



HOW TO USE CUSTOMER SURVEYS TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF CONTACT CENTRE TEAMS



Customer surveys can help contact centre managers guide, develop and improve the performance of the teams they manage. Feedback from customer surveys allows you to know what your teams are getting right — and wrong — in the eyes of your customers. In short, customer surveys help you to keep your customers at the heart of everything you do.

Customer insight can also help you improve the performance and motivation of your contact centre teams. Most calls are already recorded and managers track call times and accuracy. Such feedback is useful for quality assurance, training and performance improvement.

However, hearing what customers have to say, in their own words, can have a powerful effect on customer service agents. This feedback gives agents solid evidence of how the way they deal with calls can have an impact – good and bad – on their customers' experience. It motivates agents to continue doing those things that have a positive impact and work to improve aspects that have a negative impact on customer service.






Company culture is an essential factor here; managers must use the feedback to support and develop their teams rather than to criticise or punish. At Happ, we help companies collect and understand insight derived from customer surveys of the contact centre experience. We also advise contact centre managers on how to use this information to compare the performance of different teams and individual agents.

In our experience, the best managers use this knowledge to motivate and develop their teams. This report highlights some of the key ways they do that. But first, let's take a brief look at the strengths and challenges of the three main types of surveys used to track contact centre customer experience.



Contact centre customer survey types

TYPE OF SURVEY	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
 IVR (Interactive Voice Response)	<p>If implemented immediately after the call, IVR can give you highly accurate data because the experience is still fresh in customers' mind.</p> <p>Customers are often not always willing to spend</p>	<p>Costly for high volumes of calls.</p> <p>Customers are often not always willing to spend more time on the phone.</p>
 Email	<p>Highly cost effective</p> <p>You can ask more questions than by phone or text.</p> <p>Opportunity to ask more creative survey question</p>	<p>Lower response rates, as emails get lost or forgotten in customers' inbox.</p> <p>Customers tend not to respond immediately, which impacts accuracy.</p>
 Text / Link in Text	<p>You get customers' attention quicker than with emails.</p> <p>Customers are more willing to respond, as they're not waiting on the phone after the call.</p>	<p>You need customers' mobile numbers.</p> <p>Questions must be friendly, short and precise.</p>



Customer survey best practice guidelines

At Happ, we help our clients implement contact centre surveys by sending their customers a text message right after calls end. We design these surveys to make it as easy as possible for customers to respond. This helps to ensure our clients get the most timely and accurate feedback.

Here's a summary of the guiding principles we use to design our customer surveys:

1. We ask for feedback immediately after the call

Your customer receives an automated text as soon as they have completed a call with one of your agents. Depending on the software you use, we are able to pass call parameters from your CRM to generate reports that enable you to identify the customer and some key performance indicators, such as average call duration and average call wait (together with the survey results).

The text can include a survey link URL (similar to if you had sent an email). Alternatively, we can send a text-to-text message so your customers have the opportunity to rate certain aspects of their experience with your contact centre. All responses are saved within your CRM and/or data warehouse for you to reference and analyse.

We can also ask conditional follow-up questions if the customer enters a certain score threshold. For example, if they rate their call below 2 out of 5, we can automatically prompt a follow-up message asking if they want a call to discuss this further.

2. We only ask few and simple questions

It is important to ensure giving feedback is quick and easy for your customers. They are generally unwilling to complete lengthy, time-consuming questionnaires. That's why we recommend asking only a few questions.



You can choose to ask your customers one of the following types of question:

- General satisfaction question: "Overall, how satisfied are you with your call to our contact centre?"
- Agent satisfaction question: "How satisfied are you with the service provided by our agent?"
- Customer effort score question: "How easy was it today to receive service from us?"
- A Net Promoter Score (NPS) question: "How likely are you to recommend the service you received from our call centre to your friends or relatives?"

Customers always receive a free-text comment area after the question and the option to ask to be contacted about the issue they have. If they respond yes to the latter, we can also ask for their preferred day and time to receive that call.

3. We alternate from a pool of questions

This increases response rates and enables you to ask more questions over a period of time. We can also create an algorithm to track the number of responses you receive for each question. This enables you to prioritise and schedule your questions based on your customer segments.

Recommendations to help contact centre managers use customer surveys to motivate and develop their teams:

- **Track customer satisfaction in real time to make quick improvements**

Tracking customer satisfaction in real time gives contact centre managers valuable insight and the ability to spot trends. For example, we observe that, in many cases, customer satisfaction ratings drop significantly at certain times of the day (it can be as much as 0.5 to 1 point in a 5 point scale). It may be that agents are tired towards the end of a shift, or perhaps information essential to serve customers effectively isn't available to agents at certain times.



If you are tracking in real time, you can tackle these issues quickly and make changes during the day. You can also ensure your team leaders know why problems arise, which can help them boost agent motivation or compensate for the skills missing to make customers happy.

- **Let the team learn from high performing agents**

Agents take notice of verbatim reporting of customer feedback; particularly, if the agent is named individually. Of course, customer complaints need to be addressed but don't ignore the value of positive feedback. It is a myth that customers who are happy with the service don't bother to respond to surveys. Our data shows that happy and unhappy customers respond in the same numbers.

However, there are differences in the way they provide their responses. For example, unhappy customers write 70% more in free text comments. As such, even snippets of genuinely positive customer feedback can have a highly motivating effect on teams and individual agents. Even when problems arise, reports of a customer's appreciation for the agent's efforts can motivate that agent to keep solving problems for customers.

Managers who track customer satisfaction by individual team members can reward those who consistently outperform. They can also increase overall team performance by tracing calls for tips and examples of good customer service. They can work with their teams to replicate this best practice across other team members.

- **Support new team members while not overlooking the existing team members**

When new agents join the team, managers naturally take time to train and onboard them. However, our research shows that this is also a time when customer satisfaction ratings for longer serving agents tend to decline. This may be because they are handling more calls as resources are deployed to train new team members.



It's also important to track agent performance over the course of their tenure. Unsurprisingly, new agents tend to get lower than average customer satisfaction ratings in their first week. Their ratings then increase to a peak average of around 4.3 out of 5 over the following weeks and months.

However, after around seven months, if they keep on receiving similar subject calls, their averages tend to slope downwards. This may be due to boredom or lethargy or simply because their average call handling time decreases and they start handling more calls.

Managers can avert this situation by varying the calls agents take, especially after six months tenure. Try to strike a balance between more difficult enquiries that challenge their skills without pushing them too far. Customer satisfaction also declines when agents have to handle issues they don't have the training, experience or resources to deal with.

- **Use customer feedback to optimise resources**

Not all customers want to receive a feedback call. When asked, only around 35% of dissatisfied customers (ratings 1 & 2 on a 1-5 scale, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is highly satisfied) want to receive a call asking for their feedback. You can also optimise your call centre resources by asking customers to select a call-back time slot and then prioritise and schedule your agents' follow up calls.



To learn more about how to design and implement customer surveys that will help you motivate and manage your contact centre team please contact us.