Call Center Survey Report

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Call Center Survey Report

Overview

The purpose of the Call Center Survey is to provide call center management with information they need to make employment, staffing, training and organizational decisions that are informed by up-to-date facts and information. The survey is conducted by Applied Skills & Knowledge, LLC with the support of CCNG International, Inc. Approximately 1,200 CCNG call center members were invited by email to participate in the survey. The survey was administered online. There was a 13% response rate.
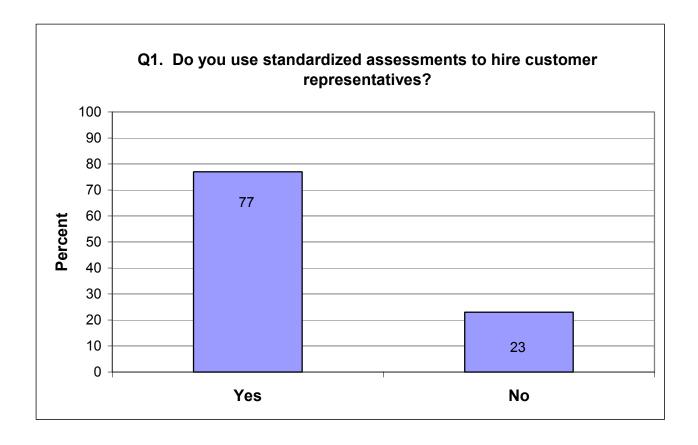
The survey is comprised of two sections. The first section contains information about hiring and employee development, organizational design characteristics, and compensation in call centers. The second section contains fourteen questions that are rated on a five-point scale and address factors that research has demonstrated distinguish high performance organizations.

The results for each question in Section 1 are presented in the report. Questions 8 and 9 are not reported because they are used to calculate the turnover index. Question 15 is not reported because it is used to identify the state location of the call center and is used to categorize the results.

The survey was completed by managers, supervisors, customer representatives, trainers, and staffers in call centers. One question in the High Performance section of the survey asked respondents to rate the quality of customer service provided by their call center. Another question asked respondents to rate the competitiveness of the company's products and services. Research has demonstrated that employees' ratings on questions such as these correlate with customer ratings. Since the goal of most call centers and organizations is to perform well in these two areas, the report focuses on these two goals and turnover in reporting the High Performance results in Section 2.
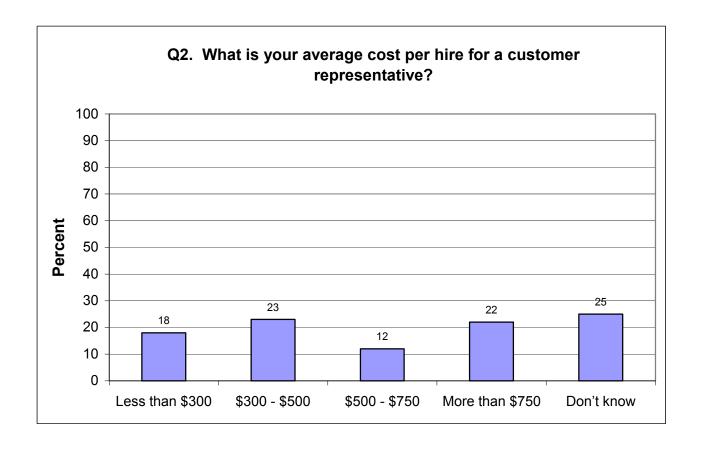
For further information about this survey and results, contact Steve Yelity at
steve_yelity@appliedskills.com or call Steve at 973-631-1607, X104.

