#CustomerSatisfaction

The Importance of Customer Satisfaction (C-Sat) Scores and How to Improve Them



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THE IMPORTANCE OF C-SAT SCORES & HOW TO IMPROVE THEM

Many highly experienced consultants and contact centre executives will agree that one of the fundamental measurements of success for just about any customer-service or sales orientated contact centre, is Customer Satisfaction or as it is also known CSAT. You measure it and improve it- and one great way to do it is through CSAT scores.

By focussing attention on seeking to understand what drives or influences CSAT in your contact centre, it becomes possible to implement whatever changes or interventions may be deemed appropriate to drive up the CSAT scores. In all probability, by making many small changes to some processes, procedures and operating methods, overall operating efficiencies will definitely improve, costs will be reduced, and staff satisfaction will improve.

In this article I will cover some of the best ways to improve Customer Service and Customer Satisfaction in the call centre. My advice is based on nearly 40 years of experience both running large-scale contact centres and providing call centre training and consulting services to operations in South Africa and in many other countries. I have also gathered and presented in this article, a great deal of information from numerous CSAT-related articles written by many different subject matter experts and published on the amazing CallCentreHelper.com website.

I urge all contact centre and CX professionals to subscribe to the CallCentreHelper.com newsletter and to visit the website where you will find an enormous library of easily accessible information.

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Introduction

First, I will discuss what CSAT means in the call centre and how to improve your call centre's CSAT score fast.

The main reason why businesses measure Customer Satisfaction is to ensure Customer Retention, a crucial factor in long-term business growth. The more customers that a company can keep loyal for longer, the better will be the company's overall performance. Customer Loyalty and Customer Retention are therefore two of the most important metrics for just about all businesses.

Although there are numerous other factors that drive and influence Customer Loyalty, high Customer Satisfaction scores generally correlate with high Customer Loyalty.

CSAT is a measurement that is based on customer feedback. In a nutshell, you measure the percentage of customers that are satisfied (or very satisfied, or not satisfied at all) with your services. In most cases, the term "CSAT" is used in connection with "CSAT Score," which refers to the numerical measure of customer satisfaction. The higher the percentage of positive customer satisfaction feedback, the better your CSAT score will be.

Customer satisfaction (CSAT) scores can be great indicator of overall performance, but how can they be used to benefit the the overall performance of the contact centre?

Let's start at the beginning..

What Matters Most to Customers?

In general terms, when engaging with a contact centre, customers want to achieve three things: -

Success ... The want a favourable outcome to the main reason why they are calling or connecting with the contact centre.

Least Effort ... They want the interaction to be a fast and as seamless and as effortless as possible.

Emotions ... They want to feel good about the interaction and happy with the experience and the outcome.

The answer that most contact centre professionals will agree on, is that the **emotional dimension** is in fact what matters most in just about all contact centre customer engagements. It is how the customer *feels*, before, during and, particularly after the call or interaction. Emotion has the greatest impact on Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty. Emotion influences the actions and behaviour of customers. So, the physical and emotional feelings that the interactions between the customer and the agent evoke, will have a significant impact on their loyalty to the company, brand, product or service; and therefore, a massive impact on the CSAT score!

So, if you can identify the key drivers of CSAT and work on methods to score these individually on their importance to the customer, it becomes a great deal easier to highlight key opportunities to improve the contact centre's service and CSAT scores.

It stands to reason that when we discover what matters most to the customer, we can start to improve the contact centre's CSAT and any other quality scorecards.

How is CSAT measured?

To measure CSAT the operation needs to engage directly with a significant portion of their customer base across all relevant touchpoints (e.g. Telephone, Chat, email, social channels, face-to-face etc) and to carry out structured and consistent Customer Satisfaction surveys. Such surveys are typically done by means of automated post-call IVR questions, by email or by means of short telephone interviews.

How is C-Sat Calculated?

