

2024 SPECIAL REPORT SERIES

# The metrics that matter

Rethinking how to measure customer loyalty



Create connection. Value conversation.



## Introduction

Significant investments into AI technology. Mission statements about the importance of customer centricity. Promises to cultivate “happy agents” who are capable of creating “happy customers.”

Despite all these financial and conceptual commitments to improving the customer contact operation, customer and employee experiences continue to lag. Nearly 55% of consumers say their experiences have gotten worse over the past year, while more than 80% of agents continue to exert too much effort on the kind of low-value tasks that cause churn and inefficiency.

Why are customer contact operations not progressing? Why are businesses not taking advantage of the opportunity to “compete on the customer experience” and win lasting loyalty? Why are contact center cultures falling short of their promise of empowering agent delight and productivity?

There are many answers, but one of the biggest is an inadequate vision for the purpose of the contact center. Despite their promises of customer centricity, brands continue to set the wrong objectives for their customer contact operations – and then exacerbate that mistake by focusing too intently on antiquated metrics.

Indeed, if contact centers are to finally improve in the latter half of 2024 and beyond, it will be by reassessing their purpose – and identifying metrics that matter most to that vision. These metrics will not only grade performance against customer- and employee-centric objectives but account for recent industry trends, such as the rise of digital and AI- driven engagement.

This report, the first in the Contact Center Elevation Series by CCW Digital and Foundever, is your ticket to analyzing the contact center through the eyes of your customers and employees.



# Top 3 contact center objectives for 2024 & beyond

Although it can be fun to celebrate year-over-year gains, metrics are not merely about creating a scoreboard. They are not simply a way to gamify the operation.

Instead, they are a method of communicating the true purpose of the contact center, while rallying the entire organization around the outcomes that matter most.

Before diving deep into the specific metrics contact centers should be prioritizing, it is thus essential to identify the top objectives for contact centers in 2024 and beyond.

## 01

### Increase customer lifetime value

Modern success is not simply about providing satisfying interactions; it is about creating overall experiences that make customers more likely to spend more money over the long haul. It is about cultivating an element of loyalty so strong that customers would not even think about switching to a competitor. Granted, it is also about investing in the right phases of the experience – and tailoring the highest-value messaging to the highest-priority customers.

These reasons explain why growing customer lifetime value is the ultimate objective for the contact center. It asks brands to truly consider where customers are in their journeys, how they ultimately feel about brands and which actions will either cause them to become delighted enough to spend more – or upset enough to go elsewhere.

To measure success against this objective, it is imperative to analyze customers' overall spend with a business, paying attention to the specific moments of the journey that precede purchasing decisions. It is also critical to evaluate the effort and time devoted to specific customers; for example, a brand is not evil for giving more leeway to a potential seven-figure spender than to an obvious "free trial, then cancel" user.

## 02

### Uncover actionable intelligence

An increasingly popular perspective argues that "data is the contact center's greatest export." This viewpoint makes perfect sense. The function of the business that directly interacts with customers, the contact center has the clearest window into customers' needs, expectations and frustrations. Successful contact center leaders, consequently, hold their team accountable for collecting, analyzing, democratizing and actioning key insights.

To measure success against this objective, it is imperative to determine that there are no roadblocks to bots or agents capturing customer sentiments and intentions, no barriers to sharing real-time insights about customers throughout the journey and no breaks in the feedback loop that turns the voice of the customer into meaningful business change.

# 03

## Strengthen brand value and reputation

The contact center's role as the face of a brand is not merely a commentary on the information it captures from customers. It is also a requirement to communicate and act properly, helping the brand solidify its reputation for caring about customers, delivering stellar experiences and creating consistent value.

To measure success against this objective, it is imperative to consider the various factors that impact customer trust and brand reputation. Consistency, accuracy and compliance across the omnichannel journey are essential, as contact centers must assure customers of their ability to receive relevant, valuable service no matter where, when or why they connect. Employee engagement plays a huge role as well, as the competency and cordiality of agents will signal the integrity and honesty of its mission. CCW Digital research confirms that the majority of customers become more willing to support a brand if it has a reputation for taking care of its employees.

