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How **Speech Analytics** can boost **Agent Well-Being**

Crisis Calls

Aggressive Customers

Stress and anxiety

Introduction

There are people worldwide that are struggling with their emotional well-being and mental health issues. The challenge of the last few years and the uncertainty of the future certainly do not help the situation. The well-being of Contact center agents has not been spared in the matter. Agent well-being has therefore become a matter of great concern.

In addition to providing support to vulnerable and sometimes aggressive customers, agents have had to deal with their own personal struggles which affect agent well-being. However, they have continued to do their part and form an integral part of any company's culture. They are one of the only points of contact for the customers and set the tone for customer relations.

It is therefore essential that companies take care of their agent well-being and invest in technologies and solutions that help ease the pressure on the agents and enhance agent well-being. These solutions need to create a healthy environment that allows agents to grow professionally and boost their emotional well-being so that agents can take on their job and the challenges.

Here is where companies can kill two birds with one stone with Xdroid's AI-driven VoiceAnalytics solution. Read on to find out how.

Stress In the **Workplace**

With the economy still recovering from the effects of the pandemic and preparing for what is to come due to the energy crises and the military conflict in Ukraine, it is no secret that job insecurity is at an all-time high. As a result, people are working with a lot of anxiety. They are not only feeling the pressure of financial difficulties but also that of challenges at a personal and social level. A study conducted by researchers at Cornell University among 2100 contact center workers in the US revealed high levels of stress on both professional and personal fronts as seen in the figures below.

87% of agents out of **2100** surveyed reported high or very high-stress levels at their call centers.
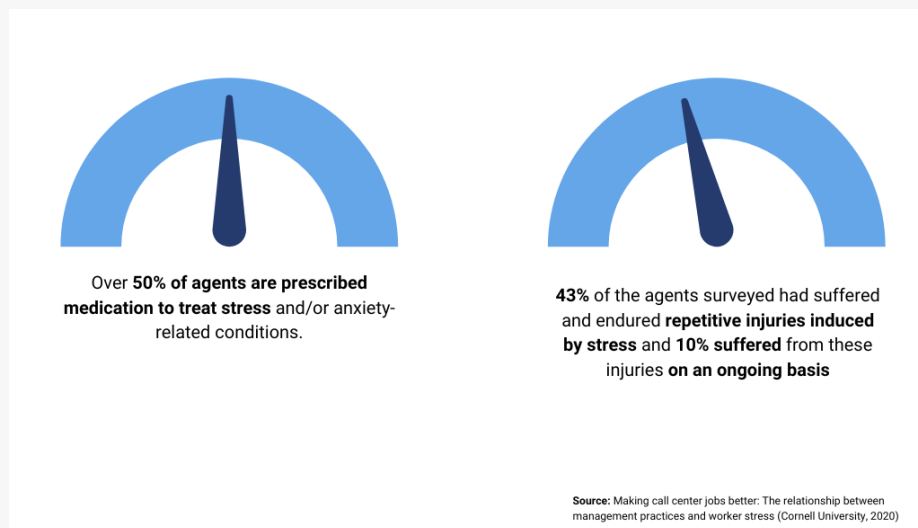
77% agents reported high or very high personal levels of stress

Source: Making call center jobs better: The relationship between management practices and worker stress (Cornell University, 2020)

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Society has changed, people have changed, their families have changed, and their living situations have changed. All these changes are emotionally challenging to deal with and can have a lasting impact on agent well-being as people are not supposed to live and function with these levels of stress and uncertainty.

Mental Health Matters and Agent Well-Being

The awareness of mental health issues indicates a positive shift in society. Mental health issues are not taboo anymore. But we are still seeing an increase in cases of breakdowns, panic attacks, mental health leaves, and burnout among employees. An internal study among contact center agents that Xdroid works with revealed that depression and other mental health issues accounted for 15-20% of the disclosed reason for absences. The rise of these issues certainly rings alarm bells as managers all over the world try to figure out ways in which they can help their employees. The same internal research also suggests that presenteeism i.e. agents working through depression cost 1.5 times more than absenteeism. The study at Cornell also highlighted persisting Mental Health issues when the following was revealed to them.

22

Days taken to recover from Depression.

As opposed to 3.5 days taken to recover from other common issues.

Source: Making call center jobs better: The relationship between management practices and worker stress (Cornell University, 2020)

The vulnerability of the world at large calls for robust solutions that can aid the agents. They need tools that not only develop their skills but also help them navigate stressful situations.

