

**NATIONAL
SUPPORT
NETWORK**

BALANCING EFFICIENCY WITH EMPATHY IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

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WHY NOW?

PRESSURE, COMPLEXITY, AND CUSTOMER EXPECTATION



Polycrisis, vulnerability = higher emotional load & complexity in contacts across sectors



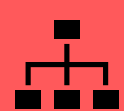
Rising demand and tighter budgets for operations



Customers expect to feel heard and to be helped effectively



Losing balance undermines trust and creates repeat demand



POLL: Where is your organisation weighted today: empathy, efficiency, varies by team, or unclear?

WHAT IS EMPATHY, ANYWAY?

Pity

Feeling sorry for someone
at a distance

Sympathy

Feeling concern for
someone without fully
sharing their state

Empathy

Seeking to understand
someone's state/feeling
with them

Compassion

Sensitivity to suffering with
a commitment to alleviate
and prevent it

I hear your
frustration, you
did the right thing
to get in touch

I understand this
really matters

You're through to
the right place for
help

What I'll do right away
is...

EXPERIENCE OUTWEIGHS SERVICE IN MEMORY

They didn't care
that I was upset.

They said it's resolved,
but I'm not sure if I trust
that.

I heard 'sorry' but it
sounded fake.

I don't know what
happens next.



**WHAT WE
DO**

**HOW IT
FEELS**

They got it done,
but I felt like a
number.

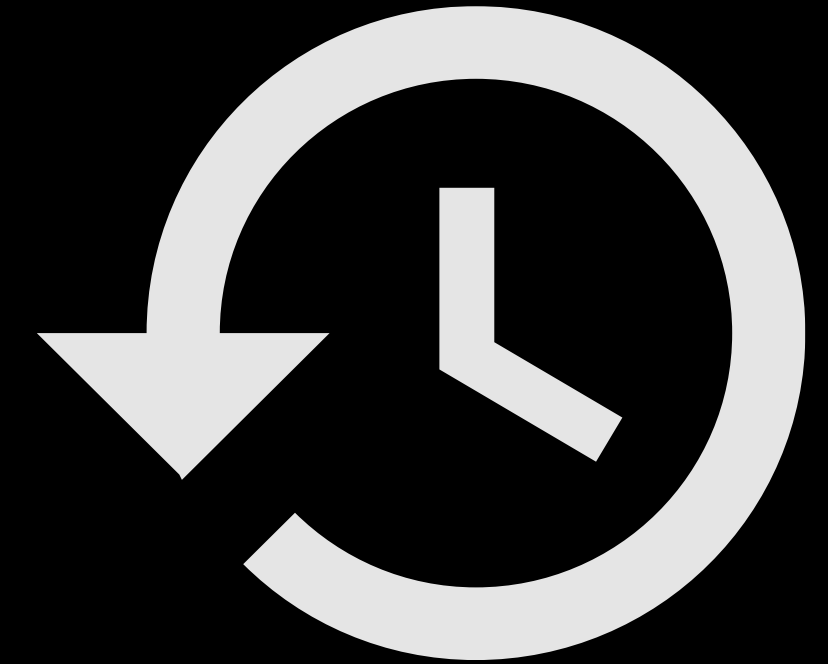
I felt rushed off
the call.

I hope it's sorted
but I don't feel
reassured.

I should probably call back
to check.

...Meh.

Bad experiences erase efficiency gains



- 78% feel frustrated when dealing with customer services - losing a combined 1.52 billion hours annually (New Britain)
- 82% of UK customers have had to repeat their issue more than once (Vodafone)
- Economic value erodes when experience falls short: missed revenue and market share outweigh gains from efficiency or cost-cutting (KPMG)
- Customers increasingly cite “genuine care and understanding” as a top driver of satisfaction (UKCSI)
- Emotional loyalty leads to retention, advocacy, and higher spend (Forrester)
- Around 52% of customers will switch brands after just one negative experience, and 86% will leave after two (Forrester)

THE TELLS OF IMBALANCE



“They were quick -
but didn’t listen.”



“ They were nice-
but didn’t help.”



“I didn’t feel safe
to say what I
needed.”