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Hiring & Development

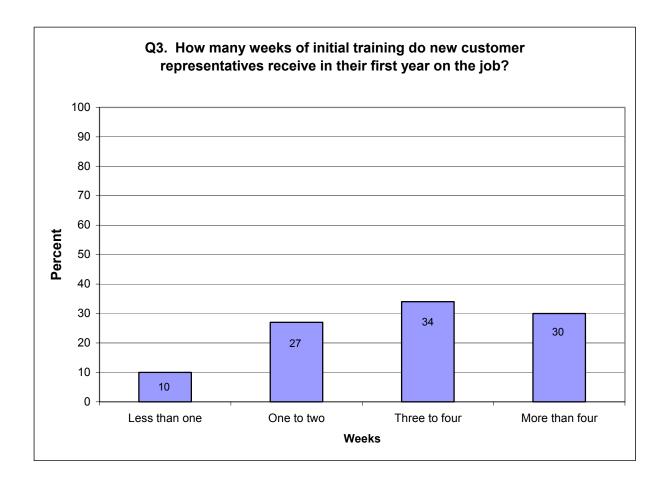**Q1. Do you use standardized assessments to hire customer representatives?**

Standardized assessments include paper and pencil tests, online assessments, structured interviews and work simulations. These assessments are more fair and accurate methods for hiring the best employees. The survey results indicate that the majority of call centers (77%) use standardized assessments to hire customer representatives.

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Hiring & Development

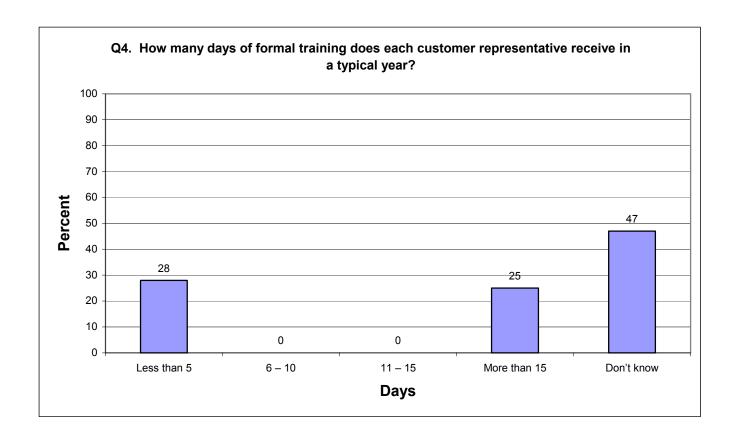### Q2. What is your average cost per hire for a customer representative?

The cost per hire includes recruiting, assessment and interviewing time and costs for processing multiple job candidates for each hire. Studies indicate that the average cost per hire for a non-management job falls in the $300 - $500 range.

The survey results indicate that 23% of call centers' cost per hire are in that range and 18% are below it. The remainder of respondents were above that range or did not know their costs. Of those who reported they knew the amount, 55% reported $300 - $500 or less than $300.

Hiring & Development

Q3. How many weeks of initial training do new customer representatives receive in their first year on the job?
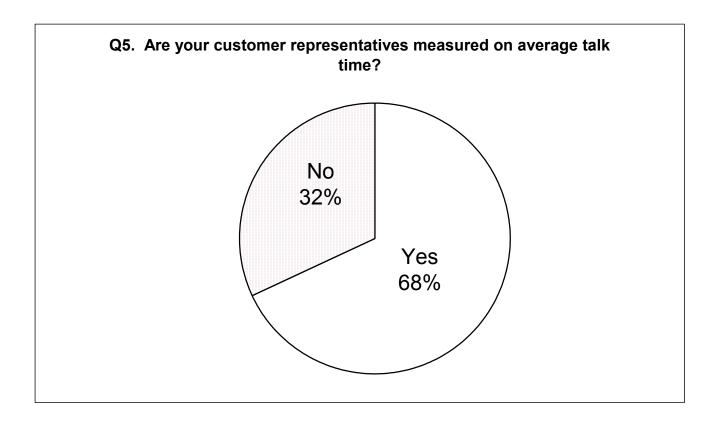
Initial training includes formal classroom training and "nesting" periods during which time new customer representatives are not yet performing all functions of the job or handling all types of calls. The survey results indicate that while most call centers (34%) provide three to four weeks of initial training, a large portion provide less (37%) and a large portion provide more than four weeks (30%).

