

Women Managers In Domestic And International Call Centers

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Abstract

Transnational factories in many regions of Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America have long viewed women as the "ideal" employees because of their low wages and high productivity. A job in a call center can be considered as the quintessence of the stereotypical 'women's role' in the workplace. Skills linked with hegemonic femininity, such being pleasant, making customers feel comfortable, and handling upset customers, are essential for providing good service over the phone. Interestingly, at some of New Delhi's burgeoning contact centers, gender segregation is not the norm. Call center employers, educators, and employees all agree that their workplaces are completely inclusive of people of all gender identities. However, despite these promises of occupational desegregation, one still encounters signs of gendered processes in global call centres.

Keywords: *Ideal worker, Transcriptions factories, garments, women's work, hegemonic, femininity.*

Introduction

An employee of a call center, an office dedicated to the transmission of communications in enormous volumes, is known as a call center executive. Representatives at call centers field questions from customers, log complaints, and share details about available products and services.

Women play a crucial part in the contact center industry, assisting businesses in answering customer questions and ensuring their needs are met. The history of contact centers and the advancement of women within the field are discussed here.

The Origin of Women in the Contact Center Industry: Home-based sales of baked products by housewives in the 1950s inspired the idea of call center operators today. Through increased education and improved resources, call center representatives improved their level of expertise throughout the subsequent decade. Despite some progress in recent years, women are still vastly outnumbering males in contact center agent professions. Women play a crucial role in the contact center industry, helping businesses to answer customer concerns and maintain customer happiness, both of which are crucial to the success of any organization that relies on customer care offered by a contact center. Here, we'll talk about how women got started in call centers and what they've contributed thus far.

Customer service representative professions may appeal to women since they are clerical in nature and don't demand a lot of physical labor, both of which are stereotypically associated with women's work. Because they don't necessitate a four-year degree, these occupations also provide an opportunity for women who have taken time out of the market to raise children or care for elderly relatives to return to the labor field. The rise in telecommuting opportunities for agents also helps boost female interest in careers in the contact center industry. When women have the option to work from home, they gain a great deal of autonomy in their schedules. They can better manage job and family responsibilities because they don't have to spend so much time away from home commuting. Contact center employees are held to strict policies that are designed to maximize customer happiness and compliance. Some of these guidelines concern the language they use with clients to ensure efficient and individual service. Female call center representatives are favored over male ones since they are more likely to follow procedures.

Female call center representatives followed their managers' instructions and used personal touches like "have a good weekend" and wishing customers a speedy resolution to their issues more often than their male counterparts.

Women may also be sought after in contact centers because of the stereotype that they are more sociable and empathic than men. Furthermore, it is often necessary to de-escalate and deal with challenging client circumstances by responding with empathy and demonstrating emotional intelligence. Customers are more likely to stick around if they feel that their opinions matter to the business. The result is increased consumer loyalty.

Female Executives in the Call Center Industry: Contact center agents are predominantly female, yet there are fewer women in leadership positions. While women comprise over 2/3 of the customer service sector, only a small percentage of them advance to management positions. It's interesting that women tend to be hired and promoted on the basis of their prior achievements, whereas males might be hired and promoted based on their potential. It's also been noted that

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women are more commonly linked to domesticity than to enterprise, sentimentality to competence, and passivity to success. Women put their social status ahead of professional advancement. More women may reach executive positions if stereotypes alter. Ops has never before faced such extraordinary difficulties. The benefit of digital and analytics is just beginning to be realized by businesses, which are exploring uncharted territory in their quest to capture this value throughout their whole value chain, from internal Operations to external partners like distributors and customers. It's time for more women to take the lead in these frontline positions since change is the name of the game.

The term "women in power" refers to women who hold positions of prominence in society, whether in politics, business, or other fields. Inequitable power dynamics between the sexes go deep. Women have historically been underrepresented in positions of authority.

The number of women in positions of authority across society's many fields is growing as gender parity improves.

The survival and prosperity of the human species depends, in large part, on women having fair and equal representation in all societal structures. Furthermore, research indicates that "absence is not merely a sign of disadvantage and disenfranchisement, but the exclusion of women from positions of power also compounds gender stereotypes and retards the pace of equalization or being equalized."

Having influence in one's profession over one's peers is what is meant by "occupational power." It's not just large, formal institutions like governments or corporations that have leaders; positions of power can be found anywhere from small, informal groups or clubs to overtly recognized figures like the heads of state or the CEOs of large corporations (as is the case in the library field, where the concept of power is discussed in the broader health literature and the occupational therapy literature from three perspectives). These more formal contexts can be found in many parts of society, including but not limited to the government, industry, university, the media, and NGOs.

