



2024 UK Contact Centre KPI Benchmarking Insights Report

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Measure, analyse, act: the benchmarks of success

In a highly competitive contact centre market, margins are low, customer expectations high and efficiency paramount. To be successful, contact centres have to focus on providing great experiences in the most cost-effective way.

Speed, accuracy and customer satisfaction are all essential, but one factor can't be prioritised at the expense of others. Exceeding call rate targets but providing a poor experience is a recipe for failure. Giving great experiences but calling too few customers is a recipe for bankruptcy.

How do contact centre leaders track and measure performance and progress in all these areas, to ensure consistent improvement? The answer is benchmarking. Contact centres need to keep a keen eye on a wide range of metrics, to make sure teams are operating efficiently, customers are happy and targets are being met.

In this report we'll highlight the key metrics to track, based on a study of industry leaders in key contact centre sectors - sales, debt collection and customer service. We'll discuss why these metrics are important, and how they drive contact centre success. We'll also look at other important data that can supercharge contact centre performance.

Methodology

This report is based on data from an independent survey of 500 UK contact centre leaders, from organisations ranging in size from 20 to 4,999 agents. The data was collected in May 2024.



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Why bother with benchmarking?

How important is benchmarking? Here are five ways it improves the effectiveness of your contact centre...

Benchmarking is about quality control

Measuring important metrics is about quality control: it tells you, in detail, what you're doing well and what you could be doing better. It's a concrete commitment to continual improvement.

It gives you data - and data drives innovation

You may have a general idea about customer satisfaction rates and agent productivity, based on anecdotal evidence and gut feeling. But benchmarking gives you data, and data allows you to compare how you're doing today with the same time last month, last year or the same time five years ago. It allows you to compare yourself to industry averages. When you can do that, you have the evidence you need to drive improvements.

It brings a competitive advantage

When you get benchmarking right, it becomes a systematic, consistent and highly effective way of identifying and implementing best practice. When you apply best practice across your contact centre operations, the result is competitive edge.

It entrenches the idea of continual improvement

When you measure important metrics consistently over time, you cement the idea that improvement is a journey and not a destination. Being 'good' at something at one point in time is not the same as being good at it all the time. Contact centres have to evolve to meet new regulator demands and customer expectations. Benchmarking tells your entire organisation that improvement never stops.

It identifies molehills before they become mountains

Benchmarking over time is the best way to stop minor challenges becoming major problems. For example, metrics may identify a small but growing uptick in agent churn, repeating over a number of cycles. If something is causing growing dissatisfaction among your workforce, benchmarking lets you find out what it is and act on it before the trickle of leavers becomes a disruptive torrent.

Measuring the right metrics and benchmarking against industry and historical standards has never been more important. Read the rest of this report for valuable and sector-specific insight.

Executive summary: the key findings

- More agents are working remotely, and many report significantly increasing workloads.
- Top performance metrics across sectors include average handle time and quality assurance scores.
- In debt collection, the mean first call resolution (FCR) rate is over 42%, while the right party contact (RPC) rate is 26%.
- In customer service, the mean FCR rate is 45%, while the mean average handle time is 7.82 minutes.
- In sales, the daily average number of calls per agent is over 56, while the average success per call rate is 6.74%.
- Nearly 20% of respondents manually evaluate 21%-30% of calls per week, while nearly 40% now use speech analytics to improve and accelerate the quality assurance process.
- Nearly 60% of respondents think AI will have some impact on contact centres in the next three years, with 38% saying its biggest impact will be in reducing manual workloads.



I. Team performance

Team performance is critical to the overall health of your contact centre. Teams that perform well meet targets, achieve more with less and impress customers. By contrast, teams that perform poorly drive inefficiency and customer dissatisfaction.

The complication for contact centres since the pandemic is the number of agents that now work remotely, at least some of the time. According to our survey, two thirds (66.2%) of agents now work in a hybrid environment, with less than a quarter (23.2%) working fully in-office.

Leaders need to ensure that communication and collaboration can still be smoothly achieved with hybrid teams. In the rest of this section, we'll focus on other factors that determine the performance of contact centre agents, and how to improve productivity and team dynamics.

Key team performance metrics

A wide range of metrics can be tracked to reveal valuable insight into the efficiency, wellbeing and productivity of your agent teams. Together, they give you the data you need to improve team performance and head off any staffing challenges before they become disruptive.

Performance indicators

According to our survey, the top performance metrics that contact centres need to measure are average handle time (AHT - 50.4% chose this as their top answer), quality assurance (QA - 42.2%), and customer satisfaction (CSAT 41.2%). Other popular choices included first contact resolution rate (36.2%) and call outcomes (29.2%).

Why are these metrics important to measure?

- AHT measures the average duration of a customer interaction, including talk time and time on hold. Typically, the lower AHT, the more efficient your contact centre operation, but this needs to be balanced with other factors like customer satisfaction.
- QA evaluates the performance of agents during interactions with customers, usually through the analysis of call recordings, and measures factors like language use, compliance, product knowledge, professionalism and more.
- CSAT is measured using customer feedback surveys and shows how satisfied (or otherwise) customers are with your service.