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Hiring & Development

Q4. How many days of formal training does each customer representative receive in a typical year?

The chart shows a bar graph with Percent on the y-axis (0 to 100) and Days on the x-axis.

- Less than 5: 28
- 6 – 10: 0
- 11 – 15: 0
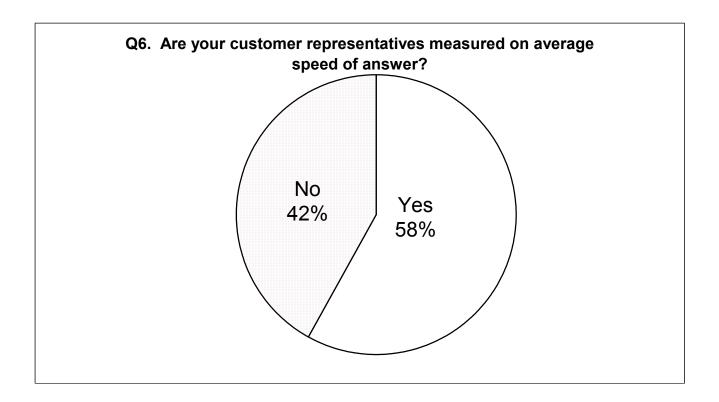- More than 15: 25
- Don't know: 47

Formal training includes schedule training time and classroom training. The survey results indicate that the majority of respondents to the survey did not know (47%) how much training customer representatives receive after initial training. Of those who reported they knew the amount of training provided, 53% of the respondents indicated that the amount of training was "less than five days."

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Organizational Design

Q5. Are your customer representatives measured on average talk time?
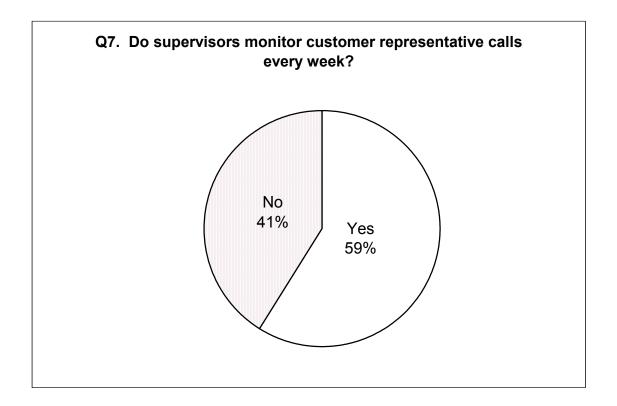
No 32%

Yes 68%

Average talk time is the time required to complete each customer call. The survey results indicate that approximately two-thirds of call centers (68%) use average talk time as a measure of performance in their call centers.

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Organizational Design

Q6. Are your customer representatives measured on average speed of answer?
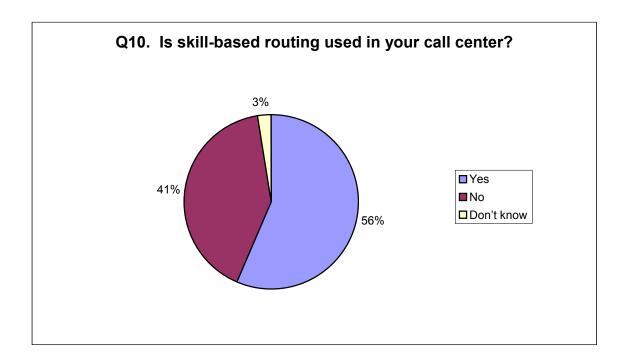
No 42%

Yes 58%

Average speed of answer is the time required for a customer to wait in the queue before speaking to a customer representative. The survey results indicate that the majority of call centers (58%) use average speed of answer as a measure of performance in their call centers.