Gender as a discriminatory factor: There is a strong correlation between gender and authoritative roles. Research has shown that there is no such thing as an independent relationship between power and gender in today's culture. Gender thus influences the means through which power is obtained, exercised, and displayed. An article published in 1988 summed up the cultural and historical factors that promote the stereotype that women and men are motivated by different things when it comes to positions of authority. Throughout western history, women have had significantly less access to power than men. There's a common misconception that women aren't as interested in politics as men are. Some people believe that men and women use and display authority differently.

Women are "less involved in bribery, and less likely to condone bribery taking," according to research, which suggests that having more women in positions of power can help reduce corruption. "cross-country data show that corruption is less severe where women hold a larger share of parliamentary seats and senior positions in the government bureaucracy, and comprise a larger share of the labor force," according to a 2000 study on women and graft.

Other factors: There are various elements at play in determining who has power, including but not limited to the gender gap in authoritative roles. Who holds power is heavily influenced by factors such as social status, sexual orientation, age, and race. Journal of the National Association of Social Workers study finds "double burden of racism and sexism exacts a toll on their mental health and restricts opportunities" for women of color.

Further, "the degree to which a system successfully includes women can indicate a propensity for the system to include other disenfranchised minorities," as stated in another study. Call centers have strict policies and are goal-oriented. Agents are coached on how to interact with customers in a specific way. Managers keep tabs on how closely employees follow these guidelines, and it may affect their compensation and promotion opportunities.

An interesting trend occurred when the compliance of male and female call center agents with the language prescriptions was examined. In other words, in accordance with directives from their superiors, female call center employees were more likely than their male counterparts to address the customer's issue, refer to them by name, invite them to call back if required, and end on a positive note, such as "have a good weekend." Unlike their male counterparts, why would female agents be more likely to comply? Child development and educational studies show that girls are more likely to receive positive reinforcement for following the rules and harsher punishment for rule violations (such as fidgeting or speaking up in class) than boys. These ingrained societal distinctions may manifest themselves in professional settings. In highly structured companies, where employees are evaluated on how well they follow directions and achieve goals, these distinctions become readily apparent. Both trends can be attributed to increased rule-keeping by women. Even though following the rules is praised and rewarded in the classroom, it may become a liability for young women in the workplace. It ensures that they remain in routine employment where they may contribute little and receive little recognition.

The conventional wisdom holds that women are just as qualified as men to hold positions of political power. The same holds true for their power in the executive suite. And many people, according to studies on women and leadership, consider women to be superior to men in terms of being empathetic and organized leaders, while also finding them to be indistinguishable from males on crucial leadership attributes like intelligence and ability for invention. Then why don't we see more women in executive positions in business and government? At least according to the general public, it isn't because they lack fortitude, management ability, or adequate skill sets.

The concept of a "work-life balance" is only one aspect. Few respondents identify professional interruptions associated to parenthood as a major barrier for women seeking leadership posts, despite evidence from economic studies and prior surveys suggesting that this may be the case. About 20% of the population blames women's family duties for the lack of women in executive roles in industry and politics.

Similarly to the political sphere, the general public does not differentiate significantly between men and women in terms of key leadership attributes in the economic sphere. Women have an obvious advantage over men when it comes to being honest and ethical, paying employees fairly, and mentoring new hires. When it comes to taking chances and making lucrative transactions, men have the upper hand.

Nowadays, "acting like a man" training for women is a thing of the past. Even though contact centers have traditionally been operated by women and managed by men, women now make up 60% of contact center managers worldwide. Despite the fact that many studies have focused on whether or not contact centers prefer to hire women because they are "more compliant" and "better at following rules" than males, the women I spoke with in leadership positions in contact centers felt they offered something different to the table. Whether it's genetics or upbringing, they said, women are more equipped to handle the sensitive interactions that occur in a contact center; they can multitask more effectively (hence the jokes men make about women having too many windows open on their computers); and they view the business from a more strategic, big-picture perspective.

