What Contact Centres are Doing Right Now

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How do You Compare?

A Call Centre Helper Research Paper

(2024 Edition)

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Contents

What We Did

AI has shaped the strategic narrative for everyone this year – from the technology vendors weaving new features into their product offerings and the contact centre leaders rethinking what great CX looks like, right through to the agents facing a new chapter of possibilities in augmentation and automation – redefining daily life on the frontline.

Yet AI is not a silver bullet, and many industry challenges continue to persist, as contact centre professionals grapple with the hype vs. reality of where it can truly make a difference.

That's why we've surveyed Call Centre Helper readers yet again, throughout summer 2024, to uncover the latest and most exciting contact centre insights in our annual survey.

Run in partnership with Five9, Jabra, NICE, Sabio, Scorebuddy, and Zoom, our survey focuses on key elements of the contact centre, including Advisor Experience and Engagement, Artificial Intelligence, Customer Experience, Headsets, Quality Assurance, Workforce Management, and more!

Over 200 contact centre professionals got involved and completed our survey, and we're delighted to share what they had to say…

Executive Summary

We can't wait for you to see what's happening behind the scenes of contact centres right now, but in the meantime, here are some key highlights of our latest research:

Chatbot Adoption Is on the Rise (Despite High-Profile Failures)

We've all heard about DPD disabling its online support chatbot after it swore at a customer (back in January 2024) and it's not the only high-profile example of this technology failing. Yet adoption rates are still on the rise! Are chatbots just the technology that we all love to hate?

Cost Per Call Hits a 5-Year High

There's been a jump in use of the cost-per-call metric – highlighting the increasing pressures of running a contact centre in a tough economy.

An Increasing Number Now Have a "Work in Progress" AI Strategy

The year-on-year change in how seriously contact centres are looking into AI has been really promising to see.

Micro-Shifts Abandoned as the World Returns to Normal

This is the first year since 2021 that no one has said they are offering micro-shifts.

These shifts (less than one hour) were popular with some contact centres during the Covid-19 pandemic, at the peak of remote working when it was quick and easy to ask agents to jump online for a short burst of work to help offset high call volumes.

Social Events and Motivational Games Finally Returning to Pre-Covid Levels

It's promising to – finally – see social events and motivational games hitting a 5-year high with a welcome return to pre-Covid levels.

This suggests that contact centres are beginning to settle into their not-so-new routine and bring back the tried-and-tested initiatives to keep staff morale high.

Even More Contact Centres Have Heavily Invested in the Employee Experience

There's been further investment across the industry in mental health first aiders, wellbeing rooms, yoga classes, and more – all up on last year's findings.

However, the contact centre industry still has a long way to go in acknowledging and fully utilizing the benefits of wellbeing technology.

What's Happening in Your Contact Centre?

Are these trends emerging across your teams, or are you feeling behind the times?
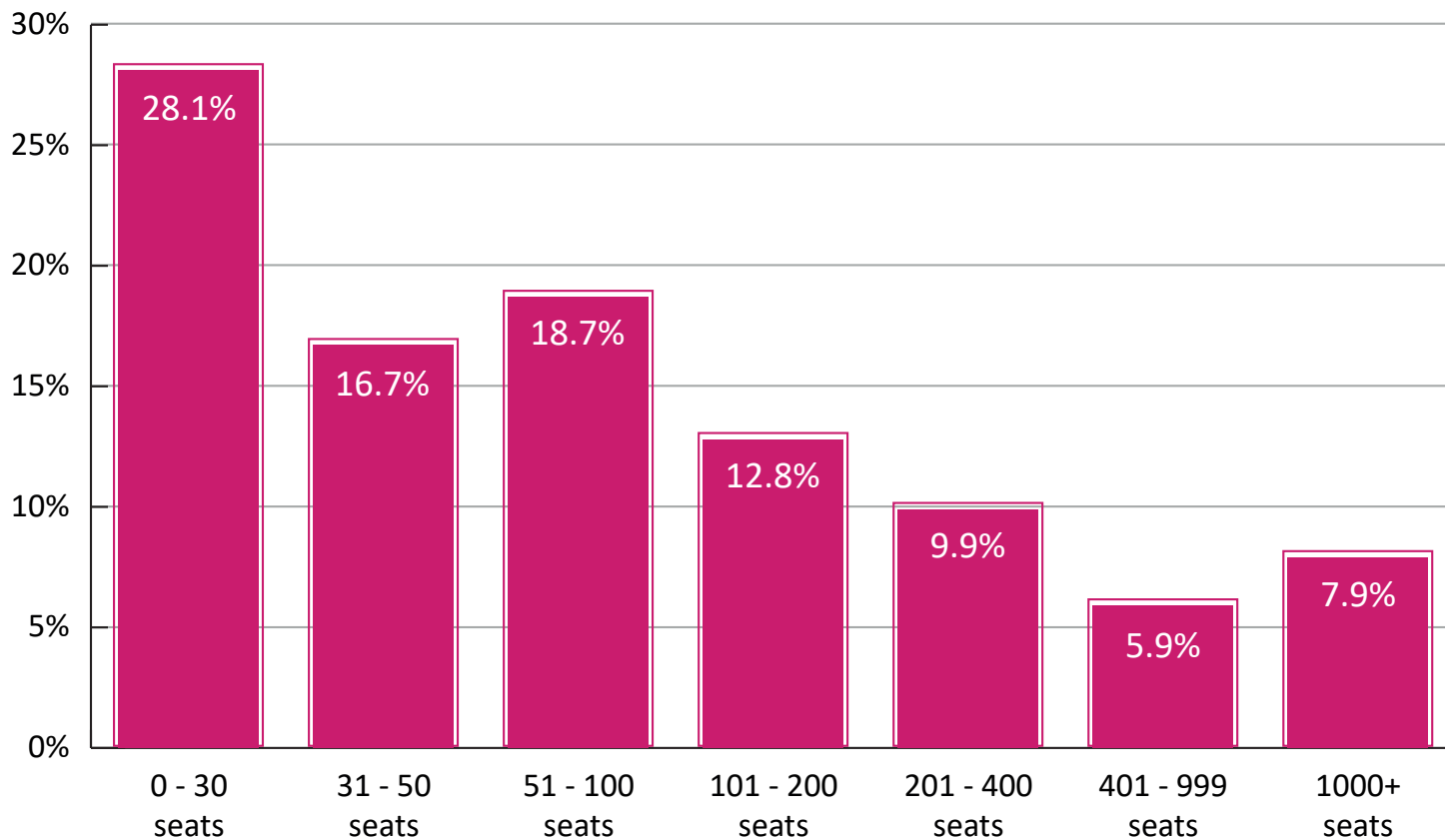
Read on to find out how you compare!

General – How Does Your Contact Centre Compare?

1. What Is the Size of Your Contact Centre?

Participants in this year's survey came from 200+ contact centres, of all different shapes and sizes, ranging from 0–30 seats to 1,000+.

What is the Size of Your Contact Centre?

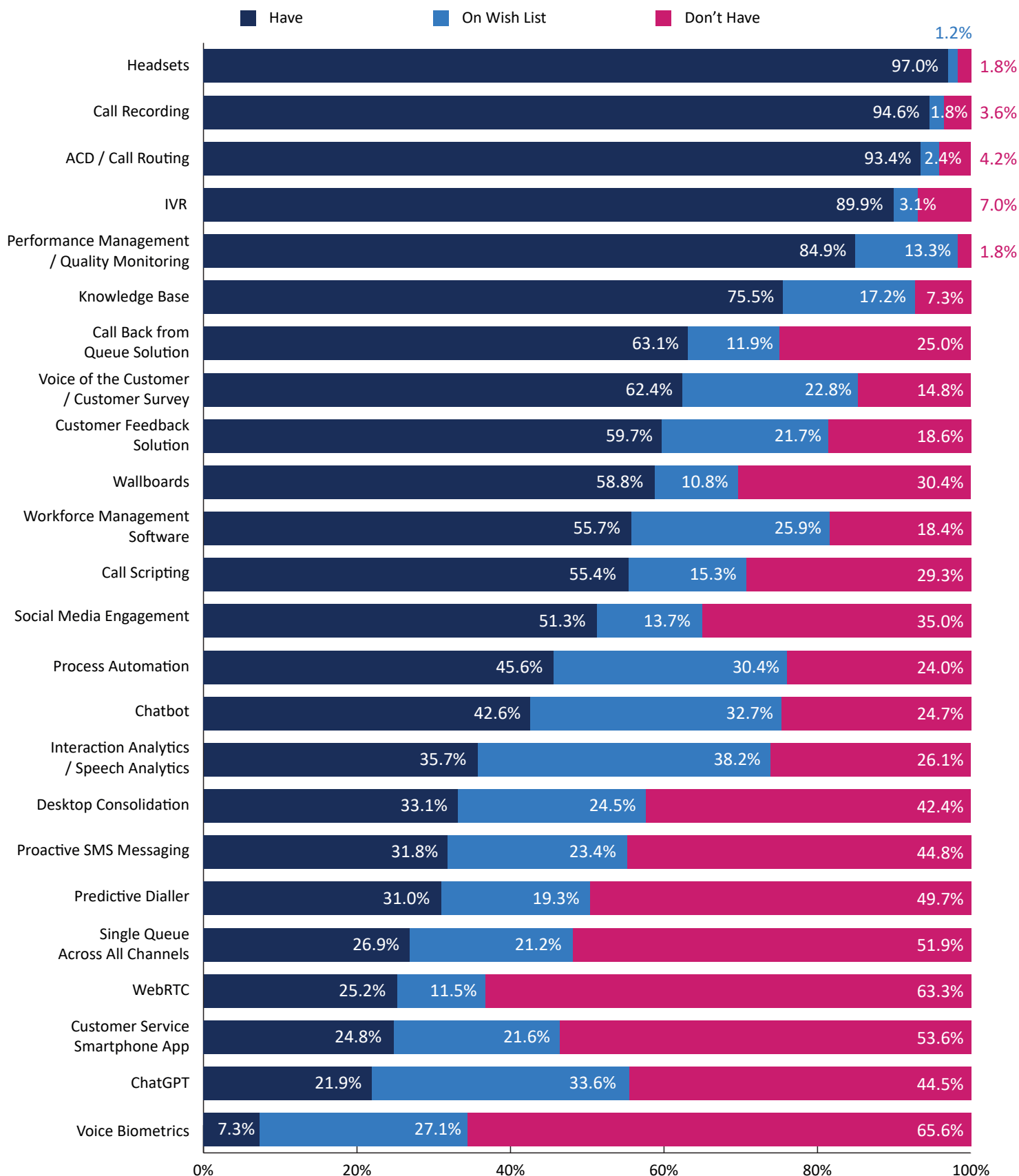| Size	Percentage
0 - 30 seats	28.1%
31 - 50 seats	16.7%
51 - 100 seats	18.7%
101 - 200 seats	12.8%
201 - 400 seats	9.9%
401 - 999 seats	5.9%
1000+ seats	7.9%

