# Call Centre Team Leader interview questions

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## What to expect

Interviews for a call centre team leader usually focus on your ability to coach staff, manage live performance metrics and handle escalations. Employers want to see that you can balance service targets with people leadership and that you understand the operational rhythm of a contact centre.

- **Behavioural:** Questions about how you have coached, motivated or managed a team member in the past, using the STAR method.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical situations such as a sudden spike in call volumes or an angry customer, testing your judgement under pressure.
- **Technical or metrics:** Questions about how you use average handle time, first-contact resolution, workforce management tools and quality assurance to drive performance.
- **Process:** Questions about rostering, coverage planning and how you structure a shift or a week for your team.
- **People leadership:** Questions about delivering feedback, handling conflict and keeping a team engaged through change.

The process often starts with a phone screen with a recruiter or HR, then a face-to-face or video interview with the hiring manager, typically the call centre manager. Some employers include a panel with an operations manager or a peer team leader. You may be asked to complete a practical exercise, such as reviewing a call recording or responding to a written scenario. Final stages can include a meet-and-greet with the team or a second interview.

## 1. Tell me about a time you coached a team member who was not meeting their performance targets. What did you do and what was the result?

**Why they ask**

This probes your coaching ability and how you handle underperformance, which is a core part of the role.

**How to structure your answer**

Use STAR: describe the situation, the task (your responsibility to improve their performance), the action you took (specific coaching steps, feedback, support), and the result (improvement in metrics or behaviour).

> **Example answer**
>
> *"In my last role, one of my representatives had an average handle time well above the team target and was receiving lower customer satisfaction scores. I sat with them and listened to a few of their calls. We identified that they were spending too long on hold researching answers. I set up a side-by-side coaching session and gave them a quick-reference guide for common queries. Over the next month, their handle time dropped to within target and their customer satisfaction scores improved. They also told me they felt more confident on the phones."*

## 2. You notice that call abandonment rates have spiked during your shift. What do you do?

**Why they ask**

This tests your ability to react to live operational pressure and make quick decisions to protect service levels.

**How to structure your answer**

Walk through your immediate actions, then your short-term and longer-term responses. Show you prioritise customer experience while supporting your team.

**Example answer**

*“First, I would check the real-time dashboard to see where the spike is coming from, whether it is a queue, a specific skill group or a system issue. I would then reassign available staff from lower-priority tasks to the phones, and if needed, step on the phones myself. I would also check if any representatives need immediate support with complex calls. After the immediate spike, I would review what caused it, such as a roster gap or a new product issue, and adjust the plan for the rest of the shift. I would keep my manager informed if the situation continues.”*

## 3. How do you use metrics like average handle time and first-contact resolution to manage your team's performance?

**Why they ask**

Employers want to know you understand the key contact centre metrics and can use them to coach rather than just police.

**How to structure your answer**

Explain what the metrics tell you, then how you act on them without compromising customer service. Give an example of a trade-off.

**Example answer**

*“I use average handle time and first-contact resolution together because one without the other can be misleading. A low handle time might mean calls are being rushed and customers are calling back. I look at the trend over a week, then drill into individual calls to see what is happening. For example, if a representative has a high first-contact resolution but long handle times, I might coach them on efficiency without losing quality. If a representative has low first-contact resolution, I focus on product knowledge and problem solving. I share the team's performance against targets in daily huddles so everyone knows where we stand.”*

## 4. How do you build a roster that balances coverage with staff preferences and fatigue?

**Why they ask**

This assesses your workforce planning skills and your ability to manage a seven-day or extended-hours operation fairly.

**How to structure your answer**

Outline a step-by-step approach, covering forecasting, staff input, compliance with any enterprise agreement, and contingency planning.

**Example answer**

*“I start with the forecast from the workforce management team, looking at historical call volumes and any upcoming campaigns. I map that against staff availability, skills and any agreed preferences or restrictions. I make sure the roster complies with our enterprise agreement and fatigue management guidelines. I build in some flexibility for unplanned leave by cross-training staff and having a small on-call list. I publish the roster well in advance and check in with the team to address any issues. If gaps appear, I look at overtime or shifting breaks before bringing in agency staff.”*

## 5. Describe a time you had to deliver difficult feedback to a team member. How did you handle it?

**Why they ask**

This looks at your people leadership, sensitivity and ability to have honest conversations that improve performance.

**How to structure your answer**

Use STAR, but emphasise the action: how you prepared, how you delivered the feedback, and how you followed up.

**Example answer**

*“One of my representatives was consistently not following the call script, which was affecting compliance. I arranged a private meeting and started by asking how they felt the calls were going. I then showed them a recording and pointed out specific moments where the script was missed. I explained why the script mattered for compliance and customer understanding. We agreed on a plan to practise together for a week. I followed up with another recording review and gave positive feedback when they improved. They ended up meeting compliance standards and said the feedback helped them understand the reason behind the script.”*

## 6. Tell me about a time you handled an escalated complaint from a customer. What was the outcome?

**Why they ask**

This probes your customer service judgement and your ability to resolve complex issues that frontline staff could not close.

**How to structure your answer**

Use STAR, focusing on how you de-escalated the situation, what you did to resolve it and what you learned.

**Example answer**

*“A customer called back after a billing error had not been fixed. They were very frustrated. I listened without interrupting, apologised for the inconvenience and confirmed I would take ownership of the issue. I reviewed the account, found that a credit had not been applied correctly, and fixed it while they were on the line. I also arranged for a confirmation email and a follow-up call from the billing team. The customer calmed down and later left positive feedback. I used that case to coach the team on checking credits before closing a call.”*