Performance indicators and the state of the industry

What do these metrics tell us about the industry today? The predominance of AHT over everything else is symptomatic of an industry that is having to do more with less. AHT is always important for efficiency, but the perfect storm of tight margins and tough economic conditions makes reducing AHT ever-more crucial to contact centre success. However, contact centres need to avoid seeing AHT in isolation.

How to improve your performance metrics

- Upskill your agents. Better agents are more knowledgeable, empathetic and efficient. They work quickly but also methodically and professionally. Training, feedback and call analysis are the magic bullets here, because they have the potential to improve every team performance benchmark.
- 2. Use a range of metrics. Don't focus on one or two metrics at the expense of others. For example, bringing AHT down is great, but not at the expense of a worsening CSAT score. Performance benchmarking requires a light touch and a nuanced approach.
- 3. Invest in technology. Better technology
 IVR and self-serve payments, for
 example can reduce call handling
 times, give time back to agents to focus
 on more complex calls and improve
 customer satisfaction scores, all in one.

Key takeaway

The average talk time of MaxContact's client base was 3 minutes 45 seconds in Q1 2024

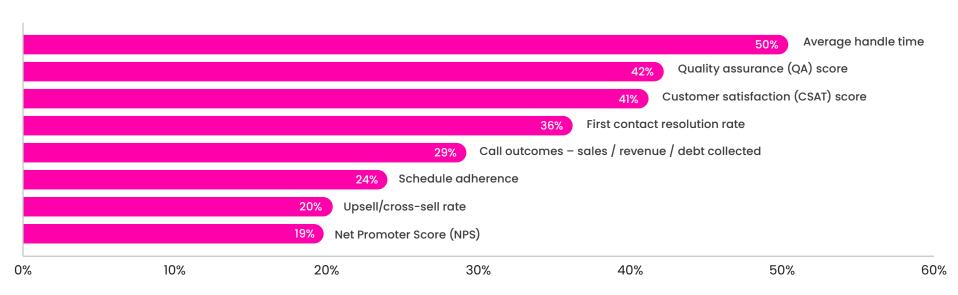


How are your team working?



What metrics are tracked to evaluate agent performance?

(Survey respondents ticked all that applied)



Agent metrics

According to our survey, the average annual agent turnover rate is 30.2%, and 43.8% of contact centres reported an increase in agent salary compared to last year, with an average increase of 7.14%. At the same time, 42.0% of contact centres reported an increase in agent workload compared to last year. The average workload increase was 10.87%.

Why are these metrics important to measure?

People are the beating heart of your contact centre. You need good agents, in the right numbers, to create an efficient and customer-focused operation. Comparing agent metrics against industry standards can predict workforce challenges before they threaten the viability of your operation.

Agent metrics and the state of the industry

In a cost-of-living crisis, it's no surprise that there is some upward pressure on wages. What might be more surprising is the 56% of respondents who didn't report an increase in average salaries! Might they be storing up recruitment and retention challenges for the future? As a whole, the industry needs to be wary of agent burnout as workloads increase, with an annual turnover rate already approaching a third of all agents.

How to improve your agent metrics

- Focus on agent wellbeing. In a competitive industry, can you afford to lose your most experienced agents to a rival? Agent wellbeing and retention should now be front and centre of contact centre strategies.
- Open up career paths. Train, improve and promote. Agents who see a path to promotion are more likely to stay the course.
- Get smart with workforce management.
 Technology can help you optimise
 agent numbers at any given time,
 keeping costs down and workloads
 reasonable.

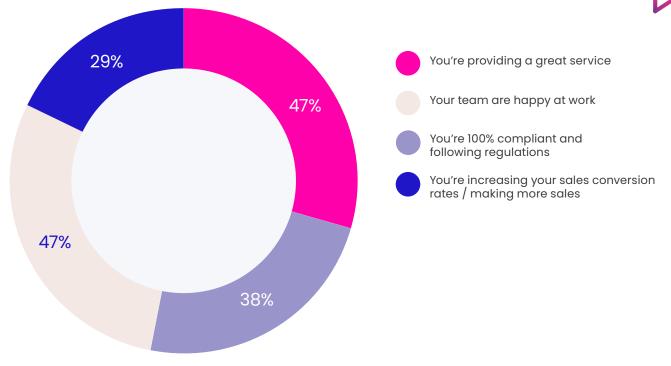
Key takeaway

The wellbeing of your workforce has a direct correlation with the health of your contact centre

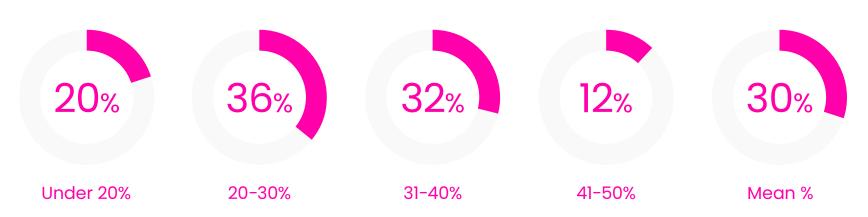


What do you believe are the most important outcomes for you and your business regarding your contact centre team's performance?

