

COMPANY OVERVIEW (200 WORDS MAXIMUM TO DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANISATION/DEPARTMENT)

The Contact Centre has over 300 employees, handling up to approximately 40,000 calls a week and is an integral part of the Screwfix business, supplying products to the trade and DIY market. Screwfix is a fast paced and fast growing company, in terms of customer base, sales and physical stores, meaning each year the Contact Centre receives more calls, is involved in more projects and must adapt to suit the changing customer and their needs.

Return completed entries:

By email: info@swccf.co.uk

By post: South West Contact Centre Awards 2014, Unit 5, Stangate House, Stanwell Road, Penarth CF64 2AA

Screwfix Contact Centre – Contact Centre of the Year (inhouse) Nomination

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AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

Screwfix is one of the largest employers locally, offering a wide variety of roles within its head office and Contact Centre. There are many initiatives in place that make staff more content within their roles, which in turn has led to a higher level of engagement and customer service:

Everyone has a voice

Over the past few years Screwfix has quickly grown from a small Somerset based operation into a large national retailer, employing a total of 6,000 employees across the UK. Despite this very quick expansion, the company is proud that it retains the agility and small business culture. There is a huge focus on every single member of staff having a voice and the ability to improve their company. The directors doors are always open and the word 'hierarchy' doesn't seem to exist and could be replaced with 'team'. Contact centre staff are actively encouraged to suggest ways to improve both the customer experience and their own environment and take on projects through discussions with their managers and also a dedicated intranet space, empowering them to make a contribution to their company.

Empowering staff with knowledge

The managers ensure all staff are communicated with on a daily basis, both in terms of business updates, product information but also more local information and innovative ways to make customer interactions both easier and more profitable. The contact centre believes that informed staff that feel part of the wider business (and are able to comment and add to decisions if they wish) are motivated staff so we ensure that communication is regular, relevant and two way.

Focused on fun

Happy staff = happy customers. The contact centre put an emphasis on making each day enjoyable for the team. Sales incentives, prizes, competitions and social events are promoted heavily around the building encouraging staff to get involved. The team are also highly focused on raising funds for charity and host a variety of events throughout the year including fancy dress days, cake sales and family fun days. Staff can get as involved as they wish, even organising the events themselves if they come up with an idea.

Flexible working hours

The contact centre is open from 7am – 9pm Mon-Fri and 8am – 6pm at weekends, and although clearly the phone lines must be supported throughout this time, the company offers permanent and part time

positions and works to the principle of having as many people as possible working the shifts they want to work. Rotas are created taking into account all staff requests wherever possible with the Resource and Real Time Planning department creating a 'preference based' approach. This approach is very successful, with the team securing their ideal shifts over 80% of the time. This means the agents are in when they want to be, so they can be focused on the customers and not on the 'hygiene factors' of inflexible or unsociable shifting.

Autonomy over shifts

Staff members can choose the length of their lunch break and can change the length of their working day accordingly. This empowers the staff to manage their own time and remain as engaged as possible. This is a popular option and ensures again that the team can really put their time and energy into what they do while they are here and on increasing the autonomy and control over their own destinies.

Constant re-assessment of hours

The roster is re-assessed daily and those workers who have said they would like extra hours that week are contacted as and when extra hours are available – ensuring staff have increased motivation and customers reap the service benefits of this.

RECRUITING THE BEST

The contact centre operates a well oiled recruitment process enabling managers to recruit the staff that will live and breathe the Screwfix brand. A job at Screwfix is viewed as a career and each candidate is viewed in terms of a wider picture – could this person become a manager one day?

Recruit locally

The Somerset roots are very important to the company and there is a huge emphasis on recruiting people from the local area where possible. The contact centre has strong links with the local colleges and schools offering work experience where possible and has had highly successful apprentices working in the Contact Centre.

Assessment centres

All new candidates attend an assessment centre rather than an interview. These are purposefully designed to be much less stressful and give the managers the chance to see how candidates work and react alongside others. The skills of the individual are much easier to exemplify and a more focused and effective approach to recruitment is created.

Recruiting from within

Contact centre managers will always encourage staff to apply for internal promotions; it is deemed as a great achievement to have a team member develop within the company and is seen as a direct reflection on the manager. Currently, the Contact Centre is proud of the 14 agents who have secured wide ranging secondments into our Head Office and the numbers of current Head Office staff who began their careers in the Contact Centre are significant.

Top benefits

Successful recruits are treated to a range of fantastic benefits including staff discount at both Screwfix and B&Q, 28+ days holiday, discounted staff meals, childcare vouchers, pension and share save schemes.