To better inform the results shared in this report, the chart above highlights the different sizes of the contact centres that contributed to our survey.

2. What Technology Do You Have in Your Contact Centre?

What Technology Do You Have in Your Contact Centre?

Legend: ■ Have ■ On Wish List ■ Don't Have

Technology	Have	On Wish List	Don't Have
Headsets	97.0%	1.2%	1.8%
Call Recording	94.6%	1.8%	3.6%
ACD / Call Routing	93.4%	2.4%	4.2%
IVR	89.9%	3.1%	7.0%
Performance Management / Quality Monitoring	84.9%	13.3%	1.8%
Knowledge Base	75.5%	17.2%	7.3%
Call Back from Queue Solution	63.1%	11.9%	25.0%
Voice of the Customer / Customer Survey	62.4%	22.8%	14.8%
Customer Feedback Solution	59.7%	21.7%	18.6%
Wallboards	58.8%	10.8%	30.4%
Workforce Management Software	55.7%	25.9%	18.4%
Call Scripting	55.4%	15.3%	29.3%
Social Media Engagement	51.3%	13.7%	35.0%
Process Automation	45.6%	30.4%	24.0%
Chatbot	42.6%	32.7%	24.7%
Interaction Analytics / Speech Analytics	35.7%	38.2%	26.1%
Desktop Consolidation	33.1%	24.5%	42.4%
Proactive SMS Messaging	31.8%	23.4%	44.8%
Predictive Dialler	31.0%	19.3%	49.7%
Single Queue Across All Channels	26.9%	21.2%	51.9%
WebRTC	25.2%	11.5%	63.3%
Customer Service Smartphone App	24.8%	21.6%	53.6%
ChatGPT	21.9%	33.6%	44.5%
Voice Biometrics	7.3%	27.1%	65.6%

Chatbot Adoption Is on the Rise (Despite High-Profile Failures)

We've all heard about DPD disabling its online support chatbot after it swore at a customer (back in January 2024) and it's not the only high-profile example of this technology failing. Yet chatbot adoption rates are still on the rise!

42.6% of contact centres now have them – up from 37.5% in 2023 and 30.8% in 2020 – highlighting continuous growth year on year. Not only this, but 32.7% of contact centre professionals have chatbots on their wish list – compared to just 24.7% who don't have any interest at all.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Headsets	98.5%	97.9%	98.8%	98.4%	96.1%	97.7%	97.2%	99.1%	97.0%
Call Recording	85.8%	87.5%	91.4%	90.3%	89.0%	90.7%	89.8%	95.3%	94.6%
ACD / Call Routing	90.0%	90.1%	90.9%	89.7%	88.5%	92.5%	89.5%	94.8%	93.4%
IVR	79.5%	81.6%	86.1%	82.7%	80.2%	81.5%	86.6%	93.3%	89.9%
Quality Monitoring	82.3%	83.9%	80.2%	87.0%	83.7%	84.6%	83.2%	86.2%	84.9%
Performance Management							80.4%		
Knowledge Base	71.6%	75.6%	60.5%	70.5%	71.2%	66.2%	73.9%	72.3%	75.5%
Call Back from Queue Solution	N/A	51.1%	41.1%	40.2%	49.0%	47.6%	60.4%	63.6%	63.1%
VoC / Customer Survey	N/A	51.5%	48.4%	59.1%	62.5%	64.1%	64.9%	71.3%	62.4%
Customer Feedback Solution	59.8%	66.6%	58.5%	61.9%	57.3%	59.0%	58.7%	66.7%	59.7%
Wallboards	68.6%	72.9%	74.7%	63.0%	59.6%	60.0%	58.5%	64.7%	58.8%
Workforce Management Software	31.4%	36.9%	37.2%	49.0%	48.4%	44.8%	46.3%	53.9%	55.7%
Call Scripting	46.9%	52.3%	42.5%	51.0%	54.5%	48.1%	52.9%	54.9%	55.4%
Social Media Engagement	48.3%	52.9%	52.7%	57.4%	53.2%	50.7%	53.7%	52.7%	51.3%
Process Automation	36.3%	39.1%	34.6%	31.1%	36.9%	38.5%	37.2%	43.7%	45.6%
Chatbot	N/A	9.9%	30.7%	14.0%	30.8%	34.3%	36.0%	37.5%	42.6%
Interaction / Speech Analytics	9.2%	13.4%	13.2%	15.9%	21.4%	24.0%	28.0%	37.5%	35.7%
Desktop Consolidation	22.3%	33.2%	26.3%	34.7%	40.3%	36.2%	37.2%	45.4%	33.1%
Proactive SMS Messaging	N/A	35.5%	28.0%	29.3%	32.7%	30.8%	29.8%	37.8%	31.8%
Predictive Dialler	22.0%	22.3%	22.9%	24.6%	23.9%	19.6%	26.1%	32.2%	31.0%
Single Queue across All Channels	24.1%	32.0%	30.7%	26.3%	25.3%	30.8%	31.3%	33.4%	26.9%
WebRTC	N/A	13.2%	36.4%	12.8%	16.1%	19.3%	19.7%	26.5%	25.2%
Customer Service Smartphone App	N/A	27.9%	20.1%	30.5%	28.7%	28.4%	24.3%	26.4%	24.8%
ChatGPT	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10.3%	21.9%
Voice Biometrics	5.0%	5.0%	23.6%	5.0%	7.8%	7.7%	10.7%	12.4%	7.3%

2. What Technology Do You Have in Your Contact Centre?

More and More Contact Centres Are Using ChatGPT

Our 2024 survey findings also revealed that more and more contact centres are using ChatGPT, with 21.9% now having it – compared to just 10.3% in 2023 – and a further 33.6% having it on their wish list. This highlights that AI is now part of mainstream conversation, above and beyond the initial testing carried out by industry trailblazers.

This is also reflected in the broader use of AI in the contact centre – as seen in Question 18 "Where Is Your Artificial Intelligence Strategy?" – as almost 70% of contact centres now either have or are working on an AI strategy.

Just as we saw with the cloud, this new technology is quickly becoming a staple part of contact centre life – not surprising given that customer service is such a great proving ground for AI.

WFM Adoption Rates Continue to Rise

Our survey findings also showed that WFM adoption rates have continued to rise – up from 31.4% to 55.7% in just 8 years. Perhaps underpinned by an increasing emphasis on agent wellbeing and fiercer competition for staff in recent years, alongside a growing awareness of just how much accurate planning, forecasting, and scheduling can impact the bottom line.

