



# The Executive Guide to Improving 6 Call Center Metrics



## Introduction

Measuring and improving call center metrics can be a pain point for executives. Your call center operates in a stressful environment where good quality metrics lead to a higher standard of customer service. This guide will help you improve 6 key call center metrics for better performance and future success.

### 1. Customer Satisfaction (C-Sat)

#### Definition:

The level of satisfaction customers have with an organization and their products and / or services.

#### How to Improve:

Your mission as a call center is to keep service costs low, while maintaining high caller satisfaction. Here are three ways your contact center can improve customer satisfaction.

#### 1. Keep Employees Happy

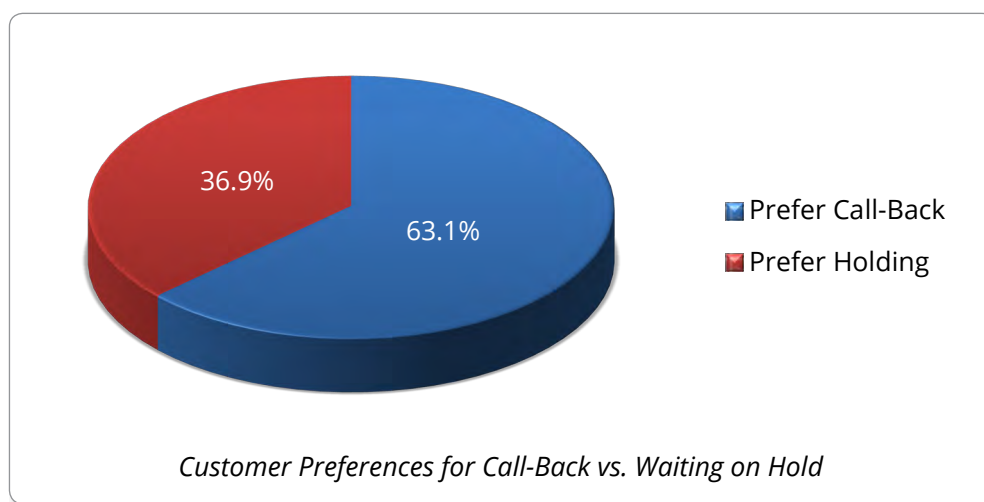
Keeping employees cheerful depends on a number of factors including: a well-developed company culture, access to user-friendly and intuitive tools & technology, and ensuring that employees have a voice inside your organization. Ultimately, engaged employees will create satisfied customers.

#### 2. Resolve Calls the First Time

If you ask customers what frustrates them the most, nearly half (42%) will say, "having to speak with multiple agents and start over every time". Resolving customer issues the first time is the single biggest way to improve customer satisfaction. Studies reveal that caller satisfaction ratings will be 5-10% lower when a second call is made for the same issue.

#### 3. Eliminate Hold Time and Use Call-Backs

Eliminating the need for customers to wait on hold not only increases customer satisfaction; it also reduces costs for call centers. Forcing callers to wait in queue drives up telco costs and, unfortunately, causes many of them to hang up and end the conversation before it even begins. In fact, 60% of customers will abandon a call after just one minute of hold time. Instead, contact centers could offer callers the option to receive a [call-back](#). According to SoftwareAdvice.com, 61% of customers prefer a call-back to waiting on hold.



## Service Level

### Definition:

Also called telephone service factor (TSF). Service level is expressed as X percentage of contacts answered in Y seconds.

### How to Improve:

Your target service level should be based on what your call center can reasonably achieve, given your staffing level and the expected call volume. So let's say you have assembled the necessary data, how exactly do you get from staffing numbers and call volume numbers to service level numbers? The answer is with the lost art of Erlang, used to determine the number of agents required to staff a call center, given a desired call volume and probability of queuing.

Many call center managers working today don't have that feel for capacity scheduling that one can only get by working directly with an Erlang tool. Fortunately, there are many easy (and free) ways to get back that feel. For example, you can experiment with an online [Erlang C calculator](#). Another option is the Excel macro you can [download here](#).