CSAT in the call centre is generally measured by a variation of a standardised question on a 1-3, 1-5, or 1 or 0-10 scale: For example: *"How would you rate your satisfaction with (company)?"*

The Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) is measured on a percentage scale, with 100% being complete customer satisfaction, and 0% with no customer satisfaction.

There are two main ways to calculate and report on the contact centre's CSAT score

CSAT (average) = Sum of all score values / number of all scores

CSAT (percentage) = (number of all positive scores / number of all scores) x 100

What is a good CSAT score?

As every contact centre operation has a distinctly different mix of Company, Brand, Products, Services, Use of technologies and Culture, it is extremely difficult to compare one CSAT score to another. However, it is safe to say that the contact centres should strive to maintain as high a CSAT score and possible. 100% would be perfect! (Sadly, its not a perfect world.)

It is also important to remember that CSAT scores will definitely change if the customer is asked different questions about different aspects of the interaction. As an example: A customer may be 100% satisfied with the product or service but had a poor experience with the contact centre agent. Or visa versa. Or, they may have had a great interaction with the agent but have been seriously let down by another department or another element of the value chain. For example, a retail outlet or the distribution or logistics network.

IMPROVING CSAT

How to Increase CSAT Scores in the Call Centre

There is a well-proven phrase: “What can be measured, can be managed” or similarly, “What can be measured, can be improved”. So, let us take CSAT as the starting point for improving the overall performance of our contact centre operations.

Monitor and Track Related Call Centre KPIs

If you are searching for ways to improve CSAT scores in your call centre, start with the data that is provided by your call centre reporting or analytics software. Key metrics reports, including total calls answered, total calls abandoned, average hold time, and the number of calls handled by each agent can provide invaluable insights into your call centre's current customer service levels.

Keep an eye on related KPIs, such as First Contact Resolution, as you work to improve CSAT scores in your call operation. According to the authoritative US contact centre organisation ICMI, contact centres see a 1% increase in Customer Satisfaction scores for every 1% improvement in First Contact Resolution (FCR)

Some Ways to Increase CSAT Scores in the Call Center

Whether you use CSAT follow up surveys after calls, or simply ask your customers to rate their experience with a Net Promoter Score, you undoubtedly have some method of benchmarking where your company stands when it comes to Customer Satisfaction. And as we all know, what gets measured gets improved. So, where do you begin when you're ready to improve CSAT scores in your call center?

Here's the First Set of Techniques

1. Focus on Personal Interactions with Your Customers

Most modern contact centres use some form of Interactive Voice Response (IVR) to help to manage inbound calls; to provide in-IVR information and to use the IVR technology to route calls to the most appropriate agents.

While IVR systems can provide contact centres with significant efficiency improvements and cost-savings, inappropriate use of IVR methods and technologies can have a negative impact on customer experience (especially if the call flows are complicated and specifically, if there is no easily accessible option to speak with a live agent). Although it may cost more in the short term to staff more 'live' agents to field the calls that would otherwise have been handled by the IVR, you can recoup those costs by retaining more customers; plus, your agents will have the opportunity to up-sell and cross-sell to your existing customers, providing additional revenue streams.

Studies have shown that more real-time, *personal* interaction with customers leads to significantly higher call center CSAT scores. Use your IVR system as a tool to enable and optimize the most effective routing to achieve better one-on-one interactions with your callers for improved CSAT scores.

2. Implement Advanced Call Routing Strategies

Advanced call routing strategies, such as geographic call routing and skills-based routing, can significantly decrease your call center's Average Hold Time (AHT) and Average Transfer Rate (ATR). When these are improved these KPIs have a significant impact on improving CSAT scores in your call center. With advanced call routing, you can ensure that your callers are sent to the agent who is best equipped to handle their needs.

Use advanced call routing techniques, like skills-based routing and percentage-based routing, to ensure that callers are directed to the right agent the first time that they call. This essential call center software feature allows your business to reduce average hold time and cut down on unnecessary call transfers.

