

# Rethinking Call Scripts – Results from Surveying 500+ Contact Center Agents

The Case for the Anti-Script



# Welcome to today's webinar!

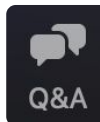


**Justin Smith**

Sr. Research Copywriter @ Balto  
*Webinar Host/Moderator*



Today's session will be about **30 minutes** with time for **Q&A**.



Use the **Q&A button** on your screen to submit questions.



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The Conversation Excellence Lab is Balto's hub for academic-level research. We create thought-leading content with the support of research teams and in-house data.

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# Today's Webinar Speakers



**Justin Smith**

Sr. Research Copywriter,  
Balto



**Lior Torenberg**

Sr. Creative Solutions  
Manager, Balto



**Michelle Barbeau**

Sr. Customer Enablement  
Manager, Balto

# Research Demographics

567

Agents

25-34

Most represented age group (34%).

48%

Of respondents were **Customer Service** representatives.

3.8

Years was the average respondent tenure at their current job.

18%

Of respondents worked in **Retail**, followed by 16% in Finance and Professional Services and 12% in Healthcare.

67%

Worked in contact centers with **5-300 agents**.

# Research Takeaways

1. Agents don't go off script because they forget what to say, they go off script because they want to.
2. The more involved agents are in writing their scripts, the more they'll follow them, and the happier they'll be overall.
3. Agents at larger contact centers follow their scripts the least.

# Research Takeaways

4. Script adherence is heavily influenced by an agent's trust in their manager and beliefs about their coworkers' work ethics.
5. The agent experience is universal. Factors like age, gender, tenure, industry, and more had no statistically significant effect on script adherence.

# 1. Why do agents go off script?



# Why do agents go off script?

## Improvisation

Was the #1 reason agents went off script, followed by unnaturalness and unhelpfulness.

## Boredom

Was the lowest reason that agents went off script, followed by forgetfulness.

## Forgetfulness

Was actually the #1 reason that agents *accidentally* went off script in our [2021 agent survey](#).

**When agents go off script on purpose, it means they know what they're talking about.**

## **2. Involve agents in script writing**

# Involve agents in script writing

**The more involved agents were in writing their scripts, the more they followed them.**

**In general, 64% of agents wanted to change their script,** but those who reported the highest script writing involvement wanted to change it the least.

## Endowment Effect

We prefer things that are ours over things that are not.

## Ikea Effect

When you help build something, you feel a closer connection to it.

## Ownership Mentality

Psychological ownership over tools and processes leads to higher performance and retention

# **3. Contact center size and script adherence**

# The larger the contact center, the less agents follow their scripts. **Why?**

## 2021 Manager Report

Managers at larger contact centers spend more time re-coaching; coaching gets less effective with scale.

## 2021 Agent Report

Agents at larger contact centers forget what to say more often; less script internalization at play.

## Factors that contribute to lower script adherence at large contact centers:

- Manager scope of control
- QA requirements
- Number of remote employees
- Script writing involvement
- Coaching effectiveness

# **4. The influence of manager and coworker beliefs**

# The influence of manager and coworker beliefs

Agents were asked to answer the questions below on a scale of 1-5.

***I trust management to set me up for success with strong call scripts***

The more an agent trusted their manager's script writing, the more they followed their script.

***How much of your call script do your coworkers follow?***

The more an agent thought their coworkers followed their scripts, the more they did as well.

***How important is it to your manager that you follow your script?***

The more a manager expected an agent to follow their script, the more they did.

**Trust, modeling, social proof, & communication of expectations.**

**5. The agent experience is universal**



# The agent experience is universal

Regardless of age, gender, industry, education, tenure, job, and whether an employee is virtual or in-person, script adherence remains the same. **At the end of the day, agents want agency.**

# Actionable Takeaways

## Communicate Expectations

Get clear on what you need agents to hit on every call, and what they can make their own.

## Get Regular Feedback

Hold a quarterly feedback session and invite agents to share what's working for them, and what isn't.

## Reward Ownership

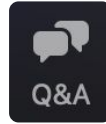
Celebrate new best practices and rebuttals that agents discover, and share them out with the rest of the team.

## Embrace Change

Scripts are built with great care, but that doesn't mean they'll work for everyone forever. Embrace feedback and new ideas.

# Thank you!

## Q&A



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