



What Contact Centres Are Doing Right Now

How Do You Compare?

A Call Centre Helper Research Paper

(2023 Edition)

Sponsored by



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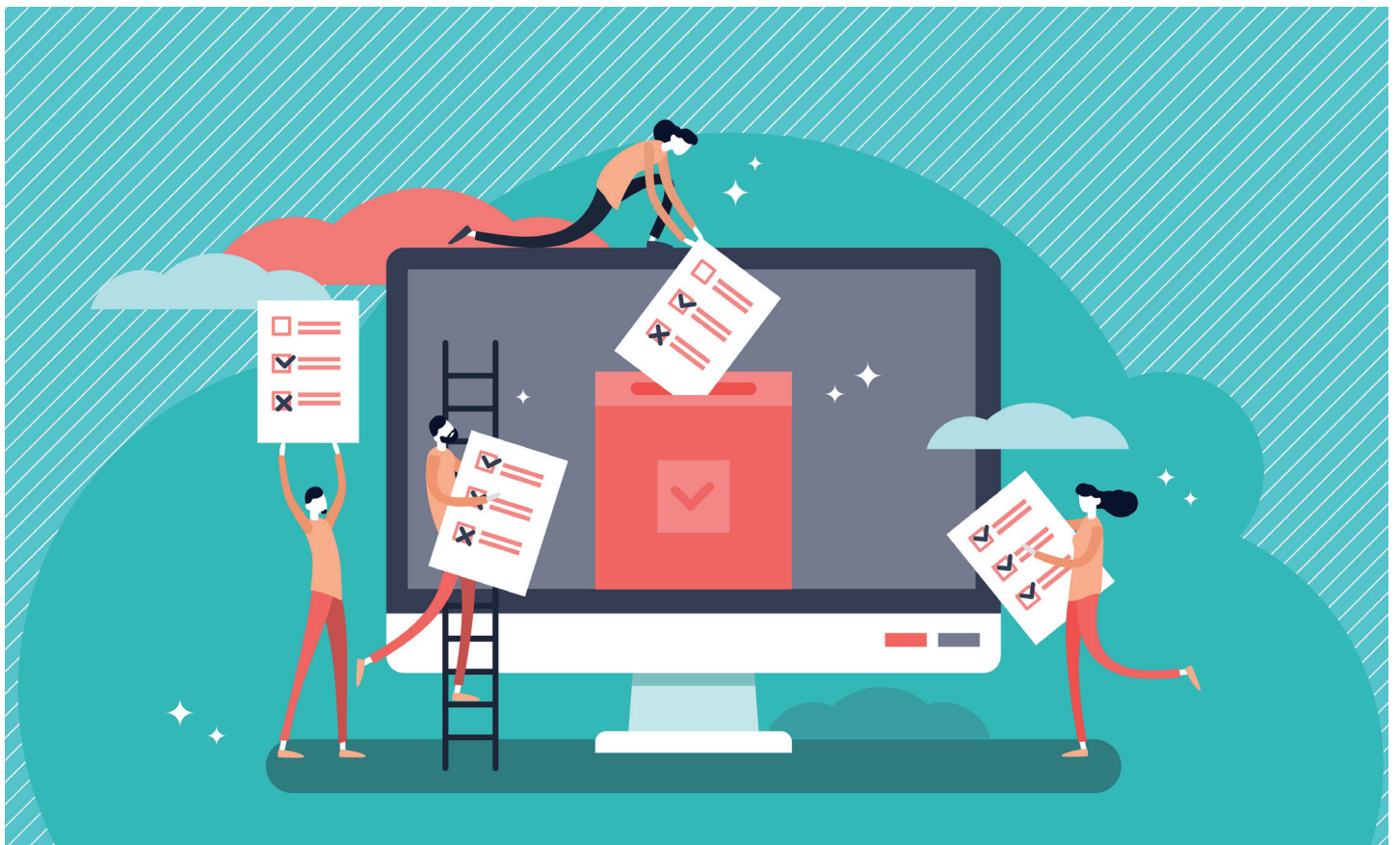
What We Did

As the industry continued to adapt to the post-pandemic world, 2023 also saw fresh challenges emerge – from driving the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) agenda forward to reacting to the cost-of-living crisis and the arrival of ChatGPT.

That's why we've surveyed Call Centre Helper readers yet again, throughout June and July 2023, to uncover the latest and most exciting contact centre insights in our annual survey.

Run in partnership with Sabio, Central, Odigo, Scorebuddy, and NICE, this survey focuses on the key elements of a contact centre, including advisor experience and engagement, artificial intelligence (AI), customer experience, quality assurance, workforce management, and more!

216 contact centre professionals got involved and completed our survey, and we're delighted to share what they had to say...



Executive Summary

10% of Contact Centres Are Already Using ChatGPT

On a positive note, for the first time, our What Contact Centres Are Doing Right Now (2023 Edition) also included ChatGPT – capturing a snapshot in time as to how this new technology is being adopted across the industry since its launch in November 2022.

The results? Well, the industry seems to be very divided at this stage, with a clear head start by early adopters embracing the challenge of deploying it, and around a third intrigued enough to have it on their wish list, whilst the vast majority are waiting sceptically on the sidelines to see how things unfold.

Email and Video on the Decline as Customers Favour More Convenient Channels

Our What Contact Centres Are Doing Right Now (2023 Edition) report findings revealed some signs of movement in the use of contact channels – including a decrease in video and email accompanied by increases in SMS, social media, and live chat.

This is possibly indicative of customer preferences for convenience, where they may be finding video and email slower and more cumbersome than starting up a quick conversation via SMS, social media, or live chat.

Social Events Have Yet to Recover to Pre-Covid Levels

Arguably, one of the biggest industry casualties in the shift to hybrid and remote working, post-Covid, has been the drop-off of contact centre social events. Sadly, while there has been a small year-on-year improvement, figures have yet to recover to those last seen in 2019. This is disappointing, but possibly indicative of many contact centres still finding their feet in the new normal and making hybrid arrangements (for most) a success.

Almost a Quarter of Contact Centres Are Not Countering the Cost-of-Living Crisis

Across 2023, the ‘cost-of-living crisis’ put increasing pressure on businesses to react to best support their employees through these difficult times. Whilst many have indeed been rising to the challenge – with some fantastic real-life examples of what’s happening in some contact centres – somewhat disappointingly, around a quarter of survey respondents said their employer was doing nothing to support them.

Industry Rising to Wellbeing and Diversity Challenges

Our survey also asked about mental health and wellbeing, and the results showed an overwhelmingly positive picture of various initiatives taking hold as the norm across many contact centres – including mental health first aiders and wellbeing rooms on site.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) has also been a hot topic of late, and it’s equally been fantastic to see that the vast majority of survey respondents reported to either have lots of initiatives up and running or a few initiatives up and running.

Only Half of Contact Centre Professionals Are Committed to Their Current Call Centre

Yet, despite many positive changes across the industry, when asked, 'Are you likely to leave your current call centre (by choice) for a new opportunity elsewhere within the next 12 months?', half of contact centre professionals said 'yes' or 'unsure', suggesting that many contact centres are still falling short in successfully engaging and retaining their frontline.

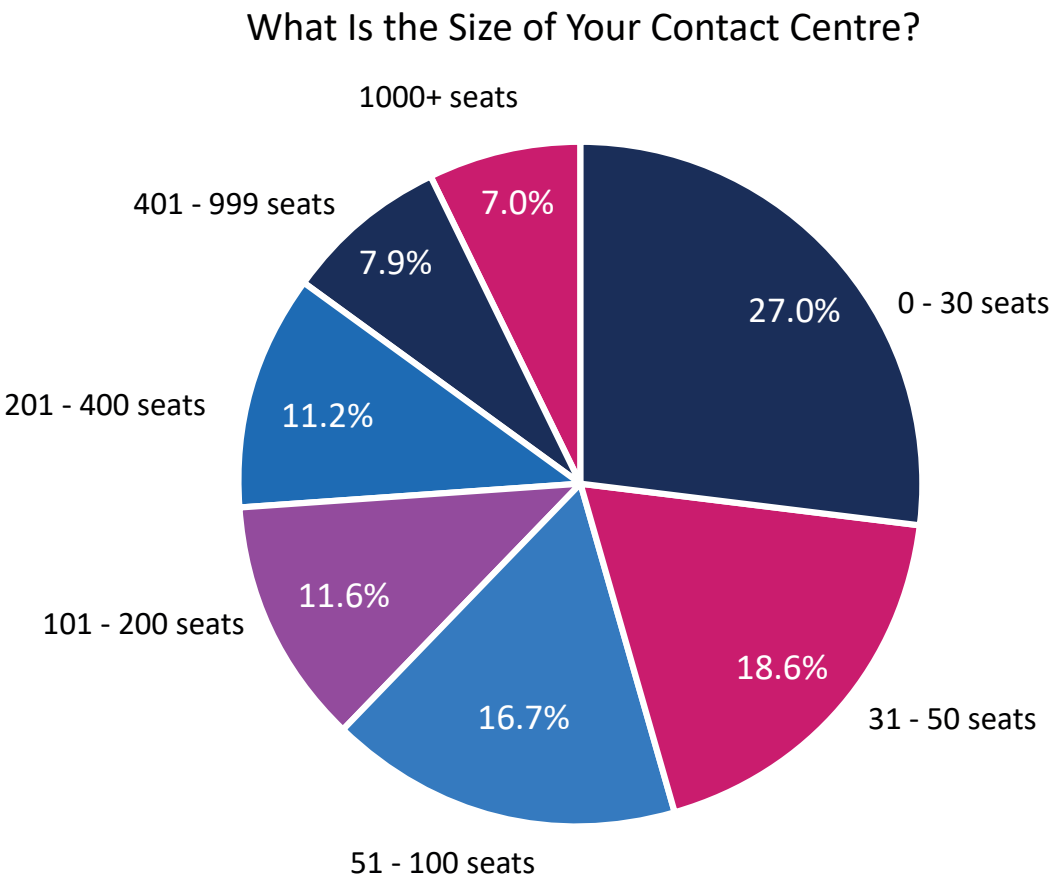
What's Happening in Your Contact Centre?

Are these trends emerging across your teams, or are you feeling behind the times? Take a look at the full report to find out how you compare.

General – How Does Your Contact Centre Compare?

1. What Is the Size of Your Contact Centre?

Participants in this year’s survey came from 216 contact centres of all different shapes and sizes, ranging from 0–30 seats to 1,000+.



To better inform the results shared in this report, the chart above highlights the different sizes of the contact centres that contributed to our survey.

2. What Technology Do You Have in Your Contact Centre?

10% of Contact Centres Are Already Using ChatGPT

There have been some notable shifts in the use of technology since the 2022 survey findings were published.

For the first time, our What Contact Centres Are Doing Right Now (2023 Edition) survey also asked about ChatGPT – capturing a snapshot in time as to how this new technology is being adopted across the industry since its launch in November 2022.

The industry seems to be very divided at this stage, with a clear head start by early adopters – approx. 10% of the industry – embracing the challenge of deploying it, with a further 39.2% intrigued enough to have it on their wish list.

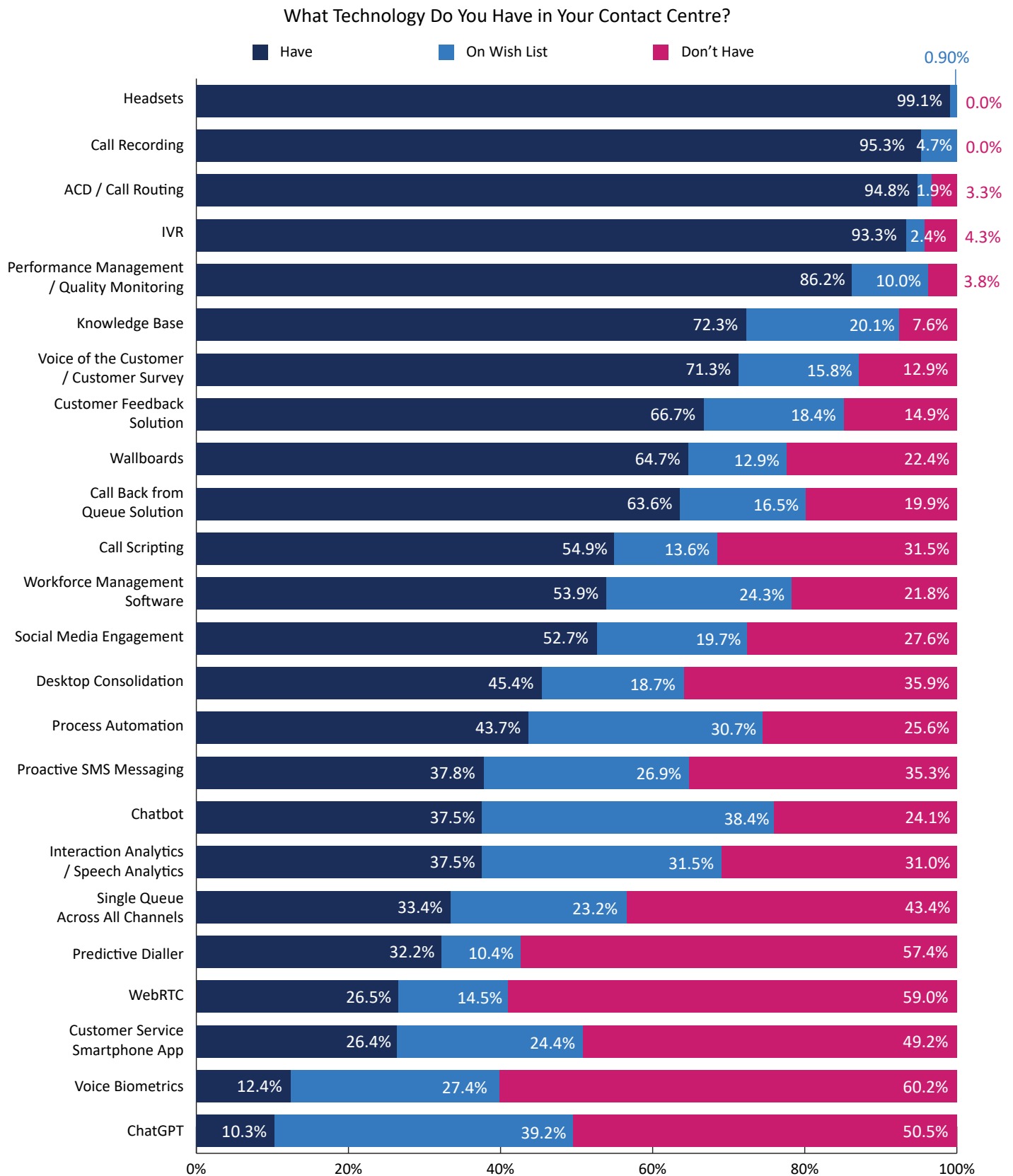
Comparably, the other half of our survey responders (50.5%) claimed not to have it – perhaps waiting to see how the early adopters fare, so they can approach this with a more cautious, considered response.

What Technology Do You Have in Your Contact Centre?

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Headsets	98.5%	97.9%	98.8%	98.4%	96.1%	97.7%	97.2%	99.1%
Call Recording	85.8%	87.5%	91.4%	90.3%	89.0%	90.7%	89.8%	95.3%
ACD / Call Routing	90.0%	90.1%	90.9%	89.7%	88.5%	92.5%	89.5%	94.8%
IVR	79.5%	81.6%	86.1%	82.7%	80.2%	81.5%	86.6%	93.3%
Quality Monitoring	82.3%	83.9%	80.2%	87.0%	83.7%	84.6%	83.2%	86.2%
Performance Management							80.4%	
Knowledge Base	71.6%	75.6%	60.5%	70.5%	71.2%	66.2%	73.9%	72.3%
VoC / Customer Survey	N/A	51.5%	48.4%	59.1%	62.5%	64.1%	64.9%	71.3%
Customer Feedback Solution	59.8%	66.6%	58.5%	61.9%	57.3%	59.0%	58.7%	66.7%
Wallboards	68.6%	72.9%	74.7%	63.0%	59.6%	60.0%	58.5%	64.7%
Call Back from Queue Solution	N/A	51.1%	41.1%	40.2%	49.0%	47.6%	60.4%	63.6%
Call Scripting	46.9%	52.3%	42.5%	51.0%	54.5%	48.1%	52.9%	54.9%
Workforce Management Software	31.4%	36.9%	37.2%	49.0%	48.4%	44.8%	46.3%	53.9%
Social Media Engagement	48.3%	52.9%	52.7%	57.4%	53.2%	50.7%	53.7%	52.7%
Desktop Consolidation	22.3%	33.2%	26.3%	34.7%	40.3%	36.2%	37.2%	45.4%
Process Automation	36.3%	39.1%	34.6%	31.1%	36.9%	38.5%	37.2%	43.7%
Proactive SMS Messaging	N/A	35.5%	28.0%	29.3%	32.7%	30.8%	29.8%	37.8%
Chatbot	N/A	9.9%	30.7%	14.0%	30.8%	34.3%	36.0%	37.5%
Interaction / Speech Analytics	9.2%	13.4%	13.2%	15.9%	21.4%	24.0%	28.0%	37.5%
Single Queue across All Channels	24.1%	32.0%	30.7%	26.3%	25.3%	30.8%	31.3%	33.4%
Predictive Dialler	22.0%	22.3%	22.9%	24.6%	23.9%	19.6%	26.1%	32.2%
WebRTC	N/A	13.2%	36.4%	12.8%	16.1%	19.3%	19.7%	26.5%
Customer Service Smartphone App	N/A	27.9%	20.1%	30.5%	28.7%	28.4%	24.3%	26.4%
Voice Biometrics	5.0%	5.0%	23.6%	5.0%	7.8%	7.7%	10.7%	12.4%
ChatGPT	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10.3%

Jump in Number of Contact Centres Using Analytics

Equally significantly, the use of interaction/speech analytics has jumped from 28% of contact centre professionals using the technology in 2022 to 37.5% in 2023. Given the level of insight and transformative power of such solutions, this is perhaps unsurprising.



This is brilliant to see, as there is much to be gained from analysing all calls and not just a handful per advisor, per month – showcasing a notable shift towards new methods of quality and performance control, as well as trouble-shooting issues such as ‘why have call volumes peaked today?’ and taking out much of the guesswork from the day-to-day running of the contact centre.

Demand for Chatbots on the Rise

The survey data also showed an increase in the number of contact centres using chatbots, up from 36% in 2022 to 37.5% in 2023.

There’s also been a positive shift in demand – with it being listed on the wish list for 38.4% of contact centres, compared to just 35.6% back in 2022.

This suggests that chatbots are becoming a more mainstream, tried-and-trusted solution, as contact centre leaders are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of chatbots and their capability for handling simple queries with ease – freeing up agents to handle more complex customer queries.

Increasing Number of Contact Centres Making Smartphone Apps Available Too

Many more contact centres are also realizing the self-service and time-saving potential of smartphone apps too – with deployment increasing from 24.3% in 2022 to 26.4% in 2023.

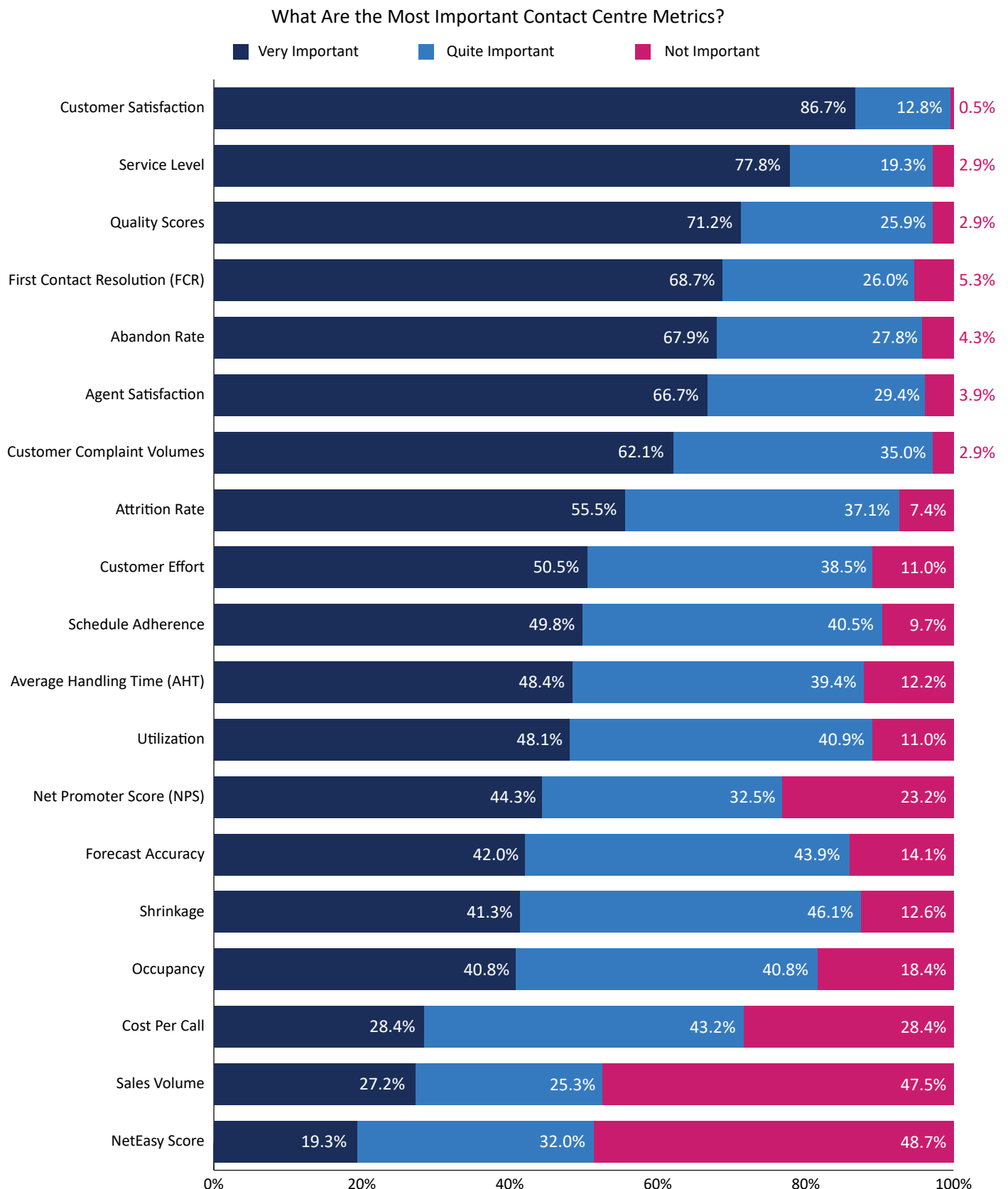
There’s also more interest in this technology, with those putting it on their wish lists rising from 22.1% in 2022 to 24.4% in 2023.

As customers themselves become more comfortable with using apps in their day-to-day lives, it’s unsurprising that many contact centre professionals also see where their services and customers can benefit from this technology.

3. What Are the Most Important Contact Centre Metrics?

Top and Bottom Ranking Metrics Remain Consistent With 2022 Data

Overall, these metrics findings highlighted that contact centres across the board are very much focused on delivering a quick and high-quality service experience to their customers.



This is evident in how the 2023 survey showed a very similar picture to 2022 in the popularity of industry metrics – as Customer Satisfaction, Service Level, Quality Scores, Abandon Rate, and First Contact Resolution (FCR) all held their spots in the top 5 this year, whilst Cost Per Call, Sales Volume, and the NetEasy Score remained in the bottom 3.

