



# 5 Key Metrics Every Call Center Manager Should Master

Why It Matters to have the Right Metrics as a Call Center Manager

There are a lot of reasons that call center managers should keep working to find the right metrics from their call center data. Business insights, available from data that has historically been locked away in a phone system, are invaluable to a company that wants to use their contact center as a tool for achieving business objectives. With the right metrics from your call center, you and your team will have the data you need to manage your customer experience, get the most out of your call center employees and maximize the return on your investment.

**LET'S TAKE A LOOK** at just 5 metrics or metric combinations that you and your contact center managers should have a handle on, why they matter and the business insights you can garner from those metrics.

# 1. Abandon Rate

THE ABANDON RATE is the percentage of calls in which the caller hangs up before the call is answered or routed by an automated method such as an off- hours schedule, no agents logged in, or all agents busy.

It's a common metric that most call center managers are aware of, but that metric isn't always used correctly.

There's a common misconception that the abandon rate should be as close to 0% as possible. While it's true that you want as many customers speaking with agents or being routed to the correct party as possible, it's also true that there is a diminishing return on your investment if you invest too much into zeroing out your abandon rate.

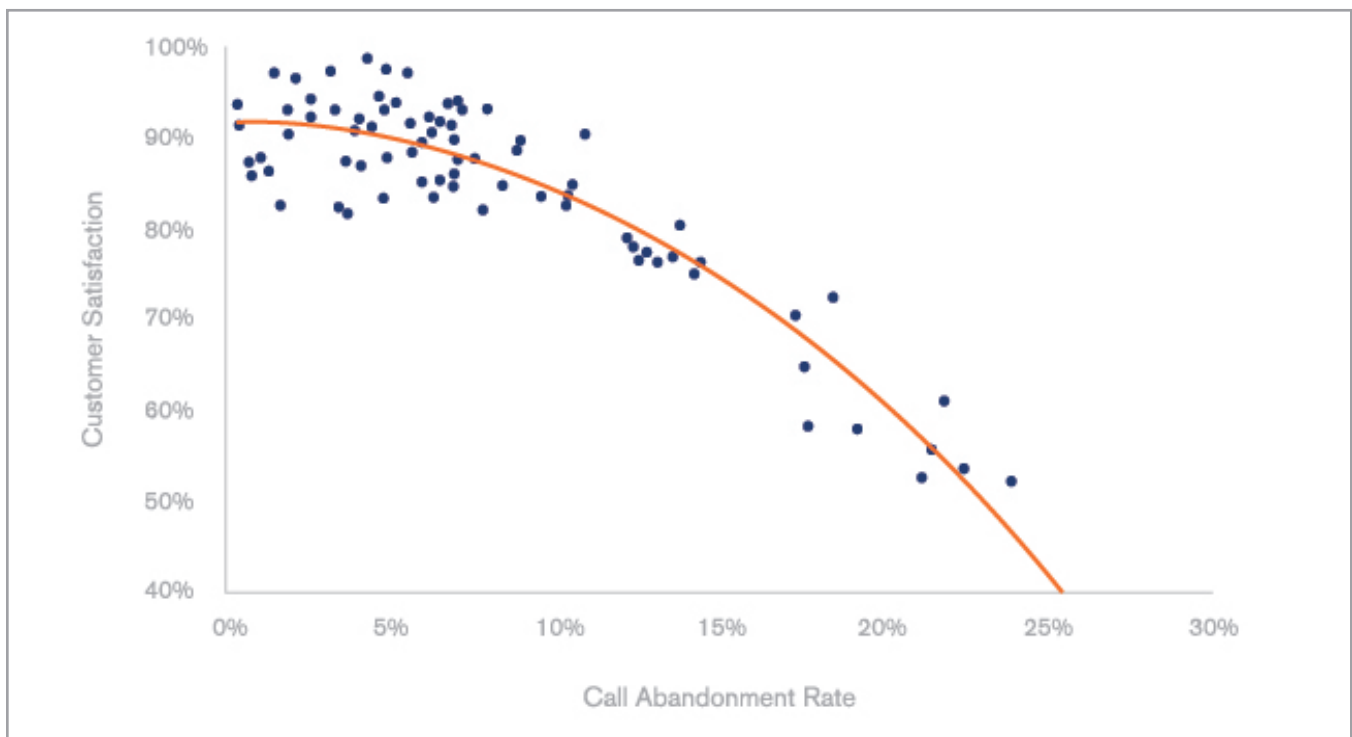
Across multiple industries a typical, healthy abandon rate is between 4% and 8%. Below 4% means you may be spending a lot of money on call center staffing without a commensurate increase in customer satisfaction. An abandon rate above 8% indicates that you likely have customer service issues.

