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Improving customer service

THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT GUIDE 2011

How to make sure you are getting the most out of your contact centre.



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Contributions from

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- Michele Rowan, MD, Customer Contact Strategies
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1. Introduction

Welcome back to this updated guide, where we take a fresh look at Performance Management, which in our world encompasses more than internal productivity. In order to excel, we also need to monitor and drive employee engagement as well as the contact centre's impact on customer behaviour; they all drive each other and ultimately, bottom line.

After 10 years of analysing customer service operations, we have seen that performance management's (PM) prime reason for existing is to ensure that management understand the contact centre's effectiveness as well as its efficiency. In this guide, we take a closer look at how to measure and achieve this, how different areas drive each other, how to improve internal as well as external status and finally, how to align contact centre targets to the organisation's overall goals.

We believe our industry needs to take a more holistic approach to contact centre management and that there are inherent dangers in examining different areas in isolation. This guide has been designed to try to help you adopt this holistic approach. In the process, we will dispel some commonly heard myths and provide insights from some of the UK's leading practitioners. We will also share some often counter-intuitive findings from our own benchmarking surveys. Over the last 10 years, we have analysed top performers in over 900 contact centre reviews, carried out hundreds upon thousands of customer satisfaction surveys and agent interviews and last but definitely not least, proven correlations between the three areas resulting in industry first research.

After reading this guide you will:

- Know what the most relevant areas are to measure, manage and why.
- Have an updated insight into how these areas drive each other.
- Be able to drive and prove your impact on customer loyalty and thus bottom line.



The team at Bright UK &
Mats Rennstam, MD

"Our industry needs to take a more holistic approach to contact centre management"

2. Why Performance Management

2.1 Easy versus relevant

If forced to single out one area where people have gone wrong in the past we would point to measuring what is easy to measure and not necessarily what is relevant to measure. A classic example of this is the 80/20 target (80% of calls answered in 20 seconds). Very few centres reach this mark (the average in 2010 was 59% of calls answered within 20 seconds) and yet it persists driven, we believe, by senior management's desire to have one number to focus their efforts on. More importantly most centres genuinely believe that achievement of this target is key to delivering customer satisfaction. However when measuring what impact 30 seconds shorter hold time has, we see that it hardly affects CSAT at all. Just a small dip in FCR (First Contact Resolution) or employee engagement however sends customer satisfaction plummeting.

"You get what you measure"

This year we see the same thing happening with NPS (Net Promoter Score) and CES (Customer Effort Score). The 'one ring to rule them all' idea is a nice one but unfortunately we need to monitor many more to get the full picture.

Before setting targets for any operational metrics, the strategy needs to be clear; what is our overall purpose and what metrics will drive this strategy? It is the combination of not choosing KPIs that drive strategy and a lack of data on how those KPIs affect each other that makes many centres work very hard yet only become efficient, not effective. This is enforced by using those KPIs in appraisals. If the measures aren't driving the right targets we are driving the wrong things; you get what you measure.

We often quote a bad joke about a man who comes across a friend on his knees under a pub lamppost. When asked what he was doing there he replies he is looking for his car keys that he lost down the road. "Then why are you looking here?" The friend looks up perplexed and says, "Because it's light here of course."

Not only is measuring what is easy to get out of our ACDs often wrong, but what we spontaneously think is our job (e.g. driving customer satisfaction as opposed to behaviour) might not actually be right; at least not in terms of the strategy needed to maximise the contact centre's contribution to the organisation's objectives.

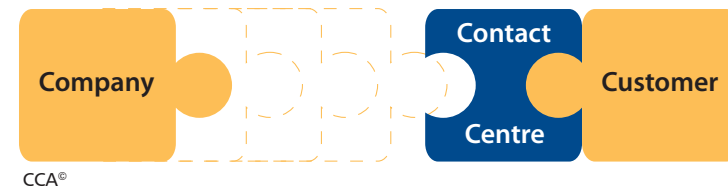


2.2 Building internal and external status

As we will go on to show, there are some KPIs that are not just useful for measuring your centre's performance, but are also great tools to increase your status within the organisation and even improve our industry's reputation.

Internal status

In order to get the necessary funds to maintain and invest in your centre you need to improve your internal equity and market yourself effectively inside the organisation. You can achieve this by using your KPIs to prove your value to the different stakeholders in your company and speak their language. What metrics would a Financial Director be interested in (your targets for becoming more cost efficient?), the Marketing Director (how you measure and drive customer satisfaction and behaviour?) and the CEO (how you can feed back information to all other departments supporting them in their development?.)



