



# PLACING ADVISOR WELLBEING AT THE TOP OF THE CONTACT CENTRE AGENDA

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# INTRODUCTION

As brands focus increasingly on digital transformation and optimising customer engagement through the adoption of AI and automation technologies, there has been a fundamental shift in the nature of today's contact centre advisor role.

With automation and technology now handling a growing proportion of repetitive, simpler tasks, advisors are being left to handle only the more urgent, complex and emotional customer journey interactions.

This has seen average interaction handling times increase, with advisors having to adjust to a workload of non-stop, high-intensity engagement.

Not surprisingly, this is placing huge pressures on advisors – leading to greater levels of burnout, absenteeism and presenteeism – and, inevitably, higher attrition rates.

That's why it's essential that, as we rush to transform our customer service operations and secure the benefits of innovation, we don't overlook the significant impact that they are having on the CX world's #1 asset – your people.

And with advisor attrition remaining at worrying levels across Europe, it's clear that nurturing positive mental health and wellbeing has never been more important. CX leaders need to become advocates for positive mental health and wellbeing across their contact centre workforce.

There also needs to be an emphasis on a new generation of solutions and services that can measure mental wellbeing in the workplace, recognise warning signs, and also helping organisations to address any pressure points quickly.

This has to be more than just another HR tick-box exercise. Poor mental wellbeing undermines your CX strategy and, with 40% of advisor attrition directly linked to burnout, it's also proving unacceptably costly for both individual brands and the wider economy.



# TRANSFORMATIONAL CX IS HAVING A DIRECT IMPACT ON AGENT WELLBEING

It's clear that there's strong enthusiasm among CX leaders for digital-first engagement and the increased deployment of AI and automation tools, although factors such as advisor attrition show that it can also have a mixed impact on agents.

First the good news. With fewer routine calls to handle, as well as access to better information and customer insight to help them manage and close interactions, advisors now have access to tools that can accelerate the delivery of excellent customer experiences. The development of digital and AI-enabled innovation - backed by the transition to the cloud - also opens up potential new role opportunities, with some advisors getting involved in shaping the development and ongoing training of conversational AI and chatbot solutions.

However, as we rush to transform our customer service operations and secure the benefits of these innovations, it's all too easy to overlook the effect they are cumulatively having on your people – the key Human Service element of any CX strategy. Key challenges here include:



## CONTACT CENTRES ARE PUSHING AGENTS TO THEIR LIMITS

Whether it's the complexity and back-to-back regime of calls, under-resourcing, constant monitoring, verbal abuse, heightened consumer expectations, or the constant demands of being a brand ambassador, contact centre agents typically work under extreme pressure. **Indeed 87% of advisors report high or very high stress levels at their contact centres.** Burnout occurs when advisors feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained and unable to meet constant demands.



## UNSUSTAINABLE LEVELS OF CONTACT CENTRE AGENT ATTRITION

Recruiting and retaining customer service advisors is one of the key challenges faced by contact centre leaders, with average advisor attrition across Europe according to Contact Babel currently around 20%. It's a major problem for operators, with Sabio Research suggesting that annual attrition effectively costs a 500-seat contact centre almost £1m to replace and train advisors – in addition to its impact on the customer experience and brand loyalty. Research also suggests that highly **stressed advisors are 36%** more likely to leave than their lower stressed colleagues.



## CUMULATIVE PRESSURE OF INTENSE MEASUREMENT OF CONTACT CENTRE AGENTS

While the advisor and performance metrics currently gathered might be great for finding out what advisors do all day, it's rare for CX leaders to track how agents are feeling, their state of mental wellbeing, or to identify what could be done to help them do their job better and more productively.

The impact of such a sustained workload of challenging interactions is placing too much stress on advisors. It's time for CX innovation to reach inwards into the contact centre to support advisors with their more complex roles.

# PUTTING YOUR PEOPLE FIRST WITH HUMAN SERVICE

Standard contact centre performance metrics often miss the full picture, focusing on traditional measures and generally capturing only a snapshot in time. That's why it's so important to understand demand, involve advisors in planning, re-train people where necessary, and also adjust advisor shifts to adapt to higher mental loads and call AHT. Sabio works closely with clients to help them monitor Advisor Wellbeing and develop strategies to help identify and resolve process frustrations that impact advisor stress levels. Examples include:

## GIVING ADVISORS MUCH MORE CONTROL OVER THEIR WORKING LIVES AT ALLIANZ DIRECT

Working with Sabio and using Twilio's disruptive Flex contact centre platform has enabled Allianz Direct to introduce contact centre innovation at a revolutionary pace. The company's agile model now gives advisors much more control and choice over their working lives – evidenced by sickness rates dropping from 13% before the transformation to just 3% after. A key part of this change has been a determination to give advisors the flexibility and tools they need to deliver on the company's customer commitments.

