CONTACT CENTER PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020-21

A study across 150 million calls

- eCommerce
- Food & Delivery
- Healthcare & Pharma
- Education & Edtech
- Insurance
- Real Estate



Ozonetel

INTRODUCTION

Every December we turn introspective. As leading contact center solution providers, we study key performance data across diverse call centers including average talk time, queue times, speed of answer, wrap times, outbound call pickup rates, and more.

But this year was unusual. In 2020, both inbound and outbound call volumes see-sawed across call centers depending on their location, customers, and industry vertical. Fluctuations continued as countries moved in and out of lockdowns and people changed both working and buying patterns.

So, this year we not only captured yearly averages but also quarterly variations. As a result, this report captures important customer experience and customer behaviour metrics including

- Call Center Performance 2020: Key Performance Metrics
- Call Center Performance 2020 vs 2019
- How was 2020 different? COVID's Impact on call center performance



KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS

What did we measure?

Inbound Calls

Inbound calls include customer support, order processing and sometimes, sales calls. Key metrics covered here include Time in Queue, Abandonment Rates, Speed of Answer, Hold Times, Talk Times and After Call Work.

Outbound Calls

Outbound calls include sales calls as well as outbound customer service and confirmations calls. Here the number of outbound calls dialled and answered are a key indicator of performance. Therefore, we studied both the calls dialled per agent as well as average Pickup or Answer Rates.

Agent Experience

Across both inbound and outbound call center of various verticals, we studied how much works agents were putting in each day. This includes both Average Calls per Agent per day and total working hours including breaks.

Inbound Call Center Metrics

Industry Verticals we studied

- eCommerce
- Food & Delivery
- Healthcare & Pharma
- Education & Edtech
- Insurance
- Real Estate



Customer Experience

Did callers endlessly wait in queues, abandon calls, or get connected fast?

37 Seconds	08 Seconds	15%	13 Seconds	93%
Average Time in Queue	Average Speed Of Answer	Average Abandonment Rates	Average Hold Times	Service Level Agreement

What is Average Time In Queue?

Average time in queue reveals how long callers wait to get connected to someone when they phone a business.

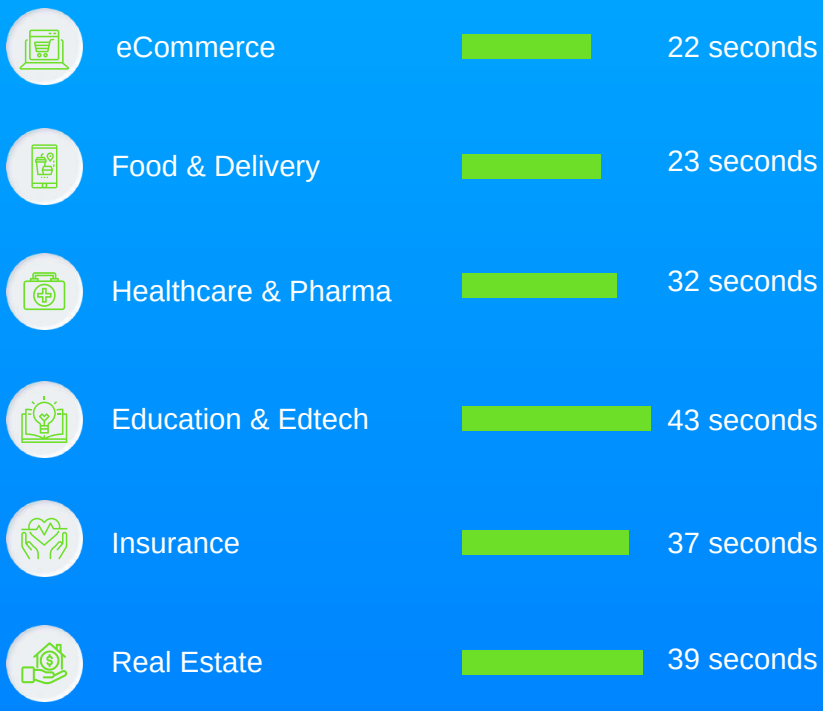
In 2020, 37 seconds was the average time a caller waited to get connected to a live agent.

