

# 2022 agent experience trends report

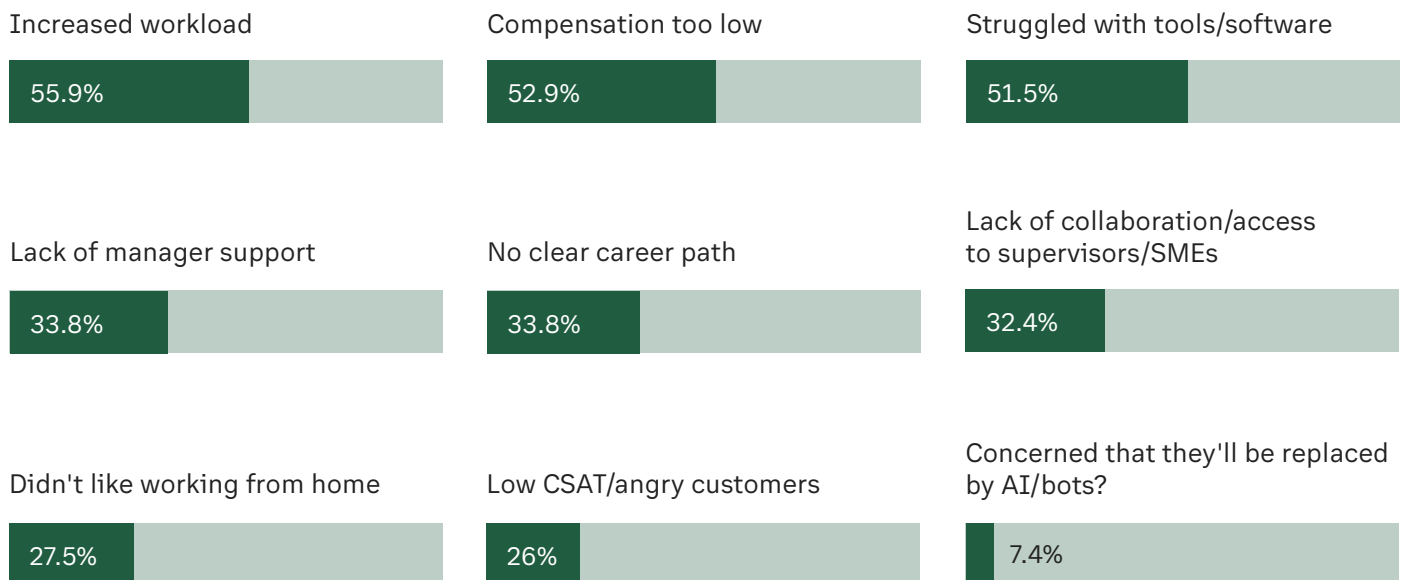


# 2022 agent experience trends report

[RingCentral](#) recently teamed up with [Benchmark Portal](#) to conduct a survey on contact center agent turnover and retention. In the survey, two-thirds of contact center leaders—65.6% of survey respondents—reported an increase in attrition, or agent turnover, over the past two years.

This report will reveal the top three factors of rising attrition rates among contact center agents and explore ways leadership teams can reverse this trend.

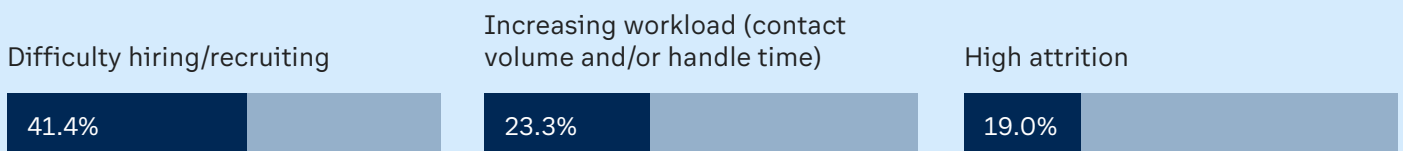
## If your attrition rate was higher, what do you attribute this rise to? (Select top 3)



# Challenge #1: Agents' increased workload

Even prior to the pandemic, customer support agents were overwhelmed by the amount of work CX leadership teams expected them to accomplish daily. Rather than the *quality* of service provided, many contact centers measured “success” by the *quantity* of support tickets completed. And although this model has been slowly changing, most contact center employees still don't consider agents' workloads to be manageable. According to the [2022 Contact Center Challenges and Priority Study](#), contact center team members in all positions state that “increasing workload” is their company's second-biggest challenge at 23.3%—preceded only by “difficulty hiring/recruiting.”

