



What Contact Centres Are Doing Right Now

(2015 Edition)

How do you compare?

A Call Centre Helper Research Paper

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What We Did

Throughout April 2015, Call Centre Helper readers were invited to take part in a '20 Questions About Your Contact Centre' survey, run in partnership with NewVoiceMedia.

The aim of the survey was to capture a snapshot view of exactly what contact centres are doing right now.

We also took the opportunity to compare the data with the questions we asked in our 2014 survey.

Over 600 contact centre professionals took part, and we're delighted to share the results with you.

This survey provides valuable insight into the fundamental framework of the contact centre, covering everything from the most widely used initiatives and service levels to the technologies that have made it on to every manager's wish list.

The industry is changing, shaking up everything from where agents work to what metrics they are targeted against. Yet there are still a number of barriers in place preventing the contact centre from reaching its full potential.

First Contact Resolution trumps Average Handling Time

For too long, process-driven metrics such as Average Handling Time (especially when heavily targeted against) have been driving the wrong behaviours in contact centres, including agents “accidentally” hanging up on callers with more complicated queries.

The survey findings show a strong preference for First Contact Resolution over Average Handling Time, suggesting that the false economy of process-driven metrics is finally being recognised.

Average SLA targets for the phone are 10 seconds faster than for webchat

For the first time, we also gathered data on the service level agreement (SLA) targets currently in place across the four core channels: phone, email, webchat and social media.

The results confirm that the well-known industry standard of 80% of calls being answered within 20 seconds is in wide use, while webchat SLAs are a notable 10 seconds slower – with 30 seconds being revealed as the standard response time (whether this is targeted against 70%, 80%, 90% or 100% of conversations).

Further findings show that 24 hours is the standard response time for email, while the majority of social media contacts are answered within 30–60 minutes.

Contact centres are moving away from 0845 numbers

In the UK, there has also been a notable shift away from 0845 numbers – with usage dropping by 7% between 2014 and 2015.

This has largely been driven by the change in the law on 13th June 2014 – from which date it became illegal to provide an 0845, 0870 or similar number for a customer complaints line.

The prevalence of social media has also probably made contact centres think twice about the use of expensive phone numbers, for fear of a customer revolt.

There is a clear divide in opinion on outsourcing

Over half (53%) of contact centres don't consider outsourcing to be a viable option for them – and instead choose to handle their calls in house.

Meanwhile, a third of the industry currently relies on it – with 17% of contact centres outsourcing a large part their operational needs, and a further 14% outsourcing some of their calls.

A growing number of contact centres are piloting homeworking schemes

A growing number of contact centres are considering and piloting homeworking.

Between 2014 and 2015, the most noticeable shift is the 2% increase in those piloting homeworking programmes – from 5.4% to 7.1%. There has also been an increase in the number of contact centres considering it – up from 16% to 18%.

IT issues are holding back progress in the contact centre

While we are beginning to move in the right direction, the industry still has some way to go.

This was no clearer than in the findings of 'What barriers stop you from running your dream contact centre?' – which revealed that budget (67%), IT issues (44%) and the need for new technology (40%) are all being held responsible for stopping progress in the contact centre.

How does your contact centre compare?

What is your mix of contact channels?

Traditional channels are standing their ground in our multichannel world

The mix of contact channels has changed considerably between 2014 and 2015. The findings indicate that the newer digital channels may be losing their footing in the contact centre industry, while traditional channels (such as phone and email) maintain a dominant position.

What is your mix of Contact Channels?

	2014	2015
Voice - Inbound	50.0 %	55.7 %
Voice - Outbound	18.2 %	17.0 %
Email	12.8 %	14.8 %
Mail / Post (Snail Mail)	5.2 %	3.6 %
Webchat	4.2 %	3.0 %
Social Media	2.7 %	1.8 %
SMS	3.4 %	1.2 %
Video Chat	0.2 %	0.2 %
Other	3.3 %	2.7 %

The comparison table highlights that voice is taking an even stronger majority than in 2014 (up from 50% to 55.7%). Email is also on the increase (up from 12.8% to 14.8%).

There is a visible decline in the use of digital channels

In parallel to this, there is a visible decline in the use of the newer digital channels – with webchat dropping from 4.2% to 3%, social media dropping from 2.7% to 1.8% and SMS also seeing a decline from 3.4% to 1.2% between 2014 and 2015.

No evident change in the uptake of video chat

There is also no evident change in the uptake of video chat – with figures remaining below 1%. Possible reasons for this increased loyalty to traditional channels include:

- the limitations of Twitter in fully resolving an issue
- inconsistent or slow response times
- the lasting impact of a poor digital channel experience on customer confidence.

Which telephone numbers do you use in your contact centre?

Contact centres are moving away from 0845 numbers

The findings highlight an increase of almost 7% (between 2014 and 2015) in the number of contact centres using 03 numbers. They also show a decrease of 7% in the number of contact centres using 0845 numbers – with figures falling from 18.59% to 10.3% – as well as notable decreases in the use of 0844, 0870 and 0871 numbers.

Which telephone numbers do you use in your contact centre?

	2014	2015
01 or 02 national rate geographic numbers	23.8 %	22.2 %
03 national rate non-geographic numbers	8.84 %	15.6 %
07 mobile numbers	3.44 %	4.4 %
0800 / 0808 toll free numbers	19.5 %	22.4 %
0844	9.94 %	7.1 %
0845	18.59 %	10.3 %
0870	3.44 %	1.9 %
0871	2.53 %	1.6 %
09 premium rate numbers	0.72 %	1.3 %
00800 international toll free numbers	3.06 %	3.2 %
International numbers	3.25 %	5.5 %
Other	2.87 %	4.4 %

This has largely been driven by the change in the law on 13th June 2014 – from which date it became illegal to provide an 0845, 0870 or similar number for a customer complaints line. A further likely influence that is making companies think twice about the use of expensive phone numbers is the fear of a Twitter-led customer revolt (AKA ‘PR nightmare’).

In addition, the visible correlation between the increase in 03 numbers and decrease in 0845 numbers – both fluctuating by 7% – may be caused by one of the core methods for compliance, namely switching 0845 numbers to their 0345 equivalent. In most cases, the legal owner of the 0845 number already owns the 0345 equivalent by default.

We expect to see a further shift away from 0845 and similar numbers in the coming months due to new Ofcom regulations, which came into effect on 1st July 2015. The regulations state that companies using 084/087/09 numbers have a duty to their callers to declare the level of service charge that they have chosen to impose.

It is expected that many companies will switch across to 03 numbers to avoid facing the poor publicity which will likely be associated with declaring high service charges.

10% of contact centres are still using 0845 and similar numbers

While it is reassuring to see such a strong shift, there are a number of contact centres still using 0845 and similar numbers – collectively making up a fifth (21%) of the telephone numbers used in the industry.

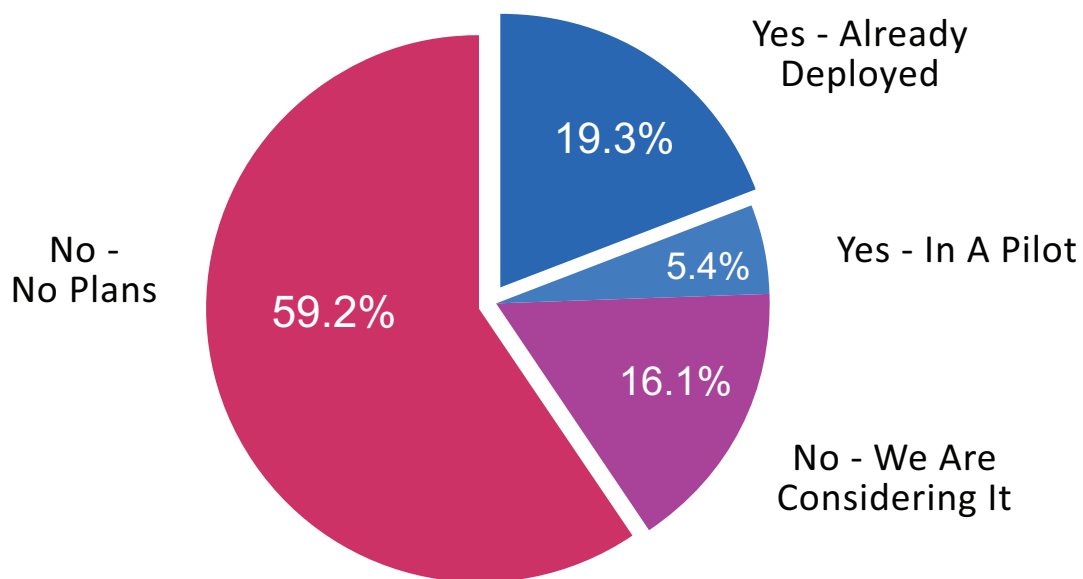
Do you operate agents working from home?

