Contact Center Peer Group Benchmark Report

Sample Center

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BenchmarkPortal
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Industry Sector:

Sample Industry

Peer Metrics Filters:

B2B > 75% | Union Yes > 75% | IVR < 10% | Talk Time > 4 min| Average Handle Time > 6 min

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Executive Summary

Researchers at BenchmarkPortal have continued the work begin at Purdue University in 1995, collecting contact center performance data and providing actionable benchmarking reports to contact center managers.. Although there are many parameters to measure in a contact center, twenty-two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been found to strongly correlate to optimizing the **quality** and **quantity** of calls handled.

BenchmarkPortal was awarded a U.S. Patent for its unique methodology of benchmarking call centers. That methodology has been utilized in preparing this report.

The report includes the following elements:

1. Tables of key classification characteristics,
2. A performance matrix that compares you to your industry,
3. A table of KPIs that indicate the effectiveness (or quality) of your call center,
4. A table of KPIs that indicate the efficiency (or cost elements) of your call center, Aggregated multichannel tables of KPIs and All Industries* multichannel comparisons, and
6. Our glossary of terms and definitions.

Our benchmark reports have been used by call center managers around the world to:

a) Establish an objective baseline of current performance against industry peers.
b) Identify strengths to be cultivated and weaknesses to be addressed.
c) Create roadmaps for improvement.
d) Lead toward certification as a Call Center of Excellence under the program administered by BenchmarkPortal.

As such, our reports have shown themselves to be practical, actionable tools for directional and continuous improvement.

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Section I: Contact Center Classification Metrics

In comparing a contact center's performance to its peers in the same industry, it is useful to have some basic statistical information regarding the other call centers in the industry. This Section exhibits those "demographic" metrics, such as call center size in terms of volume of calls handled, number of agents, IVR statistics, and the like

Contact Center Profile Metrics

Metric	Your Value	Industry Average	Peer Average
Inbound Calls Offered	230,308	1,775,710	396,047
Annual Inbound Call Volume Handled by Agents	215,916	662,004	372,647
Annual Inbound Call Volume Handled by the IVR	0	966,423	0
Percent Business to Business	84.00%	24.61%	82.92%
Percent Consumer to Business	16.00%	75.39%	18.64%
Percent Organized Labor (Union) -Yes	X	36.36%	85.71%
Percent Organized Labor (Union) -No		63.64%	14.29%
Full-Time Agents	47	79	64
Part-Time Agents	1	5	7

Section I (Continued)
Contact Center Classification Metrics

Metric	Your Value	Industry Average	Peer Average
Respond to Inbound Calls	70.40%	67.78%	63.24%
Initiate Outbound Calls	1.21%	9.87%	5.31%
Respond to E-mail	14.17%	9.14%	11.29%
Respond to On-line Web-chats	0.00%	1.70%	0.00%
Other	14.22%	11.52%	21.27%

Metric	Your Value	Industry Average	Peer Average
Customer Service (questions and inquiries)	77.44%	78.83%	76.93%
Order Taking and Order Tracking	0.02%	3.09%	2.91%
Technical Support	16.23%	6.87%	3.11%
Complaints	0.02%	5.24%	11.89%
Re-directing Inbound Calls	0.01%	4.66%	3.21%
Other	6.30%	1.32%	3.70%

Metric	Your Value	Industry Average	Peer Average
Annual Call Center Budget	$5,265,733	$5,851,713	$4,725,533
Average Hourly Wage for Front-line Agents	$28.10	$17.24	$24.53
Average Hourly Starting Wage	N/A	$15.67	$12.85

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Section II: Voice Channel - Performance Matrix – Client & Peer Group vs Industry Average

The challenge of every contact center manager is to balance the quality and quantity of inbound calls handled. The patented BenchmarkPortal processes include the Performance Matrix. The Performance Matrix combines quantity KPIs on the x-axis, i.e., metrics like calls/agent/hour, average talk time, agent utilization and the like (see Section III) with quality KPIs on the y-axis, i.e., metrics like average speed of answer, time on hold and the like (see Section IV)
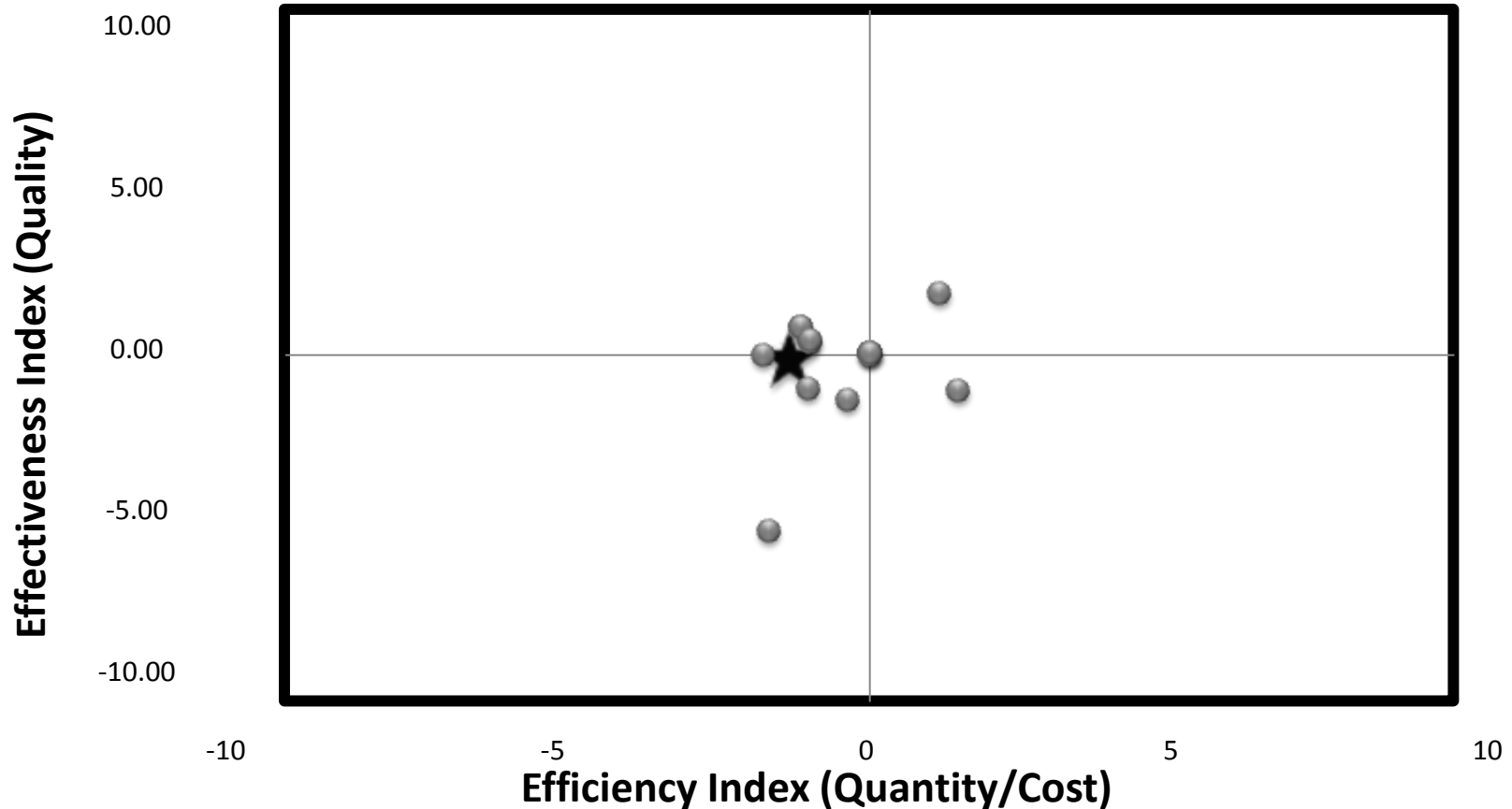
- *Star position is based upon the accuracy of data you provided. Missing metrics will decrease the accuracy of your star position.*