Other Metrics Rising in Importance – Including NPS and Customer Effort

However, the findings also showed quite big jumps in popularity for Customer Effort (from 44.8% in 2022 to 50.5% in 2023) and Net Promoter Score (NPS) (from 38.8% in 2022 to 44.3% in 2023), as well as notable rises in Shrinkage (from 29.8% in 2022 to 41.3% in 2023) and Schedule Adherence (40.8% in 2022 to 49.8% in 2023).

What Are the Most Important Contact Centre Metrics?

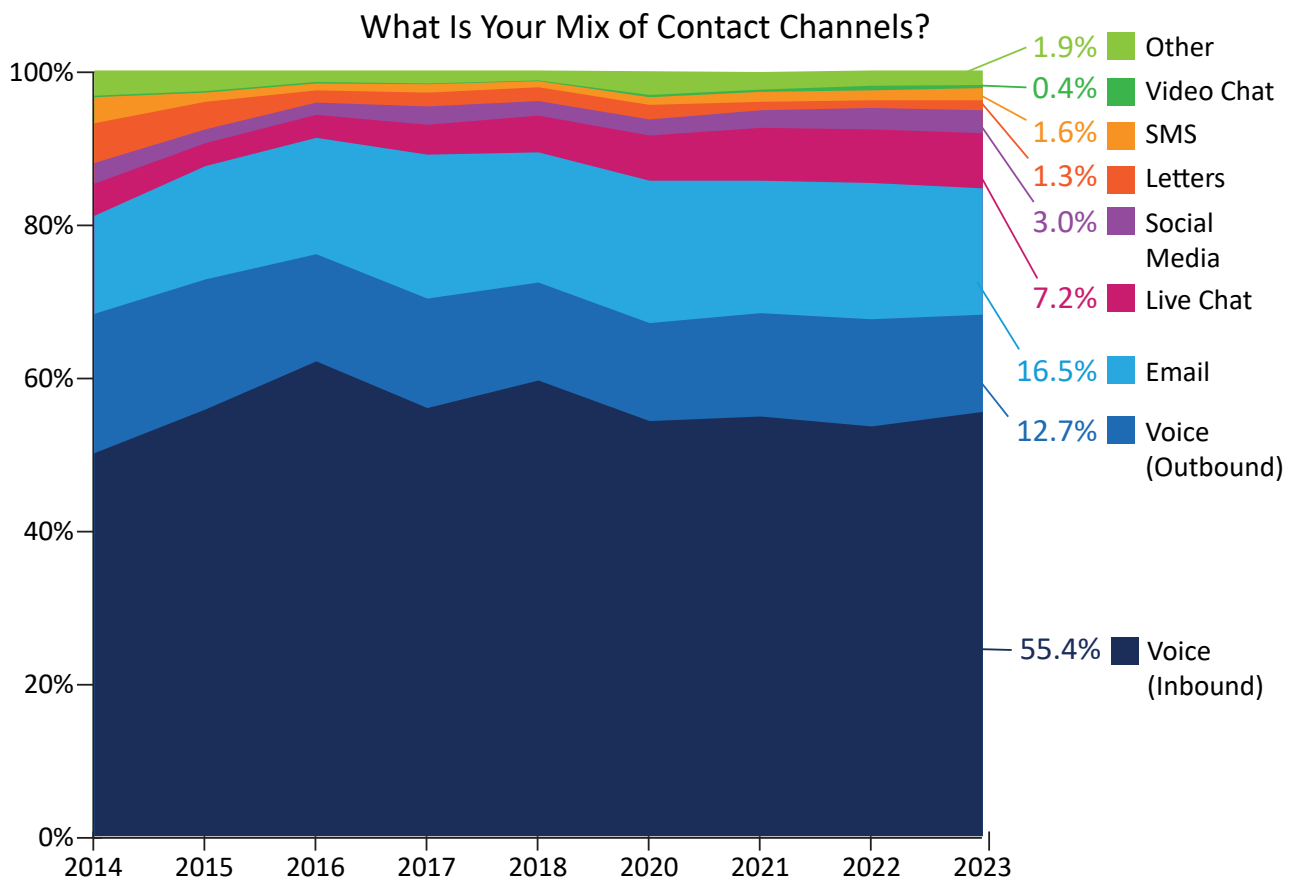
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Customer Satisfaction	91.1%	95.7%	93.1%	89.2%	84.8%	84.7%	85.3%	86.7%
Service Level	70.0%	62.7%	61.4%	65.6%	72.0%	73.2%	71.5%	77.8%
Quality Scores	68.4%	67.5%	63.9%	65.1%	64.5%	68.1%	67.8%	71.2%
First Contact Resolution (FCR)	65.4%	68.0%	69.8%	68.8%	63.8%	69.4%	63.9%	68.7%
Abandon Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	62.0%	59.1%	63.9%	66.0%	67.9%
Agent Satisfaction	48.4%	62.0%	63.1%	67.1%	66.9%	60.0%	59.5%	66.7%
Customer Complaint Volumes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	65.7%	64.8%	59.7%	62.1%
Attrition Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	49.8%	46.6%	45.7%	49.3%	55.5%
Customer Effort	35.8%	53.6%	48.9%	47.5%	48.2%	55.7%	44.8%	50.5%
Schedule Adherence	37.6%	47.6%	40.2%	48.6%	43.1%	42.4%	40.8%	49.8%
Average Handling Time (AHT)	31.8%	33.2%	31.9%	44.0%	44.2%	47.6%	45.1%	48.4%
Utilization	N/A	N/A	N/A	44.1%	39.5%	40.8%	39.0%	48.1%
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	29.6%	36.6%	32.8%	36.6%	39.8%	41.7%	38.8%	44.3%
Forecast Accuracy	33.4%	36.2%	37.1%	40.3%	33.9%	32.5%	34.3%	42.0%
Shrinkage	28.5%	30.5%	27.3%	35.7%	35.1%	36.2%	29.8%	41.3%
Occupancy	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	35.6%	36.4%	33.9%	40.8%
Cost Per Call	N/A	N/A	N/A	31.0%	27.3%	24.5%	24.2%	28.4%
Sales Volume	29.1%	35.1%	27.2%	27.8%	32.2%	27.6%	25.9%	27.2%
NetEasy Score	11.4%	21.7%	19.5%	14.8%	14.0%	10.3%	13.3%	19.3%

(These are the percentages of survey participants that believed each metric to be “very important” year-on-year)

4. What Is Your Mix of Contact Channels?

Email and Video on the Decline

The survey findings showed a very similar picture year-on-year between 2022 and 2023 data in the mix of contact channels being used across the industry.



However, there were some signs of movement – including a decrease in video (down from 0.6% to 0.4%) and email (down from 17.8% to 16.5%).

This shift was accompanied by increases in SMS (up from 1.3% to 1.6%), social media (up from 2.8% to 3%), and live chat (up from 7% to 7.2%).

This is indicative of customer preferences for convenience, where they may be finding video and email slower and more cumbersome than starting up a quick conversation via SMS, social media, or live chat.

What Is Your Mix of Contact Channels?

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020	2021	2022	2023
Voice (Inbound)	50.0%	55.7%	62.0%	55.9%	59.5%	54.2%	54.8%	53.5%	55.4%
Voice (Outbound)	18.2%	17.0%	14.0%	14.3%	12.8%	12.8%	13.5%	14.0%	12.7%
Email	12.8%	14.8%	15.2%	18.8%	17.0%	18.6%	17.3%	17.8%	16.5%
Live Chat	4.2%	3.0%	3.0%	3.9%	4.8%	5.9%	6.9%	7.0%	7.2%
Social Media	2.7%	1.8%	1.6%	2.4%	1.9%	2.1%	2.3%	2.8%	3.0%
Letters	5.2%	3.6%	1.6%	1.8%	1.8%	1.9%	1.1%	1.0%	1.3%
SMS	3.4%	1.2%	0.9%	1.1%	0.8%	1.0%	1.3%	1.3%	1.6%
Video Chat	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%	0.4%
Other	3.3%	2.7%	1.5%	1.7%	1.3%	3.1%	2.3%	2.0%	1.9%

Inbound Calls Also on the Rise

Interestingly, voice (inbound) also saw a jump – from 53.5% in 2022 to 55.4% in 2023. It's possible this reflects the greater neediness of customers in 2023, as they face the cost-of-living crisis and high inflation rates and are looking to their service providers for financial and emotional support.

Is 'Digital Transformation' Just Another Buzzword?

Despite these shifts across digital channels, voice still dominates the contact centre industry. This suggests that many are just paying lip service to digital transformation in their operations, and that while other channels have been adopted – including live chat, email, and social media – digital transactions have a long way to go to truly compete with voice as a channel of choice.

5. Which Apps Do You Use to Interact With Customers?

Facebook Most Popular for Interacting With Customers

Almost half of survey respondents (48%) said that they were using Facebook to interact with customers – a clear leader in the customer service game, against the other available apps, including Instagram (28.4%), Messenger (24%), Twitter (26.5%), and WhatsApp (19.1%).

Over a Third of Contact Centres Don't Use Any Apps to Interact With Customers

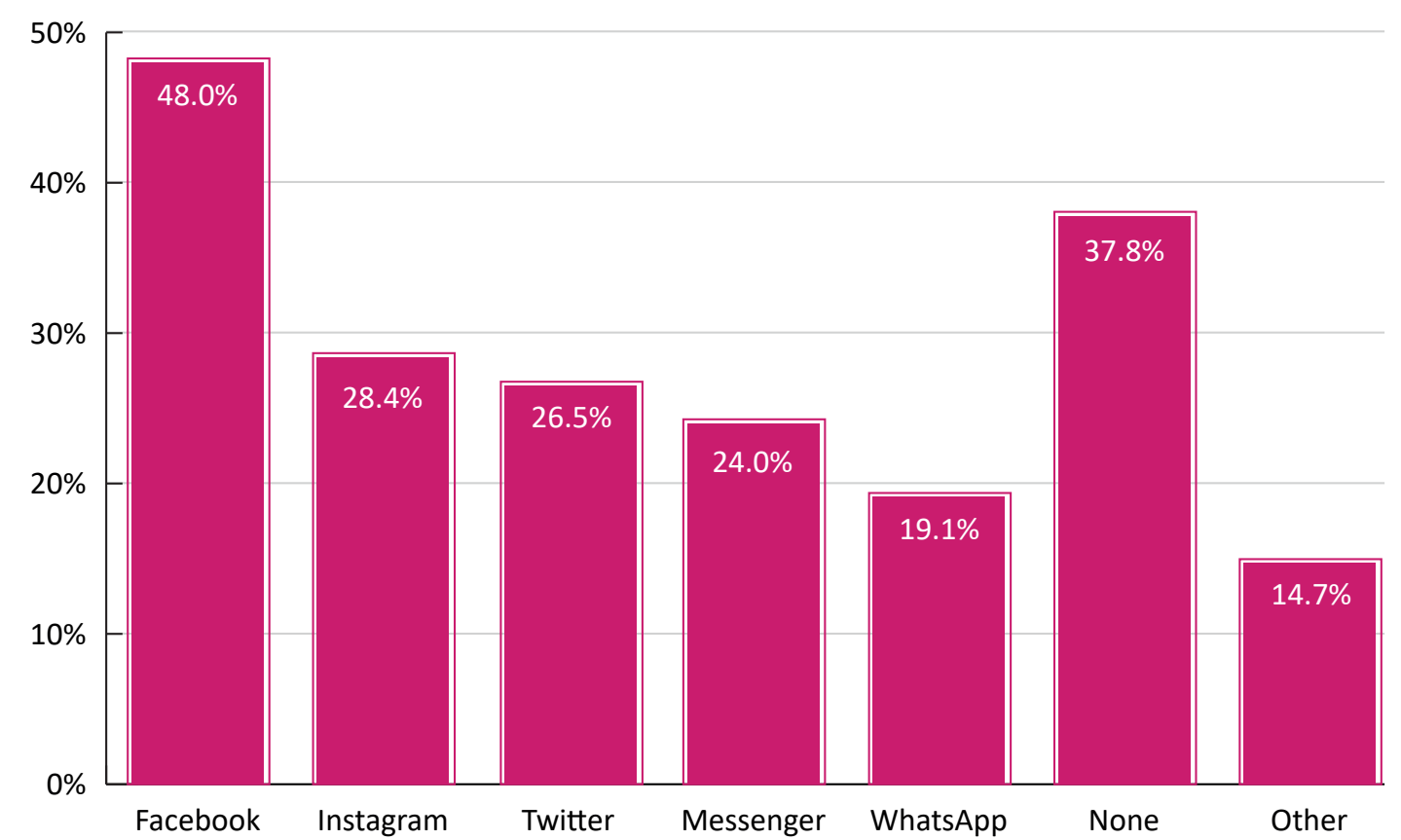
By comparison, 37.8% of contact centre professionals claimed they weren't using any apps to interact with customers.

This is possibly due to different customer preferences and demographics in play, although it may also be indicative of the nature of some industries – for example, those handling more emotive subjects such as bereavements and insurance may be more inclined to push their customers towards the phone for a more in-depth conversation.

Some Contact Centres Also Using LinkedIn, MS Teams, and Viber

Of the 14.7% who said 'other', the most frequently mentioned apps were LinkedIn, MS Teams, TikTok, YouTube, and Viber – with some survey respondents also claiming to be using their own in-house built apps.

Which Apps Do You Use to Interact With Customers?



6. Do You Measure Customer Emotion In Your Contact Centres?

The Industry Is Slowly Realizing the Benefits of Measuring Customer Emotion

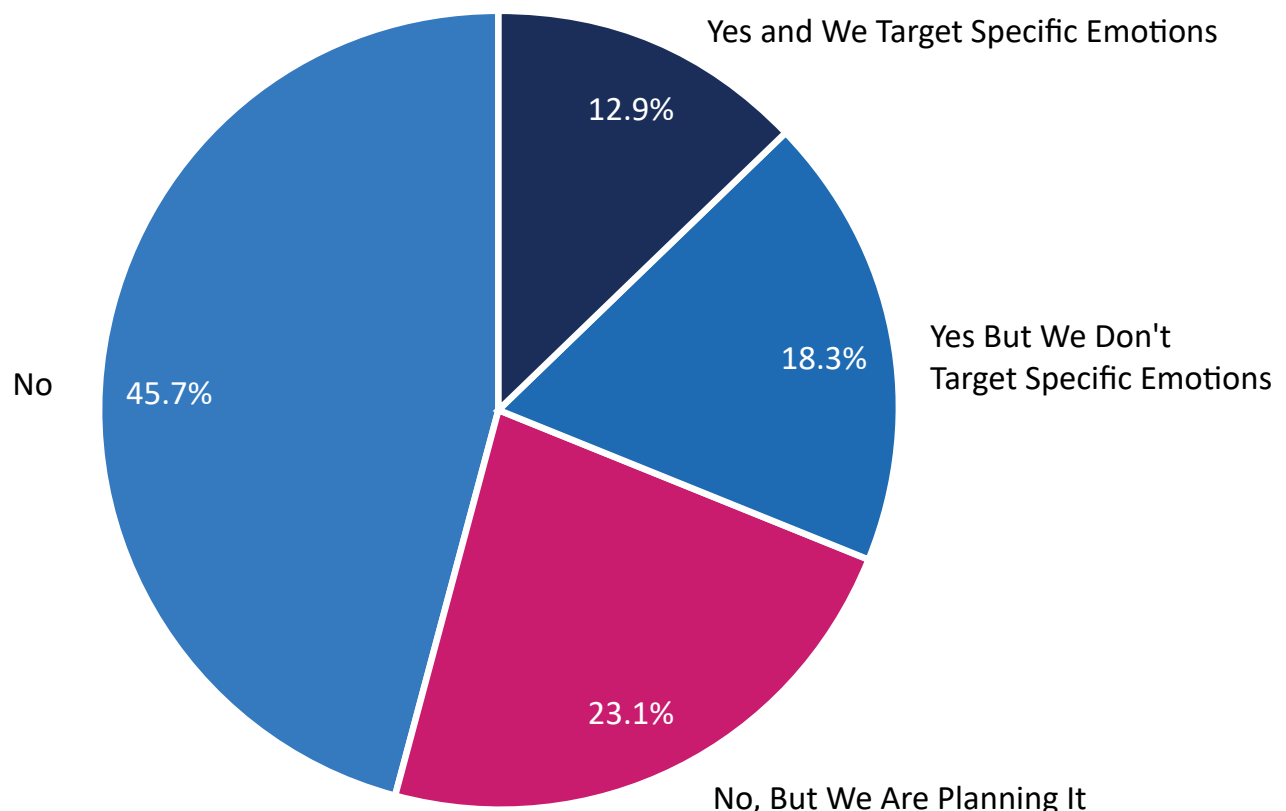
Analytics software has been a game changer for contact centre professionals, allowing them to measure customer emotion and really understand what's happening behind every call.

It's promising to see so many professionals embracing these new capabilities, as 12.9% of survey respondents said that they target specific emotions, whilst a further 18.3% measure customer emotion but don't target specific emotions, and 23.1% are currently planning to introduce a means to measure customer emotion.

Almost Half of Contact Centres Aren't Measuring Customer Emotion

However, almost half are missing a trick here! The survey findings showed that 45.7% of contact centres aren't measuring customer emotion – overlooking key opportunities to capture sentiment about products and services, as well as to spot underlying performance issues in their agents.

Do You Measure Customer Emotion in Your Contact Centres?



7. To Create Your Metric Scores, How Frequently Do You Ask Customers to Complete a Post-Contact Survey?

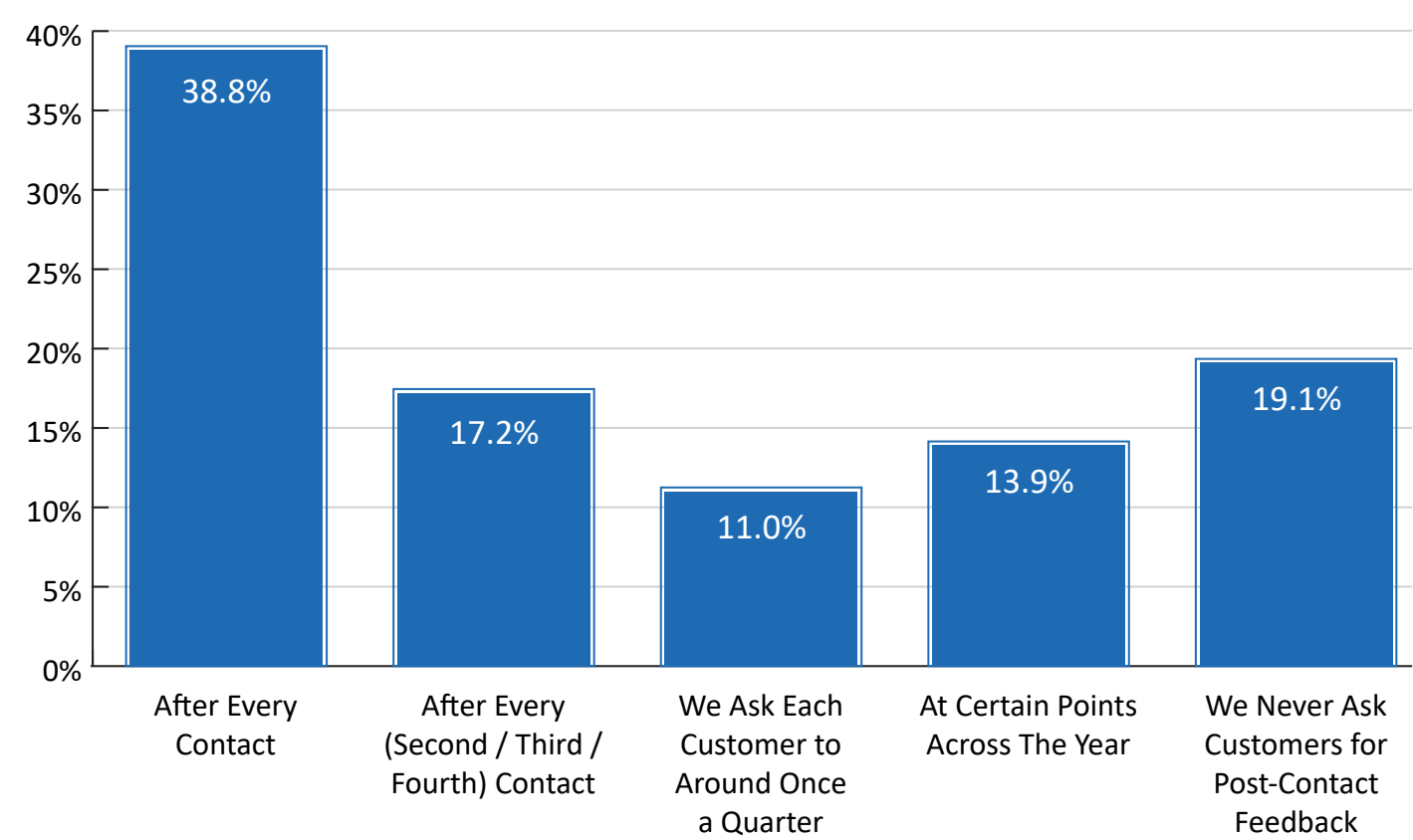
Are Contact Centres Restricted by the Systems They Have in Place to Survey Customers?

The survey data showed a real spread of results varying from after every contact (38.8%) to once per quarter (11%).

Whilst this may be led by management preferences and previous levels of customer engagement – on a case-by-case basis – it could also be indicative of the systems and investment different organizations have in place.

For example, those claiming to send out a survey after every contact are most likely fortunate enough to have an automated system in place to do so – whereas the 13.9% who only do it at certain points across the year may be reliant on another department (such as Marketing) to coordinate an e-blast to the wider customer data base on their behalf.

To Create Your Metric Scores,
How Frequently Do You Ask Customers to Complete a Post-Contact Survey?