**Figure 1: Biggest challenges.**  
What are your biggest challenges today?



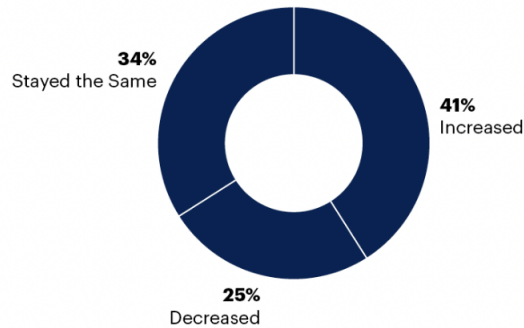
Source: [Contact Center Pipeline](#)

**55.9%**  
of contact center leaders believe agent attrition is due to **increased workload**

Of the customer service and CX leaders RingCentral and Benchmark Portal surveyed, 55.9% of them cited “increased workload” as the main contributor to employee turnover, making it their top factor of agent attrition.

COVID-19 magnified the workload challenges that were already prevalent in contact centers prior to the global shutdown. [Gartner found](#) that in 2020, more than 40% of customer support teams experienced an increase in contact volume compared to their initial 2020 projections.

## Impact of COVID-19 on Customer Service Contact Volumes



n = 106, all respondents, excluding don't know/not applicable  
Source: 2020 Gartner CSS Work From Home Survey, Gartner Research Circle members (CSS) and external sample  
Q: As compared to original projections, have 2020 service contact volumes increased, decreased or stayed the same as a result of the pandemic?  
739749\_C

**Gartner**

Source: [Gartner](#)

## Average handle time

2019  
**545** seconds

2020  
**559** seconds

2021  
**589** seconds

Source: [SQM Group](#)

With more people than ever shopping, communicating, and doing business online, both the volume and handle time of contact center support tickets have increased. According to [SQM Group](#), call centers' [average handle time](#) (AHT) increased by 8% from 2019 to 2021. And customer engagement with service agents hasn't slowed since then—support requests are [up 14% from last year](#).

Rather than restructuring their processes, many contact centers have simply thrown more unnecessary tools and technologies at the problem—which requires agents to not only learn new (potentially ineffective) systems, but also increases the time it takes them to find a solution. If contact center tools are constantly glitching or unable to meet agents' needs, [it can add to employees' frustration](#) and stress levels.

Agent attrition itself plays a major role in the overwhelming workload issue. As more and more agents burn out and leave contact centers for new jobs, CX leadership teams often expect the remaining agents to pick up their slack.

## How you can help your agents' workload issues

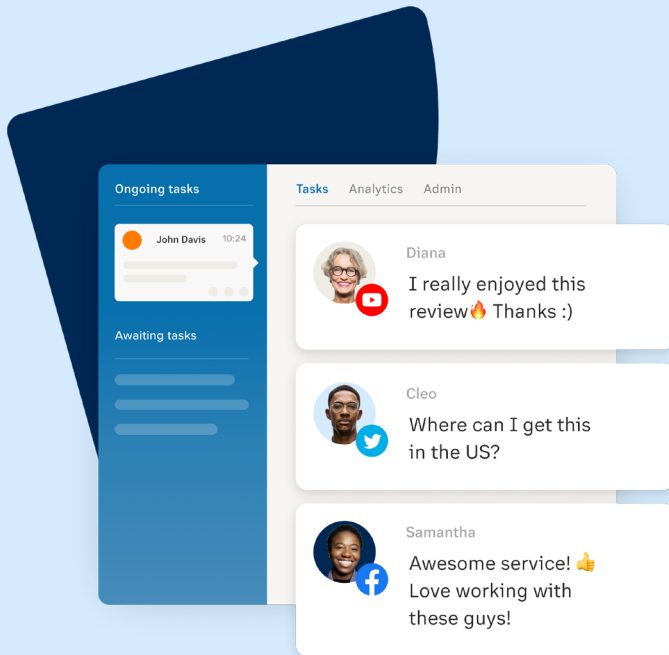
One way to reduce the burden on your employees is to hire more agents—staff your contact center effectively in order to keep up with customer demand. By reducing your agents' workload, you'll likely find it will also increase your customers' satisfaction.

