



What Contact Centres Are Doing Right Now

(2016 Edition)

How do you compare?

A Call Centre Helper Research Paper

Sponsored by

What We Did

Throughout October 2016, Call Centre Helper readers were invited to take part in our annual '20 Questions About Your Contact Centre' survey. This year, it was run in partnership with NewVoiceMedia.

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

We also took the opportunity to compare the data with that collected in both our 2014 and 2015 surveys.

Each year, the survey provides the latest and most valuable insights into the fundamental framework of the contact centre. In doing so, it covers everything from the most widely used initiatives and metrics to the technologies that have made it on to every manager's wish list.

Over 340 contact centre professionals took part, and we are delighted to share the results with you.

Executive Summary

Every year, changes to technology, processes and training transform the make-up of the contact centre.

These changes often bring improvements to the customer experience, but they also present businesses with new challenges to overcome, which can prevent contact centres from performing to their full potential.

Here are a number of useful conclusions that have been drawn from this year's survey, which may enlighten you about the dynamics of a contact centre in 2016.

More professionals view the contact centre as “a cost centre” rather than “a profit centre”

An alarming 39.8% of people surveyed believe that their contact centre is viewed merely as a compulsory expenditure, asserting that their business would label it a “cost centre”. This compares to just 25.2% who instead suggest that the call centre is a “profit centre”.

This information could perhaps indicate that some businesses may be ignoring the valuable insights that the contact centre could bring to a company. If used correctly, the call centre can be used to [direct the voice of the customer](#) into the wider business to drive real change.

Annualised hours are becoming an increasingly popular initiative

In just a year, the use of annualised hours as an incentive for contact centre employees has sharply risen by over 5%, moving from 30.9% to 36.1%.

This rise has been so emphatic that more contact centres now use annualised hours, the approved number of hours an employee is contracted to work each year instead of each week, than have installed personalised call routing.

Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) remains the undisputed king of metrics

Despite being a very old metric, a clear majority (91.1%) still believe Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) to be a “very important” metric in the contact centre.

Following CSAT, there is a vast drop-off of metrics categorised as very important by our readers. In fact, the second-placed “very important” metric was Service Level, which had a much lower score of 70.0%.

Notably, the number of those who thought that Average Handling Time (AHT), Shrinkage and Net Promoter Score were important metrics has dropped considerably since 2015.

34.6% of contact centre managers rarely connect with their external counterparts

More contact centre managers agreed with the statement “I seldom talk to any external contact centre managers” (34.6%) than attended organised site visits to other contact centres (29.9%).

Despite this, site visits are a great method of discovering new ways to improve the contact centre, and are underused. Call Centre Helper regularly attends site visits and posts articles detailing the experience. [Click here](#) to see what we found out on a site visit to General Motors’ contact centre in Luton.

Only 28.5% of centres target advisors against Average Handling Time (AHT)

As Average Handling Time (AHT) is deemed to be becoming less important in the contact centre, fewer people are now targeting agents against it.

Whilst 83.9% of contact centres still actively engage with AHT, the majority now only monitor it behind the scenes, and only 28.5% use the metric to single out advisors. This signifies a major reduction from just a few years ago.

Salesforce is clearly beating Microsoft for Customer Service CRM

Salesforce, a CRM solution that combines customer information into a single integrated platform, is now used by over 10% of contact centres, according to our survey.

However, the percentage of companies using Microsoft CRM Dynamics has fallen to 5.5%, when just over 12 months ago it was revealed that 11.0% of contact centres employed the system.

Whilst not experiencing quite as drastic a fall, systems such as Oracle/Right Now and SAP have also suffered in the past year.

Lack of budget is holding back contact centres

When asked: “What barriers stop you from running your dream contact centre?”, 80% of our readers revealed that budget was becoming a major concern.

This figure has increased by an alarming 13% in the past year and backs up the earlier view that businesses are beginning to view contact centres as cost centres and not profit centres.

IT issues, the need for new technology and conflicting business priorities also remained prominent hindrances that prevent managers from forging their dream contact centre.

How Does Your Contact Centre Compare?

What is your mix of contact channels?

Traditional technologies continue to defy contemporary channels

Despite call centres having established a range of new channels, such as webchat, SMS and social media, the percentage of inbound phone calls and emails in the call centre is rising.

As evident below, the patterns of change from 2014–2015 are almost identical when you compare them to changes from 2015–2016.

What is your mix of Contact Channels?

	2016	2015	2014
Voice - Inbound	62.0 %	55.7 %	50.0 %
Email	15.2 %	14.8 %	12.8 %
Voice - Outbound	14.0 %	17.0 %	18.2 %
Webchat	3.0 %	3.0 %	4.2 %
Social Media	1.6 %	1.8 %	2.7 %
Letters	1.6 %	3.6 %	5.2 %
SMS	0.9 %	1.2 %	3.4 %
Video Chat	0.2 %	0.2 %	0.2 %
Other	1.5 %	2.7 %	3.3 %

The comparison table emphasises the continued rise in inbound voice, from 50.0% to 62.0%, and email, from 12.8% to 15.2% in just two years.

Inbound calls increase, whilst outbound decreases once more

With the increase in phone companies offering call-blocking schemes, including [Vodafone's controversial initiative](#) that was announced earlier this autumn, it is no surprise that contact centres have reduced their outbound operations.

However, the rapid rise in inbound call would be a surprise to many. One explanation is that, with self-service on the rise, more calls may be entering the contact centre due to failure demand, more available information, and username and password problems, amongst other reasons.

The presence of social media in the contact centre falls further

In only two years, the use of social media in contact centres has fallen by 40%, moving from 2.7% in 2014, to just 1.6% in 2016.

These figures show that using social media for customer service is becoming a fallen novelty. This may be because when social media was still a fresh concept to the public, companies would scramble to prevent bad feedback being shared and tweeted across the internet. However, as of 2016, it looks like many companies have fallen back into bad habits.

