



# When Staffing Your Contact Centre Feels like ‘Groundhog Day’

These 5 best practices can get you out of the time loop.

You deal with the same staffing problems over and over.  
It's just a different day.



**You don't have enough people:**

Another trained agent leaves, forcing you to hire a replacement, and that can be a struggle.

Or it's a busy period – maybe it's a Monday or a Friday or the end of the month – and your call volumes are peaking, but you don't have the people to answer the phones.

**You turn to HR but they can't hire fast enough:**

You need people right away but HR tells you they need 12 weeks to find and onboard new talent.

**You are worried about hitting your SLAs:**

How do you meet SLAs when you don't have enough people? You could drive overtime and cancel holidays, but that has its limits.

# Do the numbers.

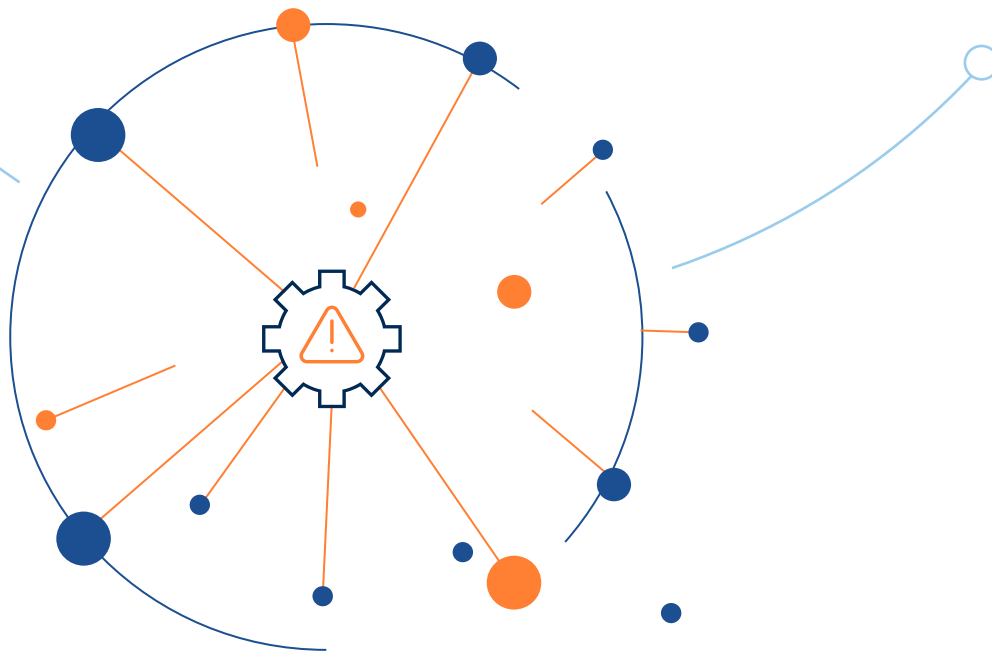
These never-ending staffing headaches have serious implications for you, your agents, and the business.



If you cut back on training and coaching time or holidays, you get overworked agents, poor team morale, and missed SLAs.

Poor team engagement and morale drives up attrition, making the situation even worse.

Senior stakeholders will expect root cause analysis and remediation plans.



Your business risks losing both new and existing customers.



# 5 Best Practices to get you out of the time loop

# #1

## Adopt a targeted and proactive recruitment approach to find candidates quickly.

Suppose you need 20 extra people and you turn to HR to find them. They advertise online or in print media, and wait for the applications to roll in. If you are lucky, you might get 20 applications by the end of next week.

### Best practice:

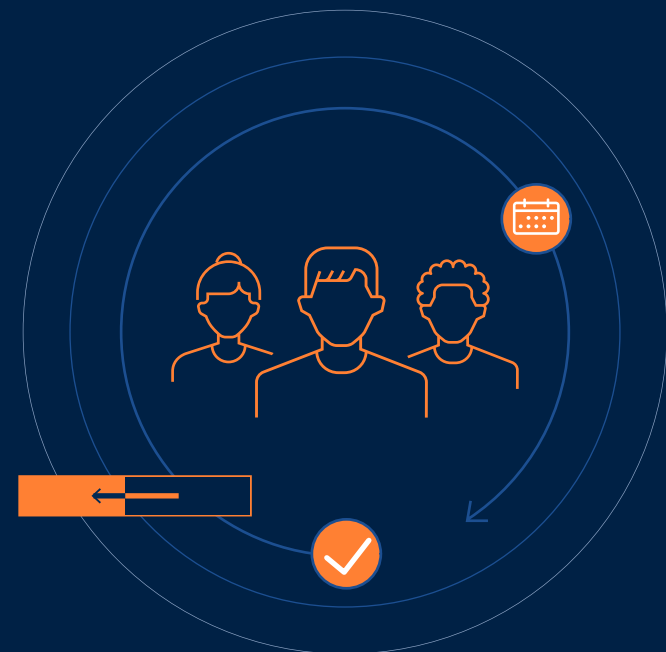
A proactive, targeted approach can line up 20 people for interview by the end of day 1.

