

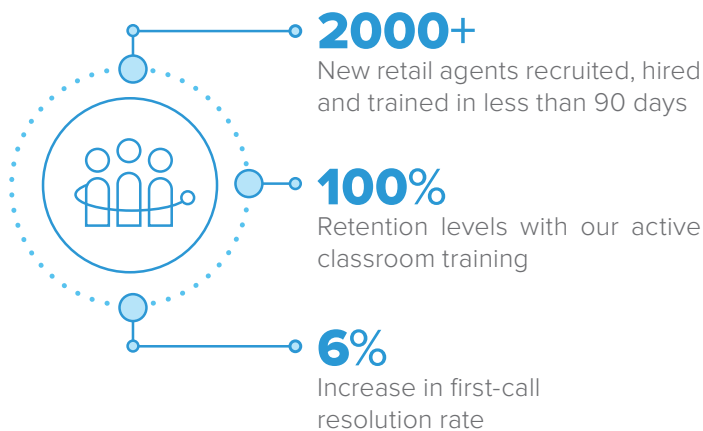
CASE STUDY: SYKES HELPS RETAILERS RAMP UP FOR SEASONAL DEMANDS



> The Background

When retailers need to ramp up for holidays and other periods of peak demand, they need speed, flexibility and experience. Reports indicated that retailers hired roughly 615,000 seasonal employees in 2016, according to the National Retail Federation. Sales and customer care centers recognize peak shopping seasons — holidays, back-to-school, summer sales, new product launches and more — that require large-scale hiring.

> Major Highlights



> Challenge Presented

Retail seasonality creates several challenges for customer care services. They need to quickly hire and train large numbers of the right people without sacrificing quality. Today's tech-savvy consumers can locate product information online and pose complex questions which require well-trained, proficient customer service agents to resolve. Retailers look for a customer care provider that hires successfully, trains effectively and delivers flexibility to provide quality service every time.

> Our Solution

SYKESHome is a sophisticated solution that meets the customer service demands of peak retail seasons. This work-at-home system involves hiring exceptional people, implementing lean-forward training and continually delivering flexibility to meet the seasonal needs of today's biggest retail brands.

Hiring Exceptional People

Hiring smart — finding the right person for the job — is part art and part science. Decades of experience and data have helped us understand what works and develop an effective approach to large-scale hiring.

- Outline specific requirements: We work with our partners to define the brand-specific requirements and skills necessary for our employees to succeed. Defining the work experience, sales skills, education, certifications and computer abilities required for the job enables us to screen potential agents for those prerequisites. Specialized skills, such as proficiency in a particular language or subject matter expertise, are also considered during selection.

- Target talent through online assessment: Our online application process allows for quick and easy identification of qualified agents by screening their information for the criteria we've previously outlined with the brand. We also test applicants using real-life simulations and models online. This allows us to evaluate applicants' customer service and sales skills, such as phone manner, tone of voice, service fluency and multitasking competency.
- Involve the Operations team: After candidates pass initial screening, one-on-one interviews are conducted by their prospective manager. Involving the operations team in the hiring process better enables us to hire agents who are a good fit with the team and product, and who exhibit the appropriate skills and personality. Our familial culture inspires employees to live and breathe the brand of both SYKES and our partner, avoiding any potential brand degradation.

Implementing Lean-Forward Training

In traditional training, the student listens while the instructor talks. However, people only retain about 20 percent of what they hear, as opposed to 90 percent of what they do. That's why we've flipped that approach, so our new hires learn by doing while the instructor facilitates and guides. Learners are further engaged through carefully constructed tasks that give them hands-on access to the information and systems they will use on the job. Enriched-media exercises and gamification keep them engaged, while animated content that instructs using stories helps improve connection and retention.

Delivering Flexibility

The SYKESHome network of virtual agents delivers exceptional scalability. We recruit across North America, Germany and the UK anytime a retail ramp requires it. The flexible nature of at-home agents makes the SYKESHome network the perfect source for quick and effective ramp-ups to meet seasonal demands. We've also perfected training techniques to ensure each agent is fluent in client culture, branding and products.

SYKESHome is not just about seasonal employees — we have a core of 3,700+ at-home agents who have serviced our clients' accounts year after year. These core agents handle the volume as seasonal employees are hired and trained.

Flexibility is so important that we give clients the benefit of both our virtual network and our brick-and-mortar structure. This is possible through our cloud-based portal, OneSYKES. OneSYKES provides the flexibility to simultaneously train virtual and brick-and-mortar agents. We can also increase capacity by adding more virtual agents or shifting interactions to trained agents in a contact center in the U.S. or around the globe.

> Partnership Outcomes

Through our hiring strategy, training program, and flexible network and infrastructure, we provide retail clients the fast, nimble and competent service they need to meet seasonal and peak demand.

- SYKESHome enables us to recruit, hire, train and launch any program in 60 to 90 days.
- We successfully graduated almost 2,000 new retail agents in a single seasonal ramp-up.
- An impressive team of 92 facilitators conducted training for the seasonal ramp-up, with many new retail training classes running at the same time.
- Our active classroom training helps retain new agents — some of our active classroom courses have retention levels at 100 percent — by keeping them engaged and better preparing them for customer interactions. Confident agents stay.
- Our ability to scale quickly and effectively saves clients millions of dollars by avoiding the consequences of understaffing. Shorter hold times, lower abandon rates, higher first-call resolution and positive brand perception are all potential improvements our solution offers. One client saw first-call resolution rate increase by six percent using our proven methods!