You should also think “digital first.” Improve customers' self-service options to reduce the need for agents to take on repetitive or transactional tasks. Set up automated services—like [IVR](#) and [chatbots](#)—to handle simple customer inquiries.

Empower employees with the knowledge, tools, and support they need to bring out the business value they add to your company. For example, you could track the customer tickets that lead to long resolution times and develop a training program to help agents handle these tickets independently and more efficiently.



# Challenge #2: Agents' difficulty with contact center tools and software



55.1%

of contact center leaders believe agent attrition is due to **difficulties with tools and software**

More than half of those surveyed—51.5% of contact center and CX leaders—said agents' struggle with contact center technology was one of the top three factors of employee attrition.

When support teams have to toggle between multiple tools—or when the tools, themselves, are complicated—it's nearly impossible for agents to find all of a user's relevant and necessary information, collaborate across company teams, and gain a holistic view of the customer.

As reported in CCW's [State of Contact Center Technology](#) market study, nearly 91% of CX leaders are aware that—even when handling “typical” customer interactions—agents are required to access multiple screens, dashboards, systems, and databases.

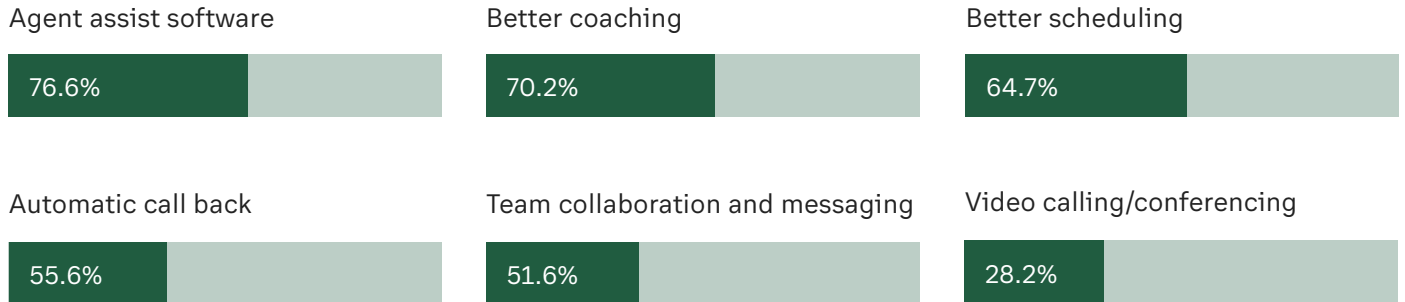
When agents use separate tools for each task, they're likely spending too much time “[context switching](#).” According to a recent [report by Qatalog and Cornell University](#), modern workers spend 36 minutes, on average, switching between applications each day. The report also shows that it takes people an average of 9.5 minutes to get back into a productive workflow once they've switched apps.

RingCentral and Benchmark Portal survey respondents didn't specifically name their technology problems, so it could be anything from old software to insufficient training to too many—or overly complex—tools in their tech stack.

The survey asked respondents, “What tools do you wish your contact center software provided to help agents do a better job and be more satisfied?” The top answer, chosen by 76.6% of CX leaders, was “agent assist software.” CX Today, a U.K.-based tech news site, [defines agent assist software](#) as

“An overlay of productivity tools that sit on top of core contact center processes with the sole intention of simplifying an agent’s everyday workload.”

