

Call Centre staff hindered by lack of training

05 June 2003 – Source. Institute of IT Training

On average, just over a third of workers in call-centres are happy with the level of training they receive, a situation that needs fixing as the customer becomes ever more demanding, claims a new report.

Customers are becoming increasingly frustrated at the bad service they receive at call-centres which is partly the result of a lack of investment from employers in training staff, claims a new survey released today.

The findings from the third National Complaints Culture Survey (NCCS) from TMI suggest that while customers are becoming more demanding when it comes to complaining, only 36% of employees, on average, say that their training is adequate to meet the demand.

Surveying over 2900 consumers and 3000 employees from 43 organisations, the report suggests that employees were particularly annoyed by the lack of on-the-job training such as feeding back on lessons learned from mistakes, as 65% of customers want complaints handled in person and solved immediately.

Bottom of the list of sectors in terms of offering training is 'services' with well under one in three employees being happy with the level of training they receive. Retail came top of the list although the numbers were still low.

Employee empowerment in retail call-centres, however, came top of the list averaging 46%. Workers also felt that their industry had its finger on the pulse when it came servicing customers and were the most likely to trust their organisation.

Mike Havard, head of the consultancy CM-Insight and former call-centre HR director, believes that HR should be more active in improving jobs in the industry by offering clear career paths and training:

'HR should be looking at ways of widening call-centre positions by improving job descriptions and making jobs more challenging. It should be an entry level job with a clear career path where talented people can cross to other areas,' he told HR Gateway.

Today's report, which will be discussed at the Institute of Directors (IoD) later, recommends that people 'make or break' the service experience: '...it is clear that technology alone will not solve the people issue,' it states.

Managers need to train staff and coach these 'service providers' on an ongoing basis. Also, leaders must cease treating their service providers as 'second-class citizens', it states: 'Rewards need to be increased in line with enhanced service'.