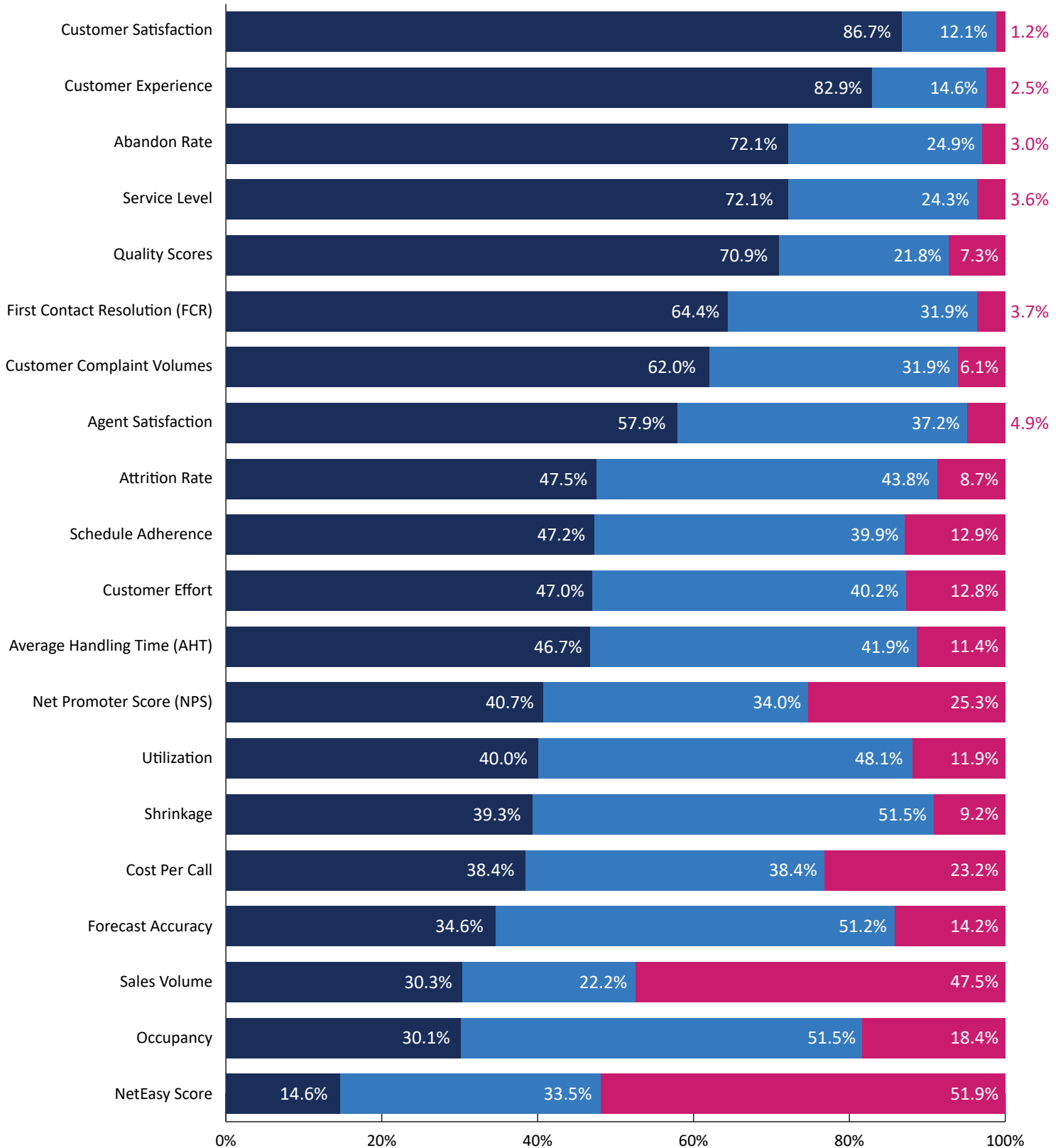**Are IVRs and ACDs Being Displaced by AI?**

Interestingly, the findings show a year-on-year dip in those with traditional ACD/ Call Routing (down from 94.8% in 2023 to 93.4% in 2024) and IVR solutions (down from 93.3% in 2023 to 89.9% in 2024) – suggesting there may be a degree of displacement at play here due to emerging AI capabilities in this space, redefining how calls are routed to the best agent (virtual or human), that we'll need to keep a close eye on in the coming years.

3. What Are the Most Important Contact Centre Metrics?

What Are the Most Important Contact Centre Metrics?

Legend: ■ Very Important   ■ Quite Important   ■ Not Important

Metric	Very Important	Quite Important	Not Important
Customer Satisfaction	86.7%	12.1%	1.2%
Customer Experience	82.9%	14.6%	2.5%
Abandon Rate	72.1%	24.9%	3.0%
Service Level	72.1%	24.3%	3.6%
Quality Scores	70.9%	21.8%	7.3%
First Contact Resolution (FCR)	64.4%	31.9%	3.7%
Customer Complaint Volumes	62.0%	31.9%	6.1%
Agent Satisfaction	57.9%	37.2%	4.9%
Attrition Rate	47.5%	43.8%	8.7%
Schedule Adherence	47.2%	39.9%	12.9%
Customer Effort	47.0%	40.2%	12.8%
Average Handling Time (AHT)	46.7%	41.9%	11.4%
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	40.7%	34.0%	25.3%
Utilization	40.0%	48.1%	11.9%
Shrinkage	39.3%	51.5%	9.2%
Cost Per Call	38.4%	38.4%	23.2%
Forecast Accuracy	34.6%	51.2%	14.2%
Sales Volume	30.3%	22.2%	47.5%
Occupancy	30.1%	51.5%	18.4%
NetEasy Score	14.6%	33.5%	51.9%

3. What Are the Most Important Contact Centre Metrics?

Customer Experience in the Top 5

For the first year – in 2024 – we added Customer Experience (CX) to the list and it was ranked very important by 82.9% of contact centre professionals, outperformed only by Customer Satisfaction at 86.7%. This is somewhat unsurprising given how fundamental customer satisfaction is to the all-inclusive Customer Experience (CX).

Other metrics to take the lead include Abandon Rate (72.1%), Service Level (72.1%), Quality Scores (70.9%), and First Contact Resolution (64.4%), highlighting a strategic emphasis on delivering a consistently fast and quality customer experience, every time.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Customer Satisfaction	91.1%	95.7%	93.1%	89.2%	84.8%	84.7%	85.3%	86.7%	86.7%
Customer Experience	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	82.9%
Service Level	70.0%	62.7%	61.4%	65.6%	72.0%	73.2%	71.5%	77.8%	72.1%
Quality Scores	68.4%	67.5%	63.9%	65.1%	64.5%	68.1%	67.8%	71.2%	70.9%
First Contact Resolution (FCR)	65.4%	68.0%	69.8%	68.8%	63.8%	69.4%	63.9%	68.7%	64.4%
Abandon Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	62.0%	59.1%	63.9%	66.0%	67.9%	72.1%
Agent Satisfaction	48.4%	62.0%	63.1%	67.1%	66.9%	60.0%	59.5%	66.7%	57.9%
Customer Complaint Volumes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	65.7%	64.8%	59.7%	62.1%	62.0%
Attrition Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	49.8%	46.6%	45.7%	49.3%	55.5%	47.5%
Customer Effort	35.8%	53.6%	48.9%	47.5%	48.2%	55.7%	44.8%	50.5%	47.0%
Schedule Adherence	37.6%	47.6%	40.2%	48.6%	43.1%	42.4%	40.8%	49.8%	47.2%
Average Handling Time (AHT)	31.8%	33.2%	31.9%	44.0%	44.2%	47.6%	45.1%	48.4%	46.7%
Utilization	N/A	N/A	N/A	44.1%	39.5%	40.8%	39.0%	48.1%	40.0%
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	29.6%	36.6%	32.8%	36.6%	39.8%	41.7%	38.8%	44.3%	40.7%
Forecast Accuracy	33.4%	36.2%	37.1%	40.3%	33.9%	32.5%	34.3%	42.0%	34.6%
Shrinkage	28.5%	30.5%	27.3%	35.7%	35.1%	36.2%	29.8%	41.3%	39.3%
Occupancy	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	35.6%	36.4%	33.9%	40.8%	30.1%
Cost Per Call	N/A	N/A	N/A	31.0%	27.3%	24.5%	24.2%	28.4%	38.4%
Sales Volume	29.1%	35.1%	27.2%	27.8%	32.2%	27.6%	25.9%	27.2%	30.3%
NetEasy Score	11.4%	21.7%	19.5%	14.8%	14.0%	10.3%	13.3%	19.3%	14.6%