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Section III: Efficiency
Key Performance Indicators –Voice Channel

This section brings together those efficiency-related (productivity) Inbound Call KPIs that are critical to contact center managers for both management and improvement initiatives. The table below contains eleven cost-related KPIs that are indicative of a contact center's cost efficiency. Statistics shown include the industry average and gap for each KPI as computed from our database.

Mertic	Your Value	Industry Average	Peer Average	Industry Gap	Peer Gap
Inbound Calls per Agent per Hour	4.77	5.76	5.20	-0.99	-0.43
Cost per Inbound Call in Dollars	$8.34	$6.16	$7.57	-$2.18	-$0.78
Average Inbound Call Talk Time in Minutes	5.00	4.16	4.40	-0.84	-0.60
Average Inbound After Call Work in Minutes	3.11	2.30	2.66	-0.81	-0.45
Agent Utilization in Percent	67.32%	70.95%	69.68%	-3.63%	-2.36%
Agent Occupancy in Percent	95.70%	83.65%	83.23%	12.05%	12.47%
Adherence to Schedule in Percent	N/A	90.60%	91.50%	N/A	N/A
Average Agent Attendance in Percent	89.67%	93.03%	91.20%	-3.36%	-1.53%
Inbound Call Auxiliary Time in Percent	12.67%	16.83%	22.55%	4.16%	9.88%
Agents/Supervisor Ratio	15.00	13.91	14.25	1.09	0.75
Turnover of Full-time Agents in Percent	23.65%	19.38%	19.53%	-4.27%	-4.12%

Note: Gaps which have a negative impact on cost efficiency are shown in red with a minus sign. Gaps in blue without a minus sign have a positive impact on cost efficiency relative to the industry average.

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Section IV: Effectiveness
Key Performance Indicators – Voice Channel

The table below contains the eleven KPIs most indicative of the contact center's effectiveness (quality). Statistics shown include the industry average and gap for each KPI as computed from our database.

Metric	Your Value	Industry Average	Peer Average	Industry Gap	Peer Gap
Top Box Customer Satisfaction in Percent	69.36%	62.84%	61.48%	6.52%	7.88%
Bottom Box Customer Satisfaction in Percent	5.35%	2.67%	3.92%	-2.68%	-1.43%
Top Box Agent Satisfaction in Percent	N/A	37.93%	17.22%	N/A	N/A
Bottom Box Agent Satisfaction in Percent	N/A	10.00%	7.15%	N/A	N/A
Inbound Calls Closed on First Call in Percent	80.62%	84.81%	80.76%	-4.19%	-0.14%
Inboud Calls Average Speed of Answer in Seconds	98.00	81.67	112.21	-16.33	14.21
Inbound Calls Transferred in Percent	7.50%	9.63%	8.86%	2.13%	1.36%
Average Hold Time Inbound Calls in Seconds	10.00	47.51	42.92	37.51	32.92
Average Time in Queue Inbound Calls in Seconds	93.00	202.90	135.74	109.90	42.74
Average Inbound Calls Abandoned in Percent	5.60%	9.63%	8.86%	4.03%	3.26%

Note: Gaps which have a negative impact on cost efficiency are shown in red with a minus sign. Gaps in blue without a minus sign have a positive impact on cost efficiency relative to the industry average.

Section V: Multi Channel Metrics
Key Performance Indicators

Multichannel KPI comparisons depicted in this section aggregate multichannel data for All Industries in our growing database until such time as sufficient data has been gathered and validated to allow Industry-specific comparisons. "All Industry" comparisons with your Industry are useful for directional insights into performance improvement but are not to be considered definitive for a specific Industry.

Annual Volume	Your Value	All Industry Average
Outbound Calls Annual Volume	27,252	205,014
E-Mail Annual Total Volume	76,606	66,684
Social Media Annual Volume	N/A	6,949
Web Chat Annual Volume	N/A	28,163
Postal Mail	N/A	91,769
Fax	17.00	18,143
Other Annual Volume	141	81,546

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Section V (Continued)
Multi Channel All Industry Metrics

Outbound Calls	Your Value	All Industry Average	Gap
Outbound Calls Average Talk Time in MINUTES	1.15	3.30	2.15
Outbound Calls After Call Work Time in MINUTES	N/A	1.43	N/A
Outbound Calls Average Cost Per	$1.18	$5.56	$4.38

E-mail	Your Value	All Industry Average	Gap
E-mail Response Time in HOURS	10.12	12.73	2.61
E-mail Average Handle Time in MINUTES	7.48	7.21	-0.27
E-mail First Contact Resolution Rate Percent	42.60%	81.45%	-38.85%
E-mail Contact Upsell Rate	N/A	8.60%	N/A
E-mail Average Cost Per	$7.70	$7.19	-$0.51

Social Media	Your Value	All Industry Average	Gap
Social Media Response Time in HOURS	N/A	1.71	N/A
Social Media Average Handle Time in MINUTES	N/A	7.08	N/A
Social Media Cost Per	N/A	$4.35	N/A

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Section V (Continued)
Multi Channel All Industry Metrics

Web Chat	Your Value	All Industry Average	Gap
Web Chat Response Time in SECONDS	N/A	72.29	N/A
Web Chat Average Handle Time in MINUTES	N/A	9.80	N/A
Web Chat First Contact Resolution Rate Percent	N/A	71.13%	N/A
E-mail Contact Upsell Rate	N/A	7.70%	N/A
Web Chat Cost Per	N/A	$9.74	N/A

Postal Mail	Your Value	All Industry Average	Gap
Postal Mail Handle Time in MINUTES	N/A	6.73	N/A
Postal Mail Cost Per	N/A	$8.68	N/A

Fax	Your Value	All Industry Average	Gap
Fax Average Handle Time in MINUTES	3.00	6.29	3.29
Fax Cost Per	$3.09	$5.63	$2.54

Other	Your Value	All Industry Average	Gap
Other Average Handle Time in MINUTES	31.53	12.59	-18.94
Other Mail Cost Per	$32.44	$15.43	-$17.01

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Section VI: Customer Satisfaction
Formal Collection Process