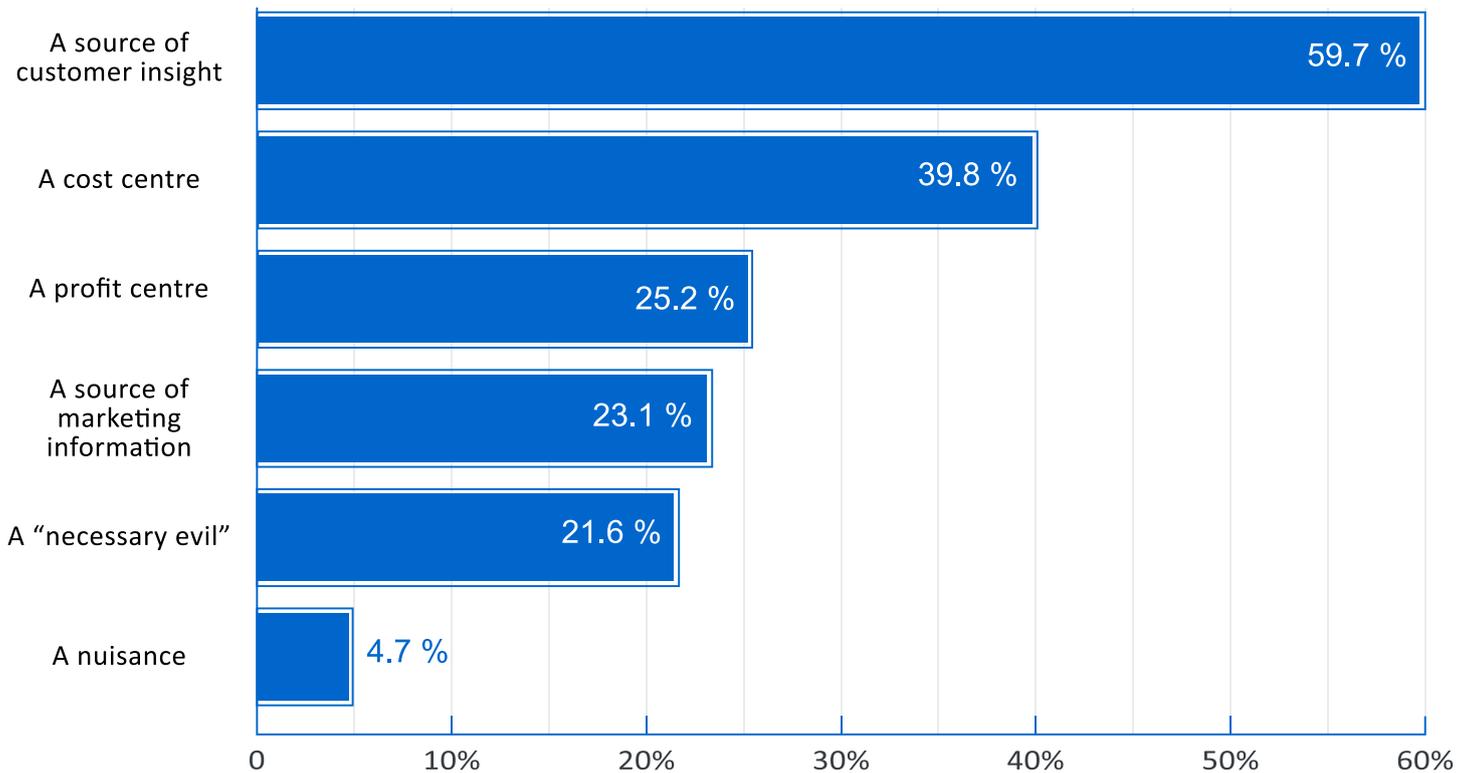
How is your contact centre perceived by the rest of the business?

(Multiple answers were allowed during this poll, so the total does not add up to 100%.)

Contact centres are generally perceived to be a source of customer insight

The chart below highlights how nearly 60% of companies believe that the contact centre is a key source of customer insight.

How is your contact centre perceived by the rest of the business?



This is no surprise, considering that it is contact centre advisors who interact with the customers, getting to know their likes and dislikes of the products that their business delivers.

A good example of this insight is a company that we met that allows their advisors to feed back the way that customers use products to developers in product design.

This company did this because a lot of developers are struggling to find out what customers want and how they use a product, so they think "I have to invent what I think what they would like". By using advisors, the business eliminated such uncertainty.

This is just one example of how many companies are involving [advisors in operations and strategy](#).

Negative perceptions of the contact centre are circulating in companies

Unfortunately, feedback from the chart suggests that a higher than expected percentage of businesses perceive the contact centre in a negative light.

39.8% of those questioned believed that their business considers the contact centre to be “a cost centre”, 21.6% say it would be branded as a “necessary evil”, and a shocking 4.7% reported their business would deem it to be a “nuisance”.

This negativity is perhaps reflected in the strict budgets that affect 80% of contact centres.

What initiatives do you currently have in the contact centre?

(Multiple answers were allowed during this poll, so the total does not add up to 100%.)

Multiskilling advisors remains the key contact centre initiative

In a similar result to last year's findings, multiskilling advisors continues to be a top contact centre priority. In fact, 98.2% either have multiskilled advisors or have them on their wish list.

What initiatives do you currently have in the contact centre?

2016

	Have	On Wish List	Don't Have
Multiskilling Agents	88.2 %	10.0 %	1.8 %
Social Events	77.1 %	10.7 %	12.2 %
Buddying Agents	71.0 %	12.1 %	16.9 %
Unpaid Leave	65.2 %	5.2 %	29.6 %
Knowledge Champions	63.3 %	26.3 %	10.4 %
Flexible Shifts	61.0 %	12.5 %	26.5 %
Agent Empowerment	61.0 %	28.5 %	10.5 %
Spot Prizes	51.5 %	15.9 %	32.6 %
Motivational Games	50.2 %	26.3 %	23.6 %
Annualised/ banked hours	36.0 %	11.8 %	52.1 %
Personalised Call Routing	33.2 %	28.7 %	38.1 %
Sales Commission	26.7 %	5.4 %	67.9 %
Self-help Customer Videos	23.0 %	27.9 %	49.1 %

2015

	Have	On Wish List	Don't Have
Multiskilling Agents	90.5 %	5.7 %	3.8 %
Social Events	77.3 %	12.1 %	10.6 %
Buddying Agents	71.5 %	10.9 %	17.6 %
Unpaid Leave	66.4 %	5.6 %	28.0 %
Knowledge Champions	66.2 %	20.4 %	13.4 %
Agent Empowerment	61.6 %	24.2 %	14.1 %
Flexible Shifts	59.7 %	16.0 %	24.3 %
Spot Prizes	52.8 %	14.5 %	32.7 %
Motivational Games	47.1 %	23.2 %	29.7 %
Personalised Call Routing	38.2 %	25.6 %	36.2 %
Sales Commission	36.0 %	5.6 %	58.4 %
Annualised/ banked hours	30.9 %	15.0 %	54.1 %
Self-help Customer Videos	23.8 %	22.7 %	53.5 %

These multiskilled advisors are highly beneficial in the contact centre, because if they are multilingual or can speak on behalf of both the sales and support team, for example, they can cover multiple call types. This leads to higher efficiency, as if one department is busier than another, they can call on agents across and effectively balance the workload. It can also reduce the number of call transfers.

Declining use of sales commissions as an initiative

According to the table above, only 26.7% of companies still adopt sales commissions as a workplace initiative. This is a 9.3% drop on 2015 alone, and implies that it is an outdated incentive.

But how is it outdated?

Offering sales commissions points fingers at individuals and not the system, only focuses on short-term results and often culminates in the best outcome for the advisor and not the customer. This could be why call centres are neglecting the initiative, with more contact centres now adopting team targets.

Motivational games are on the rise

An initiative that is becoming more prominent in the contact centre is the use of motivational games. There was a 6.1% increase in those who employ or wish to employ motivational games in their contact centre in 2016, compared to the percentage found in 2015's survey.

Keeping advisors motivated undoubtedly boosts the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of customer service. So, by adopting motivational games, which attempt to align positive experiences within the workplace, you can improve customer service and advisor morale.