OPERATIONAL TRAPS THAT TIP THE BALANCE

TRAPS

- Targets that punish care
- Rules that don't flex for real life
- Tools that speed the wrong parts of the journey
- Tech that disempowers or blocks
- Broken knowledge management

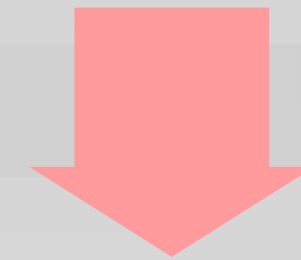
CONSEQUENCES

- Avoidable repeat contact
- Unresolved issues
- Low trust, low disclosure
- Wasted time
- Customer & colleague frustration
- Inconsistent outcomes
- Commercial, compliance and reputational risk

HUMAN TRAPS THAT TIP THE BALANCE

TRAPS

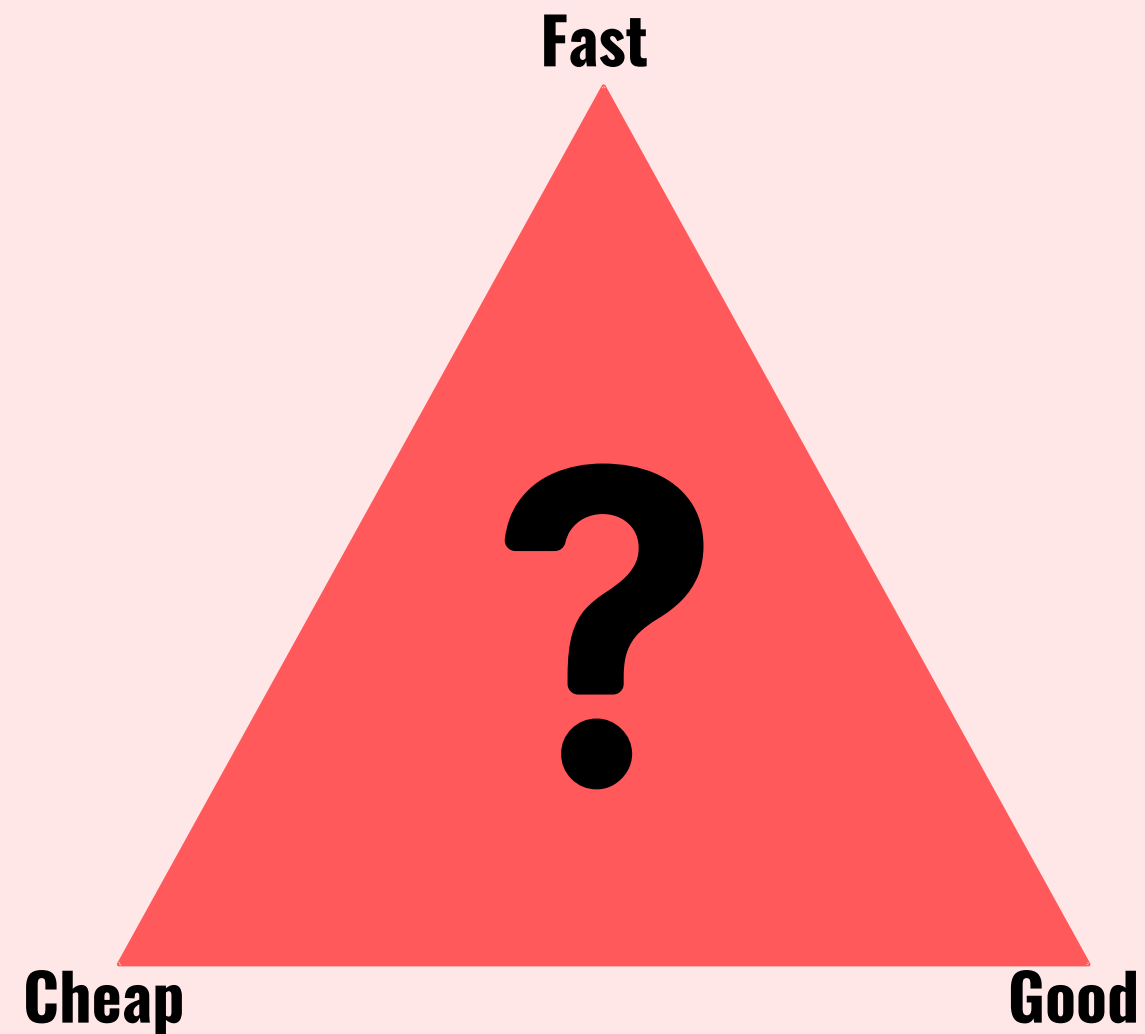
- Empathy overload without tools, recovery time, or space
- No clear boundaries to contain difficult conversations
- Training and coaching deprioritised
- Advisors' own vulnerability unacknowledged
- Ignoring that colleague experience drives customer experience



