



Customer Experience Management & Improvement

Part One of The UK Contact Centre
Decision-Maker's Guide 2016 (14th Edition)



Just so you know, you're reading part one.

Part 1 of 3

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Most businesses say that customer satisfaction is vital to them.

Yet this raises more questions: how 'satisfied' do customers have to be? And what do customers want from contact centres? Quite simply, they would like to be answered quickly by a person who is able to help them without passing them around, and have the correct answer given to them quickly by someone with whom they feel comfortable talking. Additionally, the business has to deliver on the reason the customer is calling in the first place - by sending out the purchased item promptly, changing the database details or refunding money, for example. So the contact centre does not stand alone: it orchestrates the rest of the business.

Various pieces of research show that the benefits to a business that are made from increasing customer satisfaction are non-linear: if a customer is very happy, they are likely to be worth a great deal in additional direct purchases and possibly more importantly, will act as a brand advocate for your company. A customer who is merely 'satisfied' will not have anywhere near the same positive impact on revenues or profits, and is likely to be a good deal less loyal. A contact centre can achieve all the operational performance measurements which it sets for itself, without actually being successful.

If the customer does not hang up the phone feeling that she has been treated appropriately and that her query has been resolved to her satisfaction, then that counts as a failure, regardless of how good the internal metrics may be. All too often, organising and ensuring your contact centre is working as effectively as possible can feel a lot like training an unpredictable puppy. By focusing on better managing the customer experience, we're confident that we can have you feeling like a wise old dog in no time.





In their time-precious lives, customers don't have time to paw for traditional surveys anymore. Instead we need to ask them for their thoughts in real-time, at the moments that matter, in an easy way and through the channels most convenient to them. However, arguably the most important aspect of all of this is asking the customer for their opinions in their own words – it is the powerful insight in these comments that has the ability to transform the contact centre and entire organisation.

As customers become more demanding and their expectations of what constitutes good service increase, then contact centres are forced to develop greater external focus.

This is in part due to the growth of outsourcing, which has introduced a new competitive edge to the business of handling calls. In addition, the greater choice available to customers in terms of suppliers means that customer retention is now as important as customer acquisition.

Without knowing what your customer thinks of your service, you cannot legislate for their requirements. A continuous tracking survey hosted by a third party is a useful piece of corporate intelligence. Surveys hosted on a SaaS platform have the advantage of being contact centre provider and equipment-agnostic. Businesses can continue using surveys non-stop as they outsource, switch suppliers or take their contact centre service back in-house, hence tracking the impact of these changes.



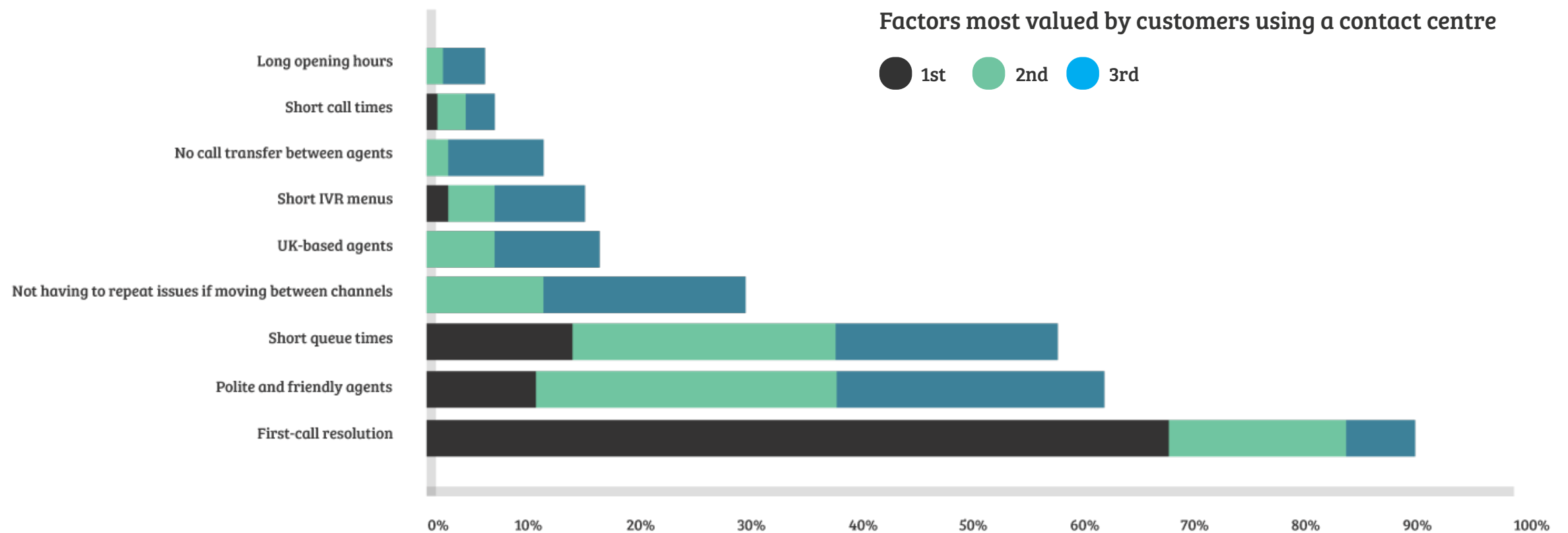


The factors in achieving Customer Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to choose the three most important factors impacting upon customer satisfaction from a list of eight, with the graph below showing the most popular choices. As with last year, the top choice was “first-call resolution”, with “polite and friendly agents”, and “short queue times” once again in second and third place, the latter acknowledging that the customer experience starts well before the agent’s greeting.

Factors most valued by customers using a contact centre

● 1st ● 2nd ● 3rd





Some contact centre managers also believe that having UK-based agents goes a long way to helping customer satisfaction, with 17% of respondents placing domestic agents in the top 3. Short call duration, which has been slipping as a primary metric for a number of years, was picked as a top 3 factor in achieving customer satisfaction by only 7% of the respondents this year, further evidence that we're barking up the wrong tree with average handle time and that it's becoming increasingly irrelevant in the modern day contact centre, in businesses' opinion at least: it would be interesting to see if customers agree.





When considering how the factors involved in keeping customers happy differ depending on whether it is a service or sales call, some conclusions can be drawn:

- First-contact resolution is still seen as the most important factor, albeit a higher proportion of service respondents (70%) place it in first, against 44% of sales contact centres.
- As a service call is perhaps more likely to require multiple agents to resolve it, 30% of service respondents place not having to repeat issues in the top 3, compared to 11% of sales contact centres.
- You never know when someone is having a ruff day, sales contact centres are more likely to believe that polite and friendly agents are key: 25% place this as the top priority, against only 5% of service respondents.
- Sales operations are far more likely than service agents to believe that UK-based agents are key to a positive customer experience (33% place this in their top 3, against only 14% of service operations). It may be that these types of contact centre are aware that there are usually easy alternatives for prospects to call, and do not wish to put off callers who do not like speaking with offshore agents.
- No sales respondents put short IVR menus in their top 3, compared with 18% of service respondents. This is likely to be because labyrinthine IVR menus are usually restricted to large service operations, whereas sales operations are more likely to have representatives who can sell any of the products, whereas service agents may be more specialised and work in specific departments.

Take a break...

You've earned it, but before you do, click the button below to get your hands on Part Two of The UK Contact Centre Decision-Maker's Guide, where we discuss techniques you can use to truly measure Customer Satisfaction.

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