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Over **50% of agents are prescribed medication to treat stress** and/or anxiety-related conditions.

43% of the agents surveyed had suffered and endured **repetitive injuries induced by stress** and **10% suffered** from these injuries **on an ongoing basis**

Source: Making call center jobs better: The relationship between management practices and worker stress (Cornell University, 2020)

Looking for a new job

Agents with High Stress Levels — 44%

Agents with Low Stress Levels — 8%

See their job as temporary

Agents with High Stress Levels — 30%

Agents with Low Stress Levels — 9%

Source: Making call center jobs better: The relationship between management practices and worker stress (Cornell University, 2020)

Cornell's study further found a link between absenteeism and job satisfaction level.

"High absenteeism and low job satisfaction were most prevalent among workers reporting high-stress levels. For example, workers reporting very high-stress levels had on average a 10% absenteeism rate compared to 4% absenteeism among those experiencing low stress."

Agent well-being further affects agent turnover rates. The study found that agents with very high levels of stress tend to switch companies more due to their perception of lower opportunities for advancement. As seen in the figure below.
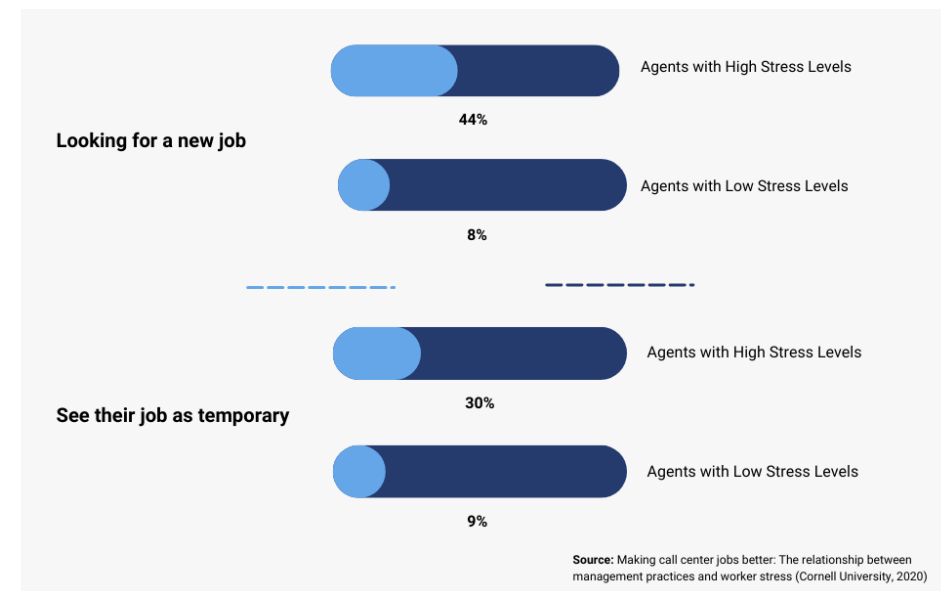
So what is it that companies can do to address this issue?

During such times, Contact Center Managers can turn to Xdroid's VoiceAnalytics for help. The solution is more than just a way for automating quality management. It enables managers to improve agent experience as well as gauge agent well-being and sentiment. Supervisors can track not only performance but also investigate any particular call or other customer interaction, and situations where their agents are struggling. They can focus on giving them the guidance they need and, more importantly, when they need it. Managers can work towards reducing agent turnover and support their agents both professionally and emotionally.

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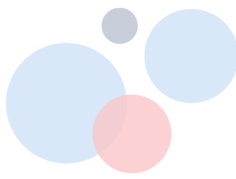
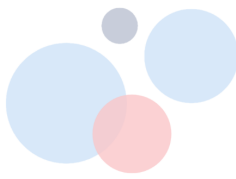# Implementing a **Healthy Work Environment**

Creating a healthy work culture calls for some philosophical changes in management style. This involves challenging the traditional hierarchical form of management and working towards a more collaborative modern style of management. The impact of these changes might take time but will truly contribute to agent well-being.

To help with this, managers can opt for AI-driven tools that can truly make a difference. In the Contact Centre space, managers can speed up the process of modernising and implementing a healthy work environment through the use of technologies Xdroid has to offer.