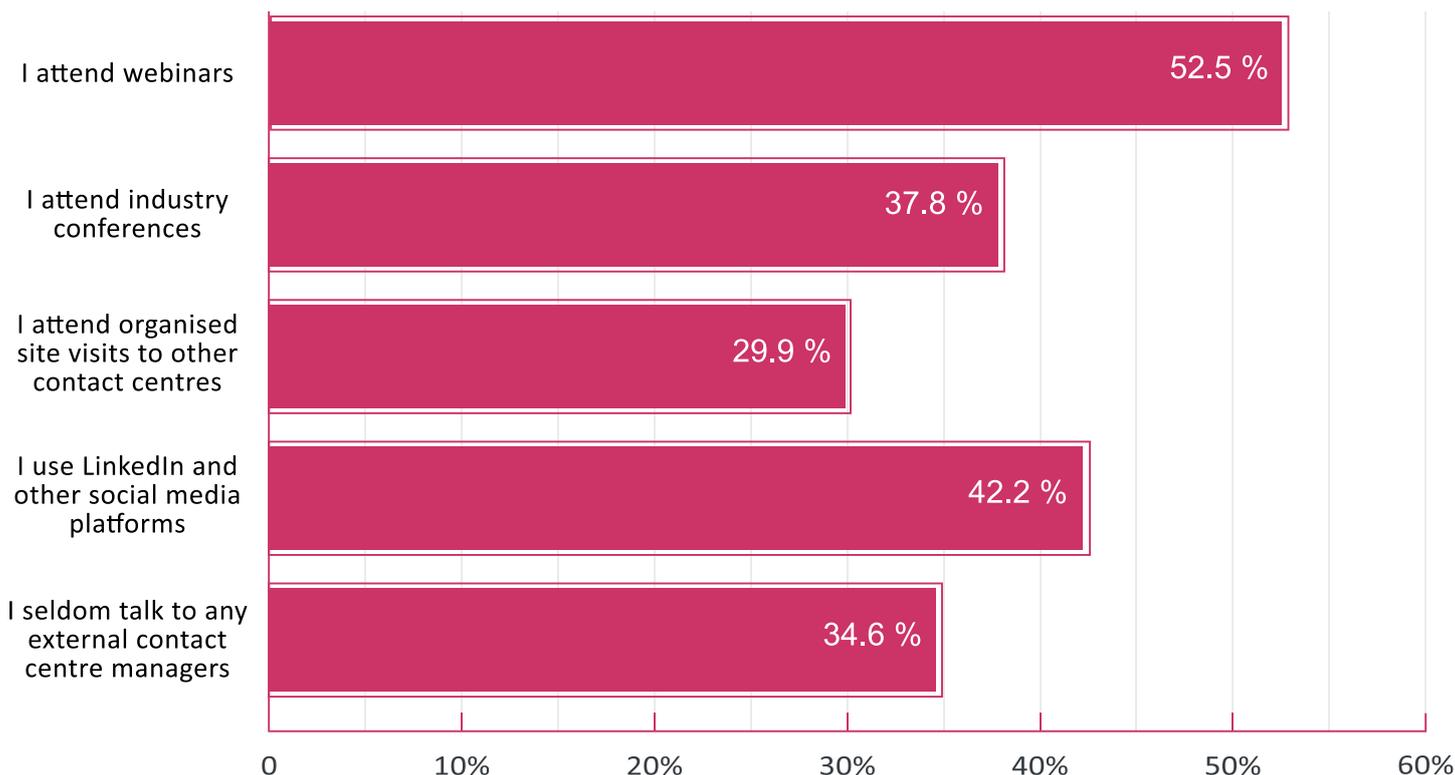
How do you network with contact centre managers outside of your own contact centre?

(Multiple answers were allowed during this poll, so the total does not add up to 100%.)

Attending webinars is the preferred method of networking contact centre managers

The chart below shows that over half of contact centre managers attend webinars, so that they can keep in contact with their external counterparts.

How do you network with contact centre managers outside of your own contact centre?



It is no surprise that this is even more popular than using social media platforms, because not only do webinars offer the chance to build relationships, they are often presented by knowledgeable experts, discuss relevant topics and are recorded for convenient viewing.

For information on Call Centre Helper's upcoming webinars, which include a chatroom for you to share ideas with other call centre professionals, [click here!](#)

Industry conferences are also a popular method of networking

Whilst webinars and social media are favoured by the majority of call centre managers, 37.8% of those surveyed still attend industry conferences.

These remain a great chance to learn, market to clients and keep up to date with the latest contact centre trends, as well as providing networking opportunities.

Although webinars offer convenience, industry conferences allow you to meet experts in person, as well as providing the chance to meet new people and learn from their successes and failures in implementing new call centre processes.

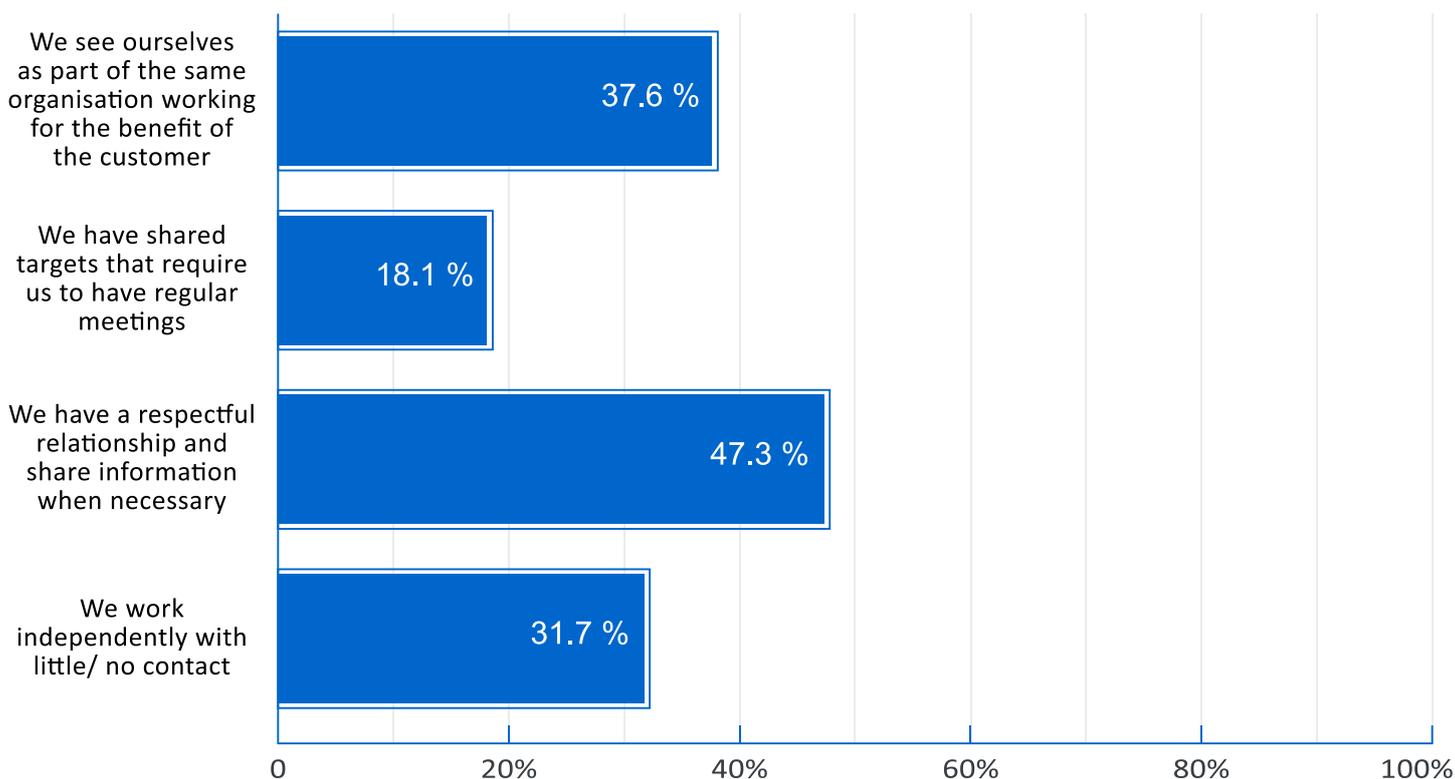
How aligned is your contact centre with the marketing department?

