



3 Proven Ways to Reduce Abandon Rates in the Call Center



There are three things we can all agree with when it comes to phoning a contact center: Callers don't like to be on hold, agents don't enjoy talking to callers who have been on hold, and no call center wants to have long hold times. Unfortunately, these things occur all too often.

It should come as no surprise that call abandonment is on the rise, as call centers are being asked to do more with less, while facing increasing call volumes (growing at 20% per year). You can only tell customers that "your call matters to us, please be patient" so many times before they simply hang up the phone. Each abandoned call reduces First Call Resolution (FCR) rates and, more importantly, becomes a bad memory for that customer.

A high call abandonment rate is a sure sign of caller frustration. Luckily, reducing your abandon rates has been proven to lower costs, improve customer satisfaction and deliver a better call center experience.

Here are three tips for reducing abandon rates in your contact center:

1. Keep the Caller Informed

In a perfect world, your organization would always have enough agents to handle the number of incoming calls. However, this isn't realistic in a typical call center. Spikes in call volume can and do occur, and the end result is a poor customer service experience. This is something that all service organizations should avoid, particularly since **35%** of customers will stop doing business with a company after a poor experience.

One solution here is to be honest with your callers. If hold-times are an issue, consider preparing customers by placing a message in the IVR or ACD, informing them of estimated wait times. This reduces customer apprehension and will subsequently lower their desire to abandon the call. This approach also encourages customers to call during off-peak periods.

In the right environment, the estimated wait time (EWT) calculation can be an effective tool, but it's also important to consider the difficulty in determining this number. One factor is the variability in average handle times (AHT). As AHT changes throughout the day (and with different operating conditions), the accuracy of the calculation can change significantly. Workforce management is another issue: staffing changes that occur throughout the day (due to shift changes, etc.) can affect handle times and EWT calculations.



2. Know Your Numbers

Do you know how long your customers will wait before they abandon the call? 30 seconds? 60 seconds? 5 minutes? According to [Velaro](#), 60% of customers are not willing to wait more than one minute on hold. Zappos – legendary for its customer service – strives to answer 80% of calls within the first 20 seconds.

Call detail reports provide you with a wealth of information and insight into your calls – including the ones that never got answered. By knowing who abandoned a call, when they called you, and how long they waited before hanging up, you can make informed decisions as to how to resolve the situation. Having a solid understanding of your callers' patience and effectively managing the call queue will result in an excellent customer service experience.

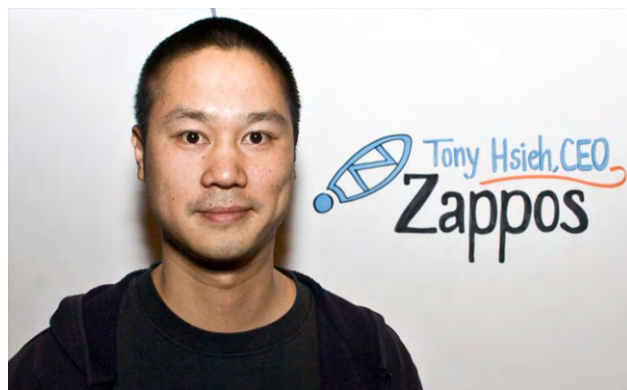


In addition, make sure to staff based on volume. Though this might seem obvious, adjusting agent schedules to match peak calling windows can be less expensive than hiring additional agents – and both are less expensive than having to acquire new customers!

Every call has revenue potential; each interaction is an opportunity to promote positive brand awareness. Don't shoot yourself in the foot before you can get the foot in the door. In closing, take a look at how Zappos viewed customer service as an investment, not a cost.

"In early 2004 our biggest problem was customer service – specifically, finding the right employees to staff our call center. A lot of people may think it's strange that an internet company would be so focused on the telephone, when only about 5% of our sales happen by phone. But we've found that on average, our customers telephone us at least once at some point, and if we handle the call well, we have an opportunity to create an emotional impact and a lasting memory.

We receive thousands of phone calls and e-mails every day, and we view each one as an opportunity to build the Zappos brand into being about the very best customer service. Our philosophy has been that most of the money we might ordinarily have spent on advertising should be invested in customer service, so that our customers will do the marketing for us through word of mouth."



3. Employ a Call-Back Solution!

One of the single best ways to reduce abandonment is to offer customers a **call-back** as an alternative to waiting on hold. Also known as “virtual queuing”, this approach is similar to the take-a-number system you might experience in a store lineup. Instead of having to wait on the phone, your place in the queue is held by an automated system.

According to **Forrester**, for consumers:

“The option to hold their place in queue and go on to do something else is highly appealing, with 75% stating a preference for it”.

By replacing hold-time with a call-back, you’re giving back what the customer values most: their time. This translates into increased consumer loyalty, higher net promoter scores (NPS) and general good-will.

In addition, a study by Contact Babel showed that **32%** of contact centers experienced fewer abandoned calls after call-backs were added. At Fonolo, we’ve witnessed this effect many times. Read **our success stories** for real-life examples.

Call-backs can help redistribute the demand on your call center to better match the supply of available agents. If you have a deficit of agent capacity in the mid-day but a surplus in the afternoon, you can use call-backs to defer calls until a later time. Think of it as an ‘insurance policy’, allowing you to smooth out spikes in call volume.



33% Reduction in Abandon Rate



“With Fonolo, we saw an immediate impact on our abandonment rate ... on our busiest days it was down 33%”

– Chris Abel, Director of Contact Center Operations



Conclusion

When it comes to customer service, the bar has never been higher. At the call center, these heightened expectations often lead to call abandonment. Simply put, customers don’t want to wait on hold. Abandoned calls are costly for call centers as they result in higher repeat calls and dissatisfied customers. Luckily there are easy ways to fix the problem and stay ahead of the competition.

Fonolo: Call-Back Solutions for the Call Center

With Fonolo, your customers will never wait on hold again, regardless of where the conversation begins – web, mobile or inbound call. Our cloud-based technology easily hooks into your existing call center infrastructure, with minimal impact to your business processes.



In-Call Rescue

Give callers the option to receive a call-back when hold times are too long.



Mobile Rescue

Let customers easily connect to a live agent, directly from within your mobile app.



Web Rescue

Enable customers to seamlessly transition from web to live assistance.

Why Replace Hold-Time With a Call-Back?

Improve the Customer Experience

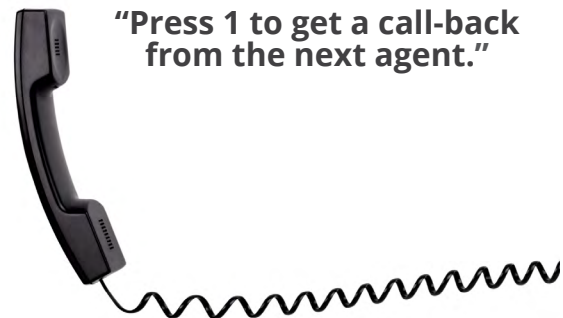
Eliminate hold-time and give customers back what they value the most – their time.

Reduce Abandonment Rates

Fewer abandoned calls translates into a healthier bottom line.

Reduce Cost-per-Call

Realize lower handle times and telco costs.



Join Us for a LIVE Demo

Learn how Fonolo can help you increase sales, lower abandon rates and create happier customers.

REGISTER NOW!