Homeworking is becoming an increasingly viable option

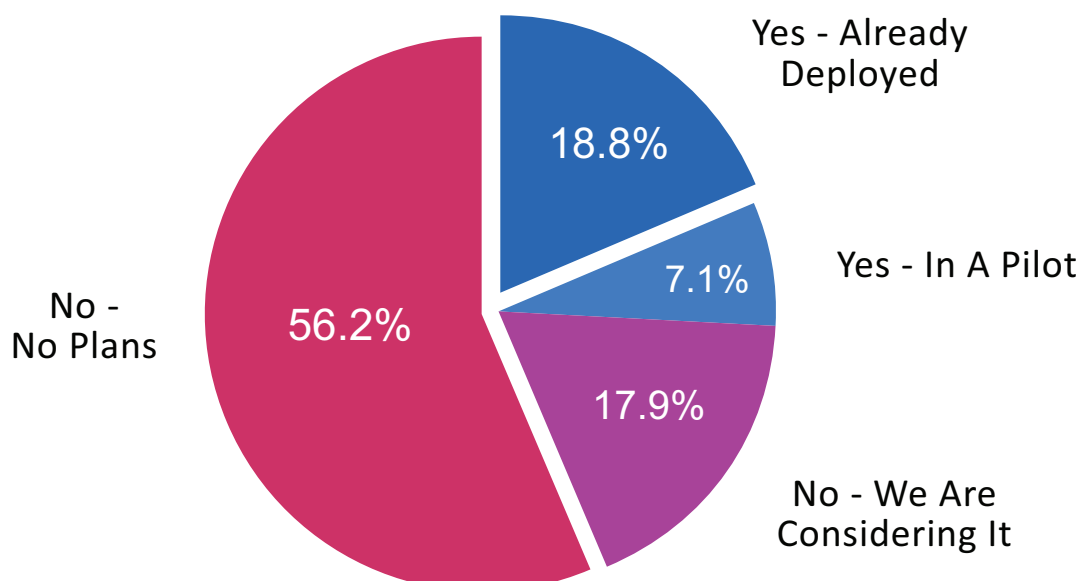
Developments in the cloud, alongside the ever-growing prevalence of smartphones, have finally made homeworking a viable option for the industry.

Do you operate agents working from home?

2014



2015



It is now possible for contact centre agents to log in to the same systems as their in-office colleagues, as well as being properly managed by their supervisors from a remote location.

In both 2014 and 2015, the number of contact centres operating with homeworking agents remained at approximately 20%.

This year-on-year stability supports the fact that homeworking is a viable option for contact centres wishing to expand their business or bring reserve agents in to handle peaks in demand – without investing in costly new premises.

A growing number of contact centres are piloting homeworking schemes

A growing number of contact centres are considering and piloting homeworking.

Between 2014 and 2015, the most noticeable shift is the 2% increase in those piloting homeworking programmes – from 5.4% to 7.1%. There has also been an increase in the number of contact centres considering it – up from 16% to 18%.

It is encouraging to see contact centres finally beginning to embrace homeworking, as there are a number of benefits to be gained – including:

- increased employee engagement (created by a better work/life balance)
- a reduction in sickness-related shrinkage (as it is a lot more feasible for someone with a cold to log on to their computer at home than it is to take their commute to work)
- wider talent pool for recruitment (as you aren't limited geographically).

What initiatives do you currently have in the contact centre?

Multiskilled agents have been trained up in 90% of contact centres

From spot prizes to flexible shifts, there are a number of ways to keep agents happy and productive at work. The most widely used initiatives in the contact centre industry are multiskilling agents (90% have this in place), closely followed by social events (77%) and buddying agents (71%).

What initiatives do you currently have in the contact centre?

	Have	On Wish List	Don't Have
Multiskilling Agents	90.52 %	5.66 %	3.83 %
Social Events	77.31 %	12.10 %	10.59 %
Buddying Agents	71.48 %	10.87 %	17.66 %
Unpaid Leave	66.44 %	5.59 %	27.97 %
Knowledge Champions	66.16 %	20.44 %	13.40 %
Agent Empowerment	61.62 %	24.24 %	14.14 %
Flexible Shifts	59.70 %	16.02 %	24.28 %
Spot Prizes	52.77 %	14.45 %	32.77 %
Motivational Games	47.14 %	23.23 %	29.63 %
Personalised Call Routing	38.16 %	25.55 %	36.29 %
Sales Commission	35.99 %	5.60 %	58.40 %
Annual Hours	30.92 %	15.03 %	54.06 %
Self-help Customer Videos	23.76 %	22.74 %	53.50 %

62% of contact centres empower their agents to do their best

One of the most notable initiatives in place is agent empowerment. This initiative is already being used in almost 62% of contact centres, with a further 24% placing it firmly on their wish list.

When rolled out properly, this initiative can increase employee engagement and encourage a sense of ownership, which can in turn drive customer satisfaction and improve attrition rates.

It is encouraging to see that so many managers are recognising their agents' potential and giving them the freedom they need to do a great job.

Over a quarter want to introduce personalised call routing

There is still a lot of room for improvement, with a number of initiatives featuring prominently on the wish list.

The most sought-after initiative is personalised call routing (26%) – closely followed by knowledge champions (20%), motivational games (23%) and self-help customer videos (23%). It is likely that these initiatives are being held back by a lack of time and resources or support from the board.

What technology do you have in your contact centre?

There is a positive trend for customer-focused investments

It is no surprise that headsets, ACD/ call routing and call recording technologies take prime position in the 'Have' section, as very few contact centres could manage without them.

What technology do you have in your contact centre?

	Have	On Wish List	Don't Have
Headsets	98.50 %	0.83 %	0.66 %
ACD / Call Routing	91.58 %	2.86 %	5.56 %
Call Recording	89.52 %	6.32 %	4.16 %
Performance Management / Quality Monitoring	87.12 %	9.03 %	3.85 %
IVR	83.44 %	5.18 %	11.37 %
Wallboards	79.60 %	10.46 %	9.95 %
Knowledge Base	70.74 %	21.40 %	7.86 %
Voice of the Customer/ Customer Survey	65.42 %	17.63 %	16.95 %
Workforce Management Software	60.03 %	22.30 %	17.67 %
Call Scripting	57.46 %	7.46 %	35.08 %
Process Automation	41.34 %	30.36 %	28.30 %
Call Back from Queue Solution	35.91 %	25.43 %	38.66 %
Desktop Consolidation	34.96 %	26.26 %	38.78 %
Predictive Dialler	30.58 %	15.47 %	53.95 %
Single Queue across All Channels	26.99 %	24.91 %	48.10 %
Speech Analytics	15.66 %	34.77 %	49.57 %
Voice Biometrics	5.73 %	29.34 %	64.93 %

What is interesting is the apparent trend in technologies that can help to improve the customer experience – with performance management/ quality monitoring (Have – 87%), knowledge base (Have – 71%) and voice of the customer (Have – 65%) all holding strong positions on the comparison table.

Many contact centres are still struggling to get the basics right

Unfortunately, it appears that many contact centres are still struggling to get the basics right. This is evident in the strong demand for technologies such as single queue across all channels (Wish list – 25%), process automation (Wish list – 30%) and desktop consolidation (Wish list – 26%).

Speech analytics and voice biometrics also feature high on the wish list – although actual uptake remains fairly low in comparison to other contact centre technologies.

Which CRM system do you use?

There is a diverse range of CRM systems being used in the industry

While Microsoft CRM Dynamics (11%), Salesforce (10%), SAP (8%) and Oracle/ Right Now (7%) all take leading positions in the findings, there is no single technology leader in this field.

