



What Customer Support Professionals want in 2026

The expectations, priorities and hiring trends shaping the Customer Support market.

The Customer Support market continues to evolve as candidates become more selective about where they work and employers face increasing pressure to attract and retain high-performing talent. While salary remains important, conversations across the market reveal a broader shift towards flexibility, progression opportunities, workplace culture and efficient hiring processes.

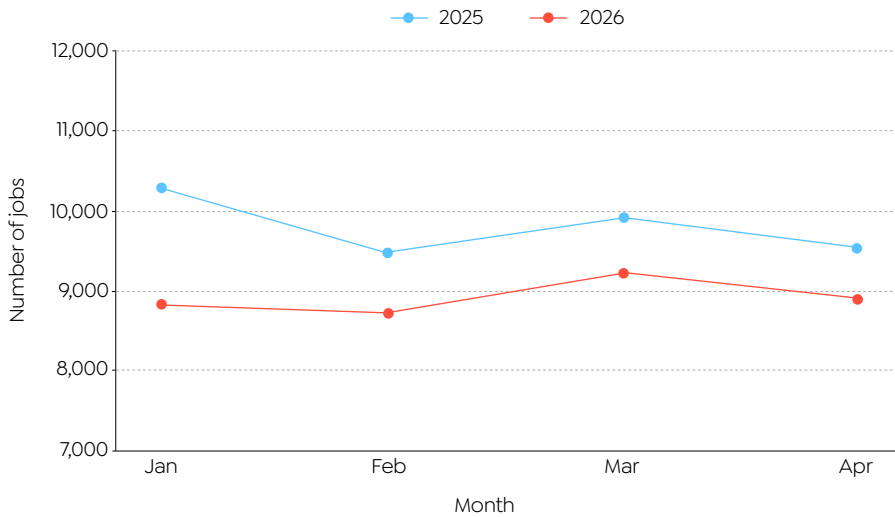
Drawing on recruiter insight and candidate feedback, we explore what Customer Support professionals are looking for in 2026, the skills employers value most, and what businesses can do to remain competitive in a changing market.

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Customer support hiring

After significant hiring activity across customer support functions in recent years, vacancy growth has stabilised. While overall posting volumes have softened compared to previous peaks, demand for high-quality support professionals remains consistent.

2025 vs 2026 customer support job volumes



The market has become increasingly selective. Employers are prioritising candidates who can demonstrate strong customer service fundamentals alongside adaptability, emotional intelligence and the ability to work effectively across multiple channels.

Larger customer support operations are also revisiting outsourcing models. While India remains a key hub for processing functions, South Africa is seeing growing investment in voice-based customer support due to its strong talent pool and customer service capabilities.

The challenge for employers is no longer simply attracting applicants. It is identifying candidates who combine technical capability with the interpersonal skills required to deliver exceptional customer experiences.

Top three skills in demand



Emotional intelligence



Reliability



Multilingual communication

What else are employers prioritising?

While technical proficiency remains important, hiring managers are also focusing on behavioural attributes during the assessment process.

Additional areas employers value include:

- CRM and customer support platform experience
- Problem-solving ability
- Adaptability to changing processes and technology
- Positive attitude and work ethic
- Complaint resolution experience
- Stakeholder communication skills
- Ability to manage KPIs



What candidates want from their careers

What does good progression look like?

44% Increased earning potential

21% Opportunity to lead

18% Clear targets to hit

17% Regular feedback

The results highlight that progression is being viewed through a financial lens. While leadership opportunities and development remain important, candidates are looking for visible pathways that lead to higher earnings and long-term career advancement.

Adapting to remote and flexible work

Flexibility remains one of the biggest drivers of candidate decision-making in Customer Support. Hybrid working, flexible hours and greater control over schedules are now expected by many professionals, particularly those balancing family commitments.

What matters most when choosing between similar roles?

39% Working patterns and flexibility

28% Benefits and stability

19% Progression opportunities

13% Salary alone



“Although still a priority, the strongest candidates are no longer moving purely for salary increases. They want to understand where a role can take them in 12, 24 and 36 months.”

Nicola Burgin, Associate Director

What else are candidates prioritising?