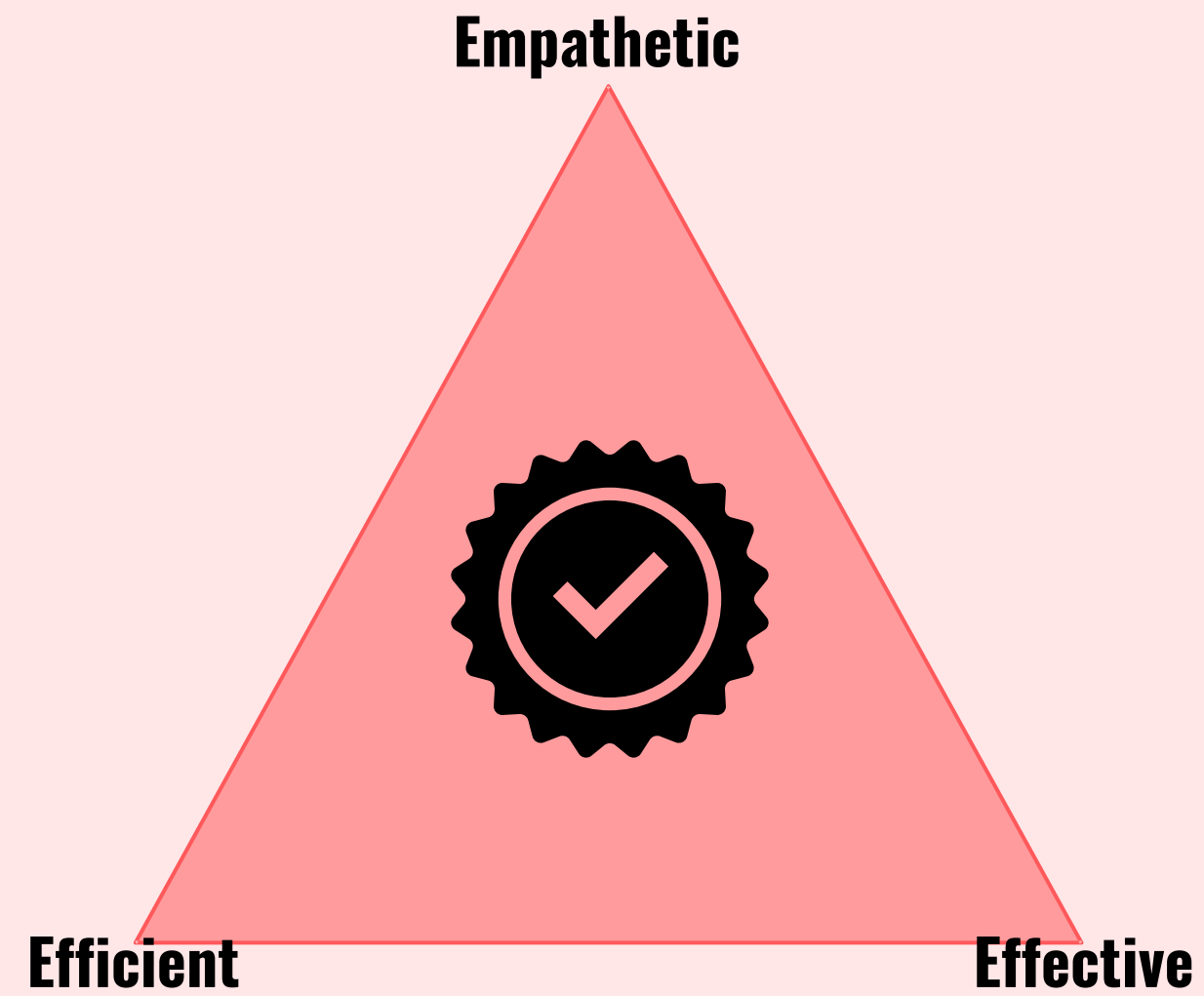
CONSEQUENCES

- Emotional fatigue and burnout risk
- Irritability and detachment
- Transactional service, cookie-cutter responses
- Drained energy,
- Higher colleague churn