We all sit on a fantastic amount of information that doesn't make its way to the rest of the organisation (read an example of this in Donna Fluss' book "The real-time contact centre.") If we succeed in both providing and proving value to the rest of the organisation we will receive more attention, increased budgets and start a positive cycle.

Who knows where the money is?

Times are tight. Whether in the Boardroom or at our kitchen table we need to make sound and prudent decisions on our finances. So who really understands this for customer management operations? We analyse, we benchmark, we measure – all important - yet too often we do not 'know'. The rapid evolution that we now face – the dynamicism of channels, the growth and impact of social media, means we are faced with tough questions of priorities and how to optimise performance. And the only sensible way to deal with this is to understand the money. What is the real impact on value, on costs and revenues? What are the financial implications of different risks, different investments?

Therefore we need an acceptance that the financial focus should always take precedence; embrace the discipline and work with it, and the financial controllers of the business, in a constructive way. We need to speak the language of the Boardroom to win their support and understanding; and we need to connect the measures and costs in our business with the outcomes that matter – to understand how value is affected and what our role as customer champions is in driving this value. Difficult sometimes – the data is not always easy to pin down. But only when we have can short-termism, cost obsessiveness and lack of support at Board level be put in broader context and managed accordingly. Painful for some. Enlightening for most. So have a go and define the change you would like to see – in hard, irrefutable terms. Show them the money.

Mike Havard, Director, Ember Services. www.emberservices.com

External status

It is alarming to see several sectors' attrition figures getting worse. This is one area where we are all in the same boat and need to act together to make a change. When reviewing centres we see a vast number of engaged and ambitious staff really wanting to do a great job. However, how do they feel when they know their family and friends read horror stories (often based on flawed statistics) about call centre sweat shops, or watch TV commercials with battery hens?

We need to get better at proudly marketing our industry to the outside world and communicating fact not fiction. For example, if we exclude the absolute worst performers (highest result in Bright Index 2010 was four weeks average short-term absence per agent), neither attrition nor absence is worse at in-house centres than other departments in contact centres. The average centre is actually performing significantly better now than two years ago, the volume and complexity of calls have however increased at an even faster rate.

Key points

- Measure what drives strategy not what is easy to measure
- Measure wider: not just efficiency but effectiveness
- Use the results to increase internal and external status
- Limit the number of KPIs, select a few and focus on these

3. The Most Relevant Things to Measure and How

3.1 Performance

Performance, when defined as productivity, is the most common area of measurement. Most centres measure the same things; abandonment rate, hold time, calls per agent, calls per day etc. As previously mentioned, there is no rule book for choosing your KPIs because different companies have different strategies. The list to the right shows what the best performers are measuring, however it is only when measuring employee and customer satisfaction in parallel that they get the full advantage. For example, call wait time only becomes useful as a measure when you also measure the customer satisfaction in relation to the same calls. That way you can see by how much you are able to reduce your call wait time and become more cost efficient. A simple example of the difference between standard performance measuring and a fuller holistic way of measuring.



Another good example is Average Handling Time (AHT). Yes this could be a good tactical metric for managing individuals, for instance when you want to see how you can improve sales and FCR, but it shouldn't be a KPI because the AHT in itself doesn't drive strategy; it drives the KPI. When we break down agents' AHT versus sales and FCR figures we actually have not seen any correlation, different agents have different ways of reaching higher FCR and conversion rates.

Most common performance metrics amongst high performing contact centres:



Comments on a selection of metrics:

Self service: At the same time as you hear friends complain about endless IVR menus, in our benchmarking we see that the top performing centres have a high percentage of self-service calls. Customers like self-service when it is set up correctly and there is an option to speak to a live agent.

Hold time: Contrary to what you may read in the media or remember from your own experiences, the average hold time is approximately 1.5 minutes. The problem is that during a year, this fluctuates significantly and it's the unfortunate bad experiences that customers remember.

Agents per team leader: Researching differences amongst the top performers we analysed 900 reviews and saw that the centres with 8-15 agents per team leader had significantly better results on all of the key metrics. Above 15 agents per team leader the results dropped dramatically but under eight the results stayed the same.

Utilisation level: The spread of outcome here is symptomatic with the wide range of performance levels in our industry. In 2010 the lowest utilisation level (incoming calls and talk time compared to the resources assigned to handle them) in the Bright Index benchmark was 25% and the highest 132%. In the first case, the centre is extremely over-staffed, in the latter the agents start every day knowing that they will hardly be able to handle half of the calls coming in. Both are equally demotivating and neither cost-efficient.

A recommended level is between 70 - 80%. Above this we start seeing negative effects on absence and attrition. However don't mistake this metric for average talk time per agent per day which rarely goes over 60%.

3.2 Employee satisfaction and engagement

Over the last decade, the industry has experienced extreme movements in both attitude to, and performance by, staff and correlations between the two have often been counter intuitive.

