

First Call Resolution: What About That 14%?

Customer satisfaction is crucial to customer loyalty, positive word of mouth, and return on investment--this is a given. We also know first call resolution (one and done) is the #1 driver for customer satisfaction with best practices reported at 86%. However, this means that 14% of your customers are contacting you more than once (even more than twice or three times) to resolve their issues! This not only frustrates your CSRs and yourselves, but your customers as well. Repeat calls are costly not only to operations and the bottom line, but they negatively impact customer satisfaction as well as employee productivity. Here's some questions to ponder. * How do you define first call resolution? * And how do you--if you do--calculate it? What gets measured gets managed, and what gets managed gets better. In a recent study (Ascent Group) more than 90% of companies measuring first call resolution reported improvement in their performance. Another study reported a dramatic fall in call volume identifying that a minimum of 20% of all calls were repeat calls from customers needing an answer or help they didn't get. Further, that the absence of first call resolution was found to account for a minimum of 30% of a call center's operational costs! In another study released recently (CFI Group) reports that (yet again) first call resolution has the most impact on customer satisfaction, and therefore, their loyalty and likelihood to recommend. In this study, across all industries measured, almost a fifth of all callers hung up with their issue unresolved. Of those customers who didn't have their issue resolved, 68% are at risk of defection (43% said they'd definitely defect; 25% weren't sure). The bottom line: Invest in your people--give them the training, the tools, and the authority to get their job done right the first time. We're finding that quite a number of centers do not measure FCR, and for those that do, there is still no standard for this measurement. Following are additional questions to ask yourself: * What percentage of your customer's concerns and/or questions are handled on first contact? * How frequently do your customers contact you? * Do you/can you identify repeat calls? * Do you/can you segment responses by call type? * Do you ask your customers if their concern was resolved, and how many contacts this required? The more you can drill down your data, the more actionable and accurate the outcome. Of course, the best measurement of FCR lives with your customers. So go to the source. Find out if they think their issues and/or questions are being resolved on the first contact. Your metrics alone, although quantifiable, are indirect and are only approximations of customer opinion and could easily be overstated. Many times the customer's view is lower than these measurements. From an Ascent Group Study (2003), the four primary ways of measuring FCR were: 34% Call statistics calculations (internal measure) 26% Agent-driven call logging or tick sheet (internal measure) 15% Call monitoring (internal determination) 25% Customer satisfaction surveys (external measure) Your front lines are the interface with customer's issues. One of the foremost methods to boost customer satisfaction and improve FCR is to consistently and ongoing train your people in world class customer service skills. The bottom line once again: Invest in your people--give them the training, the tools, and the authority to get their job done right the first time.

About the Author

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