(Survey respondents ticked up to two responses)



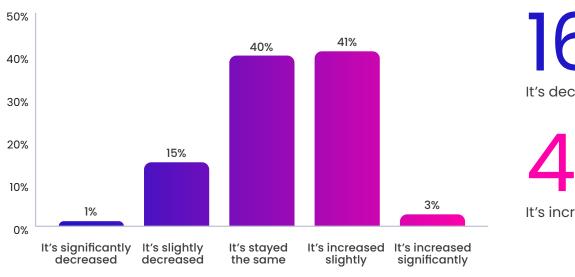
What is your average agent turnover rate per year?

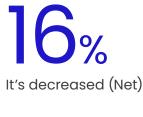


Business outcomes

Nearly half (47%) of our respondents thought providing a great service was the most important business outcome, but almost as many - 46.6% - chose ensuring team happiness at work. That's good news, because the two are tightly intertwined. Contact centre leaders understand that happy agents lead to satisfied customers.

How does your average agent salary compare in 2024 vs 2023?

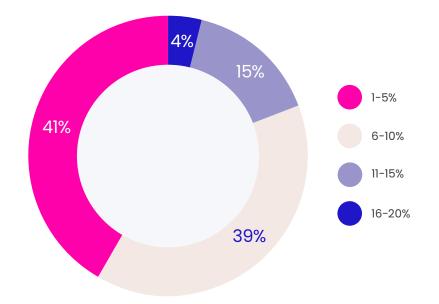




44%

It's increased (Net)

You said the average agent salary has increased when comparing this year to last year, how much has it increased by?

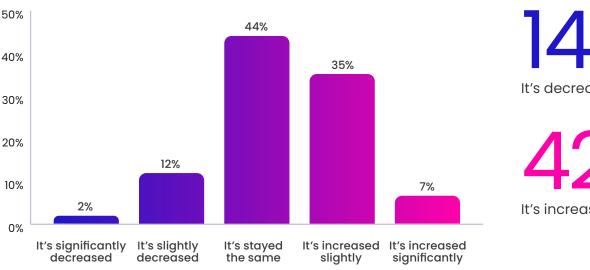


The average increase of agent salary across those surveyed is

7%



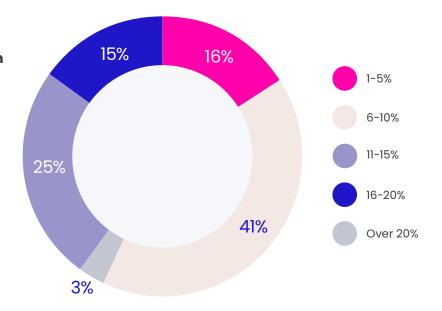
How does your agent's workload compare this year vs last year?



It's decreased (Net)

It's increased (Net)

You said the agent's workload has increased when comparing this year to last year, how much has it increased by?



The average increase in agent workload across those surveyed is

II. Sales

In a slow economy, your sales communications need to hit the right customers at the right times - and with the right offer. They also need to be fast. To some extent, sales is a numbers game. The more targets you call, the more success you're likely to have.

Of our 500 respondents, 167 were from a sales background. We asked them about the metrics that make a difference.

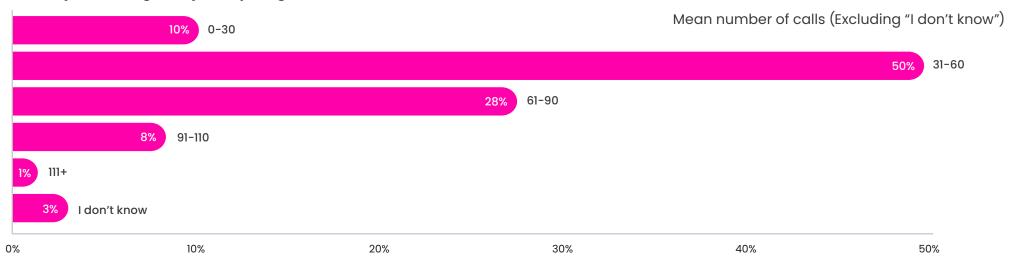
Why are these metrics important to measure?

- Average daily calls: the average number of daily calls per agent is 65.55, with half of sales teams handling between 31 and 60 calls per agent per day. Speed is important in sales, with the success of a campaign often dependent on contacting large numbers of target customers. In cold calling campaigns, speed is absolutely of the essence.
- Success per call rate: the average success per call rate the number of calls that result eventually in a sale is 6.74%, but over a quarter of teams (26.35%) only manage between 4 and 5%. Different product groups have different hit rates, but it's crucial to track this metric and see how it reacts to different campaigns and strategies.
- First-call close rate: this is the number of leads that close on first call, which can be an indicator of how qualified leads are before they are passed to sales, as well as the level of expertise of your agents. The average in our survey is 27.81%, with nearly 30% of teams achieving 20 to 29%.
- Average revenue per call: this is an estimate of the income brought in by every call, calculated by dividing total call centre revenues by the number of calls made. It can also be narrowed down to teams or individual agents. In our survey, the mean average revenue per call is £197.60, though nearly a quarter of teams (24.55%) generate much less, averaging £30 to £59 per call.