The graphic below represents the percent of Centers that have a formal mechanism to collect Customer Satisfaction. It is difficult to imagine effective improvement programs that do not include "the Voice of the Customer" in one form or another.
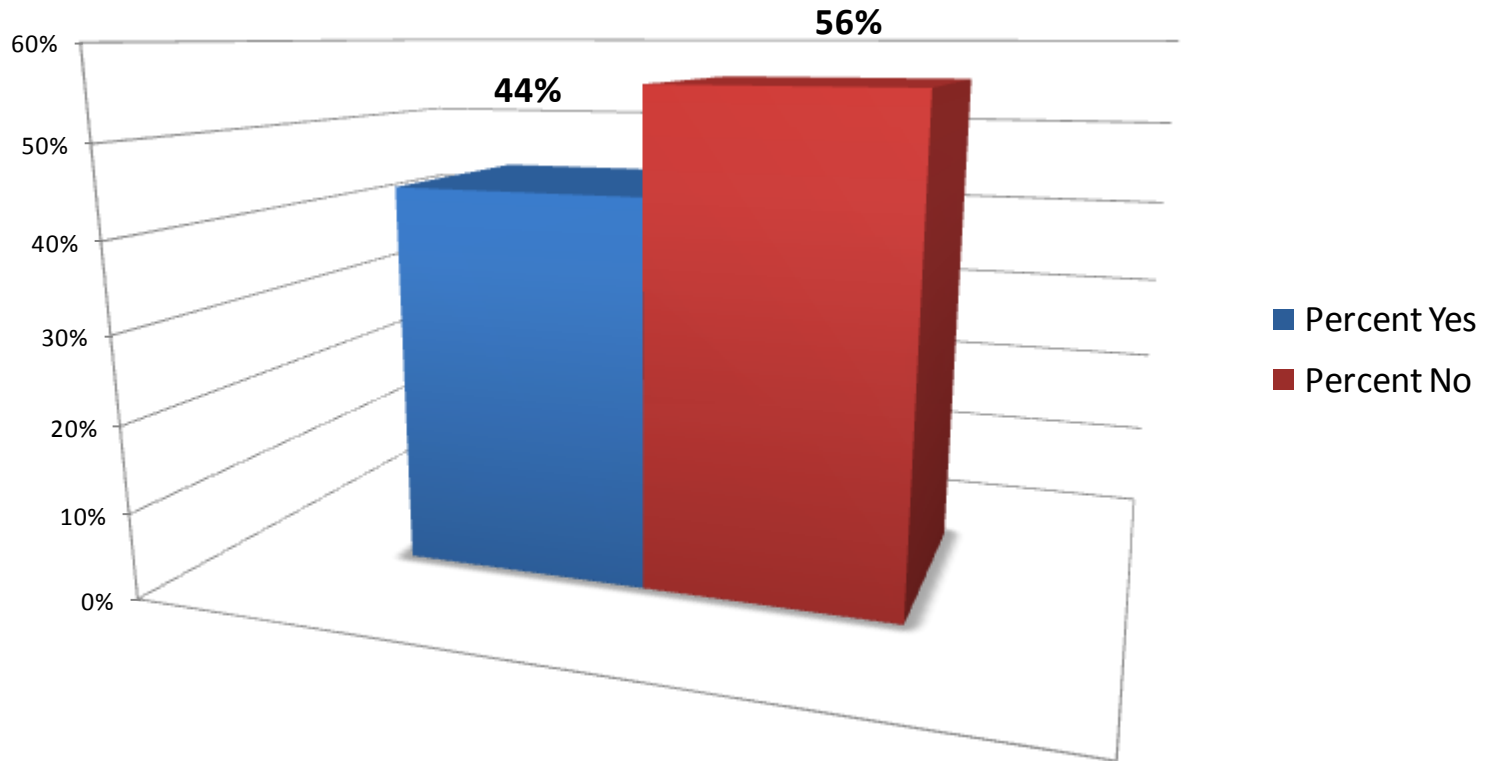
Appendix A
BenchmarkPortal Background

BenchmarkPortal hosts a data mart of key performance metrics, collected from thousands of call centers. This database, which originated at Purdue University (Indiana, U.S.A.) under Dr. Jon Anton and Professor Richard Feinberg, has become the worldwide source for best practice information for customer service, sales, collections, and technical support call centers.

BenchmarkPortal manages the International Benchmarking Community, which is a membership organization of call center managers and quality assurance professionals dedicated to using best practice comparison information as a key management decision driver.

Bruce Belfiore now leads this research into best practices. The BenchmarkPortal team publishes books and white papers to educate contact center managers. They continually strive to identify best practices in all aspects of contact center operations.

In addition to best practices benchmarking and research, BenchmarkPortal offers the following to the contact center community:

- Center of Excellence Certification to Contact Centers that are among the highest performers in their industries.

- Performance assessments for contact centers

- Specialized consulting assignments. (see "core competencies" on next page)

- Certificated training for call center professionals through the College of Call Center Excellence (http://www.thecollegeofcallcenterexcellence.com/)

- Automated benchmarking services (iBenchmark) to facilitate continuous improvement programs for contact centers in all sectors.

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Appendix B
Core Competencies of the BenchmarkPortal Team

Agent recruiting and screening	Outsourcing selection and contracting	Quality assurance measurement
Benchmarking best-in-class	Electronic commerce	RFP preparation and fielding
Call center design and architecture	E-mail management issues	Sales best practices
Call center market research	Environmental	Telecom optimization
Call flow and work flow	Hosted vs. On-site Platforms	Training and Certification
Call forecasting	Human resources Implementation	Vendor selection and contracting
Call monitoring/quality control	Internet customer service	Virtual call centers
Collections	Intranet platform design Operations	Web-based training
Computer hardware/software	Multi-channel contact centers	Workforce management
CRM implementation strategies	Process re-engineering	
Culture change	Project management	

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Appendix C
Principal Investigator Professional Background

Bruce Belfiore is Senior Research Executive and CEO of BenchmarkPortal, which provides best practices information to the customer contact industry worldwide.

Bruce is also the provost of the College of Call Center Excellence, which brings leading edge curricula to call center professionals through in-person workshops and online classes. He has also taught the course "Call Center Management" at Purdue University. He is the host of *CallTalk™,* the industry's first online radio program which features experts from the contact center industry in an interactive, talk-show format.

Bruce is the author of the books *Benchmarking for Profits!, a manual for best practices benchmarking*, as well as its sequel, *Benchmarking at its Best for Contact Centers*. He is currently working on another book, *Shareholder Value and Customer Contact*.

Bruce has also authored or co-authored numerous research papers and best practices studies and articles focused on contact center topics. He authors regular online articles under the rubrics *CallTalk Caramels™* and *Contact Center Economics 101.* He is a consultant to call centers in a wide variety of industries seeking to improve their results, and is noted for helping to calculate the financial impact of proposed changes.