(Multiple answers were allowed during this poll, so the total does not add up to 100%.)

Under 38% of contact centres have close ties with their company's marketing department

In accordance with the graph below, only 37.6% of contact centres agreed with the statement: "We see ourselves as part of the same organisation working for the benefit the customer."

How aligned is your contact centre with the marketing department?



This disconcerting figure highlights the general disconnect of contact centres from the marketing team and indicates that the voice of the customer, which is collected in the contact centre, is not being driven back into the wider business.

So, worryingly, customer feedback may not be influencing the business's marketing strategy.

Less than a fifth of contact centres share targets with their business's marketing team

Underlining the prominent trend of marketing teams neglecting the contact centre is the finding that only 18.1% of businesses combine targets and have regular meetings between the two departments.

This is particularly concerning because it is more important than ever for the contact centre to match the voice that their company is promoting through its marketing department. This is because, in a competitive world, customers want to buy from a brand that they trust, and having a consistent brand voice is imperative to this.

So, shared targets and regular meetings between the two departments could be a valuable exercise.

What are the most important contact centre metrics?

(Multiple answers were allowed during this poll, so the total does not add up to 100%.)

Common contact centre metrics are being viewed as less and less important

All of the metrics presented in the table below are now being deemed as less important than they were just a year ago. Although some have fared better since 2015 than others.

What are the most important contact centre metrics?

2016

	Very Important	Quite Important	Not Important
Customer Satisfaction	91.1 %	6.2 %	2.7 %
Service Level (% answered within a time)	70.0 %	24.3 %	5.7 %
Quality Scores	68.4 %	27.1 %	4.5 %
First Contact Resolution (FCR)	65.4 %	28.1 %	6.5 %
Agent Satisfaction	48.4 %	43.6 %	8.0 %
Adherence	37.6 %	50.8 %	11.6 %
Customer Effort	35.8 %	46.4 %	17.8 %
Forecast Accuracy	33.4 %	44.3 %	22.3 %
Average Handling Time (AHT)	31.8 %	43.2 %	25.0 %
NetPromoter Score	29.6 %	28.4 %	42.0 %
Sales Volume	29.1 %	21.8 %	49.1 %
Shrinkage	28.5 %	42.1 %	29.4 %
NetEasy Score	11.4 %	28.1 %	60.5 %

2015

	Very Important	Quite Important	Not Important
Customer Satisfaction	95.5 %	4.2 %	0.3 %
First Contact Resolution (FCR)	77.3 %	19.4 %	3.3 %
Quality Scores	72.5 %	22.6 %	4.9 %
Service Level (% answered within a time)	70.0 %	26.4 %	3.6 %
Agent Satisfaction	65.0 %	29.1 %	5.9 %
Adherence	51.8 %	33.0 %	15.2 %
Average Handling Time (AHT)	46.0 %	37.5 %	16.5 %
Customer Effort	39.2 %	37.4 %	23.4 %
Forecast Accuracy	38.7 %	41.1 %	20.2 %
Shrinkage	35.5 %	36.4 %	28.1 %
Sales Volume	34.3 %	20.1 %	45.6 %
NetPromoter Score	32.6 %	27.8 %	39.6 %
NetEasy Score	12.8 %	27.6 %	59.6 %

Since 2015, Average Handling Time (AHT) has dropped by almost a third in people viewing it as a “very important” metric, falling from 46.0% to 31.8%. In addition, there were also major declines in the same category for First Contact Resolution (FCR) and Adherence, which decreased by 11.9% and 14.2%, respectively.

However, Customer Effort has remained relatively stable, as despite a slight drop in the percentage of people viewing it as a “very important” metric, fewer people view it as “not important”, compared to 2015. In the past year, the figure of those who categorise Customer Effort as “not important” has decreased by 5.6%, to 17.8%.

Quality Scores remain a fundamental metric

Staying near the forefront of the most commonly used metrics in the contact centre are Quality Scores. A lower percentage of those surveyed believed the metric to be “not important” than they did in 2015.

Quality Scores provide an overview of the overall caller experience, looking at the conversations that advisors are having on their phone calls and scoring them accordingly.

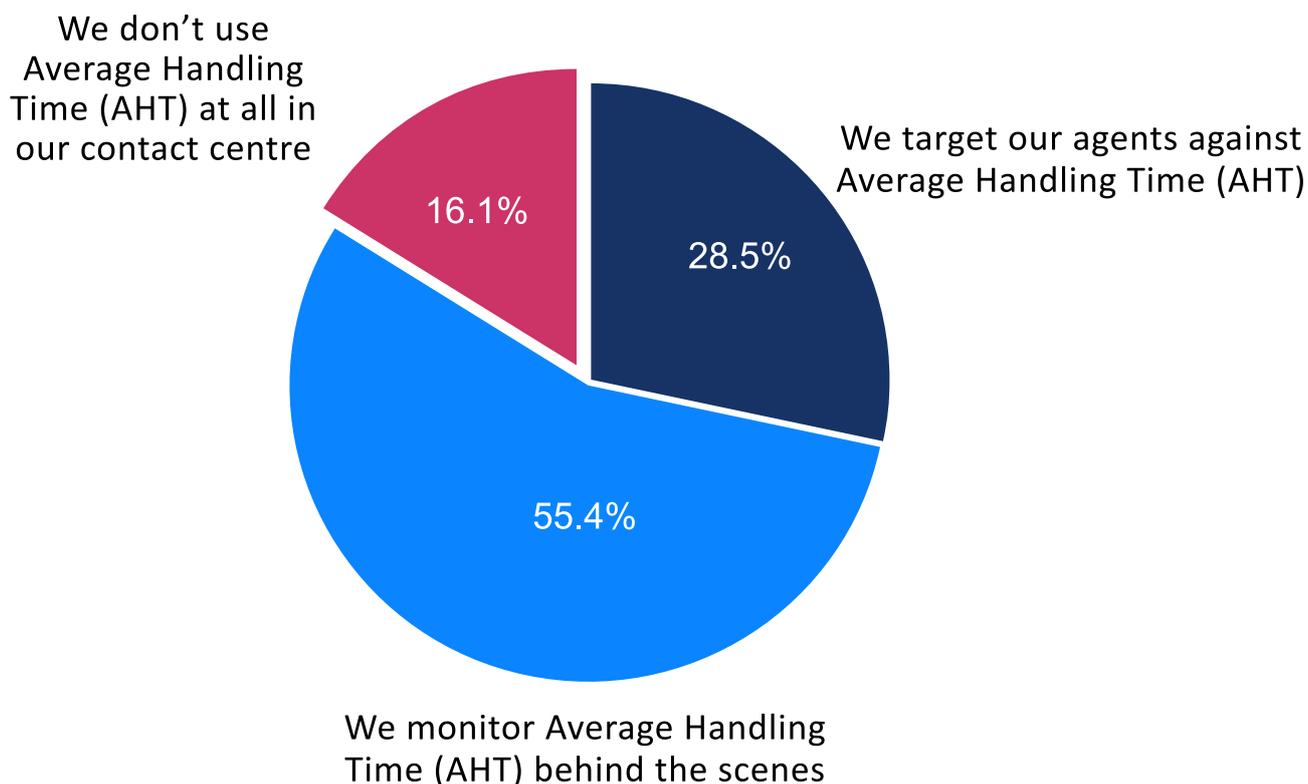
The ability of this metric to accurately pinpoint proficiencies in advisor performance, provide development feedback and track progress cannot be equalled by any of the other metrics presented. So, until a better alternative is uncovered, most contact centres will continue to utilise this measure.