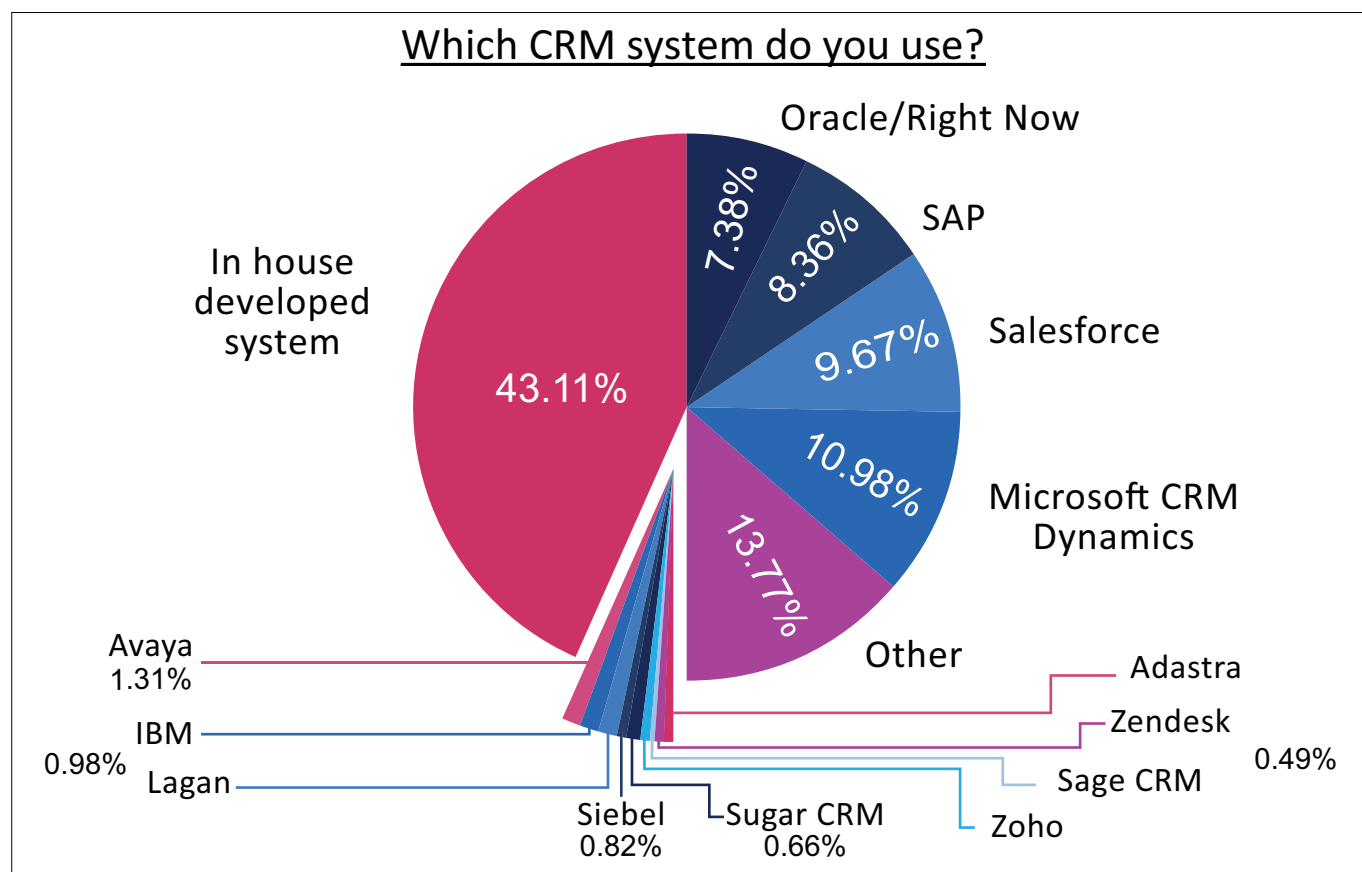
This is especially clear in the 'other' data collected, which makes up almost 14% of the findings. The individual responses listed over 30 other CRM systems in use across the industry, including ConnectWise, Gentrack and Neocase.

Which CRM system do you use?

In house developed system	43.11 %
Other	13.77 %
Microsoft CRM Dynamics	10.98 %
Salesforce	9.67 %
SAP	8.36 %
Oracle/Right Now	7.38 %
Avaya	1.31 %
IBM	0.98 %
Lagan	0.98 %
Siebel	0.82 %
Sugar CRM	0.66 %
Zoho	0.49 %
Sage CRM	0.49 %
Adastra	0.49 %
Zendesk	0.49 %

The most popular option is developing the CRM system in house

The most popular option is developing a CRM system in house – with a clear majority of 43% of contact centre professionals stating this preference.



What sort of knowledge base do you have?

14% of contact centres don't have a knowledge base

A knowledge base is an important resource for any contact centre agent. This is especially true for those who deal with complex queries regarding mortgage applications or insurance policies on a daily basis. Yet almost 14% of contact centres admit to not having one in place.

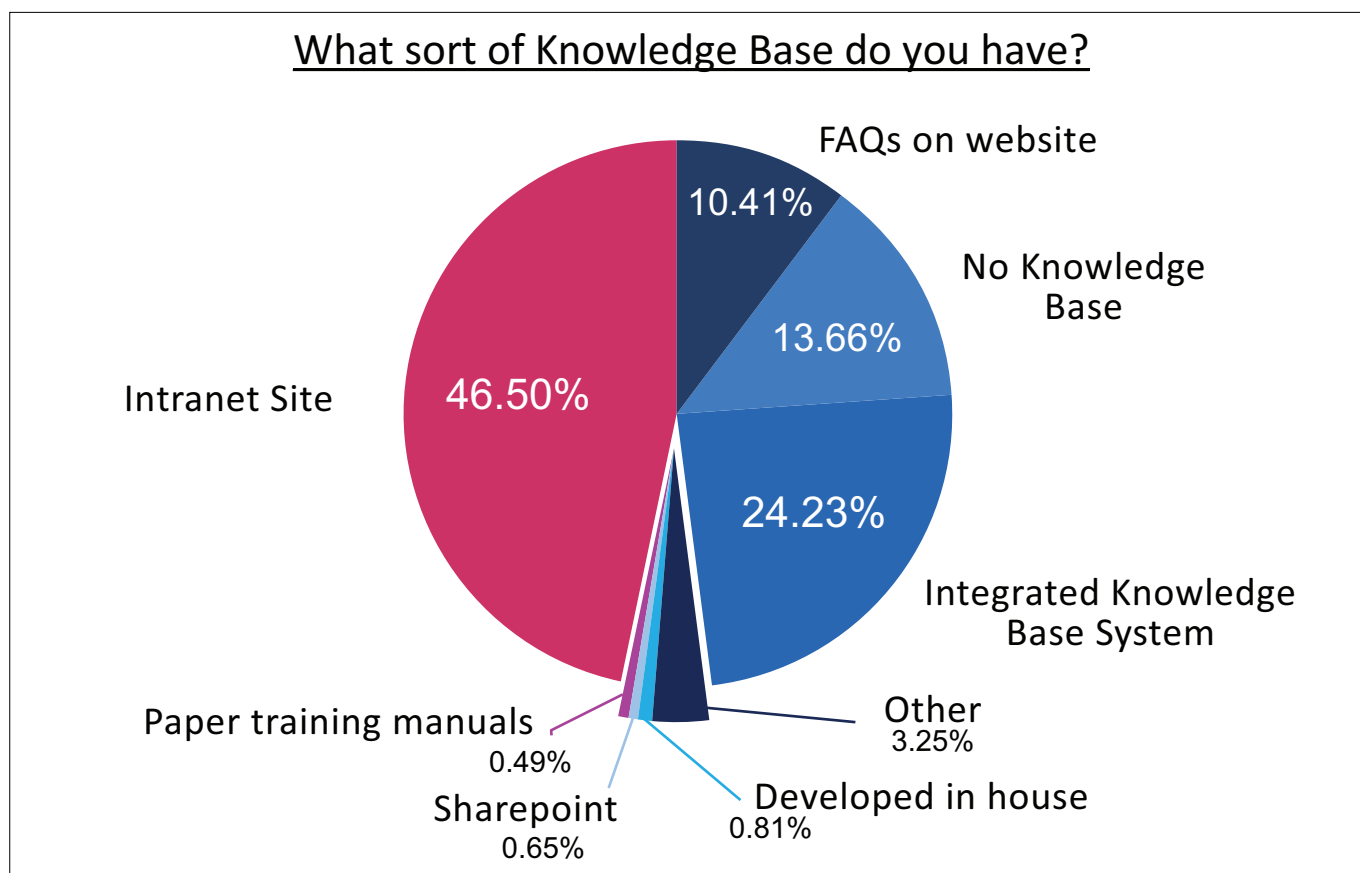
What sort of Knowledge Base do you have?