Four Quick-Win ways to improve CSAT

- Support the Channels your Customers Want to use
- Resolve Customer Contacts at the First Attempt
- Handle Customer Contacts Fast
- Get as close-up and personal with your customers as possible

Agent Job Satisfaction has a Significant Impact on CSAT Scores

Monitor Agent Satisfaction (ASAT) as closely as you monitor Customer Satisfaction

Agents are literally the face or voice of your company. When your agents are satisfied, it reflects in the way they provide service to your customers.

Provide sufficient training, and lots of timely and correct feedback through formal, structured coaching sessions as well as lots of on-the-fly impromptu coaching.

Agent Empowerment – If your agents feel they have a large amount of control over their working lives, they will more likely feel that they can reach their full potential. This is empowerment, and when agents feel empowered, Customer Satisfaction improves – which can make a big difference to your CSAT scores, particularly if CSAT is one of the primarily measurement in the contact centre.

To improve CSAT by increasing agent empowerment, try out these ideas:

(Please note that some of these ideas may not be possible to implement in certain contract centres due of policy, process or other reasons)

- Let agents apply for special roles, such as subject matter experts, where they can take the time to improve their understanding of one area and share that knowledge with the rest of the team.
- Lower script adherence, while improving agent support systems (i.e. knowledge bases, screen pop and communication tools), so agents aren't so restricted in how they can support customers.
- Give agents a say in how they're assessed. If the team understand how their performance is being evaluated – and maybe even have a say in that process – they will feel more comfortable in being innovative to improve CSAT.
- Show appreciation to agents who go the extra mile to support the customer, sharing what they did and maybe even training it as a best practice, so what was once a nice gesture to improve CSAT becomes a systematic strategy.
- Improve schedule flexibility, so agents have a greater input into when they work, increasing employee engagement, which is so closely linked with CSAT. This can be done by using tools to arrange shift-swaps via mobile apps, for example.
- For more tips like this for improving agent empowerment, read our article: What Does Employee Empowerment REALLY Mean?

Reduce Customer Effort to Increase Customer Satisfaction

Many organizations try to achieve "silent service" by following business models like Amazon. This is where they take an organization-wide strategic approach, that the best way to improve CSAT is to remove the source of problems before they occur, so customers have no need to call into the contact centre, where CSAT has the potential to drop. Here are some ideas to work with...

- Take the legwork out of the conversations. The agent needs to do as much of the thinking and the proactive contact as possible, so educating agents on the customer journey and how to best use probing questions is important.
- Give agents the customer's interaction history so they can see the value of the customer and where they are in their journey from what's gone on in the past. This saves the customer effort, in terms of not having to fully explain themselves.
- Use caller ID and routing to personalize the call, as you can recognize customers from their phone numbers and route them through to the last agent they spoke to. This will reduce effort, as the customer won't have to repeat themselves.
- Inspire the right attitudes by creating a positive culture and designing an environment that meets the values of your customers, to encourage smooth interactions that lower effort.
- Create "How to" Videos. Let's not forget, most customers now look for the answers online before phoning in to the contact centre. So, helpful video content – that's easy to engage with – and easy website navigation are critical in terms of reducing effort.

Improved Customer Experience leads to Improved CSAT

A good customer experience is impacted by a number of things, but if we can look for non-invasive CSAT insights at every key step of the customer journey, we can see where the greatest CSAT gains can be made. We can then also add rewards at certain touchpoints, where we can most positively influence customer emotion.

- **Become customer-obsessed** and use customer feedback to gain a clear understanding of your customers, maybe creating a set of customer promises and commitments from your research and ensuring that you are hitting them at every touchpoint.
- **Get emotional** and perhaps try to define the emotions that you would like to evoke within the customer experience. If you can focus each department around this goal, you can create a branded customer experience.
- **Involve the whole team** in journey mapping so you are united behind a universal goal in how to improve CSAT and so that everyone knows what they are responsible for. Doing this will also help you to plan "moments of wow" within your journeys.
- **Think proactive** by adding rules to your customer journey, so you can intervene before the customer calls in to the contact centre. Having a proactive strategy allows you to improve and simplify the customer experience, also helping to reduce effort.
- **Be personalized** by doing things like developing customer profiles, working with marketing, to find out the four or five groupings of customers that access your services and train agents to spot them and deliver a different kind of service. If you can hook this up with your CRM then that's even better.