What is Average Time In Queue?

Being made to wait in queues can drastically reduce customer satisfaction, increase abandonment rates, and consequently increase customer churn.

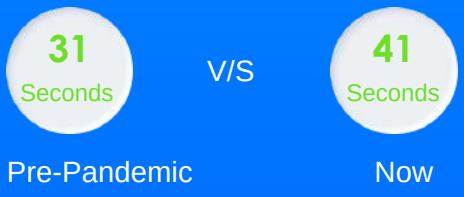
- High average queue times indicates insufficient agent availability.
- Low average queue times indicates adequate agent availability.

Industry Wise Average Time in Queue



This year, Average Queue Times increased in all industry verticals except in Healthcare

Average Queue times



How to improve average time In queue?

To improve your queue times, you need to investigate when and why your queue times are going high. Hourly and weekly call queue reports can help identify if call volumes are higher on a particular day or time. Once you have done this, consider using the following measures:

- Accurately project call volumes based on your historical reports and increase staffing accordingly.
- Train agents to resolve problems faster and wrap ACW more quickly.
- Set call queue limits for each skill you route your calls to. When queues exceed those limits, auto route them to other skills or agents.

- Divert simple transactions to a self-service IVR. Transactions that are best suited to self-service IVR include location confirmation, booking confirmation, checking ticket/delivery status, and cancellations.
- Reduce call queues by letting callers opt for voicemail and call-backs. Deliver these voicemails to a priority inbox. Use a power dialer to automate callbacks.
- Use Dynamic Queue Reprioritisation to ensure that high value customers are never made to wait in queue. Use CTI integrations to recognise these callers and push them to the top of the call queue.

What is the Average Speed Of Answer?

The average speed of answer is the average time agents take to answer inbound calls. This includes time while the agent's phone rings but does not include the time the caller spends in the IVR or waiting queue.

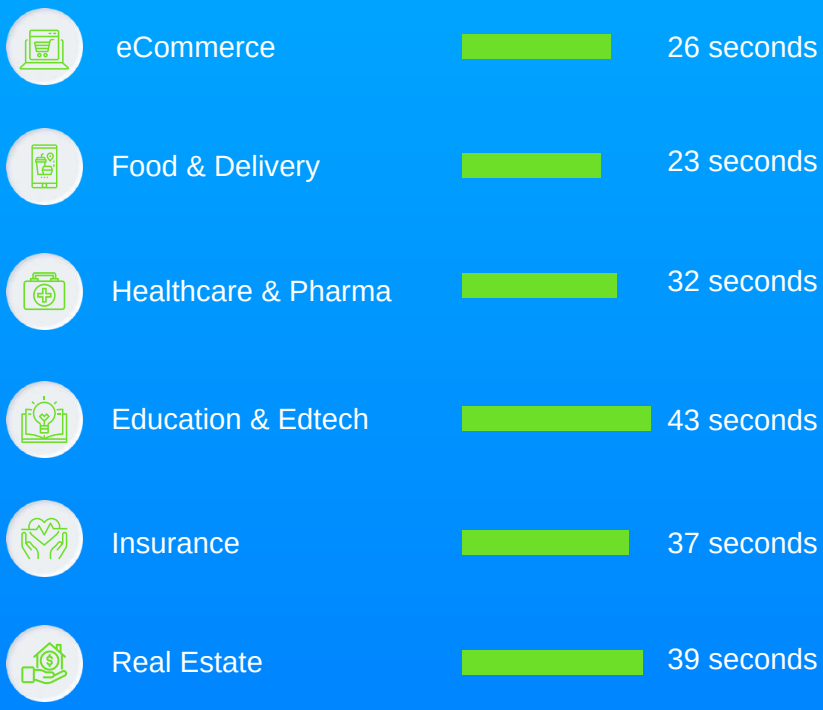
In 2020, 8 seconds is the average time an agent takes to answer an inbound call.