Other factors include relevance of proactive engagement, commitment to acting on customer feedback, personality in customer-facing communication, data security and protection and social response rate.





# Metrics to reassess in 2024 & beyond

Telling contact center leaders to blankly ignore long- standing metrics is missing the mark. Even though they have become public enemy number one in thought leadership conversations, many “traditional” contact center metrics still communicate relevant insights. They still assist greatly with forecasting and strategic planning. As a result, they are still worth measuring.

Recognizing the evolution of the contact center, savvy contact center leaders will nonetheless begin to assess – and emphasize – these metrics from a new, evolved perspective. They will ensure that these metrics serve their purpose of communicating helpful insights without signaling the wrong message about what matters to the contact center and the business.

## Average Handle Time (AHT)

Over the past two decades, AHT has become a punching bag of the customer contact community. Many view it as the embodiment of the “cost center” days, in which agents were measured not based on conversational nuance but on how quickly they could complete a call.

The best contact centers will therefore take a comparative approach, assessing the deviation between the current average handle time for certain types of calls – and the expected handle time for a “model call” in which the customer leaves happy.

But while it is true that negligently rushing customers off the phone is the antithesis of customer centricity, it is short-sighted to ignore the relevance of AHT. After all, time is still money – and customers ultimately do want quick interactions. They simply object to a trade-off between speed and resolution.

Savvy companies will accordingly identify opportunities in which AHT increases are beneficial because they **provide agents with the time needed to make a true customer connection.**

A modern approach to AHT, therefore, accounts for unnecessary inefficiencies that are actually hurting the experience. Whereas a metric should never suggest that agents should ignore opportunities to meaningfully converse and carefully explain details to customers, it should absolutely highlight factors that prevent agents from quickly engaging in such dialogue.



Modern contact center leaders will also want to track the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on AHT.

The notion of “AI-driven self-service handling simple issues and agents having complex ones” suggests that the AHT for agent-led interactions will rise moving forward, as complex calls should inherently take longer to resolve. However, if the company is using productive agent-facing AI solutions, such as agent assist, it will eliminate key sources of effort and reduce AHT even for complex interactions.

Of course, there is also another dimension to consider: situations in which lengthier conversations are actually more desirable. Because bots and low-touch digital

options will be handling a higher volume of support cases, brands may not have as many opportunities to actively converse with customers. And insofar as these conversations are where brands humanize themselves and build relationships with customers, they play a pivotal role in building revenue and loyalty.

Savvy companies will accordingly identify opportunities in which AHT increases are beneficial because they provide agents with the time needed to make a true customer connection.

## Cost per interaction

No matter how pro-customer the culture, contact centers still operate in a business reality. They do have to consider budgets, which is why “cost per interaction” endures as a popular metric.

Progressive contact center leaders will nonetheless consider the various nuances of the cost per interaction metric.

Much like the new approach to AHT, for example, they will consider how the rise of self-service will transform the metric. If agents are spending more time on high-value, complex interactions, there is a

chance the average cost of these interactions will rise. But as long as that increase is offset by the savings of deflecting low-value interactions and revenue generation of engaging with customers in a more consultative, personalized manner, the business will ultimately still benefit.

It is also important to take a broader, omnichannel perspective to costs. Digital channels theoretically promise a lower cost per interaction, but if they are ill-suited for an issue, the business will face additional costs when the customer escalates to the traditional phone channel. The cost of that escalation, meanwhile, says nothing of the price of the customer’s dissatisfaction.

A final consideration is to transcend “cost per interaction” and begin thinking about “cost per issue.” If contact centers are living up to their potential as a data center, they will be capturing the intelligence needed to proactively resolve common issues. They should, consequently, see a reduction in the cost of responding to such issues.

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## Containment rate

With self-service commanding so much attention, containment rate is understandably on the typical contact center leader's radar. It is not, however, an automatic indicator of success.

The reality is that any remotely decent self-service platform can contain customers. It can provide accurate, knowledge-driven resolutions to standard customer inquiries. It can enable them to process simple transactions. It can be a welcome alternative to waiting on hold for a live agent.

