

A woman with dark, wavy hair is smiling and wearing a black headset with a microphone. She is in a call center setting, with other employees and computer monitors visible in the blurred background. The lighting is bright and professional.

**8x8**

# **The Ultimate Guide to Contact Center Hiring**

Tools, Templates, and Data for  
Contact Center Hiring Managers

# Introduction



Every fall, [the International Customer Management Institute \(ICMI\)](#) surveys their audience of contact center leaders to ask about their top challenges and priorities for the coming year. One thing that never seems to change? Hiring always ranks as a top-three challenge. And in today's strong economy and robust job market, it's a concern for most industries. To win the war for talent, contact centers must have a strategic, organized plan of action. This guide will provide just that.

If you're a hiring manager who plans to staff up in the year ahead, this guide will help you write better job descriptions and arm you with salary data you can use to make more informed recruiting decisions. This resource is filled with templates

and practical examples that will also help inform the interview and selection process. We've even included an onboarding checklist you can use to set your new employees up for success.

We recommend reading through this guide, taking notes, printing off templates, and sharing the insight with your team. Hiring is one of the most critical components of building and sustaining a positive, customer-centric culture. Are you ready to make sure your contact center masters hiring in 2020 and beyond? Let's begin with step one: the job post.

## Step #1

## Creating the Job Post and Determining Salary Range



I noticed that the dynamic range between what an average person could accomplish and what the best person could accomplish was 50 or 100 to 1. Given that, you're well-advised to go after the cream of the cream. A small team of A+ players can run circles around a giant team of B and C players.

— Steve Jobs

If you want to recruit outstanding employees to join your team, it all starts with the right job description. Without a good handle on this part of the process, subsequent steps are more likely to fail. Your job postings should serve as the foundation for your hiring, onboarding, and retention efforts. Not only should they act as an internal guide for defining roles, responsibilities, and success, they're also the "face" of your brand to prospective employees. And with millions of job postings currently open on the Internet, it's crucial to structure yours in the most concise, effective way possible. Here are some things to consider as you begin writing or revising your descriptions.

**General rules:**

- 1. Start with a strong job title/headline.** While it's a good idea to use brand language and tone, keep in mind standard search terms that job seekers will use to find your posting. Often, less is more. While "director of first impressions" might have a nice ring to it, it will likely get far fewer applicants than simple, more commonly used, and accurately descriptive terms like receptionist, administrative assistant, or customer service representative.
- 2. Be honest about the scope of the role, and share only the relevant details.** The job description is not the place to share a lengthy company history. Use the posting to share in detailed, but concise terms, precisely what the role will entail. It's a good rule of thumb to begin the posting with an introductory summary paragraph, and then whittle down the critical responsibilities to around five bullet points.

3. **Share the salary range up front.** Many job seekers will not apply to jobs that don't disclose this information, and being honest from the start helps avoid wasted time on both sides.
4. **Have someone proofread the posting before it goes live!** Preferably, someone who's familiar with your brand voice and guidelines. Job listings are an extension of your brand, and you should treat them as such.

Are you looking for specific guidance on creating effective job postings for contact center roles? Here's an example of a job posting for contact center agents. Use this as a guide, then use the blank template to draft descriptions for other roles in your contact center.

## Contact Center Agent

**Other commonly used terms:** Customer service agent, call center agent, customer service representative, call center representative, customer care representative, customer care agent.

## Sample job posting:

### Customer Care Representative/Call Center Agent Company XYZ Provo, UT

Company XYZ, a leader in the online wellness industry, is currently hiring customer service agents in Provo, Utah. Our mission is to inspire healthier communities by providing the tools, resources, and support our customers need to take better care of themselves—mentally, physically, and emotionally. We're looking for candidates who can help us achieve that mission. If you're passionate about serving others, have natural problem-solving abilities, and a positive attitude, we want to hear from you!

This position will work Monday–Friday from 9:00–6:00 ET in our Westbanks campus.

**Key responsibilities:**

- Respond to incoming customer calls, helping customers resolve issues in a timely, empathetic, professional, and courteous manner. Average calls per agent, per day: 50
- Utilize critical thinking and active listening skills to identify and proactively address customer issues that may arise after the initial call
- Accurately log notes from each call and add them to the customer relationship management software
- Communicate with empathy, building rapport with customers, and helping them feel confident that they're receiving the best information
- Act as an ambassador of Company XYZ, upholding our mission, vision, and values during every customer interaction

**Requirements for this position:**

- One year of experience in a customer-facing service role
- High school diploma or GED
- Successful completion of a background check
- Three professional references
- High-level of emotional intelligence and attention to detail

**Preferred experience:**

- Experience in the healthcare field and/or a passion for wellness
- Proficiency with Salesforce
- 4-year college degree

**Starting salary:** \$14.50/hour

**Benefits:** Two weeks PTO, five sick days, plus health insurance after six months of employment for employees working 30+ hours per week

## Blank template to use for other roles:

**[Job Title]**

**[Company Name]**

**[Location]**

[Introductory paragraph describing the open role and how it fits into the company mission.]