Bruce holds both U.S. and European nationality. He has divided his career between North America and Europe, and has fulfilled work assignments in Asia and Africa. He has worked in finance as a banker and CFO for multinational organizations, and in management consulting with the Bain & Co. management consulting group. While in Europe, Bruce was also a speaker and writer on business topics in English and Italian, and was adjunct professor of the Xavier University business school campus in Milan, Italy.

Bruce holds an A.B. degree from Harvard College, a J.D degree from Harvard Law School, and an MBA degree from Harvard Business School. He is the holder of a registered patent for a symbolic language system known as Simbly™, with important call center applications.

Bruce can be reached at BruceBelfiore@BenchmarkPortal.com.

Appendix D
Glossary of Terms

Note: The time periods for which you should report metrics are usually the most recent 12 months for which you have data, except for satisfaction data, which are for the most recent 90-day period. New centers and centers which have recently moved or undergone major changes in technology or organization should discuss the appropriate time period to use with their BenchmarkPortal expert.

A

Abandon Rate: This is the percentage of calls that get connected to the ACD, but get disconnected by the caller before reaching an Agent, or before completing a process within the IVR. The abandon rate is the percentage of calls that are abandoned compared to calls received.

ACD: See Automatic Call Distributor.

Adherence to Schedule: A measure of whether Agents are "on the job" as scheduled. This percentage represents how closely an Agent adheres to his/her detailed work schedule as provided by the workforce management system. 100% adherence means that the Agent was exactly where they were supposed to be at the time projected in their schedule. The scheduled time allows for meetings with the supervisor, education, plus answering customer phone calls. The question, "how often do Agents deviate from their schedule" is answered by this metric.

After Call Work Time: Call-related work that is done when an Agent is not on a call. This is the cumulative amount of time Agents spend on performing follow-up work after the Agent has disconnected from the caller, divided by the total number of calls handled by Agents. The data for after call work time is taken from the system.

Agent: A general term for someone who handles telephone calls in a call center. Other common names for the same job include, but are not limited to: operator, associate, sales associate, collections specialist, customer service representative (CSR), or customer care representative.

Agent Development: A process designed to address the Agent's individual needs, and to help them build their work skills and achieve their career objectives. This may include, but not be limited to, work behaviors expected, taught, measured and tracked; continuous education offered and encouraged; and career planning.

Appendix D
Glossary of Terms

Agent Occupancy: The percentage of total paid hours of an Agent's shift during which the Agent is logged in to the ACD or other technology and is available to handle inbound phone, outbound phone, e-mail, chat and other productive work (white mail or back office work), divided by the total scheduled hours at work.

Agent Turnover: The number of Agents who left their "Agent job" (voluntarily or involuntarily) during the previous 12-month period, divided by the total number of Agents working, expressed as a percentage. Track those who were hired during the period, minus those who left their job during the same period. The average number of Agents working is calculated by taking the beginning-of-the-year Agent head count plus the end-of-year Agent head-count and dividing that number by two. ***Do not include attrition during training.***

Where:

$$Annual\,Turnover \quad (\%) = \left(\frac{P}{A + R - P} \right) * 100$$

      A = the total number of Agents working during the specified period;

      R = the number of new-hires during the specified period; and

      P = the number of Agents that left the center during the specified period.

Agent Utilization Rate (a.k.a. Utilization):   *(NOTE: this definition was expanded in November, 2015, to account for the shift towards multi-channel operations. Dedicated inbound call centers are not affected by this change; only multi-channel centers are affected.)*. Utilization is the percentage of the Agents' shift engaged in productive work. For centers which are completely or almost-completely engaged in taking inbound calls, this will mean the percentage of logged-in time during which the Agent is in active telephone mode (involving talk time, hold time and after-call work time). For multi-channel centers, utilization will also capture productive time engaged in e-mail, chat, outbound and other productive work (responding to postal mail or performing productive administrative/"back-office" work). Managers of multi-channel centers must work to gather accurate information on productive time from appropriate systems (e-mail, chat, outbound systems, etc.), and be ready to make those reports available for review.

NOTE! FOR SINGLE-FUNCTION, DEDICATED AGENT CENTERS, PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING FORMULA: *(e.g., Agents that handle only inbound calls or only e-mail or outbound calls)*

AVERAGE SINGLE FUNCTION UTILIZATION PER DAY =

(Avg. Contact Time in Min. + After Contact Time in Min) X (Avg Contacts per Shift)

Logged-in Time-in-Minutes per Shift

NOTE! FOR BLENDED MULTI-CHANNEL CENTERS, PLEASE USE THIS FORMULA:

Inbound calls: (Avg. Contact Time + Avg. After Contact Work Time) X (Avg Contacts per Shift) **PLUS**

Outbound calls: (Avg. Contact Time + Avg. After Contact Time) X (Avg Contacts per Shift) **PLUS**

E-mails: (Avg. Contact Time + Avg. After Contact Time) X (Avg Contacts per Shift) **PLUS**

Web Chats: (Avg. Contact Time + Avg. After Contact Time) X (Avg Contacts per Shift) **PLUS**

Social Media: (Avg. Contact Time + Avg. After Contact Time) X (Avg Contacts per Shift) **PLUS**

Postal Mail/Back Ofc work: (Postal Mail/Back Ofc Work Time) X (Avg Transactions per Shift) **=**

Total Utilized Minutes per Shift

AVERAGE MULTI-CHANNEL/FUNCTION UTILIZATION PER DAY =

Total Utilized Minutes per Shift

Logged-in Time-in-Minutes per shift

Average Dials per Hour per Agent. This is the sum of all outbound calls manually or automatically dialed and connected to an Agent divided by the total of the Agent hours devoted to outbound calls.

Average Handle Time: See Handle Time.

Average Hold Time: The time during which an Agent placed a call on hold during the body of a call. This is the cumulative total of all hold time, divided by the number of calls placed on hold, for the period that is measured (please use annual metrics).

Average Occupancy in Percent: See Occupancy.

Average Paid Shift Length in Hours: The average length of an Agent shift, including lunch and breaks, e.g., 8 hours, 10 hours, etc.

Average Response Time: This is an average of the amount of time, rounded to hours, that elapse while a contact center to respond to a non-voice inbound customer contact (E-mail, Web Chat, FAX, White Mail, etc.).

Average Sale Value per Call: This number is determined by taking the total sales in dollars and dividing it by the total number of calls handled that result in a sale during the same period of time.

Average Speed of Answer (ASA): This is the cumulative total length of time of calls that are in queue or that are ringing before being answered by an Agent, divided by the total numbers of calls answered. This includes both IVR-handled calls and calls handled by an Agent.

Average Talk Time: This is the sum total of Agents' time-in-talk mode, divided by the total number of calls handled by Agents.

Average Time between Calls (a.k.a. Idle Time): This is the average number of minutes during which the Agent is logged into the system in a ready state, waiting for the next call. In other words, it is the average idle time in minutes an Agent spends in waiting mode between calls.

Average Time in Queue: This is the cumulative total length of time of calls spend in queue before being answered by an Agent. It is the time-in-wait time incurred by a call directed to a split/skill, which includes the time of wait during transfers. This is the average wait time that a caller endures waiting for an Agent to answer the telephone after being placed in the queue by the ACD. This differs from average speed of answer, because this calculation includes only calls that actually had a wait time. This metric is also known as Average Time of Delay. Most ACD systems provide this number.