Intranet Site	46.50 %
Integrated Knowledge Base System	24.23 %
No Knowledge Base	13.66 %
FAQs on website	10.41 %
Other	3.25 %
Developed in house	0.81 %
Sharepoint	0.65 %
Paper training manuals	0.49 %

Less than 1% of contact centres use paper training manuals

For those who do provide this resource for their agents, an intranet site (47%) is the most popular option. This is followed by an integrated knowledge base system (24%) and having FAQs on the website (10%).

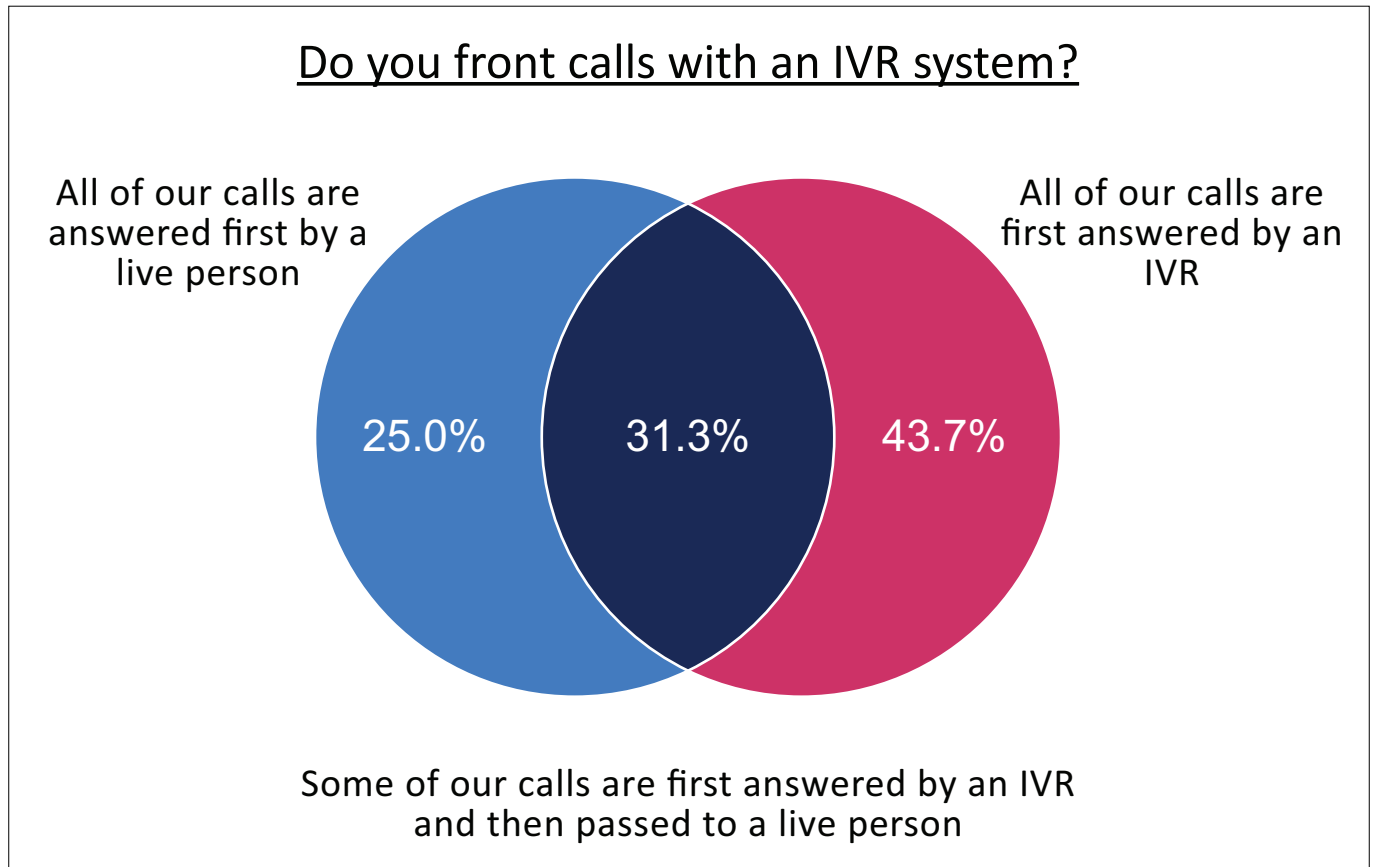
By contrast, paper training manuals are currently used by less than 1% of the industry – highlighting a strong trend for easy, on-screen access to the required information.



Do you front calls with an IVR system?

Only 25% of contact centres first answer their calls with a live person

If Will Rogers' famous quote *"You never get a second chance to make a good first impression"* is to be believed, how you welcome your customers into your contact centre is of great importance. Yet only 25% of contact centres first answer their calls with a live person.



The majority first answer their calls with an IVR

The majority first answer their calls with an IVR (44%), while 31% answer their calls with a mixture of the two. These findings are of particular concern as very few contact centres deliver an excellent IVR experience. Reasons for this vary from lack of maintenance (e.g. keeping all menu options in line with current FAQs) through to poor initial design (e.g. too many options and layers).

What are the most important contact centre metrics?

Customer Satisfaction trumps Average Handling Time

Metrics help contact centre managers understand how efficient their operation is, but it can be difficult to select the right ones.

For example, process-driven metrics such as Average Handling Time (especially when heavily targeted against) can drive the wrong behaviours, including agents “accidentally” hanging up on callers with more complicated queries.

It is interesting to see that the false economy of this behaviour (which can drive repeat contacts) is being recognised and that First Contact Resolution (FCR) takes a prime position in the findings (77% – Very Important).

How important are these metrics to your contact centre?

	Very Important	Quite Important	Not Important
Customer Satisfaction	95.50 %	4.15 %	0.35 %
First Contact Resolution (FCR)	77.34 %	19.38 %	3.29 %
Quality Scores	72.47 %	22.65 %	4.88 %
Service Level (% answered within a time)	69.98 %	26.35 %	3.66 %
Agent Satisfaction	64.99 %	29.12 %	5.89 %
Adherence	51.75 %	32.98 %	15.26 %
Average Handling Time (AHT)	46.02 %	37.54 %	16.44 %
Customer Effort	39.16 %	37.41 %	23.43 %
Forecast Accuracy	38.66 %	41.12 %	20.21 %
Shrinkage	35.50 %	36.38 %	28.12 %
Sales Volume	34.33 %	20.14 %	45.53 %
NetPromoter Score	32.57 %	27.82 %	39.61 %
NetEasy Score	12.81 %	27.58 %	59.61 %

It is also encouraging to see both Customer Satisfaction (95% – Very Important) and Agent Satisfaction (65% – Very Important) taking a considerable lead over Average Handling Time (46% – Very Important) and Sales Volume (34% – Very Important). These findings suggest that there is greater focus being placed on the quality of the customer experience than on the cost.

The Customer Effort Score is more popular than NetEasy

The NetEasy Score was marketed as an evolution of the Customer Effort Score, yet the original Customer Effort Score appears to remain more popular – with only 23% of contact centre professionals rating the Customer Effort Score as ‘Not Important’ compared with nearly 60% for the NetEasy Score.