### How it works:

- Understand the local labour market.
- Proactively target candidates using CV databases that show who's been actively looking for jobs within a certain timeframe.
- Email them or call them. "We have your CV. We think you may be a right-fit candidate for the opening we have. Can we have a conversation?"
- Typically, you can expect a 20% uptake. So if you approach 100 people on day one, you'll have about 20 candidates lined up for an interview.

## The outcome:

# Hire 30 people in just three weeks as opposed to the standard 6-8 weeks.



## #2

### Automate your process for screening candidates to speed up onboarding.

Employers in regulated industries are required to screen candidates prior to employment. This includes obtaining a photo ID, proof of address, bank statements and references, as well as performing credit reference and criminal records checks.

Your HR team needs to create a file, and review, scan and store the documents.

This time-consuming process prevents you from ramping up and hiring quickly.

#### Best practice:

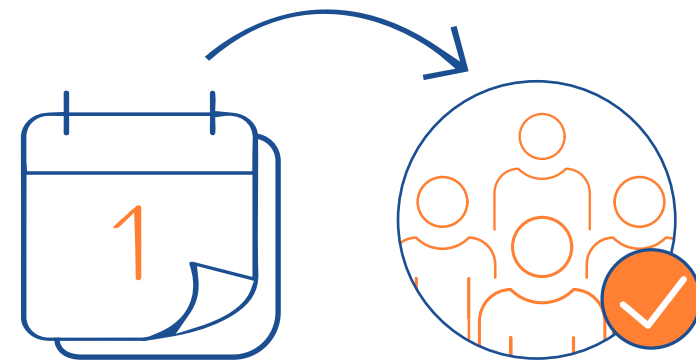
Use an automated system to screen candidates faster.

#### How it works:

- The automated system sends a link to the candidates to fill out all their details.
- Candidates can take photos of their bank statements, passports and other documents, and upload these directly to the system
- The system then automatically contacts agencies for credit references and criminal records.

### The outcome:

# Cut screening time from four weeks to one.



# #3

## Use flexible employment contracts to vary employee hours depending on call volumes.

Call volumes can vary by the day, week, or month depending on the nature of your business. Typical employment contracts do not provide the flexibility to move hours up or down based on these patterns. This means your company is either paying for employees to do nothing or it is driving overtime.

### Best practice:

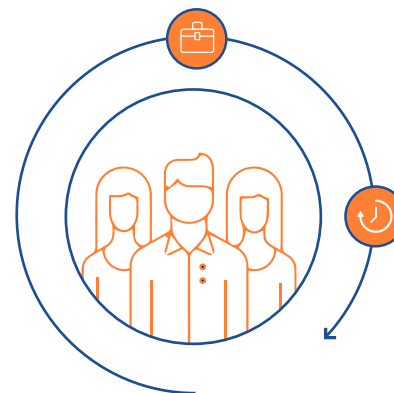
Implement a flexible working model that allows you to vary daily and weekly hours depending on customer demand and seasonal trends.

### The model in practice:

A retail bank struggled to manage fluctuating call volumes. Mondays and Fridays were particularly busy, and volumes were higher at the start and end of the month. Agents worked a standard 7.5 hour shift. This meant the bank did not have enough people during busy periods while at quieter times employees had nothing to do.

### The flexible working model:

- Deploys 100 to 200 people in the bank's call centres on any given day.
- Agents work an average of 37.5 hours a week, but can flex up to 45 or down to 32 in any given week.
- Daily shifts vary from 6 to 10 hours to match call volumes across the week.



**The outcome:**  
Serve customers efficiently during busy periods, and lower costs during quieter times.



# #4

## Create a separate workforce to staff evening/weekend shifts.

Customers like to call whenever it suits them, so you need to be open late nights and weekends. But your staff don't like working these shifts, affecting team morale and making it harder to retain people

### Best practice:

Create a separate workforce pool to work late nights and weekends.

### The approach in practice:

A wealth management firm needed to serve its clients 8 am – 1 am weekdays and further hours on Saturdays and Sundays.

Their contact centre staff did not like the evening and weekend shifts. It was the number one cause of job dissatisfaction and the top reason for leaving.

The solution was to create a separate workforce pool for late nights and weekends. It was staffed with people who were willing to work these shifts (and paid more for the unsocial hours).

The main workforce is now much happier just working standard hours, improving morale and reducing attrition.

## The outcome:

# Better satisfy customers outside normal working hours, and improve morale and employee retention.



# #5

## Create a temporary workforce to address your short and medium term needs.

You need extra people, but only for the next three to six months. But your HR policies and practices are all geared to permanent staff. Hiring temporary people is painful.

### Best practice:

Use an external provider for your short term needs.

### The approach in practice:

A financial services firm was migrating its core CRM platform. They knew this would take time - agents would need training and support, and there would be bugs and other problems to fix.