We now see a more stable focus on both people metrics such as number of training days, agent vs. team leader ratio etc., as well as an increased interest in employee engagement and customer satisfaction as opposed to only looking at productivity metrics. This started about five years ago and has not stagnated despite cost cutting programs during the recession. Companies are starting to realise that staff engagement drive both CSAT and productivity, as well as taking a wider view of what actually drives that performance and therefore bottom line.

When shown proof of direct links between engagement and productivity, organisations start to listen. A positive and proactive agent will take new targets on board and try and reach them, have less absence, solve problems themselves and in turn increase FCR, etc. They have to be given the mandate to be a proactive problem solver though, which is often not the case.

The simplest way of making organisations (whose centres sell products) pay attention to the power of engagement, is to show the correlation with conversion rates; the link is clear.

So, what does our baseline really look like?

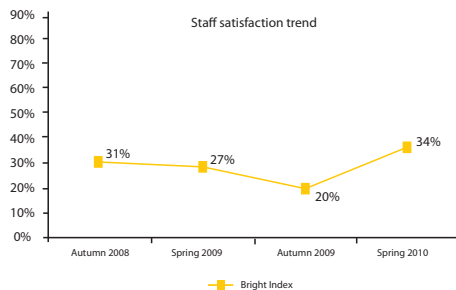
Let us start with looking at general satisfaction and motivation amongst staff. The graph to the right shows the percentage of employees rating their satisfaction with their contact centre employer as "very satisfied"; 34% in 2010. The reasons for the previously downward trend varied from company to company but the area 'Support & Processes' was, and still is, by far the area that still gets the most negative feedback across the board. Over 20% say that the technology in place actually hinders them more than helps them in their work.

The trend was also due to a mind-set fuelled by media and commercials portraying call centres as the dark coalmines they rarely are.

The third reason for results not being better is a lack of appropriate staff - 15% say they do not enjoy talking to or helping customers and should frankly never have been hired.

As mentioned, we saw an improvement during 2010 that we mainly put down to actually listening to agents more and acting on the findings.

The most relevant employee evaluation areas are shown in the box to the right. The key metric here is engagement but to be able to drive it we need to measure the main drivers of engagement and motivation; achievement, recognition and development.



Employee satisfaction

- Recognition
- Achievement
- Support
- Engagement
- Knowledge
- Development

3.3 Customer satisfaction & behaviour

Common CSAT Measures

- General satisfaction
- First contact resolution
- Perceived engagement
- Perceived competence
- Sales or other action

Most companies already measure customer satisfaction on an enterprise level but the problem with this is that it is not accountable. Asking customers what they feel when they hear your brand name will not help us drive change in the contact centre. Instead you need to be able to link the feedback to a recent call to your centre and break it down to agent or minimum team level.

360° feedback to agents

When doing instant post call surveys and feeding back their own results to agents individually, we saw metrics like FCR and customer satisfaction increase by 30% for CSAT clients in 2010. There is an element of competitiveness behind this but mainly it comes from the agent actually seeing that they are making a difference for the first time. They can also experiment with the way they handle customers and see what effect that has on their scores. For instance if they make an effort to sound happier and more upbeat on calls, that translates into better customer satisfaction scores and they are more likely to repeat that behaviour. Thus, sharing the results down to the agent level helps create a self-developing and learning organisation.

"breakdown results and achieve 30% automatic CSAT increase"

How to kill the Goose: Golden Rules of Customer Feedback

The basic issue for any customer feedback tool is the customer's motivation to respond. We are asking customers to do something for us, which involves them in costs (time, effort, phone bill, thinking about the questions we have asked, giving us information.) The powerful dynamics of exchange and reciprocity say that if we want customers to do this, and go on doing this, then there has to be some payback to the customer for their gift giving. But at the moment the exchange is very one-sided. The customer does all of the giving, organisations do the receiving, but what do they offer in return? What can we do, and what must we do to tackle these issues? First of all we have to recognise that in exchange we have to offer them something equally valuable, and that the more personally relevant, immediate and tangible this is the better.

Read the continued article at www.brightindex.co.uk under Research. Dr. Guy Fielding is a Chartered Psychologist specialising in interpersonal and organisational communication.

As mentioned before it is dangerous to focus on one metric only. Additional measures like NPS and CES are good to monitor (instead of just looking at customer satisfaction on its own). However these new metrics cannot be used in isolation either.

Asking about general satisfaction is often a more useful tool for identifying problems somewhere else in the organisation. If all your performance metrics are good, especially if they hold up when benchmarked, then you know that it is the product or another area of the business that is at fault. However, this type of insight must be taken further and fed back to the appropriate department. Make sure you allow the customer to leave audio or free text verbatim which paints a clearer picture.