Why measure average speed of answer?

The average speed of answer indicates how fast your agent's answer calls. This KPI affects caller waiting times and consequently affects customer satisfaction.



Industry Wise Average Speed of Answer



Average Speed of Answer



Pre-Pandemic Now

Average speed of answer seems to have remained the same. However, this varied across industries, with Healthcare & Pharma showing an improvement in this metric while other industries showed an increase.

How to improve average speed of answer?

The type of telephony you use could affect the average speed of answer.

- Landlines or mobile telephones take up to 6 seconds for call ringing.
- VOIP and softphones instantly hit the call to agents

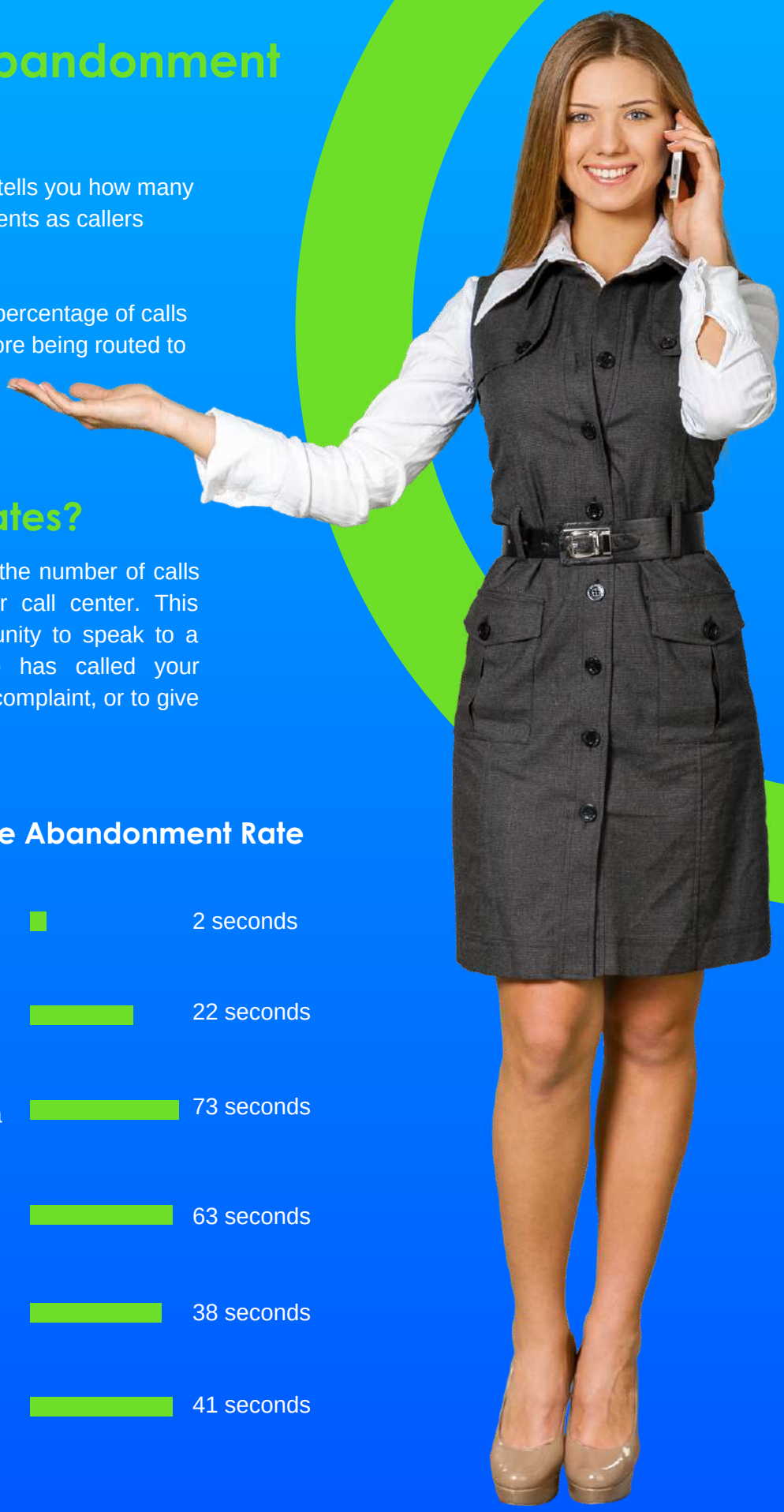
In order to improve agent speed of answer, the following steps should be taken:

