

As a result of the recent COVID-19 health scare, many contact centers are transitioning to an at-home set up in addition to preparing to handle an influx in calls as economic and consumer uncertainty grows. Getting these plans in place now can save you time, & headaches, later.

Here is a checklist to assess your COVID-19 readiness:



PREVENTION

With more people in front of screens than normal, even for Millennials, **it's clear COVID-19 will drive digital transformation.** Seize the opportunity as a strategic business initiative.

- Actively encourage sick employees to stay at home.**
Any employee that has symptoms that may relate to those of COVID-19 as noted by CDC guidelines should be highly encouraged to stay at home. This may require a **review of your company's sick leave policies** and require adjustments to accommodate the possibility of an increase in ill patients. If possible, create a back-up plan of potential agents to backfill any missing agents.
- Separate and inform potentially sick employees.**
If employees who exhibit illness cannot be sent home/must remain at work, adjust your floor plan to meet the CDC's guidelines of 6 feet separation. In addition, **conduct training and increase/encourage awareness regarding personal hygiene** and etiquette (e.g. covering noses and mouths with a tissue or shoulder/elbow when coughing /sneezing).
- Perform routine environment cleaning.**
The spread of COVID-19 appears to be especially rapid due to the virus's ability to remain active on surfaces for extended periods of time. Routinely clean high touch areas in your workspace such as doorknobs, handles, keyboards, etc and provide readily available disposable wipes and hand sanitizer.

For more information on how to prepare your workplace, you can [check out the CDC's guidelines here.](#)



STAFFING

With more people working at home, business is anything but usual for contact centers experiencing record levels of inbound calls. For outbound-centric contact centers, the ability to continue with engagement efforts may be especially difficult as shelter in place orders may prevent agents from even coming into the office entirely and indefinitely.

Equipping agents to work from home during this period may be the most effective approach but can present unique challenges. **Here are a few best practices to consider when shifting to at-home agents:**

- ✓ **Create new policy and compliance guides.**
Set expectations early and often when transitioning to an at-home agent model. Communicate what success looks like, Consider providing your employees a checklist much like this one that outlines the appropriate compliance and security policies that will govern their new working environment.
- ✓ **Review, train and test the skills of your agents.**
Some agents may be better suited to work from home than others. **Review your team and select those that you think would operate best** in an at-home model. Train and test these select agents in a separate at-home area and discuss an optimal place within the agent's home where they can work.
- ✓ **Get the infrastructure in place to remote work.**
Determine if your agents have **access to high-speed internet and, ideally, a corporate VPN.** However, even without a VPN, agents can work in a modified manner. Review your company's data access policies and adjust your agent's desktop exposure accordingly.
- ✓ **Ensure agents have the right equipment for at-home work.**
Send agent's home with headsets, laptops, monitors, etc. and any other supplies they may need. Run several audio quality tests with your at-home agents to simulate what your customers will likely experience.
- ✓ **Enable remote call & screen monitoring, scripting, and other Quality Management Tools**
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REDUCE AGENT-ASSISTED CALL VOLUME

Consumers are going to have a lot of questions as the economic impact of this crisis takes hold. This is especially true within the insurance and financial services sectors. Your call queues will certainly be impacted and with available agent-time reduced you should shift to digital channels to make sure you're ready.

- ✓ **Rely on mobile and digital channels.**
Field commonly asked questions or route simple service requests through webchat.
- ✓ **Get proactive with email campaigns.**
Alert customers quickly in a rapidly changing environment and get anticipatory about their needs.
- ✓ **Consider adopting additional channels if you don't have them already.**
SMS continues to grow as the top channel of choice, especially in challenging times. Review your engagement strategies and consider incorporating or expanding beyond voice, webchat, and email.

While the vast majority of contact centers remain brick and mortar operations, there has been a steady increase in the shift to remote agents. Cloud technology has been at the forefront of this shift and will continue enabling contact center operators to adjust their businesses in these trying times. **To learn more, please contact us at info@livevox.com.**