KURA

Service Leaders vs Laggards:
New research points to a potential leadership crisis
within the contact centre industry

- **New report provides a detailed snapshot of views, issues, and drivers for change from senior decision-makers within the contact centre industry**
- **Over a third of leaders believe their advisor's performance is "fair" or "poor"**
- **Paper finds that decision-makers aim to prioritise customer satisfaction, but are increasingly impaired by technology unable to match rising customer expectation**

Kura and Inisoft commissioned ContactBabel, a leading contact centre analyst firm, to survey over 100 senior decision makers and understand the state of the industry from a leader's perspective.

Over a third (35%) of leaders believe their advisor's performance was only "fair" at best. This is coupled with the fact that only 21% see agent attrition as a key driver for organisational change. Perhaps most surprisingly, less than half (49%) of decision makers see their customer satisfaction score as the most important driver for change.

CEO of Kura, Brain Bannatyne said: "These insights, directly from decision makers themselves, highlight the potential disconnect between leaders and the agents who are powering the business. Not so long ago, contact centres in the UK were driven solely by cost efficiency, but today, customer service is a commercial imperative. Up against the need to provide better service, is the sustained increase in customers' expectations - from speed of response to easy access, efficient handling and ultimately, a positive experience. It's never been more important for businesses to invest in their people now, to empower them so they're able to deliver the type of service customers expect."

In the survey of 100 senior UK contact centre decision-makers, only 28% of managers stated holding either primary or secondary responsibilities for customer service strategy, despite having the day-to-day responsibility for the contact centre's performance. This highlights a potential disconnect

between those with a first-hand understanding of how to best support agents and those who have the authority to implement change.

69% of UK contact centres view first contact resolution as being the number 1 factor in improving customer experience within the contact centre. The onus is on businesses to offer employees sufficient training to be able to achieve this.

Investigating ways to improve customer service and experience, 79% said that investment in technology would be their first or second option for adapting to changing consumer needs, while 73% said improved quality assurance measurement and training was required to adhere to changing customer requirements. 79% said increased software skills were required.

Given the rise in customer expectations, and advances in technology in this area, the paper finds that the solution is two-fold. Most new agents encounter a steep learning curve to understand the intricate, multiple systems that many contact centres use. There is a demand for unified, omni-channel agent desktops that empower employees to serve their customers whilst reducing errors and call handling times. This approach also provides a dynamic view of the customer in real-time.

In addition, the research highlights a need for contact-centre staff to have a sophisticated knowledge base and emotional intelligence, to provide tailored and appropriate customer contact.

Brain Bannatyne added: "The evolution of the agents' role has outpaced many of the systems and processes supporting them. We know that most advisors – over 90%, currently use multiple applications within a call – causing many challenges for advisors who are increasingly involved in more complex interactions. The world of customer contact is only going to get more complex and demanding, requiring new skills and systems to raise the bar even higher. Contact centre leaders should act now to empower their agents to deliver the customer experience that their businesses and customers demand."

Arceeb Moughal, Director of Commercial, Kura & Oonagh McBride, Head of Inisoft, will be speaking at Steve Hurst's Engage Annual conference in London, 13th November. They will reveal some of the key learnings from this research and explain how the knowledge can be implemented in the contact centre. Kura will also be hosting a stand at the CCA Convention in Glasgow which takes place on the

15th and 16th November. The CCA will discuss the second phase of this research which moves from contact centre leaders to the perspective from advisors themselves.

About KURA and Inisoft

Kura provides award winning outsourced contact centre services from its four locations across the UK. Our software subsidiary, Inisoft, develops omni-channel customer engagement solutions, including unified agent desktops, which are sold globally and used by many leading brands.   Kura is in business because we want to help people to develop and reach their full potential. We're building a culture that shifts the mind-set from focusing on "things and stuff" to "people and behaviour". We call this process "Crossing the Bridge". Our vision is, to one day, be recognised as "Unrivalled in Developing People".

To find out more, please visit www.wearekura.com or www.inisoft.com .