**What tools do you wish your contact center software provided to help agents do a better job and be more satisfied?**



Many companies aren’t arming agents with all the tools they need to succeed. [CCW’s market study](#) reveals that only 59% of companies believe their technology is at least “somewhat helpful” in empowering agents to do their best work. CCW also shows that more than one-fifth of companies feel at least “somewhat unprepared” for self-service growth and agent-led online interactions.

**From a technology standpoint, how prepared is your contact center/CX function to support/address the following trends?**

- Very unprepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Somewhat unprepared
- Very well prepared
- Neither especially prepared nor unprepared

**Increased demand for self-service**



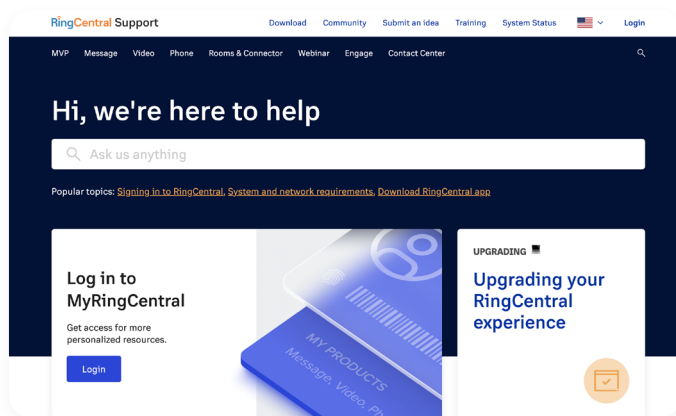
**Increased demand for agent-led digital engagement (chat, messaging, etc.)**



Source: [Customer Contact Week Digital—State of Contact Center Technology](#)

If this seems familiar, it may be time to re-evaluate your training programs, and equip your agents with the knowledge and tools they'll need for a fully omnichannel future.

## How you can help your agents get comfortable with software



RingCentral's customer-facing KMS

[Qatalog and Cornell University's](#) research shows that 69% of those surveyed report that finding the information required to do their jobs is time consuming. And 54% of respondents say that apps can sometimes make it more difficult to find this information.

One helpful tactic for cutting down on the time it takes to find necessary information is to [set up a CRM](#) with single-view dashboards that connect to the rest of your [agents' support stack](#).

Knowledge management is also an essential aspect of your agents'—and your customers'—success. A [knowledge management system](#) (KMS) is designed to help your business catalog and organize important information, so it's easily accessible to internal team members or external customers.

A KMS is any system—like an online resource base or even a CRM platform—that makes teamwork efficient and sharing data simple. According to [ICMI research](#), 98% of KMS users say the tool drives “moderate to significant value” toward achieving their business optimization objectives. Creating and maintaining a KMS is especially important as more agents transition to hybrid work and require new or additional onboarding and training. In addition, the ability to display knowledge articles directly in the agent interface can expedite onboarding, service interactions, and drive first contact resolution improvements.



# Challenge #3: Agents' lack of managerial support



33.8%

of contact center leaders believe agent attrition is due to a lack of manager support

Of the contact center leaders polled, 33.8% say lack of manager support is a top cause for employee attrition. If these are the managers themselves calling out their lack of support as a reason for agent turnover, there seems to be a lot of work to be done in this area.

When agents are already stressed due to increased workloads, trouble with tools and software, and pressure to hit their KPIs, the last thing they need is an unsupportive leader. However, since every manager is different, and issues with leadership members vary from company to company, it's difficult to pinpoint problems that apply to all customer support teams. What does apply to all teams is, though, is a desire for happiness. When leadership teams are more focused on hitting metrics over the quality of their agents' work lives, employees will feel undervalued and underappreciated—which will inevitably, and probably quickly, lead to turnover.

Contact centers had to make an abrupt switch to remote work during the height of the pandemic, and managing a team remotely is an entirely different skill set than managing a team in person. When CX leaders were forced to step into this “new” role, many likely faced a steep learning curve and may not have initially known how to check in with their direct reports while working from home. But even if this was (or is) the case for some managers, they should be as transparent as possible with their employees—and vice versa—to maintain a high-functioning team unit. Especially in the midst of a global crisis.