“

Our advisors can choose how they can make the best contribution, whether that's handling calls, supporting social interactions, managing chat sessions or supporting operational tasks.”

– Head of Operations, Allianz Direct

## HOW ADVISORS HELPED TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN AGENT CHARTER AT MONEYBARN

Moneybarn, the UK's leading lender of specialist car, van and motorbike finance has been recognised as one of the UK's best workplaces. For Moneybarn it was really important that advisors were able to own the feedback process. Their team was encouraged to develop their own agent charter based on key values and behaviours.

“

Sabio provides the expertise and CX solutions we need to respond to the ever-changing needs of our customers. Advisors are at the heart of this process, understanding clearly how our core Moneybarn values and behaviours map directly on to their own activities.”

– Sam Wooller, Customer Experience Communications Manager, Moneybarn

## PROVIDING ADVISORS WITH NEW LEVELS OF CUSTOMER DEMAND INSIGHT AT HOMESERVE

HomeServe is now routing 70% of its total call traffic through its AI bot – handling 6,000 calls a day with an intent accuracy of around 94%. And while HomeServe was confident that most UK Customers would be happy to use the new solution, there still needed to be options for those people who would prefer to speak with a contact centre agent.

“

With Conversational AI's ability to categorise over 150 separate customer intents, our UK CX teams has gained new levels of insight into the issues driving customer demand.”

– Phil Jordan, Head of Contact Channel Automation, HomeServe

# EMPOWERING ADVISORS WITH A DYNAMIC SCIENCE-BASED WELLBEING PLATFORM

With the increased use of transformative technology to support different aspects of the customer journey, there's a real risk that your agents can get left behind. While many organisations have mastered their technology stack, some still struggle to deploy solutions that can successfully blend and balance technology with human talent.

Recognising that nurturing positive mental health and wellbeing has never been more important. Sabio offers a range of solutions from dedicated apps that focus on measuring and improving mental wellbeing in the workplace through to powerful digital and AI-powered solutions that support advisors in their increasingly complex roles. Sabio Advisor Mental Health & Wellbeing capabilities include:



## WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING PLATFORM

A powerful data-led solution that analyses subjective agent wellbeing data and workplace digital information to provide employers with a picture of mental wellbeing in their workplace – enabling rapid identification of the ‘red flags’ that can lead to attrition, burnout, absenteeism and presenteeism.



## VOICE OF THE EMPLOYEE - KNOWLEDGE-BASED BOTS

Powered by AI, knowledge-based bots aggregate real-time information from across your operation into a central smart repository – providing answers from any touchpoint. Highlighting content that’s popular, bots provide a great resource for contact centre advisors working to transform customer experience.



## SERVICE ADVISOR MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING PROGRAMME

An essential programme that within 10-12 weeks can help you to support your advisors’ mental health and wellbeing by analysing daily routine and surfacing insights. A virtual mental health and wellness coach is also featured to help your advisors navigate their emotions, stresses, pressures and boosts.



## AI-ASSISTED ADVISORS WITH AGENT ASSIST

An AI solution that’s designed to reduce frustration for customers and improve advisor operational efficiency. Agent Assist embedded in the Agent Desktop provides continual analysis of customer/advisor conversations, surfacing key contextual information to equip advisors with real-time insights. They get to give expert answers promptly, while customers benefit from faster resolution and less annoying delays.



## ADVISOR DESKTOP TRANSFORMATION

A major source of stress for advisors is the constant toggling between different platforms and interfaces as advisors search for the data they need to help customers. Today’s highly-skilled advisors need to be supported by a new generation of assistive, unified desktops that bring together telephony, digital channels and CRM data insights to make engagement less stressful for agents.

Deployed separately, each of these solutions can both empower advisors and deliver benefits for their customers. However, brought together they can form part of a comprehensive, more structured advisor wellbeing strategy that unlocks significant business benefits – particularly in terms of CX performance and business value.