The screenshot shows the 'Westbay Traffic Calculators' application window. It has four tabs: 'Erlang B', 'Extended Erlang B', 'Erlang C', and 'Call Minutes'. The 'Erlang C' tab is active. The interface is divided into two main sections: 'Hourly figures' and 'Delay statistics'. In the 'Hourly figures' section, there are three radio buttons and input fields: 'Number of agents / operators' (34), 'Number of calls' (650), and 'Average duration of each call' (150 sec.). In the 'Delay statistics' section, there are three radio buttons and input fields: 'Probability of calls being delayed' (14 %), 'Average delay of all calls' (3 sec.), and '% of calls answered in' (94) with a corresponding input field (20 sec.). On the right side of the window, there are several buttons: 'Calculate' (highlighted in blue), 'Stop', 'Close', 'Results', and 'Help'. Below these buttons is a 'Traffic' section with two radio buttons: 'Erlangs' (selected) and 'C.C.S.'. At the bottom of the window, there is a copyright notice: '© Westbay Engineers Ltd. 1996 - 2014 - www.erlang.com'.

Remember, you can't fix what you don't measure. Armed with this tool you can begin to understand the impact of the variables on your organization, and then use it to maximize and improve the results from the ground up.

Another way to improve your service level is with a [call-back](#) option, as you can use it to smooth out spikes in call volume, diverting calls to off-peak periods when you can handle the load more readily.

## First-Call Resolution (FCR)

### *Definition:*

The percentage of calls that don't require any further agents to address the customer's reason for calling. The customer does not need to contact the organization again, nor does anyone within the contact center need to follow up.

### **How to Improve:**

Let's say a call center gets 100,000 calls per month. If the cost per call is \$10, and 30% of calls are repeat calls, the cost of the repeat calls is \$300,000 per month. A mere 10% reduction would yield a savings of \$30,000 per month or \$360,000 per year. Make the cost of a call \$25, and the annual savings would be \$900,000.



Unfortunately, there's no silver bullet to improving this metric. You need to focus on three areas: people, process, and product.

### **1. People**

In order to speed call resolution rates, be sure your agents have good listening skills, are focused on solving the right problem, and employ top-notch troubleshooting skills. They need to sound confident, anticipate related questions that callers might have, and follow-through on the commitments they make to the customer.

### **2. Process**

Sit with agents and watch them handle calls. They need to have information at their fingertips if they're going to resolve issues on the first call. That could be as simple as a binder with procedures in it or as complex as an online knowledge base.

### **3. Product**

Are you having quality issues? Is something continuing to fail time and time again? Are people calling back about the same failure issue? If so, what can you do to fix it?

Listen to the types of complaints that are driving repeat calls and examine your people, processes, and product to see what you can do to improve first call resolution.

## Employee Satisfaction (E-Sat)

### *Definition:*

Used to describe whether employees are happy and fulfilling their desires and needs at work.

### **How to Improve:**

With all the focus on customer service, some organizations miss the mark with their own employees. The number one way to keep your customers happy is to keep your employees happier! It's no surprise that keeping call center agents engaged can be a real challenge, given the repetitive nature of the job (answering an endless stream of phone calls) and the metrics-based approach used to track performance.

Happy employees also mean a lower percentage of agent churn. High turnover results in inflated call center costs and a loss of qualified agents. Simple changes in team culture and job quality can easily improve employee satisfaction.

- Perform satisfaction surveys
- Provide career development
- Deliver a well-balanced benefits plans
- Recognize employees for a job well done
- Provide work-life balance





## Average Handle Time (AHT)

### *Definition:*

The sum of average talk time plus average after-call work for a specific time period.

### **How to Improve:**

Here are the top 5 methods to help your call center improve AHT.

#### **1. Coach Your Agents – Then Coach Them Some More**

Effective coaching ensures that the skills, techniques and methods taught during training are practiced and applied during actual customer interactions.

#### **2. Use Skills-Based Routing**

Route the call based on the skills of the most qualified agent.

#### **3. Anticipate Questions**

Train your agents to anticipate questions and provide the information before the customer asks.