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Feature A
- Feature B
- Feature C

### **Requirements for this Position:**

- Feature A
- Feature B
- Feature C

### **Preferred Experience:**

- Feature A
- Feature B
- Feature C

### **Starting Salary:**

### **Benefits:**





## Determining Salary: Guidance by Role

Establishing the salary for any role is a critical determining factor of recruiting success—especially in a tight labor market. We recommend turning to the data.

Free tools like [Payscale](#) offer a wealth of valuable information you can use to make sound decisions about the salary ranges for your open positions. You can also use the tool to factor in other considerations, including location and years of experience, to ensure you're offering competitive wages. Bear in mind—averages are just that. The average salary for a call center employee in San Francisco or New York will be much higher than that of an employee based in Columbus, OH.

In the meantime, here are some general role-based averages for the most common contact center job openings.

- Call Center Agent Average Salary: \$12.71/hour
- Call Center Team Lead Average Salary: \$16.55/hour
- Call Center Supervisor Average Salary: \$47,140/year
- Call Center Manager Average Salary: \$57,532
- Call Center Director Average Salary: \$90,873

## Step #2

# Reviewing the Applicants and Narrowing the Field



The smartest business decision you can make is to hire qualified people. Bringing the right people on board saves you thousands, and your business will run smoothly and efficiently.

— Brian Tracy

You've polished your job postings, distributed them to the masses, and the applicants are rolling into your center. Now what? The next step is to review the applicants and narrow down the field to a few candidates who you'll invite to participate in the interview process. Before you do that, it's essential to make sure that everyone who's part of the hiring process is acting from a place of objectivity. Bias is human nature, and it inevitably seeps into the hiring process. To minimize its impacts and to make the interview and selection process as effective and productive as possible, consider developing a rubric that evaluates applicants against the skills and traits they'll need to excel in the role.

Here are six things to consider as you're developing your rubric and beginning to review applications:

1. Looking for detail-oriented employees? Pay attention to the details! Did they follow the application instructions? Is their resume free of typos? Consider their level of professionalism and attention to detail as you're scoring their resume and their responses to any application questions.
2. Make sure every person who's reviewing applications is using the same rubric and scoring scale. When possible, use a basic five-point scale for clarity and ease of use.
3. New to using rubrics during the hiring process? Make sure all stakeholders understand why it's important to follow the

more objective, structured process, and hold everyone accountable for following the process. Provide clear examples of what you’re looking for in applications and resumes so that reviewers can score consistently.

- 4. When establishing the core team who will review applicants and narrow down the field, make sure to have diverse representation. It’s a good idea to include the hiring manager, along with one to two employees who currently serve in the role for which you’ll be hiring.
- 5. Ensure that before applications are passed on for review, they’re stripped of identifying information regarding name, age, race, or gender. This helps to limit any unintentional bias during the initial selection process.
- 6. Consider adding a brief work sample exercise to the application. The task need not be complicated or time-consuming to complete or review. For an agent role, for example, consider a mock call recording assignment, or have applicants respond to a mock social media post or two. If your employees will be expected to provide written responses to customers, be sure to assess their writing and critical reading abilities.

Sample rubric for resume and application reviewers:

Scoring scale: 1–5 (per application question)

This applicant thoroughly answered the question in a way that demonstrates they’re capable of performing this role well.

- 1. Strongly disagree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Agree
- 5. Strongly agree

Resume Score: 1–5

- 1. Very poor
- 2. Below average
- 3. Fair
- 4. Satisfactory
- 5. Outstanding

Overall impression score: 1–5

- 1. Definitely would not pass this candidate on to the interview round
- 2. Probably would not pass this candidate on to the interview round
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Would probably pass on to the interview round
- 5. Would definitely pass on to the interview round

**Instructions:** Tally up all the scores for each application question and add in the overall impression and resume scores and bring in the top five highest-scoring candidates for interview rounds.

A smiling man in a grey suit, blue shirt, and blue tie is shaking hands with another person whose arm is visible in the foreground. The background is a blurred office setting.