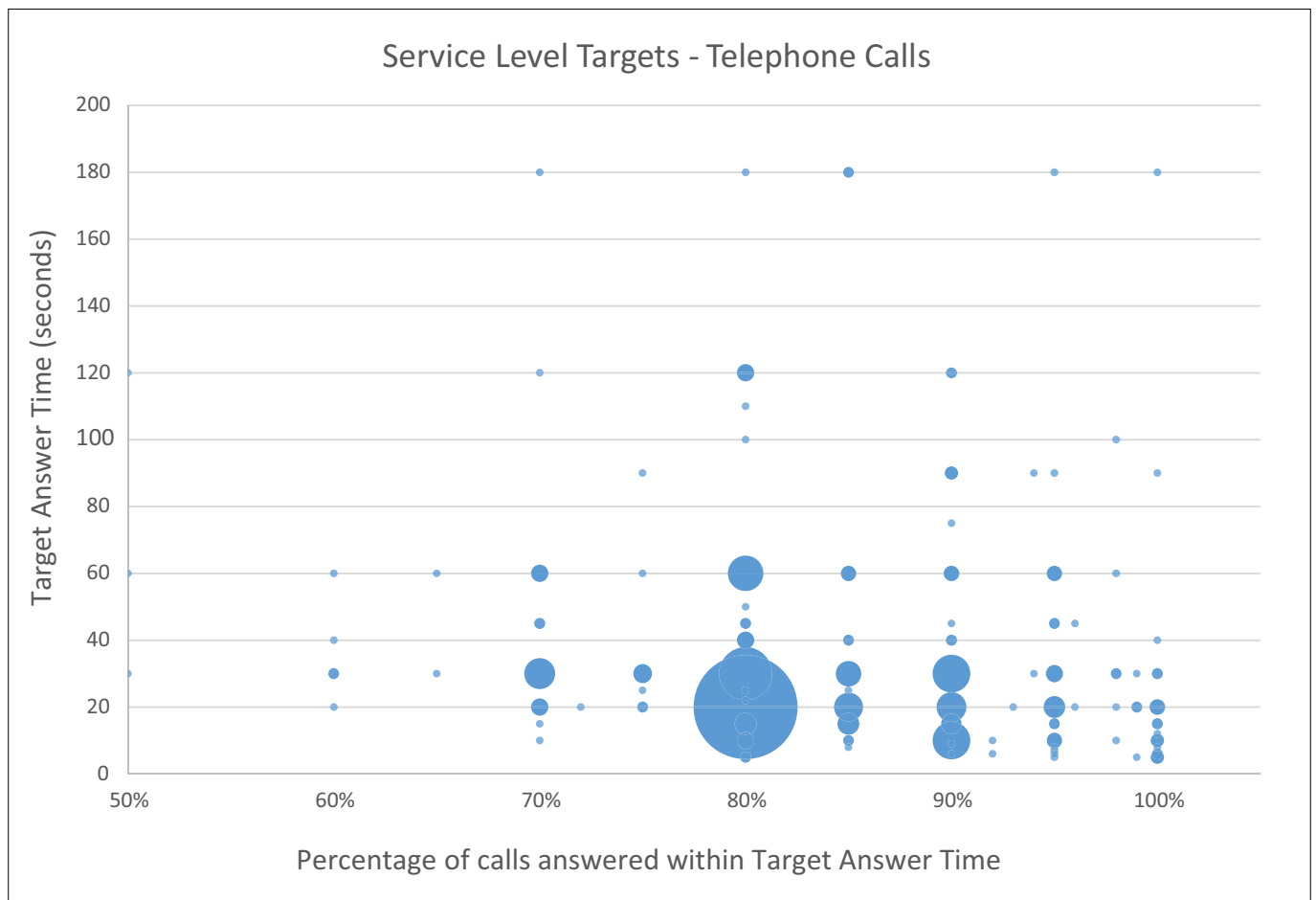
The NetPromoter Score is also struggling to hold its place on the comparison table, with nearly 40% of contact centre professionals voting it ‘Not Important’.

What is your service level (SLA) target for telephone calls?

The industry average is 80% of calls being answered within 20 seconds

In the survey, participants were asked about their service level agreement (SLA) targets for telephone calls. This data was captured in percentage/seconds.

The results confirm that the well-known industry standard of 80% of calls being answered within 20 seconds is in wide use. This is evident in the large cluster surrounding this data point in the bubble graph.



However, industry leaders are setting the bar even higher and targeting against 90% of calls being answered within 20 seconds – evident in the smaller yet still significant cluster around this data point.

Further visible clusters on the bubble graph indicate that there is also a trend for 70% of calls being answered in 30 seconds and 85% of calls being answered in 20 seconds.

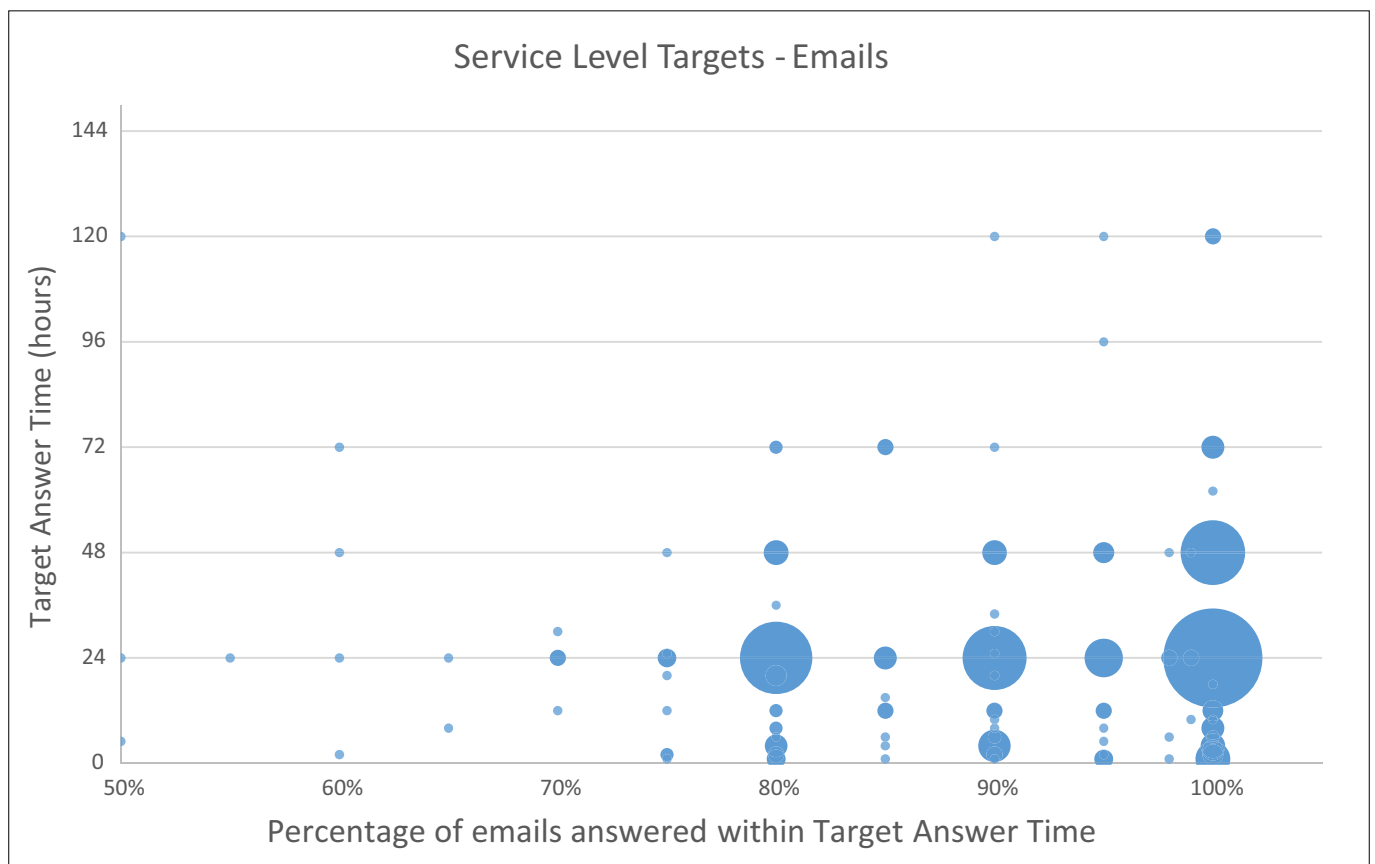
[Please note, the findings only reflect the targets contact centres have in place – and not the actual figures they achieve.]

What is your service level (SLA) target for email?

24 hours is the standard response time for email

Survey participants were also asked about their SLA targets for email. This data was captured in percentage/hours.

The findings reveal that 24 hours is the standard response time for email, whether this is targeted against 80%, 90% or 100% of emails.



