



RYAN STRATEGIC ADVISORY

Driving Excellence Using Work From Home Agents

A white paper for CXperts

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cxperts

Introduction

If one clear point has emerged from the past twelve months, it is that massive changes are taking place in the CX delivery space. Enterprises can no longer exclusively support their products or services in large facilities concentrated in a small number of locations. Instead, virtual working, the concept of agents supporting consumers from their homes, is now part of mainstream customer experience management. This method of providing end-users with the support they need will only grow in prominence in 2021 and beyond.

It is within this dynamic that leading contact center outsourcer CXperts is pivoting to support its current and prospective clients with a Work From Home offering that is positioned to respond pragmatically to the needs of enterprises across industries. By concentrating on business continuity, compliance and engaging the best agents, CXperts is disrupting positively in all aspects of home-working.

Work From Home as the new customer experience normal

The ongoing shift to home-based working

Gone are the days of customer experience management that was concentrated around the call center farms of the late-90s, where literally hundreds if not thousands of agents supported end-users from a single or small number of locations. This business model is no longer viable, due to concerns about public health and the impact on business continuity.

But, while the move to Work From Home delivery has been brisk of late, this form of managing customer experience has been gaining traction for some time. There are a number of reasons for this shift, including:

- **Better outcomes with experienced agents** – one of the primary reasons why so many enterprises are opting for home-working customer experience management is the reputation of this business model for delivering superior interactions with end-users. This owes to the traditional Work From Home employee profile, which tends to employ people with more professional experience and higher levels of education. This translates into proactive solutions when dealing with consumers, resulting in superior outcomes.
- **Improved employee morale** – employees that work from home tend to be more responsive to consumers, due to the boost in morale that comes from the flexibility that this business model affords them. With less time spent commuting and increased savings on food / transportation expenses, home-working employees are better equipped to support end-users. This was recently quantified by leading consultancy 5th Talent, which published a study that indicated Work From Home agents most

appreciated the cost savings and more time with loved-ones that home-working provided them.

- **Better agent retention drives improved consumer outcomes** – happy agents based at home are more likely to stay with their existing employer. This means that there is an immediate cost savings associated with recruitment and retention. This is important, especially in the context of the 2021 Ryan Strategic Advisory Front Office BPO Omnibus Survey, in which 628 enterprise contact center operators identified agent recruitment as their 2nd biggest operational pain points. By using the Work From Home model in which agents feel more fulfilled, the potential savings that can be derived is significant. This is on top of the clear reduction in overheads by not needing to operate a physical contact center. In fact, more enterprises are looking to outsourcing providers that use the virtual model, as the reduction in expenses around facilities management for one or more sites is significant; these savings can be passed back to the client in the form of lower price points.

Key enterprise CX challenges in 2021 (1 = unimportant advantage, 8 = very important advantage)



Source – Ryan Strategic Advisory 2021 Front-Office BPO Omnibus Survey

Enterprises are prioritizing BPOs with home-based capabilities

There is a clear view among contact center service buyers that home-working is the way to move forward for their customer experience needs. This again was illustrated in the Ryan Strategic 2021 Front-Office BPO Omnibus Survey, where respondents indicated that having a virtual working platform is a crucial success element when choosing a partner. This simply makes sense, as forward-looking enterprises want to work with a BPO player that has motivated, positive and engaged agents. No matter the industry, when it comes to how their end-users are supported executives feel that the ways of the past are simply not an option.

The CXperts Home-Based Model

Introducing CXperts

In the current customer experience environment, CXperts comes to the table with a value proposition that is increasingly centered on Work From Home interactions. Founded on a strong legacy of socially responsible contact center delivery, CXperts provides clients with solutions that are based around white-glove, high-touch quality care that results in both the best outcomes and increased brand loyalty. Whether it relates to customer care, technical support or revenue generations, CXperts focuses on quality as the foundation of its interactions. This permeates through to the firm's Work From Home approach, which takes into account a number of innovative approaches. These include:

- ***Multishore Work From Home platform*** – while traditionally most contact center outsourcers offering Work From Home solutions have done so from a domestic angle, CXperts has taken a different approach. In order to maximize risk diversification and to access the best possible talent, CXperts' leadership has situated its home-workers across both the USA and Puerto Rico, and a number of offshore/nearshore delivery points, including Guatemala, Jamaica, the Philippines, Mexico and Colombia. By using a diversified Work From Home delivery footprint, CXperts can leverage specific language skill sets and maximize talent requirements by deploying a multishore strategy.
- ***Emphasis on corporate social responsibility*** – CXperts has made social responsibility a hallmark of how it operates, especially as it aims to obtain formal certification as a woman and minority owned business.