## Step #3

# Preparing for and Conducting Interviews

What are the top three to five predictors of success for the role in which you're hiring? If you're hiring for new customer service agents, it's a good idea to talk to supervisors, current high-performing agents, and former agents who've moved up the ranks. Develop a list of the common characteristics that the most successful agents shared. Be sure your interview questions help you assess whether candidates possess these skills/traits. For the sake of fairness, be sure to develop a set of standard interview questions. It's much harder to score and assess candidates objectively if every candidate is asked a different set of questions.

"I have found that nearly all of the companies I have worked for have put zero effort in

trying to determine the efficacy of their questions and desired responses," says contact center leader [Matt Beckwith](#). "My team and I have created a very effective set of questions for agents, but they are effective because we determined what things are important to succeed in this role."

Quick tips for conducting successful interviews:

- Consider using video. Especially when hiring for remote roles, video can bridge the gap between phone and in-person. And when scheduling/time zones are a challenge for team members who are conducting the interviews, video meetings offer a simple, time-saving option.

- Make sure all interviewers have access to the candidates' resume and application ahead of time. Provide interviewers with a list of questions, along with a rubric to complete post-interview.
- Ensure all interviewers are using the same standardized questions for each applicant. It's okay for different interviewers to ask different questions, but make sure each applicant answers the same questions.

## The interview: sample questions and rubric

Ready to conduct interviews? We've compiled eight sample questions to consider when interviewing candidates for a contact center agent, supervisor, or manager role. Many of these questions are favorites of leaders and hiring managers who are in the trenches.

### 8 Examples of interview questions for common contact center roles

1. Tell me about a time you experienced bad customer service. Follow-up questions: how did you feel about it? How did you feel about the person providing the service? How did you respond? —Via Matt Beckwith, Blogger for [ContactCenterGeek](#) & Steering Committee Member for the [Northern California Contact Center Association](#)
2. Can you tell us about a time when you overheard a team member provide inaccurate information to a customer or colleague? How did you handle that situation? —Via [Chris Hanna](#), Founder, [Evolving Management](#)
3. Tell me about an idea you brought forward to help improve the customer experience. —Via [Chris Hanna](#), Founder, [Evolving Management](#)
4. If you were the successful candidate for this position, what do you foresee to be the most challenging part of the role, initially? —Via [Chris Hanna](#), Founder, [Evolving Management](#)



5. In terms of company culture, what are the non-negotiables you need to feel engaged, aligned, and charged up about coming into work on a Monday? —Via [Chris Hanna](#), Founder, [Evolving Management](#)
6. When greeting a customer on the phone, what's one non-verbal technique you can use to project a friendly tone? —Via [Jacob Shields](#), Senior Contact Center Manager, CCI Systems
7. Can you tell me about a time you experienced great customer service? What made it great? —[Patrick Russell](#), Director of Product Marketing, 8x8
8. What are your writing strengths and weaknesses? —[Leslie O'Flahavan](#), Principal, [E-WRITE](#) (This is a helpful question when interviewing employees who will support customers via email, chat, or social media)

### Contact Center Supervisor/Manager

1. When evaluating an employee or team members' performance, what factors are most important to you? —Via [Chris Hanna](#), Founder, [Evolving Management](#)
2. What strategies would you use to ensure a good relationship with remote team members? —Via [Chris Hanna](#), Founder, [Evolving Management](#)
3. Have you ever been overloaded with work? How do you keep track of work so that it gets done on time? —Via [Chris Hanna](#), Founder, [Evolving Management](#)
4. Give me an example of when you identified an issue (process, tools, policy) and developed a solution that helped improve the performance of the team. —Via [Chris Hanna](#), Founder, [Evolving Management](#)
5. Tell us about a time when you had multiple tasks assigned and not enough time to complete them all within the available time. How did you handle it? —Via [Chris Hanna](#), Founder, [Evolving Management](#)
6. Some people work best as part of a group —others prefer the role of an individual contributor. How would you describe yourself? Give an example of a situation where you felt you were most effective. —Via [Chris Hanna](#), Founder, [Evolving Management](#)
7. When you have difficulty persuading someone to your point of view, what do you do? Give an example. —Via [Chris Hanna](#), Founder, [Evolving Management](#)
8. Has there ever been a time when you did not agree with your leadership about a policy or decision? If so, how did you voice your opinion? —Via [Jacob Shields](#), Senior Contact Center Manager, CCI Systems

## Sample rubric for scoring interviewees

### Scoring scale: 1–5 (per interview question)

This candidate answered the question thoroughly, articulately, and in a way that suggests they'll be successful in the role.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

### Overall impression score: 1–5

1. I definitely would not hire this candidate
2. I probably would not hire this candidate
3. I have mixed feelings about this candidate
4. I probably would hire this candidate
5. I definitely would hire this candidate





## Notes/Observations:

### Total Score:

**Instructions:** Tally up all the scores for each interview question and add in the overall impression score to come up with a total score. Average each interviewer's scores for each candidate to determine overall rankings. It's also a good practice to include examples of what a 1,2,3,4, or 5 answer might look like, specific to the questions you'll be asking and scoring. Be sure to provide guidance on the types of answers you're looking for, so everyone who's part of the interview process is on the same page.