Average Time to Abandonment: This is the average amount of time a customer will wait in queue before abandoning.

Alternate Points of Contact: Refers to contact channels other than phone that a customer can use to communicate with a contact center, such as email, web chat, fax, social media, and postal mail. (See also Contact Channel.)

Analytics and Reporting Process: A process designed to provide a means to collect, store, and analyze call center performance data, and caller inquiry data. The products of this process are actionable reports for Agents, Supervisors, Mangers, and other departments. As financial margins in small centers are often narrow, these centers are more prone to "bleed red" when not managed efficiently.

Automatic Call Distributor (ACD): A device used to manage and distribute incoming calls to a specific group of terminals (Agents).

Automatic Dialer (aka, Autodialer): A device used to generate outbound calls based on a call list, and distribute answered outbound calls to a specific group of terminals (Agents) for completion.

Automatic Number Identification (ANI): ANI is a service of telecommunications carriers, which identifies the telephone number of the calling party. It is commonly used for billing, call routing and database synchronization. There are several specific technologies that fit under the umbrella of ANI, including caller ID.

Auto Response: An auto-response system automatically returns a prewritten message to anyone who submits e-mail to a particular address, whether an individual or a Web site. Auto-response systems are widely used by Web sites for the purpose of responding to visitor comments and suggestions in a preliminary way. You may see an auto-responder in cases where you purchase something online, receiving a "thank you for your order" e-mail, etc.

Auxiliary (AUX) Time in Percent: This is the average amount of time per shift, in percent, that an Agent is logged into an AUX state. Auxiliary time may include, but is not limited to, times for training, meetings, assigned off-line work, e-mails, or other job-related tasks. After Call Work Time and Outbound dialing activity is work related, therefore it is not considered Auxiliary Time and therefore it is inappropriate for AUX-codes to be used as such.

Average Attendance in Percent: Actual number of shifts worked divided by the planned number of shifts multiplied by 100. This is a percentage representing how often Agents are NOT absent from work due to an unplanned absence (not to include excused absences, i.e., vacation, authorized leave, FMLA, jury duty, etc.). This is calculated by dividing the total number of unexcused absences by the total number of planned shifts, then subtracting the resulting number from 100.

Average Cost per Call/Contact: See Cost per Call/Contact.

Average Total Live Connects per Agent per Hour: This is the sum of Live Outbound Call Connects divided by total Agent hours. This includes all live conversations to numbers dialed.

Average Total Right Party Connects (RPC) per Agent per Hour: This is the sum of all Right Party (Decision-Maker) Outbound Call Connects divided by total of all Agent hours. (Typically, the correct party connection is able to lead to a resolution.)

B

Base Salary per Year: This is the gross annual base earnings (or guaranteed earnings before incentive pay) of an Agent. (Based on 2080 annual paid hours for a full time employee).

Best Practice: Best practice is variously used to describe the best performing metric in a category, or a proven process or technology that results in optimal performance as measured through benchmarking.

Blended Agents: The term "Blended Agents" refers to Agents that are scheduled to split their workload between handling inbound calls and making outbound calls. Blended Agents can also refer to Agents who spend a portion of their work schedule engaged in non-telephone activities such as handling e-mails, chat sessions, back-office work, and so forth.

Bonus or Incentive Compensation: Annual compensation that is over and above the base wage. This is measured, per Agent, by dollar or percentage above the hourly wage.

Bottom Box Agent Satisfaction: The percentage of lowest possible scores received on the question: "Overall, how satisfied are you with your position?" (a "lowest" score of 1 out of 5, or the bottom of whatever scale you use.)

Bottom Box Caller Satisfaction: The percentage of lowest possible scores received on the question: "Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received during your call to our center?" (A "lowest" score of 1 out of 5, or the bottom of whatever scale you use.)

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Budget: The annual call center budget is the total annual dollar amount attributed to and allocated for <u>all</u> expenses associated with the operation of the call center <u>for which the call center manager is accountable</u>. The annual budget should include all fully loaded direct and indirect costs for budgetary line items such as: labor, benefits, and incentives for Agents, management, training, and support personnel; HR costs (e.g., recruiting, screening, training); telephony expenses (toll, trunks, equipment); technology purchases/installation (hardware, and software); technology maintenance (hardware and software) network; furniture, fixtures, decorations, etc.; utilities (gas, water, power, UPS backup); maintenance (repair, janitorial, upkeep); supplies; overhead expenses and charge-backs for shared corporate costs (e.g., legal, risk management, payroll administration, IT support, security, accounting, grounds keeping, real estate, floor space, common areas, etc.) as applicable.)

Burdened Cost per Agent: The annualized average cost of an Agent, including salary, commissions, bonus, and benefits.

Business to Business: This is the percentage of calls exchanged with other businesses as opposed to end-user (individual customer) callers.

C

Calculated Cost per Call in Dollars: The Annual Budget divided by Annual Calls Handled (total of IVR-handled and Agent-handled calls). In blended outbound activity, take the percent of the Annual Budget dedicated to Outbound call-occupied time, divided by live Outbound calls handled.

Calculated Cost per Call Minute in Dollars: The quotient of Annual Budget divided by Annual Calls Handled (both technology-handled and Agent-handled calls), divided by Average Call Handle Time (the sum of Talk Time + Hold Time + After Call Work Time).

Annual Budget	Live calls handled	Live call time per call	Cost per minute
$800,000	/ 200,000 = $4 cost per call	/ 5 minutes	$4 / 5 = $0.80

Calculated Calls per Contact in Dollars: The Annual Budget divided by total Annual Contacts from all channels (Agent handled and Automated) that are handled by the contact center or location.

Calculated Calls per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) in Dollars: The value derived from dividing the annual budget by the total number of FTE's. (Annual Budget / Total FTE's)

Calculated Self-Service in Percent: The value given from total number of annual calls handled by the IVR divided by the sum of all IVR-handled calls and Agent-handled calls, expressed as a percent.

((Annual IVR-Handled Calls) / (Annual IV-R Handled Calls + Annual Agent-Handled Calls) X 100)

Call Center Performance Evaluation: This is a process designed to provide a visible means to manage the call center and report its accomplishments to upper management. Properly implemented, it defines those key performance indicators (KPIs) that are optimal to manage the call center, determines the frequency with which to collect and analyze performance KPIs, and provides an understanding and guidance of how to manage the center if KPIs fall below goals.

Call Quality Monitoring: A process designed to observe and evaluate from 5 to 10 calls per month for each Agent, and to record the evaluations on a monitoring form to be discussed by the Supervisor and the Agent during the coaching process.

Call Recording: A technology that enables call centers to capture and record most customer/Agent telephone interactions. See Call Quality Monitoring Process.

Call Routing Process: (See also ACD) This is a process designed to ensure that each call is routed to the next available Agent with the proper skills and training to handle the call in the most effective and efficient manner possible. Call routing often includes identifying "high-value callers" and routing them to a shorter queue.