#### **4. Automation**

Do what you can to make things easy for the agent. Streamline processes and applications for easy navigation.

#### **5. Help Agents**

Whether it's with well-written workflows, floor walkers or the [buddy-up agent](#) approach, always aim to help the agent.



## Abandoned Calls

### Definition:

The caller hangs up before reaching an agent.

### How to Improve:

Why is the abandon rate important? It speaks directly to customer dissatisfaction and the negative impact it has on customer loyalty. A high call abandonment rate is a sure sign of caller frustration. Luckily reducing your abandon rates is proven to provide improved customer satisfaction and a better call center experience.

#### 1. Keep the Caller Informed

If hold-times are an issue, consider preparing customers by placing a message in the IVR or ACD informing them of the estimated wait time. This reduces customer's apprehension and will subsequently lower their desire to abandon the call.

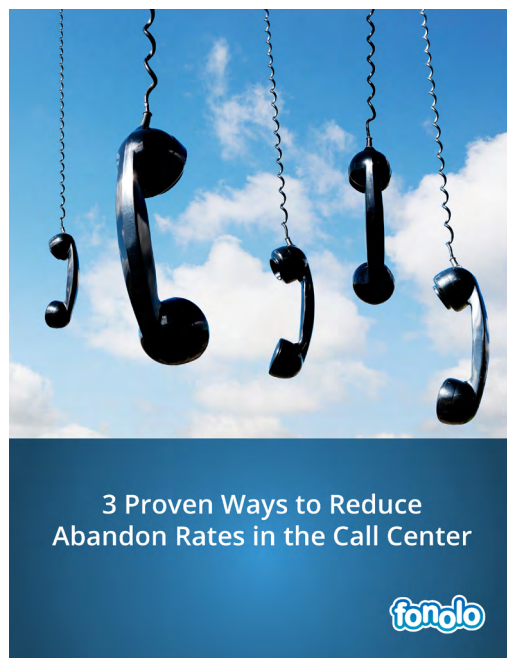
#### 2. Know Your Numbers

Call detail reports provide you with a wealth of information and insight into your calls. By knowing who abandoned a call, when they called you, and how long they waited before hanging up, you can make informed decisions on how to resolve the situation.

#### 3. Employ a Call-Back Solution

Call-back technology (otherwise known as "virtual queuing", or "replacing hold-time with a call-back") can improve the customer experience, reduce cost-per-call and lower the abandonment rate in your contact center.

For a more in depth look, read [3 Proven Ways to Reduce Abandon Rates in the Call Center](#).



# Fonolo: Call-Back Solutions for the Call Center

With Fonolo, your customers will never wait on hold again, regardless of where the conversation begins – web, mobile or inbound call. Our cloud-based technology easily hooks into your existing call center infrastructure, with minimal impact to your business processes.



## In-Call Rescue

Give callers the option to receive a call-back when hold times are too long.



## Mobile Rescue

Let customers easily connect to a live agent, directly from within your mobile app.



## Web Rescue

Enable customers to seamlessly transition from web to live assistance.

## Why Replace Hold-Time With a Call-Back?

### Improve the Customer Experience

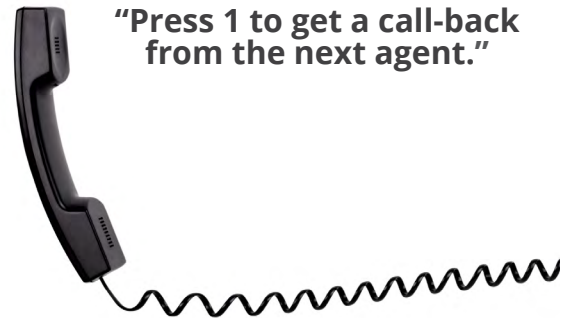
Eliminate hold-time and give customers back what they value the most – their time.

### Reduce Abandonment Rates

Fewer abandoned calls translates into a healthier bottom line.

### Reduce Cost-per-Call

Realize lower handle times and telco costs.







## Join Us for a LIVE Demo

Learn how Fonolo can help you increase sales, lower abandon rates and create happier customers.

REGISTER NOW!