

How to Utilize Your Call Center Software to Optimize KPIs

Knowing these metrics and what they mean for your business can help you redefine and optimize your call center strategy.



Focus on the Right Metrics

Whether it's sales or customer support, **call center software is a must for businesses looking to improve the experience they consistently deliver to customers.** The data collected by your call center software is huge and varied. Taking a look at the Big Data provided by your call center software can help your business be more effective and efficient. As you establish baseline metrics, identify areas for improvement, and look to increase company efficiency, there are a few KPIs that you'll want to measure.

When it comes to call center success, meeting the needs of customers is of the utmost importance. Your call center software is collecting data such as first contact resolution rates and agent utilization rates that can help you cut costs and deliver a great customer experience. Knowing about these metrics and what they mean for your business can help you redefine and optimize your call center strategy for greater success.

Different metrics will mean more to different businesses; there's no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to call center success.

In a 2012 study, Aberdeen Group surveyed businesses regarding their contact center workforce management (WFM) activities. Because many businesses understand the value of repeat customers, it makes sense that the top objectives driving these activities revolve around the customers. 48% cited their top objective as improving the quality of customer interactions, followed by 46% citing improved agent productivity and utilization¹.

1. "Workforce Management in the Contact Center," Aberdeen Group, June 2012.

Another 37% cited improving overall response time to customer needs. In order to improve your call center's performance and help your teams meet their goals, focus on these KPIs and utilize the data provided by your call center software to optimize each.

The call center metrics you should be measuring are:

- First Contact Resolution
- Cost-per-Contact
- Customer Satisfaction Rating
- Agent Utilization Rate/Occupancy
- Average Handle Time



First Contact Resolution (FCR) and Cost Per Contact (CPC)

Customers want to call in once, and that's it. Calling in multiple times about the same topic or needing to speak to more than one person from a business isn't ideal and can damage the customer's experience. Aberdeen found *that the average first call resolution rate (FCR) for top performers is 75% while the industry average is 62%*. Your call center software should provide you with insights into repeat calls and the corresponding agents. Capture the details about repeat calls and take a look at their effect on your business. More repeat calls often means lower customer satisfaction, longer wait times, and a greater cost per contact.

Measuring FCR:

There are a number of routes you can take to measure first contact resolution. You can track repeat calls, use post-call surveys sent to customers, use live customer feedback, and utilize agent logs. Asking a customer if they've called about an issue before and asking if the issue was resolved at the end of a call, via any of these channels, will provide you with a wealth of information about whether or not your team is able to resolve calls upon first contact.

Using Your Data:

Once you've collected enough data from each agent to determine individual FCRs and a company call center average, identify issues that could be hindering your organizations performance such as inadequate training, routing issues, or customer knowledge. Then, talk with your agents to get their take on why customers call back; your data could be missing some key points. Your call center software will allow you to benchmark your FCR and once you've taken steps towards improving it, based on the issues you identified, you'll be able to see performance variations.

If your FCR is at 65%, which is within the average range in the call center industry, *35% of your total contact volume will be coming from customers who are calling back* because their issues wasn't resolved on first contact. This could cost your business big. The cost-per-contact (CPC) is one key metric many call centers today are measuring and the cost of handling interactions is important to look at.

Measuring CPC:

The simplest way to calculate this number is to take the overall costs associated with answering a call divided by the number of calls you take. What do you allocate to that cost? Labor budget, telecommunications budgets and technology could all be taken into account. It's a very important measure for looking at the efficiency of your call center, but it's up to your business to determine what is allocated to the total overall cost number.

Using Your Data:

Cost per contact could fluctuate for a number of reasons. For example, a company pushing to grow revenue may find that their agents are spending more time to cross-sell or up-sell customers. A cost per contact increase could correlate to an increase in revenue per call or customer. Isolating this data wouldn't be wise, unless the initiatives at your business and call center remain consistent. Look at the impact of changes, such as a process change, and if there is there an associated revenue outcome or other benefit.

Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) Rating

A business is only successful when its customers are happy. While improving first contact resolution rate can lead to an increase in customer satisfaction, there are additional opportunities your business can take advantage of that will lead to an increase in customer satisfaction. Call center software that allows you to monitor agents in real-time can help you ensure a positive experience for the customer each and every time.

- **66% of consumers are willing to spend more with a company with they believe provides excellent customer service.**
- **75% of consumers say they have spent more with a company because of a history of positive customer service experiences.**
- **25% of consumers place a high value on excellent customer service.**

Measuring CSAT:

Your CSAT rating is dependent on the customer's overall satisfaction of the interaction or service.

Your call center software should automatically send out customer satisfaction survey's following a resolved phone call. Telephone surveys, a page on your company website, or call backs are all ways you can measure CSAT.