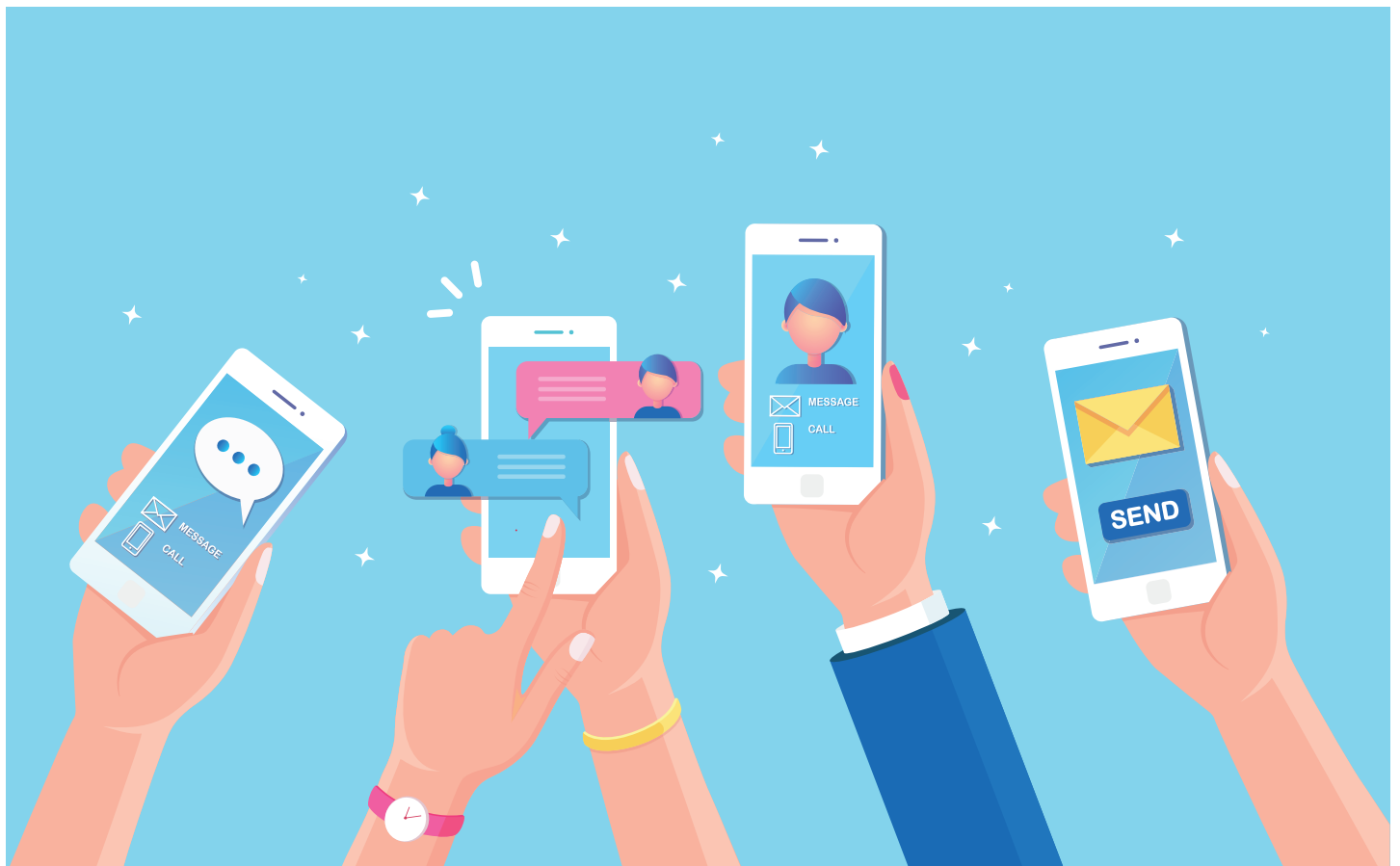


Less Than 20% Never Ask Customers for Post-Contact Feedback

Frequency aside, the data showed that asking customers to complete a post-contact survey is the norm in the industry and that only 19.1% never ask customers to do this.

Whilst initially alarming, it's highly possible that some of these contact centres are using more advanced methods of tracking customer insights, such as interaction and speech analytics, which largely remove the need for customers to be asked 'how was today's call?'

Others may focus on metrics such as First Contact Resolution rates or rely on their quality teams to gauge customer sentiment, for example.



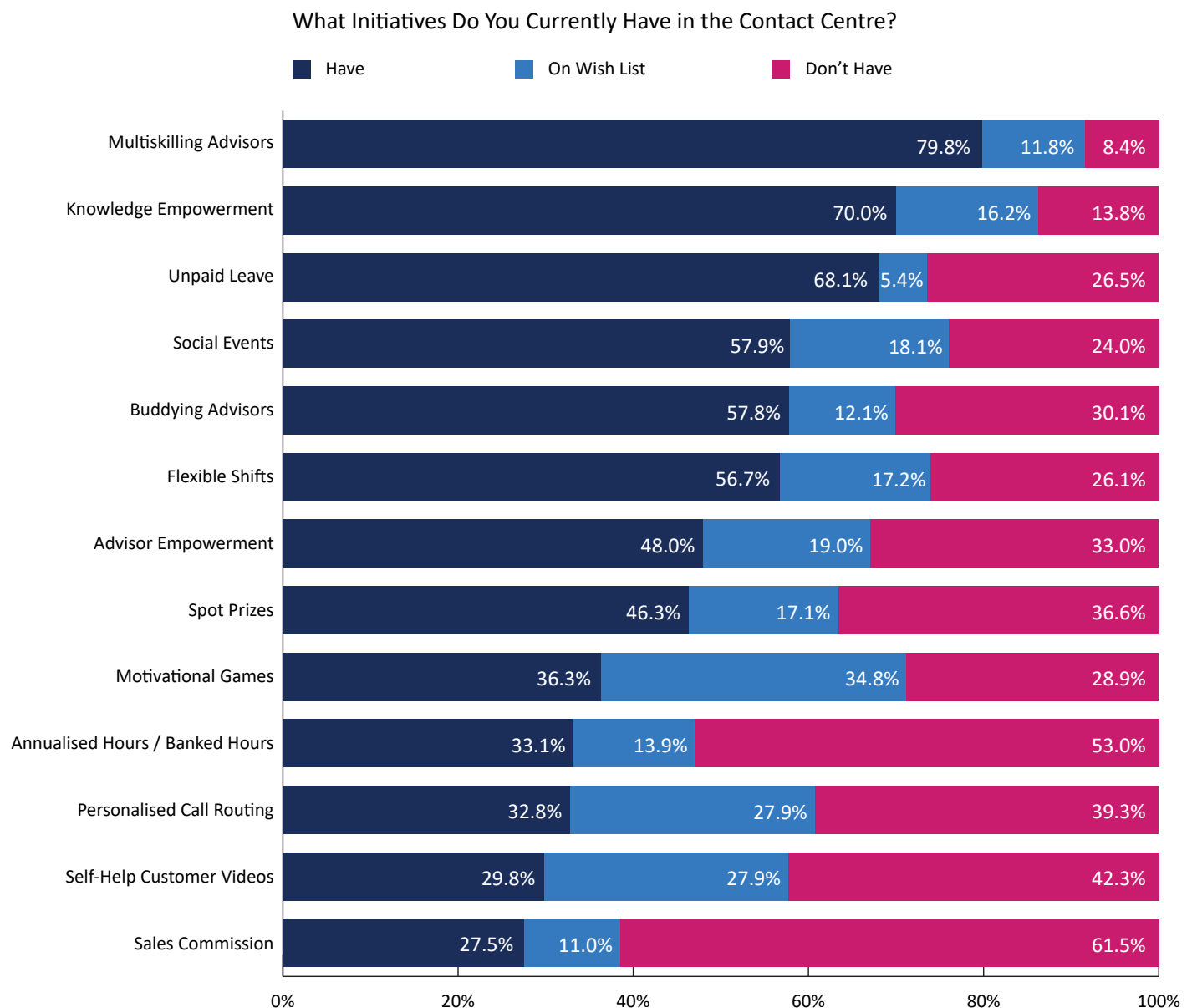
8. What Initiatives Do You Currently Have in the Contact Centre?

Staffing Pressures Taking Focus Away From Multiskilling Agents

One of the most noticeable year-on-year trends was the drop in the number of contact centre professionals who said they are multiskilling advisors – as this has decreased from 86.7% in 2022 down to 79.8% in 2023.

This is possibly indicative of the staffing challenges the industry continues to face, leaving less time and training resource to upskill long-standing team members against the more pressing need to train new starters. It was also interesting to see 11.8% had multiskilling advisors on their wish list, highlighting that while many see the benefit of this initiative, there are barriers to making this a reality.

The findings also revealed that unpaid leave has fallen down the league table, as it was in the #2 position last year. This could also be symptomatic of staffing challenges, with fewer contact centres feeling able to offer unpaid leave as a top-up to paid annual leave while still meeting their service levels.



Social Events Have Yet to Recover to Pre-Covid Levels

One of the biggest industry casualties in the shift to hybrid and remote working, post-Covid, has been the drop-off of contact centre social events.

Although there has been a small year-on-year improvement (up from 56.9% to 57.9%), percentages in the 60s and 70s haven't been seen since 2019.

This is disappointing, but possibly indicative of many contact centres still finding their feet in the new normal and making hybrid arrangements (for most) a success.

However, as 18.1% of respondents have said this is on their wish list, it does suggest that there's a possible come-back in store as contact centres gradually restore balance.

What Initiatives Do You Currently Have in the Contact Centre?

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Multiskilling Agents	90.5%	88.2%	80.4%	84.5%	83.9%	81.7%	87.6%	86.7%	79.8%
Knowledge Empowerment	66.2%	63.3%	66.8%	56.6%	63.1%	63.6%	63.3%	64.3%	70.0%
Unpaid Leave	66.4%	65.2%	70.8%	70.7%	65.5%	68.4%	71.8%	70.9%	68.1%
Social Events	77.3%	77.1%	74.0%	66.6%	64.0%	50.8%	47.0%	56.9%	57.9%
Buddying Advisors	71.5%	71.0%	70.9%	60.0%	58.1%	60.6%	62.9%	54.9%	57.8%
Flexible Shifts	59.7%	61.0%	62.5%	51.8%	58.2%	53.6%	56.3%	49.3%	56.7%
Advisor Empowerment	61.6%	61.0%	61.0%	48.8%	47.9%	53.0%	51.4%	44.1%	48.0%
Spot Prizes	52.8%	51.5%	45.4%	44.6%	38.9%	37.4%	32.1%	44.5%	46.3%
Motivational Games	47.1%	50.2%	44.7%	38.5%	30.9%	29.0%	23.6%	33.3%	36.3%
Annualised Hours / Banked Hours	30.9%	36.0%	37.7%	36.0%	35.1%	39.9%	40.9%	37.8%	33.1%
Personalised Call Routing	38.2%	33.2%	36.4%	30.4%	30.3%	30.2%	32.8%	33.2%	32.8%
Self-Help Customer Videos	23.8%	23.0%	23.6%	24.3%	30.9%	27.5%	32.1%	31.0%	29.8%
Sales Commission	36.0%	26.7%	30.7%	27.0%	28.9%	27.9%	23.9%	24.1%	27.5%

Motivational Games Are Bouncing Back

What's very refreshing to see, however, is the way motivational games are bouncing back to the fore, with stats jumping from 33.3% up to 36.3% – and creeping ever-closer to the 40% that were seen pre-Covid.

This suggests that contact centre professionals have embraced the challenge of finding motivational games that suit a hybrid working environment.

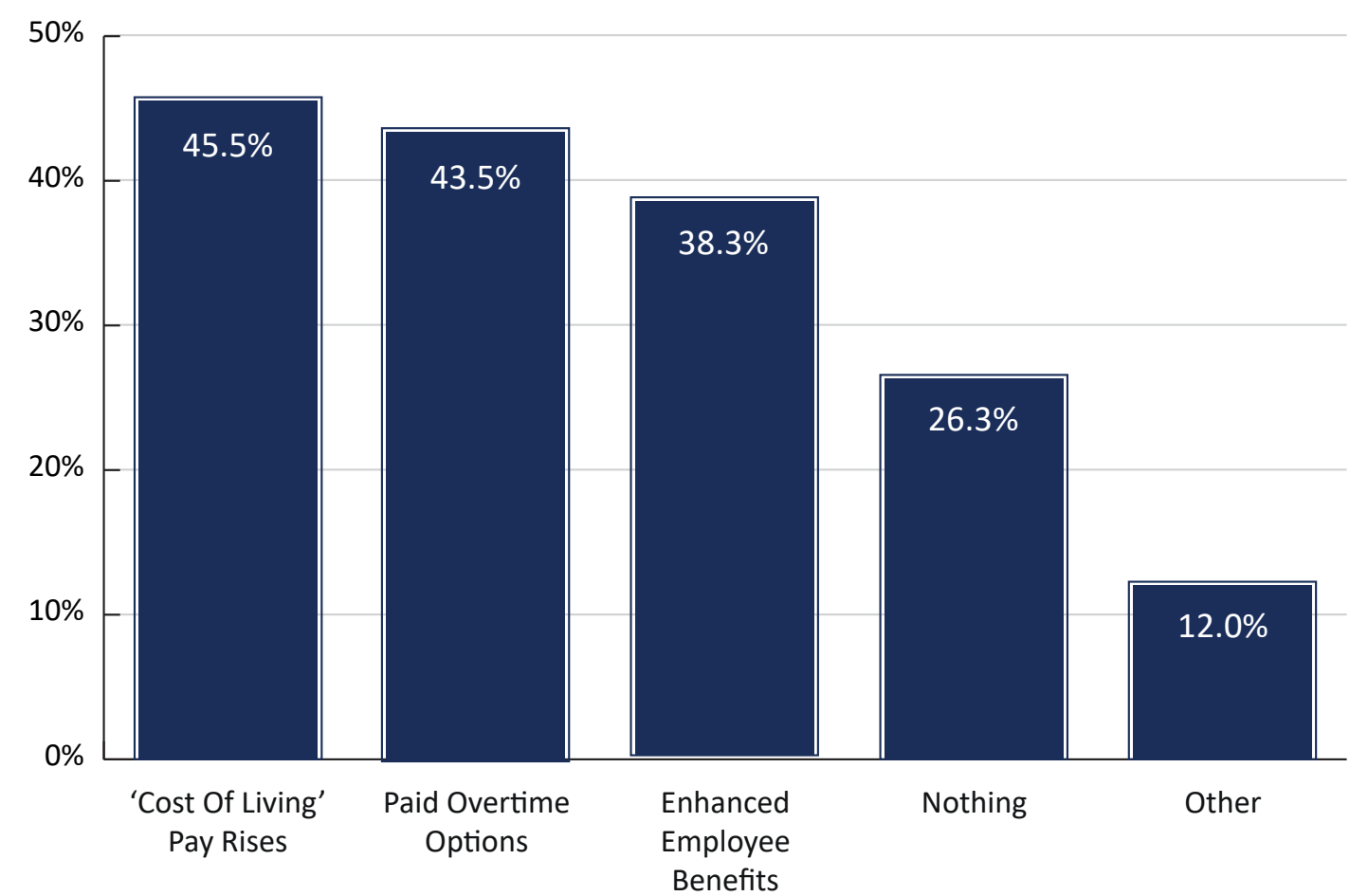
It's also great to see 34.8% of contact centre professionals having motivational games on their wish list, showing a real desire to bring this fun back into their teams – no matter where and when they work.

9. What Is Your Call Centre Doing to Help You Through the Cost-of-Living Crisis?

Almost a Quarter Seeing Nothing to Counter the Cost-of-Living Crisis

Inflation, energy bills, and mortgage interest rates have continually hit the headlines this year, with rises putting increasing financial pressure on households and ultimately driving the ‘cost-of-living crisis’.

What Is Your Call Centre Doing to Help You Through the Cost-of-Living Crisis?



In turn, this has put pressure on businesses to react to best support their employees through these difficult times. Somewhat disappointingly, 26.3% of survey respondents said their employer was doing ‘nothing’ to support them.

Yet Half Have Received a Cost-of-Living Pay Rise

However, it's reassuring to see many contact centres have indeed risen to the challenge – with 45.5% of survey respondents confirming that their employer had given them a cost-of-living pay rise, whilst a further 38.3% had welcomed enhanced employee benefits.

In addition to this, 43.5% said that they'd been offered 'paid overtime options'. This is arguably a win-win on meeting customer demand, although possibly less of a benefit to those with less flexible work/home life arrangements, who may be unable to take full advantage of this opportunity to boost their income.

Breakfast Clubs and Working From Home Opportunities All Helping to Make a Difference

Furthermore, of the 12% who said 'other', some of the support initiatives mentioned by survey respondents included spot bonus opportunities, an internal food bank, breakfast club, loans, more working from home opportunities to help save on petrol costs, and access to Wagestream – a financial wellbeing app that offers flexible (earlier) access to pay across the month.

10. What Is Your Call Centre Doing to Support Your Mental Health and Wellbeing?

Around Half of Contact Centres Now Have Mental Health First Aiders in Post

For the first time, our What Contact Centres Are Doing Right Now (2023 Edition) survey also asked about mental health and wellbeing. The results showed a positive picture of various initiatives taking hold as the norm across many contact centres.

Nearly half of survey respondents (44%) said they had mental health first aiders and posters for external services such as Samaritans (42.6%), whilst around a third said they had a wellbeing room on site (27.3%) and benefited from regular drop-in sessions (32.1%). Beyond this, 18.7% of contact centre professionals even cited yoga classes being made available to them across the working day.

That's not all! It was fantastic to see a wide range of positive initiatives mentioned under 'other' too – including monthly wellness allowances, regular events and webinars around mental health, menopause support groups, support after bad calls, wellness days, and more!

Several respondents also mentioned having an employee assistance programme and Lyra – an employer-sponsored benefit that connects employees to mental and emotional healthcare, all showing that many contact centres are being proactive and creative in supporting their teams' mental health and wellbeing.

Around a Fifth of Contact Centres Failing Their Employees

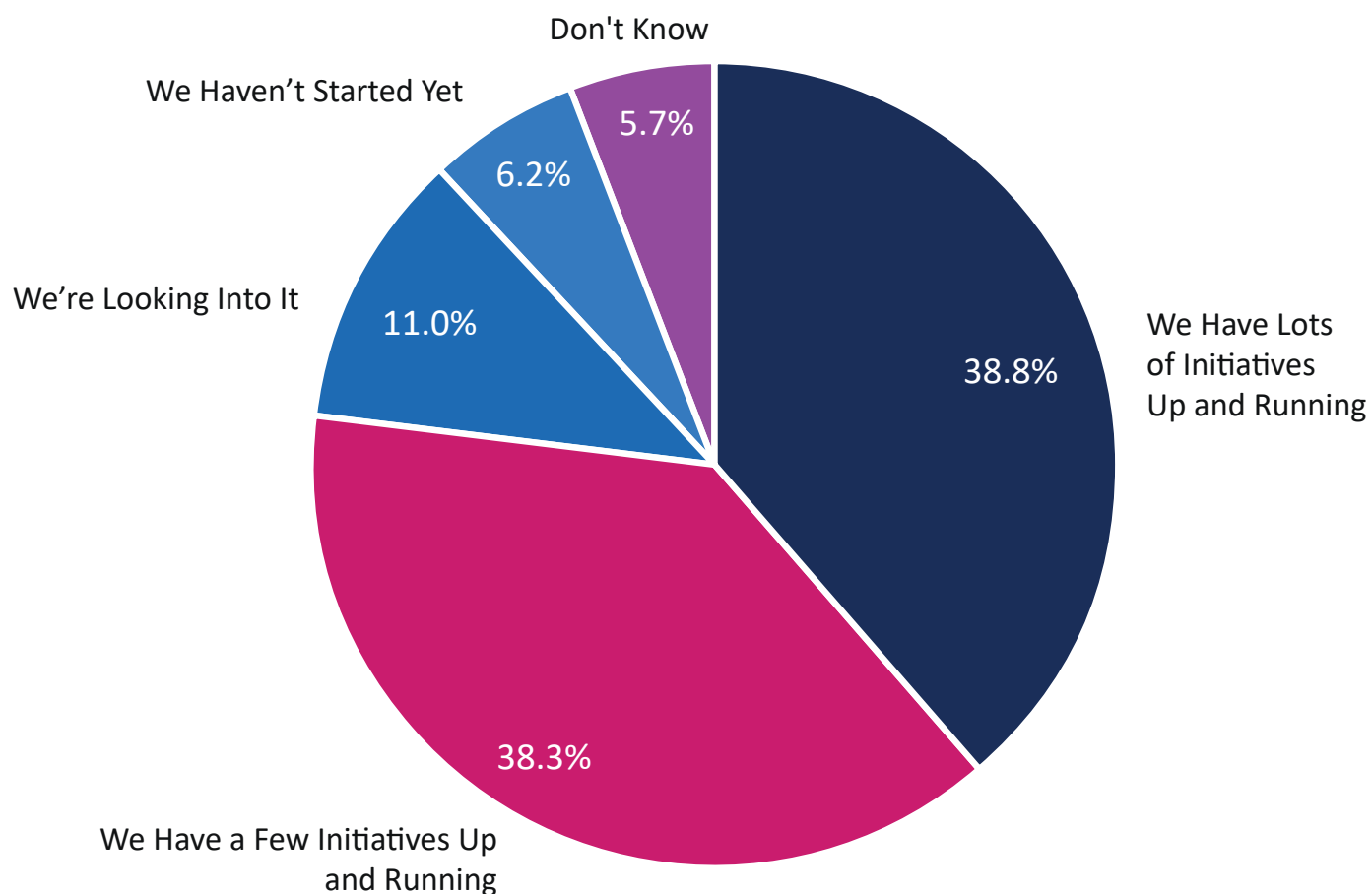
Sadly, some contact centres have some serious catching up to do, as 18.2% of survey respondents claimed that their contact centre was doing 'nothing' to support their mental health and wellbeing.

What Is Your Call Centre Doing to Support Your Mental Health and Wellbeing?



11. Where Are You on Your Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Journey?

Where Are You on Your Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Journey?



Almost 80% of Contact Centres Stepping Up to DE&I Challenge

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) has been a hot topic of late, but it's been difficult to unpick whether contact centres are paying more than just lip service to driving change. That's why we asked 'Where are you on your Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) journey?' in this year's survey.

It's been fantastic to see that 38.8% of survey respondents reported to have 'lots of initiatives up and running', whilst a further 38.3% said they have 'a few initiatives up and running'.

Not only that, but an additional 11% of respondents claimed to be 'looking into it', showing that DE&I is high on the agenda across many contact centres right now.

12. Is Your Call Centre Doing Enough to Support Vulnerable Customers?

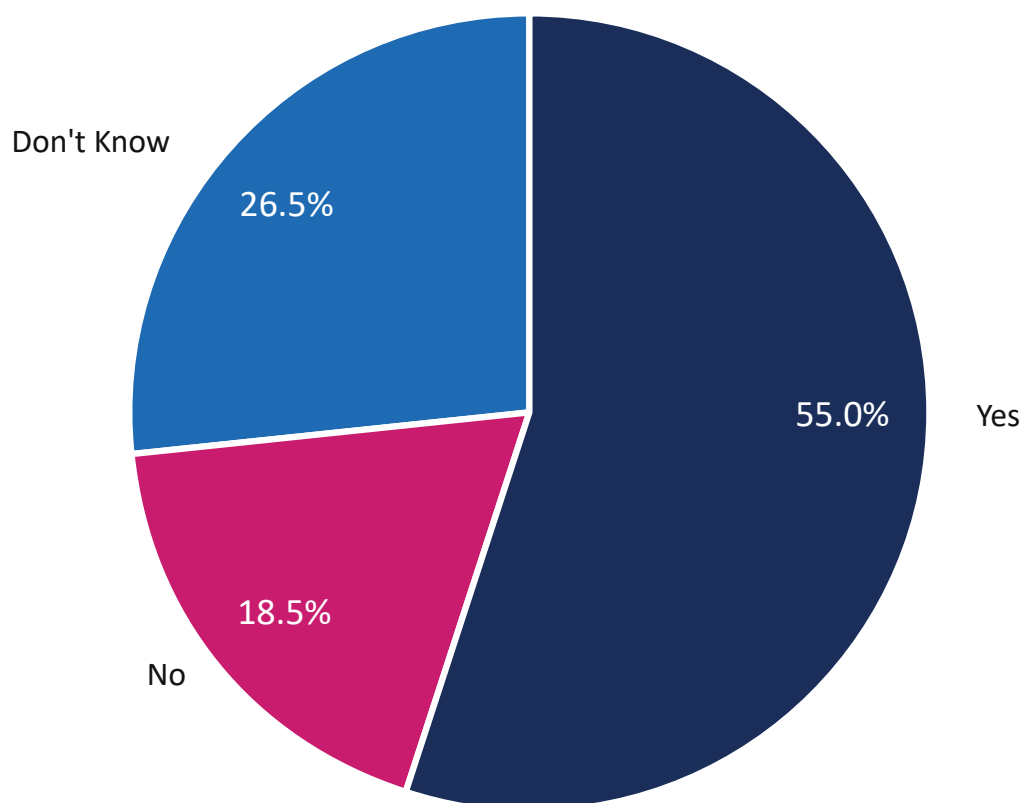
Only Around Half of Contact Centres Prepared for New Consumer Duty

As of 31st July 2023, the UK's financial regulator, the FCA, introduced a new Consumer Duty, which placed a greater emphasis on the fair treatment of vulnerable customers.