One of the major bonuses with breaking down customer satisfaction to team and agent level is finding the most effective agents, as opposed to just efficient ones, and then being able to replicate their behaviour.

Jane Hext, Independent Consultant, previously Customer Services Director at Vodafone comments on using automatic customer satisfaction surveys to drive change

Ensuring that performance management effectively motivates people to put customers first should be at the heart of transforming a company culture. I have seen tremendous benefits from running daily real-time customer satisfaction surveys. The volume however needs to be sufficient for all advisors and teams to receive direct feedback from customers that they have spoken to themselves, which can then be used to coach their skills development.

The feedback and engagement from advisors is overwhelmingly positive because they see managers prioritising customer feedback far above traditional contact centre productivity metrics.

The trick for all of us is trying to find a win-win performance management system. I have found that staff feel motivated and eager to know how customers felt about their conversation. We gain valuable insight from the aggregated outcomes of the surveys, and of course our customers appreciate that we care, as evidenced by the higher than normal response rate and volunteering of information.

3.4 Correlations and Balance

By measuring the three key areas above simultaneously, a new world will open up. As soon as you see a movement in one area, you can go back to the other two to see what caused it as they all drive each other.



In addition, if you also breakdown the results to a team or agent level you will have a very powerful tool to help you:

- Find your service level breaking point, i.e. when do customers start to get dissatisfied? Is it after 30secs, 1 minute, 2 minutes? The cross sector average is 1.5 minutes but, you need to find your own.
- Finding the most effective agents and not just the most efficient. Who are the agents that are both productive and drive CSAT? Find them and try to replicate their behaviour.
- Finding other correlations - what drives sales, FCR, customer satisfaction etc?

4. Benchmarking



4.1 Why benchmark?

Measuring and following up the relevant KPIs will tell you how much better or worse you are doing since the last time you measured. It will not however tell you whether the resultant figure is good or bad. This can only come from external benchmarking; comparing you to peers and other centres out there.

Very often you will be surprised by the findings. It is easy to misjudge our own performance and think that we are worse at many more things than we actually are or, that we excel when compared to peers. A benchmarking exercise helps you prioritise and spend time, budget and resources where they are really needed.

Benchmarking against your own sector is of course of biggest initial interest - they have the same challenges as you do. Don't disregard the total average though; not many bank customers call banks other than their own. They will however call their Telecom / Utility / Health service's centres and that's where they will form their overall opinion on what good customer service is!

Anne Marie Forsyth, Chief Executive CCA, comments on looking beyond traditional measurements.

For many, measuring customer satisfaction is an essential part of an organisation's day to day management. Who can accept unhappy customers in a world of 'Watchdog' media coverage, Web 2.0 feedback and CEO demands that the 'customer comes first'? And how can service be improved if we don't measure what's broken?

For the sceptics, loyalty or repeat spend are more important measures. Satisfied customers are known to defect, so some advocate the use of the Net Promoter Score. Others say CRM systems will (finally) capture the information needed to understand individual customer relationships with organisations; satisfaction will be one of many measures.

The CCA Industry Council debate on this topic focused on the need to identify the role and purpose of customer satisfaction measurement. Trying to improve customer satisfaction to the level of delight may be inappropriate if price is the key driver in the marketplace.

Learn more at www.cca.org.uk.
CCA - the professional body for customer contact

4.2 Methodologies

Different types of benchmarking and what to look out for

What are the different types of services on offer, what differentiates them and what are the most important criteria to consider when choosing one?

Benchmarking has been getting a bad name in the UK due to sometimes lax approaches resulting in unreliable data and non-comparable results. Benchmarking can play a crucial role in helping us raise our game but it must follow a few simple but imperative rules. Above all it must be:

Reliable

Rigorous quality assurance of the data entered must be in place. Take a simple thing like cost per call. Some centres measure salaries only, others add on rent, IT costs, tea/coffee, training, recruiting etc. The same applies to FCR, Absence, Training, the list goes on. There must be one set way of calculating the KPIs in order to be able to compare apples with apples.

Applicable

The participants should be benchmarked against peers with the same challenges as themselves. If competitors are of a different size or have different opening hours, this needs to be factored in as well.

Relevant

The benchmarking should of course measure what is relevant for both the customer and for the centre. It is, for example, strange how few centres measure first contact resolution. Yet this is one of the most important KPIs for the customer.