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Organizational Design

Q7. Do supervisors monitor customer representative calls every week?
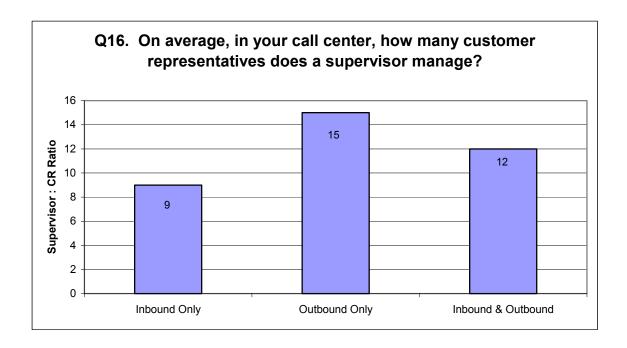
No 41%

Yes 59%

Call monitoring occurs when supervisors sit side-by-side or remotely and listen to live or recorded customer calls for the purpose of coaching or evaluating customer representatives. The survey results indicate that supervisors in 59% of call centers conduct weekly call monitoring sessions.

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Organizational Design

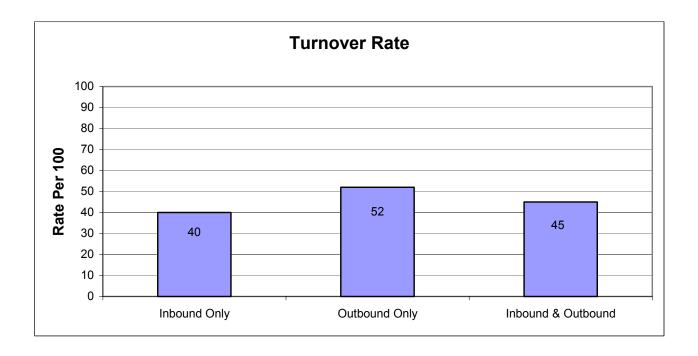**Q10. Is skill-based routing used in your call center?**

Skill-based routing is the use of computer technology and an organizational design that enables customers to be routed to customer representatives who are especially skilled to handle the type of customer routed to them. The survey results indicate that the majority of call centers have implemented skill-based routing, but a large portion have not yet done so.

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Organizational Design

Q16. On average, in your call center, how many customer representatives does a supervisor manage?

The ratio of supervisors to customer representatives is the number of customer representatives each supervisor manages. The survey results indicate that in Outbound call centers, supervisors have the largest number of customer representatives to supervise (a ratio of 15:1) and in Inbound Only call centers, supervisors have the smallest number (a ratio of 9:1).
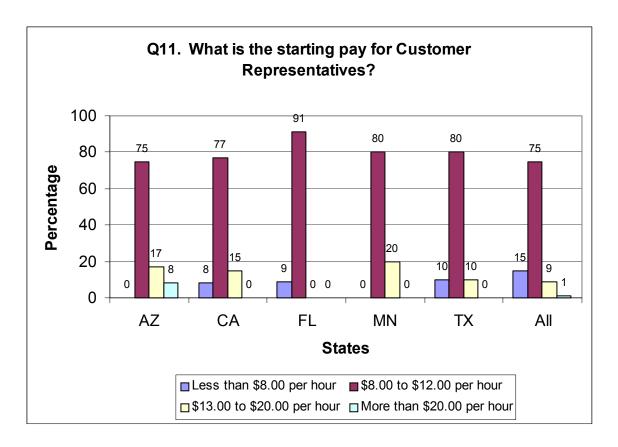
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Organizational Design