Even a bad self-service platform, moreover, can still drive containment – it simply has to make the escalation process so cumbersome that customers give up.

But a business focusing on lifetime value, actionable intelligence and brand reputation will recognize that not all containment is created equal. It knows that the real purpose of self-service is not to provide a technically acceptable resolution but to provide a high-value experience for the customer.

Moving forward, it will therefore be imperative to correlate any increase in self-service containment with broader value indicators like customer satisfaction,

promoter score, loyalty rate and lifetime value. It will also be imperative to challenge the validity of “containment” by looking at the customer's future behaviors.

Do they tend to call back for further help from an agent shortly after a supposed “containment?” Do they attempt to bypass self-service in favor of an agent down the road? Do they stop engaging with the brand, thus minimizing future opportunities to generate upsell revenue?

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## Customer retention rate

It is imperative to know what percentage of customers return to make future purchases. It is crucial, however, to avoid mistaking a repeat customer for a loyal one.

The reality is that switching to a competitor is not always easy or desirable. As a result, customers who are generally content with a brand – and even those who might even be somewhat unsatisfied with it – may continue to make purchases.

These customers may not, however, advocate for the brand on social media. They may not respond to upsell pitches and make additional purchases

throughout the year. Most notably, they may ultimately end up switching if and when a practical, appealing alternative comes along.

Before boasting about a high retention rate, savvy contact center leaders will consider this context. They will dive deeper into the data to determine the difference between those who are ardently supporting a brand rather than simply passively purchasing.



# Metrics to prioritize in 2024 & beyond

Recalibrating contact center performance measurement requires more than simply making previous metrics better. It also involves adopting metrics that are fundamentally better-suited for the goals and objectives for today’s contact centers.

It also involves building a framework to accommodate future metrics that will indicate whether the customer contact function is making progress in becoming a relationship-building, revenue-generating, data-capturing engagement center.

Though not all as simple and straightforward as metrics like AHT, the below metric categories provide a look at what should be on the radar now – and in the months and years ahead.

## Critical metrics for today’s contact center

Igniting stronger revenue and brand cachet may be the ideal, but the reality is that far too many contact centers devote far too much time to putting out fires.

By assessing and eliminating the inefficiencies that force contact centers to take a reactive approach to service, contact centers can begin their pivot to becoming proactive relationship builders.

The problem with past efficiency metrics, however, is that they underappreciated customer and employee experiences. As a result, they actually created more problems – and further prevented the contact center from realizing its potential.

**The below metric categories address this problem, enabling brands to find the perfect harmony between productivity and customer centricity.**

**Issue recurrence rate**

**What it is:** How often does a particular issue reach the contact center? Is it declining over time? Are there any biases toward certain channels?

**What it measures:** Ability to act on data, ability to leverage and educate customers on different channels, ability to deliver proactive engagement



**Customer  
and  
employee  
effort scores**

**What it is (customer):** How often is their preferred channel available? How many steps do they encounter during authentication/qualification? How many times do they have to restate information/re-answer questions during interactions? What is the process for switching channels?

**What it is (agent):** How many systems do they access on a typical day? How many screens and searches must they access before providing a resolution? How often do they have to search the knowledge base – and how effective are the searches? How much time do they spend on non-interaction tasks? How much time are they “silent” during customer interactions? What is their mechanism for gathering insight into and feedback from customers?

**What it measures:** Attention to factors that drive customer loyalty and agent happiness

**Employee  
Net Promotor  
Score (eNPS)**

**What it is:** How likely are agents to recommend the brand and its contact center environment?

**What it measures:** The agent experience, likelihood of agents coming across as “happy” ambassadors during customer interactions, relevance and appeal of training and career advancement opportunities, sense of “culture” in an increasingly distributed world



## Future metrics for the next-generation contact center

As contact centers escape the shackles of responsiveness, they can begin to focus on proactive journey orchestration, lifetime value generation and brand elevation.

To do that, it is imperative to identify opportunities for building real connections with customers – and then create accountability for maximizing those moments of truth.

The below metric categories do just that, helping brands understand whether they are empowering agents and bots to go beyond service and create lasting relationships.