Caller Satisfaction: This is a state of mind that a customer has regarding his or her most recent interaction with a call center. It is typically measured by asking the question: "Overall, how satisfied were you with the telephone interaction you just had?"

Caller Satisfaction Collection Process: An established, routine process of gathering customer feedback regarding a recent call center contact experience. This process includes after-call IVR surveys, follow-up outbound (live Agent) calls, follow-up email surveys, and the like.

Caller Satisfaction Outbound Process: A standard (1 to 5) rating process of gathering customer feedback regarding a recent contact center-initiated call experience. This process includes after-call IVR surveys, follow-up outbound (live Agent) calls, follow-up e-mail surveys, and the like.

Caller Self-Service Process: This is a process designed to a) to have the caller input into the IVR information about themselves and the reason for their call in order to minimize live-Agent time, and b) to migrate low-value calls to the IVR, where the caller's question can be answered by the IVR without the caller talking to an-Agent.

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Calls Blocked in Percent: The total number of calls that did not connect with the ACD divided by the total number of calls offered plus blocked calls multiplied by 100. These are calls that never make it to the ACD. Examples of blocked calls are: "busy signals," "number not in service" messages, etc. This number is commonly furnished by the telecommunications provider.

Calls Handled: These are the total number of unique inbound calls received in a given year by the center that are completed by an Agent, plus those completed by the IVR. The numeric value for calls handled must be equal to or less than calls offered, and should be approximate to the numeric value of calls offered less those abandoned. (This number is often provided by your ACD.)

Calls Handled by Agent-Inbound: These are the total number of unique inbound calls received in a given year by the center that are completed by an Agent. The sum of this value, when added to the sum of calls handled by the IVR, should equal the value for calls handled by the center. (This number is often provided by your ACD.)

Calls Handled by Agent-Outbound: These are the total number of outbound calls connected during a given period of time by the center that are completed by an Agent.

Calls Handled by IVR: These are the total number of unique inbound calls received in a given year by the center that are completed by the IVR. The sum of this value, when added to the sum of calls handled by Agents, should equal the value for calls handled by the center. (This number is often provided by your ACD.)

Calls Offered: This is the total number of inbound calls received at the ACD in a given year by the center. (This number is provided by your ACD.)

Calls per Hour: The total number of calls handled per Agent per shift divided by the total number hours worked; i.e., 48 live calls per shift / 6 hours occupied per shift = 8 calls per hour

Calls Resolved on First Call: This is the total numbers of calls that were completely resolved during the course of the first inbound call initiated by the customer (and that therefore do not require a call back to resolve the issue) divided by total numbers of calls handled by Agents – expressed as a percent. Also known as first call resolution (FCR) and first time final.

Calls Transferred in Percent: The total number of calls transferred by Agents (due to their inability to properly or completely handle the call – for whatever reason), divided by the total number of unique calls handled by Agents. This would not include voluntary transfers to other departments after resolution occurs for the initial call reason.

Campaign: See Outbound Call Campaign

Campaign List: Outbound call dialing list(s) used in connection with Automatic (Predictive) Outbound Dialers. These lists are fed into the automatic dialer throughout the calling day until all calls have been completed or until an answering machine response protocol has been employed. Uncompleted campaigns are carried over to the next day(s).

Chat Session: See Web Chat.

Computer-Telephony Integration (CTI): This refers to the technology that enables the coordination and integration of computers with telephone systems. Functions of CTI include: Calling Line Information Display, Screen Population (on call answer), On Screen Dial, Preview and Predictive Dial, and On Screen Call Control. For outbound calling such as telemarketing, CTI pre-dials the callers, matches the number of a called party with a customer record and displays it for reference by the Agent when talking to the customer.

Connects: See Live Connect Percent.

Consumer to Business: This is the percentage of calls exchanged with people working for businesses as opposed to calls from individuals calling in their private capacity.

Contact Channel: See Customer Access Channels.

Contacts per Hour: The total number of customer contacts from all channels handled per Agent per shift, divided by the total hours worked- i.e., 48 live calls per shift / 6 hours occupied per shift = 8 calls per hour

Contacts Resolved on First Call: This is the total numbers of customer contacts from all channels that were completely resolved during the course of the first contact initiated by the customer (and therefore do not require a follow-up contact to resolve the issue) divided by total numbers of contacts from all channels handled by Agents – expressed as a percent (Also known as First Contact Resolution (FCR) or First Time Final).

Cost per Call: This is the sum of all costs for running the call center for the period divided by the number of calls handled in the call center for the same period. This includes all calls for all reasons whether handled by an Agent or technology, such as IVR. You can also just calculate the cost per call for Agent-handled calls. The number of calls received will be captured by the ACD. The total cost of the center can be obtained from your accounting department.

Cost per Contact:

a) Across all channels: This is the sum of all costs for running the call center for the specified period, divided by the number of contacts handled in the call center for the same period for all contact channels, including phone (live Agent and IVR), e-mail, web-chat.

b) By channel: This is the sum of all costs for running the call center for the specified period divided by the number of contacts handled in the call center for the same period for each contact channel, factored by its percentage of total contacts for all channels for the period, as follows:

1. Cost per Agent Handled phone contact = (Budget / # Agent Handled phone contacts) x (# Agent Handled phone contacts / total sum of all contacts)

2. Cost per IVR Self-Service contact = (Budget / # IVR Self-Service contacts) x (# IVR Self-Service contacts / total sum of all contacts)

3. Cost per E-mail contact = (Budget / # E-mail contacts) x (# E-mail contacts / total sum of all contacts)

4. Cost per Web Chat contact = (Budget / # Web Chat contacts) x (# Web Chat contacts / total sum of all contacts)

Cross-Sell: A cross-sell occurs when an Agent recognizes that the caller might be able to use a product from the same company, but in a totally different product line. For instance, an Agent at a banking call center who is opening a savings account for a caller might recognize the advantage for the caller to purchase a CD from the bank at a higher interest rate.

CTI: See Computer-Telephony Integration.

Customer Access Channels: Customer access channels are the multiple ways that customers can reach out and contact a company. A few of the obvious access channels are telephone, e-mail, fax, normal mail, kiosk, and face-to-face.

Customer Centric: Placing the wants and needs of the customer as the central focus of all business practices within the firm. Seeing your business through the "eyes of the customer."

Customer Lifetime Value: The imputed dollar revenues or profits (depending on formula) generated by the customer for as long as the customer remains with the firm.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM): This process is designed to ensure that the Agent taking a call is aware of all aspects of the caller's information, including such things as purchasing history, previous contacts, credit rating, channel preferences, value to the company, and many more. The CRM process allows the Agent to use this caller information to better serve the caller's needs during the call handling experience.

Customer Retention: The process of keeping a customer as opposed to losing the customer to the competition. A percentage of this figure would be the tenure of the average customer with the firm as computed by the sum of the time of all customers with the firm divided by the number of customers.