The Once-Trendy "Net" Metrics Falling out of Favour

By contrast, less than half of survey respondents (40.7%) rated the Net Promoter Score (NPS) as very important, and just 14.6% of contact centre professionals rated the NetEasy Score as very important – showing a year-on-year decline from the 2023 survey findings.
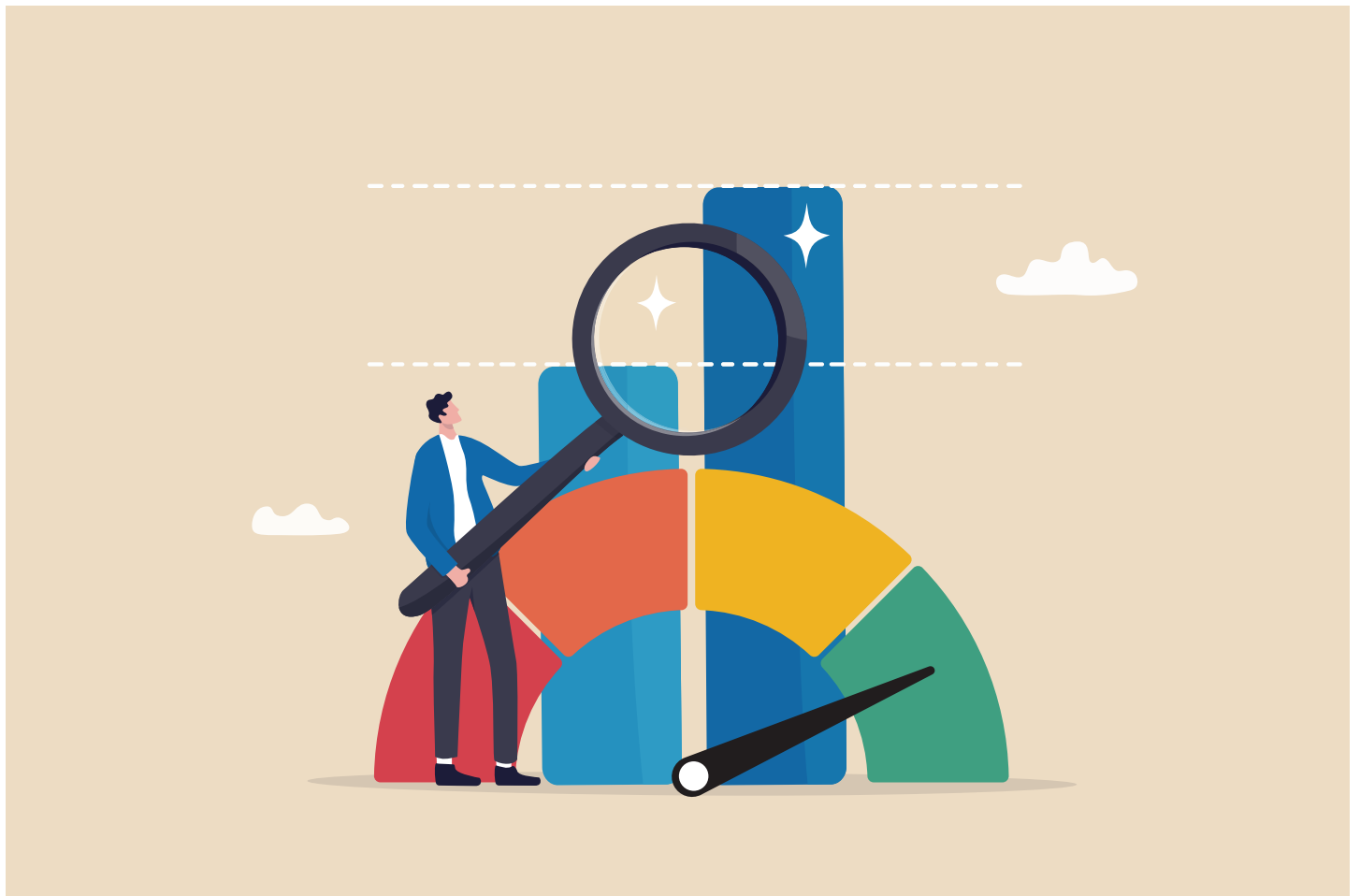
Overall, it seems the industry has yet to make its mind up on the significance and usefulness of these two metrics as, whilst currently in decline, both remain more popular and in wider use than they were back in 2016 (when NPS was recorded at 29.6% and NetEasy at 11.4%).

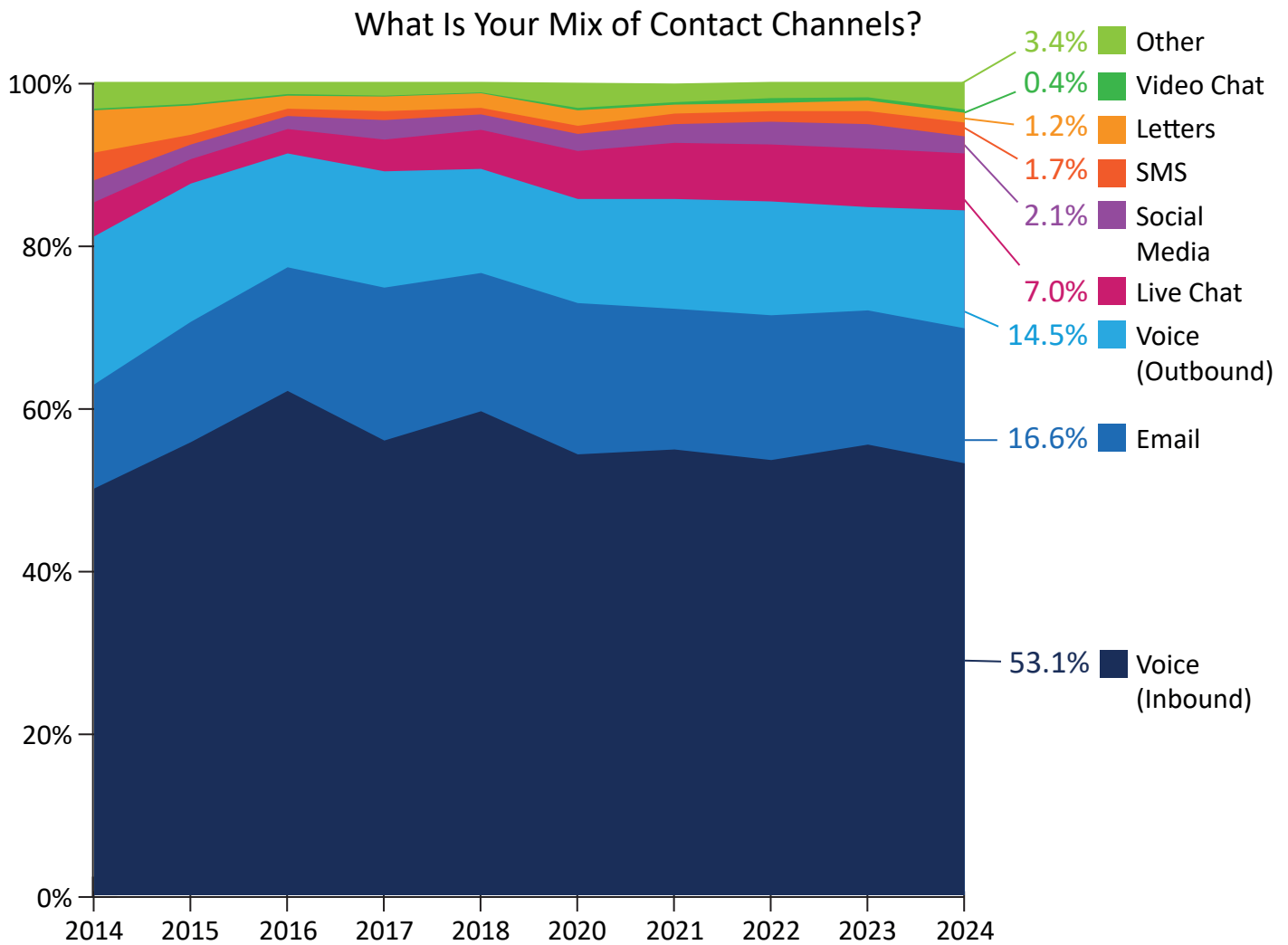# 3. What Are the Most Important Contact Centre Metrics?

Cost Per Call Hits a 5-Year High

It's also interesting to note that there's been a jump in use of the cost-per-call metric – highlighting the increasing pressures of running a contact centre in a tough economy.

Somewhat ironically, other metrics that could help the contact centre save money and run more efficiently are being overlooked and seeing a year-on-year dip – particularly in the planning arena, with emphasis down on monitoring schedule adherence (49.8% to 47.2%), utilization (48.1% to 40%), forecast accuracy (42% to 34.6%), shrinkage (41.3% to 39.3%), and occupancy (40.8% to 30.1%).

4. What Is Your Mix of Contact Channels?

What Is Your Mix of Contact Channels?

Channel	Value
Other	3.4%
Video Chat	0.4%
Letters	1.2%
SMS	1.7%
Social Media	2.1%
Live Chat	7.0%
Voice (Outbound)	14.5%
Email	16.6%
Voice (Inbound)	53.1%

(Stacked area chart showing channel mix percentages from 2014 to 2024, vertical axis 0% to 100%.)

Voice Remains King – But There's Been a Shift Toward More Outbound Calls

The year-on-year stats show voice still reigns king in customer contact – with inbound and outbound combined holding a clear majority of 67.6% in 2024.

Yet there's been a slight shift in balance between the focus on outbound and inbound – with inbound showing a decline year on year (55.4% down to 53.1%) and outbound showing an increase (from 12.7% up to 14.5%).

There could be several reasons for this, potentially showing a shift towards using callbacks to manage call volumes (as the use of callback from queue solutions holds steady at 63% this year), or chatbot conversations falling out of the self-service loop and needing some outbound agent support, or even greater emphasis on proactive customer service.

[Editor's Note: We recently visited a contact centre that was embracing AI to identify customers with a propensity to lapse, empowering their teams to proactively get in touch to retain them. Read more in our article on How to Improve Your CX Strategy.]

4. What Is Your Mix of Contact Channels?

Email, Live Chat, SMS (and Even Letters) Hold Steady

Meanwhile email (16.6%), live chat (7%), SMS (1.7%), video chat (0.4%) and even letters (1.2%) have held a steady position year on year.

Has the Rebrand From Twitter to X Impacted Social Media Contact Rates?

The only other notable decline is in the use of social media – dropping from 3% to 2.1% year on year. Perhaps a knock-on effect on the rebranding of Twitter to X back in April 2023 – as several news sources report a big decline in users since the rebrand.

It's equally possible that WhatsApp is making its mark and giving customers more choice in how they communicate with an organization – offsetting social media contact volumes in the process.

