

GoodLife Fitness reveals the secrets behind its contact centre success

If you're looking for ways to improve your contact centre's performance then here's a behind-the-scenes look into how GoodLife Fitness does it (and how you can too)



By Emily Nielsen

Recently, I had the special opportunity to take an insider's peek into GoodLife's contact centre located in London, Ontario.

At a closed-door meeting with Julie Pontes, director of member experience, I was let in on a wealth of incredible insights. In this no holds-barred interview Julie, with much excitement and enthusiasm, revealed some of her best-kept contact centre success secrets.

While taking notes, there were times when I could not believe what I was hearing and neither will you. Why? Because just one of Julie's ideas alone could transform your contact centre. If you think I sound like I'm full of beans, then consider this:

Julie is running the contact centre behind the world's fourth largest fitness chain, with some 375 fitness clubs, 13,300 employees and 1.3 million members scattered across 10 provinces and four time zones! That's an immense challenge. Yet she's managed to make it work and work very, very well.

So, how do Julie and her team do it? What's her secret to success? Well, much like with your personal health and fitness, despite what everyone wants to believe there is no "magic bullet." However, there is hope because there are a combination of things you can do to improve the results of your contact centre's performance.

Before I reveal some of Julie's advice and what you can do to improve your contact centre, there are two things you should know about GoodLife first:

1. When you join a GoodLife gym one of the first things a GoodLife trainer will do with you is help you determine your desired fitness outcomes.
2. GoodLife clubs have something called a 20 Minute FIT FIX Total Body Workout. This is a circuit consisting of nine workout machines which would take you around 20 minutes to complete.

Now, having said that and in the spirit of GoodLife and its 20-minute circuit, consider the following tips, tricks and secrets a form of a Total Body Workout for your contact centre led by your very own, very passionate personal contact centre trainer Julie Pontes.

Laid out before you now are the desired outcomes you may be striving for and the "exercises" you can do to achieve them. Now then, let's begin your very first contact centre Total Body Workout.

Want agents who can more easily handle your customers' problems and questions?

The exercise? There are a number of things Julie would recommend; however, the single most impactful thing you can do is this: hire from within your organization. Why? Because when you do your agents come with the customer experience, knowledge and company culture required to assist customers with more ease.

Want to empower front-line staff with customer-helping superpowers?

Many organizations leave front-line staff to fend for themselves when customers approach them with questions or problems. Often customers are left feeling unsatisfied with the answers received. Not at GoodLife. At GoodLife, Julie has empowered front-line staff (known as associates) with the power of superhuman customer-helping intelligence.

The secret? By running an internal chat line between the contact centre and associates, front-line staff can immediately tap into the knowledge needed to better help members.

Are your agents overwhelmed by inbound calls for basic information?

If so, the exercise for this is to bring your call centre and marketing department together. This means bringing the contact centre "out of the basement" and placing it right into the heart of your business. By doing this Julie has started to provide the marketing team with the insight and exact changes they need to continually optimize self-service

tools—the website and app—based on immediate customer feedback coming up from the contact centre agents.

Want to dramatically reduce agent turnover rates?

Here's what Julie would do: Stop promoting the belief that the contact centre is just an entry-level position. Rather than allowing anyone with just a lick of contact centre experience in, try limiting the position to people within your organization. Start promoting a walk-in policy which encourages your current employees to check it out, get a feel for it and to see if they'd like to work in it or not.

The catch? Making this work will depend on your ability to elevate how your contact centre is perceived. At GoodLife, the contact centre was purposely placed alongside other key departments in the head office which is equipped with fitness equipment (obviously!), meditation rooms, ping-pong tables and so much more. The result? People actually want to work here.

If there was a "magic bullet" this would be it!

If the previous four ideas are considered exercises then consider this last one a supplement. A magic bullet of sorts to boost your overall contact centre performance.

So here it is: Julie is an outsider. Despite working at GoodLife for 17+ years, most of those years weren't spent in the contact centre tinkering with technology or trying to decipher the cold facts and faceless figures contained in contact centre reports.

Rather, they were spent on the

outside where it matters most: in the field, first as a general manager and then as a divisional manager of operations, working with the associates and members, understanding their needs.

This supplement—in the form of deeply understanding customer and staff needs combined with empathy—gives Julie rare insight into how exactly the contact centre, with all its bells and whistles, can better serve associates and members. Now my question to you is: Are you supplementing your contact centre with a deep understanding of who you're actually trying to help?

Well that's a wrap for your very first contact centre Total Body Workout and insider look into how the world's fourth largest fitness chain runs a successful contact centre.

To get your contact centre firing on all cylinders, use GoodLife's FIT FIX 20 Minute Total Body Workout approach. Spend 20 minutes, three times a week working these success secrets into practice. That means determining how you can begin implementing these ideas—in practical ways—within your contact centre. ✓

Emily Nielsen launched Nielsen IT Consulting, a consulting firm focused on helping organizations achieve breakthrough results using contact centre and unified communication technologies, in 1999. If you'd like such rewarding results you're encouraged to contact Emily at enielsen@nielsenitconsulting.com or by calling 519-473-5373.