How are you using Average Handling Time (AHT) in your contact centre?

The majority of contact centres still monitor AHT behind the scenes

As the last graphic suggested, AHT is becoming less important as a metric in the call centre. However, over 55% of contact centres still monitor it behind the scenes.

How are you using Average Handling Time (AHT) in your contact centre?



The benefit of tracking AHT is clear, as your contact centre could handle more calls with the same number of staff. So, you are maximising profitability by measuring productivity and efficiency.

Yet, as discussed below, this number is decreasing, and many businesses have now stopped targeting agents against it, with some dropping it altogether.

Over 16% of contact centre do not use AHT

The chart above showcases how 16.1% of contact centres do not employ AHT as a metric and highlights how the clear majority (71.5%) do not target agents against it.

This is because contact centre managers are starting to question whether measuring AHT truly benefits customer service.

For more information on how measuring AHT can negatively affect customer service, [click here](#).

Which CRM system do you use?

Lesser-known CRM systems are emerging

CRM systems that we did not include as an individual option and categorised as “other” in the 2016 survey rose from 17.2% to 31.3% in the past year.

Which CRM system do you use?

	2016	2015
In house developed system	30.3 %	43.1 %
Salesforce	10.4 %	9.7 %
Oracle/Right Now	7.3 %	7.4 %
SAP	6.7 %	8.4 %
Microsoft CRM Dynamics	5.5 %	11.0 %
Zendesk	3.4 %	0.5 %
Freshdesk	1.5 %	-
IBM	1.2 %	1.0 %
Sage CRM	0.9 %	0.5 %
Netsuite	0.6 %	-
Sugar CRM	0.3 %	0.7 %
Zoho	0.3 %	0.5 %
Infusionsoft	0.3 %	-
ACT	0.0 %	-
SalesLogix	0.0 %	-
Other	31.3 %	17.2 %

This countered the fall in the number of companies that have adopted in-house systems, which dropped from 43.1% to 30.3%. Also, as noted in the Executive Summary, the percentage of businesses that employ better-established CRM system options, such as Oracle/Right Now, SAP and Microsoft CRM Dynamics, fell considerably.

The lesser-established CRM systems that many of the survey’s participants said they had implemented included Avaya, Seibel and Lagen.

Salesforce CRM usage rises by almost a tenth in one year

According to our survey, the one well-established CRM system that clearly bucks the trend noted above is Salesforce CRM, which is now implemented in 10.4% of contact centres. This is up from 9.7%, which was the recorded figure in 2015.

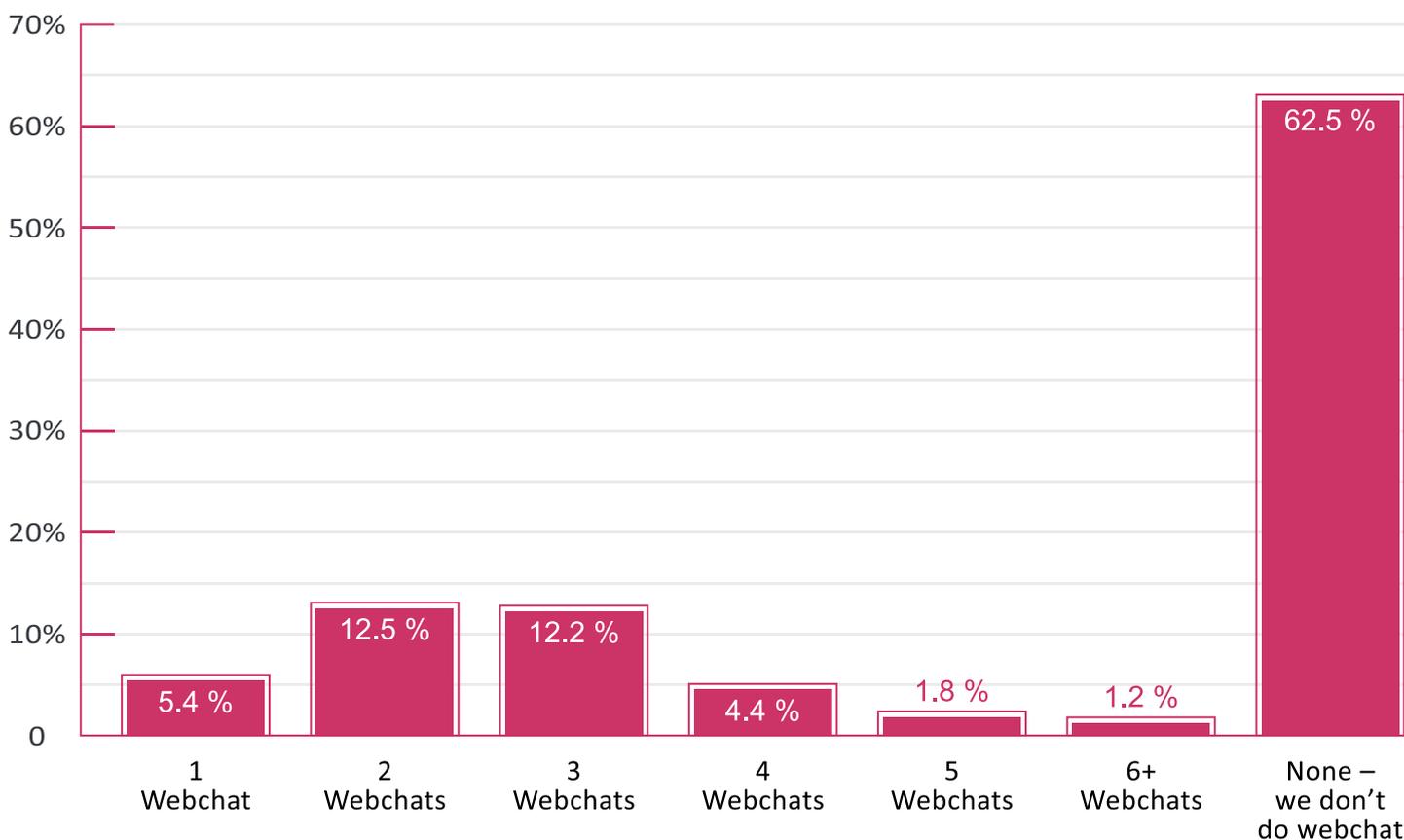
A lesser-known example that has also been introduced into more contact centres in the past year is IBM, as its usage has increased from 1.0% in 2015, to 1.2% in this year’s findings.

