customer service staff can actually save companies money in the long run, and Michael Lauro, President of Lauro Consulting Inc., (LCI) agrees. LCI provides professional services and consulting for contact centers, call centers, customer service and IT help desks.

“A well-trained staff can reduce abandoned calls, reduce handle time per call, chats and emails – and it improves cus-

tommer satisfaction,” said Lauro, adding that there is different training for various levels within an organization. “Training is very important, especially for front-line representatives who are talking to or interacting online with customers every day.”

Based in Florida, LCI specializes in designing high performance contact centers and call centers for its clients using a method Lauro calls the “Integrated Approach.” This process includes assessing a client’s current practices and goals as well as assisting with the design and building of the center. The last phase is implementation. “Our approach is to stay with a client after going live to tweak and adjust whatever is necessary, and to ensure that they have efficient and effective operations,” said Lauro.

LCI also offers a short assessment entitled a “Focused Appraisal<sup>SM</sup>”, producing either a list of areas with potential opportunities for improvement, or a high level review of one or two specific areas of an operation.

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