Equally, CXperts believes in inclusionary hiring practices, taking the initiative to source virtual talent with an emphasis on diversity. It is important for the leadership at CXperts to ensure that members of different groups that may be under-represented find enriching employment opportunities within their firm. They have made this a priority when hiring new recruits. This approach is complemented through employee

development programs that are designed to help team members from all backgrounds maximize their potential by way of targeted training and mentoring via experienced coaches.

- **Focus on security and fraud prevention** – one of the biggest concerns that enterprise contact center operators have concerning the Work From Home model is ensuring maximum compliance with information management requirements. After all, the increase in identity theft that has been ongoing over the past decade has been nothing short of catastrophic.

This is why CXperts has implemented provisions that drastically reduce the opportunity for fraud to be undertaken in a home-working environment, starting with screening agents for previous criminal activity or credit risks. Equally, ensuring data protection means going beyond having team members log into a secure VPN. To ensure that fraud is kept out of their virtual delivery operations, CXperts has taken a number of proactive steps. In addition to becoming HIPAA and PCI compliant, CXperts has embraced technology to keep fraud to a minimum. Thus, partnerships have been forged with leading information security providers that include:

- **ThinScale**, to ensure watertight remote delivery in a BYOD environment;
 - **Sophos**, one of the most respected names in information technology security;
 - **Ameyo**, a secure and flexible cloud contact center platform, and;
 - **Time Doctor**, which monitors the activity of remote employees, in order to signal nefarious activity.
- **Hiring the right team members** – In order to best serve its customers using home-based agents, CXperts has developed a process designed to identify the best possible virtual brand ambassadors. By screening existing facilities-based employees as well as new applicants in a database that is continuously updated,, CXperts can select those best able to manage a home-working environment. Key considerations in hiring criteria not only include the prospective agent’s capabilities to handle basic IT issues as it relates to their equipment and network connectivity, but also cultural alignment to CXperts core values that we work tirelessly to ingrain from day one. Equally, an assessment is done to determine how well a CXperts’ team member will do changing their work environment from a physical contact center to driving customer experience from home. As noted earlier, diversity and the opportunity to recruit individuals from under-represented backgrounds to forge a career in CX delivery is incorporated into this virtual agent recruitment strategy.
- **Driving better agent engagement** – there is ample evidence to suggest that agents enjoy working from home. A recent study by consultancy 5th Talent identified that a large number of those that have been shifted out of the office would prefer to keep working from home in the future. However, the same study also uncovered that almost 20% of agents feel a sense of loneliness, which can lead to disengagement, thereby

impacting their performance. CXperts has positioned itself to ward off any sense of isolation among its home-working team members. This has included provisions to keep morale strong by way of gamification tools that are designed to engage and challenge team members. As a consequence, attrition is lower and outcomes remain strong.

CXperts has taken several steps to make a fun virtual environment. Some of the most popular ones include:

- The use of the Share Treats platform as a customized way to reward agents via credits at popular retailers and restaurants near their homes;
- Holding monthly virtual celebrations to recognize anniversaries, birthdays and agent achievements. A standout to these parties is the inclusion of family members, which is a morale-booster for employees.
- Virtual team days that recognize and celebrate local and international holidays that are important to individual agents. Examples include Valentine's Day and Chinese New Year.

Conclusions

At no time has customer experience management been as challenging as the past 12 months. Consumers are focused on better interactions, with enterprises struggling in terms of how best to address new operational realities. With home-working rapidly becoming the CX operating model of choice for many enterprises, the complications that contact center executives face is profound. With its focus on evolving toward more virtual working CXperts is emerging as a leader in this regard. By concentrating on business continuity, security and proactive agent management, it comes to the market with an offering that is comprehensive and detailed for clients across sectors.