FAST/CHEAP/GOOD: PICK ANY TWO



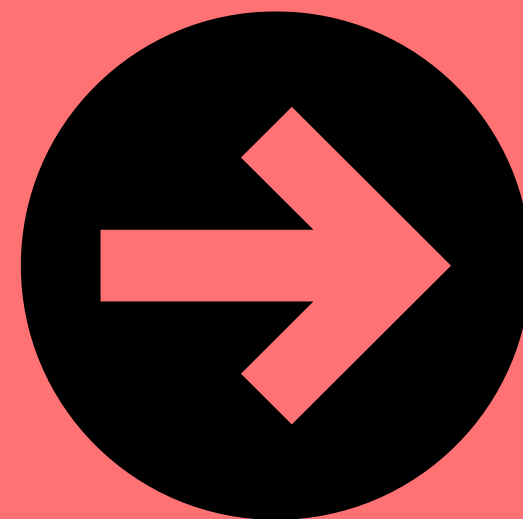
BEYOND THE TRADE-OFF



EMPATHY AND EFFICIENCY TOGETHER FUEL GROWTH

- Efficiency without empathy | solved but not trusted | repeat demand, churn
- Empathy without efficiency | caring but unresolved | fatigue, cost, burnout
- Together → loyalty, growth, sustainable service

Feel it



Fix it

DON'T SCRIPT EMPATHY OPERATIONALISE COMPASSION.



NOTICE

Spot cues in tone, silence, or behaviour. Connect with empathy, don't absorb



NAME

Acknowledge difficulty clearly. Use empathy markers that feel natural to you, not scripts



CONTAIN

Hold the space with clear boundaries. Keep calm, don't carry. Pause or escalate if needed



ACT

Compassion = empathy in motion. Solve, signpost, provide options & info

SUPPORTIVE STRUCTURES

Recovery



Measurement



Tech Assist



Debrief



QUALITY & DEVELOPMENT THAT VALUE EMPATHY

WHAT WE CHECK/COACH FOR

Empathy: acknowledge and reassure from the start

Clarity: issue captured accurately, clear information for customer

Progression: move forward with information, resolution and signposting if needed

Closure: customer knows we care and what happens next

WHAT IT DRIVES IN METRICS THAT MATTER

Customer: first empathetic resolution; disclosure handled well

Colleague: energy intact after the contact

Commercial: fewer repeat contacts; uptake of support services, improved outcomes



TECH THAT FREES HUMANS TO CARE

Emotion-aware routing - so the right calls reach the right people first

Real-time nudges - help advisors adjust tone, timing and content in the moment

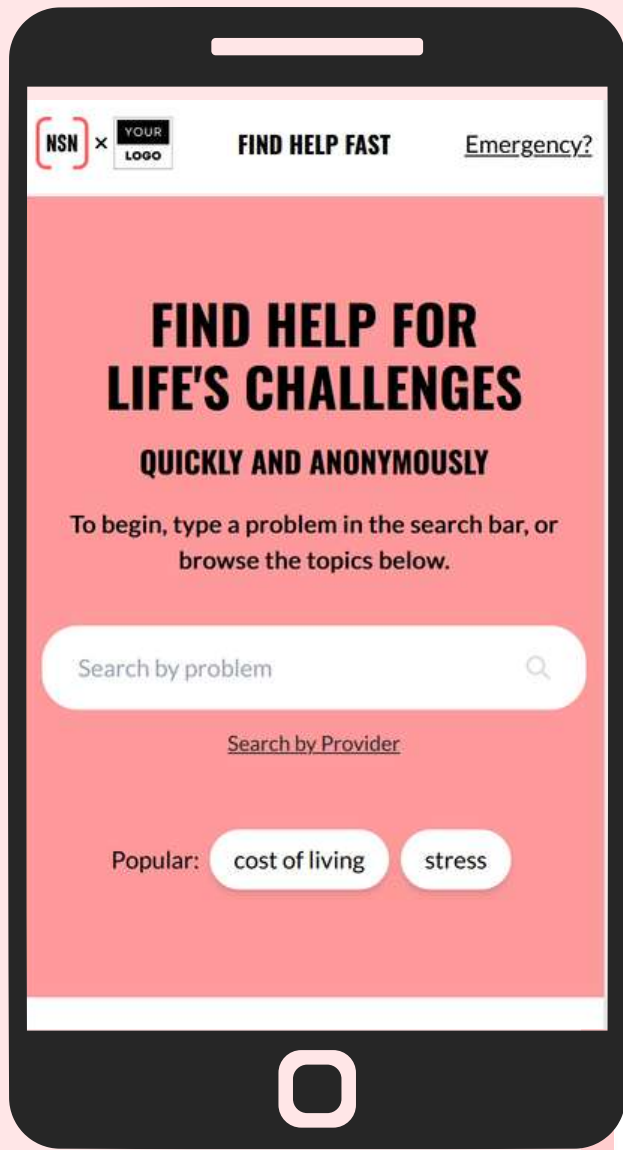
Active signposting - makes support easier to take up