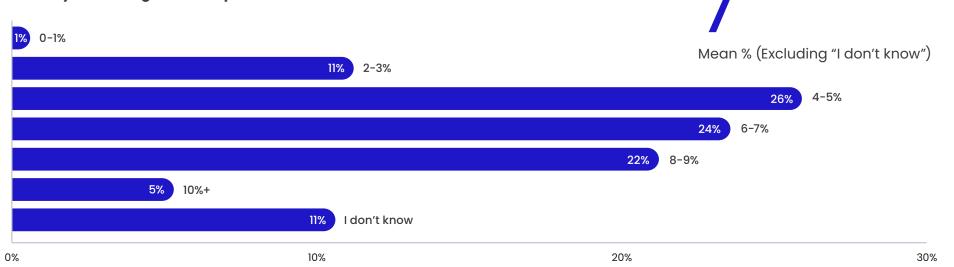


57

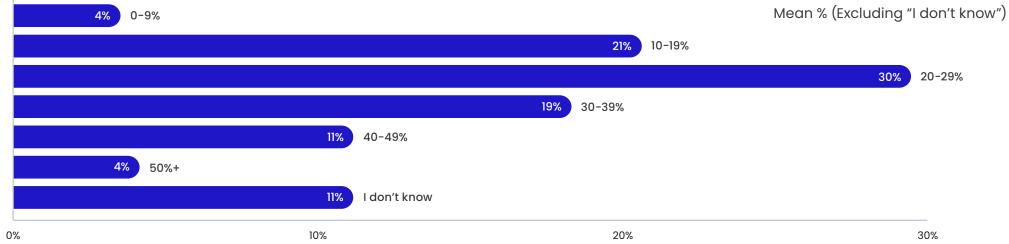
What is your Average daily calls per agent?



What is your Average success per call rate?



What is your Average first-call close rate?



What is your Average revenue per call?

£197,60





Sales metrics and the state of the industry

Sales has always been a competitive sector but that is particularly true during an economic slowdown, when businesses are competing for slices of a shrinking pie. Our survey results suggest that most of our respondents in sales are contacting qualified leads, with a 6.74% success per call rate substantially above the figure that might be expected from cold calling (which is often as low as 2%). That reinforces the importance of a core foundation of sales success. The better your data, and the more targeted your campaigns, the more successful they're likely to be.

More generally, many teams have room for improvement in terms of average revenue per call and average success per call rates.

How to improve your sales metrics

- Motivate your workforce. Introduce recognition and rewards for agents who perform especially well. An element of competition can be engaging and fun.
- Continually refine your campaigns. Measure the success of sales campaigns in real time and tweak them to produce better results. For example, rework sales scripts to better engage customers, and give instant feedback and even live coaching to agents to help improve performance.
- 3. Dial more effectively. Use different dialling modes depending on the nature of the campaign. For example, use superfast predictive dialling for straightforward, high volume sales campaigns, or more unrushed progressive dialling for targeted, high value campaigns.
- 4. Leverage speech analytics. Utilise speech analytics tools to gain deeper insights into customer interactions. Automatically identify successful sales techniques, objection patterns, and areas for improvement. Use these insights to refine sales strategies, provide targeted training, and optimise scripts for better conversion rates.

Key takeaway

Use sales metrics to track success at contact centre, team or agent level. In the current climate, no sales team can afford to ignore key performance indicators

III. Debt collection

The cost of living crisis has affected us all. Consumers have less money in their pockets and bigger bills to pay. Debt and payment collectors are having to work harder to meet targets, as clients juggle bills and, increasingly, miss payment deadlines.

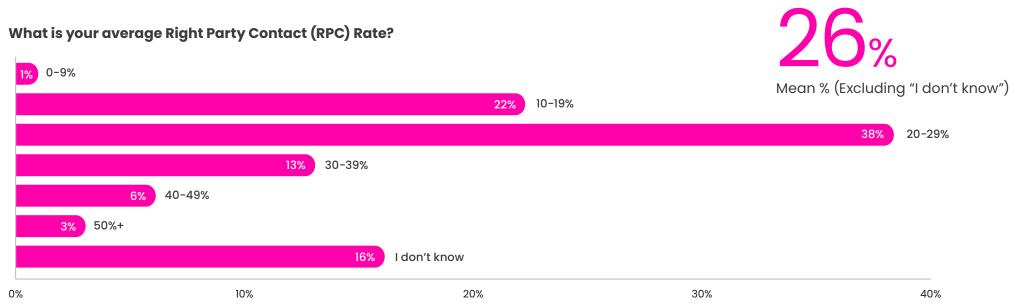
In this environment, what metrics do debt collection contact centre leaders track? We surveyed 100 debt collection professionals as part of our wider study.

Why are these metrics important to measure?