Monitor & Meet Customer Expectations

With leading brands becoming so difficult to deal with, customers have higher expectations of your brand than they previously might have. If you do not meet these expectations, achieving good CSAT results will be tricky – so managing and exceeding expectations is becoming an increasingly important task.

- **Train the team to manage expectations**. This is important, because the first stage in exceeding expectations is setting them. So, you want to train agents to under-promise and over-deliver, so you can give your CSAT scores a big boost.
- **Be careful in language choices.** People are very good at hearing what they want to hear, so agents need to be careful in giving next steps, and Marketing also need to be wary that they aren't setting expectations that are unrealistic for those in the contact centre to live up to.
- Prepare for vulnerable customers and set yourself apart from your competitors by supporting those who need it most. The customer's family and friends may well be so impressed that they do business with you too.
- Share best practice of how agents have been able to boost CSAT scores by exceeding customer expectations, so other agents can be trained to follow suit.
- Turn around negative experiences by sincerely apologizing, reassuring customers and taking ownership of the issue.

Here are Another 16 Ways to improve C-Sat

1. Offer VIP treatment

Why does American Express refer to its customers as "members"? Well, there's a lot of power in labelling customers as anything "special" or "VIP".

It's human nature to enjoy feeling part of something exclusive – or to feel like you're getting a better deal or service than others.

From loyalty programmes to the kind of customer service you offer, there are plenty of ways to make your customers feel special. Simply acknowledging that they're a highly valued, loyal customer when they call can be effective.

If your contact centre technology allows you to route based on CRM data, you already have the tools to prioritise VIP customers.

2. Go the Extra Mile

"Always give people more than they expect to get" is a simple but powerful quote by Nelson Boswell, which could be easily applied to any area of life.

The key here is in the surprise element of getting more than you expected. For instance, imagine you expected to receive a free mug, but were actually given a free mug and a 20% discount voucher. Then imagine you expected to get the voucher and the mug from the beginning. The second scenario just isn't as exciting – because you got what you were expecting.

Happy customers are those that got more than they expected – in terms of product or service.

3. Review Your Social Customer Service

Social customer service may not account for a big proportion of customer service interactions, but failure to respond via social channels can lead to a 15% increase in the churn rate.

Social networks can have a significant impact on how customers see your brand. Shoppers not only have heightened expectations when it comes to social media service, but if you get it wrong, your mistakes are out there for all to see.

4. Spread the "FAN" Acronym to Promote Good Service

Turn customers into fans by having agents follow this FAN acronym:

Find = Use your questioning expertise to understand the root cause of the problem.

Action= Identify the right course of action, agree this with the customer and ensure it happens.

Nice touch= This is where we surprise and delight our customers. A follow-up call is nice and thorough, and if it's tailored to the customer it can be really special, but is there something else we can do to really wow them?

5. Develop a series of "Power Hour" training Sessions.

Adding a 'power hour' of specific training to an agent's weekly routines can be extremely helpful in continuously reinforcing your customer-centric business model. These training sessions might involve analysing an agent's favourite call of the week... or their most disastrous.

Supporting and polishing up their frontline agent skills – such as use of emotions, empathy, openness, listening and influencing – are all critical factors in helping boost customer satisfaction.

Instead of being the initiator for which skills these sessions should focus on, why not allow agents to set the agenda for their own training and development? Giving the team the ability to recognise which skills need improving may also encourage a sense of responsibility and trust.

6. Learn from Your Dissatisfied Customers

Your dissatisfied customers will be the ones that deliver the most insight about your business and customer service techniques. Listen to them.

This may be through customer focus groups, immersion sessions, call monitoring or the use of interaction analytics.