By watching this metric you are simultaneously monitoring your staffing levels and measuring customer satisfaction while ensuring the highest ROI for your employee investment.

According to "Call Abandonment Rate" by Jeff Rumburg of [MetricNet](#),

"Figure 1 below shows the relationship between abandoned calls and customer satisfaction for a representative cross section of North American service desks. At low abandonment rates, the relationship between customer satisfaction and abandonment rate is almost flat, indicating that a very low abandonment rate has very little impact on customer satisfaction levels. It is only when the abandonment rate increases above seven or eight percent that customer satisfaction begins to drop off significantly."<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1: Call Abandonment Rate vs. Customer Satisfaction



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Rumburg, Jeff. "Call Abandonment Rate" (Metric of the Month), 2.

## 2. Queue Time For Abandoned Calls In Relation To Overall Queue Time For The Group And Average Staffing Level

QUEUE TIME FOR ABANDONED CALLS is the amount of time a caller waits before hanging up while in queue for a contact center.

OVERALL QUEUE TIME is the amount of time calls (in general) spend queuing for any exit reason in the contact center (abandon, call answered, all agents busy, forwarded, etc).

AVERAGE STAFFING LEVEL is the average number of staff members logged in and active at any particular point.

The comparison of queue time for abandoned calls in relation to overall queue time for the group and average staffing level provides multiple business insights that are imperative to a call center manager, and the business as a whole.

By measuring the queue time for abandoned calls and comparing it to the overall queue time for the group, you can make judgements around staffing levels by testing whether or not customers are willing to wait slightly longer than they are currently waiting for an agent. The willingness by customers to wait a little longer in queue gives tremendous flexibility around staffing level planning. **This is especially true** when combined with an analytics platform that can tell you when and under what circumstances customers are willing to wait longer. Now you can more dynamically and appropriately staff your call center.

Additionally, if your queue time for abandoned calls is substantially higher for the group, this means there is elasticity in the amount of time your customers are willing to wait. This is important because it means you have the opportunity to test reducing or repurposing your staff, without compromising your customer satisfaction levels. It's always important to know that the opportunity exists to reduce expenditures while keeping your customer base happy. On the flip side, if your queue time for the abandoned calls is lower than the overall queue time for the group, along with an abandon rate that is higher than 7% or 8%, that means your customers might not be willing to wait as long.

Another option is to measure the number of agents logged in per day or per hour. You can shift some of your staffing to better meet the needs of customers during peak call times and reduce the queue time to help improve customer service.

### 3. Average Agent Call Handle Time in relation to Percentage of Calls Transferred

AGENT CALL HANDLE TIME is the total time an agent is occupied with a call. This includes all agent talk time, hold time, and any wrap time on a call.

PERCENTAGE OF CALLS TRANSFERRED is the number of calls that the agent takes in a group and then transfers on to someone else, divided by the total number of calls that agent takes from the group in any time period.

Percentage calls transferred is a great customer satisfaction metric. In a customer support setting, it's ideal to have the call handled by the first agent that answers the call as much as possible in order to give the customer the best experience possible. Think about a time that you called into a support environment and were transferred around several times before your question was answered. It can be a frustrating experience.

When you combine average handle time of an agent with their percentage calls transferred, you can get some interesting insights.