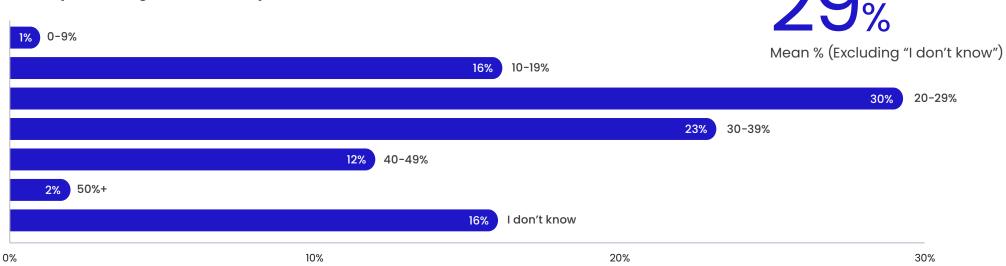
- Right party contact (RPC): the percentage of calls that get through to the right customer. You can't collect a payment if you're not talking to the debtor in person, so RPC is a crucial metric. According to our survey, the mean RPC rate is 26%.
- Promise to pay (PTP): the percentage of calls that result in a promise to make a payment. The mean PTP rate is 29% in our survey, with 53% of teams reporting a rate between 20 and 39%.
- Percentage of debt collected: this is the percentage of overall debt an agency is able to collect, which is a high level indicator of effectiveness. The mean percentage of debt collected is 32%, according to our survey, with nearly half of teams (49%) collecting between 20% and 39%.
- First call resolution (FCR): the percentage of issues that are resolved at first contact. With debt collection, this can mean a payment or a promise to pay. Our survey finds a mean FCR rate of 42.83%, with 33% of teams reporting an FCR between 30% and 49%.









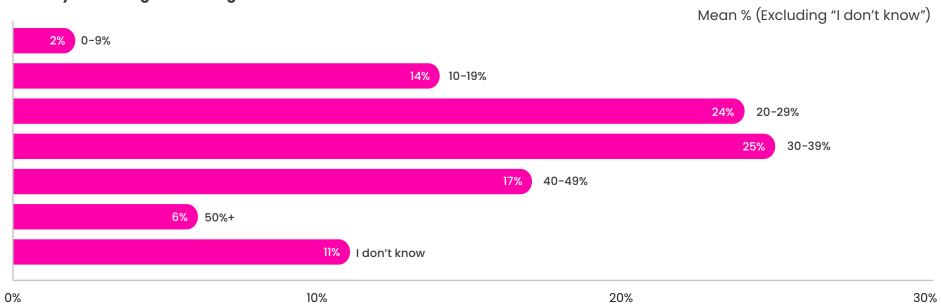


Debt collection metrics and the state of the industry

These are busy times for the debt collection sector, with UK household debt rising year on year. On average, adults in the UK now hold £4,170 of <u>unsecured debt</u>. Our statistics suggest that debt collection agencies do a fairly good job of collecting it. A mean collection rate of 32% is higher than in the US, where the <u>average success rate</u> is between 20% and 30%.

But more could be done. Raising RPC, PTP and FCR rates by just a few percentage points could lead to increased collection rates amounting to millions of pounds across the industry.

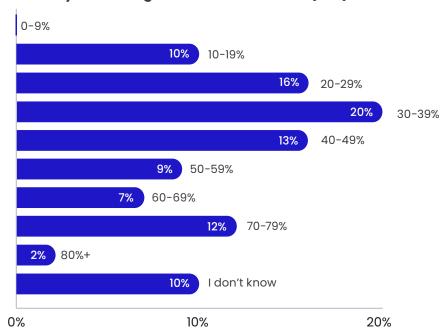
What is your average Percentage of Debt Collected



32%



What is your average First Call Resolution (FCR)



43%

Mean % (Excluding "I don't know")

How to improve your debt collection metrics

- Smart outbound dialling. A smart outbound solution can help agencies target the right people at the right time, increasing payment volumes and PTP rates.
- 2. Greater call efficiency. At the same time, a smart auto dialler means agents spend more time on calls and less time dialling, with calls connected at the optimum rate. In other words, you talk to more clients and collect more debt.
- 3. Self-serve payments. Let clients make payments at their leisure, 24/7, and without having to spend time on hold in a call queue. The result? More payments, more regularly.

Key takeaway

Technology is at the heart of efficient debt collection in 2024 and beyond

IV. Customer service

Great customer service can turn a one-off sale into years of repeat business. In a world where competitor products or services are usually just a Google away, keeping customers happy with great after sales service and support is crucial to long-term success. So how do we measure it?

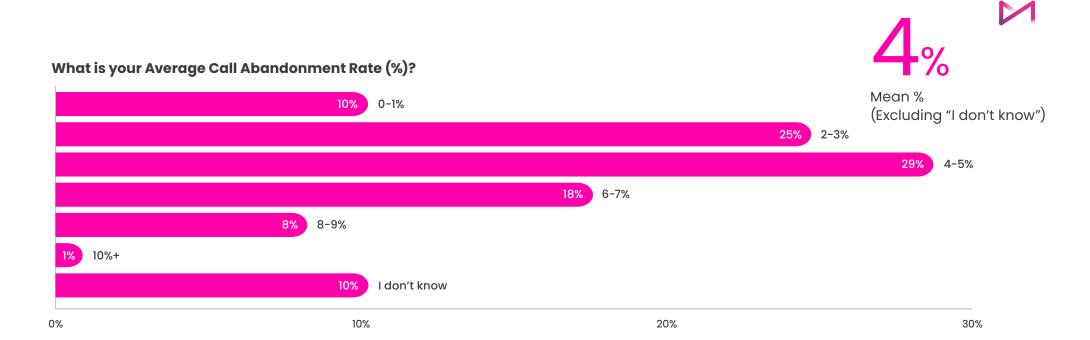
Of 500 respondents to the MaxContact benchmarking survey, 449 were from a customer service background.