Further analysis of the results revealed an industry average of 95% of emails being answered within 24 hours, with industry leaders targeting against 100% of their emails being answered within 20 hours.

[Please note, the findings only reflect the targets contact centres have in place – and not the actual figures they achieve.]

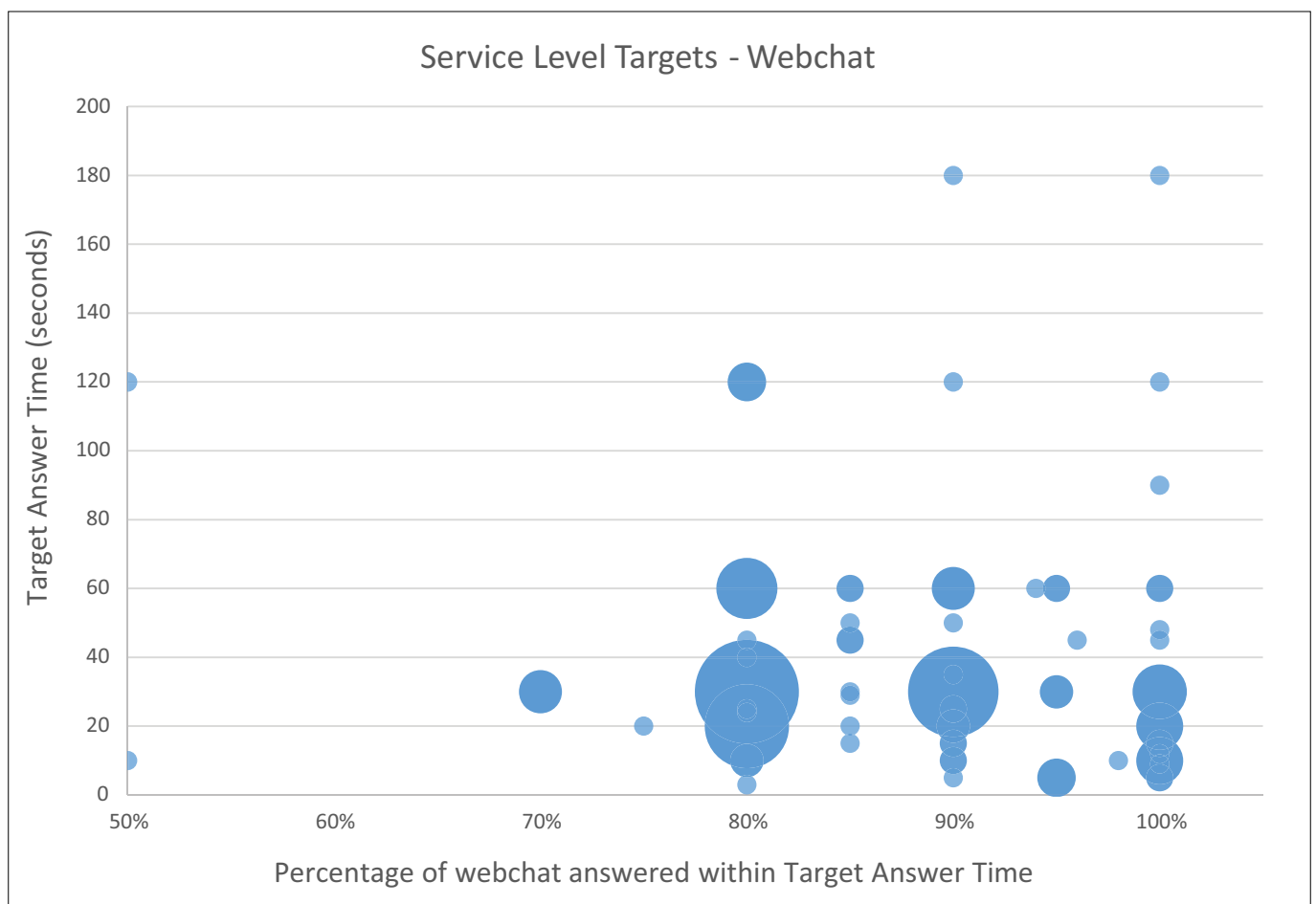
The lack of a satisfactory response time on email from most contact centres is probably driving up repeat contacts and hurting First Contact Resolution.

What is your service level (SLA) target for webchat?

Average SLA targets for webchat are slower than for the telephone

Survey participants were also asked about their SLA targets for webchat. This data was captured in percentage/seconds.

The findings reveal that 30 seconds is the standard response time for webchat, whether this is targeted against 70%, 80%, 90% or 100% of webchat conversations – a notable 10 seconds slower than SLA targets on the telephone.



The industry average is 90% of webchats being answered in 30 seconds

Further analysis of the results reveal an industry average of 90% of webchats being answered within 30 seconds, with industry leaders targeting against 95% of webchats being answered within 20 seconds.

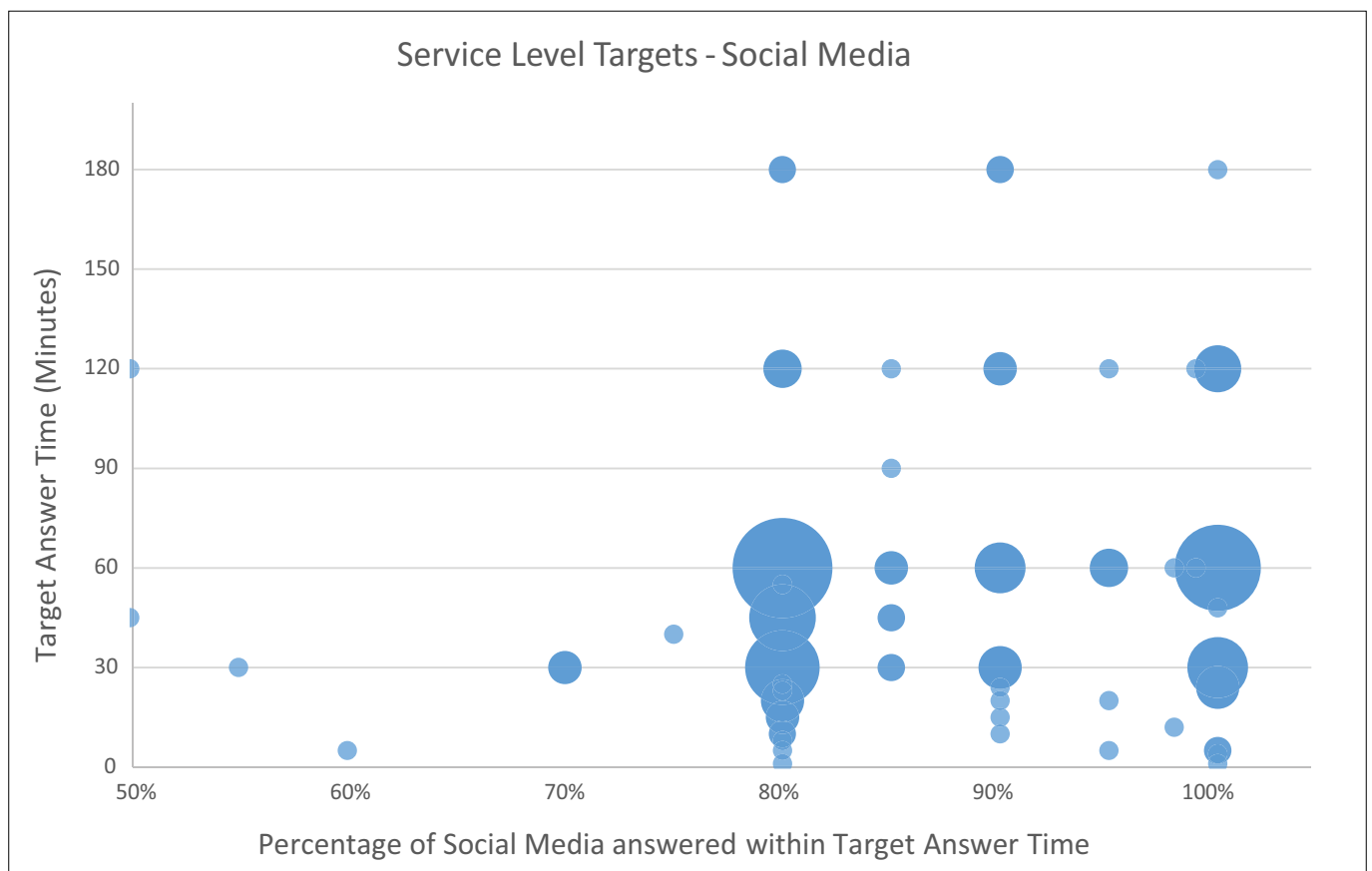
[Please note, the findings only reflect the targets contact centres have in place – and not the actual figures they achieve.]

