Call centers around the world have been criticized for poor working conditions, intensive monitoring practices, and tight control over the employees. These conditions cause high levels of stress, anxiety and burnout among call center employees. UNI Global Union’s ICTS sector, which represents more than three million employees in the communication industry, has released a ground-breaking report as part of its annual Call Center Action Month. The report analyzes the health effects caused by performance management in call centers, and finds that:

**Effects on well-being:** Narrow job design, high use of scripts, intense monitoring and punishment for failure to reach targets damage employees’ physical and psychological health and cause musculoskeletal disorders, stress, anxiety and burnout etc.

**Reasons for these effects:** These management practices cause harm because they reduce employees’ control of their work, their ability to develop and use skills, and their ability to engage emotionally with customers.

**Outcome on performance:** Call center management practices that put a lot of pressure on employees’ physical and psychological health tend to perform worse than professional call centers.

UNI’s report shows that a professional model of call center management where employees have more control over the work can actually both improve employee well-being and increase performance. The professional model requires changes in four areas:

1. **Cross-train employees to handle different call types.** If employees are trained to handle different call types and have the opportunity to use a variety of skills, both physical and psychological strain can be reduced.

2. **Increase employee control over working methods and working times and reduce use of scripts.** If employees have more control over work methods and what is said to the customer, and if they are involved in the scheduling of their working hours and breaks, the employees can better deal with the demands of their jobs and reduce the negative health effects.

3. **Adopt a developmental approach to monitoring.** If the frequency and intensity of the monitoring is limited, and if monitoring is carried out to identify skills training needs rather than to discipline or dismiss employees, employees’ stress and anxiety can be greatly reduced.

4. **Increase employee involvement in setting performance targets.** If employees can participate in the setting of performance targets to make them fair and consistent, their well-being will increase.

Some large, high-performance call centers have already implemented these changes and have created a work climate where employees are treated as professionals and are given more power to decide how and when they work, and have in the process managed to improve customer service ratings. You too should benefit from such advances - request a meeting with your managers today about implementing the changes in your call center!
UNI needs your help to improve call centers around the world . . .

Participate in our survey today!

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ICTSCallCenterMonthEnglish