- Improve agent training so agents wrap calls and answer faster.
- Use an auto answer so that calls connect to agents within 1 second.

What is the Abandonment Rate?

Average abandonment rates tells you how many calls went unanswered by agents as callers disconnected in queue.

In 2020, 15% is the average percentage of calls that callers disconnected before being routed to an agent.



Why measure abandonment rates?

Abandonment rates indicate the number of calls that go unanswered in your call center. This represents a missed opportunity to speak to a customer or prospect who has called your business for a sales inquiry, complaint, or to give valuable feedback.

Industry Wise Average Abandonment Rate

eCommerce	2 seconds
Food & Delivery	22 seconds
Healthcare & Pharma	73 seconds
Education & Edtech	63 seconds
Insurance	38 seconds
Real Estate	41 seconds

Abandonment Rates

33% V/S 45%

Pre-Pandemic Now

Abandonment rates show an increase which indicate that customers are not happy with the increase in average queue times and are showing their impatience by abandoning calls.

How can we reduce Abandonment Rate?

Generally, our clients have stringent service level agreements, for which we need to maintain high answer rates and consequently low abandonment rates

- Use skill-based routing to distribute calls better amongst your agents.
- Define Call Queues for each skill.
- Ensure adequate staffing to keep call queues short.
- Create fallbacks such as routing calls to other skills or a self-service IVR during high call volumes.
- Offer voicemail and call-backs to callers when queue time exceeds a defined limit.



What is Hold Time?

Hold time tells you how long a caller is made to wait when an agent puts them on hold to retrieve information, speaks to a supervisor, or transfer the caller.

In 2020, 13 seconds is the average percentage time a caller was made to wait on hold.

Why measure Average Hold Times?

Average hold times effect both customer experience and can increase or decrease the average handle time therefore effecting cost per call and overall call center productivity.

Industry Wise Average Hold Time



Average Hold Time



Average Hold Times increased only in the ecommerce industry. In all other sectors there was an improvement in hold times, indicating that agents were either transferring calls faster, or able to retrieve information they required faster than previously.

How can we reduce average hold time?

High average hold times indicate lack of training or poor transfer technology.

- Route callers to the right agent skill by improving the IVR options.
- Cross-train agents to handle multiple call types to minimize transfers.
- Improve agents problem diagnosis and resolution skills.
- Ensure your agents have easy interface to transfer calls when required.

What is Service Level?

Service level indicates how many calls are answered within twenty seconds. Aggregated across Industries, most of our clients maintained an average service level of 93%. This means most clients answered 93% calls in twenty seconds or less.

In 2020, 13 seconds is the average percentage time a caller was made to wait on hold.

These levels vary based on business KPIs. For instance, this is how service levels varied across four sectors:

Financial Services: 95% calls answered in under 20 seconds.

BPO: 99.9% calls answered in under 20 seconds.

Ecommerce: 98% calls answered in under 20 seconds

Pharma: 80% calls answered in under 20 seconds.

How do we maintain high service levels?