What is your service level (SLA) target for social media?

The majority of social media contacts are answered in 60 minutes or less

Survey participants were also asked about their SLA targets for social media. This data was captured in percentage/minutes.

The findings show that the majority of social media contacts are answered within 30–60 minutes. This is evident in the clustering in the bubble graph.



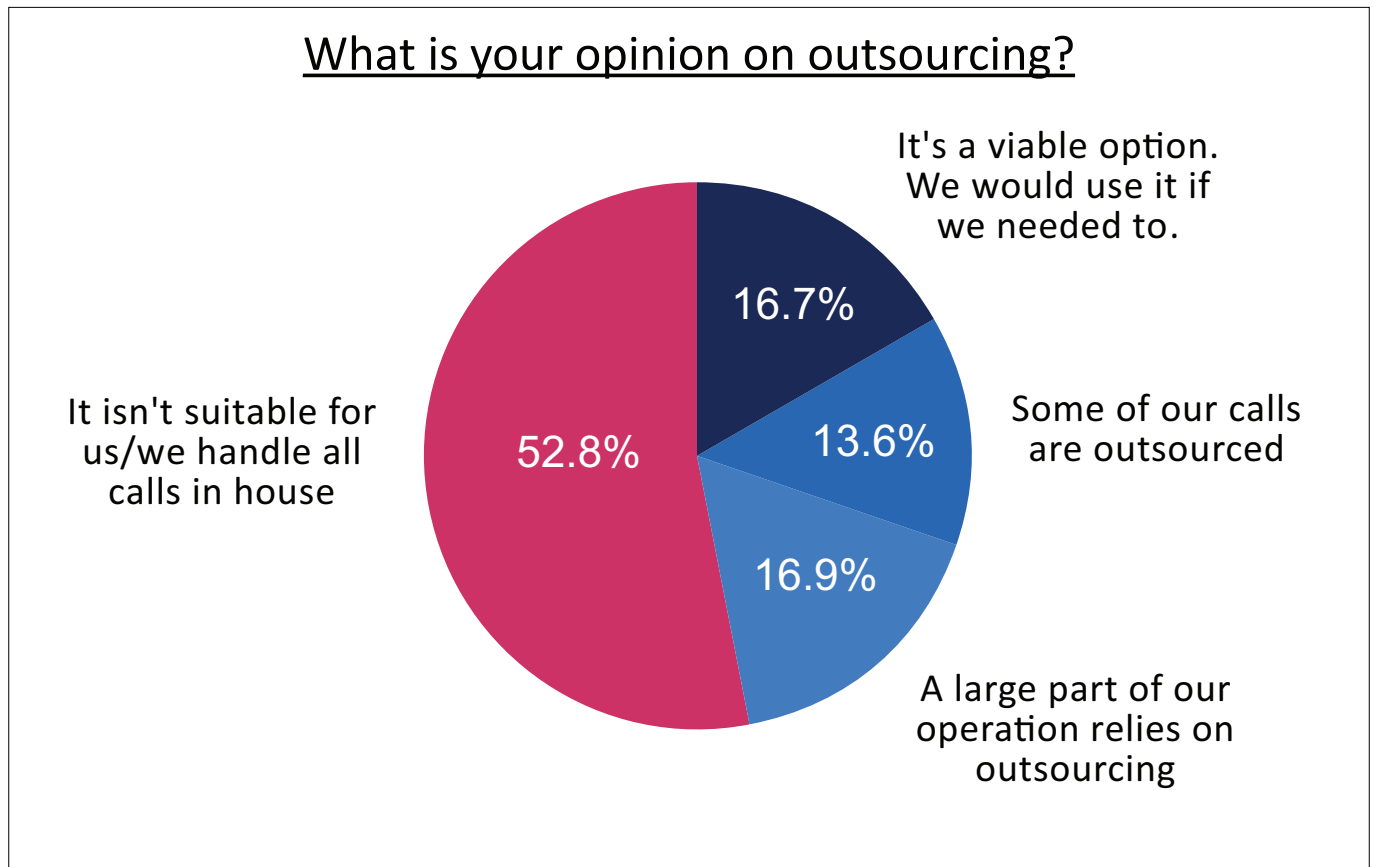
Further analysis revealed an average industry target of 85% being answered within 60 minutes – with industry leaders targeting 100% against 30 minutes.

[Please note, the findings only reflect the targets contact centres have in place – and not the actual figures they achieve.]

What is your opinion on outsourcing?

Over half of contact centres choose not to use outsourcing

The findings of the survey revealed that over half (53%) of contact centres don't consider outsourcing to be a viable option for them – and instead choose to handle their calls in house.



A third of contact centres rely on outsourcing for their operational needs

In stark contrast, a third of the industry currently relies on outsourcing – with 17% of contact centres using it for a large part their operational needs, while a further 14% outsource some of their calls.

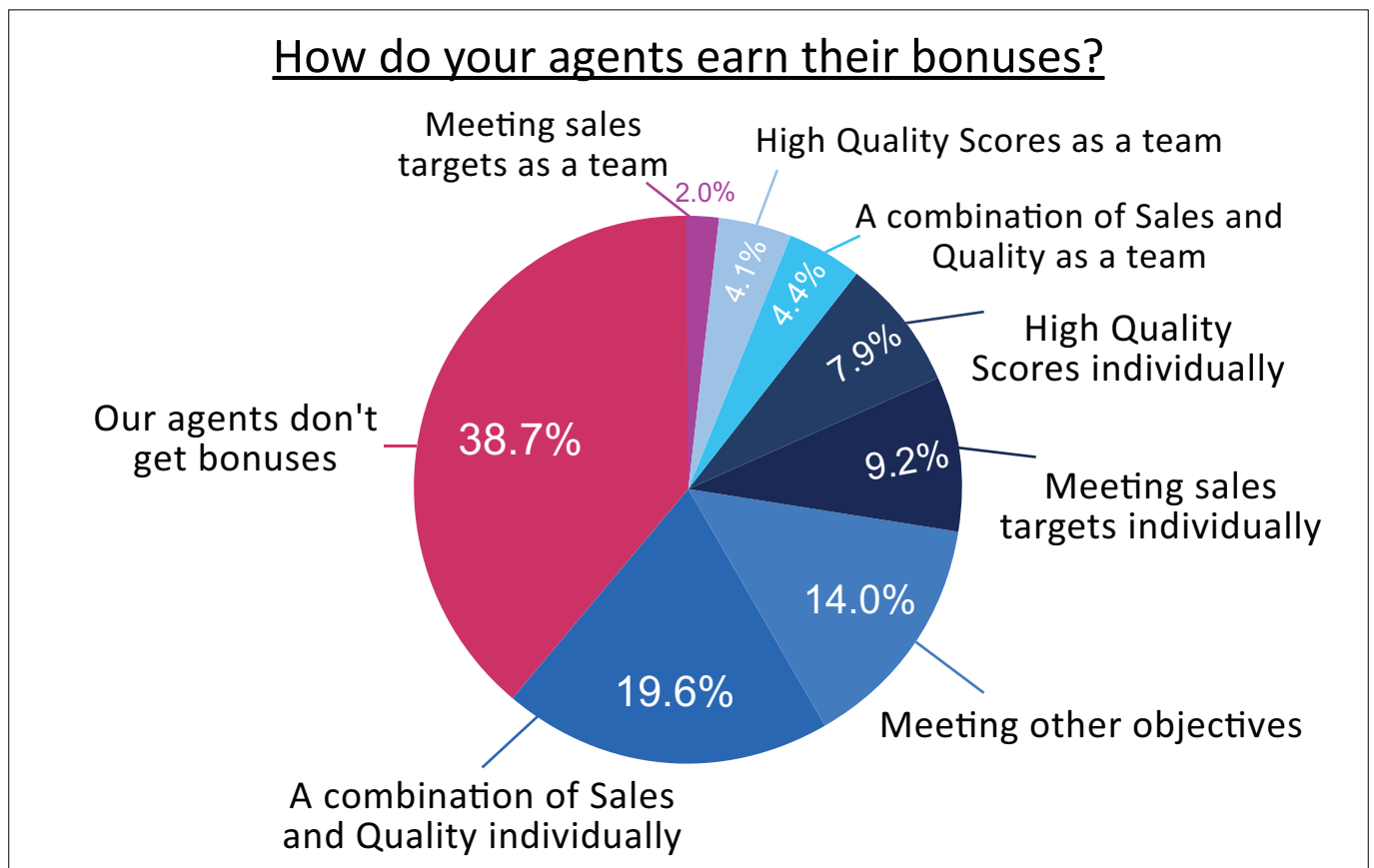
17% of contact centres also consider outsourcing to be a viable option – and would use it if they needed to, highlighting a clear divide in opinion across the industry.