Turnover Rate

Turnover* is determined by comparing the number of customer representatives who leave the call center each year reported (Q 8) in the survey (i.e., quit, involuntary termination, promotion, and transfer) to the average monthly number of customer representatives (i.e., headcount) reported in the survey (Q 9). Turnover includes voluntary (e.g., promotions) and involuntary turnover (e.g., terminations). The survey results indicate that turnover is highest in Outbound Only call centers (52%) and lower in Inbound Only call centers (40%). The national average turnover for call centers is 45%.
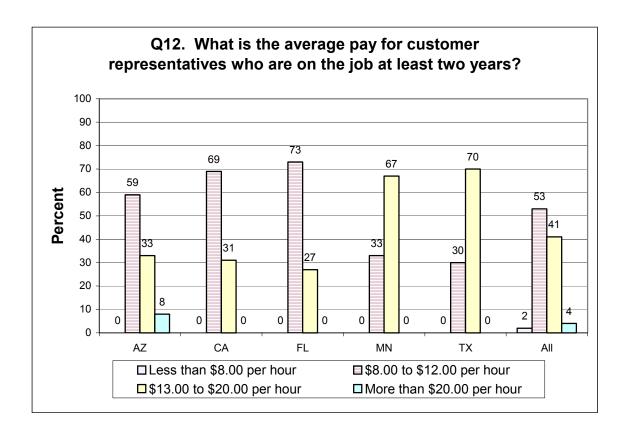
*Turnover is calculated by dividing Q8 by Q9.

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Compensation

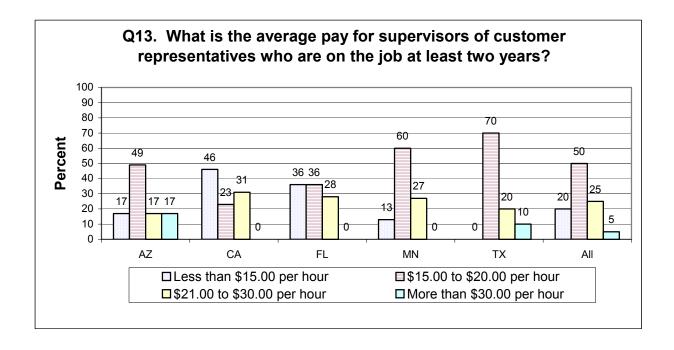**Q11. What is the starting pay for Customer Representatives?**

The survey results indicate that the average starting pay for new customer representatives is in the range of $8 - $12 per hour (75%). This is true for all states. A small portion of customer representatives receive less than $8 per hour (15%) and this varies considerably from state to state. A smaller portion of customer representatives receive $13 to $20 per hour (9%) as starting pay. Again, this varies from state to state with Minnesota paying the greatest amount (20% pay $13 to $20 per hour).

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Compensation

Q12. What is the average pay for customer representatives who are on the job at least two years?

Chart — Percent by state (AZ, CA, FL, MN, TX, All):

State	Less than $8.00 per hour	$8.00 to $12.00 per hour	$13.00 to $20.00 per hour	More than $20.00 per hour
AZ	0	59	33	8
CA	0	69	31	0
FL	0	73	27	0
MN	0	33	67	0
TX	0	30	70	0
All	2	53	41	4

Legend:
☐ Less than $8.00 per hour ☐ $8.00 to $12.00 per hour
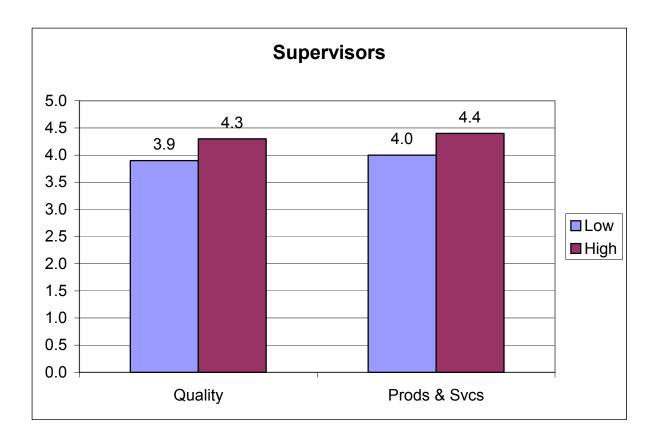☐ $13.00 to $20.00 per hour ☐ More than $20.00 per hour

The survey results indicate that, overall, the average pay for customer representatives on the job for two years or more is in the range of $8 - $12 per hour (53%), similar to the findings for starting pay. However, a large portion of customer representatives receive $13 - $20 per hour (41%) and this varies considerably from state to state with Minnesota and Texas paying the most after two years. A small portion of customer representatives receive more than $20 per hour (4%).