Using Your Data:

Once you've collected enough customer feedback to identify the overall current state of satisfaction, take a look the areas of your call center and business that are receiving the greatest feedback, in terms of both positive and negative responses. As your call center software reporting identifies these areas, either through a custom built report or notes from agents, use the information to refine your call handling process, company products, and other business processes.



2. "2012 Global Customer Service Barometer," American Express/Ebiquity, Feb 2012.

Average Handle Time (AHT) and Call Center Averages

Average handle time is a tricky metric to measure for a number of reasons. A low average handle time could indicate an especially efficient agent, but it could also indicate that one of your employees is rushing customers off calls. Over a period of time, people will pace themselves to meet a goal your company sets for the entire company. You want to ensure your average handle time isn't affecting your customer satisfaction.

Measuring AHT:

Average handle time is a measure of the average amount of work time related to calls, including both average talk time and after-call/wrap-up time. Some systems report it on an individual basis, breaking up these components, while others report it on an overall basis. It's a key measure that incorporates two elements.

Using Your Data:

Especially if you're just starting out, use your call center software to help you find that sweet spot between AHT and CSAT so that your business is handling calls efficiently without diminishing the customer's experience. Once you've found it, look for anomalies or trends that can help you identify who top performers – those with lower AHT, but high CSAT – are.

Call Center Averages:

These metrics are the ones you should be monitoring, but what do they really mean if you're unaware of how competitors and other call centers stack up? Below are some averages you can use to benchmark your business's call center success:

- **FCR:** The call center industry benchmark average is a 70% FCR rating².
- **CPC:** The average cost per call ranges from \$3.50 to \$32.74, depending on industry and product pricing³.
- **CSAT:** The average CSAT is 77% across industries including: banks/credit unions, subscription TV, cell phone service providers, insurance companies and more⁴.
- **OCC:** Typically, even the most efficient contact centers experience between 15 and 35 minutes of downtime in a given hour⁵.
- **AHT:** An average AHT is 285 seconds (4 minutes, 45 seconds)⁶.

3. First Call Resolution (FCR) – The Metric that Matters Most," SQM Group, 2012.

4. "Benchmarking in Call Centers," Diagnostic Strategies, 2011.

5. "Contact Center Satisfaction Index 2012," CFI Group, 2012.

6. "One Simple Way to Boost Agent Utilization: Social Media Customer Service," Global Response, December 2012.

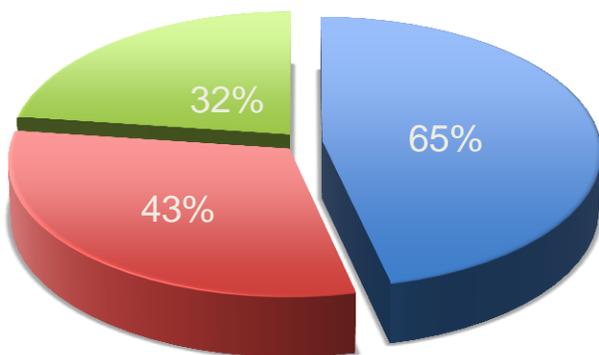
7. "AHT as call center management evaluation metric," Wim Rampen, 2009.

Agent Utilization Rate/Occupancy (OCC)

Agent productivity is often measured by the percentage of time spent on tasks that add value to the businesses, such as the number of sales or customer support resolutions made. Other examples include calls made/answered and the number of emails sent. Your call center software can help you improve this metric.

- **Best-in-class performers are able to decrease average handle time year-over-year by over 15%**
- **77% of organizations cite AHT as a top measure in assessing results of contact center workforce management programs**

Agent Productivity and Utilization are Top Goals¹



- Improve Agent Productivity and Utilization
- Improve forecast accuracy in predicting volume of customer interactions
- Improve the quality of customer interactions

Measuring OCC:

This big picture metric provides a high-level snapshot of how your agents are spending their time. To determine what your agent utilization rate is, take the total handle time and divide by it by the total time signed into the queue. OCC should be measured at both the individual and company levels. Individual measurements could help indicate top performers while a companywide measurement can help you identify faults and strengths in current processes.

More than half of all contact centers with active workforce initiatives indicate that improving agent utilization and productivity are top of mind when investing in contact center workforce management processes and technologies.

Using Your Data:

Once you've calculated OCC, take a look at whether it's running high or low. A high OCC could indicate your team needs more support. If this number is too high, too often, you could also be seeing a high turnover rate as representatives become burnt out. This number is a key metric in both your call center and workforce planning.

Summary

Your call center software provides you with a large amount of data, focused on KPIs, that you can use to evaluate individual call center agents, business processes, and the customer experience you're delivering as a whole. There are certain KPIs, such as CSAT and FCR, you can't ignore. In addition, your call center software should ensure collecting this data and then reporting it is easy. Additional trainings with your agents and analysts will allow you to make the most of the data and information afforded by your call center software. These metrics can help you optimize the efforts of your team and are worth paying attention to.

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