Therefore, it was reassuring to see that 55% of survey respondents felt their call centre was doing enough to support vulnerable customers.

Unfortunately, however, almost half of respondents seemed to be unaware of (26.5%) or unprepared for (18.5%) the 31st July 2023 deadline – which was very concerning given that the What Contact Centres Are Doing Right Now survey was open for responses across June and July 2023, when the deadline was imminent.

Is Your Call Centre Doing Enough to Support Vulnerable Customers?



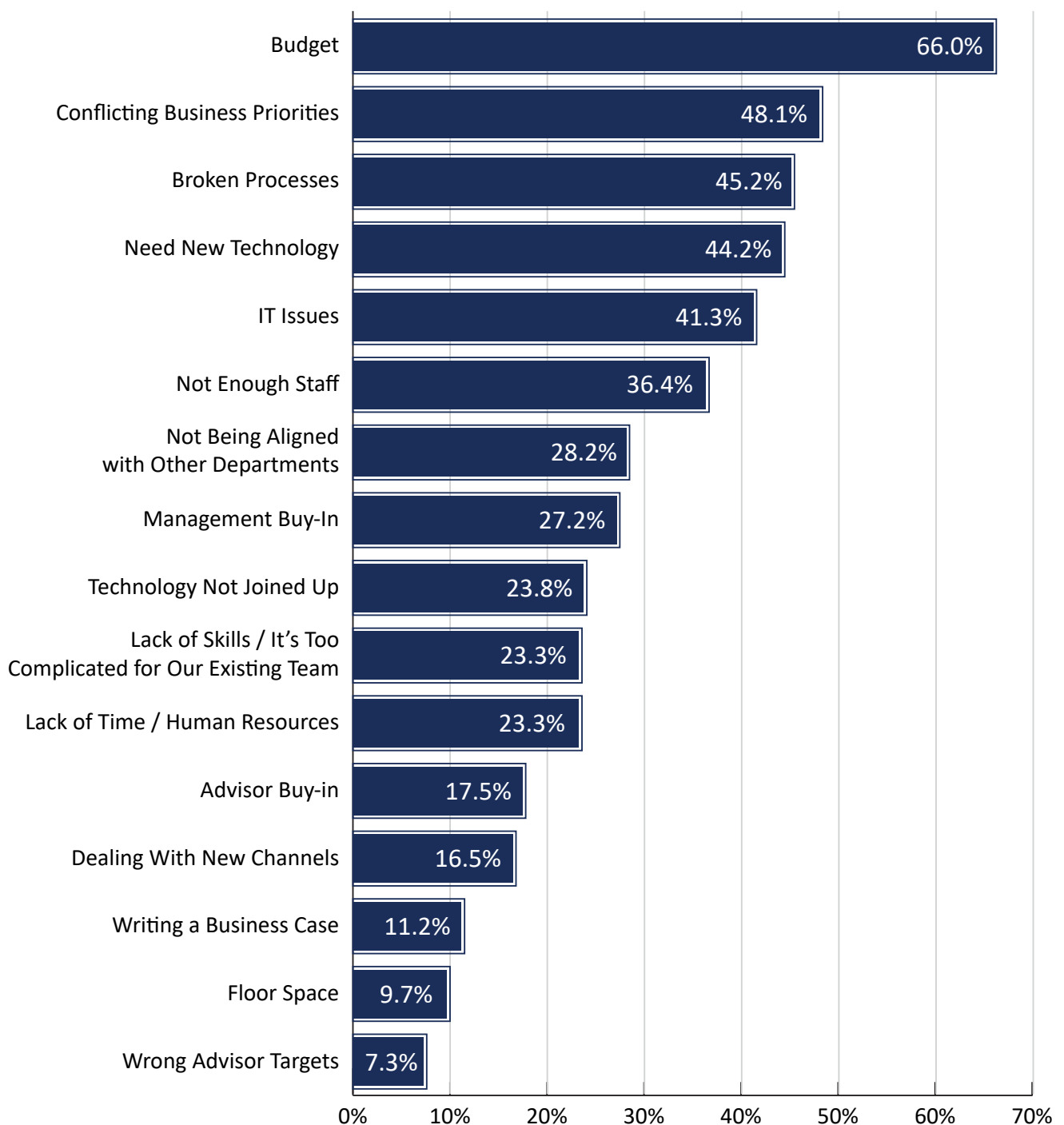
13. Which Barriers Stop You From Running Your Ideal Contact Centre?

Budget Tops the List as Biggest Barrier to Contact Centre Success

A staggering 66% of contact centre professionals said that budget is a barrier to running their ideal contact centre. However, that's far from the be-all and end-all, with conflicting business priorities, broken processes, needing new technology, and IT issues also to blame.

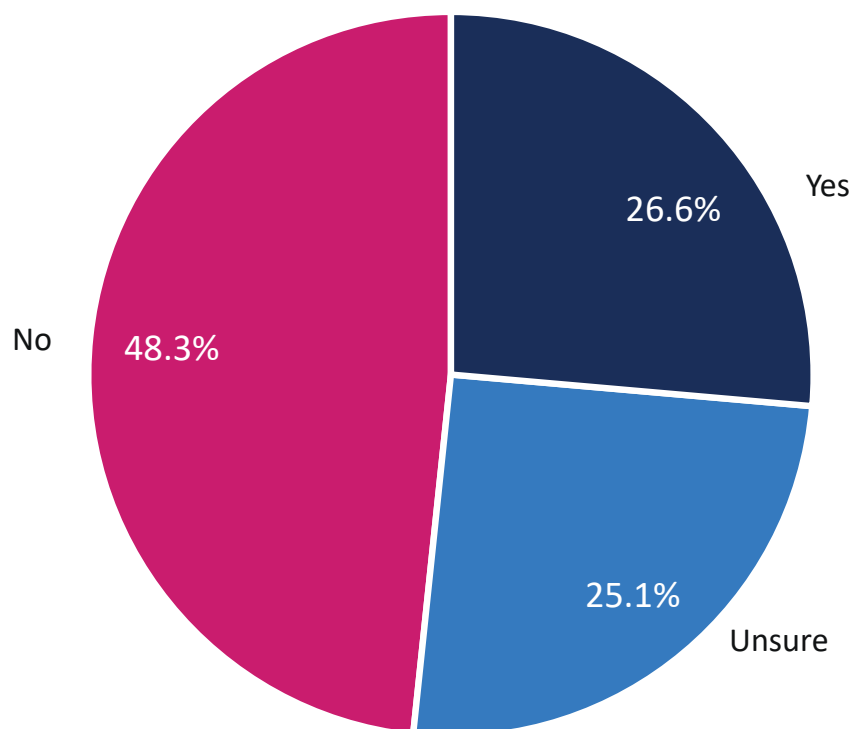
Beyond this, survey respondents claimed many people-led issues to be at the heart of their woes too, with lack of skills (23.3%), lack of time (23.3%), management buy-in (27.2%), and not enough staff (36.4%) also holding them back.

Which Barriers Stop You From Running Your Ideal Contact Centre?



14. Are You Likely to Leave Your Current Call Centre (by Choice) for a New Opportunity Elsewhere Within the Next 12 Months?

Are You Likely to Leave Your Current Call Centre (by Choice) for a New Opportunity Elsewhere Within the Next 12 Months?



Only Half of Contact Centre Professionals Are Committed to Their Current Call Centre

When asked, 'Are you likely to leave your current call centre (by choice) for a new opportunity elsewhere within the next 12 months?', only 48.3% of survey respondents said 'no'.

By contrast, of the other half, 26.6% said 'yes' and a further 25.1% said 'unsure' – suggesting that many contact centres are falling short in successfully engaging and retaining their frontline.



Advisor Experience & Engagement

The Advisor Experience & Engagement chapter is sponsored by Sabio.

Sabio Group is a global digital customer experience (CX) transformation specialist with major operations in the UK (England and Scotland), Spain, France, Netherlands, Denmark, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa and India.

The Group delivers solutions and services that seamlessly combine digital and human interactions to support outstanding customer experiences.

Through its own technology, and that of world-class technology leaders such as Amazon Connect, Avaya, Genesys, Google Cloud, Salesforce, Twilio and Verint, Sabio helps organisations optimise their customer journeys by making better decisions across their multiple contact channels.

The Group works with major brands worldwide, including Aegon, AXA Assistance, BBVA, BGL, Caixabank, DHL, loveholidays, Marks & Spencer, Rentokil Initial, Essent, GovTech, HomeServe, Saga, Sainsbury's Argos, Telefónica and Transcom Worldwide.

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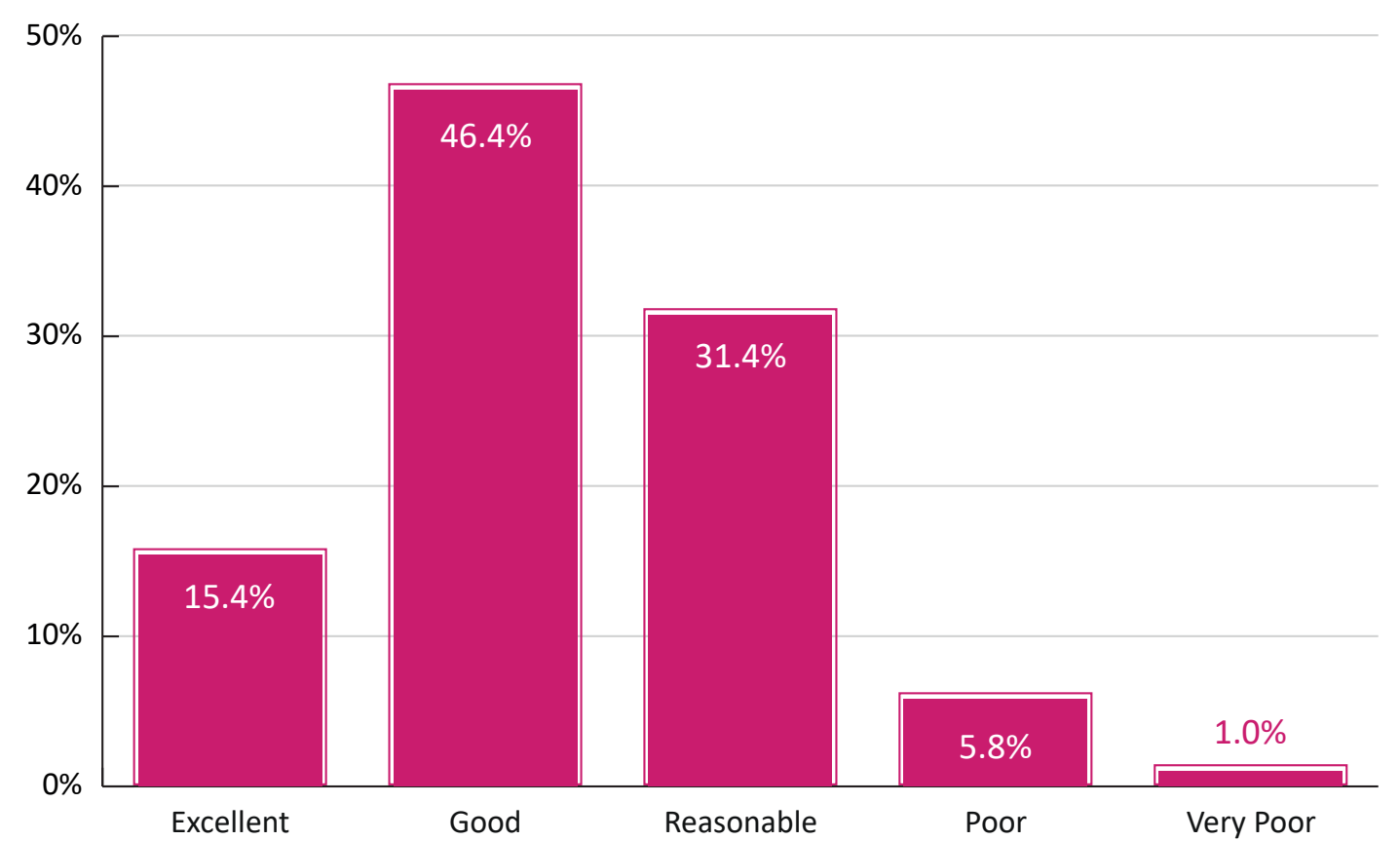
15. How Would You Rate the Level of Employee Engagement in Your Organization?

Almost Half of Contact Centres Failing to Engage Employees Well

38.2% of contact centres need to make serious improvements to successfully engage their employees, as 31.4% of survey respondents said their employee engagement was 'reasonable', whilst a further 5.8% said 'poor' and 1% said 'very poor'. In contrast, only 15.4% said their employee engagement was 'excellent'.

Overall, it was somewhat promising that 46.4% said their employee engagement was 'good', but with strong competition for the best staff, these results highlight that many contact centres need to do a lot more to maintain a thriving culture and retain the best talent.

How Would You Rate the Level of Employee Engagement in Your Organization?



16. Do the Managers and Leaders in Your Organization Understand How to Engage Their Teams?



Lack of Time and Tools Significant Barriers to Engaging Teams

When asked 'Do the managers and leaders in your organization understand how to engage their teams?', almost half of survey respondents replied 'yes, BUT...', with 23.2% saying 'yes, BUT they don't have the time', whilst a further 23.2% said 'yes, BUT they don't have the tools to allow them'. Only 11.1% claimed not to see any sign of managers knowing how to engage their teams well.

This suggests a misalignment in strategic priorities and that many contact centres need to give managers a fair chance to improve it – by ring-fencing time and investing in the tools they need to succeed instead of just paying lip service to the cause.

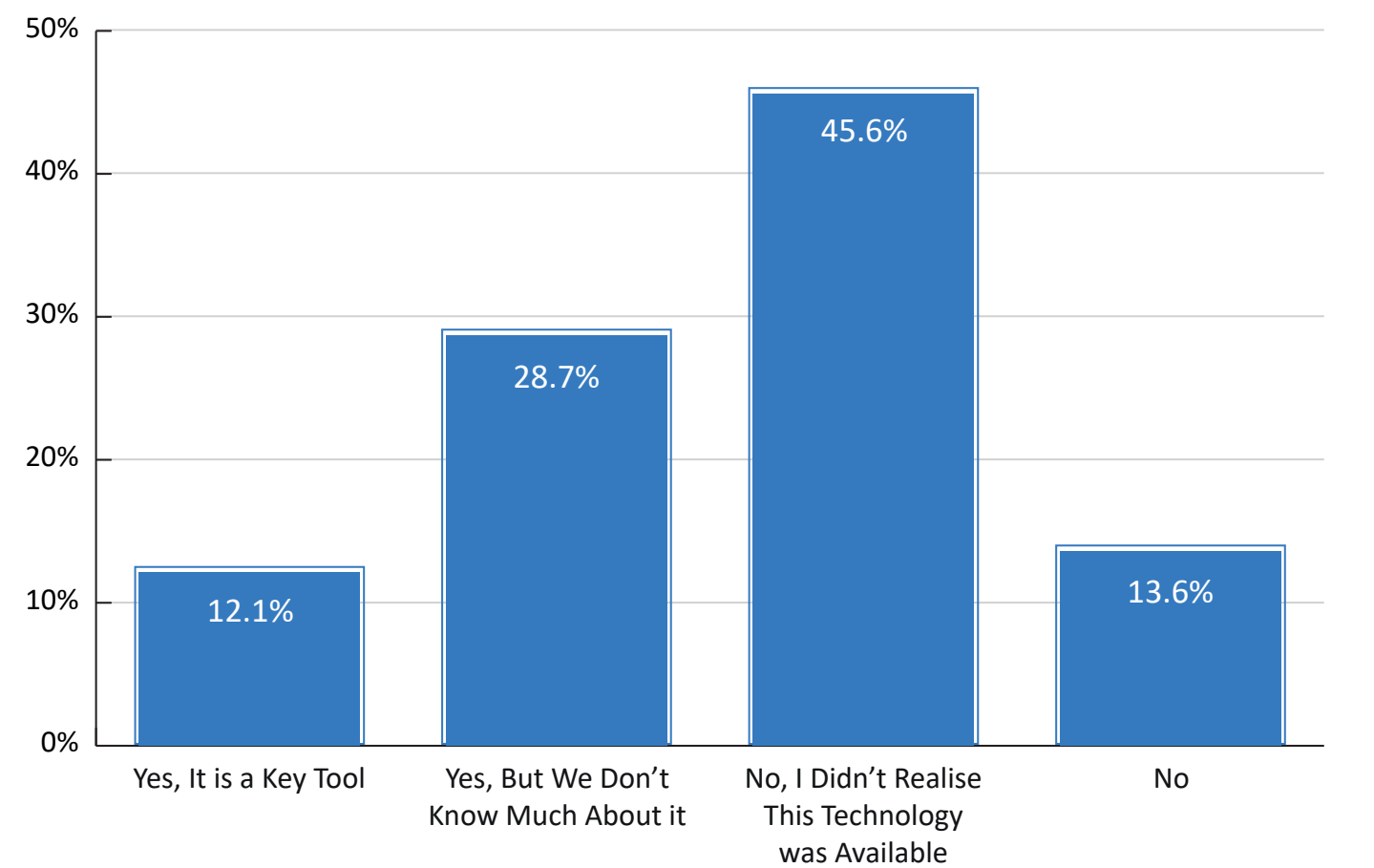
17. Have You Considered Using Technology to Monitor the Wellbeing of Your Advisors?

Only 12% of Contact Centres Utilizing Wellbeing Technology

When asked 'Have you considered using technology to monitor the wellbeing of your advisors?', a staggering 45.6% of survey respondents said 'No, I didn't realize this technology was available', whilst a further 28.7% said 'Yes, but we don't know much about it' – compared to just 12.1% who said 'Yes, it's a key tool'.

This suggests that the early adopters of wellbeing technology are already reaping the rewards, whilst most of the industry has yet to realize its potential.

Have You Considered Using Technology to Monitor the Wellbeing of Your Advisors?

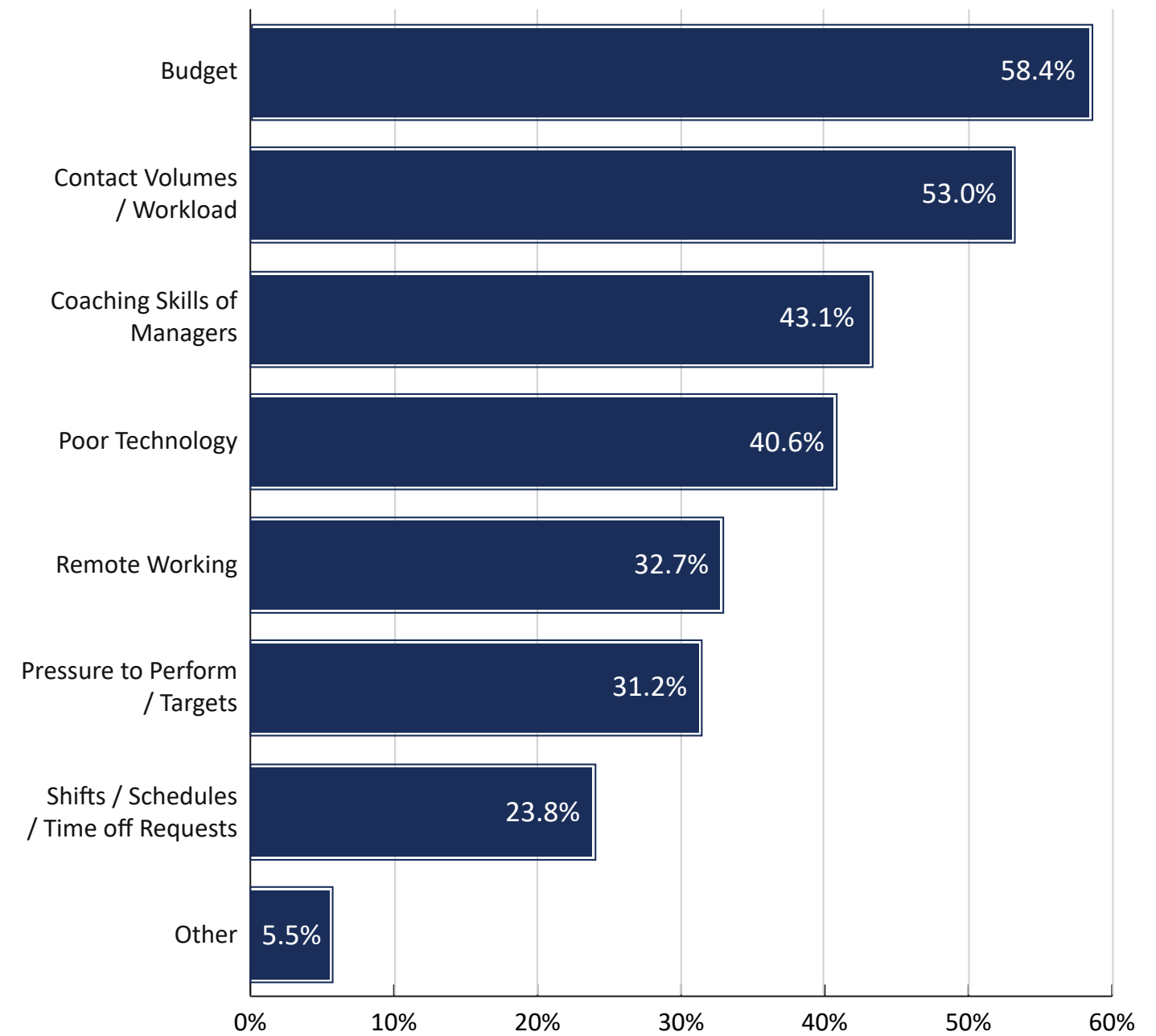


18. Which Barriers Are Stopping You From Improving the Advisor Experience?

Budget and Workloads Leave Many Feeling out of Control

It's sad to see that 58.4% of survey respondents blamed 'budget' and 53% blamed 'contact volumes' and workload', as both are typically outside of a contact centre manager's control – suggesting a feeling of helplessness when it comes to improving the advisor experience.

Which Barriers Are Stopping You From Improving the Advisor Experience?



A Third Blame Remote Working as a Barrier to Improving the Advisor Experience

Interestingly, 32.7% said they saw remote working as a barrier to improving the advisor experience, highlighting that not every contact centre has found the right balance yet when it comes to keeping everyone engaged.