## Step #4

## Making the Offer and Onboarding



“Employee orientation centers around and exists to help the individual employee, but it is the company that ultimately reaps the benefits of this practice.”

— Michael Watkins,  
Author of *The First 90 Days*

You’ve polished your job descriptions, marketed them to the best possible pool of candidates, conducted internal reviews and interviews, and found the perfect new team member. Now you can sit back and relax for a bit and celebrate the fruits of your labor, right? Not so fast! Closing the loop is one of the most often overlooked but most critical parts of the hiring process. You can hire the best possible candidates, but without a careful strategy for onboarding, you’ll have a hard time retaining them and setting them up for success. What are some critical considerations for the time that comes between the offer and an employees’ first 90-days? Use this checklist as a guide for refining or establishing an effective onboarding program.

### Checklist for a 90-Day New Hire Onboarding Plan

#### Before the first day

- Send the new hire a welcome letter and package. Be sure to include all the instructions they’ll need for a stress-free first-day. Share their week-one agenda, dress code, access instructions, etc.
- Collect all required paperwork to ensure a strong start. Day one is not the time to collect payroll information, set up an email address, etc. Do your homework so employees can start day one with access to every system they’ll need to do their jobs well

- If the role includes benefits, be sure to share as many of those details as possible in advance, so new hires have the chance to review their options before they're asked to make selections
- Share a copy of the employee handbook
- Assign an internal buddy for the new hire. This person should be a peer who will help the new hire navigate their first month of employment

### First day

- Have the hiring manager greet the new hire in the lobby when they arrive for their first day. Show them to their desk, and introduce them to their onboarding buddy; have the buddy give them a tour of the office—including break rooms, restrooms, work areas, printers, etc.
- Have new hire complete an onboarding session with HR to go over system access, benefits, company policies, and more
- Have the onboarding buddy take the new hire to lunch/eat together onsite

- Schedule time for the hiring manager to meet with the new hire towards the end of the day to answer any outstanding questions and review the agenda for the remainder of the week

### First week

- Allow the new hire to meet with key company executives and learn more about the overall company strategy and mission
- Introduce the new hire to the peers with whom they'll be working most closely
- Schedule time to go over key expectations for the first 90-days, including any business or personal objectives
- Have the new hire shadow someone else in their role for a day, then begin to complete pertinent training for their role

### First 30 days

- Wrap-up initial training and have the new employee complete any necessary assessments before they start to work independently





- Schedule a lunch with the onboarding buddy towards the end of the first 30-days; encourage the new employee to ask any questions they may have after a few weeks on the job
- Schedule a 30-day check-in meeting with the direct supervisor. Review progress to date, refine 60 and 90-day goals as needed

### **First 60 days**

- Schedule a 60-day check-in meeting with the direct supervisor. Review progress to date and refine any forward-facing goals as needed
- Invite the new employee to sit-in on a strategy/planning meeting
- Set aside one day for the new employee to shadow another department in the organization. Have them present their learnings during a team meeting

### **First 90 days**

- Deploy a brief engagement survey to assess the new employees' thoughts on the first 90-days at the company, identify opportunities for onboarding improvements, and set a benchmark for engagement
- Schedule a skip-level meeting between the new employee and their supervisors' boss. Use this as a time to gather feedback about areas for process improvement and to start a career development conversation
- Schedule a 90-day review with direct supervisor

## Bringing it all together

Sourcing and hiring the right team members is no easy task, but with the right structures and processes in place, it's possible to turn your contact center into a fine-tuned hiring machine. Having the right employees in place will strengthen your contact center, allowing you to better position your business against the competition. But while hiring is one of the most critical components of delivering an exceptional customer experience, even the best employees can only do so much without the right resources. 8x8 Contact Center can help. Arm your talent with a full suite of customer care features, all designed to enable better collaboration and outstanding customer service.

[Learn more](#) or call 1-833-208-0593 to speak with a specialist.

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