By acting on the feedback or data that has now been collected, companies can proactively resolve issues/take corrective actions throughout the customer journey, before the issue repeats itself or escalates. This can boost customer satisfaction as well as retention.

7. Provide a 'Personal Touch' for Customers

Unfortunately, there are bound to be many communications with customers that do not end positively, or do not go the way you would have liked them to have gone.

For those communications, why not isolate them through 'tell-tale' indicators such as those which do not fall under the first call resolution category or those which had a high average handling time.

Once you have isolated these tell-tale communications, show your customers that you really care by sending them a personalised email. This email could ask them if you can do any more to help or if they think the company's communication could be improved. And it could perhaps offer the caller a voucher or some type of compensation to make up for their misdealing's.

8. Boost Agent Morale Through Motivational Games

Introducing the idea of gamification into the contact centre can help keep motivation high and boost engagement, in order to maintain quality customer service representatives and consistently drive high levels of customer care.

Some examples of games/competitions can include a first call resolution 'crown', which employees could compete for weekly. Another might be a daily contest for the best customer feedback scores. The end prize for these may be a half day off work or a bottle of champagne!

Gamification features are also available within many workforce management systems. Some of the features of these include awarding points for a seamless timecard, approval of timecards, perfect attendance, overtime-related bonuses, etc. Different points values can be assigned depending on each action.

9. Do Each of the Three Following Best Practices

- Identify problems that originate outside of the contact centre, while informing non-customer-facing departments of the impact they have on the Customer Experience (CX). Failure demand can sometimes make up over 50% of contacts.
- Ensure all customer touchpoints are covered in your Voice of the Customer (VoC) programme, identifying where to focus most efforts initially.
- Make Customer Experience (CX) and the Voice of the Customer (VoC) outputs highly visible in the contact centre, via lots of communications, celebrating success, etc.

10. See What's Going on in Digital

60% of customers go online before engaging with a contact centre, so it makes sense to close the gap by finding out what it was online that caused them to reach out to your contact centre.

Your online team will want to know why customer demand was leaked into the contact centre from the website, while the contact centre will benefit when the online experience is optimised.

So, consider improving the links between those who work on the company website and the contact centre team.

11. Look at What's Happening Outside of the Contact Centre

Start applying analysis to all the calls coming into your contact centre, using tools such as Rapport, so you can work quickly to eliminate customer journey bottlenecks.

By doing this you can highlight and ultimately eliminate the many repeat calls, failure demand, incorrect messages and out-of-hours contacts that can do so much to damage brand experience.

12. Don't Use Average Handling Time as an Agent Target

If you are still targeting your agents on traditional metrics such as Average Handling Time (AHT) then it's hard for them to concentrate on delivering excellent customer service.

Simply refocusing on the right metrics can make a significant difference, perhaps moving away from time-based metrics to those that have greater insight into service quality, such as First Contact Resolution (FCR).

13. Set A One-Month Coaching Competition

Use Voice of the Customer (VoC) insight to identify the bottom five performing agents in each team and focus on factors that agents can control such as knowledge and soft skills.

Then, set a one-month coaching competition for all managers to work with the selected underperforming agents to try to get the best possible aggregate improvement.

The manager with the biggest team swing in Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) scores wins a prize, and the agent with the biggest improvement also wins a prize.

14. Review Your Scripts

Sometimes an agent's strict adherence to a script can bypass common sense and cause anything but customer delight. So, give agents the freedom to act with common sense and not stick rigidly to a script regardless of the circumstances, to deliver quick wins with customer satisfaction.

For example, if a customer who has not had their problem resolved is asked: 'Is there anything else I can help you with today', it is likely to be met with a negative response. Unsurprisingly, this lack of common sense is likely to increase dissatisfaction as the customer hasn't been helped yet.

Measuring customer emotion at these points, either through interaction analytics or calculating a Net Emotional Value (NEV), will give you insight as to whether your script needs a rethink.