How many webchats do your advisors handle at the same time?

Over 60% of contact centres still do not use webchat

As the graphic below suggests, the greater percentage (62.5%) of contact centres still do not use webchat compared to those that do.

How many webchats do your agents handle at the same time?



This was not unforeseen, given the gradual decline of webchat over the past two years, as evident in the “What is your mix of contact channels?” section.

However, webchat can still be a valuable tool in the contact centre and could be even more so, if you follow the recommendations in our article: [“21 Top Tips For Using Webchat in the Contact Centre”](#).

On webchat, can one advisor speak to more than three people at the same time? Apparently not!

This survey has seemingly revealed the notion that “webchats generally take twice as long as phone calls, but can take up to three customers” to be a myth.

Taking the results from the graph above, the modal average of webchats that your advisors handle at the same time is in fact two, and the weighted average is 2.7.

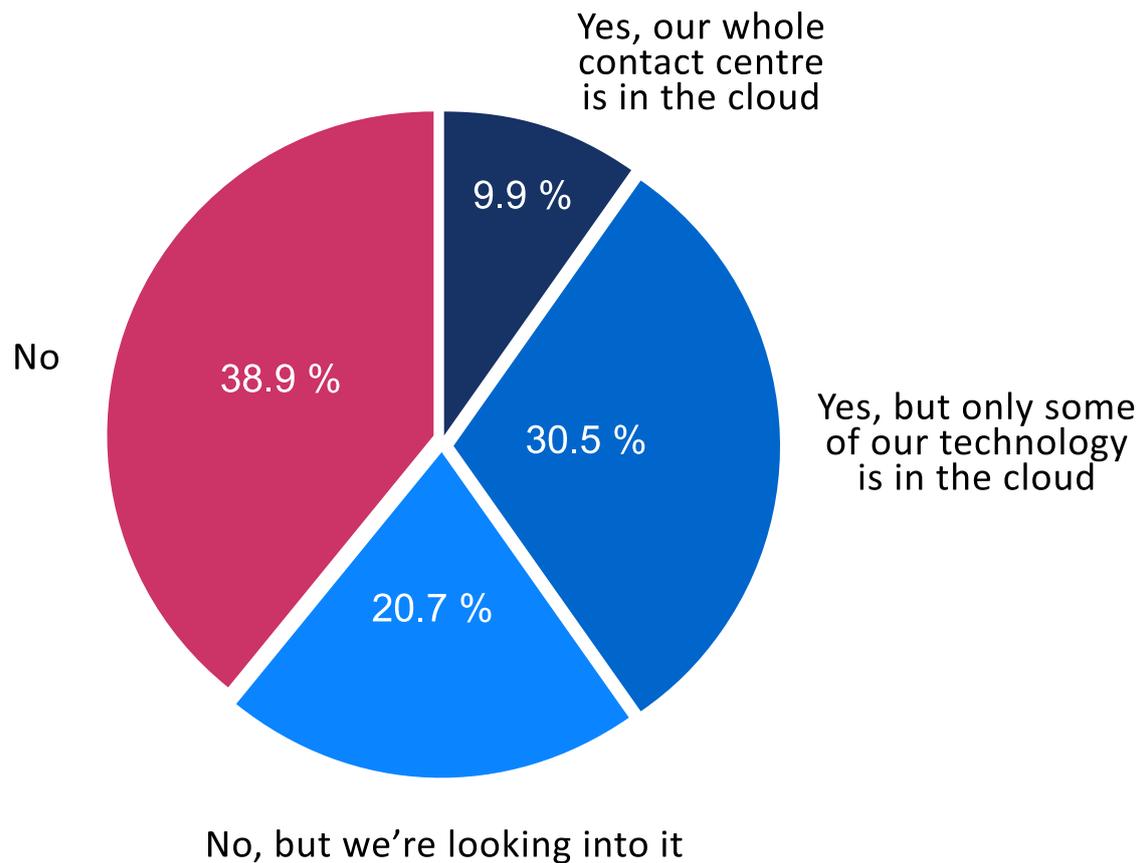
This suggests that the only tangible benefits that webchats can bring to most companies is in offering customers more communication choices, not reducing AHT.

Are you using cloud technology in your contact centre?

Almost 60% of contact centres have not yet installed cloud technology

If you add together the figures taken from the chart below of contact centres that answered “No” and “No, but we’re looking into it”, you will discover that 59.6% still do not employ cloud technology.

Are you using cloud technology in your contact centre?



This is despite cloud technology allowing contact centre applications to automatically update, meaning that advisors will always have access to the latest software features. This delivers a greater scope for home-working and makes centres better equipped to deal with unforeseen circumstances.

However, these findings could reflect difficulties in data convergence, data protection and a cultural resistance from within.

Less than a quarter of those with cloud technology apply it to the whole contact centre

Even though 40.4% of contact centres have installed cloud technology, only 9.9% of those surveyed apply it to the whole of the contact centre.

The main reason for this is that many contact centre processes use older on-site programs that were purchased some time ago. So, why fix a whole system if it's not broken? Also, if advisors show a preference for a program that is not managed by cloud technology, why force them to go against their wishes?

Are you using gamification in your contact centre?

Nearly three-quarters of contact centres are not using gamification

Data from the graphic below indicates that 72.2% of those surveyed do not use gamification in their contact centre.

Are you using gamification in your contact centre?

We are currently partnered with a gamification company	2.7 %
We have purchased gamification software that logs points	2.1 %
We play games and host competitions – keeping track of points using white boards and pens	9.3 %
We play games and host competitions – keeping track of points manually on excel	13.7 %
We don't have any form of gamification in our contact centre	72.2 %

This is surprising given the strong use of Quality Scores as a metric, because adding gamification to the process of scoring advisors for their contribution to the overall caller experience allows you to recognise and reward advisors for their hard work.

Yet, the findings above suggest that call centres have been slow to adopt gamification.

Very few contact centres purchase gamification software that logs points

Just 2.1% of contact centres are using gamification software that logs points, and only a further 2.7% are partnered with a gamification company.

This perhaps indicates that there is not yet a clear business case to justify the cost of the program.

Unfortunately, with budget being the main barrier that prevents call centre managers from building their dream workplace (as noted in the Executive Summary), gamification is seemingly not yet being seen as delivering benefit or viewed as cost efficient.