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Compensation

Q13. What is the average pay for supervisors of customer representatives who are on the job at least two years?

The survey results indicate that the average pay for supervisors on the job for two years or more is in the range of $15 - $20 per hour (50%). This is true for all states except Florida where equal proportions reported paying less than $15 per hour and $15 - $20 per hour and California where many (46%) receive less than $15 per hour. A large portion of supervisors receive $21 - $30 per hour (25%) and this varies from state to state with California, Florida and Minnesota most often paying $21 - $30 per hour. A small portion of supervisors receive more than $30 per hour (5%).
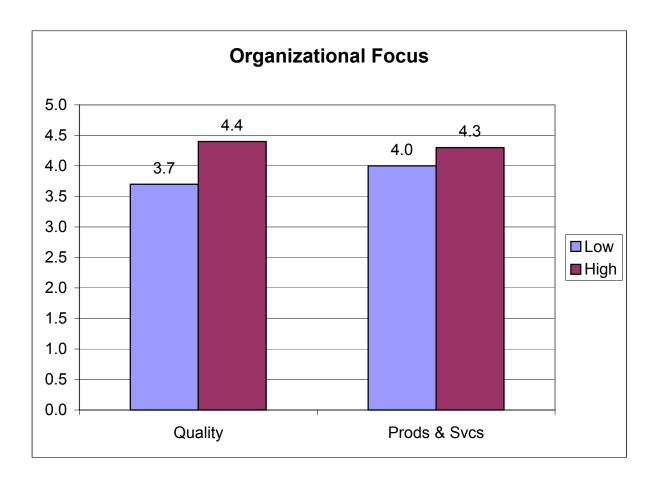
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High Performance Organizations

Supervisors

This chart presents the impact of supervisor effectiveness (High Performance questions 2, 5, and 9*) on two important organizational goals, (1) perception of the **quality** of service (High Performance question 8) provided by the call center and (2) perception of the competitiveness of the organization's **products and services** (High Performance question 11). The survey results indicate that when supervisors are rated higher, ratings of customer service quality are higher (4.3 vs. 3.9) and ratings of products and service are also higher (4.4 vs. 4.0) than when supervisors are rated lower.

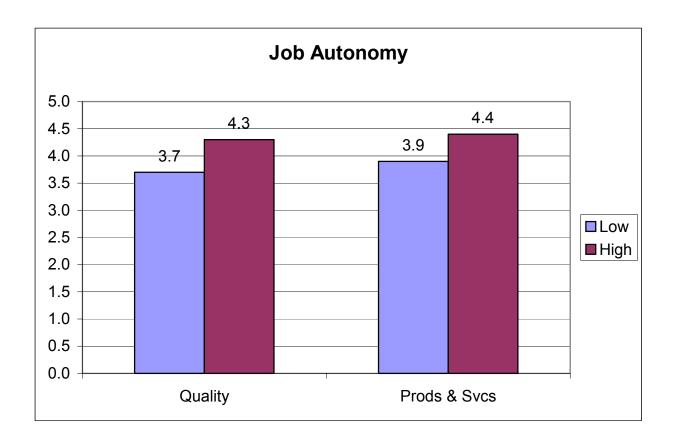*High scores are those above the average of all respondents and low scores are those below the average.