> Career Development

Candidates want clear progression routes, structured training and visible investment in their long-term growth.

> Strong Leadership

Good management and supportive leadership teams have become major factors in both attraction and retention.

> Positive Culture

Professionals are assessing company values, employee engagement and workplace environment before making career decisions.

Competitive salaries

While candidate availability has increased, competitive salaries remain essential for attracting experienced talent. Employers are becoming more flexible with salary bands, recognising the need to reward relevant skills and experience.

Job Title	Range - UK Wide
Call & Contact Centre	
Call Centre Representative / Advisor	£24,000 - £34,000
Call Centre Team Leader	£28,000 - £40,000
Call Centre Team Manager	£30,000 - £42,000
Contact Centre Manager	£40,000 - £65,000
Customer Service & Support	
Multi-lingual Customer Service Advisor	£25,000 - £33,000
Customer Service Representative / Advisor	£24,000 - £34,000
Customer Service Team Leader	£28,000 - £40,000
Customer Success & Experience	
Customer Success Executive	£28,000 - £38,000
Customer Success Manager	£35,000 - £55,000
Customer Experience Manager	£40,000 - £60,000
Specialist Customer Support	
Collections Advisor	£26,000 - £32,000
Complaints Handler	£27,000 - £34,000
Service Delivery Coordinator	£26,000 - £35,000
Retention Specialist	£28,000 - £40,000

Regional salary trends

London continues to offer the highest salaries, but regional pay gaps have narrowed. Strong talent pools across Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Glasgow and Edinburgh are helping employers access skilled professionals without significant salary disparities.

Market demand

Team Leader hiring

Demand for Team Leaders remains strong, particularly for candidates with coaching, people management and KPI management experience. As a result, experienced leaders continue to command salaries towards the upper end of market ranges.

Multilingual talent

Multilingual professionals continue to attract salary premiums due to limited availability and strong demand. Candidates with French, German, Dutch, Nordic or Arabic language skills remain particularly sought after.

Specialist skills

Collections, complaints handling, customer retention and account management experience continue to command higher salaries. As customer-facing positions become more commercially focused, employers are willing to pay more for professionals who can balance customer experience with business outcomes.

Why candidates are moving jobs

Employers continue to lose talent for several recurring reasons:

- > Limited progression opportunities
- > Rigid working arrangements
- > Salary not keeping pace with market rates
- > Poor management and leadership
- > Burnout caused by workload pressures
- > Inflexible shift patterns
- > Lack of job stability

Where employers are losing candidates

One of the clearest themes emerging from candidate feedback is frustration with lengthy hiring processes. Drawn-out recruitment processes remain one of the biggest frustrations, particularly when interview stages feel disproportionate to the level of the role.

Candidates report losing interest when employers:

- > Provide limited communication or feedback
- > Delay decision-making
- > Fail to showcase culture and values
- > Present unclear progression opportunities

The impact of AI and technology

AI continues to transform Customer Support functions, with chatbots and automation increasingly handling routine enquiries and administrative tasks. Some larger contact centres are reducing headcount or replacing fewer leavers as technology absorbs lower-complexity interactions. At the same time, growing investment in technology

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and cyber security is creating new opportunities across customer-facing and sales support functions. As automation becomes more common, employers are placing greater value on professionals who can manage complex customer issues, build relationships and deliver a high-quality customer experience.



“Candidates want employers to sell the opportunity just as much as they are expected to sell themselves. The organisations winning talent are moving quickly, communicating clearly and demonstrating why their business is different.”

Fiona Norman, Director

What this means for employers in 2026

1. Prioritise flexibility

Hybrid and flexible working arrangements are now a key attraction tool rather than a differentiator.

2. Make progression visible

Candidates want to understand exactly how they can develop, earn more and advance within the business.

3. Simplify hiring processes

Reduce interview stages, provide timely feedback and avoid delays when making offers.

Customer Support professionals are moving with clear expectations. They want flexibility, progression, supportive leadership and competitive pay.

The employers attracting and retaining the strongest talent are those that recognise these priorities and build hiring processes, cultures and career pathways around them.



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