Customer Satisfaction: This is a state of mind that a customer has about a company in which their expectations have been met or exceeded over the lifetime of the product. This leads to company loyalty and product repurchase.

Customer Share: The percent of those who purchase the item of interest from a given firm. This is computed as the number of customers who purchase the item from a given firm divided by the number of customers who purchase the item from all firms combined.

Customer Value Segment: Customer value segmentation strives to segment customers based on their financial value to the company. This value is usually based on a combination of the total amount of money that a customer spends with the company, and the profitability of that revenue stream. The best example would be the frequent flyer programs that the airlines have. United, for instance, has the following value segments with its frequent flyer program: a) regular frequent flyer, b) premium frequent flyer, and c) 1K frequent flyer.

D

Dedicated Outbound Agent: This describes the differentiated skill of an Agent who is assigned and occupied full time to an Outbound team or department in the Contact Center. Such Agents typically will not switch to inbound calls or other activity during the day. This is in contrast with Blended Agent activity.

Dial Attempts: A volume measure of all dials made to a predetermined customer list. The attempt includes the ring, no answer, voice mail, and/or connects. It becomes the baseline of Outbound activity typically used for occupancy confirmation.

DNIS: Dialed Number Identification Service. A carrier service for 800/888 and 900 numbers that forwards the number dialed by the caller to the called party.

E

Effectiveness Index: The index is calculated by statistically combining into an index those metrics that are indicative of effective performance. This is considered to be a quality metric and impacts customer-focused processes.

Efficiency Index: The index is calculated by statistically combining into an index those metrics that are indicative of efficient performance. This is considered to be a productivity metric and focuses on the cost investment of time or money in operating the business.

E-Mail Auto Response: See Auto Response.

External Metrics: These are usually characterized as "soft" numbers as they are the collected attitudes, opinions, and emotions of customers or other interested parties. The data may be collected by survey, focus group, or interview methods. This represents the customer perspective.

F

Full-time Agents: A full-time Agent is one who works 40 hours or more per week, or for whatever comparable equivalent is used. In some cases, full-time Agents are counted at 36 hour per week. As this is an operational metric, the specific hours worked is less important than the number of Agents working in the capacity of a full-time Agent.

Full-time Equivalent (FTE): This is an operations and workforce metric that aggregates the amount of all labor used in terms of a full-time workforce. It is derived by adding the cumulative sum of labor hours for both full-time and part-time employees for a specified period and dividing its sum by 40.

Total FTE's = (total average hours of full-time Agents + total average hours of part-time Agents)/40

Agent Type	Agent Head-Count	Average Hrs Worked /Wk / Agent	Total Weekly Hours	Full-Time Equivalent Hours	Total FTE's
Full-time	50	40	2000		50
Part-time	20	30	600	40	15
Totals	70	70	2600	40	65

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E

Effectiveness Index: The index is calculated by statistically combining into an index those metrics that are indicative of effective performance. This is considered to be a quality metric and impacts customer-focused processes.

Internal Metrics: These are generated by computers internal to call center technology (PBS, ACD, or VRU) or by departments such as Accounting, Finance, or Human Resources. Internal metrics are commonly perceived as "hard" numbers. Examples include average handle time, queue time, and abandon rate. These metrics generally do not reflect the view the customer has of your company.

IVR (Interactive Voice Response): Technology that both routes calls and allows a customer to interact with the data systems by responding to a menu of options. Responses are typically entered by pressing the keys on the telephone keypad; however, voice recognition is becoming more commonly integrated into the process.

IVR Containment: See Percent IVR Containment.

IVR Opt Out: Measured in percent, this is the number of callers who, during their call to your center, initially attempt to find solutions via the IVR, but then elect to speak with an Agent. This is not the same as those who choose to speak to an Agent as an initial menu option.

K

Key Performance Indicator (a.k.a. KPI): A set of quantifiable measures that a contact center uses to gauge or compare performance in terms of meeting their operational and strategic goals. Common KPI metrics include cost per call, average speed of answer, hold time, occupancy, and utilization.

L

Labor Union: A legally recognized professional body organized for the purpose of supporting the needs of its members through the collective bargaining of wages, benefits, and working conditions.

List Penetration: (See also Campaign List.) A telemarketing metric that measures the percentage of the daily calling list (or "campaign") that result in a completed live call.

Live Connect Percent: This is the percentage of calls made where an person answers divided by the total calls attempted. Within the live connects, you can measure "Right-Party (Decision Maker) Connect."   Live connects do not to include hang-ups, voice-recorders, call intercepts, busy tones, etc.).

M

Minutes of Telephone Usage: This is the annual number of minutes of telephone usage by the call center for calls. This does not include the phone usage for executive, administrative, and support personnel. This number is often provided by your telecommunications service provider (the phone company).

Moment of Truth: MOT is a critical interaction between the customer and the product or service or employee that determines whether the customer will continue to purchase from the vendor.

Multi-Channel Center: In a multi-channel contact center, an Agent handles incoming and outgoing calls, e-mail, live chats, and other tasks such as letters, Faxes etc. as needed. Need is determined by contact center traffic levels as they occur randomly throughout the shift. This differs from a blended contact center in that the traffic flow is not forecasted, regulated, or managed on a business-rules driven, scheduled basis.

O

Occupancy: This is the total staffed time logged in to the ACD (including ready/available, engaged on call, in ACW, or other active states) or other technology and is available to handle inbound phone, outbound phone, e-mail, chat and other productive work (white mail or back office work), divided by the total scheduled (paid) hours at work.

Order Taking and Tracking: This is a specific function of customer service and it means that this call center specializes in taking and tracking orders.

Outbound Call Campaign: For outbound call centers, a campaign is a specific operation to call a pre-selected list of individuals for a specific purpose. (See Outbound Call Types below.)

Outbound Call Types: In benchmarking you can compare to others by call function in three distinct service call types: (1) Sales / Leads / Telemarketing; (2) Collections; (3) Surveys /Research / Follow-up Contacts.

Outbound Performance Metrics: These are all the measurements that indicate the performance of an outbound telephone Agent or contact center. Examples include Sales per Agent per Shift or measures related to results, revenue, or resolution.

Outsourcing: The process of contracting through a third-party, teleservices company to manage the call-handling experience for a company that: a) doesn't have the core competency to handle telephone calls from its customers, and/or b) has too many calls to handle for its existing base of trained Agents. The third-party teleservices company typically specializes in call handling as their only core competency.

P

Part-time Agents: A Part-time Agent is one who works a schedule of less than 36 hours per week or whatever equivalent part-time cap is used by your center. As this is an operational metric, the specific hours worked is less important than the number of Agents working in the capacity of a part-time Agent, e.g.,. if an Agent works 30 hours part-time compared to 40 hours full-time, they are .75 equivalent.

PBX: A telephone switching device owned by a private company vs. one owned by a common carrier.

Peer Group: Peer Group most often refers to the call centers that have the same profile of activities as your company. For instance, a peer group might be all call centers handling mostly inbound calls that are mostly business-to-business in a call center of over 100 Agents for a company with annual revenues of over one billion dollars. Peer group does not necessarily connote competitors.