How do your agents earn their bonuses?

Individual targets are more prevalent than team targets

There is a clear trend in the industry for giving agents individual targets rather than team targets – with a difference of 5% or more evident in the subject categories:

- MEETING sales targets as a team (2%)/ Meeting sales targets individually (19%)
- High quality scores as a team (4%)/ High quality scores individually (9%)
- A combination of sales and quality as a team (4%)/ A combination of sales and quality individually (20%).



The findings also show that there is a preference for targeting agents on a combination of quality scores and sales scores – evident in 24% of the total vote, compared with 21% (sales scores) and 13% (quality scores).

Over a third of agents don't receive bonuses

The findings also reveal that around 39% of contact centres don't offer their agents any form of bonus scheme.

This may suggest that they are instead invested in providing higher basic salaries, as well as career progression opportunities, in order to retain their agents.

What would you change in your contact centre?

The industry needs to invest in better computer systems

Our survey gave participants the opportunity to name one thing they would change about their contact centre – and some rather worrying trends emerged.

One of the most notable concerns was the demand for basic working computer systems.

Here is a small extract of the comments:

- “Systems that don’t randomly stop.”
- “Get our telephony and IT systems working as they are supposed to!”
- “Faster computers.”
- “New systems, removing the need for legacy systems, processes and workarounds.”
- “Consistent system that works 100% of the time.”
- “Fixing back-end processes in other service areas which cause issues.”
- “Better technology so that advisers have one place to go for a customer view and can access all required data in one place.”

Managers need to make more effort to keep up with the latest technology

Beyond the need for basic working computer systems, there was also widespread demand for upgrading to the latest technologies.

Here is a small extract of these comments:

- “Dual screens for everyone.”
- “Newer/upgraded software across the board—especially automation across report generation, agent scorecards, and self-serve scheduling options.”
- “Implement a CRM that shows a single customer view.”
- “Knowledge base and access instead of Excel.”
- “Excellent quality Bluetooth headsets for everyone.”
- “Integrate all channels except social media, as it is a specialist function.”
- “Joined-up reporting over all contact channels.”
- “State-of-the-art telephony set-up which includes social media and mail as part of the WFM.”
- “Automation in terms of selecting data, campaign scheduling, agent scheduling, back-off processing, customer scoring.”
- “Better back-end dashboards, so our customers can dig deeper into their calls and dispositions.”

More needs to be done to meet agents' physical and emotional needs

Another, not entirely disconnected, trend was the demand for better working conditions for front-line agents. Comments touched on everything from better pay to more time for training – with one contact centre professional even putting in a request for natural light!

Here is a small extract of these comments:

- “Refurb and new layout of offices.”
- “More time for training.”
- “Adjustable desks – standing or sitting.”
- “More empowerment for the front line.”
- “Higher pay.”
- “Give more responsibility and ownership to the agents to get customer issues resolved.”
- “We have no natural light in our centre so I’d put some windows in.”
- “More office space.”
- “Improved booths for agents.”
- “More focus on training/coaching/development of agents.”
- “Better rates of pay for the agents.”
- “More focus on agent motivation and reward.”
- “Furniture (cubicles, desks and chairs), as well as the headsets.”

The industry needs to do more to empower agents

There are also a number of cultural issues which the industry needs to address, including agent empowerment and management style.

Here is a small extract of these comments:

- “Give more responsibility and ownership to the agents to get customer issues resolved.”
- “Change planning to tell the business the requirements, rather than the business deciding what resource we have available (budget and contact ratio vs sales forecast).”
- “More empowerment for the front line.”
- “Empowerment for team managers.”
- “Set core values and achieve agent buy-in.”
- “Senior management accountability and longevity, as we have had way too many restructures in the last 2 years, which has held back positive changes being implemented.”
- “Improved way of capturing views and feedback from large agent population, without relying on going through all leadership layers.”
- “A stronger and more experienced management team who are more willing to think outside of our own business, utilise networking opportunities and share best practice ideas.”
- “Budget for experienced supporting management personnel.”

What barriers stop you from running your dream contact centre?

IT issues are holding back progress in the contact centre

While the findings from ‘What would you change in your contact centre?’ are somewhat shocking, there is a logical explanation for these failings.

When we asked our survey participants ‘What barriers stop you from running your dream contact centre?’ it was revealed that budget (67%), IT issues (44%) and the need for new technology (40%) are all being held responsible for stopping progress in the contact centre.

What barriers stop you from running your dream contact centre?

Budget	67.4 %
IT issues	44.2 %
Need new technology	39.9 %
Technology not joined up	35.4 %
Conflicting business priorities	31.3 %
Management buy-in	28.1 %
Broken processes	27.9 %
Not being aligned with other departments	25.0 %
Lack of time/human resources	24.5 %
Not enough staff	24.5 %
Floor space	21.8 %
Agent buy-in	16.5 %
Lack of skills/it's too complicated for our existing team	15.0 %
Dealing with new channels (e.g. webchat)	10.7 %
Wrong agent targets	8.6 %
Writing a business case	7.9 %

Management buy-in and staffing issues are also holding things back

It is equally apparent that a number of staff-related issues are holding back progress – with management buy-in (28%), not enough staff (25%), agent buy-in (17%) and lack of skills (15%) also being held responsible.

What is the most successful thing you've ever done in the contact centre?

We have some true pioneers in our midst working to improve the industry

It isn't all bad news, however, as we also asked 'What is the most successful thing you've ever done in the contact centre?' The responses to this question revealed that we have some true pioneers in our midst, who take it upon themselves to drive positive change in the industry.

Here is a small extract of these inspiring comments:

- "I created a new system of monitoring and evaluating the quality of agents' performance for their scorecards."
- "I introduced Quality Metrics with weekly feedback performance meetings."
- "I focused on staff development and help to implement new career pathways."
- "I removed sales targets and upskilled our teams on Customer Service."
- "I set up a stress-free room."
- "I set up an annual performance evaluation. We got to know how the agents think they are doing and share with them how we see them. We also saw their dreams and what they want to do with their lives."
- "We removed Pay-by-Performance and gave all agents the same rate of pay. It instantly changed the culture of the contact centre, increased performance of the agents and refocused the Team Leaders on coaching and positive reinforcement."
- "I helped devise a two-tier team. We amended the IVR options so that the more technical calls go to a technical agent and simpler calls to a new starter. This helps our new starters settle in – and means that we can easily get temps in to assist on the tier 1 helpline during busy periods."
- "As a non-monetary reward, we thanked team effort to reduce Not Ready time by giving 'coupons' for an additional break. Staff could 'cash in' with supervisor's approval and supervisor would take their place on the boards. Extra break could be added to normal break/lunch but could not be used to arrive late/leave early."
- "We removed sales targets and call scripts. We then refocused on customer experience (effort, satisfaction & loyalty)."
- "We changed the company culture to treat people like adults, removing the managing by numbers ethos."
- "We integrated staff into new teams, which improved cohesiveness within the whole group and improved service levels to all customers."
- "We realigned all our agents' contracts to flexible contracts which allow people to work more during busy times and less during quieter times but still get paid a regular monthly income."

About NewVoiceMedia

NewVoiceMedia powers customer connections that transform businesses globally. The leading vendor's award-winning cloud customer contact platform revolutionises the way organisations connect with their customers worldwide, enabling them to deliver a personalised and unique customer service experience and drive a more effective sales and marketing team.

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