What technology do you have in your contact centre?

(Multiple answers were allowed during this poll, so the total does not add up to 100%.)

Process Automation is high on the wish list of many

Whilst only slightly over a third of companies are currently using Process Automation in the contact centre, an additional third of those surveyed are queueing up to utilise the technology, according to the table below.

What technology do you have in your contact centre?

	Have	On Wish List	Don't Have
Headsets	98.5 %	0.9 %	0.6 %
ACD / Call Routing	90.0 %	4.5 %	5.4 %
Call Recording	85.8 %	7.9 %	6.3 %
Performance Management / Quality Monitoring	82.3 %	12.9 %	4.8 %
IVR	79.5 %	8.4 %	12.1 %
Wallboards	71.6 %	11.0 %	17.4 %
Knowledge Base	68.6 %	23.5 %	7.9 %
Voice of the Customer/ Customer Survey	59.8 %	26.6 %	13.6 %
Call Scripting	48.3 %	15.4 %	36.3 %
Workforce Management Software	46.9 %	25.0 %	28.1 %
Process Automation	36.3 %	33.4 %	30.3 %
Call Back from Queue Solution	31.4 %	27.7 %	40.9 %
Single Queue across All Channels	24.1 %	22.8 %	53.1 %
Desktop Consolidation	22.3 %	26.3 %	51.4 %
Predictive Dialler	22.0 %	16.4 %	61.6 %
Speech Analytics	9.2 %	31.1 %	59.7 %
Voice Biometrics	5.0 %	24.8 %	70.2 %

This keen response could be down to evolving functions of some Process Automation systems, which can assist the contact centre with client interactions, as well as helping with data integration and response triggering.

The technology can also help to implement desktop automation, speed up data movement and improve workflow.

Less than half of contact centres now use call scripting

Figures from this survey show that only 48.3% of contact centres use call scripting software, perhaps indicating that the principle is becoming outdated.

Unfortunately, rigid use of scripting can make your customer service sound insincere, cause a decline in your customer retention rates and limit an advisor's ability to respond to customer queries.

Over 70% of contact centres are unconvinced about voice biometrics

More than 70% of contact centres "Don't have" voice biometrics and have not placed it "On the Wish List".

The low usage of voice biometrics, which uses a customer's voice to create a "fingerprint" unique to that voice, is most probably due to its requirement for an individual to enrol or provide an initial voiceprint to enable the authentication going forward.

As stated in [An Introduction to... Voice Biometrics](#), studies have found that when these customers are given the choice, the take-up for voice biometrics is low, which impacts the return on investment for the technology.

How frequently do you review the performance of your technology solutions?

Over a fifth of contact centres only review technology when something breaks down

Unexpectedly, 23.1% of those who took the survey revealed that they only review technology in their contact centre when a solution no longer functions.

This figure is surprisingly high, given that if an important technology fails without any notice, contact centres would most likely have to draft in advisors or perhaps even shut down operations whilst searching for a resolution. This scenario could have serious implications for the business.

Less than half of contact centres regularly review their technology

46.3% of recipients regularly review their solutions' performance to see if they could benefit from an upgrade, as seen below.

How frequently do you review the performance of your technology solutions?

Our solutions are in the cloud and are automatically updated	8.7 %
We regularly review our solutions' performance to see if they could benefit from an upgrade	46.3 %
Only when we have recovered our Return on Investment (ROI)	8.1 %
Only when a solution no longer functions	23.1 %
Only when customers complain in large numbers	4.2 %
We've never reviewed the performance of our technology offerings	9.6 %

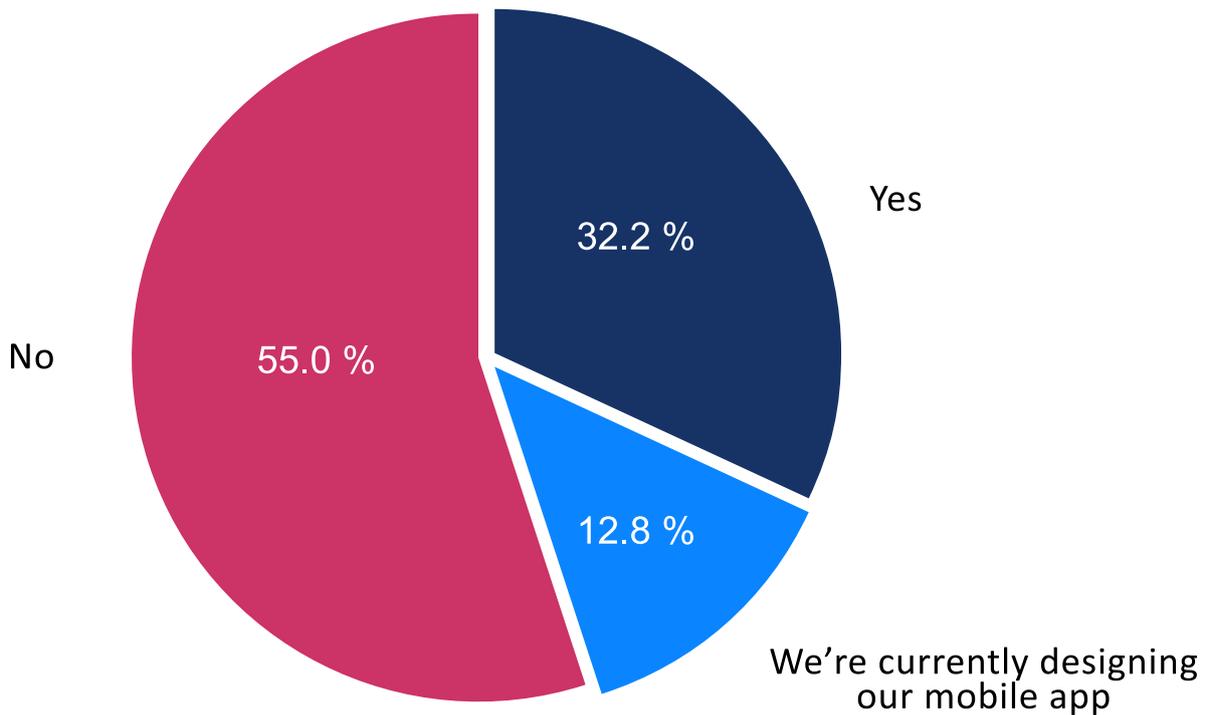
By doing so, these businesses can rejuvenate the performance of their call centres, modify technology use to complement a change in business direction and look for new ways to assist contact centre staff.

Can your customers contact you through a mobile app?

Most contact centres have no plans for mobile applications

The majority of those surveyed, 55.0%, revealed that they currently do not use mobile applications that have direct contact with the contact centre and have no plans to implement them.

Can your customers contact you through a mobile app?



Whilst mobile applications may provide customers with another method to communicate with your brand, simplify the customer experience and offer all-hours customer service, there are a number of drawbacks that are seemingly deterring companies from using them.

These drawbacks could include the cost and time to develop applications, customers expecting too much from the technology, and customers needing to download the app.

For more information on mobile phone customer service apps, [click here](#).

How frequently do you ask customers to complete a post-contact survey?

