

CONTACT CENTRE · MEASUREMENT · 2026

Contact Centre Metrics That Actually Matter

Most contact centre reporting is built from averages, and averages conceal exactly the customers you are failing. Six metrics carry real information, four of them mislead if you read them the usual way, and one number almost nobody.

Six metrics matter, four of them lie if read the usual way, and the one nobody looks at is the tail. Service level (the share of calls answered within X seconds) is the only headline number that describes an experience rather than an average. **80/20** became the default target through history rather than analysis, and should be chosen deliberately. **Average speed of answer** is useful for capacity and misleading for experience; read the **90th percentile** instead. **Abandonment** is the closest thing to a direct revenue measure: Australian self-reported figures for 2026 sit around a **9% average and 5% median**, and the gap between those two tells you the distribution is skewed. **First contact resolution** is the hardest to measure and the most valuable. ACXPA rankings put banking near **32%** in early 2026.

■ The short version

How it reports	What it says	What it hides
Average speed of answer	About 40 seconds. Sounds fine	That 450 people waited almost nothing and 50 waited a very long time. The average describes nobody's actual experience
Calls answered	94%. Sounds excellent	30 people gave up. In most businesses that is the most commercially significant fact of the week
Average handle time	Steady. No signal	Nothing at all about whether the problem was solved

■ Also worth knowing

Metric	What it measures	Read it as
Service level	% of calls answered within X seconds	Your headline. The only common metric that describes an experience rather than an average
Average speed of answer	Mean wait before answer	A capacity input. Poor for judging experience, use percentiles for that
Abandonment rate	% of callers who hang up while waiting	The closest thing to a direct revenue measure you have
First contact resolution	% resolved without the customer coming back	The most valuable and the hardest to measure honestly
Average handle time	Talk time plus after-call work	A diagnostic and a capacity input. Never a target
Occupancy	% of logged-in time spent on contacts	A ceiling to stay under, not a number to maximise

The reframe that fixes most reporting

Stop asking “how did the queue perform?” and start asking “**how many people had a bad experience, and when?**” Every recommendation below follows from that change of question. It is also the question a manager can act on, whereas “average wait rose four seconds” is not actionable by anyone.

■ Questions the full guide answers

- ☐ What contact centre metrics actually matter?
- ☐ Is 80/20 the right service level target?
- ☐ Why is average speed of answer misleading?
- ☐ What is a good call abandonment rate in Australia?
- ☐ How do you measure first contact resolution properly?
- ☐ Should we set a target for average handle time?
- ☐ What is the single easiest improvement to make?

This is the summary. The guide has the detail.

Every point above is worked through in full on our site, with the Australian context, the numbers and the exceptions. If you would rather talk it through, call **1300 881 662** or visit **unidenvoice.com/get-started**.