Penetration Level: See List Penetration.

Percent Abandoned: See Abandon Rate.

Percent Agent Utilization: See Agent Utilization Rate.

Percent Attendance: See Average Attendance in Percent.

Percent Blocked Calls: See Calls Blocked.

Percent Calls Handled on the First Call (a.k.a. First Time Final): See Calls Resolved on First Call.

Percent IVR Containment (aka, Percentage of IVR Self-Service): This is the percentage of calls that were completely resolved within the IVR and were not forwarded to an Agent.

Percentage Live Connects to Total Attempts: This is the total number of calls answered by an person divided by the total number of calls attempted. This is not the same as Right-Party Connects.

Percentage of Calls Placed in Queue: See Average Time in Queue.

Percentage of Calls Transferred: See Calls Transferred in Percent.

Power Dialer: A power dialer is more than simply an automatic dialer. It not only helps connect and manage the call; it can personalize calls to existing customers by bringing up related customer history and personal preferences. This can help to convey the feeling that each customer is receiving preferential treatment.

Predictive Dialer: A type of autodialer. A predictive dialer dials ahead of Agents becoming available or when the predictive dialer matches a forecast number of available Agents with a forecast number of available called parties. These processes provide large increases in dial rates and Agent productivity.

Preview Dialer: A preview dialer automatically presents an Agent with contact information prior to dialing the number. The Agent has complete control over the dialing process and can inform the preview dialer if and when the call is to be placed. If the Agent does not wish to proceed with the call, the preview dialer can present another contact for the Agent to review. Preview dialing is an effective automated dialing technique when the Agent requires more control over the call process and may prioritize which contacts are to be made. Also, if the Agent requires additional time prior to the call to read through notes or call history, this technique is useful because it lets the Agent manage contact preview time.

Public Business (or Branch) eXchange : See PBX.

Q

Queue Time: See Average Time in Queue.

R

Real-Time Expert Hub: A process designed to enhance the probability that each call is completed on the first call. A Real-Time Expert Hub is often staffed by subject matter experts (SME).

Right-Party Connects (RPC): This is the percentage of calls made where the intended party answers, divided by the total calls attempted. This is not to be confused with "Live Connect" which measures anyone providing a response to an outbound call connection

Rejection: The customer's state of mind such that disengagement from the current relationship has already been decided and has been or soon will be implemented. Negative word of mouth is likely to occur.

S

Semi-automatic Dialer: An Agent-controlled dialer. All actions (dialing, playing audio message, recording, and the like) are initiated by an Agent, normally with the press of a key. It is a productivity tool for telemarketing Agents.

Service Improvement: A process designed to use caller feedback from the call-handling experience to improve how future calls are handled. Properly implemented, it involves conducting caller feedback surveys, documenting complaints, fixing the caller's problem, and the process that caused the problems of the caller.

Service Level: This is a broad-based term that is used to measure productivity; however, its use is not exclusive to the productivity of call handling. In contact centers it commonly defines X amounts of output in Y amounts of time. For example, 80 percent of calls answered in 20 seconds.

Shifts per Year: On average, a full-time Agent works approximately 250 shifts per year for an 8-hour shift, or 200 shifts per year for a 10-hour shift. However, the number of shifts worked by part-time Agents may actually be more or less than this, depending upon the average length of shifts and numbers of shifts worked per year. This may also be interpreted as the average number of times that an Agent reports to work.

Single Channel Center: Contact Centers that support a single contact channel and/or Customer function only. (e.g., Inbound Telephone calls, Outbound Calls, e-mail, etc.).

Skills-based Routing: A technology enabling the routing of calls to Agents assigned a particular skill or set of skills. A common component of most ACD systems.

Smart Autodialer: A Smart Autodialer is an autodialer capable of personalizing messages and collecting touchtone or speech feedback. A speech engine is usually included for converting text to speech and recognizing speech over the phone.

Span of Control (Agents to Supervisor Ratio): This is the total number of Agents, including leads (if used,) assigned to the control of each supervisor, expressed as a ratio.

Speech Recognition: A technology designed to use interpreted human speech that enables people to interact with a computerized (telephone) system.

Staffing Model: The Workforce Management method employed by call center management to determine the optimal number of Agents to schedule per shift by using a third-party workforce management system or an in-house scheduling system. Blended staffing models are used to assign time spent on inbound vs. outbound call activity and occupancy.

Subject Matter Expert (SME): This is a designation specific to an organization, business unit, process, or item this is assigned to someone who demonstrates exceptional levels of expertise, knowledge, and abilities in the performance of a particular job-skill, task, or function related to the topic: a person that has an extended sense or in-depth knowledge of a particular subject.

T

Talk Time: See Average Talk Time.

Telephone Grade of Service (80% of calls answered in xx seconds): This is a productivity measure of the average time in seconds it requires for a center to answer 80% of its calls offered. This differs from standard service level measurements that set a goal in time to which the center shall attempt to handle a prescribed volume of calls within.

Use the following formula to calculate this value: Let X = your service level time; let Y = your service level percentage; S = the time in which 80% of calls are answered. S = (X .80)/Y). For example, if you answer 93% of your calls in 20 seconds, the results are as follows: S = (20 .80)/.93 = 17.20 seconds.)

Top Box Agent Satisfaction: The percentage of perfect scores received on the question, "Overall, how satisfied are you with your position?" (A "highest" score of 5 out of 5, or the top of whatever scale you use.)

Top Box Caller Satisfaction: The percentage of perfect scores received on the question, "Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received during your call to our center?" (A "highest" score of 5 out of 5, or the top of whatever scale you use.)

Total Calls Offered: See Calls Offered.

Touch-point: Touch-point is a "buzzword" for customer access channels. (See also Alternate Points of Contact, Customer Access Channels.)

U

Up-Sell: To sell a higher value product to an existing customer. For example, to lease a more expensive copier to an existing customer. (Also see Cross Sell).

Utilization: See Agent Utilization Rate.

V

Value-based Routing: A programmable form of Skills Based Routing targeted at Customer Value where customers are ranked in revenue or sensitivity value and their calls are handled by designated Agents.

Value Creating Gap: This represents a performance gap where your call center is doing better than your peer group.

Value Destroying Gap: This represents a performance gap where your call center is doing worse than your peer group.

Voice Response Unit (VRU): See IVR.

W

Web Chat: An interactive keyboard messaging exchange between a customer / client / individual and a customer support representative (CSR) conducted over the company's Internet web site.

Web Chat Session: This is the total elapsed time from the beginning to the conclusion of an interactive Web Chat exchange, expressed in minutes.

Workforce Management: Related to Workforce Optimization, a process often used for call forecasting and Agent scheduling using historical call data. Other functions of workforce management may include skills-based scheduling, schedule adherence, time-off administrations, performance management tools and reporting

Workforce Optimization: A process designed to ensure that all Contact Center personnel with the right skills are in the right seats at the right times to maximize the call center's productivity with the fewest possible resources.

Wrap-Up Time (a.k.a. Wrap time): See After Call Work Time.