Managing the emotional hotspot: Some of the "softer" parts of managing employees, such as their emotions and vulnerabilities, have traditionally been seen as a distraction by male-dominated companies. However, customers frequently use contact centers to vent their frustrations, so agents must be trained to calm irate callers and act as a buffer. If they can't, even if they did end up solving the customer's problem, they probably won't be seen as offering outstanding service. Customer service, it is often said, is the true essence of advertising. But beyond that, studies have shown that employees who do the lion's share of emotional labor are more likely to develop health problems. As a result, the mental well-being of workers is a good indicator of an organization's financial stability. It's a lot harder emotionally than most people realize. ...as one influential lady put it. "If I'm a customer calling about my cable, I may know this isn't a life-or-death situation, but right now it feels like it, and I'm so upset about it, that I'm not handling it very well."

The contact center industry has a bad reputation for being overly complicated. It's full of interesting things like people, methods, and gadgets. It's about recruiting talented people, providing them with advanced education, and then enjoying their maturation and success. The good side of people is great, but the bad side of people is terrible. A leader's attention and energy should be fixed on improving productivity and the quality of service provided to clients. It changes all the time. It's a fun and challenging environment that always presents new strategic challenges.

The entire plan is within the direct purview of the female leader. It takes a lot of math to figure out things like the optimal channel distribution and workforce levels. There are fluctuations in volume between hours that call for some pretty precise math: 10 individuals one half hour, 20 people the next. There should be five people available via chat, two via social media, and three via email. The leader is in charge of the systems she will use and the metrics she will track and report. All the problems and difficulties she faces regularly are here. The leader in this position must pay close attention to both the team and the metrics.

Another issue is learning how to use the technology. There has been a rise in the number of contact centers striving to adopt omnichannel strategies in order to better serve their customers in both their online and offline environments. Contact centers are incorporating new technologies, although many of these tools are still under development. Artificial intelligence (AI)-powered chatbots, for instance, can take in significantly more information than their manually programmed predecessors could. Even then, this requires close observation.

Incentives, Resources and Upselling Opportunities: Although working in a contact center is sometimes seen as a dead end, the agents there make all the difference. It doesn't matter how advanced a company's technology is if its agents aren't present and engaged in their work. That calls for extensive strategic preparation. For women in leadership roles, incentives such as contests, bonuses, or fun events have shown to be invaluable. It is also crucial to allocate resources toward education and professional development. Someone who starts out at the contact center as an agent might be offered a scholarship to study coding in order to advance to a different role within the organization. What

matters most is the intrinsic drive that keeps workers coming in each day. So, a female manager at the contact center will make an effort to learn about each new hire's aspirations and how she can best support them while they work there.

Many callers are helpless victims of circumstances beyond their control. The company instills in its agents a sense of heroic duty. This is fantastic management education in general, as people will always have to deal with disagreement. What matters is how you choose to react. Many people wonder if men and women really do have fundamentally different ways of thinking, or if they're just socialized and formed in different ways. All of the women interviewed agreed that there are excellent male contact center managers who can successfully balance the emotional and practical demands of their positions.

So maybe it doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman to succeed in this field. Perhaps the problem lies in the fact that human beings with flaws and emotions are at the center of customer relationship management. Conscious management for humans will benefit us all because it can direct our hopes and feelings in useful ways instead of trying to keep them out of the office.

Disrupting Gender Inequality in Call Centers : The MeToo movement and extensive global research on the state of gender disparity have helped bring issues of gender inequality and uneven compensation to light. The call center and customer service industry regularly faces these problems. How can we effectively disrupt inequity in call centers and beyond?

Women in Leader Today: There appears to be more room in the leadership ranks for women. In recent decades, women have made great strides in educational attainment, putting them in a stronger position for not only professional achievement but also leadership roles. A gender gap that persisted through the 1960s and 1970s has narrowed as more women than males enroll in and graduate from college. As for post-graduate study, nowadays women are more likely than males to pursue it. Over the past few decades, women have also made strides toward leadership roles and the professional workforce. Over half of all management and professional jobs in 2013 were held by women, a significant increase from just two decades earlier. However, women still face significant barriers to advancement in the corporate world.

Gender and Parity Gaps in Leadership: The need for more female leaders is a topic of concern for women that extends well beyond workplace equality. More women in executive roles in industry and government is something that four out of ten of these women believe will greatly improve the lives of all women. In addition, 50% of women believe this would have a good effect on all women's lives. Men, meanwhile, are less confident of the far-reaching benefits of women in leadership roles. About a third of males believe that more women in senior leadership roles would significantly improve the lives of all women, while less than half hold this view.

Women are much more likely than men to point to societal and institutional factors like the country not being ready to elect more female political leaders and women being held to higher standards than men in business and government as the reasons why there aren't more women in top leadership positions.