15. Identify Drivers of Customer Effort and Repeat Contact Reasons

Around 30% of all customers report spending a high level of effort to resolve their problem. Often, by the time a consumer makes a call to an agent they are already frustrated and ready to take out their anger on the next person they talk to.

Switching from the web to the phone, having to re-explain an issue, and having to contact a company repeatedly are three of the biggest causes of customer effort. Most of these efforts can be avoided if your contact centre is designed to resolve queries first time.

And remember, your agents are often the best equipped to tell you where the areas of high customer effort really are.

16. Develop a Self-Service Strategy

The majority of customers, across most demographics, prefer self-service for simple interactions.

31 Quick-Fire Tips: How to Improve Customer Satisfaction

1. Never say no to a customer

Our golden rule: never say no to a customer. If a customer service rep can't deliver a solution for the customer, they escalate this to their team lead, so strategically we can resolve the root cause.

If we ever have to say no, it's a 'Disney No'; we turn a negative into a positive through freebies such as goodwill credit or free loyalty points.

2. Let them see your smile

Be positive... Let them see your smile. A positive experience and a customer care representative that leaves a positive experience will go a long way.

Customers can hear in your voice that you are smiling – it's hard for a lot of people to be angry when the person on the other end of the phone is happy.

3. Let your unsatisfied customers guide you

Listen to those that are dissatisfied and act on their advice when it rings true. Find out as much detail as possible. Maybe the problem started on Twitter and has now taken an email and 2 phone calls. How can you improve overall, not just the end problem?

4. Put the customer at the heart of your decisions

Put the customer at the heart of your decisions and take a balanced approach.
Be focused on problem solving, not on the process.

5. Set the right expectations

Be precise and clear in your Terms & Conditions and customer communication, so you control the expectations you create. Keep your promises.

6. Show agents how their actions affect the company

It is not enough to train your frontline staff in the systems, procedures or knowledge for their part of the service chain.

We need to actively share the bigger organisational ambitions and give real-life examples of how their actions can impact the reputation of the organisation. This will remind agents of the importance of their role, which could improve customer–agent engagement.

7. Adopt training "power hours"

Adding training "power hours" to an agents' weekly routines can be really helpful to continuously remind and reinforce the customer-centric mind-set you need.

Support their soft skills regularly; the ability to manage their own emotions, positive language, listening, questioning, empathy, openness (as opposed to defensiveness) and influencing skills are all critical.

Follow the links to see our list of positive words and phrases and our set of empathy statements that boost rapport with the customer.

8. Train Team Leaders, not Team Managers

If management is mostly about the processes, schedules and targets, leadership is mostly about behaviour. So, train team leaders, not team managers.

Facilitate leadership sessions to train your team leaders to understand leadership styles, behaviours, decisions and reputation. This is key to them becoming successful and respected leaders.

Good team leaders support their teams to perform and develop and thus get the best results possible from their team members.

9. Train agents to have multiple interaction approaches

As a customer, I expect your agent to flex his or her style to meet mine, so that we have a good rapport and your brand feels like a 'fit' for me. It is important that the customer feels as if they are your number-one customer, regardless of the number of customers you serve.

10. Listen to the Voice of the Customer (VOC)

The contact centre is a great place to capture feedback from customers.

Using interaction analytics, it is possible to comb through every single customer contact and analyse the trends, problems and opportunities.

Acting on this data to proactively resolve issues in the service chain or to meet customer demands will improve customer satisfaction and retention rates.

11. Personalise the customer experience

Customers want to be treated as individuals, not as statistics, so a joined-up omnichannel experience should be offered.

No matter whether I tweeted you, called you, sent an email, put a post on your Facebook page, or a combination of all of those, you know who I am, what I need and where it's up to.

12. Get agents to relay customer feedback to the wider business

As the call centre is a hub for customer feedback, it can be used to direct the voice of the customer into the wider business to drive real change.

If staff are constantly hearing the same customer complaints, get your agents to relay these complaints back to people who can act on the issues, to make sure future customers don't face the same problems.