RingCentral and Benchmark Portal survey data also shows that 69.8% of CX leaders have found that fewer people are entering the field of contact center customer support. When paired with attrition statistics, one can venture to guess that managers are probably dealing with a lot of stress due to understaffing. This stress may cause managers to be unintentionally short

with employees or not have enough time to provide adequate support because they're busy putting out fires across the department.

Lack of support can also be reflected in the absence of timely feedback and coaching.

AI can help provide this to agents and reduce the strain on supervisors through Real-Time Interaction Guidance. It can guide them through every call (not just the ones where a supervisor is listening) to provide soft skill guidance and automated interaction scoring. Agents get timely, actionable feedback in real-time.

COVID-19 has led agents (and employees of all companies) down one of two paths: toward the "[Great Resignation](#)" or toward a more [flexible work environment](#). The latter is an important part of the next section.

Contact centers have historically struggled with high attrition and low employee engagement. In 2015, the average total working population turnover rate was [16.7%](#). In the same year, the average contact center agent turnover rate was [30-45%](#). [According to Gallup](#), "engaged" employees accounted for 36% of the total working population in 2021. In the same year, SQM Group [reported](#) that "engaged" employees accounted for only 10% of the contact center agent population.

But as Justin Robbins, President of Metric Sherpa, writes in RingCentral's "[2022 Guide to Leading an Agent-Centric Contact Center](#)" ebook, "It's time for a renaissance in the contact center and a revitalization of the agent's role."

Contact center leaders need to recognize and minimize burnout in their employees. According to a [Deloitte study](#), nearly 70% of employees feel their company leaders are not doing enough to combat or alleviate burnout within their business. So how do customer support managers turn this around? According to [NICE](#), CX leaders can help [prevent burnout](#) while increasing engagement by:

- Requesting and acting on feedback from team members
- Ensuring agents are clear about their roles, responsibilities, and performance requirements
- Promoting a work/life balance by being flexible about when and where agents work

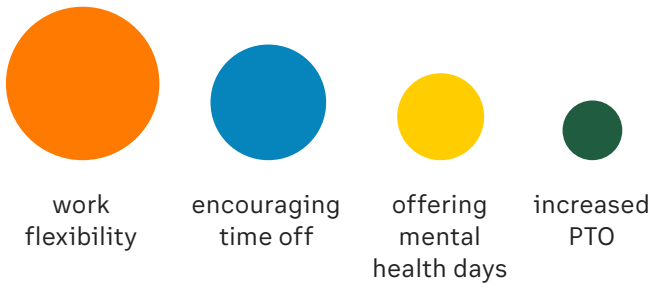
## How you can help your agents understand you have their backs

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 70%

of employees feel their company leaders are not doing enough to combat or alleviate burnout within their business.

## How workplaces can support employees



Source: [FlexJobs](#)

In July of 2020, FlexJobs aligned with Mental Health America (MHA) [to survey](#) more than 1,500 employees in various careers about the state of their well-being and how it could be improved.