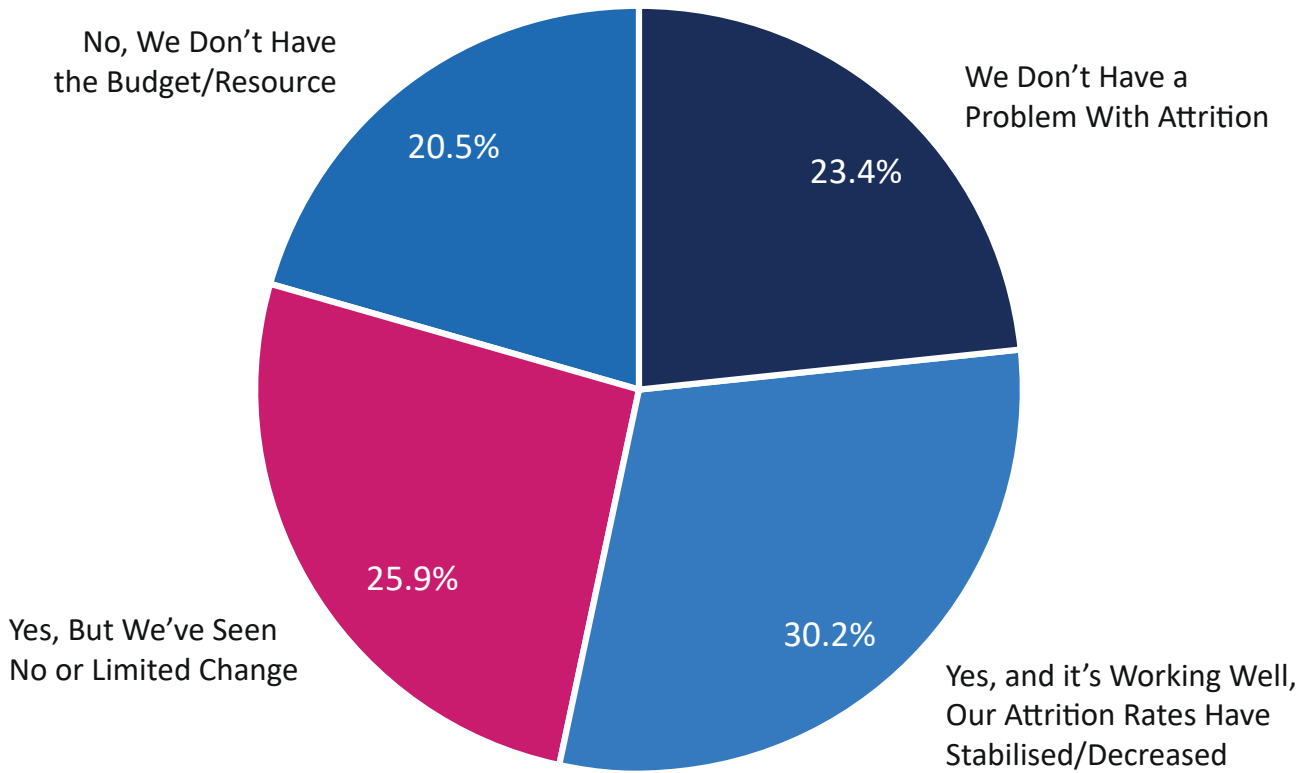
19. Have You Actively Put in Place Processes to Tackle Attrition in the Contact Centre?

Attrition Issues Continue to Plague the Industry

There's a real divide when it comes to attrition in the contact centre, but it's something the majority are experiencing – as only 23.4% of survey respondents claimed 'we don't have a problem with attrition'.

For the rest, 30.2% are succeeding in actively putting processes in place to tackle attrition, and 25.9% have tried processes to drive improvements but saw little to no change, whilst a further 20.5% claimed they don't have the budget or resource for such initiatives.

Have You Actively Put in Place Processes to Tackle Attrition in the Contact Centre?





Artificial Intelligence

The Artificial Intelligence chapter is sponsored by Central.

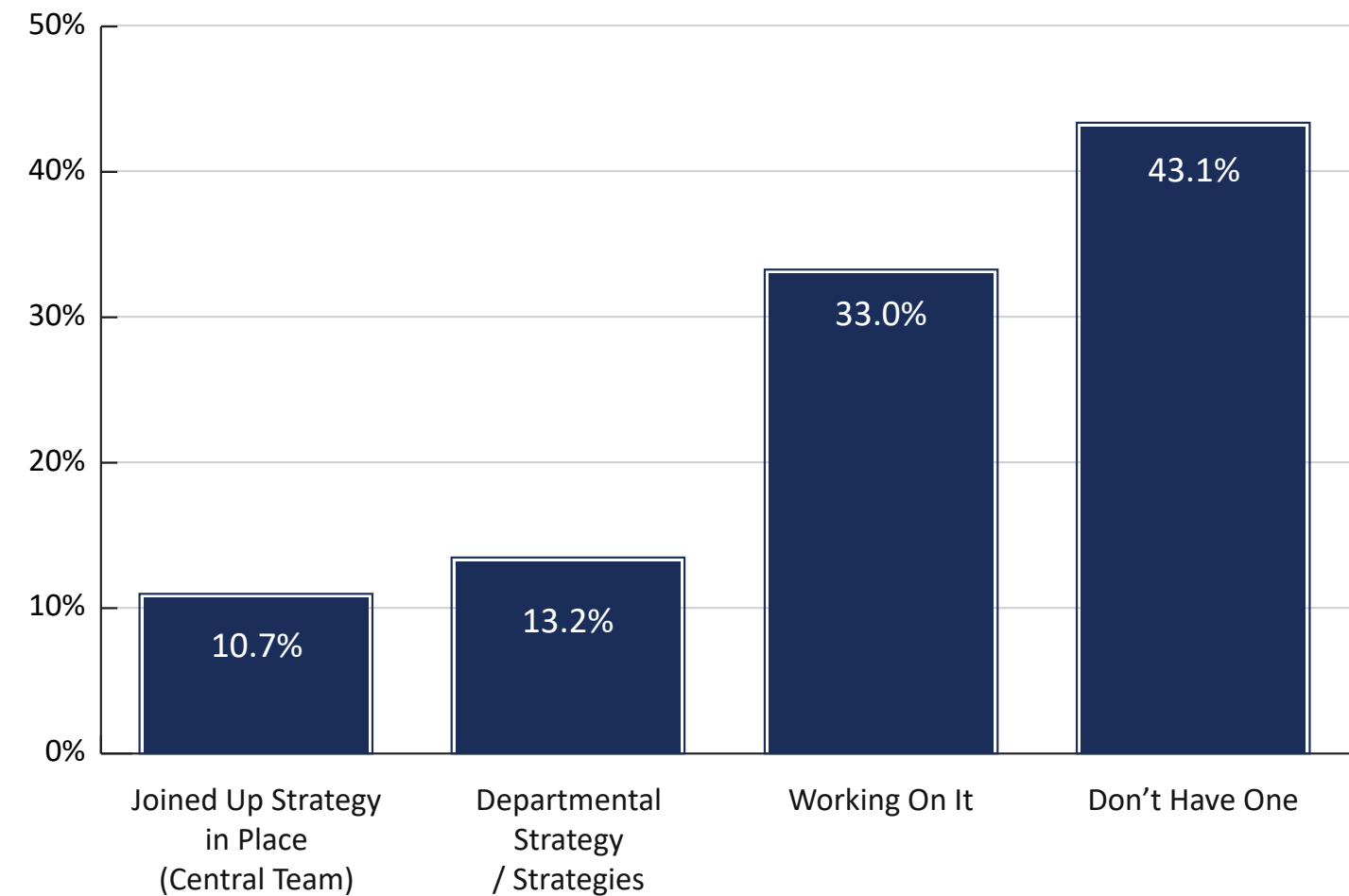
Central is an AI-powered employee Performance eXperience platform that drives best-in-class customer experiences for the world's leading brands through frontline agent success and growth. The platform provides a unified employee experience with real-time performance management, adaptive microlearning, AI-powered coaching, quality management, and VoE through a gamified solution to help organizations improve productivity and sales, reduce costs, lower attrition, and increase customer satisfaction.

Founded in 2013, Central has offices in New York, Tel-Aviv, and London, and serves customers in 150 countries in 40 different languages. Customers include leading multinational enterprises such as Microsoft, Teleperformance, Synchrony Financial, and more.

central.com

20. Where Is Your Artificial Intelligence Strategy?

Where Is Your Artificial Intelligence Strategy?



A Quarter of Contact Centres Leading the Charge With Artificial Intelligence (AI)

When asked ‘Where is your artificial intelligence (AI) strategy?’, 10.7% said they had a ‘joined-up strategy in place’ with a central team, whilst a further 13.2% said it’s in their ‘departmental strategy’.

This shows that artificial intelligence is high on the business agenda in around a quarter of contact centres, where leaders are admirable pioneers in this space. It was equally encouraging that 33% said they were ‘working on it’.

Half of the Industry Needs to Start Playing Catch-Up

Despite this promising picture, 43.1% of contact centre professionals said they ‘don’t have’ an artificial intelligence strategy.

This is possibly due to budget and buy-in limitations, but may also hint at some scepticism, with many perhaps waiting for others to go through the pain of trial and error first.

However, this may be short-lived, as once customers start experiencing the benefits of AI-led CX strategies, those lagging may face a more pressing need to adopt this technology – yet only time will tell how quickly this will happen.

21. What Would Be Your Biggest Driver for Implementing AI?

Efficiency Savings Trump Customer Experience

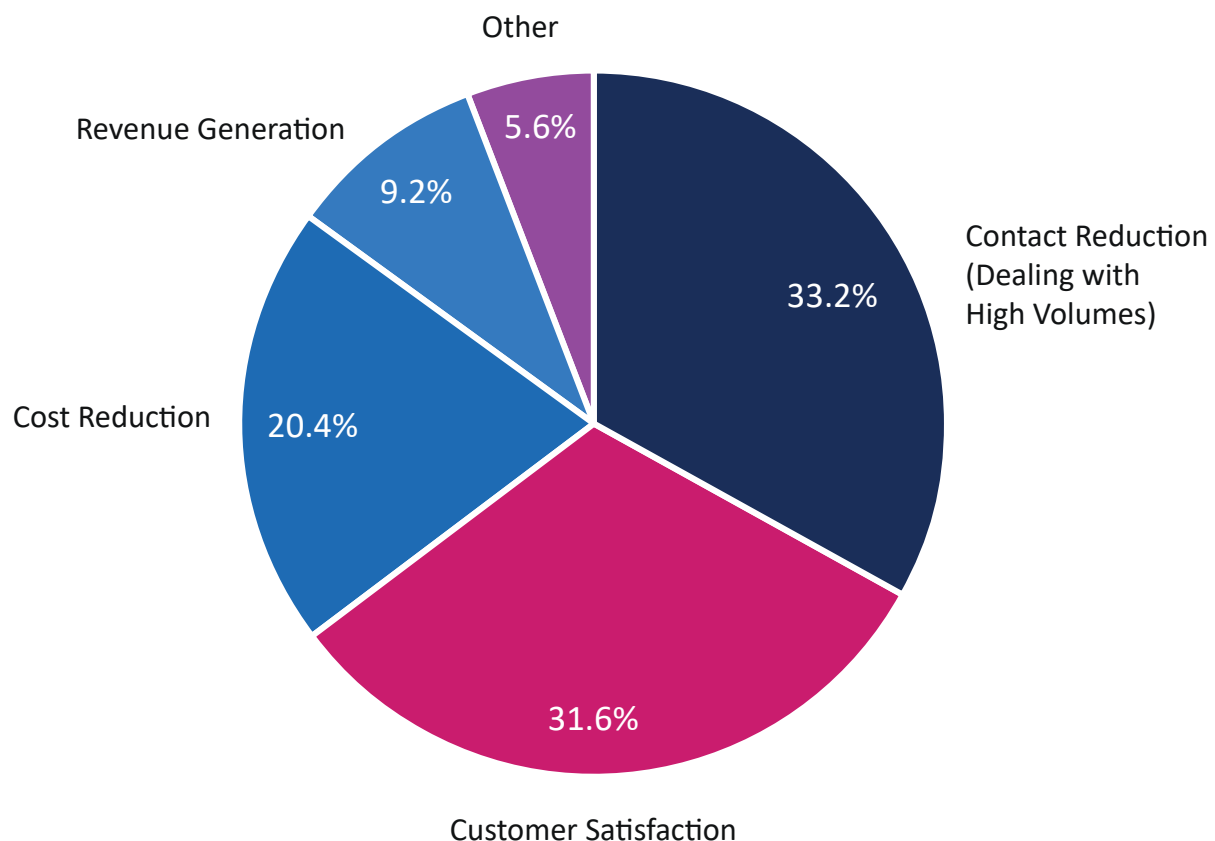
It was promising to see a third of contact centre professionals citing customer-centric reasons for wanting to implement artificial intelligence (AI) – with 31.6% striving for improved customer satisfaction.

However, the majority declared that efficiency savings, which would ultimately benefit the bottom line, were the key drivers behind implementing AI – with 33.2% aiming for contact reduction, 20.4% cost reduction, and 9.2% revenue generation.

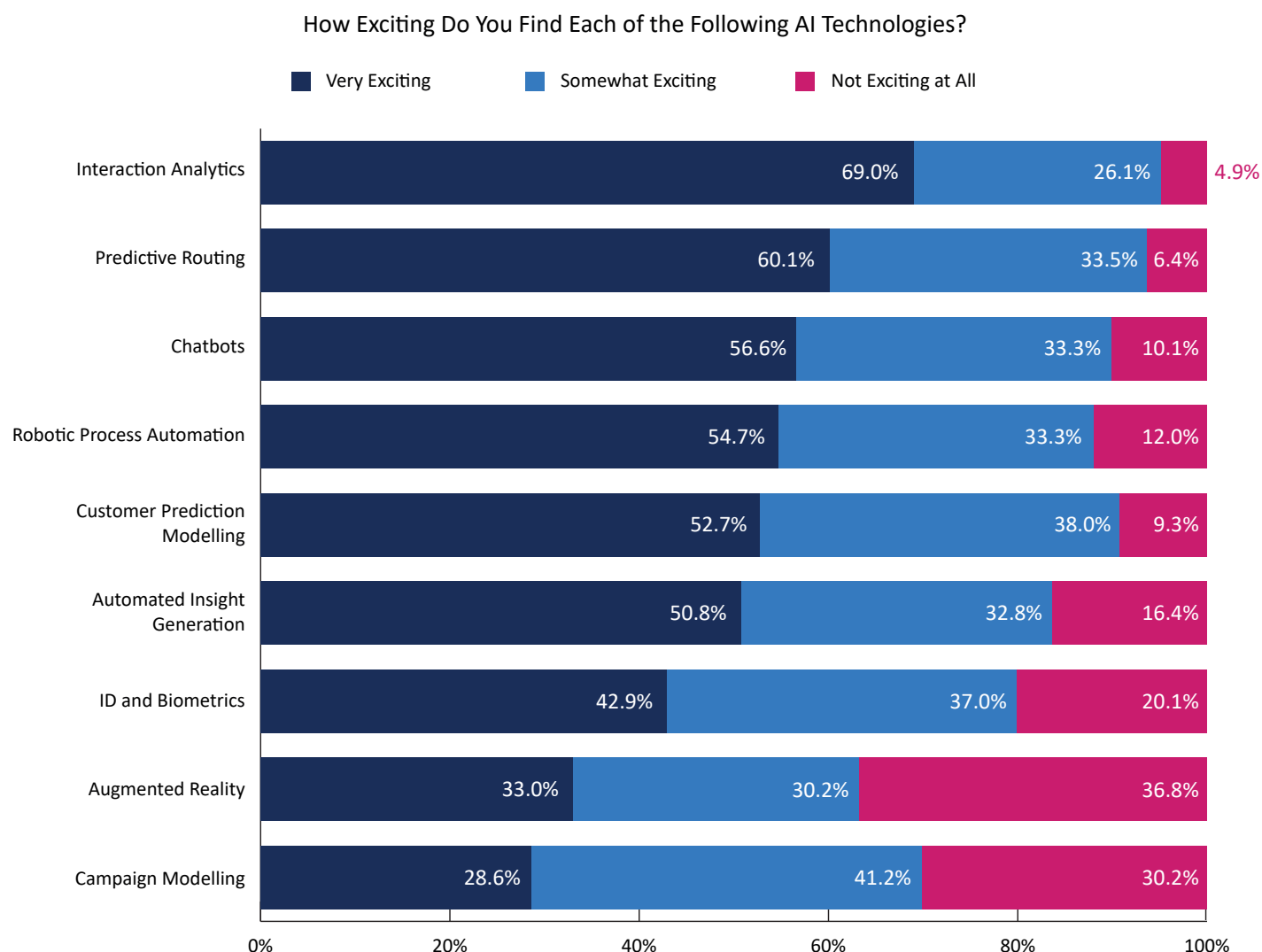
Furthermore, of the 5.6% who said ‘other’, survey respondents cited auto-quality monitoring, improved processes and efficiency, process automation, and time as additional drivers for implementing AI.

Overall, it’s somewhat concerning to see that the best interests of the customer are being sidelined here, as contact centres charge into an artificial future.

What Would Be Your Biggest Driver for Implementing AI?



22. How Exciting Do You Find Each of the Following AI Technologies?



Interaction Analytics and Predictive Routing Most Popular

Interaction analytics (69%) and predictive routing (60.1%) took a strong lead in what contact centre professionals were 'very' excited about in the scope of available AI technologies, closely followed by chatbots (56.6%), robotic process automation (54.7%), and customer prediction modelling (52.7%).

These results highlight that many professionals have been quick to see the potential benefits of this new and emerging technology and are keen to see it implemented in their contact centres.

By stark contrast, just 33% said they were 'very' excited about augmented reality and 28.6% were 'very' excited about campaign modelling – highlighting that there's a big educational piece still to do across the industry to showcase the capabilities and value-add of individual AI-driven technologies.

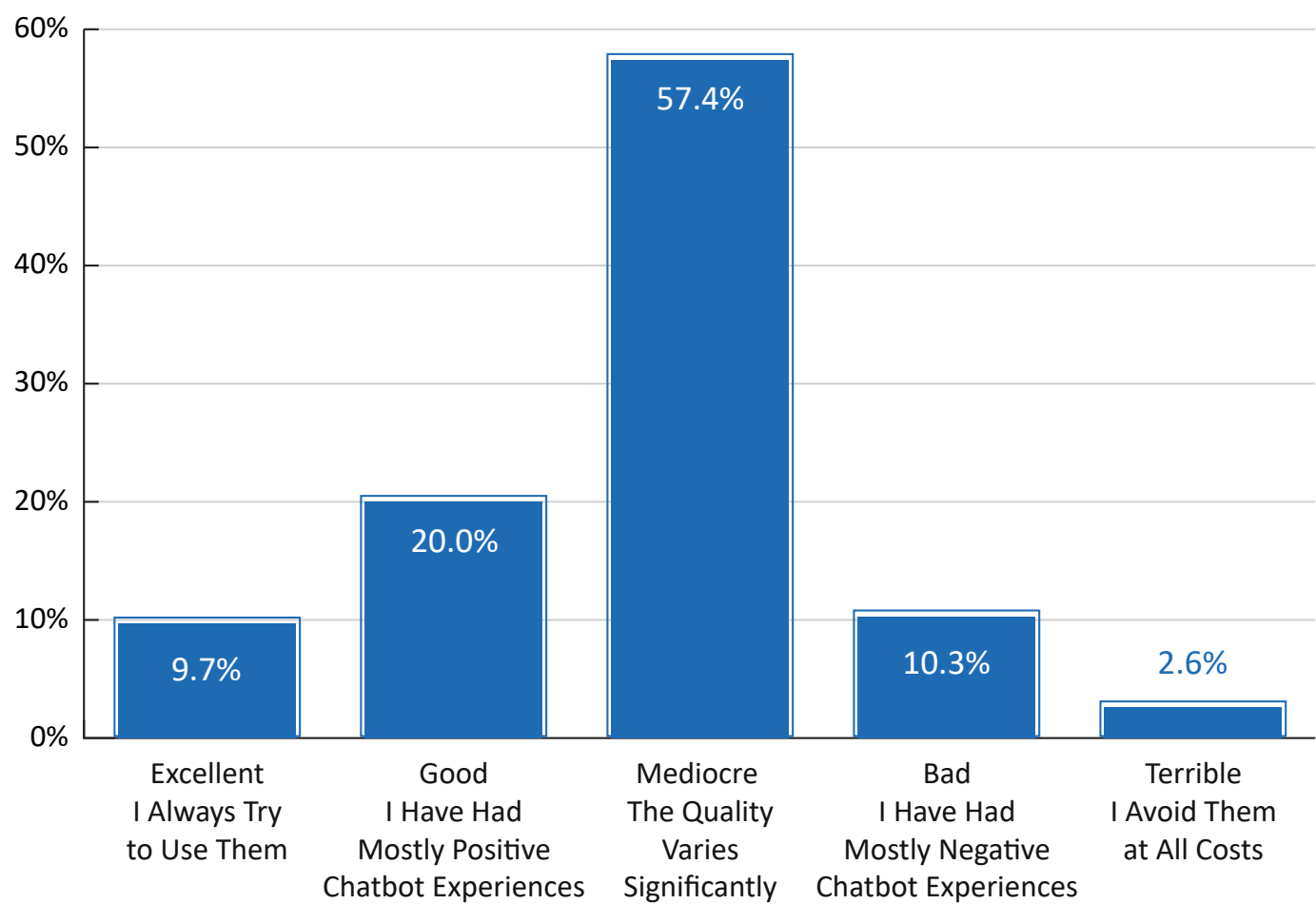
23. What Has Been Your Experience in Dealing With Other Organizations' Chatbots?

There's a Lot of Work to Do to Improve the Reputation of Chatbots

The survey findings revealed a disappointing situation in the experience of dealing with other organizations' chatbots.

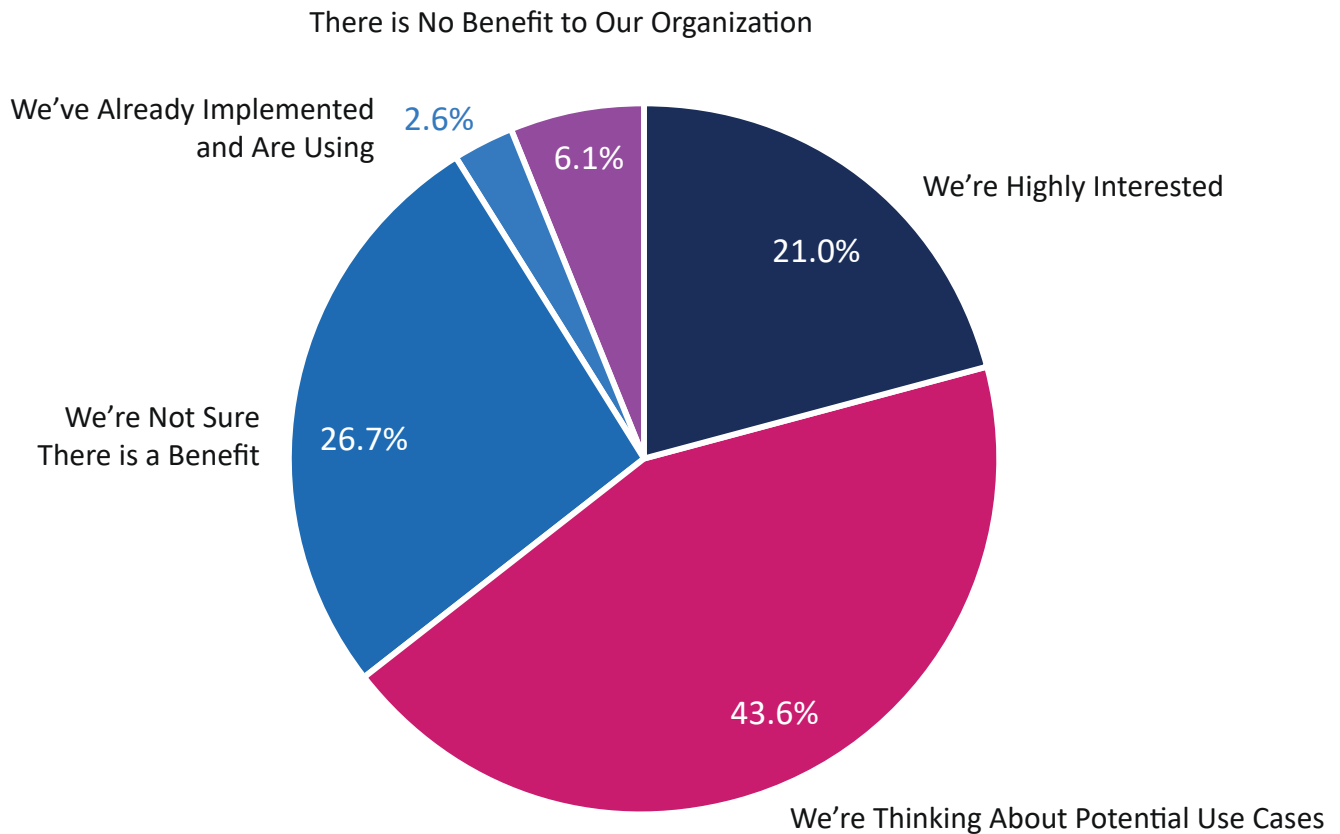
Whilst a promising 9.7% claimed to have had an 'excellent' experience, around 70% of chatbot experiences were dubbed below par – as the vast majority (57.4%) said they were 'mediocre and the quality varies significantly', whilst a further 10.3% said they'd had a 'bad' experience, and 2.6% went so far as to say their experience was 'terrible'.