The solutions can also help them deal with the rising cases of aggressive and hostile customers as agents have reported not only verbal abuse but also threats to life, racism and discrimination. A survey with a number of agents of Xdroid's clients revealed that up to 2.5% of the calls they received had foul language, a result which is shocking, to say the least. This is further supported by the earlier mentioned study at Cornell, as represented in the following figure.
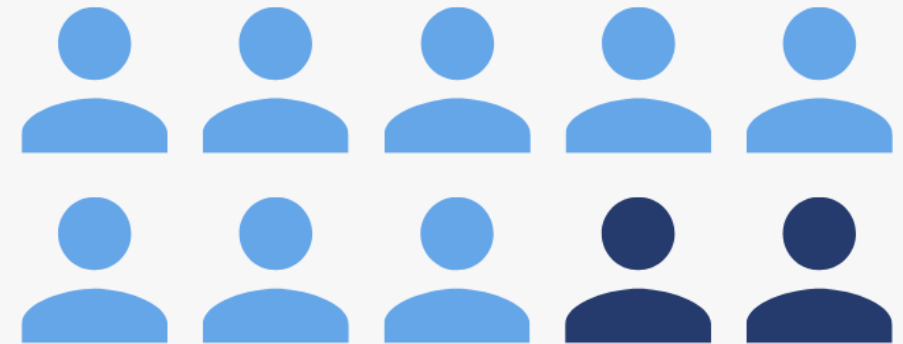
Around **80% of the agents experienced hostile behaviour** from customers who blame them for matters beyond their control and are frustrated with call transfers to other departments or agents

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Xdroid's leading-edge technology can not only help in such scenarios, but it can also add tremendous value in protecting agents from abusive customers and creating a stress-free work environment; and what is best, all in REAL-TIME. The solution is built to analyse every single call and interaction agents have with customers in an effort to ease agents' workload and guide them through every customer situation. Agents truly get everything they need and more. Features like Automated Call Summarization, Call Reports, Call Visualization, KPI tracking, and real-time recommendations help ground the agents during calls and enable them to take on their job with ease and stress-free. Xdroid's platform assists agents with exact guidelines on how to handle such aggressive customers and disengage with them in a professional manner.

They also need to be assisted in supporting vulnerable customers to the best of their abilities. Dealing with 'crisis' calls can be an emotionally demanding task. Besides giving them time to decompress or unwind after these heavy 'crisis' calls, managers can equip their agents with Xdroid's solution to prepare them for what is headed their way.

Reduce a the pressure of
Remote Work Management

Another result of changing societal culture is the coming about of hybrid workplaces and the rise of global remote teams. Managers and agents now have to work under added pressure. Agents need to ensure that they live up to the expectations and independently work towards advancing as employees, whereas managers no longer have the luxury of walking around and supervising their employees, but they still hold the responsibility for the work that is produced.

Both parties need a solution that caters to their specific needs and Xdroid's technology steps up to this challenge. The real-time online and offline capabilities of the solution address exactly that. The solution gives agents access to a single integrated platform where they can visualise the call in real-time and generate automated reports and summaries. The Real-time AgentAssist further facilitates their growth by helping them get through the KPIs, on-call recommendations, and handling difficult customers.

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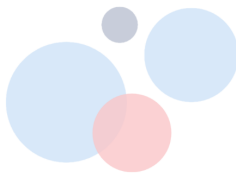
Conclusion: **Invest in Agent Well-Being**

It also provides real-time warnings and alerts to the managers who can take immediate actions during the call and/or have a coaching session right after the call about handling these situations. It also provides a listening ear and limits the damage.

The agents can be assigned to specific training programmes that are built for these situations. Monitoring the agent over time helps to see if the amount and intensity of these events are reduced.

In the UK, the FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) is intensively looking at what companies do to assist agents and prevent these mental health issues from reoccurring. A pro-active attitude will help companies to prove they take this issue seriously. It also sends a positive message to all future recruits about companies

Mental Health should be treated in the same way as any other health condition. Given how corporate culture is an influential part of society's fabric, companies must contribute to combating this issue. Just like they offer gym memberships or access to recreational facilities for good physical health, there should also be systems in place for better mental health.

Xdroid's AI-powered solutions aim to achieve this with its VoiceAnalytics, and Real-Time AgentAssist technologies in the most effective and quantifiable manner.

So sign up today for a demo and take a step to support your agents' well-being!

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Insights, Actions, RESULTS.

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