# HOW WELLBEING DELIVERS VALUE FOR CONTACT CENTRE OPERATORS

According to a recent report released by Deloitte, mental health has become a key priority for 98% of CEOs, particularly as organisations and employees continue to address the challenges of flexible working. It's a particular concern in the contact centre industry, where advisor burnout directly impacts already high levels of advisor attrition.

It's no longer enough for HR teams and contact centre leaders to treat wellbeing as a morale issue that can be solved by inundating advisors with sporadic upbeat campaigns and messages aimed at making everybody happier. Instead, organisations need to really unpack the root causes of stress, fatigue and burnout that are typically caused by systemic working practices, habits and attitudes. Addressing this will take a more data-led approach with science-based insights to fully gauge the scale of the challenge. Also, working to improve advisor wellbeing will also unlock significant value for CX operations, including:



## ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF ATTRITION HEAD-ON

Contact centre operations simply can't continue treating the challenge of advisor attrition as a backed-in cost of running their facility. Working actively to improve advisor mental health and wellbeing will not only improve conditions for your advisors, but also help optimise recruitment and training costs in a sector where even percentage point reductions in attrition can release significant bottom line benefits for CX operations and the broader business.

## UNLOCKING GREATER ADVISOR PRODUCTIVITY

The contact centre industry tracks endless metrics to analyse each advisor's daily activity, but until now there has been very little focus on the key role that advisor mental health and wellbeing plays in delivering excellent customer service. Unless brands support their advisors with rounded support, it's going to become harder and harder for them to deliver high quality customer experiences.

## SUPPORT ADVISORS AS THEY ADAPT TO TODAY'S CHANGING CX WORLD

With advisors left fielding only the most complex, urgent or emotional customer journeys, it's hardly surprising that they are under huge pressure from this sustained workload. Factor in that only 21% of advisors currently work solely in contact centres (according to the latest Contact Babel research), and it becomes even more essential to measure and drive positive impact to mental wellbeing within contact centres. Indeed, not doing this effectively would see contact centre operators failing in their duty of care towards advisors.

# WHY SABIO?

Sabio Group is a digital customer experience (CX) transformation specialist with major operations globally – and an ideal partner for organisations looking to transform their customer journeys. We are uniquely positioned to help brands take full advantage of contact centre, AI & Automation and CRM technologies.

Sabio addresses all aspects of Human Service, with a full portfolio of best practice solutions. Our goal is to focus our solutions both inwards and outwards from the contact centre, finding ways not just to help optimise advisor performance and differentiated customer journeys – but also to help provide a supportive working environment that’s designed at every stage to remove frustration and encourage positive mental wellbeing.

Through our own technology, and that of world-class technology leaders we help you optimise your customer journeys by making better decisions across multiple contact channels. Sabio also offers a full portfolio of solutions and services to support contact centre advisors as they adapt to a world of longer and more demanding conversations. Here are some of the ways we do that:



## WE’RE TECH-AGNOSTIC

Having lots of partners means we have a broad technology stack, allowing us to supply more appropriate solutions tailored to match your requirements. First, we help you to identify the challenges you need to solve, then we’ll suggest the solution that best fits your business. And because we have specialist teams for each technology, you’ll always be dealing with experts.



## WE’LL EMPOWER YOU

Rather than keep our knowledge to ourselves, we prefer to share our expertise with our clients to enable them to grow their own capabilities and become more self-sufficient based on our invaluable knowledge of CX best practice. We recognise the impact that disruptive factors such as automation, digital transformation and data can have on advisors, and we work with you to help monitor advisor wellbeing, find new ways to keep advisors engaged and provide them with the tools they need to deliver high quality customer experiences.



## ONLY THE FEATURES YOU NEED

Because we’re data first, we only propose features or new technologies when the level of data supports it. Rather than suggest the biggest scale solution, we often do a small piece of work with clients – then use the data to expand the business case together. Our wider technology portfolio means you will always have a range of options, allowing you to select only the features needed for your specific solution.



## MANY INDUSTRIES, MANY PARTNERS

We’re dedicated to providing excellent solutions through innovative technology. We do that by working with world-class technology partners such as Avaya, Verint, Genesys, Twilio, Google, Salesforce and Amazon Connect. Plus, we have deep and wide industry specific knowledge covering Banking, Insurance, Housing, Travel & Leisure, Utilities, Telcos and Retail.

# WORK WITH SABIO TO PLACE WELLBEING AT THE TOP OF YOUR CONTACT CENTRE AGENDA



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