What Has Been Your Experience in Dealing With Other Organizations' Chatbots?



24. What Are Your Thoughts on Generative AI for Your Organization?

What Are Your Thoughts on Generative AI for Your Organization?



Only Around 2% Have 'Already Implemented' Generative AI

The survey findings showed that just 2.6% of contact centres had already adopted generative AI into their contact centres.

Quite promisingly, a further 21% said they were 'highly interested', whilst 43.6% said they were 'thinking about potential use-cases'. This suggests the technology has already made big strides in capturing the attention of the industry, and many more may be implementing it soon.

Third of the Industry Unsure of the Benefits

However, not everyone felt this way! The findings also revealed that 26.7% said 'we're not sure there is a benefit', whilst a further 6.1% said 'there is no benefit to our organization'.

Only time will tell if these operations change their tune once the technology becomes more mainstream and begins to sway customer loyalty.



Customer Experience

The Customer Experience chapter is sponsored by Odigo.

Odigo helps large organisations connect with individuals through world-class, cloud-based contact centre solutions. Our cutting-edge, proprietary technologies enable a seamless, efficient, omnichannel experience for your customers and a satisfying, engaging experience for service agents.

Odigo serves more than 400,000 agents and business users globally. With a 25-year history of industry firsts, Odigo has more than 250 clients around the world.

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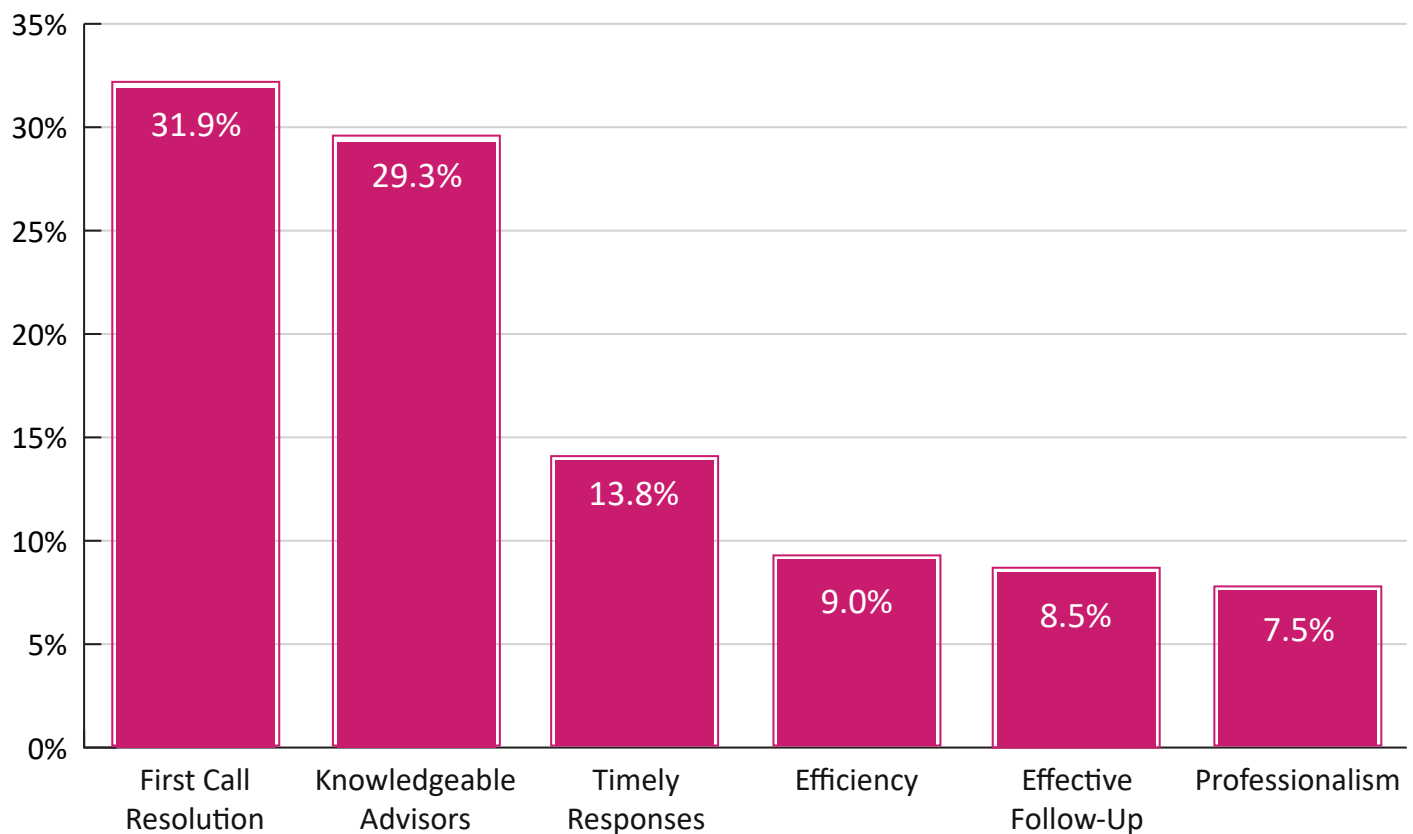
25. Above All, What Do Your Customers Value Most?

Customers Value FCR and Knowledgeable Advisors First and Foremost

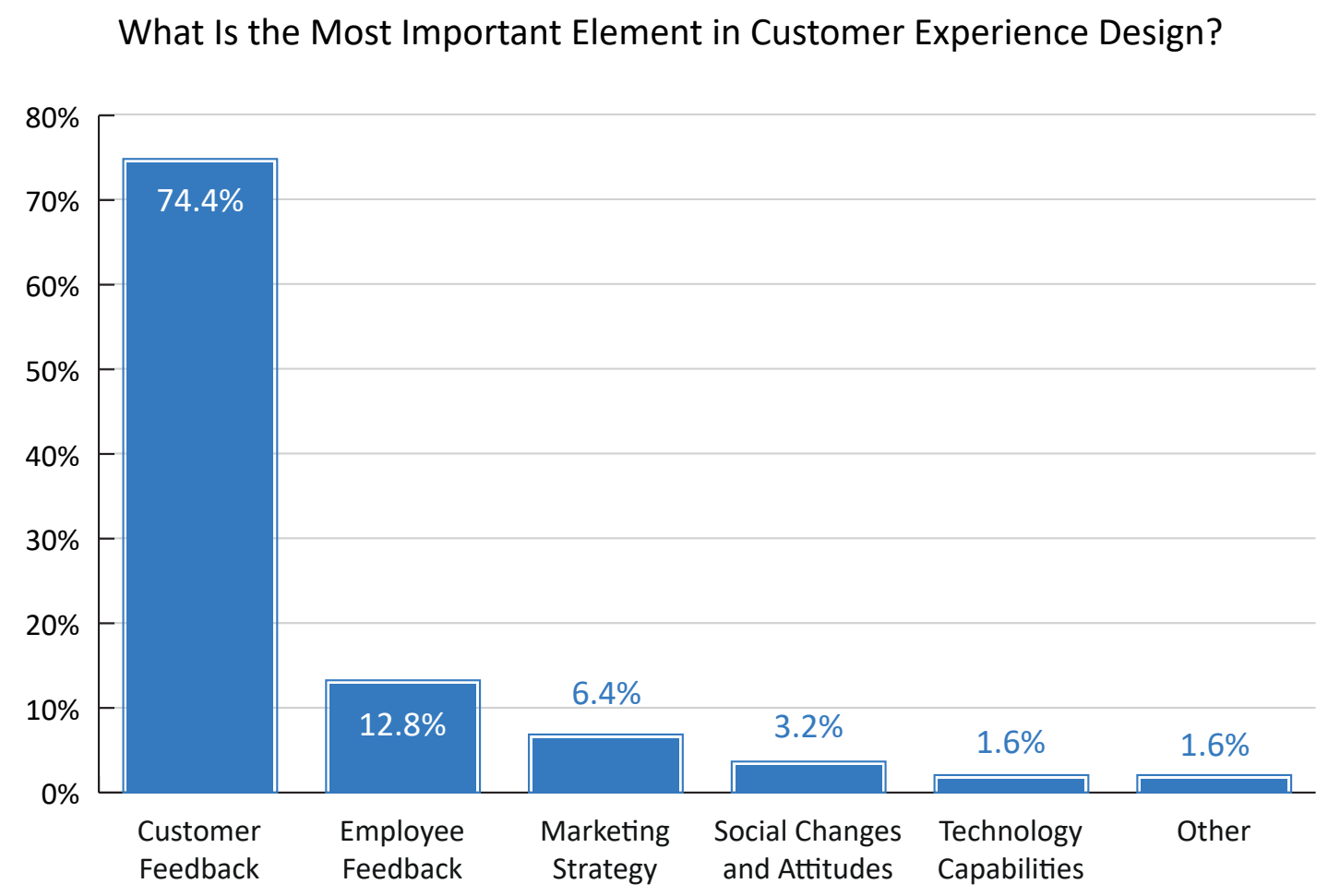
Survey respondents claimed their customers valued first call resolution (FCR) (31.9%) and knowledgeable advisors (29.3%) the most – highlighting where many contact centres are focusing their customer service efforts right now.

Somewhat surprisingly, lagging were efficiency (9%), effective follow-up (8.5%), and professionalism (7.5%) – although it's arguable that these are traits many take for granted when dealing with an organization and wouldn't necessarily feel are notable points of value.

Above All, What Do Your Customers Value Most?



26. What Is the Most Important Element in Customer Experience Design?



Customers Placed Front and Centre of CX Design

It's fantastic to see customers placed front and centre here, and quite rightly so, with 74.4% of survey respondents claiming that customer feedback is the most important element in customer experience design.

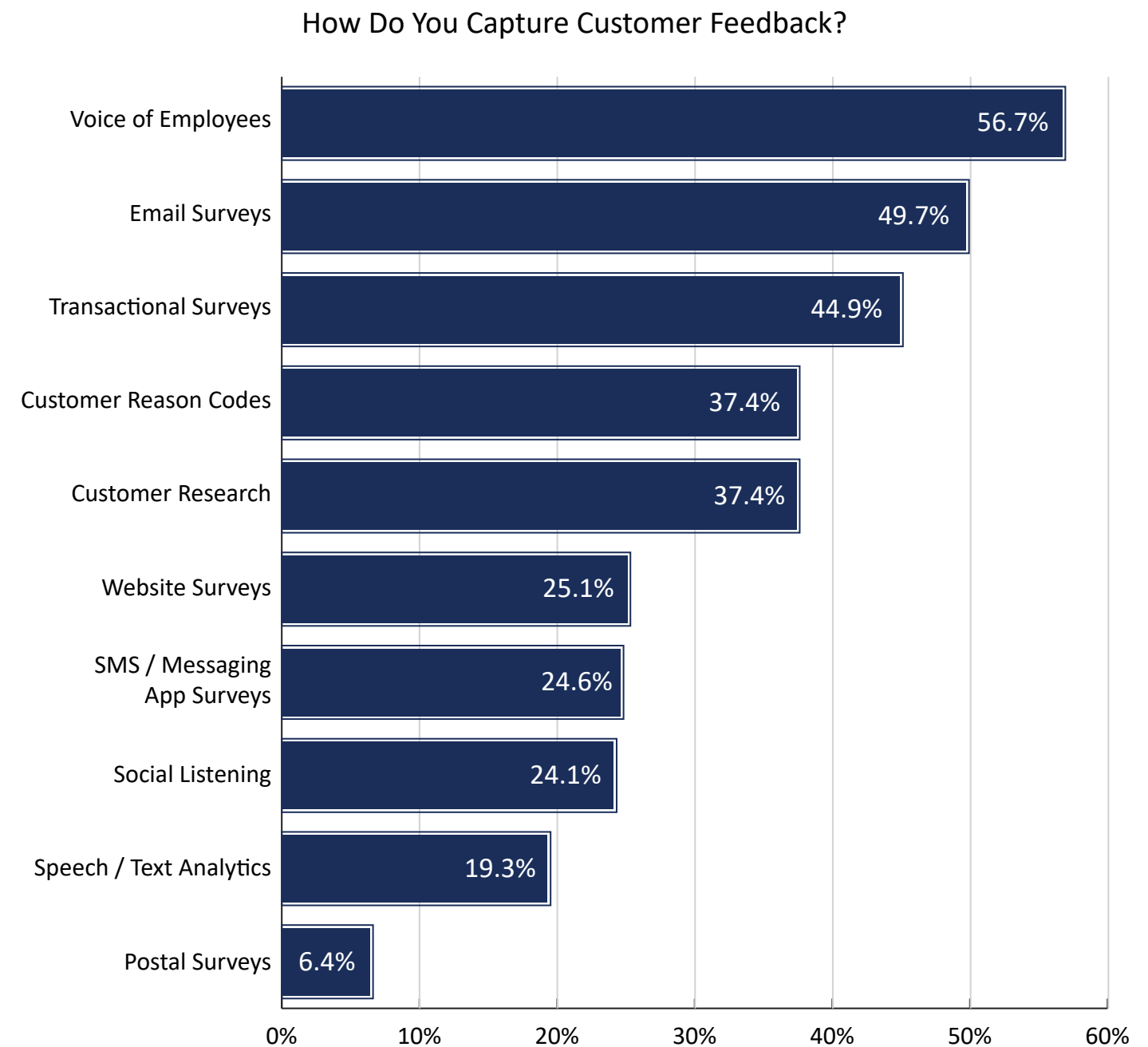
By comparison, employee feedback (12.8%), marketing strategy (6.4%), and social changes and attitudes (3.2%) are perceived to be less important elements in CX design.

Furthermore, of the 1.6% who said 'other', survey respondents also cited building visible and clear processes.

27. How Do You Capture Customer Feedback?

Voice of Employees, Email, and Transactional Surveys Top the Leaderboard – for Now

The 2023 research findings showed that voice of employees (56.7%), email surveys (49.7%), and transactional surveys (44.9%) are the most widely used methods for capturing customer feedback right now. However, there are clear signs of change ahead.



Email Surveys Are on Their Way Out, in Growing Favour of Speech Analytics

The findings also revealed that email surveys (down from 53.9% in 2022 to 49.7% in 2023), transactional surveys (significantly down from 61.8% in 2020 to 44.9% in 2023), and customer reason codes (down from 40.1% in 2022 to 37.4% in 2023) are falling out of favour – each receiving their lowest scores since 2019.

This is in parallel with the growing popularity of voice of employee surveys (up from 51.8% in 2022 to 56.7% in 2023), SMS/messaging app surveys (up from 19.5% in 2022 to 24.6% in 2023), and social listening (up from 18.4% in 2022 to 24.1% in 2023).

Not only that, but the use of speech and text analytics is on the rise too – hitting a five-year high in our survey records, climbing from 9.6% in 2019 to 19.3% in 2023.

How Do You Capture Customer Feedback?

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Voice of Employees (VoE)	69.6%	58.8%	59.0%	51.8%	56.7%
Email Surveys	N/A	N/A	54.3%	53.9%	49.7%
Transactional Surveys	73.5%	61.8%	N/A	N/A	44.9%
Customer Reason Codes	N/A	N/A	41.0%	40.1%	37.4%
Customer Research	40.4%	42.2%	41.6%	31.9%	37.4%
Website Surveys	N/A	N/A	35.3%	24.1%	25.1%
SMS / Messaging App Surveys	N/A	N/A	20.2%	19.5%	24.6%
Social Listening	35.7%	31.7%	22.5%	18.4%	24.1%
Speech / Text Analytics	9.6%	16.6%	13.9%	16.3%	19.3%
Postal Surveys	N/A	N/A	8.1%	6.0%	6.4%

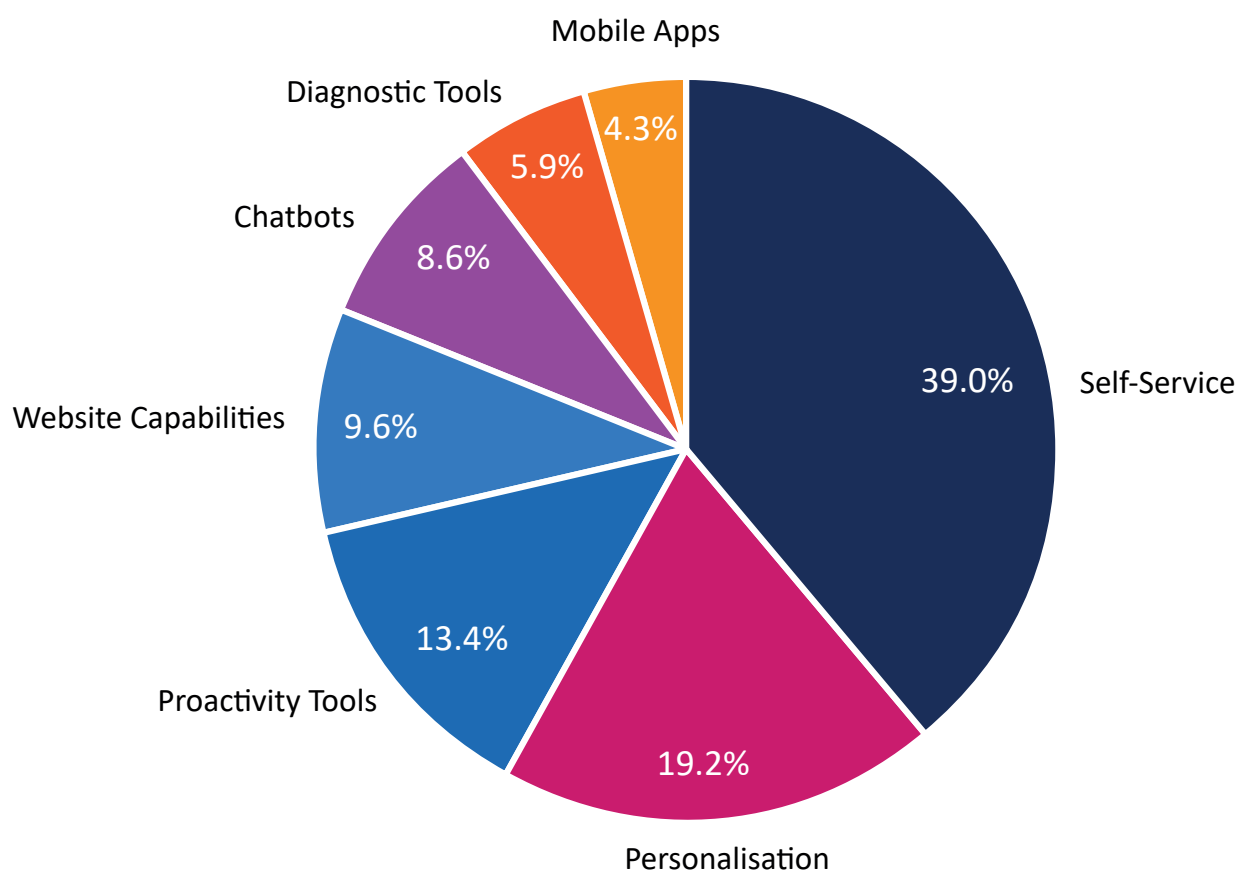
28. When Improving Customer Experience, Where Do You Think Organizations Can Get Maximum Value for Money?

Self-Service a Clear Winner

More than a third (39%) of survey respondents stated that investing in self-service was where they believed their organization could see maximum value for money. Personalization (19.2%) and productivity tools (13.4%) were also perceived to be a strong investment.

By contrast, diagnostic tools and website capabilities were thought to be worse value for money. This suggests a strong trend in contact centres investing (or soon to be investing) in self-service to help improve the customer experience.

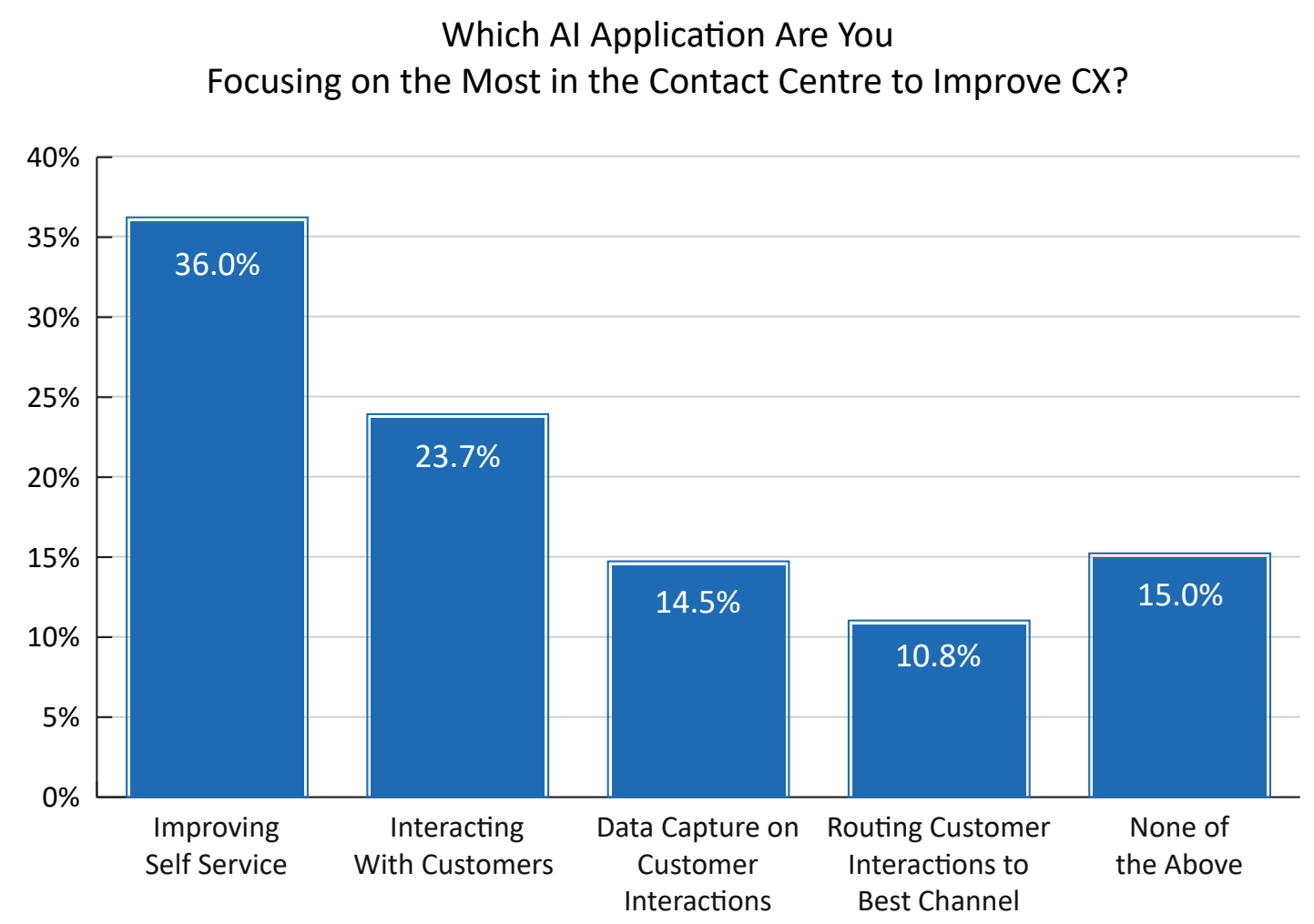
When Improving Customer Experience, Where Do You Think Organizations Can Get Maximum Value for Money?