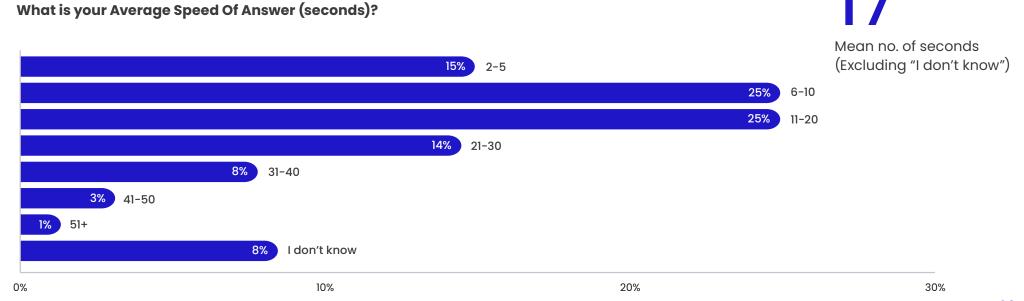
Why are these metrics important to measure?

- Call abandonment rate: the percentage of calls to customer service that are abandoned before being answered by an agent. This is a major indicator of call centre efficiency, with the mean abandonment rate in our survey at 4.41%. More than half (53%) of teams have an abandonment rate between 2% and 5%.
- Speed of answer: how long it takes to answer incoming calls.
 The mean rate is 17.11 seconds, but 25% of teams have it down to between 6 and 10 seconds.
- Average handle time (AHT): the mean average handle time (talk time plus time on hold) is 7.82 minutes, with 44% of teams reporting times of between 6 and 9 minutes.
- First call resolution (FCR): FCR is important in customer services, when customers may be looking for quick solutions to frustrating problems. In our survey, mean FCR is 41%, and 45% of teams report an FCR between 20 and 49%.

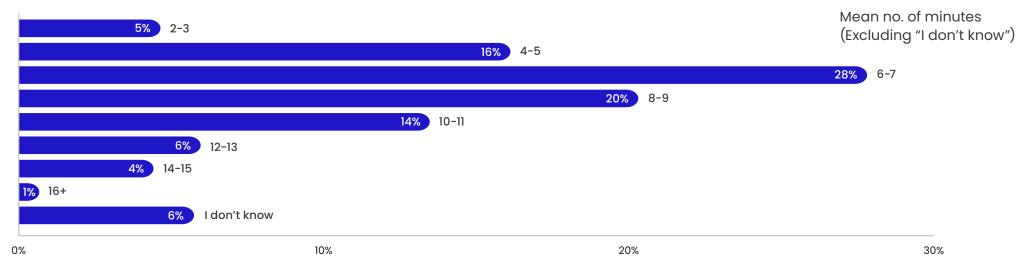
Key takeaway

MaxContact's customer service clients achieved an average speed of answer of 14 seconds in Q1 2024

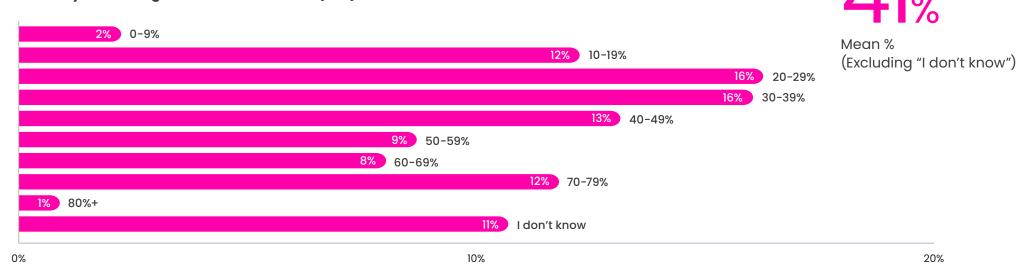








What is your Average First Call Resolution (FCR)?





Customer service metrics and the state of the industry

What does all this tell us about the state of customer service contact centres? We know that both B2B and B2C customers are becoming more demanding and expecting smooth and seamless customer service experiences. In terms of metrics, that means answering the phone in six seconds rather than 17 should be your target, and pushing for FCR rates above 50% should be an achievable ambition for most contact centres.

AHT is a tricky metric and needs to be used in conjunction with others. Taken in isolation, nearly eight minutes appears to be quite a long time to spend on a single customer. But if it's eight useful minutes that lead to higher FCR and glowing customer reviews, it may be time well spent.

How to improve your customer service metrics

- Staff training and feedback. The more knowledgeable agents are about your products and services, the more likely they are to resolve issues in one call. Even if they can't solve a problem themselves, experienced agents will know exactly where to send a customer next.
- 2. Omnichannel communications. In 2024, customer services should not be about voice calls alone. Let customers communicate via email, live chat or text and see FCR rates grow while time to answer and call abandonment rates fall. Give customers the channels they want and give agents more time to solve complex issues.
- 3. Track multiple metrics together. These benchmarks should never be used in isolation, because one on its own can give a distorted or overly simplistic picture. Use them together to balance speed, efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Key takeaway

With customer expectations growing, benchmarking can be the difference between growth and stagnation

V. Additional contact centre insights

The statistics we've seen so far should all be benchmarked, tracked and used to measure improvement (or otherwise) over time.

But they're not the only useful statistics for contact centres. In the final chapter, we'll look at some other valuable findings from our benchmarking survey.