However, further research is needed to see just how much customers truly distinguish this channel from SMS.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Voice (Inbound)	50.0%	55.7%	62.0%	55.9%	59.5%	54.2%	54.8%	53.5%	55.4%	53.1%
Voice (Outbound)	18.2%	17.0%	14.0%	14.3%	12.8%	12.8%	13.5%	14.0%	12.7%	14.5%
Email	12.8%	14.8%	15.2%	18.8%	17.0%	18.6%	17.3%	17.8%	16.5%	16.6%
Live Chat	4.2%	3.0%	3.0%	3.9%	4.8%	5.9%	6.9%	7.0%	7.2%	7.0%
Social Media	2.7%	1.8%	1.6%	2.4%	1.9%	2.1%	2.3%	2.8%	3.0%	2.1%
Letters	5.2%	3.6%	1.6%	1.8%	1.8%	1.9%	1.1%	1.0%	1.3%	1.2%
SMS	3.4%	1.2%	0.9%	1.1%	0.8%	1.0%	1.3%	1.3%	1.6%	1.7%
Video Chat	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%	0.4%	0.4%
Other	3.3%	2.7%	1.5%	1.7%	1.3%	3.1%	2.3%	2.0%	1.9%	3.4%

5. Which Apps Do You Use to Interact with Customers?

Which Apps Do You Use to Interact with Customers?

Legend: ■ 2024 (pink) ■ 2023 (blue)

App	2024	2023
Facebook	43.5%	48.0%
Instagram	27.0%	28.4%
X (formerly known as Twitter)	26.0%	26.5%
Messenger	22.5%	24.0%
WhatsApp	21.5%	19.1%
Other	14.5%	14.7%
None	36.0%	37.8%
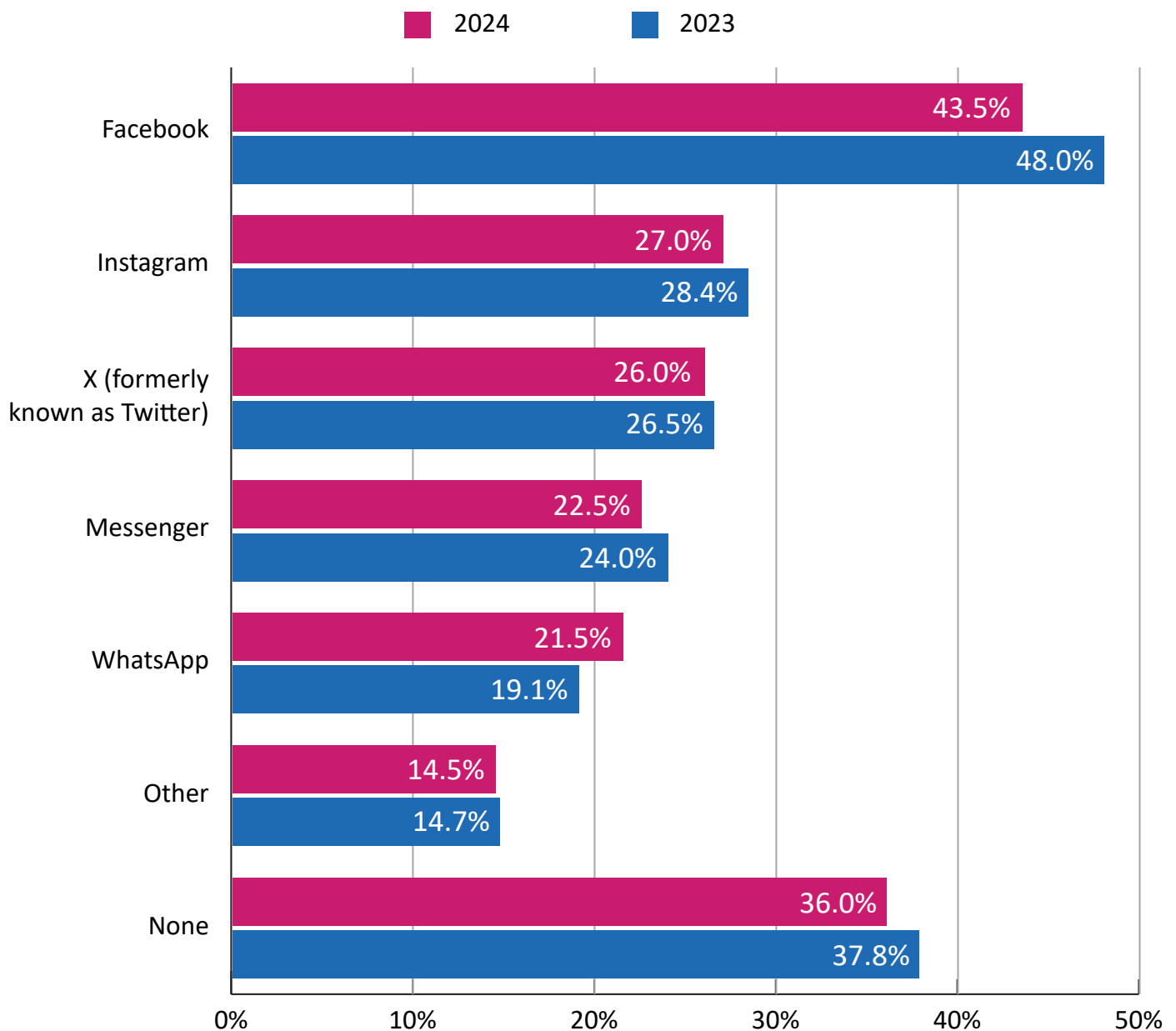
All Apps in Decline – Except for WhatsApp

Following on from the social media shortfall shown in Question 4 – What Is Your Mix of Contact Channels?, it's interesting to see it's not just X (formerly known as Twitter) on the decline, as Facebook is down from 48% in 2023 to 43.5% in 2024, Instagram is down from 28.4% to 27%, and Messenger is down from 24% to 22.5%.

By contrast, only WhatsApp is showing signs of increasing – up from 19.1% in 2023 to 21.5% in 2024 – suggesting that many contact centres could be beginning to shift away from use of social media in general, perhaps in an attempt to save money and consolidate their available channels.

5. Which Apps Do You Use to Interact with Customers?

This upward trend is also supported by rising WhatsApp activity across the world. Most notably in Africa, where WhatsApp is really taking off due to availability and cost, bridging infrastructure gaps and connecting Africans with local businesses and services.

There's Clearly No One-Size-Fits-All When It Comes to Apps in the Contact Centre

Interestingly, there was also a scattering of other apps named in use across the industry – with a handful of survey responders saying they were also using MS Teams, their own in-house app, Viber, and LinkedIn. One even said they were "about to roll out Apple Business".

Taken together, this highlights that, whilst some apps are more popular than others, there's clearly no one-size-fits-all here.

6. Do You Measure Customer Emotion in Your Contact Centres?

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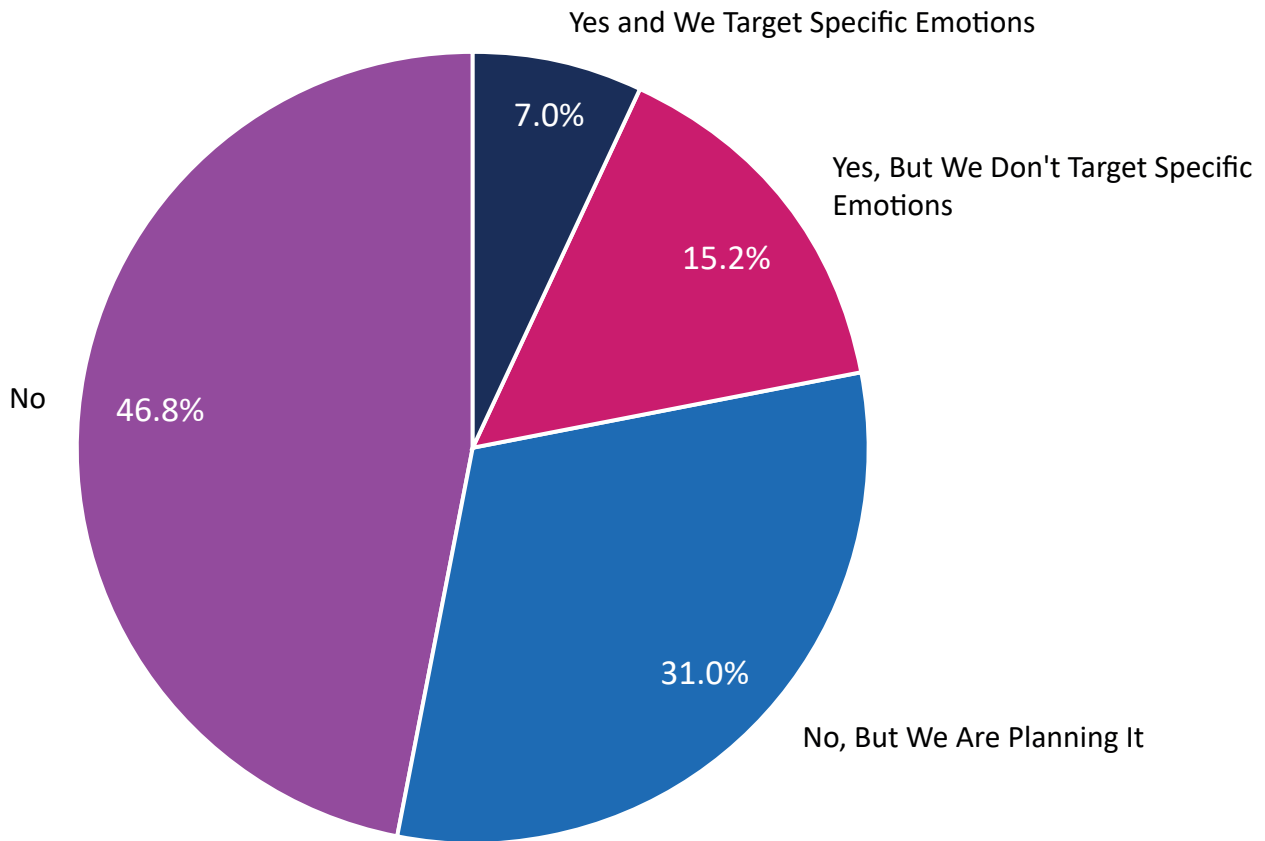
Measuring Customer Emotion Has Taken a Backseat in 2024

Back in 2023, it appeared that the contact centre industry was slowly beginning to realize the benefits of measuring customer emotion – due in part to the evolving capabilities of speech analytics.