Chatbots Are Not Giving Value for Money

Only a surprising 8.6% of respondents said that chatbots are giving the maximum value for money – perhaps reflecting customer dissatisfaction with this new technology.

29.Which AI Application Are You Focusing on the Most in the Contact Centre to Improve CX?



Self-Service Key Focus for AI Application

When asked 'Which AI application are you focusing on the most in the contact centre to improve CX?', improving self-service took a clear lead at 36%.

A further 23.7% said interacting with customers, whilst data capture on customer interactions and routing customer interactions to best channel lagged.

This indicates that self-service is a clear priority for contact centres right now, with AI being perceived as a viable solution and means to deliver it.



Scorebuddy
QUALITY SCORING SYSTEM

Quality Assurance

The Quality Assurance chapter is sponsored by Scorebuddy.

Scorebuddy is a cloud based Quality Assessment platform used to measure and improve staff performance by evaluating multi-channel customer interactions in contact centers.

Together with its contact center quality management solution, Scorebuddy has an integrated Quality Assurance BI solution, Coaching module and customer sentiment survey tool.

Scorebuddy helps improve agent consistency and increase agent engagement, which in-turn improves the overall customer experience. Scorebuddy is designed to collect data quickly and accurately, store it centrally for collaboration with agents, and generate instant analysis and reporting.

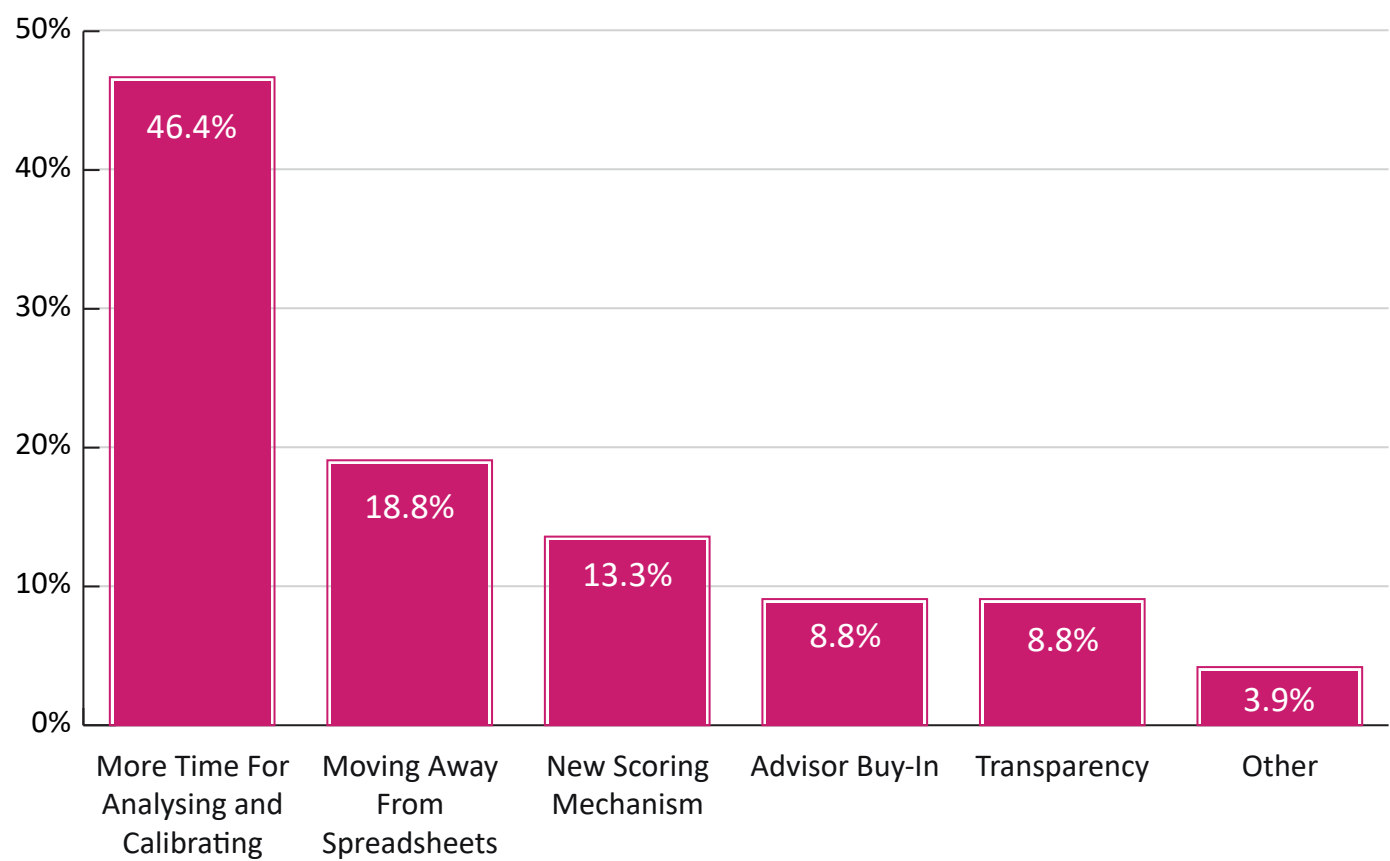
scorebuddyqa.com

30.What Would You Like to Change Most Within Your Quality Monitoring Programme?

Many Would Like the Gift of Time

46.4% of survey respondents said they'd like to have more time for analysing and calibrating, and the root cause for this could be twofold. Firstly, these contact centre professionals could be using long-winded methods to complete their regular quality monitoring exercises, such as manual call listening and marking against spreadsheets.

What Would You Like to Change Most Within Your Quality Monitoring Programme?



Around One Fifth Want to Ditch Spreadsheets

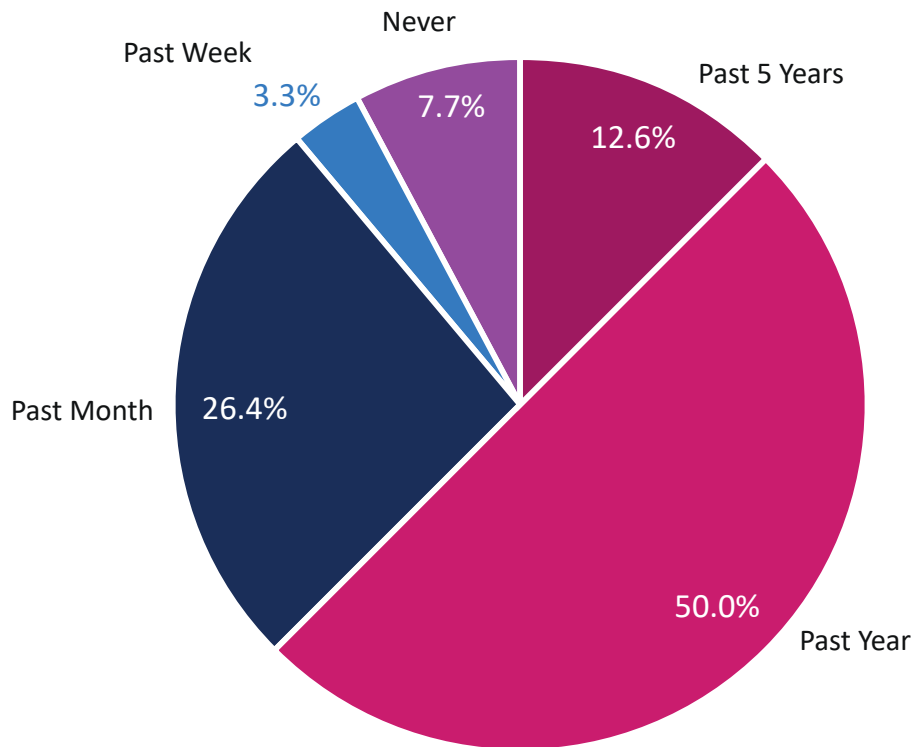
Furthermore, it was interesting to see that 18.8% of survey respondents cited the desire to move away from spreadsheets – suggesting that there are several contact centres yet to utilize the latest quality monitoring technology.

13.3% also said they most wanted to see change in the form of a new scoring mechanism, showing that some need to dedicate some strategic thinking time to their quality monitoring processes. In addition, of the 3.9% who said ‘other’, survey respondents cited introducing a QA department and increasing the volume of calls evaluated.

Overall, the findings suggest there’s plenty of room for improvement across the board when it comes to delivering a great quality monitoring programme.

31. When Did Your Company Last Change the Questions on Your Quality Scorecard?

When Did Your Company Last Change the Questions on Your Quality Scorecard?



Half of Contact Centres Review Their Quality Scorecard Questions Annually

It was great to see that 50% of survey respondents said they'd last changed the questions on their quality scorecard in the past year – suggesting many have an annual process for reviewing quality scorecard questions year-on-year.

Alongside this, over a quarter (26.4%) said that they'd changed their questions in the past month, while only 3.3% said they'd done it in the last week. These findings suggest that most contact centres are keeping a relatively close eye on the questions on their quality scorecards to check they are fit for purpose.

Almost a Fifth Failing to Regularly Review the Questions on Their Quality Scorecards

On the flipside, 12.6% of survey respondents revealed they'd only completed this exercise in the past five years, while 7.7% said they'd never done it.

This is concerning, as it suggests that a fifth of contact centres are not engaged in a cycle of continuous improvement and are letting their quality monitoring process go stale.

32. Which Attributes Do You Measure on Digital Channels?

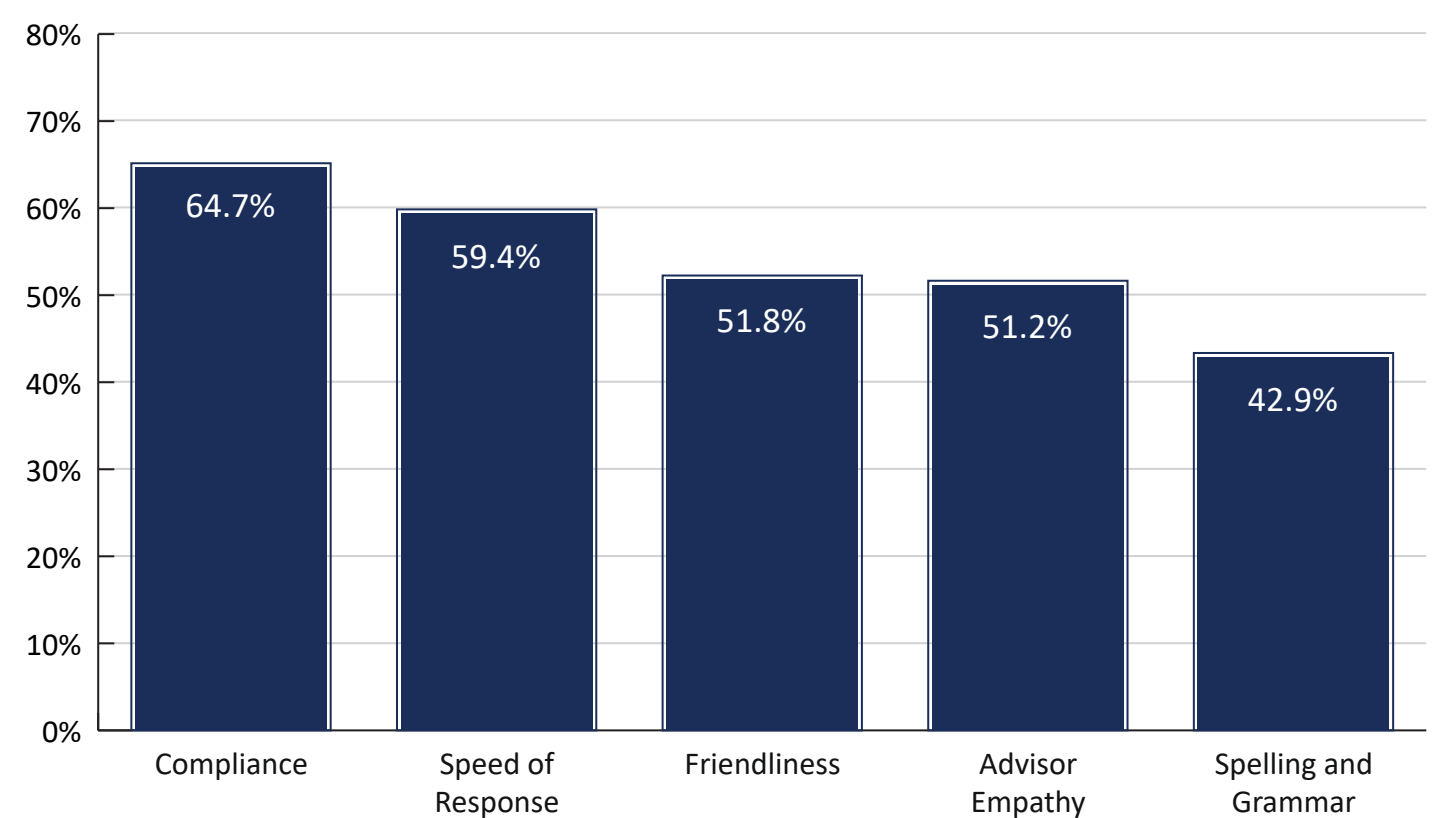
Equal Emphasis on a Range of Attributes

Compliance, speed of response, friendliness, advisor empathy, and spelling and grammar all ranked similarly here, with no major outliers – showing that many contact centres capture a broad view when it comes to monitoring their digital channels.

Most Contact Centres Do Not Measure Spelling and Grammar

That aside, as ‘select all that apply’ was an available option in the survey, it’s somewhat concerning to see spelling and grammar and compliance not ranking higher, suggesting that several contact centres aren’t measuring these consistently across in their digital channels and possibly compromising the quality of these interactions.

Which Attributes Do You Measure on Digital Channels?



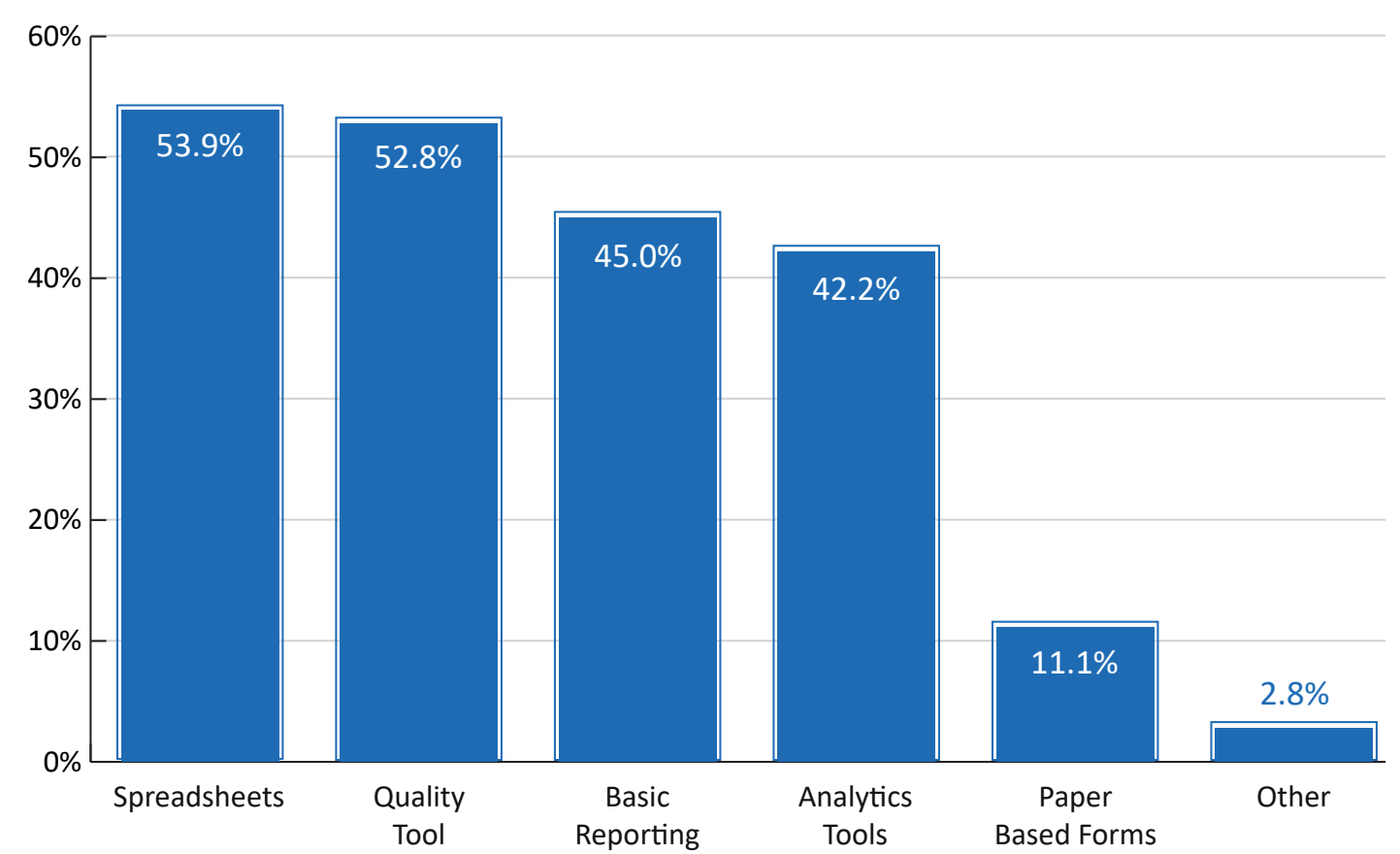
33. Which Quality Tools Do You Use?

Analytics and Quality Tools Becoming More Mainstream

It was promising to see analytics (42.2%) and quality tools (52.8%) on a par with the more traditionally used tools of spreadsheets and basic reporting – showing that many contact centres are adopting a progressive approach to quality monitoring, and that these tools are becoming more mainstream.

In addition, of the 2.8% that said ‘other’, survey respondents cited independent offshore QA providers and relying on manual processes.

Which Quality Tools Do You Use?



Most Contact Centres Content Using Spreadsheets

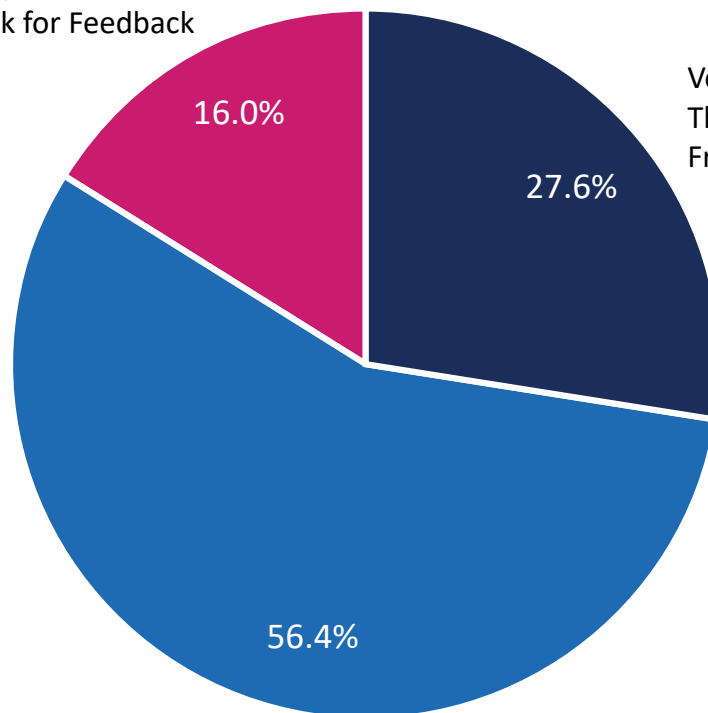
Many survey respondents (53.9%) confirmed they are still using spreadsheets as a key quality tool. Furthermore, only 18.8% of these same survey respondents said that moving away from spreadsheets was what they’d like to change most within their quality monitoring.

This suggests that around a third of contact centre professionals (35.1%) are content with their spreadsheet-based quality processes.

34. How Engaged Are Your Customer Advisors in the QA Programme of Your Contact Centre?

How Engaged Are Your Customer Advisors
in the QA Programme of Your Contact Centre?

Passively Engaged: Rarely Review Their
QA Scores, Never ask for Feedback



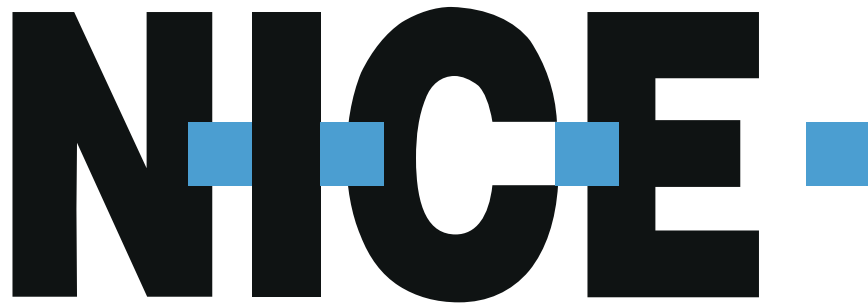
Very Engaged. Review All
Their QA Scores and
Frequently Ask for Feedback

Moderately Engaged: Review Some of Their Scores, Rarely Ask for Feedback

Majority of Contact Centres Need to Work on Their QA Engagement

When asked 'How engaged are your customer advisors in the QA program of your contact centre?', 56.4% of survey respondents said 'moderately engaged', whilst a further 16% of survey respondents said 'passively engaged'. Sadly, this makes any QA efforts seem futile for many.

By contrast, only 27.6% reported that their customer advisors were 'very engaged'. This highlights that most contact centres are struggling with QA engagement right now and need to take proactive measures to address this situation.



Workforce Management

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35. What Equipment Do You Use for Forecasting and Scheduling?