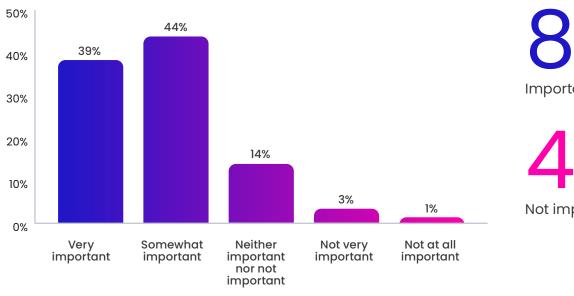
Quality assurance

We've already seen that quality assurance (QA) is an important metric for contact centres to measure. Assessing QA means evaluating calls for compliance and regulation purposes, and for the quality of agent interactions. It is obviously vital for avoiding fines from regulators and potential reputational damage, and for making sure agents are steering conversations in positive ways.

- The good news is that 82.8% of survey respondents say quality assessing calls is very or somewhat important, with only 3.6% considering it not important.
- Among respondents, the mean average of calls assessed for QA purposes is 34.6% - though 53.2% of respondents assessed 30% or less of calls.
- On average, leaders shared insights and coaching tips with their teams 7.3 times per month - though nearly 22% shared them just once a month or less.



How important, if at all, is quality assessing calls for compliance and regulation purposes consistently for your business and its leaders?



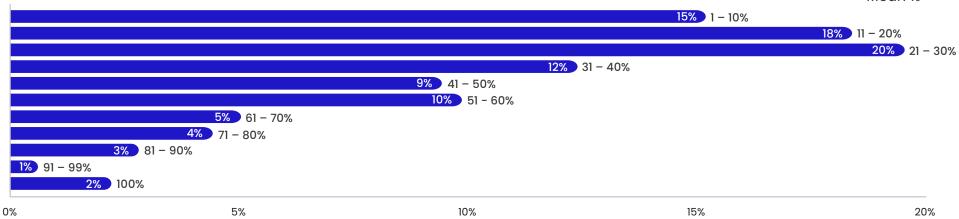
83% Important (Net)

4%
Not important (Net)

On average what percentage of calls, if any, are manually evaluated for quality, compliance and coaching for agents per week?







Speech analytics and QA

Clearly, there is room for improvement in QA rates. Speech analytics automates the QA process by analysing speech data for valuable information about agent performance, compliance and customer emotion. It can alert managers to compliance issues, so that action (agent training, script editing) can be taken. Solutions with real-time analysis alongside post-call analysis can help make every call compliant, by prompting agents to read the relevant scripts while the call is taking place.

• In our survey, 38.6% of respondents currently use a speech analytics solution. But nearly two thirds (61.4%) do not.

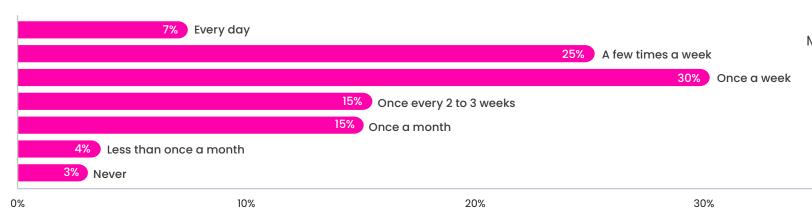
By automating call assessment, speech analytics can listen for compliance or performance missteps in 100% of the calls your contact centre makes and takes. It can then alert managers to potentially problematic interactions.

Key takeaway:

Assessing calls for QA purposes is a vital part of contact centre operations. Speech analytics makes QA more effective and efficient



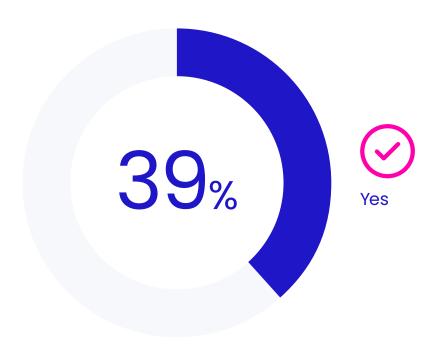


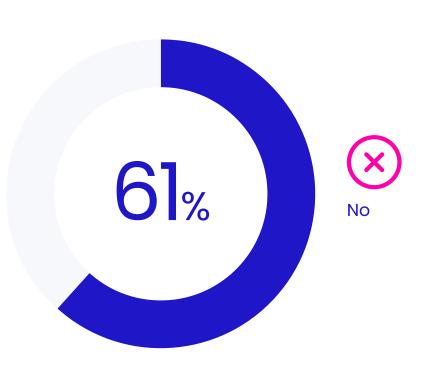


Mean times per month

40%

Does your contact centre currently use a speech analytics solution?





VI. Al and contact centre innovation

At the moment, Al drives both speech analytics and a new generation of intelligent, human-like chatbots, allowing contact centres to automate a number of manual tasks while also improving performance. In the future, it's likely to do considerably more, thanks to its ability to analyse large amounts of data in small amounts of time.

