



Contact Centre Careers



Why would I want to begin my career in a Contact Centre?

The contact centre industry is simply huge. With around 10,500 call centres throughout the UK employing over 800,000 people opportunities to forge a career within this industry are excellent – especially in South Wales.

Generating over £400m for the Welsh economy each year, the [contact centre industry in Wales](#) employs around 30,000 people with South Wales having one of the largest concentrations of contact centres in the whole of the UK – second only to the Glasgow-Edinburgh corridor. As such it remains one of the leading providers of employment opportunities in the region.

Contact centres – or ‘call centres’ as they used to be known are the central point of contact for an organisation to communicate with its customers. These could be commercial organisations such as banks, mail order companies and other retailers to charities, advisory services and local or national government bodies such as the DVLA or NHS Direct.

The industry is fast paced and growing both here in Wales and the rest of the UK, despite the move by many large-scale organisations to relocate their centres overseas.

What are the common career paths in Contact Centre?

The most [common role](#) that entrants into the contact centre industry take is that of Call Centre Operator – sometimes referred to as Sales Support or Sales Advisor. It is their job to maintain contact with the organisations customers via the telephone, email, SMS messaging, fax and post, either to sell goods or services, or provide information and advice.

For the most part your role will see you involved in all aspects of customer management such as dealing with inbound or outbound sales orders for goods or services, handling enquiries and complaints, or providing advice. In practice this could include cold calling potential customers to generate leads, direct selling, responding to incoming enquiries or conducting market research for clients.

Your next move up the ladder could see you progress into a supervisory role such as Team Leader then into management, where you will be leading a small team of agents. And being a growing

industry there are opportunities to move into senior management roles such as Contact Centre Manager or Operations Director.

What qualifications are important in Contact Centre?

According to a 2010 report produced by Top 50 Call Centres for Customer Service, around 35% of call centre workers are degree qualified, demonstrating the increasing appeal of the industry and contradicting the sometimes negative connotations associated with a contact centre career. However, this is one of the few careers that don't demand a degree as a condition of entry.

A number of employers provide work-based or 'on the job' training programmes but to get your foot in the door they will be looking for candidates with a range of skills, including:

- Good key board skills
- Excellent customer care skills and personal empathy
- Clear telephone voice
- Good communications skills – both written and verbal
- Ability to work on your own initiative and as part of a team
- Ability to work well under pressure and to meet deadlines

If you have ambitions to progress through the organisation there are an increasing number of Certificate, Diploma and Degree-level courses – many of which your employer may fund – in Call Centre Management. These are often available through distance or web-based learning and whilst not mandatory, the more professional accreditations you have to your name the greater your chances of moving up through the ranks.

What makes a good Contact Centre CV?

It is often said that the process of getting a job is a job in itself. And one of the most important stages of this process is preparing your CV. But with employers typically taking less than 30 seconds to consider your application, you need to ensure that the information included matches their requirements and is specific to the advertised role.

Don't get hung up on your abundance or lack of academic credentials on your CV because whether you went to university or not the thing that will really get you noticed is your previous experience. Any previous, relevant experience that you have will be crucial to your application, and the more of it you have the better.

If you are new to the contact centre industry highlights all the roles you may have held previously that have involved dealing with customers, whether paid or unpaid. Then think about what you did

that made a difference in each role and times when the lime-light shone on you for what you achieved.

For instance, perhaps you reduced call-waiting times by 10% which meant you could serve an extra 5 customers each day. Or maybe you won an award for outstanding customer service? Achievements are what makes you stand out from the crowd – the things that you have done in your professional life that have made a real difference to the organisation and offer a potential employer a taste of what you could do for their business.

What should I expect during the job interview process?

Being invited to an interview means that you have staved off competition from dozens of other hopefuls and are now down to the final few to be considered for the advertised job. In general, contact centre employers run an assessment centre where you will be surrounded by other candidates. But don't panic. It probably won't be as bad you think and you may even enjoy it.

During the process you will probably take part in a programme of tasks designed to test your skills and abilities that are required for the job role, such as problem-solving, communication or analytical skills. This may include group exercises, interviews, presentations, in-tray exercises, personality tests or case-studies. And be prepared for the interviewer to test you on the things you claim you can do on your CV.

Or instance, if you claim that you are good at solving problems for customers the interviewer is likely to present a hypothetical situation or ask you to describe a time when you have used your problem solving skills. So before the interview, think of a time when you have encountered a difficult situation, the steps you took to resolve it, the eventual outcome and the lessons you learnt from the experience.

Accepting the job offer

Interviews are a two-way street where you need to determine if the company is right for you in the same way that they want to find out if you are right for them. So you need to ask your own questions about the organisation, the job itself, training opportunities - and then you can decide if the employer is positioned to meet *your* expectations

For details on the latest contact centre vacancies in South Wales, [click here](#).