#### IMAGINE THIS SCENARIO

Mary is new a new agent in the Customer Support group. She takes the same types of calls as everyone else but has less experience answering the questions she is getting. It is likely that you would see a longer than average handle time for Mary's calls because she is trying hard to solve the customer's issues. But you might also see a higher than average (compared to the rest of the group) percentage transferred compared to the rest of the group because, as hard as Mary is trying, she still has to transfer more calls off to others for assistance than the more experienced representatives. This scenario is an indication that Mary likely needs additional training.

#### ANOTHER SCENARIO MIGHT BE

John who has been with the group for a while but his average handle time is substantially lower than the average for the group. However, his percentage transfer is still higher than his coworkers. Seeing this trend over time may be a sign that John is taking the easy calls and sending the more difficult calls off to others to handle, which means he might need some extra coaching or incentives in order to be a top producer.

There are some employee training insights here. A high average handle time and a high percentage transfer is often a sign that the agent needs additional training. A low average handle time in conjunction with a high percentage transfer can be a sign that this employee needs some additional guidance or coaching because they are not putting enough effort into solving the customers' issues.

## 4. Agent Percentage Available and Percentage Calls Answered

PERCENTAGE AVAILABLE is the percentage of time that the agent is logged in to the queue and able to take calls but is not on the phone, in wrap-up, or in release. This is sometimes measured in the inverse by percentage utilization.

PERCENTAGE CALLS ANSWERED is the percentage of calls that that the agent answered from the queue out of the total number of calls that were presented to them.

The value of this metric is dependent on the call distribution pattern for the group. If calls are presented to the agents one at a time (round robin, longest idle, etc), this metric should be watched closely. However, if calls are presented to all agents simultaneously, tracking this metric is of little value.

Both of these metrics are good to track individually but in tandem can add even more value. For example, they are good to track staffing levels and agent productivity. A high percentage available (or low percentage utilization if that is how you are measuring it) and a low percentage calls answered on a per agent basis can point to areas where agents need coaching. They are logged into the group but are not answering calls that are presented to them, which leads to inconsistent customer service levels and should be addressed immediately.

Part of that problem might be a training issue. Are agents trained to take themselves out of the group (either by logging out or going into release mode) when they are not available to take calls? Something as simple as this can dramatically increase customer satisfaction levels, especially if a company's standard workflow includes agents performing tasks other than answering calls. If they're unavailable to the queue, then customers are unnecessarily waiting for the calls to ring those agents that don't really have an opportunity to answer calls.

A high percentage available and a high percentage calls answered across the board (not on a per agent basis) is an indication of an over-staffed call center. It might mean that your agents are spending significant amounts of time waiting around for calls to come to them.

## 5. Wrap-up Code Count & Average Handle Time

A WRAP-UP CODE is a "reason" code applied to the call during or after the call. The agent can generally select from a set of pre-defined codes for future reporting.

Many Contact Center Customers are tracking wrap-up codes but often don't take the extra step to track the average time for each code. This is important because it can really drive automation and increase customer service throughout the organization.

Take the example of a Technical Support Contact Center group. They may have a set up wrap up codes that describe the reason for the call. They might include things like password reset, VPN issues, Backup problems, etc. It's important to track those codes to understand how many of each type of call comes in.

But it could be more important to know how much time each type of call takes.

If, in a week, that group receives 100 password reset calls that require a 5minute response on average, versus the same group receiving 50 VPN issues that require a 30-minute response on average, it's easier for your team to determine which types of calls would derive more value from an automating solution.

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with Brightmetrics

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Furthermore, Brightmetrics alone provides the ability to look at summary information and drill into any piece of data to seamlessly view the detail behind it, and it will continue to drill all the way down to a graphical representation of everything that happened on any individual call. The consumer of the report can easily “follow the breadcrumbs” from a very high level overview all the way down to a very detailed view or anywhere in between, slicing up the data as they go in a very simple and efficient manner.