Over a quarter of contact centres risk survey fatigue

According to the chart below, 27.6% of contact centres survey their customers after every interaction, meaning that they actively risk survey fatigue.

How frequently do you ask customers to complete a post-contact survey?

After every contact	27.6 %
After every (second/ third/ fourth) contact	13.2 %
We ask each customer to complete a post-contact survey around once a quarter	11.4 %
We only send out post-contact surveys at certain points across the year	20.2 %
We never ask customers for post-contact feedback	30.5 %

Survey fatigue, the feeling that is evoked in customers after being increasingly pestered for feedback, is dangerous because it could create the opinion that you never act on customer feedback.

However, if frequent surveys are important for your business, make sure that you keep them short, ask insightful questions and demonstrate to customers that their feedback is being taken on board. This should help lessen survey fatigue.

Other options that are not included in the chart

In the comments section provided with this question in the survey, we received several remarks regarding other methods that companies use to know when to survey a customer.

Those included surveying a random 10%, only after certain call types, or after every email but not every phone call.

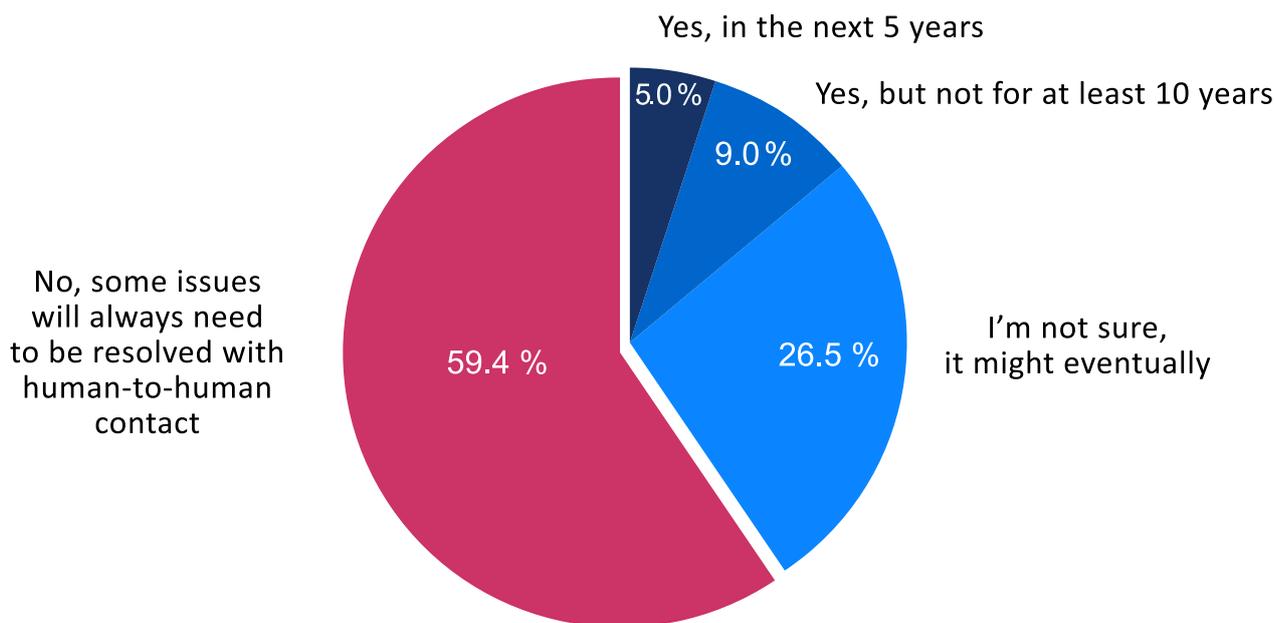
By only surveying by email, you will decrease AHT but most probably lower response rates, so a combination of both phone and email surveys is recommended when surveying.

Do you think chat bots (Artificial Intelligence) will ever take over the contact centre completely?

Most contact centre managers believe that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will never rule their roost

59.4% of those surveyed believe that some issues in their workplace will always need to be resolved with human-to-human contact.

Do you think Chat bots (Artificial Intelligence) will ever take over the contact centre completely?



Whilst this may be the case, AI is certainly changing the way we communicate, and the first wave of virtual agent applications, such as Facebook and Google, have already influenced the contact centre.

Yet, for the foreseeable future, there should always be an option to connect with an advisor if people want to talk to a real person or if the chat bot gets confused.

To discover how AI will change the future of the contact centre industry, [click here!](#)

What barriers stop you from running your dream contact centre?

(Multiple answers were allowed during this poll, so the total does not add up to 100%.)

Need for new technology and IT issues are holding back contact centres

As the table below indicates, 46.4% of call centres believe that IT issues are proving to be a hindrance in allowing them to reach their potential, with a further 42.0% desiring new technology.

What barriers stop you from running your dream contact centre?

	2016	2015
Budget	80.0 %	67.4 %
IT issues	46.4 %	44.2 %
Need new technology	42.0 %	39.9 %
Conflicting business priorities	39.7 %	31.3 %
Technology not joined up	35.9 %	35.4 %
Management buy-in	35.9 %	28.1 %
Not being aligned with other departments	32.5 %	25.0 %
Broken processes	31.5 %	27.9 %
Not enough staff	28.5 %	24.5 %
Lack of time/human resources	27.8 %	24.5 %
Lack of skills/it's too complicated for our existing team	20.3 %	15.0 %
Floor space	19.0 %	21.8 %
Agent buy-in	14.2 %	16.5 %
Dealing with new channels (e.g. webchat)	10.5 %	10.7 %
Wrong agent targets	10.2 %	8.6 %
Writing a business case	9.8 %	7.9 %

These figures have increased slightly since 2015, when 44.2% and 39.9% of participants considered IT issues and the need for new technology to be barriers.

This is not surprising given the sharp increase of call centres that have been deterred from evolving due to budget concerns.

Staff shortages rise sharply since 2015

The number of contact centres that have reported that they do not have the correct number of staff to function to their maximum potential has risen abruptly in the past year.

In fact, the figure has risen by nearly a seventh since 2015's survey, moving from 24.5% to 28.5%.

However, you can now ensure that you have the correct number of staff at any given time in your contact centre by using our version of the [Erlang Calculator](#).

If there was one thing that you could improve in your contact centre what would it be?

As expected, many replies to the question above included topics such as wanting to have a bigger budget, new technology and more multiskilled advisors.

However, there were many other suggestions, which included:

Refining customer service

- "Hire reps who have an affinity for technology and passion for customer service"
- "More self-serve options for customers"
- "More focus on the customer and less on the process"
- "Better integration of different incoming media"

Improving company interaction

- "Communication between levels of management"
- "Communication between teams/departments"

Assisting staff

- "Make more time for training and 1-2-1s and staff motivation"
- "Introduce more work-related incentives and flexible work time"
- "Wallboard functionality on the consultant desktops"
- "Call centre design (working space, relax room, common areas)"

Other

- "Churn – salary is low in comparison to others in area with no scope for change"
- "Unified customer satisfaction survey across all channels"

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.

Sell more. Serve better. Grow faster.

For more information visit www.newvoicemedia.com