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High Performance Organizations

Organizational Focus

This chart presents the impact of organizational focus (High Performance questions 7, 10, and 13*) on two important organizational goals, (1) perception of the **quality** of service (High Performance question 8) provided by the call center and (2) perception of the competitiveness of the organization's **products and services** (High Performance question 11). The survey results indicate that when organizations are rated higher in their focus on customer service quality, ratings of customer service quality are higher (4.4 vs. 3.7) and ratings of products and service are also somewhat higher (4.3 vs. 4.0) than when organizations are rated lower.

*High scores are those above the average of all respondents and low scores are those below the average.

High Performance Organizations

Job Autonomy

This chart presents the impact of job autonomy (High Performance questions 1, 2, and 13*) on two important organizational goals, (1) perception of the **quality** of service (High Performance question 8) provided by the call center and (2) perception of the competitiveness of the organization's **products and services** (High Performance question 11). The survey results indicate that when customer representatives rate their job autonomy higher, ratings of customer service quality are higher (4.3 vs. 3.7) and ratings of products and service are also higher (4.4 vs. 3.9) than when job autonomy is rated lower.

*High scores are those above the average of all respondents and low scores are those below the average.

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High Performance Organizations

Training

This chart presents the impact of training (High Performance questions 9, and 12*) on two important organizational goals, (1) perception of the **quality** of service (High Performance question 8) provided by the call center and (2) perception of the competitiveness of the organization's **products and services** (High Performance question 11). The survey results indicate that when customer representatives rate their training higher, ratings of customer service quality are higher (4.3 vs. 3.7) and ratings of products and service are somewhat higher (4.3 vs. 4.0) than when training is rated lower.

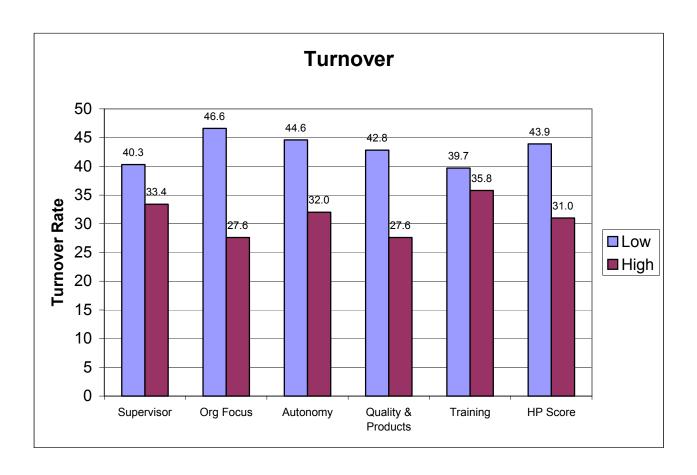*High scores are those above the average of all respondents and low scores are those below the average.

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High Performance Organizations

High Performance Score

This chart presents the relationship between high and low scores* on the High Performance portion of the survey (sum total of all 14 questions) and two important organizational goals, (1) perception of the **quality** of service (High Performance question 8) provided by the call center and (2) perception of the competitiveness of the organization's **products and services** (High Performance question 11). The survey results indicate that when customer representatives rate their organization high on most High Performance survey questions, ratings of customer service quality are higher (4.4 vs. 3.7) and ratings of products and service are somewhat higher (4.4 vs. 3.9) than when High Performance scores are lower.

*High scores are those above the average of all respondents and low scores are those below the average.

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High Performance Organizations

Turnover

This chart presents the relationship between high and low scores* on the High Performance dimensions (supervisor, organizational focus, job autonomy, quality & products, and training) and the total HP Score and turnover. The survey results indicate that for all dimensions and the total HP score, turnover is lower when high performance scores are higher. The greatest impacts are noted for organizational focus and job autonomy. Based upon these results, turnover can be reduced 19% by achieving a high score on the organizational focus dimension, and 12.6% by achieving a high score on job autonomy.

*High scores are those above the average of all respondents and low scores are those below the average.