To maintain high service levels we need to maintain high answer rates and consequently low abandonment rates. You can achieve this by following by all the measures we outlined earlier including:

- Effective Call Routing and call distribution
- Accurate Staff Forecasting
- Adequate Staffing
- Effective staff training



Agent Efficiency Metrics

How efficiently are call center agents working?

4 Minutes	45 Seconds	8 Seconds	13 Seconds
Average Talk Times	Average After Call Work	Average Speed of Answer	Average Hold Times

What is Average Talk Time?

Average Talk Times tell you how long an agent spends talking to a caller on an average.

In 2020, 4 minutes is the average amount of time agents spoke to a single caller.

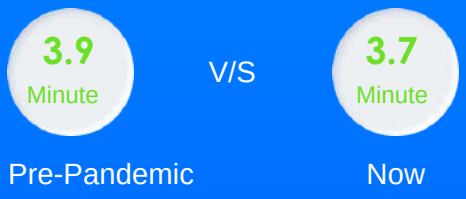
Why measure average talk times?

Average talk times are used to calculate average handle times and is used to measure a contact center's efficiency.

Industry Wise Average Talk Times



Average Talk Time



In eCommerce and food delivery, there was an increase in talk times indicating that the nature of conversations in these sectors may have changed. In all other sectors there was a drop in talk times possibly due to the pressure on agents to close calls faster.

What is After Call Work?

After Call Work (AWC) or post-call processing, is the work a call center agent puts in after speaking to a customer including updating customer information, adding call disposition and notes, logging the call or following up with an email or message. Until the ACW is complete, the agent's status remains busy or unavailable. In 2020, 45 seconds is the average amount of time agents took to wrap their after call work.

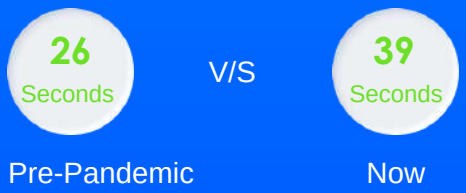
Why measure ACW?

ACW affects agents' productivity and contact center efficiency. High amount of ACW can lead to higher call queues and affect customer experience metrics.

Industry Wise After Call Work



After Call Work



In all sectors there was an increase in After Call work, indicating that nature of conversations may have changed so the disposition codes need to be updated, or agents have got more information to note after every call, or they lack the training or technology to dispose calls faster.

How can you improve ACW?

You can reduce ACW in the following ways:

- Use Call Disposition codes instead of requiring agents to add notes.
- Limit Wrap Codes to five master reasons and five sub reasons. And restrict Wrap Codes to a single level.
- Integrate with CRM to automate call logging and schedule follow- ups in a unified window.
- Train Agents. Experienced agents can wrap calls 20% faster than novices.



Outbound Call Center Metrics

532
Calls Dialled Per agent

38%
Average Answer Rates

What are Calls Dialed Per Agent?

Agents may be dialing outbound calls manually or they may be using click to call from their CRM. Alternately, businesses may be using auto dialers to automate calling and directly connect agents to their prospects.

In 2020, 532 is the average number of calls dialled per agent in 2020

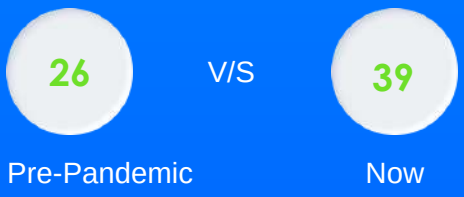
Why measure average calls per agent?

This Metric lets you know how many calls are dialled per agent, letting you plan your outbound campaigns.

Industry Wise Average Calls Dialed Per Agent



Calls Dialled Per Agent



In Ecommerce, Edtech & Education, and Real Estate, the number of outbound calls being dialed has decreased. In Insurance, the number of outbound calls being dialed has remained nearly the same. In Healthcare & Pharma and Food Delivery, the outbound calls dialed has increased.

How to improve average dials per agent?