However, it seems that contact centre leaders have taken their eye off the ball here, resulting in a backwards step in measuring customer emotions. Only 7% said "yes and we target specific emotions" – down from 12.9% last year – and 15.2% said "yes, but we don't target specific emotions" – down from 18.3% last year. This has been counter-balanced by the rise in those saying "no" – with a rise from 45.7& to 46.8%, perhaps indicative of the increasing financial pressure on running a lean contact centre operation.

	2023	2024
Yes and We Target Specific Emotions	12.9%	7.0%
Yes, But We Don't Target Specific Emotions	18.3%	15.2%
No, But We Are Planning It	23.1%	31.0%
No	45.7%	46.8%

6. Do You Measure Customer Emotion in Your Contact Centres?

AI Is Making Measuring Emotions in the Contact Centre Far More Possible

This is disappointing to see, particularly as AI is making it far more possible when it comes to measuring emotions in the contact centre. Not only through speech analytics and sentiment analysis, but also with the latest evolution in voice conversion technology, which can take the emotion out of the customer's voice in a way that is more pleasant for the customer service agent to listen and respond to.

The only silver lining here is that there's been an increase in those saying "no, but we are planning it" – up from 23.1% to 31% - suggesting that while multiple factors (and distractions) might have been in play across 2024, we should see some positive movement into 2025 and beyond.

7. To Create Your Metric Scores, How Frequently Do You Ask Customers to Complete a Post-Contact Survey?

To Create Your Metric Scores,
How Frequently Do You Ask Customers to Complete a Post-Contact Survey?
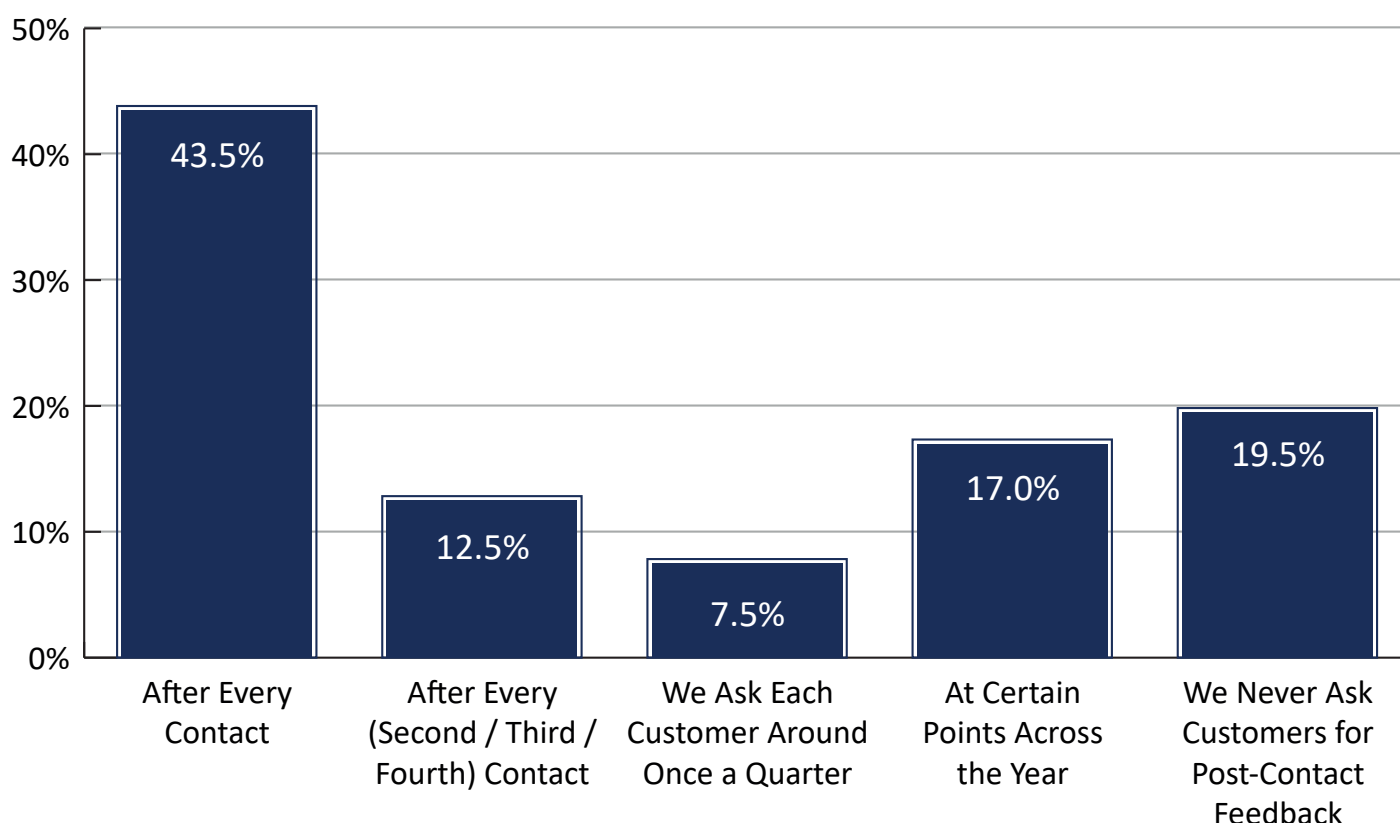
Disappointing to See Over Half of Contact Centres Regularly Spamming Customers for Feedback

The findings show that 43.5% of contact centres are sending customers a post-contact survey after every contact, a rise on the 38.8% findings from 2023, whilst a further 12.5% are trying to engage them after every second, third or fourth contact.

When response rates are typically low for these types of surveys, it's disappointing to see so many contact centres taking this spam approach to gathering customer insights to create their metric scores.

By contrast, 19.5% said they **never** ask customers for post-contact feedback – suggesting that they are gathering this insight through other (smarter) means, perhaps via analytics (in place across 35.7% of contact centres right now), or (quite simply) by asking their agents! Without compromising the customer experience in the process.