A few comments on methodology:

- Off the shelf reports can be a great low cost starting point but they will not give you bespoke recommendations and you can't choose your peer group.
- Management consultancy firms will give you great models and structured recommendations. However, they are very expensive and often based on only a handful of companies' data.
- Mystery shopping is great for monitoring how agents sound and behave but it is a 'narrow' tool. It doesn't tell you why the results are what they are. Companies also often carry out too few calls. If a centre handles 1 million calls per year, then for example 500 mystery calls (0.05% of calls) will not be statistically secure nor will it allow you to break it down to make it accountable in order to drive change.

Key points - Benchmarking

- Only through external references do you know how good or bad your results really are
- Benchmark efficiency KPIs against peers and quality KPIs against everyone
- Make sure the benchmarking supplier are comparing apples with apples and have a big enough sample

How Bright does it

For our own performance benchmarking, internal data is gathered together with a consultant which takes one to two days. This is crucial to make sure that we base the metrics on exactly the same definitions from participant to participant. The next step is finding the right peers to compare with, which we do through a mix of criteria. For example sector, size and opening hours factors in, but above all; type of contacts that the centre handles. Even in the same sector, different centres and teams' challenges can vary significantly.

The data gathered is based upon a 6-month period (on average a million contacts) which is enough to avoid temporary fluctuations but frequent enough to use the findings as a steering tool operationally. For employee engagement and customer satisfaction benchmarking, we use our survey tool 'Bright Navigator' (read more about this at the end of the guide.)

Introducing

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NAVIGATOR™

NEW

Increase customer satisfaction by 30%

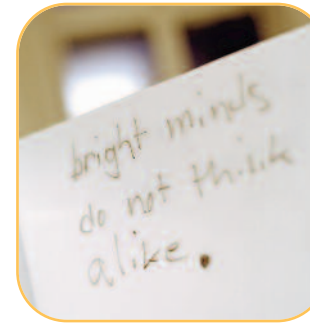
All-in-one performance management

- Customer experience measuring
- Performance monitoring
- Agent engagement tracking

Real-time, online and benchmarked!



5. Managing Outsourcing Relationships



All of the points for managing in-house performance apply equally to outsourced operations. The difference is that you might not get access to all the data, or you might not be interested in the metrics behind the scenes, but you should be. The closer and more transparent partnership you can form the more you will get out of your outsourced solution. The more effective the outsourcer's operation is, the more cost efficient it will be for you.

The technology solutions available today in performance management will let you have access to all of the key three areas, real-time, even though you are not on site.

If you are an outsourcer, you should also embrace benchmarking. It will allow you to show the client that you are outperforming in-house centres on costs (most are) and doing well on metrics like FCR which is often a client's biggest worry. When making comparisons (for example cost per call) it is extremely important however that the benchmarking supplier knows what they are doing and compares like-for-like. When paying an outsourcer everything is included, but most in-house centres do not factor in things like finance, utilities, IT costs or even telephony because it is paid for centrally.

You will also find that proposals where you have included independent benchmarking in the SLAs will be a lot more successful due to the client feeling more secure.

Key points – Outsourcing

- Apply the same rules for performance management as for an in-house centre
- Form a transparent long-term relationship
- Benchmark the outsourcer's performance for you against peers' in-house operations
- Make certain you are comparing apples with apples

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6. Managing Home Working Agents



More and more companies are starting pilot schemes to test out home working. This is driven by the potential advantages of lower costs, wider recruitment area, lower attrition etc. There are however several traps to look out for which we covered in last year's guide. Most commonly discussed are health and safety rules and security around consumer data. Another issue is how you manage these agents and keep them motivated.

Monitoring the metrics we have discussed is however not a problem due to new technology solutions.

There are also a number of often overlooked softer benefits which Michele Rowan points out below. Michele is former VP of Performance Management for Hilton Hotels. One of her key accomplishments was the strategic development and implementation of Hilton's remote agent expansion in Europe and in the US.

The utilisation of remote agents is on a dramatic rise after 10 years, with great momentum driven from the arrival of truly locked-down security. Add to that new pricing models with minimal cost-of-entry with cloud solutions, as well as facilities and energy cost reductions. Frost & Sullivan forecasts the home agent population will grow by 30% per annum.

But what about the soft(er) benefits? The challenge is that the benefits here are understandably a little more difficult to quantify. The success stories so far tend to be traded in workshops, conferences and more socially (vs. published) because blue-chip companies are just starting to be able to effectively measure the results. But it's coming to the surface, and we'll see a lot of it published this year.

Based on my experience with the Hilton@Home program, and over 150 companies I have worked with in 2009 and 2010, here are the top six key attributes and organisational benefits of remote agents:

- 1. Higher education:** Companies are reporting that 80% of at-home agents have some college, vs. 20% of in-house agents. The impact to the organisation is that aptitude for learning is likely higher. Online learning reduces training time (vs. classroom) by 20-30%, and with higher education, we can continue migrating our training online, with confidence.
- 2. Rich work experience, including management:** 40% of home agents have some management experience compared to 20% of in-house agents. The general feedback is that this deep work experience is returning higher customer satisfaction scores and better selling/recovery performance.