When comparing male and female political and corporate leaders, female respondents were more inclined to claim that female leaders exhibited superior features and attributes. There are significant differences in how men and women evaluate those in political leadership roles. Women are more likely than males to agree that female leaders do a better job at compromising, being honest, having courage, being persuasive, and working for the good of all Americans. Most men, on the other hand, believe that these characteristics are not significantly different between the sexes. They are, nevertheless, slightly more likely to favor male leaders over female leaders on four of the five political leadership attributes measured in the survey.

Few Women Hold Positions of Power: If initiatives to increase women's political participation don't take into account the barriers women face within institutions, they will fail. Incorrect institutional rules can amplify women's lack of authority, while appropriate regulations can help eliminate this gap and pave the way for more egalitarian social standards and welfare provisions for the poor. Rules and statistics have far-reaching ramifications for how women and their interests are represented. These women in power have the potential to make a significant impact beyond the policies they directly enact by serving as role models for younger generations of women and girls.

Negotiating the Labyrinth: Women's advancement is hampered by outdated perceptions about their gender. Men are stereotyped as "agentic," or decisive and headstrong in our culture. As far as they are concerned, women are "communal," or good, kind, and caring people. Societies also tend to view their leaders as more autonomous than democratic.

Therefore, there are two obstacles women who aspire to leadership positions face: The first is the "double standard," which means that a woman seeking a leadership position must demonstrate her assertiveness to win support, while men

rarely face this concern. Second, there's the "double bind": when women in leadership posts do act strong, they're often criticized for being overly aggressive. You can see an issue, Eagly remarked. The generalizations we make about males and leaders are consistent, while the generalizations we make about women and leaders are less so.

Nonetheless, there is proof that we are making progress in resolving these issues. In the last 40 years, the characteristics that define a leader have broadened to include those of the group as a whole. The idea of reporting to a woman is more often accepted. Moreover, modern women are more accepting of leadership roles than their predecessors.

Female leaders shouldn't be pictured as breaking through an invisible barrier or "glass ceiling," but rather as finding their way through a complex maze, where the proper turn requires time and effort but ultimately pays off in the end.

Women "not only talk less than men, but they talk much less than their presence in the group [would otherwise indicate]," according to experts, when groups make choices through majority rule. To put it another way, if women constitute 20% of a group, they typically contribute less than 20% of the discourse.

While women were still outnumbered by men in majority-rule groups, they participated equally in discussions when a unanimous vote was required to make a decision.

The women in these groups also reported "greater respect and more positive feedback" from the males, and the women who spoke up more also felt more confident in their ability to affect the group as a whole.

For groups where women constitute the majority or when choices are reached through consensus, this is encouraging news, he went on to say. Nonetheless, it appears that women are less likely to speak up when they are the minority in a group that operates under majority rule. Because of this, their policy preferences will not be considered or put to a vote, and they will not be accorded the respect they deserve.

Women have historically held a disproportionate number of entry-level positions in the contact center and call center industries. This is why the female ghetto label has been applied to call centers; the term originally referred to Jewish areas in Medieval Venice. The phrase still looms large over metropolitan areas with poor incomes. While male and female agents are nearly equal in some countries, such as the Philippines, women make up the vast majority of the world's agents. The majority of managerial and executive roles are filled by men. The causes seem to be rooted in long-standing prejudices and societal roles.

Women's professional advancement might be hindered by the prevalence of sexist rhetoric and everyday actions. Few male executives are aware that women executives are sometimes misunderstood to be secretaries, that women are routinely excluded from all-male social parties where business is conducted, or that they are called by their first names more often than men in the same group. Many business and professional chances that present themselves during lunch, on the golf course, or in the locker room go unnoticed by women because men are still more comfortable in those settings.

Conclusion

Women's Prospects in the Call Center Industry in the Future Given the trends toward the virtualization of contact centers and the anticipated rise in popularity of social media and chat-based call center services, it stands to reason that women will continue to play a significant role in this sector.

According to research from NASSCOM (2012), the BPO industry would more than triple in size by 2020. Significant economic gains have resulted from this rapid expansion, and they will continue to do so. As two of the most prominent O&O destinations for the BPO business, the benefits are most readily apparent in India and the Philippines. This shift has prompted a drive to recruit and retain 50% more women in India's business process outsourcing (BPO) sector as a result of the current climate. Little is known about the BPO business and the significance of language in these O & O locations despite the enormous societal impact that this massive push could have.

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