7. To Create Your Metric Scores, How Frequently Do You Ask Customers to Complete a Post-Contact Survey?

	2022	2023	2024
After Every Contact	39.4%	38.8%	43.5%
After Every (Second / Third / Fourth) Contact	17.0%	17.2%	12.5%
We Ask Each Customer To Complete A Post-Contact Survey Around Once A Quarter	7.3%	11.0%	7.5%
We Only Send Out Post-Contact Surveys At Certain Points Across The Year	15.7%	13.9%	17.0%
We Never Ask Customers For Post-Contact Feedback	20.6%	19.1%	19.5%
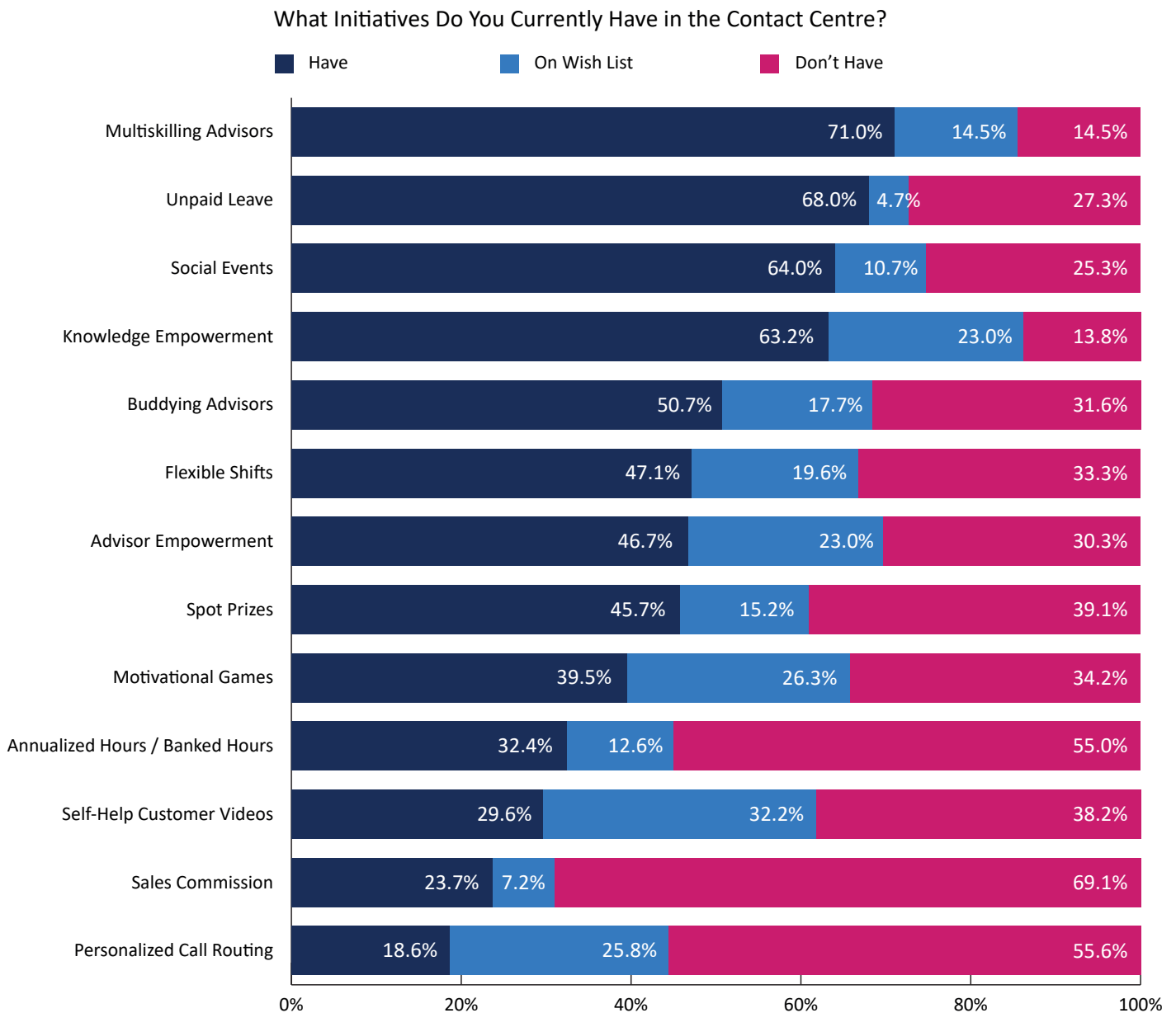
What Initiatives Do You Currently Have in the Contact Centre?

Legend: ■ Have ■ On Wish List ■ Don't Have

Initiative	Have	On Wish List	Don't Have
Multiskilling Advisors	71.0%	14.5%	14.5%
Unpaid Leave	68.0%	4.7%	27.3%
Social Events	64.0%	10.7%	25.3%
Knowledge Empowerment	63.2%	23.0%	13.8%
Buddying Advisors	50.7%	17.7%	31.6%
Flexible Shifts	47.1%	19.6%	33.3%
Advisor Empowerment	46.7%	23.0%	30.3%
Spot Prizes	45.7%	15.2%	39.1%
Motivational Games	39.5%	26.3%	34.2%
Annualized Hours / Banked Hours	32.4%	12.6%	55.0%
Self-Help Customer Videos	29.6%	32.2%	38.2%
Sales Commission	23.7%	7.2%	69.1%
Personalized Call Routing	18.6%	25.8%	55.6%

Social Events and Motivational Games Finally Returning to Pre-Covid Levels

It's promising to – finally – see social events (64%) and motivational games (39.5%) hitting a 5-year high, with a welcome return to pre-Covid levels.

This suggests that contact centres are beginning to settle into their not-so-new routine – whether office-based, hybrid, or fully remote – and bring back the tried-and-tested initiatives in a way that works best for them to keep staff morale high.

Agent Empowerment Initiatives Dipping Disappointingly Low

It's not all a rosy picture, though. Despite experts repeatedly highlighting that empowerment and flexibility are critical in everything from reducing agent stress to enhancing agent performance and staff retention, initiatives in this space are sadly showing signs of decline.

8. What Initiatives Do You Currently Have in the Contact Centre?

Between 2023 and 2024 alone, flexible shifts dropped from 56.7% to 47.1%, knowledge empowerment from 70% to 63.2%, and advisor empowerment from 48% to 46.7%.

This is all the more frustrating to see when there have been considerable advances in the technology in place to support such initiatives. For example, flexible break features in some WFM systems, which empower frontline agents to change their breaks with as little as 15 minutes' notice.

Is Flexible Working Becoming More of a Luxury Than a Staple Requirement?

This is possibly a sign of the times that leaders are tightening up operations post-Covid, as contact centres settle on their in-office, hybrid, or remote working strategy, and suggests flexible working is becoming more of a luxury than a staple requirement.

Although, sadly, it could also be indicative of short-term (and arguably short-sighted) cost-cutting initiatives as leaders continue to weather the storm of running a lean contact centre operation in a tough economy – putting long-term agent engagement to the bottom of the pile – in favour of a quick fix.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Multiskilling Agents	90.5%	88.2%	80.4%	84.5%	83.9%	81.7%	87.6%	86.7%	79.8%	71.0%
Knowledge Empowerment	66.2%	63.3%	66.8%	56.6%	63.1%	63.6%	63.3%	64.3%	70.0%	63.2%
Unpaid Leave	66.4%	65.2%	70.8%	70.7%	65.5%	68.4%	71.8%	70.9%	68.1%	68.0%
Social Events	77.3%	77.1%	74.0%	66.6%	64.0%	50.8%	47.0%	56.9%	57.9%	64.0%
Buddying Advisors	71.5%	71.0%	70.9%	60.0%	58.1%	60.6%	62.9%	54.9%	57.8%	50.7%
Flexible Shifts	59.7%	61.0%	62.5%	51.8%	58.2%	53.6%	56.3%	49.3%	56.7%	47.1%
Advisor Empowerment	61.6%	61.0%	61.0%	48.8%	47.9%	53.0%	51.4%	44.1%	48.0%	46.7%
Spot Prizes	52.8%	51.5%	45.4%	44.6%	38.9%	37.4%	32.1%	44.5%	46.3%	45.7%
Motivational Games	47.1%	50.2%	44.7%	38.5%	30.9%	29.0%	23.6%	33.3%	36.3%	39.5%
Annualized Hours / Banked Hours	30.9%	36.0%	37.7%	36.0%	35.1%	39.9%	40.9%	37.8%	33.1%	32.4%
Personalized Call Routing	38.2%	33.2%	36.4%	30.4%	30.3%	30.2%	32.8%	33.2%	32.8%	18.6%
Self-Help Customer Videos	23.8%	23.0%	23.6%	24.3%	30.9%	27.5%	32.1%	31.0%	29.8%	29.6%
Sales Commission	36.0%	26.7%	30.7%	27.0%	28.9%	27.9%	23.9%	24.1%	27.5%	23.7%

Multiskilling on the Decline for a Decade

It's also interesting to note that multiskilling agents is on the decline – down from 79.8% in 2023 to 71% in 2024. This marks a sharp decrease across the last decade, as figures have steadily fallen from 90.5% back in 2015.

Whilst there are some clear benefits to multiskilling agents – including preventing customers from being transferred and having to repeat themselves, and helping to support a clear career path for agents as they upskill and progress – there are downsides too. For example, it can compromise the quality of training and risk overwhelming new recruits with too much too soon.
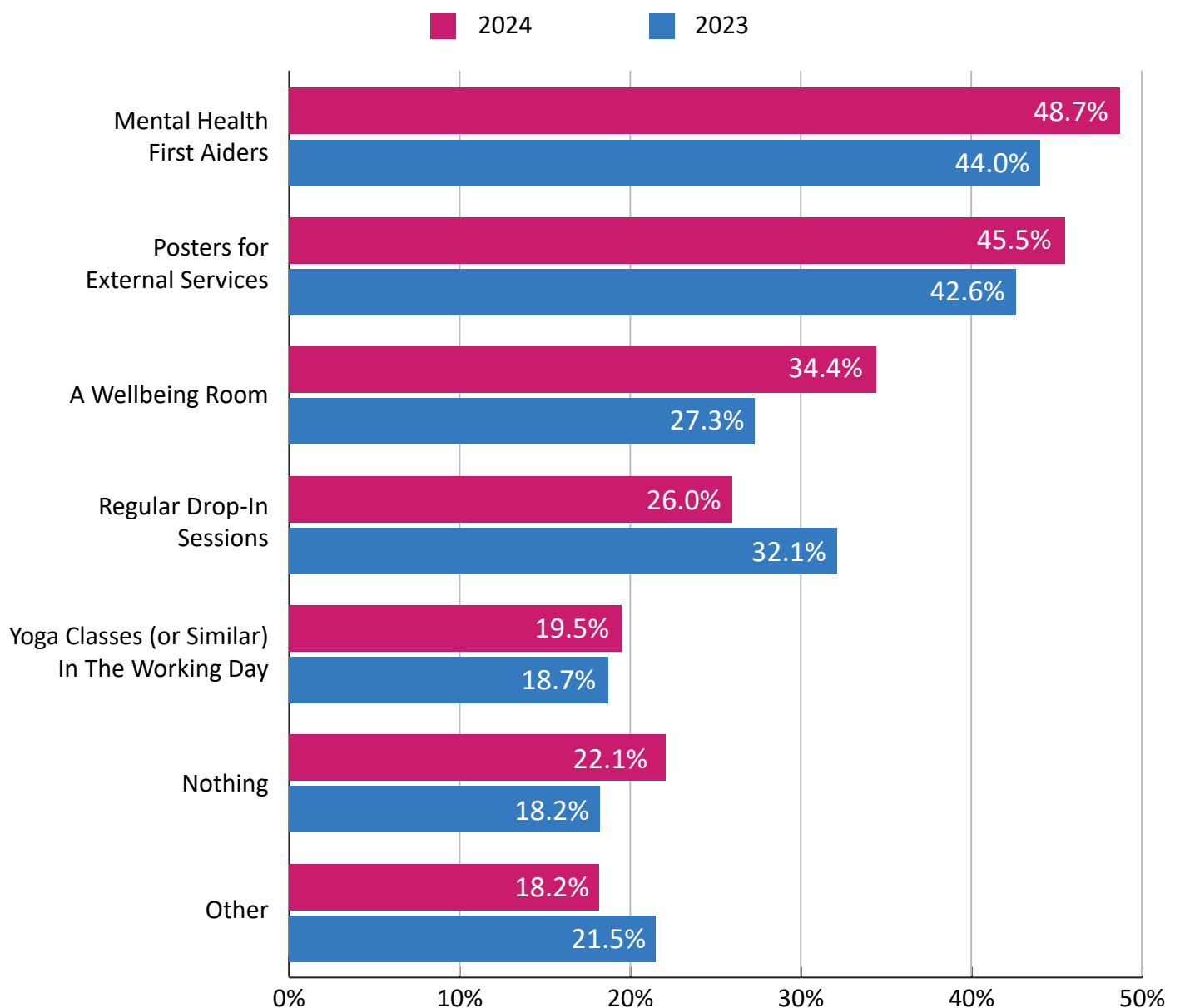
This is certainly a trend worth keeping an eye on in the years to come!