- 3. Maturity:** The average age of remote agents is 38 vs. 22 for in-house agents. We can add improved attendance, productivity and retention to the benefits listed above and attribute that to mature team members.

- 4. Highly effective at engagement:** This is an extreme win for customer contacts. Remote agents (who are hired possessing these attributes) engage more effectively with our customers.

- 5. Socially independent:** This mature, independent group doesn't want or need a lot of face time. In fact, they would prefer as little as possible. They need fast access to good sources for troubleshooting live issues and they want to share their experiences with team members, but that's it. What that means to our organisations is simply less scheduled training and coaching time, and less help-desk support.

- 6. Strong problem solving skills:** The net result of the experience, maturity and education of this group will reduce handle time for help issues, and will ultimately reduce required resources for help issues.

A critical point not to be overlooked: people with these attributes largely will not work in our brick-and-mortar operations, because of the stigma associated with call centre positions. However, they will work for us at home, as long as we hire part-time, enable flexible, agent-built scheduling, and provide ample resources and support.

Michele Rowan, www.customercontactstrategies.com

7. Technology

Like everyone else, we at Bright are excited to see what will happen with speech analytics, social media, voice biometrics etc. over the next few years. Service desks deal with up to 70% of calls regarding forgotten passwords, which with voice biometrics (staff are identified by their voice and password is reset) can be erased, leaving the staff to handle more complex queries.

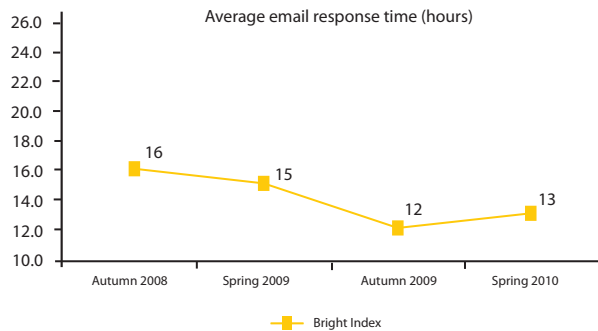
"It's not about going 'back to basics', rather 'forward to basics' as we never got it right the first time around."



A US company is having great success with personality matching based on a combination of voice analytics and demographic analysis. A customer calling in is immediately categorised based on their voice and routed to the agent most likely to have good rapport with the client. However, what we are hoping for above everything else, is that more centres will begin to use their existing technology properly. It is not about going 'back to basics', rather 'forward to basics' as we didn't ever get it right the first time around. For example:

- Finally getting multi-channel right: the average time for responding to an email is still almost over a day, a situation an increasing number of customers just won't accept.
- Measuring the relevant things in systems: stop measuring default metrics in ACDs.
- Evaluating systems through agents: a majority of them think that the systems in place hinder rather than help them do their job; ask them why!
- Call cause measuring: A majority of centres still do not have a structured way of measuring why customers are calling (and as a result cannot do root cause analysis.)
- Self-service: Is it good or evil? Well consumers continue to get irate by badly scripted IVR solutions. However, when we looked at the top 25% CSAT performers in the Bright Index, they had a significantly higher level of self-service. Their solutions were well-designed though and always had the option to speak to a live agent.

- CRM and CLI: it has been around forever yet how many times have we all had to repeat information we have given twice already?

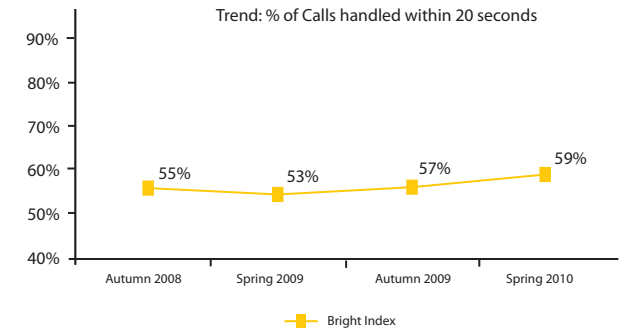


8. Sample of Trends & Findings 2010

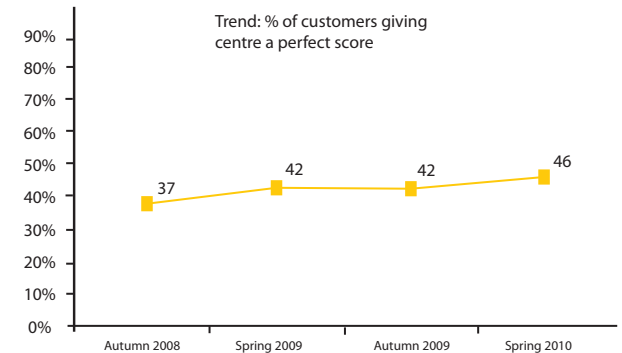
Centres are generally improving from year to year but still struggle because of the increase in call volume and complexity. However there are many misconceptions around our most common KPIs which can be misleading. Let's take a look at a few trends, all based on the near 100 participants in the Bright Index 2010.