DEVELOPING TALENT

The contact centre offers full support and training that staff need to succeed within the company. Initial training is conducted over two to three weeks (depending on if they are part time or full time) and includes phone, system, product and business information training, but also the opportunity to meet their new

manager and team as well as supported call taking on the Contact Centre floor with a Trainer before they 'go live'. This supported approach and the robust 4, 8, and 12 week review system that we have in place means that new starters are welcomed into the Contact Centre and get regular, meaningful feedback to shape their Screwfix careers.

Coaching and mentoring

Coaching sessions are available to book at any time and can cover any topic the employee wishes to discuss. Mentoring can also be arranged and is often encouraged to be set up with a manager that isn't necessarily linked to the contact centre, for example many contact centre employees are mentored by colleagues at head office (based on the same site) to gain a wider exposure to the business through our Screwfix Academy.

Further training

Further training is always on hand at the contact centre, regular sessions are held by the HR team covering a wide range of topics designed to develop and inspire individuals, including 'presentation skills', 'influencing and assertiveness', 'conducting effective appraisals' down to the more classic training courses like 'excel – beginners to advanced'. Suppliers also regularly visit the contact centre to enhance staff's product knowledge by bringing product and point of sale information (and the odd freebie thrown in!) so the agents are fully equipped with the knowledge they need to support the customer's call.

Development

For those employees who really want to shine there are more development opportunities available. Managers can nominate staff for courses like LEAP (Leading Excellence and Performance) where staff undertake nine months of training to develop management skills. Or staff can take the initiative and apply and interview for the Bi-annual Screwfix Business Academy, a year-long hands on course designed to give candidates a great insight to all aspects of the business, setting practical tasks within each department with the aim of developing future directors! The Contact Centre has also just completed it's second 'First Steps to Manager' assessment centre, recruiting a further 6 candidates who have been identified as managers of the future to be given a structured, supported course to ensure that internal talent is recognised, nurtured and developed.

A HOME FROM HOME

The contact centre spends a great deal of time making sure the working environment is as comfortable and inviting for staff as possible. Hygiene factors are so important and the team strives hard with support from the Facilities department and Employee Consultation Rep committee to ensure that any concerns raised are dealt with. The recent addition of a new 'noise reducing' carpet and daylight simulating LED lights have proved extremely popular, with plans for a revamped canteen and toilet block, more visual displays on the CC walls themselves and lockers for all staff, the team in the Contact Centre are really enjoying their new and planned environment.

Treating people like adults is so important in the Contact Centre and recent changes to rules around use of mobile phones and eating within the Contact centre have really engaged the population and continue to be an example of how everyone is trusted.

SUPPORTING THE WIDER BUSINESS

Screwfix has a very clear mission; to offer convenience and value to trade and DIY customers. It keeps things simple; a 'no nonsense' approach resonates well with customers. The company is undergoing a huge growth spurt at present, opening a store a week for the past three years. Everything the contact centre does is to support this growth. The contact centre has in turn become much busier during the growth period. More stores have meant more customer enquiries and more call and collect orders. Staff need to be even more knowledgeable ready to help customers all over the UK. Convenience and value is at the heart of everything the contact centre does.

Every week, the 40k calls that are taken within the Contact Centre represent the wide variety of functions that a multichannel business like Screwfix has created. In an average week, it is not just Contact Centre orders and service queries that are dealt with in the CC. This chart shows clearly the breadth and variety of calls taken, but also the level of support that the CC offers to its multichannel customers, regardless of where they originated. For the CC, it's about being a Screwfix customer and shopping or contacting us in whichever way is best – happy customers are loyal customers after all!

DELIVERING FOR CUSTOMERS

The contact centre knows its customers are busy and need to order quickly and get on with their jobs. All of the contact centre calls are answered by a human (there is purposefully no IVR system in place). Every call is important and in 2013 98% of all calls were answered, 88% of which within 20 seconds. The average wait time was just six seconds, meaning customers could order quickly and conveniently; no nasty call queues or complicated, multi-layered IVRs to contend with here!

Trade account customers receive an even more personalised level of service, with smaller teams the customers really can get to know the staff they speak to if they call regularly and our Key Account customers, serviced by their own team, also reap the benefits of having their own service.

The Screwfix contact centre really is a fantastic place to work. The staff are valued, a lot of time is spent making sure the environment, technology and systems are up to speed to support the growing customer base. Staff feel valued, as do customers and there is progression and development always available to keep staff engaged. The journey of the Contact Centre has been on a steep trajectory of late and exciting times lay ahead. In such a fast paced business like Screwfix, it will never stand still for long!