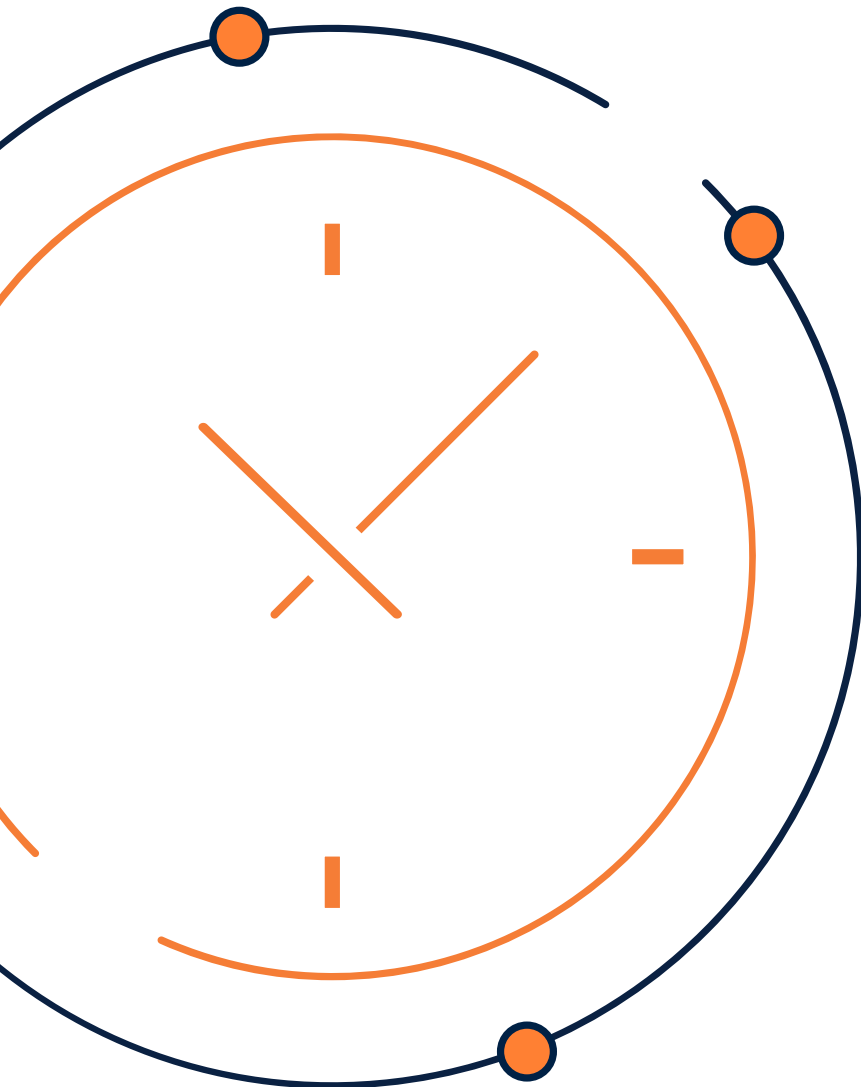
They expected occupancy to fall and average handling time to go up. They would need more people.

They found a supplier, Firstsource, to provide extra people for the duration of their IT migration. We hired people specifically on short-term contracts, sparing HR the headache of trying to design practices for temporary employees.

## The outcome:

Hire more quickly, tap into extra resources as needed, and eliminate the cost of higher headcount across the year.





What should you  
be spending your  
time on?

You could spend your time worrying about all these issues and try to solve them yourself.

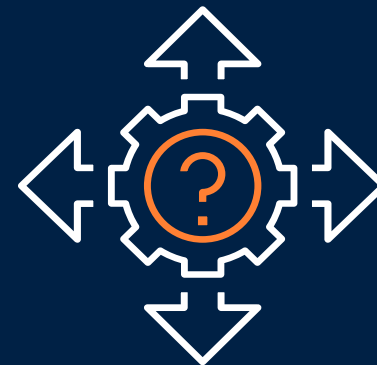
But what if you could find someone else that you could trust to deliver?



**A company that:**

- You could hold responsible for having enough people in your call centre.
- You could hold accountable for the SLA performance of those people.
- You could benchmark on the same SLAs as your in-house teams.
- Is willing to take responsibility for sourcing, assessing, recruiting and screening candidates as well as onboarding, training, and managing employees.
- Is ready to take an SLA with service level credits on all of the above.

# What would you and your senior team do with all the free time?





We are  
Firstsource

and we help organisations offload  
their staffing challenges so they  
can focus on what they do best.



## Our clients value us for:

- Our ability to take on the difficult hiring and scheduling challenges, and fill vacancies twice as quickly as the typical in-house HR function.
- Our willingness to benchmark our agents against their in-house teams and take responsibility for the results.

Our workforce solutions include managed services and contingency resourcing.

We're also a full service Business Process Management (BPM) company that can help with process re-engineering, business transformation, robotic process automation, artificial intelligence, machine learning, analytics, omnichannel technology, and social media CRM.



We provide workforce solutions to RBS, Standard Life and several other financial services companies in the UK.

Currently, we provide over 1,000 FTEs for their contact centres.  
We can do the same for you.

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