8.1 Quality trends

We touched earlier on the fact that the service level 80/20 target originates from system suppliers default reporting settings, and not what customers' demands or companies prefer to deliver.



When we measure service level in parallel with customer satisfaction, we see a cross sector breaking point at 90 seconds, meaning that customers start scoring their general satisfaction low first after 90 seconds.



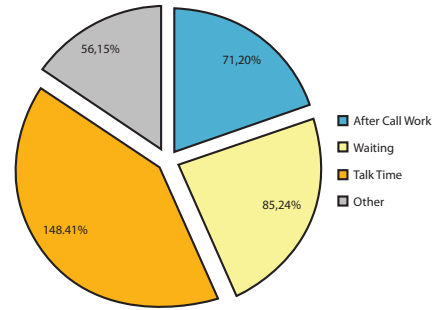
Staff engagement is something that we have proven has a much greater impact on customer satisfaction than average hold time. Over the last two years we have seen an increased focus on people. We see this as a key contributor to the higher percentage of customers giving top scores for their interaction with our benchmarking participants.

8.2 Efficiency trends

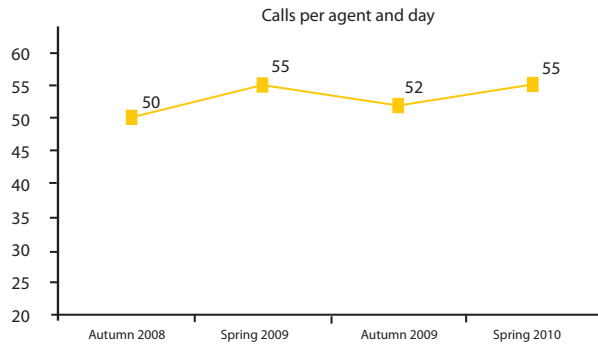
Utilisation remains something most centres struggle with. Many work with several systems increasing their 'after work time', others have processes that slow things down or problems with engagement resulting in low productivity.

Even top performers only get 60% talk time per agent and day. The trick is to make sure that time is being spent handling calls that need to be handled by staff. Let the simple queries be handled by IVR and Web solutions, and feedback incidents and problems to the relevant department in a structured way. This will minimise repeat calls about the same issue.

Chart shows a breakdown of an average work day for a Telephony FTE. It is based on total time offered to customers and number of FTEs working with calls.



Graph shows number of calls per agent and day on average, remaining stable at around 50 handled calls.

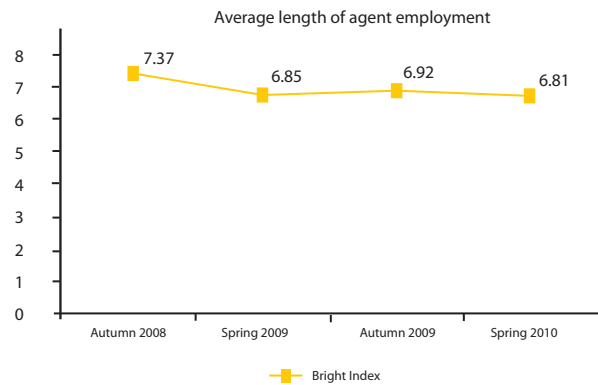


N.B. this is a cross sector average. This metric varies enormously between different types of centres.

Attrition is another area where our industry often suffers from the media grouping in-house with outsourced centres.

Outsourcers often have shorter projects and will thus automatically have a fluctuating demand for staff.

If we analyse in-house centres only, they actually have a very long average length of employment. Attrition varies enormously though from centre to centre, in fact as much as between 0% and 100%.



These are just a selection of the over 60 industry KPIs we have been measuring since 2000. Note that industry averages are just that; there are vast differences between sectors (types of centres, queries, size etc). If you are interested in your specific sector or a specific KPI, you will find our contact details on the back page. Or, find out how you compare against everyone else.

9. About Bright

How do we do it?

