

Market Report 2025–2026

The Cost of Losing Good Service Agents Due to Lack of Training

Executive Summary:

When good agents leave because they do not feel confident, developed, or properly trained, the impact goes far beyond HR costs. It triggers a chain reaction of recruiting costs, onboarding costs, productivity loss, quality risks, repeat contacts, declining customer satisfaction, and growing operational instability. For contact centers and BPOs, this is not a side issue — it is a direct economic lever.

It is important to note: There is no single global study for 2025/2026 that isolates only the cost of “agents leaving due to lack of training.” However, the financial impact can be clearly derived from current data on attrition, onboarding, engagement, and contact center performance.

1. Why this topic is becoming more expensive

In 2025/2026, the problem is intensifying for two key reasons:

First, voluntary attrition remains high. Work Institute estimates that 35 to 40 million employees will leave their jobs in 2025, following approximately 40 million in 2024.

Second, engagement is declining. Gallup estimates that low employee engagement costs the global economy approximately \$10 trillion in lost productivity.

For service organizations, this is critical. Contact centers depend heavily on confidence, structure, communication quality, and fast ramp-up. ICMI reports that losing a single agent can cost over \$35,000, while 54% of contact centers report attrition rates between 21% and over 50%, and nearly 80% say attrition is increasing or not improving.

2. Direct costs: What hits the P&L immediately

The first cost block is the direct replacement of an employee.

Gallup estimates replacement costs for frontline employees at approximately 40% of annual salary. Work Institute expands this range to between 0.5 and 2 times annual salary depending on role and market.

In contact centers, the real-world impact is often higher. ICMI estimates over \$35,000 per lost agent, reflecting not only hiring and training costs but also scheduling disruptions, service level pressure, coaching effort, and team stability.

3. The most expensive form of attrition: early exits

The most costly attrition occurs within the first months.

Work Institute reports that early attrition accounts for approximately 40% of all turnover and represents the highest financial loss because organizations cannot recover their investment in recruiting, onboarding, and training.

This is especially critical in customer service environments, where new agents require a ramp-up phase before reaching full productivity. SHRM highlights “time-to-productivity” as a key success metric for onboarding, directly influenced by training quality.

The earlier an agent leaves, the higher the cost per training hour invested.

4. The hidden cost driver: lost productivity

When experienced agents leave, companies lose far more than headcount.

They lose confidence in conversations, system efficiency, problem-solving speed, and informal team stability.

Gallup estimates that low engagement alone costs the global economy around \$10 trillion in 2025.

At the same time, less than half of employees participated in role-specific training in 2024, and 59% of CHROs report that employee development remains a major challenge in 2025.

This means the issue is not isolated - it is systemic.

5. Why good agents actually leave

Gallup provides a critical insight:

42% of employees who voluntarily left say their manager or organization could have done something to prevent it.

This is directly linked to development, coaching, and support.

Additionally, employees whose development is blocked are significantly more likely to leave.

LinkedIn reinforces this:

93% of organizations are concerned about retention

94% of employees say they would stay longer if companies invested in their development

This leads to a clear conclusion:

Good agents do not leave only because of salary.

They leave because they do not feel capable, supported, or developed.

6. The double impact in customer service

In customer service, attrition does not only create internal costs — it directly impacts customer experience.

New or undertrained agents lead to:

- Increased uncertainty in conversations
- Higher error rates
- Longer handling times
- More call transfers
- Higher repeat contact rates
- Lower customer satisfaction

SHRM emphasizes that onboarding success must be measured not only by participation, but by performance, retention, and productivity.

ICMI confirms that high attrition directly disrupts service quality and operational stability.

7. Why this is even more critical for BPOs and DACH markets

In BPO environments, the impact multiplies.

High attrition, KPI pressure, strict SLAs, and client expectations collide.

If agents are not consistently trained, companies face not only internal inefficiencies but also risks to client satisfaction, contract renewals, and project stability.

This directly connects to the cost logic outlined in your previous market overview, where poor customer experience leads to revenue loss, churn, and loyalty decline.

In German-speaking markets (DACH), the effect is even stronger.

Customers expect clarity, ownership, structure, and professionalism.

If agents lack communication confidence, the impact on perception and satisfaction is immediate.

8. Example calculation

Consider a team of 100 agents with a 25% annual attrition rate.

That equals 25 replacements per year.

Using Gallup's estimate (40% of salary) with an annual salary of €25,000 results in approximately €250,000 in direct replacement costs.

Using ICMI's contact center estimate (\$35,000 per agent), the same scenario results in over \$875,000 per year.

This does not include productivity loss, quality issues, ramp-up time, or customer impact.

The real cost is significantly higher.

9. Where FCL creates economic impact

This is where FCL becomes a business lever.

Not as another training module, but as a structured communication system.

FCL addresses three critical cost drivers:

First, it reduces uncertainty in live interactions.

Agents do not just learn processes — they learn a repeatable communication framework.

This shortens ramp-up time and accelerates time-to-productivity.

Second, it improves retention.

Agents are more likely to stay when they feel capable and developed.

FCL makes communication skills visible, measurable, and trainable.

Third, it stabilizes quality.

Standardized communication reduces variability between agents.

This leads to more consistent customer experiences and lower operational risk.

10. Management message 2025–2026

The key message is:

Undertraining is not a learning issue.
It is a cost issue.

When good agents leave because they are not properly trained, companies pay multiple times:

- Recruitment and onboarding costs
- Lost productivity
- Reduced service quality
- Long-term customer loss

The real question is not:

“Can we afford structured communication training?”

The real question is:

“How much does it cost us every year not to have it?”

Sources

Gallup Workplace 2025/2026 zu Retention, Entwicklung und Engagement.

ICMI 2025 zu Contact-Center-Attrition und Ersatzkosten je Agent.

Work Institute 2025 Retention Report und Attrition Analysis.

SHRM zu Onboarding-Erfolg und L&D als Hebel für Recruiting-, Onboarding- und Retentionkosten. LinkedIn zu Learning Opportunities und Retention.