



Anxious customers need rapid reassurance during disruptive events.

Here's 10 ways Capita helps organisations deliver it.



Mobilising a rapid ramp up contact centre involves choosing the right platform, fast recruitment, constant script updates and more. Here's what we've learned after helping a range of clients respond at speed in the past.

1



HAVE AN AGILE CULTURE.

Critical to ramping up for a disruptive event is having our senior teams ready to be contacted 24hrs a day, and supporting them with a culture of agility throughout the rest of our organisation. No matter how advanced your technology, if there isn't an underlying ability and willingness to move fast embedded in the business, you're not going to get far. For one client needing to respond to the current Covid pandemic, we received a call on Saturday morning, senior teams were writing scripts by Saturday afternoon, recruitment took place on Sunday and by 8am on Monday morning we had 100 people in place and ready to answer calls from anxious customers. Within 2 weeks we had a team of a 1,000 people up and running to support our client.

2



BE PREPARED TO ORGANISE REMOTELY.


Agility also means being able to set things up remotely, with senior teams able to access information and each other, without waiting for the office to open the following morning. What helps is running thought experiments of "how would we do this if that happens", and that practice has enabled us to put a number of contingency plans in place. Even though the scale of the Covid-19 disruption is unprecedented, the cultural and practical fundamentals of how we could react have already been established.


3





HAVE RECRUITMENT ALREADY IN PLACE.


If you have to recruit from scratch, you'll struggle to find enough people, of the right calibre, in the right place. Because we are the biggest contact centre business in the UK, we always have good, potential staff in the pipeline. This means we can mobilise new people immediately, without undertaking a huge search, and back them up by redeploying our own large, versatile workforce.


4  **TAKE YOUR TRAINING SERIOUSLY.** We have strong, accomplished internal training teams and a well-established routine for 'training to train'. Not only can we bring new teams up to speed fast, but we can identify those members best placed to pass on what they've learned, and help them do it. Therefore as the number of agents rises, so does the numbers of trainers, avoiding the risk of spreading expertise too thinly, which would leave the newest members of any ramped-up team unprepared for what they need to do.


5  **USE THE RIGHT PLATFORM.** For longer term projects it's right to select the different elements of a platform so each is best in class for the job they need to do. But for a rapid ramp up, a single, integrated, coherent system is better, and it's what we choose. Within our preferred system we have a scripting tool, CRM package, full recording facilities, blended inbound and outbound call handling, a full, real-time Management Information suite, and we can send both text messages and email.

6  **REWRITE SCRIPTS WITHOUT STOPPING.** What that enables us to do is rewrite scripts on the fly – something we've found to be hugely important for rapid ramp ups. By the nature of these fast-moving events, what members of the public need to be told changes virtually by the hour. Even with streams of calls coming in, if a customer tells us 'we need to update this one phrase, urgently' we can do that as the contacts continue. There's no need to pause the operation as the rewriting goes on. We make the change, hit enter, and the very next call to come in is met by the revised script.

7  **LEARN FAST, CHANGE EVERY DAY.** If you open a new contact centre at 10.00am, by 10.05 the situation will be different. What we've learned for a numerous set of emergency ramp-ups is that circumstances and messages in the early hours and days constantly shift, and we need to be ready for it. In one instance we launched a new contact centre with the customer still not legally certain of what they could say... The first 24 hours became an exercise in telling callers that 'we're here, we're on top of it, we'll be back to you soon,' and still it was a vital task to carry out. As more information trickled out, we updated the FAQs, we rebriefed the teams, we rewrote the scripts and every one of those first 20 days delivered something a little different.

8  **LISTEN TO FEEDBACK.** Contact centre teams are a resource in two directions. Not only do they pass out information, they feedback what callers are saying. We've learned that leveraging this insight is incredibly valuable in emergency ramp ups, but often overlooked. It can tell you that the answers you're giving are not addressing the questions your customers are most worried about. It's one of the reasons we give rapid ramp ups their own dedicated client services director so messaging stays fully attuned to what customers need to know.

9  **READY FOR HOMEWORKING.** We've been planning for homeworking for a long time, which gives us a considerable advantage over those only just coming to terms with the necessity. We've already worked through the issues of security – what agents working from home can and cannot do with personal or financial information, for example, or how they can operate double authentication. Which calls can safely be routed to a homeworker, and which must remain in a contact centre environment. How peaks, troughs and shifts work. (In the current circumstances, for example, home working agents with children are finding it useful to get the kids to bed, and then take on a late shift through the evening, making it easier for us to organise 24/7 coverage.)

10  **THIS IS NOT OUR FIRST TIME.** We're conscious that for many of our customers, the current Covid pandemic may be the first instance they've faced the need for an emergency ramp up. But it's not our first time. We've helped other customers respond in a range of ways to disruptive events in the past. We know what works. As well as being able to set up contact teams speedily, we can also guide our customers through the process, helping them identify what they need to do, and where the surprises will most likely come from. We know that in circumstances like these you strip out the normal metrics such as Average Handling Time and the mission becomes incredibly tightly focussed. We have one job to do: answer the public's enquiries quickly, accurately, responsibly. Get that right and everything else follows.

Find out more about Capita's rapid contact-centre response and other solutions supporting society through disruption at:

capita.com