Our solutions are deliberately presented last in this guide, reflecting what we believe is a key factor to the success behind them. They are born out of 10 years of experience of what drives performance in a contact centre and not the other way around; trying to mould centre's performance management after what the systems can do instead of what is relevant. Relevance is key to all of our products, actionable is second. All results are broken down to a level that drives the KPI and thus can be improved (as opposed to being a 'nice to have'). The third is real-time. Performance and quality insights need to be immediate so that you can do something about the findings early. Reliable and easy-to-use is a given and so is no IT integration, making implementation easier and quicker.

What do we do?

After over 900 reviews of contact centres and service desks, Bright has seen that three areas in particular need to be monitored continually - internal performance, employee engagement and customer satisfaction. These drive each other as well as directly affecting your bottom line! To be able to drive change however, it is not enough to simply measure internally, it is only when you compare externally that you see how well you are really doing. The Bright service suite includes all three areas of measuring as well as benchmarking and recommendations.



- **Performance benchmarking**

Gives companies the most reliable, relevant analysis and benchmarking of internal contact centre performance available. Every year 100 participants get 50 internal KPIs analysed and benchmarked by a senior consultant as well as receive a GAP analysis and recommendations on how to improve. (Bright Index™)

- **Employee engagement measuring**

Monitors staff satisfaction, engagement and support. Not only are all areas that drive customer satisfaction measured but also the factors that affect these areas. This gives management a hands-on tool to drive change. (Bright Employee Index™)

- **Customer satisfaction measuring**

Post call automatic surveys are broken down to team and agent level. Management have access to instant results; agents see their own results creating a self developing and self learning organisation. (Bright Customer Index™)

- **Intelligent reporting**

All three modules above presented real-time in a user friendly dashboard with different levels available for managers, team leaders and agents. (Bright Navigator™)

10. Client comments



"To continue to improve our processes and customer experience we need to move away from traditional call centre measures and benchmark our performance against measures that will provide insight into where we are not adding value and where we are outperforming within our sector."

Manager for contact centre strategy.



"At ING Direct we measure customer satisfaction regularly at an organisational level but we wanted a tool that associates could use to measure their individual contribution. A tool that was simple to use and provided immediate feedback on their call. The Bright CSAT tool provided just that and results highlight what a positive impact it is having on the associates' awareness of how they directly impact the customer experience. It has been great to hear our teams talking enthusiastically about the customer experience and how they can continue to deliver and improve our great customer service."

Head of customer experience.



"It's dangerous to rely on your internal measurements of the contact centre's efficiency, quality and service levels alone. Bright Index gives us a good view of our real service levels and quality."

Contact centre manager.



"We began participating in the Bright Index to get a more holistic assessment of our performance as well as reliable benchmarking of how good we really were. Through reviewing performance metrics, employee engagement and customer satisfaction, we got a much better understanding of relevant KPIs for us. Other key outcomes were greater employee engagement, a better structure for FCR and a more holistic approach to performance management. Last but certainly not least, it contributed a major sales increase last year."

Director of Telegraph Direct.



"We are conscious of never being complacent about our performance and continually striving for better. However to truly understand how you raise your standards you need to understand your competition. By bringing our singularly measured metrics together, we are able to make changes for the better. Bright's solutions have certainly had an effect on our teams and their independent view was more valuable than expected at all levels."

Manager for contact centres.



bright. Index

THE BESPOKE BENCHMARKING OF CONTACT CENTRE PERFORMANCE

Helping you achieve best practice operational goals

- Operational benchmarking is a shortcut to the efficient development of your organisation and processes. By having access to external comparisons you get a clearer picture of your own operation's strengths and areas of improvement. Bright Index© will compare you to your peers on 60 of the most relevant metrics, helping you to prioritise time, resources and money.
- Bright has produced this leading European report since 2000. We will come back to you not only with the benchmarking report, but with a GAP analysis and recommendations as well.
- Data gathering only takes half a day to a day, and we will help you fill in your data collection form with the telephony/email, HR and Financial stats needed. The findings are presented in a mini work shop two weeks later including recommendations on how to close the gap between you and best practice, then repeated 6 months later.
- After +900 benchmarking projects, all clients have been able to save the annual fee within the first months and 100% say they would recommend participation to others.



50 KPIS REVIEWED AND BENCHMARKED SHOWING YOU BOTH PEERS' RESULTS AND OTHER SECTORS.

GAP ANALYSIS AND ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS HOW TO BECOME BEST PRACTICE.

SHARED RESEARCH FINDINGS ON LINKS BETWEEN PERFORMANCE, EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION.



ABOUT US

To optimise customer management, Bright has seen that three areas in particular need to be monitored continually: internal performance, employee engagement and customer satisfaction. We help our clients measure and improve these areas! Find out more here: www.brightindex.co.uk

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Improving customer service



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