13. Hold call-review meetings with agents

While we have limited time off the phones for training, I made an offer to the staff that they can send me a note about a call they would like to review with me. This might be because they are not comfortable with the way it was handled or because they think they did a good job.

We listen to the call together and discuss how it went and I can give real-world tips on how it might have been handled more successfully or recognise their strong performance. This results in either improved performance or improved agent morale, which can improve customer satisfaction.

14. Make moves to boost agent morale

We have introduced fruit at the centre of the Support Centre to get the agents moving and a dartboard in one of the boardrooms to allow staff to interact with each other. We also moved the water cooler across each end of the office. The office relationships and atmosphere have completely changed and it's amazing how that has impacted the response from the customers positively.

15. Put management in the shoes of the customer

When anyone (managers/supervisors/agents) is listening to calls, make them stand up during any time the agent puts the customer on hold. It's a great way to demonstrate just how long it feels to the customer.

By doing so, managers may be more motivated to better equip call centres to handle problems, and agents could be more motivated to decrease hold time, resulting in a great experience for the customer.

16. Under-promise and over-deliver

An age-old edict: "never over-sell and under-deliver". Make sure expectations of service levels are established, published and met consistently!

17. Present a sample of customer complaints in team meetings

Get team members to present a sample of the customer complaints in the weekly team meetings. This allows the team to review the problems faced and feel engaged in the process of coming up with longer-term solutions.

18. Respond more quickly to emails

With social media, this is the age of the instant answer. A one-working-day turnaround for email is too slow!

Try to send a reply quickly, even if it is just to confirm you have received their email and to set expectations for when they can get a proper reply.

19. Tone is very important

Always use positive words with a genuine interest in the customer's needs. Tone is so important with the customer not being able to see us.

20. Allow the team to listen to and score their own calls

In a previous role I encouraged my team to listen and score their own calls. This built buy-in to a predominantly uncomfortable coaching session by giving agents the opportunity to identify their own areas of improvement with customer satisfaction

21. Improve your service levels and queue time

An obvious way to improve customer satisfaction would be to increase service levels and decrease queue time. But, if you wish to do this, you will need more agents in the call centre.

You can find out how many more staff you would need to employ to improve your service level and queue time by using our version of the Erlang Calculator, which factors in shrinkage.

22. Throw away the scripts

We have found that scrapping the script has had a huge positive impact, treating the customer as the individual that they are – talking to them like a fellow human being has seen us receive feedback for being friendly and approachable and is bringing people back time and again.

23. Treat the customer as you would a friend or business partner

Take care of the customer end to end. Treat them as you would a friend or business partner. Do not get stressed about KPIs such as AHT. Only get stressed, if necessary, about the impression you leave in customers' minds.

24. Make other departments understand your role in customer service

If the culture in the rest of the business is different from the service team, make sure everyone in your company understands the impact they have on the success of the business.

Show them how their actions affect the customer experience as well as the cost to the business.

25. Keep in touch with the customer

Plus 1's work for us. A follow-up call or a box of chocolates, or a free trial of a paid feature. Show that they are valued customer – a small token can make all the difference.

26. Share experiences through the company

My tip is for constant feedback throughout the complete customer service organisation. Every employee is listened to, and experiences are shared throughout the company to improve processes.

27. Senior managers should match words with behaviours

Customer-friendly words from the 'top' should be matched by personal behaviours and policies.

28. Reward positive behaviour

When KPIs (key performance indicators) are good, the team is given a budget to do something fun (they pick it themselves). If the KPIs are bad, the budget is zero.

29. Show that you care

Understand your customer's business and show that you care when users are facing an issue. Act with sympathy as well as fast and understandable solutions.

30. Use customer focus groups

Use customer focus groups to find out what the customers themselves think makes them satisfied.

31. Be honest

Be honest. Customers appreciate it! Listen to your customers and educate them for better understanding. You can engage them more if you let them see the bigger picture and the background of some of your decisions.