### Avoidable support ratio

**What it is:** What percentage of an agent's time is spent on "customer support" versus relationship-building or sales activity? What percentage of each interaction is spent reacting to a customer inquiry? How many "low-value" issues are making their way to live agents? How does the AHT of "support calls" compare with sales opportunities?

**What it measures:** The realization of the "AI for simple issues, agents for complex ones" cliché, the efficacy and stickiness of proactive support, the likelihood of agents experiencing "simple issue" burnout, the potential (or lack thereof) to generate revenue

**What it requires:** Robust analytics on contact volume, insight into digital containment and escalation, real-time analysis of conversations and visibility into sales conversations, agent satisfaction and attrition data

### Predictive personalization score

**What it is:** How much time passes before the agent "recognizes" the customer and their likely issue? What elements of personalization are included in the support process? What is the upsell conversion rate? How does the customer engage with proactive/outbound communication?

**What it measures:** The ability to identify and know the customer (fueling more lifetime value), the accuracy and relevance of data, the likelihood of turning a customer into a brand loyalist/advocate

**What it requires:** Real-time interaction analytics, robust customer journey maps, emphasis on empathy, emphasis on upselling, leeway for going "off script"

## Customer action score

**What it is:** What actions does the customer take after a particular interaction? How do they respond to messaging, routing and right-channeling? What factors are most and least likely to cause anger and churn?

**What it measures:** The true “make or break” moments of the customer experience, opportunities to make the journey more seamless and predictive

**What it requires:** In-depth sentiment analytics and coaching, escalation training, robust measurement of sales and marketing campaigns, active social listening





# Why partner with Foundever®?

Managing CX can be a challenging undertaking for companies of any size. Foundever offers a strategic solution to high operational costs, scalability and complex technology integration. Thanks to +40 years of industry expertise, over 800 brands across 45 countries trust us to deliver our services in over 60 languages. Our global teams handle 9 million customer interactions daily, blending innovation with operational excellence to tackle your CX challenges effectively.

## Our services and delivery models

Foundever provides CX outsourcing services tailored to every stage of the customer journey. Our services include customer care, technical support, back-office support, collections, trust & safety, and sales & retention. Our CX delivery solutions include in-center, work-at-home, and hybrid work models utilizing onshore, offshore, and nearshore support, ensuring scalability and flexibility to serve your customers wherever they need us.

## Ensuring operational excellence

Our global operating standards, PeakOS, ensure consistent performance, efficient processes and high-quality outcomes. PeakOS streamlines operations, enhances security and complies with PCI DSS, ISO 27001, and SOC Type 1 and Type 2 certifications. It supports globally consistent hiring, training, and performance management practices, promoting continuous improvement, professional development, and employee engagement.

## Leveraging advanced CX solutions

Foundever leverages advanced CX solutions to streamline and improve the quality of customer interactions with technologies like conversational AI, generative AI, intelligent automation, and interaction analytics. Our CRM and CCaaS platforms ensure seamless integration and flexibility, complemented by effective CX strategy and design.

Our knowledge management delivers the right information to agents and customers faster, while our learning and development uphold high-performance standards. We offer omnichannel CX strategies with self-service options that allow customers to engage through their preferred channels. Our social media CX strategies transform platforms into powerful support channels, and our unified agent desktop equips agents for exceptional service delivery.

## Delivering Industry-specific expertise

Foundever understands how to meet each client's unique needs, offering tailored solutions across various industries, including banking and financial services, insurance, healthcare, retail, technology, telecommunications, media, utilities, and logistics. We scale our services to meet the needs of disruptor brands preparing for or experiencing rapid growth. By partnering with Foundever, brands across diverse sectors and growth stages can enhance customer experiences, improve operational efficiencies and achieve measurable success.

## Cultivating a culture of care

With over 150,000 associates worldwide, united by an award-winning performance culture, we ensure every customer interaction builds long-term loyalty. Our forward-thinking approach to customer experience outsourcing delivers competitive advantages when they matter most. Our mission is clear: to be the solutions and the teams behind the best experiences for the world's leading brands, transforming customer service into a powerful tool for business growth and customer satisfaction.