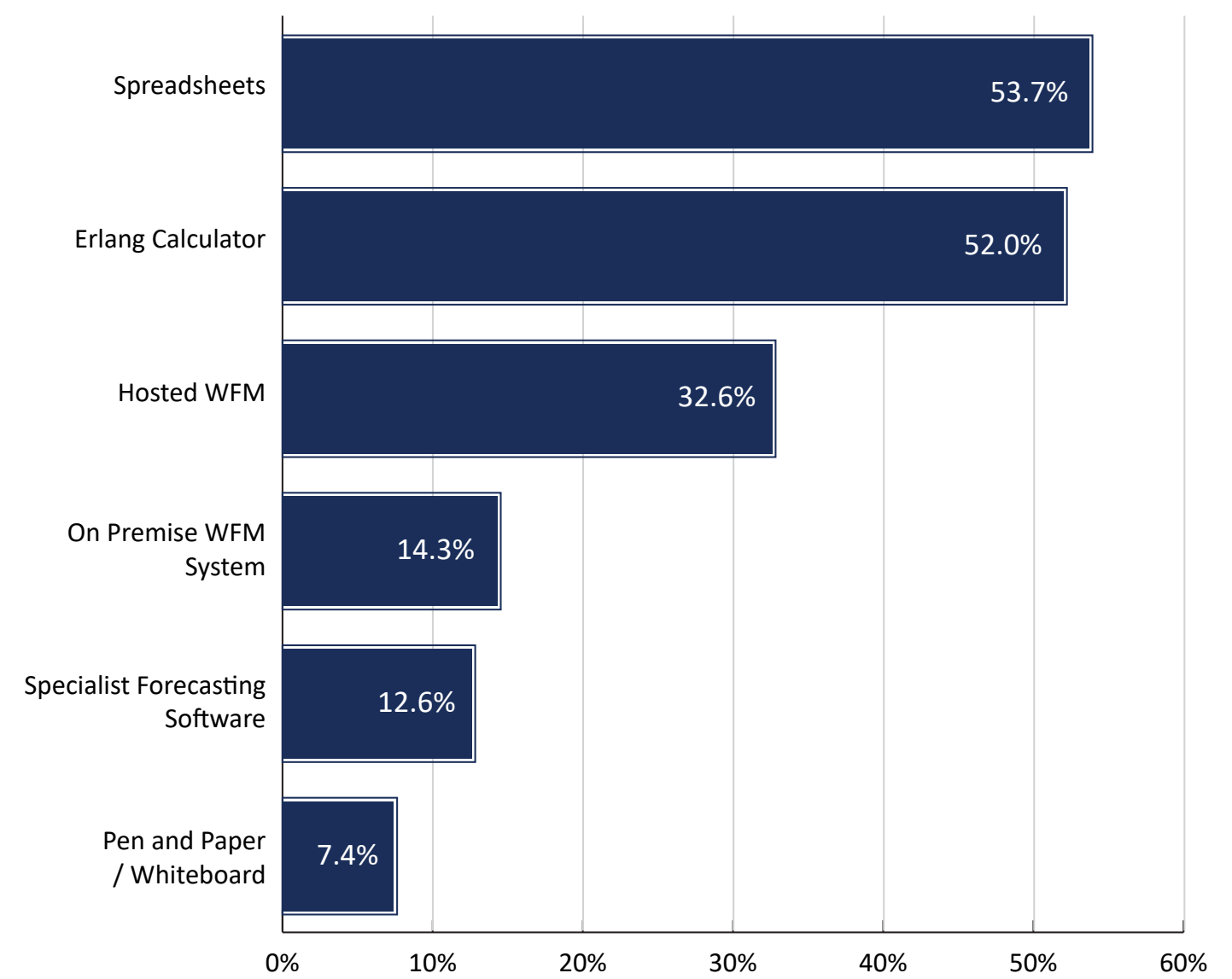
Hosted WFM Taking the Lead Over On-Premise Solutions

Contact centres are slowly embracing cloud technology as the norm – with only 14.3% using on-premise WFM solutions, compared to over double (32.6%) using hosted WFM solutions.

Majority Relying on Erlang Calculators and Spreadsheets

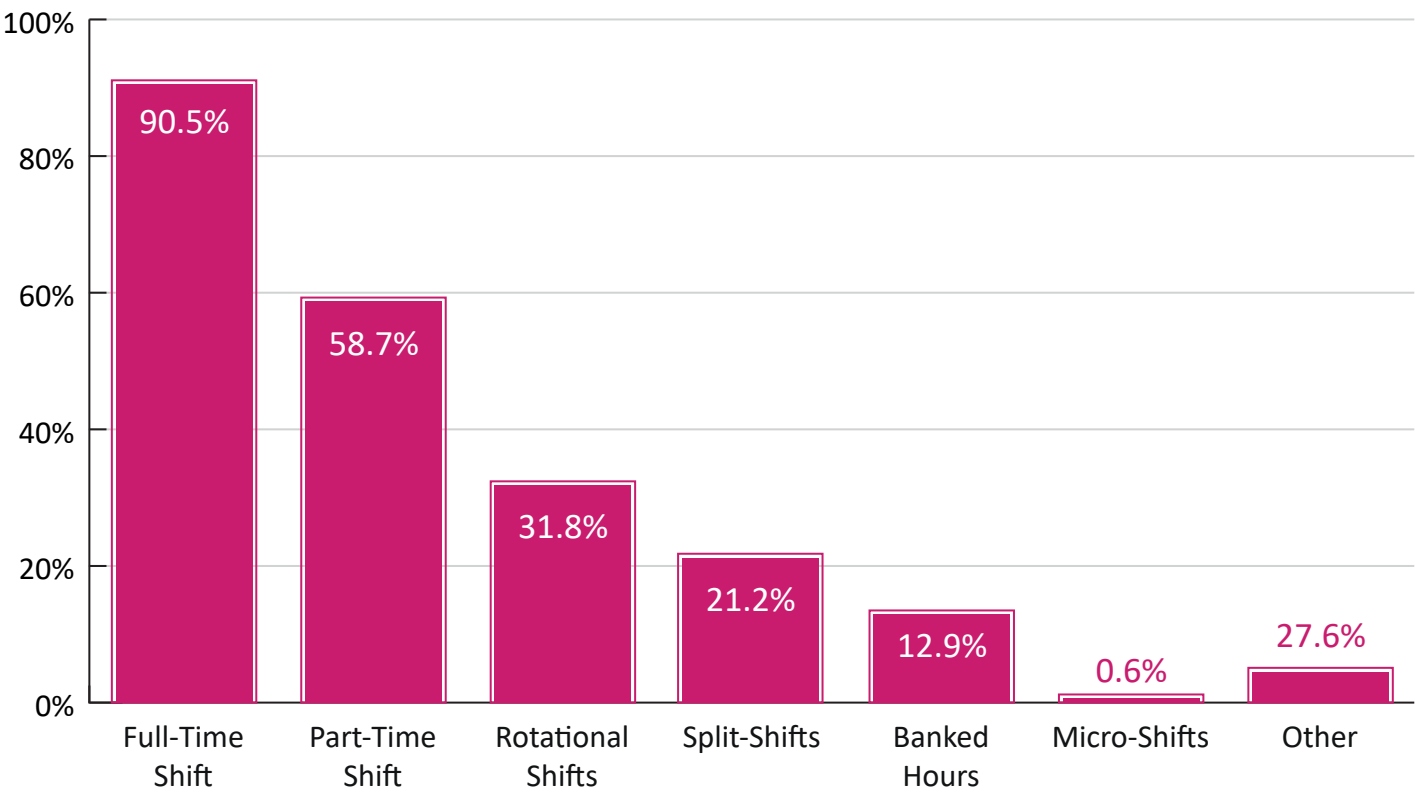
Despite this, the survey findings overwhelmingly showed that Erlang calculators (52%) and spreadsheets (53.7%) are still being heavily relied on by contact centre professionals for their forecasting and scheduling.

What Equipment Do You Use for Forecasting and Scheduling?



36. Which Shift Patterns Do You Use in Your Contact Centre?

Which Shift Patterns Do You Use in Your Contact Centre?



Contact Centres Embracing Flexible Working Options

Beyond the continuing popularity of full-time shifts (at a steady 90% year-on-year), 58.7% of contact centres are now offering part-time shifts.

This trend has shown a consistent increase in recent years – up from 47% in 2021 and 55.2% in 2022. Split-shifts are showing similar trends (gradually increasing from 19.5% in 2021 to 20% in 2022 and up to 21.2% in 2023), as are banked hours, which have also increased in availability over the years (from 6.7% in 2021 to 9.3% in 2022 and 12.9% in 2023).

This suggests that contact centres are responding to the needs of their frontline, embracing flexible working, and providing more variety for a better work-life balance.

For example, split-shifts better support working parents needing to do the school run in the middle of the afternoon – without compromising on a full-time salary.

Which Shift Patterns Do You Use in Your Contact Centre?

	2021	2022	2023
Full-Time Shifts	90.2%	90.7%	90.5%
Part-Time Shifts	47.0%	55.2%	58.7%
Rotational Shifts	36.0%	32.8%	31.8%
Split-Shifts	19.5%	20.0%	21.2%
Banked Hours	6.7%	9.3%	12.9%
Micro-Shifts (less than one hour)	1.8%	1.0%	0.6%
Other	4.3%	1.7%	4.5%

Micro-Shifts on the Decline as World Opens Up Post-Covid

On the flip side, micro-shifts have shown a steady decline since 2021 – falling from 1.8% to 1% in 2022 and 0.6% in 2023. It's unsurprising that this decline coincides with the end of Covid lockdown restrictions and the gradual return to the office.

This is because micro-shifts are typically defined as a quick burst of support of less than one hour, with the purpose of supporting peak or unexpected demand, and are wholly impractical for many frontline agents who'd now need to commute into the contact centre to complete their micro-shift.

37. What Is Your Biggest Scheduling Problem?

Absence and Call Peaks Continue to Be Top Scheduling Headaches

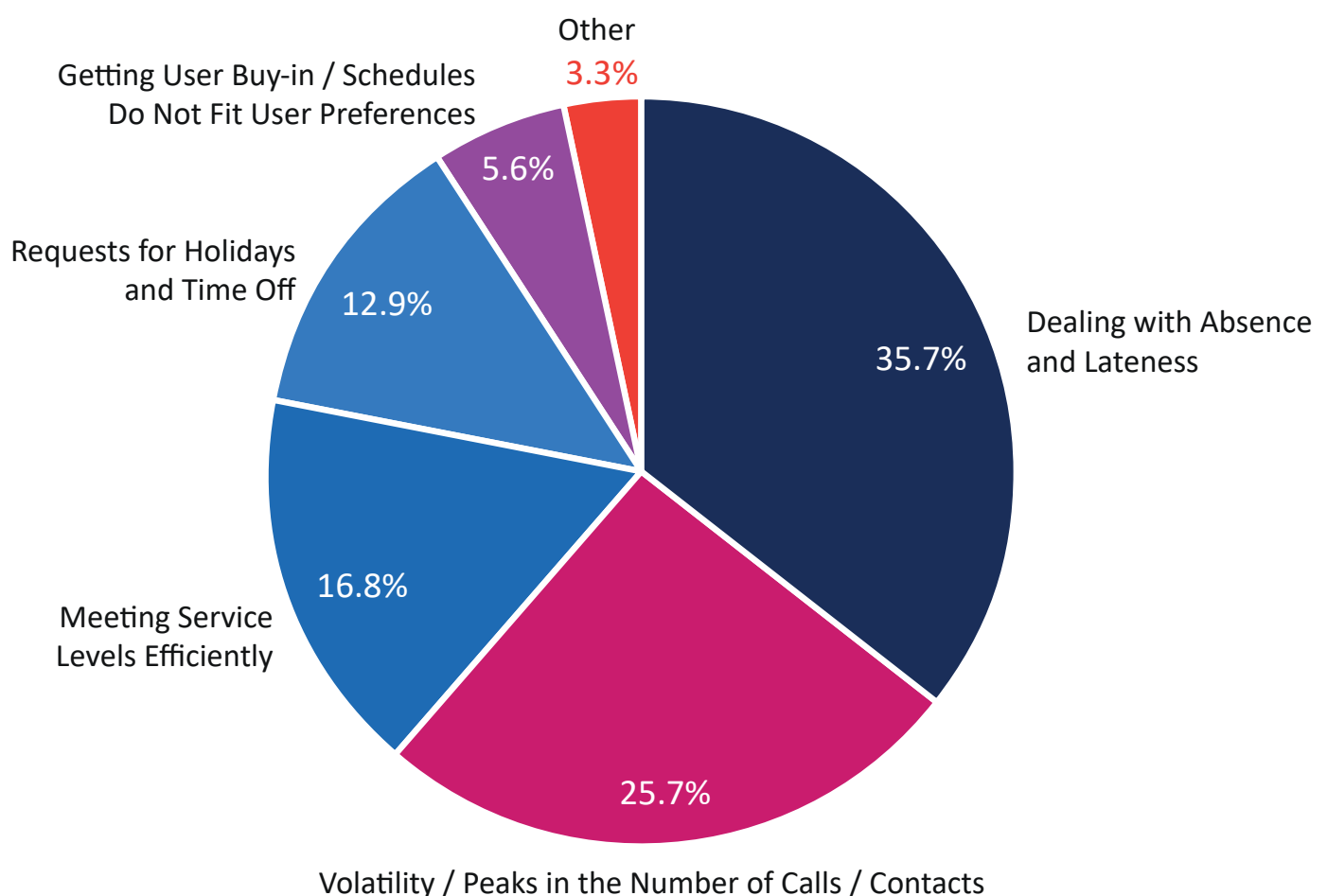
Overall, the biggest scheduling problems contact centre professionals said they were facing were dealing with absence and lateness (35.7%) and volatility/peaks in the number of calls (25.7%).

These year-on-year trends highlight the stress of the unknowns, and contact centres being at the mercy of the engagement of their staff and the needs of their customers.

However, this also suggests that there's ample opportunity for contact centre leaders to take a more proactive approach to addressing these challenges.

For example, creating scheduling playbooks to manage spikes in service demand, and revisiting employee engagement programmes to try and shift the dial on repeat offenders for lateness and absence.

What Is Your Biggest Scheduling Problem?



Holiday Requests Become Bigger Challenge as Travel Industry Recovers

It was unsurprising to see that requests for holidays and time off have become an increasingly bigger scheduling problem – cited by 7.9% in 2020, 8.5% in 2021, 10.8% in 2022, and up to 12.9% in 2023.

This is arguably in parallel with the travel industry recovering from the effects of the pandemic and therefore more employees competing for annual leave for trips abroad.

In addition, of the 3.3% who said 'other', survey respondents cited complex multiskilling, intermittent family and medical leave (FMLA), manual processes and inaccuracies, having no scheduling software, and staffing levels being too low as additional scheduling problems.

What Is Your Biggest Scheduling Problem?

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Dealing with Absence and Lateness	28.7%	25.4%	34.2%	35.7%
Volatility / Peaks in the Number of Calls / Contacts	29.1%	29.0%	29.6%	25.7%
Meeting Service Levels Efficiently	16.1%	24.9%	12.9%	16.8%
Requests for Holidays and Time Off	7.9%	8.5%	10.8%	12.9%
Getting User Buy-in / Schedules Do Not Fit User Preferences	6.3%	7.3%	7.3%	5.6%
Other	11.8%	4.9%	5.2%	3.3%

38. On Average How Long Do Your Callers Wait Before Abandoning?

A Third of Callers Too Impatient to Wait More Than 1 Minute

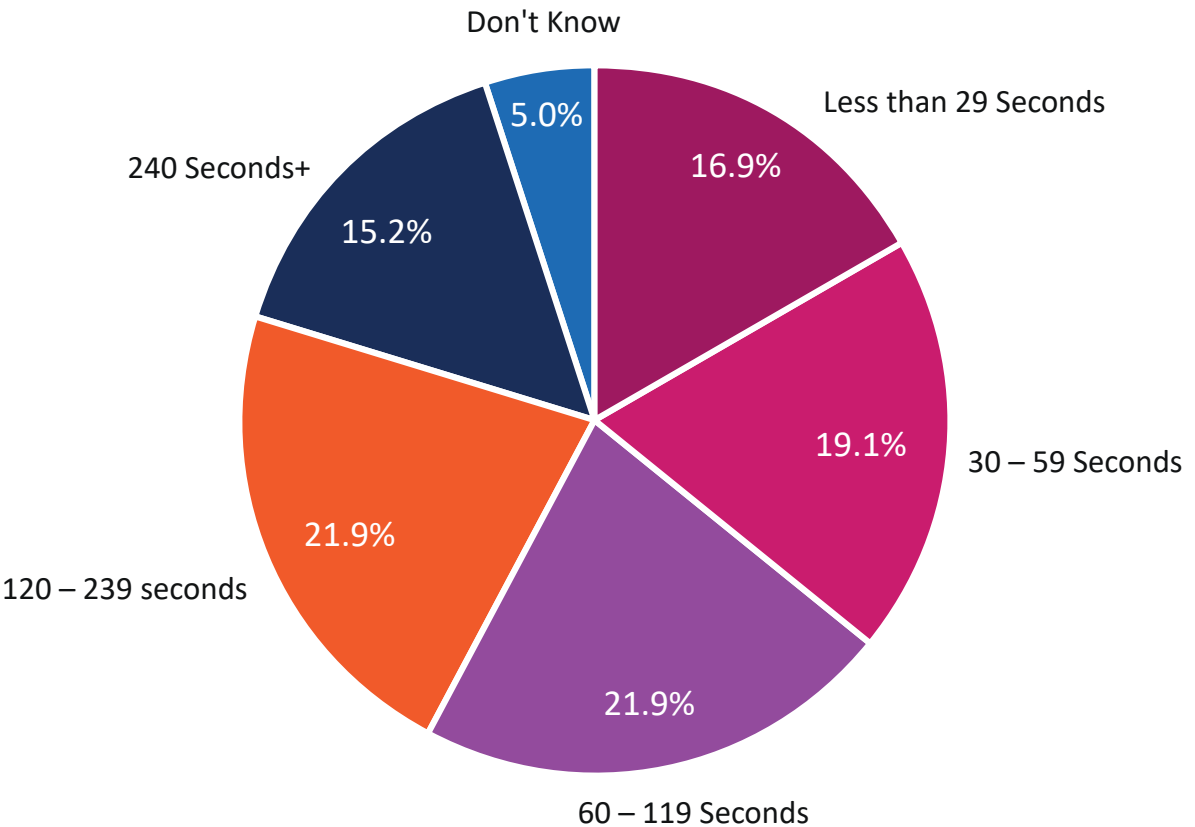
When asked ‘On average, how long do your callers wait before abandoning?’, 16.9% of survey respondents said less than 29 seconds, whilst a further 19.1% said 30–59 seconds – revealing that a third of the industry are under pressure to answer their calls in less than 1 minute.

However, we saw an even spread of results here, which may be reflective of the mix of industries represented in this survey – particularly as 15.2% of survey respondents said their callers wait for 240 seconds+ (4 minutes or more) before abandoning.

This suggests that some callers are far more patient than others, or perhaps have lower expectations of how quickly they expect their call to be answered.

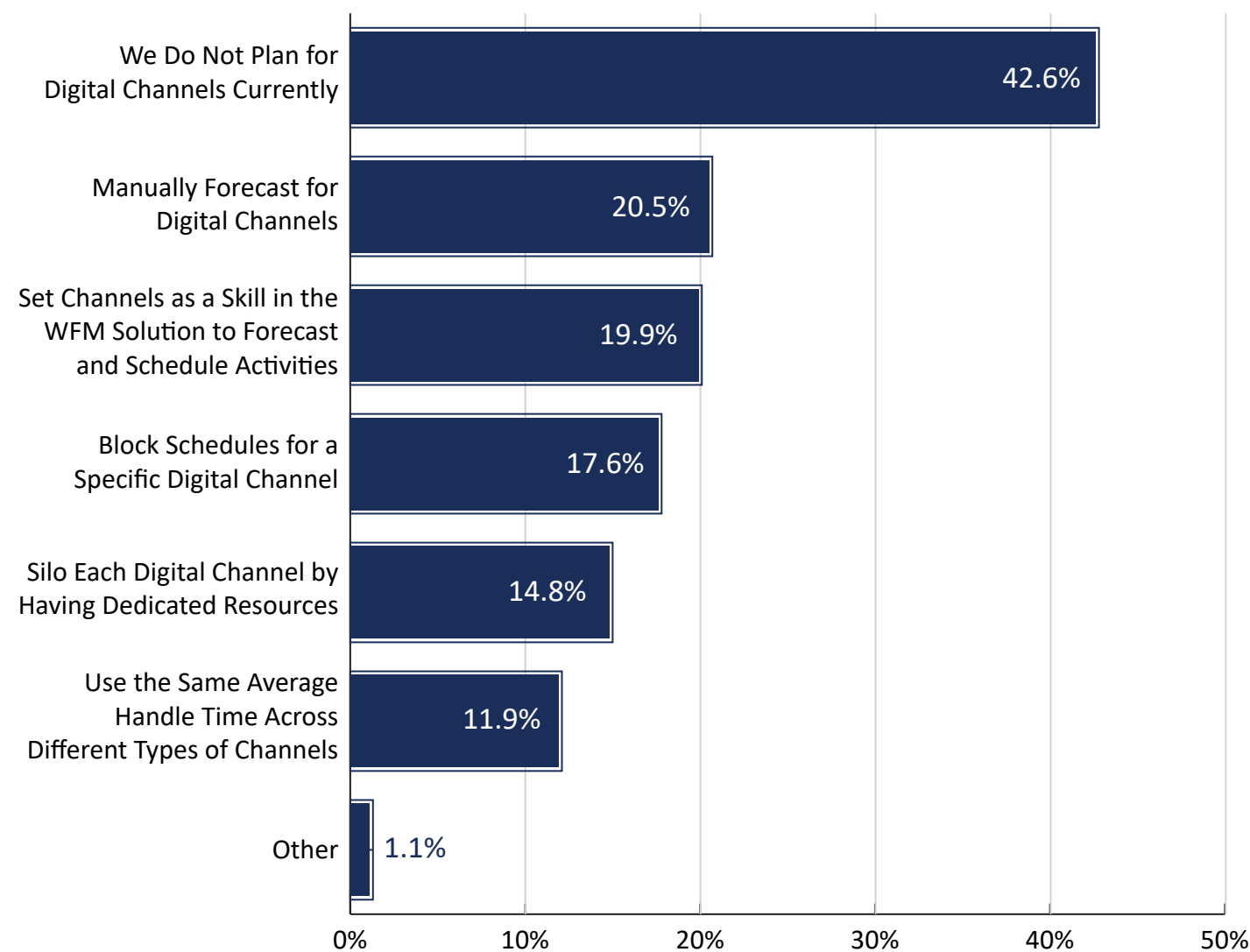
Another possible theory here is that those contact centres with multiple channels are seeing their calls abandoned sooner as their callers attempt to get through on another channel faster.

On Average How Long Do Your Callers Wait Before Abandoning?



39. How Are You Managing Digital Channels Within Your WFM Solution?

How Are You Managing Digital Channels Within Your WFM Solution?



Almost Half of Contact Centres Don't Plan for Digital Channels in Their WFM Solutions

When asked 'How are you managing digital channels within your WFM solution?', a staggering 42.6% of survey respondents said they do not plan for digital channels currently in their WFM system.

This suggests that the learning journey for effectively managing these channels is very much in its infancy, and that many organizations struggle with this.

This is quite concerning, particularly as 20.5% said they manually forecast for digital channels, because traditional call-handling calculations aren't fit for purpose for many digital interactions (such as live chat and email), as these are asynchronous conversations and harder to resource for.

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