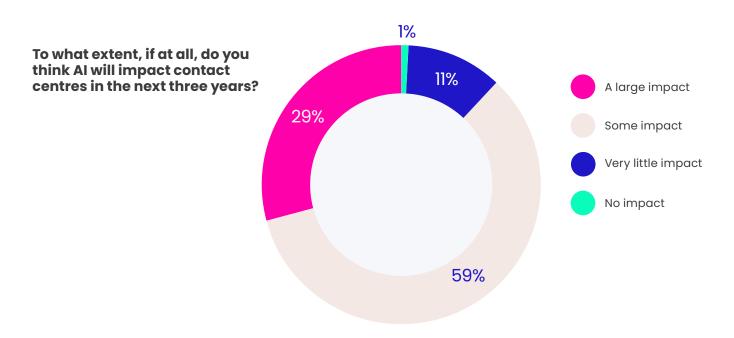
- 28.7% of respondents to our survey think AI will have a large impact on contact centres in the next three years. Over 59% think it will have some impact.
- Just over 12% of respondents think it will have little or no impact.

Respondents are positive about what AI might mean for contact centres:

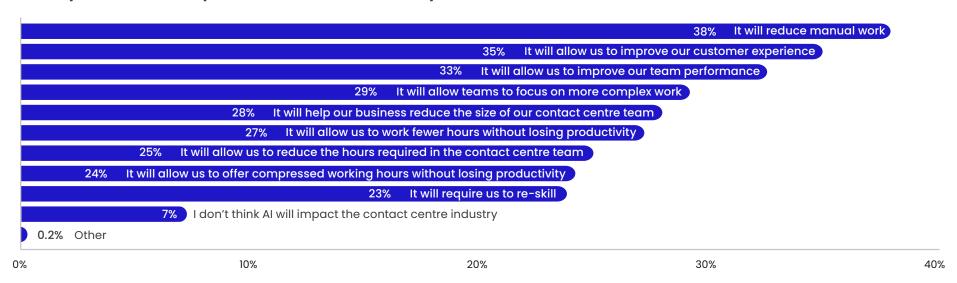
- 38% think it will reduce manual work.
- 35% think it will lead to improved customer experiences.
- 32.6% think it will help improve team performance.
- 29.2% think it will give teams time to focus on more complex work.

Taken together, AI could be extremely beneficial for contact centres, if its promise is fulfilled. As well as QA benefits, it could allow leaders to streamline teams, give agents more time to focus on difficult or sensitive interactions, and reduce costs.





How do you think AI will impact the contact centre industry, if at all?



VII. Conclusion

Only 4% of respondents to MaxContact's benchmarking survey say they track no metrics on agent performance. But in all other categories, a significant number - often 10% plus - say they don't know what their benchmarking figure is, suggesting tracking is haphazard at best.

As pressures mount, this ad hoc approach to benchmarking is no longer sustainable. Tracking metrics over time lets contact centres identify weaknesses, build on strengths and create an environment of continual improvement. It reveals valuable insights that can provide a competitive edge. The discipline of gathering and analysing relevant statistics will only become more important as margins narrow and regulators and customers become more demanding.

In this report, we've highlighted many of the metrics that contact centres in different sectors should be keeping an eye on, and some of the ways they might be improved. Many of the contact centres we surveyed are doing a lot of this already, but many could be doing more. In a competitive industry, consistent and comprehensive benchmarking is no longer optional.





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- Sellers Apply to Opportunities
- > Buyers Approve Sellers
- Good Leads Get Delivered
- **Everyone** is Transparent

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Is 2024 the year of the Rich Communication Services (RCS) revolution?

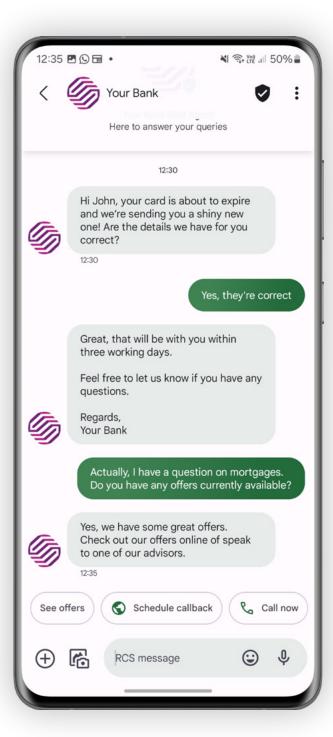
Paired with our Al-powered chatbots, Engage Hub's RCS enables brands to communicate with customers at the right time, on the right channel, in a seamless and personalised way – from service alerts and delivery updates to marketing offers, secure one-time passwords and fraud checks.

If you're looking for ways to strengthen customer relationships, increase efficiency and showcase your products and services with tools designed to help grow your business, now is the time to supercharge your communications strategy with Engage Hub. Speak to one our expert today.

Get in touch

engagehub.com

in linkedin.com/company/theengagehub



MaxContact is a contact centre software provider with a difference. It was founded in 2015 by a group of contact centre professionals who had become frustrated with providers that over promised and under delivered on features, support and resilience. It's now one of the fastest growing contact centre software specialists in the UK.

- Named in Gartner's Speech Analytics Market Guide - 2023
- Featured in CX Today's CCaaS Top Vendor Market Guide - 2023
- Featured in Call Centre Helper's Top CCaaS Vendors - 2023/2024
- IT Vendor of the Year Award from BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, and Computing Magazine - 2022
- Excellent rating on Trustpilot - 4.6 Stars
- 96% Customer Satisfaction rating