## Our promise to you

Foundever is more than just a service provider – we're your strategic partner in navigating the future of CX. By blending human expertise with AI-driven capabilities, we empower your brand to deliver exceptional customer experiences. Our global reach, advanced technological solutions and industry-specific expertise make us the trusted choice for brands looking to stay competitive and customer-focused in today's rapidly changing marketplace.

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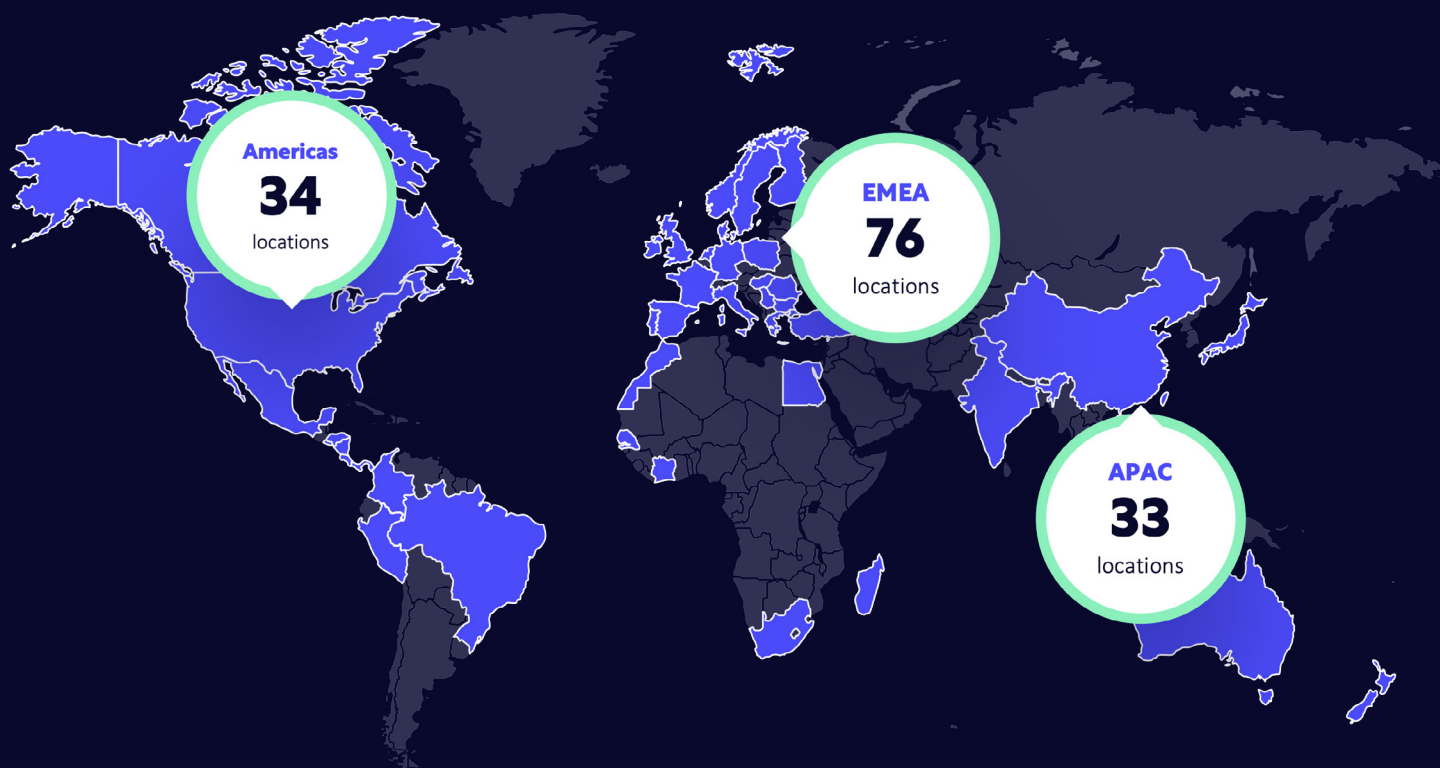
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\* Countries are new locations in 2023 and 2024



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domestic and  
near/offshore  
locations

In-center, at  
home and hybrid  
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