To improve how many contacts are dialled per agent you will need to choose a power or predictive dialer. Choose the correct dialer based on your data quality. To know more about auto dialers, read our guide to auto dialers.

What are Average Answer Rates?

In outbound calling, a lot of calls dial to busy lines, or go unanswered. Average answer rates inform us how many calls actually connected to a contact. This is also known as Average Pickup Rates.

In 2020, 38% of the calls dialled were answered by the prospects.

Why measure average answer rates?

Average answer rates let you know how effective your outbound campaign was in terms of timing and data quality.

Industry Wise Average Answer Rates



Pickup Rates



Pre-Pandemic Now

Pickup rates have reduced in Ecommerce and Healthcare which could indicate customer's fatigue at being called. Choosing some other channel to communicate with these customers, such as SMS or WhatsApp may help in these sectors.

In Food Delivery and Real Estate, there is an improvement in pickup rates indicating an improvement in the data being dialled or that customers and prospects are open to these calls, and being dialled at the right time.

How to improve your answer rates?

You can improve your answer rates by changing your dialer, data or call timing.

- If your drop rates are high, your answer rates will reduce, consider switching from predictive to Power Dialer, or changing your pacing ratio.
- If your answer rates are low, it indicates poor data quality. Try improving your data quality or contacting leads via other channels, before scheduling a call.
- Reschedule calls for separate times of the day, and days of the week, to see which day and time give you the best answer rates.

Key Agent Experience Metrics



Average calls per agent: Inbound & Outbound



Agent Working Hours: Average Login & Break times

How Many Calls Do Agents Take Per Day?

When averaged across the complete sample set, agents were answering 27 calls per agent. But the numbers vary widely across contact centers with our busiest contact centers getting 40-50 calls per agent per day.

Inbound

28

Were the number of inbound calls agents were answering per day on an average

Outbound

192

Were the number of outbound calls agents were speaking on per day on an average

Industry Wise Average Calls per Agent

Inbound



Outbound



How Long Are Agents Working In Contact Centers?

7.4 Hours

Total Login Hours 7.4 Hrs on an average

67 Seconds

Total Breaks 67 Seconds on an average

10 Minutes

Average Length Of Breaks 10 Minutes

Agents are clocking in an average of 7 hours. The total breaks they take average to a little over an hour each day. This amounts to 15% of their total login time. The average length of a break is 10 minutes.

We have clients across the globe, and in countries where login hours are restricted to 5.6 hours, the total breaks average to 44 seconds, or 13.4% of their login time. The average length of a break is 14 minutes

5.6 Hours

Total Login Hours 5.6 Hrs on an average

44 Seconds

Total Breaks 44 Seconds on an average

14 Minutes

Average Length Of Breaks 14 Minutes

CALL CENTER PERFORMANCE 2020 V/S CALL CENTER PERFORMANCE 2019

Performance Factor	2019	2020
Average Time in Queue	79 seconds	37 seconds
Average Speed of Answer	3.6 seconds	8 seconds
Average Abandonment Rates	12%	15%
Average Talk Times	4.3 minutes	4 minutes
Average Wrap Times	25 seconds	45 seconds
Calls Dialled Per Agent	90	532
Average Answer Rates	46%	38%



CONCLUSION

Our averages across call centers vary depending on business type and country. This consolidated report lets you benchmark your call center performance against these averages. It also lets you see how call center met the challenges created by the pandemic this year.

The study also reveals how call centers are continuously improving their CX metrics. For instance, on average, customers waited 53% less in queues in 2020 versus 2019. Meanwhile, customers continue to grow more impatient, with increasing abandonment rates across industries.

As we go forward, enabling customers to connect faster with live humans when they really need it, will differentiate good experience from bad. More so in a world where human interaction has suddenly become more valuable than ever before!

We hope this has been an interesting read for you, offering an overall perspective of the contact center industry as you plan your goals for the next year. All the best on the path to happier agents and happier customers!

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