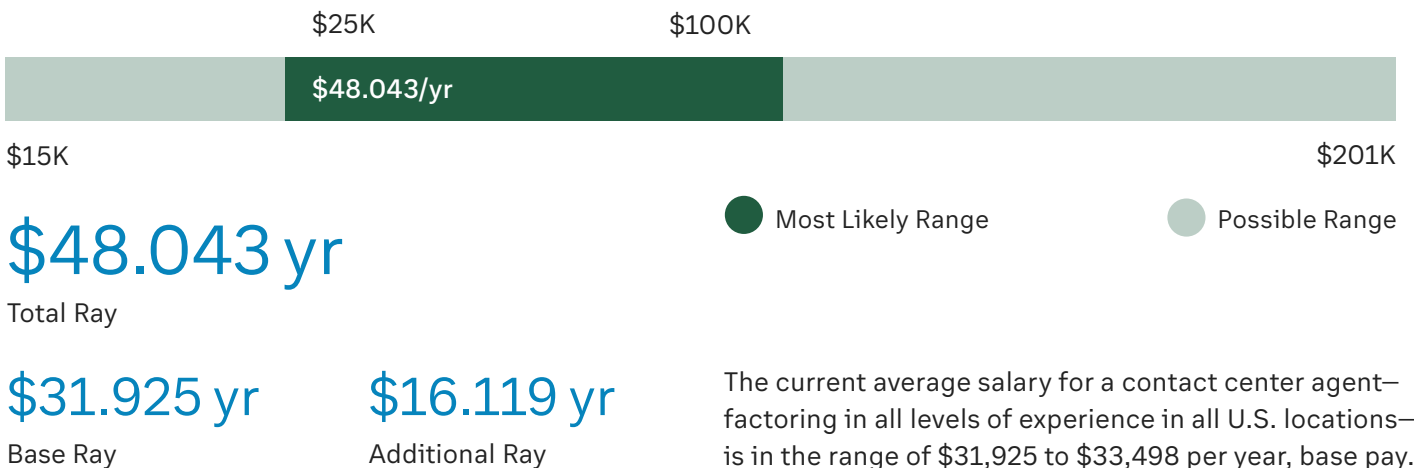
Of those surveyed, 56% responded that the top way their leadership teams could better support them was by providing workplace flexibility. Offering mental health days and encouraging workers to take time off were next, tied at 43%.

## A quick note on agent compensation

Although the survey shows “compensation too low” as the second-highest factor in agent attrition at 52.9%, it’s difficult to provide hard and fast solutions for this issue. Compensation is not one-size-fits-all; agent salaries or hourly rates are dependent on business location, employee experience, company revenue, and other considerations.

If agents are concerned with their compensation, it’s recommended they research the topic. A good place to start is by looking into the national market rate for contact center agents. Employees can also check [Glassdoor](#) and [Indeed](#); they just need to input their levels of experience to view the average salary for people with similar credentials.

## How much does a Contact Center Agent make?



Source: [Glassdoor](#)

The current average salary for a contact center agent—factoring in all levels of experience in all U.S. locations—is in the range of \$31,925 to \$33,498 per year, base pay.

## Make work easier for agents with the right contact center software

[Blair Pleasant](#), President & Principal Analyst at COMMFusion and Co-founder of BCStrategies, says, “Don’t forget about the agent experience, especially in light of the ‘great resignation.’ Make sure you take care of your agents and give them the tools they need to not only be effective and productive but also engaged and empowered.”

An agent-centric leader is dedicated to improving and automating processes in order to empower agents and instill a sense of pride and purpose in their work. RingCentral provides the technology you need to support and engage your agents—which, in turn, helps your team [deliver better customer experiences](#).



“Don't go back to the old way of doing things once the pandemic is over. Empathy and personalized experiences will remain important going forward. And don't forget about the agent experience, especially in light of the “great resignation”. Make sure you take care of your agents and give them the tools they need to not only be effective and productive but also engaged and empowered.”

– **Blair Pleasant**  
President & Principal Analyst at COMMFusion,  
Co-Founder of BCStrategies

Source: [Fonolo](#)

# About RingCentral

RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE: RNG) is a leading provider of business cloud communications and contact center solutions based on its powerful Message Video Phone™ (MVP™) global platform. More flexible and cost effective than legacy on-premises PBX and video conferencing systems that it replaces, RingCentral empowers modern mobile and distributed workforces to communicate, collaborate, and connect via any mode, any device, and any location. RingCentral offers three key products in its portfolio including RingCentral MVP™, a unified communications as a service (UCaaS) platform including team messaging, video meetings, and a cloud phone system; RingCentral Video®, the company's video meetings solution with team messaging that enables Smart Video Meetings™; and RingCentral cloud Contact Center solutions. RingCentral's open platform integrates with leading third-party business applications and enables customers to easily customize business workflows. RingCentral is headquartered in Belmont, California, and has offices around the world.

For more information, please contact a sales representative.

Visit [ringcentral.com](https://ringcentral.com) or call 877-596-2939.