Auto-summary - after-call work minimised lowers cognitive load

Conversational data - fuel for insights & coaching, not a stick for control

SIGNPOSTING THAT ENABLES EMPATHY AND EFFICIENCY

NATIONAL SUPPORT NETWORK



SUPPORT TOPICS

Mental health
You are not alone. Easily find support for yourself or a loved one

Health
Help for common issues like cancer, obesity and heart problems

Money
Financial support, bills, benefits, debt and money advice

Relationships
Domestic abuse, relationship advice, dating and family

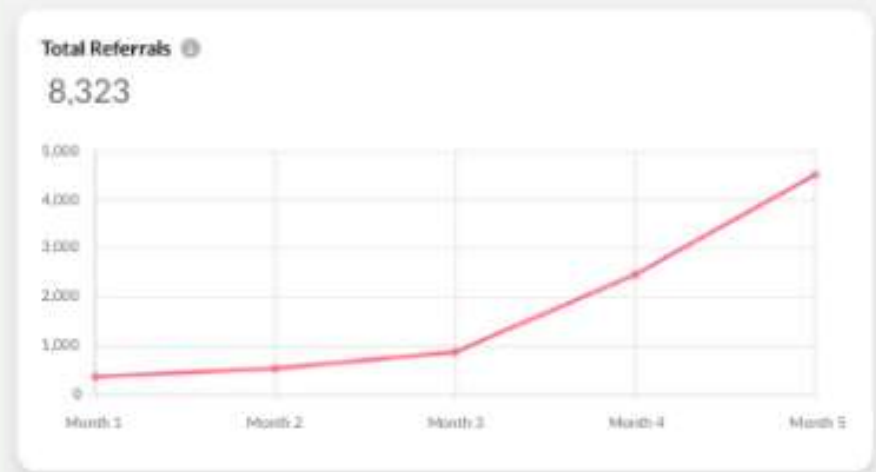
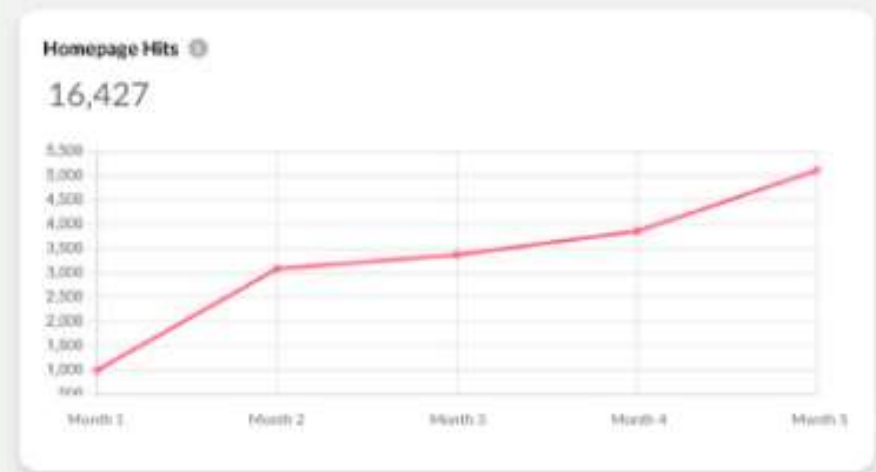
Family
Starting a family, parenting, SEND, baby to teen support

Work
Job and career advice, common work problems, business support

Housing
Housing advice, home emergencies and homeless help

Bereavement
Emotional support, help with funerals, how to support others

[Show All](#)



- ### Top Categories
- Category
- Mental health resources (general)
 - Domestic abuse support (general)
 - Trouble sleeping
 - Feeling stressed
 - Emergency financial support
 - Small business support
 - Help with food costs

+ SPECIALIST TRAINING IN VULNERABILITY SUPPORT AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



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LEAD WITH EMPATHY SO EFFICIENCY CAN LAND: FEEL FIRST, THEN FIX

Empathy \neq delay

Efficiency \neq coldness

Empathy tunes us in to the right response: enables efficiency, builds trust, prevents escalation

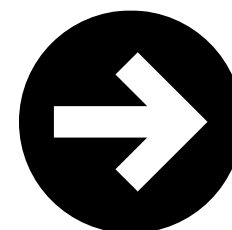
Efficiency reduces waste, not care

Customers reward trust and care, not transactions

Supported and empowered teams perform more effectively

Design for efficiency + Deliver with empathy + Measure effectiveness
= Fuel growth and protect people

Feel it



Fix it