

# Hitting Home:

## Understanding contact center agents' experience of WFH

The contact center industry has embraced the shift to working from home. But there's been very little insight into what contact center agents think about this.

For our new Hitting Home research, we ran a focus group with contact center agents to dive into their views and experiences of hybrid working or WFH. All of them were full-time contact center agents and worked at least half their time at home (most of them worked at home every day). They were located across the US, from Illinois to Texas, and Washington DC to California.

**4** things we heard and what they mean for you as a contact center leader



**1. What we heard:** Contact center agents love WFH, but admit they can get distracted – which may pose a security risk

Agents love the work-life balance that WFH gives them, especially by removing their commutes. But despite corporate rules and their best-laid plans, interruptions can and do happen. Our focus group admitted that distractions are everywhere, from TV to kids. More significantly from a security perspective, sometimes family members drop by, or friends come round to work together and combat loneliness.

*"My desk used to be in the living room. Then I noticed that I was getting distracted with the TV."*

*"I have two or three of my friends, who also work from home full time... they'd be like, ... I'm coming to your house this week... we just hang out and work from home together."*

**What this means for you:**

Implement the right tools to safeguard all of the payment and personally identifiable information that consumers want to keep secure, while agents are in their home environment – potentially with other people in the room.

## 2. **What we heard:** Agents' home setups try to mimic the security measures offered by the contact center – maybe not always successfully.

Most agents are asked to create a professional, office-like environment in their homes. Ideally, that means a dedicated workspace, a closed door, and no noise in the background. In reality, this doesn't always happen. Most of our focus group attendees didn't have a home office, for instance. They tended to work in their living room, spare bedroom, or basement – or move between rooms. Total privacy isn't universal.

*"We do have to take extra [security] measures because we're at home – because, you know, people have families and [others] who might have access to our laptop."*

### **What this means for you:**

Prioritize designing your systems so that employees have no access to sensitive information, wherever they work in their homes. This eliminates the risk of sensitive data being stolen via a data breach, or worse, potential theft by other people sharing an agent's working space.

*"Sometimes I move around, you know, for internet reasons or just to have a change of scenery."*

## 3. **What we heard:** Agents think customers don't mind they're WFH – but customers think differently.

Our focus group said they don't tell customers on the other end of the phone where they are working from. They think customers don't really mind. But that's not the case: Eckoh's research has found that 55% of US consumers consider contact center agents who are working from home a risk to their personal privacy. The fact that agents don't proactively inform customers of their location indicates some awareness that customers might not be pleased. Especially when sensitive information – such as payment details and Social Security numbers – are involved.

*"I don't think they necessarily know, and my company actually prefers that they don't know... I don't think customers know or even care as long as they are getting what they need."*

### **What this means for you:**

Change your policies to actively inform customers where agents are located. Consider seizing the initiative and operating with more openness and transparency about your working policies and security measures – making it a positive point for your brand.

*"I try not to let it on that I'm working from home. I don't mention it at all. I just feel like it's something that they don't need to know."*

## 4. **What we heard:** The right tech is crucial for agents but mustn't become a burden.

Contact center agents understand how important the right hardware and software are for them to do their jobs successfully, and to keep customer data secure. That involves a mix of ethernet cables and headphones to give them the fastest, clearest connection, and a VPN and multi-factor authentication to stay secure. But agents pushed back against further layers of technology, as that could add extra burdens to what is already a bandwidth-heavy job.

*"On being more secure and more safe – as you do that, it might lock down the system, so that my portal would be slower in performance."*

*"I was having issues with the internet and I couldn't figure out why. And then I come to find out my neighbor was hacking my internet."*

### **What this means for you:**

Find a security solution that isn't burdensome for your agents. It needs to offer a high level of security, protect agents from data breaches, and offer a frictionless experience for both agents and customers.

Discover more – including consumers' concerns about agents handling their data at home – by downloading our Hitting Home report [here](#)

Find out how Eckoh can help you address the challenge of securing the home contact center, by contacting us [here](#)