9. What Is Your Contact Centre Doing to Support Your Mental Health and Wellbeing?

Even More Contact Centres Now Have Mental Health First Aiders

This year's survey respondents gave an overwhelmingly positive response to the question of "What is your contact centre doing to support your mental health and wellbeing?" – highlighting further investments in the past 12 months in mental health first aiders (up from 44% to 48.7%), wellbeing rooms (up from 27.3% to 34.4%), and yoga classes in the working day (up from 18.7% to 19.5%).

What is Your Contact Centre Doing to Support Your Mental Health and Wellbeing?

■ 2024 ■ 2023

Category	2024	2023
Mental Health First Aiders	48.7%	44.0%
Posters for External Services	45.5%	42.6%
A Wellbeing Room	34.4%	27.3%
Regular Drop-In Sessions	26.0%	32.1%
Yoga Classes (or Similar) In The Working Day	19.5%	18.7%
Nothing	22.1%	18.2%
Other	18.2%	21.5%

9. What Is Your Contact Centre Doing to Support Your Mental Health and Wellbeing?

Smaller Positive Steps Are Being Taken Across the Industry Too

There has been an increase in smaller initiatives too. For example, the number of contact centres signposting their agents to additional support with posters for external services – up from 42.6% to 45.5%.

Not only that, but several responders said they also had employee assistance programmes (EAPs) in place, offered free counselling services when required, invited guest speakers in and hosted workshops, practised a "door always open" policy, opened an employee crisis line, offered EFT Tapping (an alternative acupressure therapy treatment), and appointed wellbeing advocates.

So overall, it's promising to see that, for many, wellbeing support is proving to be more than just a flash in the pan and is instead becoming more embedded in day-to-day contact centre life.

Although sadly not everyone is benefiting from this just yet – as evidenced by the 21.1% of survey responders who said their contact centre was doing nothing to support their wellbeing.

10. Where Are You on Your Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Journey?

Where Are You on Your Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Journey?

Don't Know 9.6%

We Haven't Started Yet 5.7%

We're Looking Into It 12.1%

We Have a Few Initiatives Up and Running 29.3%

We Have Lots of Initiatives Up and Running 43.3%
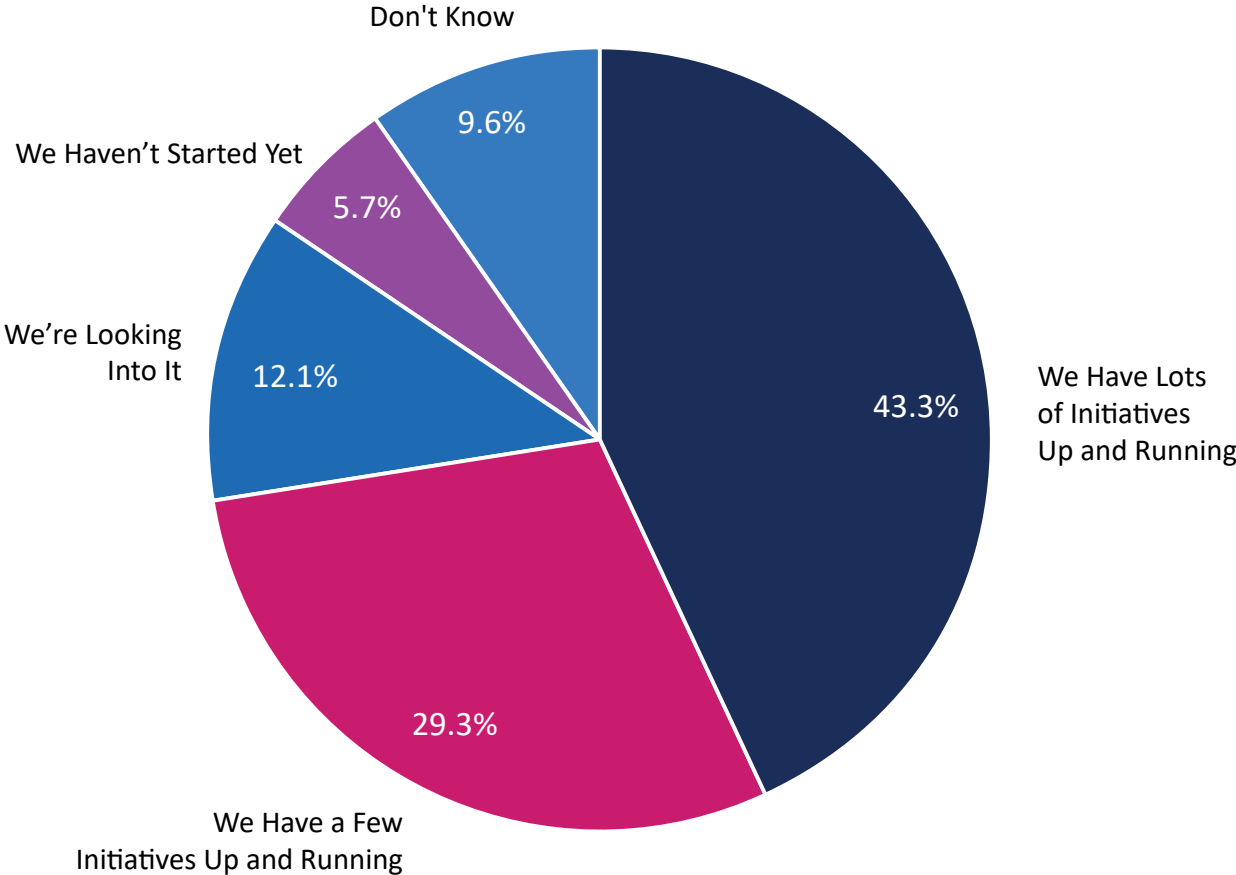
Even More Contact Centres Have DE&I Initiatives Up and Running This Year

There have been some positive shifts in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) in the last 12 months, as this year's findings showed a positive increase (from 38.8% to 43.3%) in the number of contact centres with lots of initiatives up and running.

Other trends included an increase in those looking into it and a decrease in those who haven't started yet, showing a positive picture overall that two-thirds of contact centres are actively supporting the DE&I agenda.

	2023	2024
We Have Lots of Initiatives Up and Running	38.8%	43.3%
We Have a Few Initiatives Up and Running	38.3%	29.3%
We're Looking Into It	11.0%	12.1%
We Haven't Started Yet	6.2%	5.7%
Don't Know	5.7%	9.6%

11. Is Your Contact Centre Doing Enough to Support Vulnerable Customers?

Too Many Contact Centres Falling Short on Supporting Vulnerable Customers

The number of survey participants answering "No" (24.4%) and "Don't Know" (17.3%) to the question "Is your contact centre doing enough to support vulnerable customers?" highlights that the contact centre industry still has some way to go before all customers receive fair and equal treatment in this regard.

It's a disappointing picture, particularly given the introduction of the FCA's Consumer Duty Act in the UK back in 2023, which emphasizes the importance of respecting customers' varied needs, including those in vulnerable circumstances, and providing clear and understandable communication.

Is Your Contact Centre Doing Enough to Support Vulnerable Customers?

Legend: ■ 2024   ■ 2023

	Yes	No	Don't Know
2024	58.3%	24.4%	17.3%
2023	55.0%	18.5%	26.5%
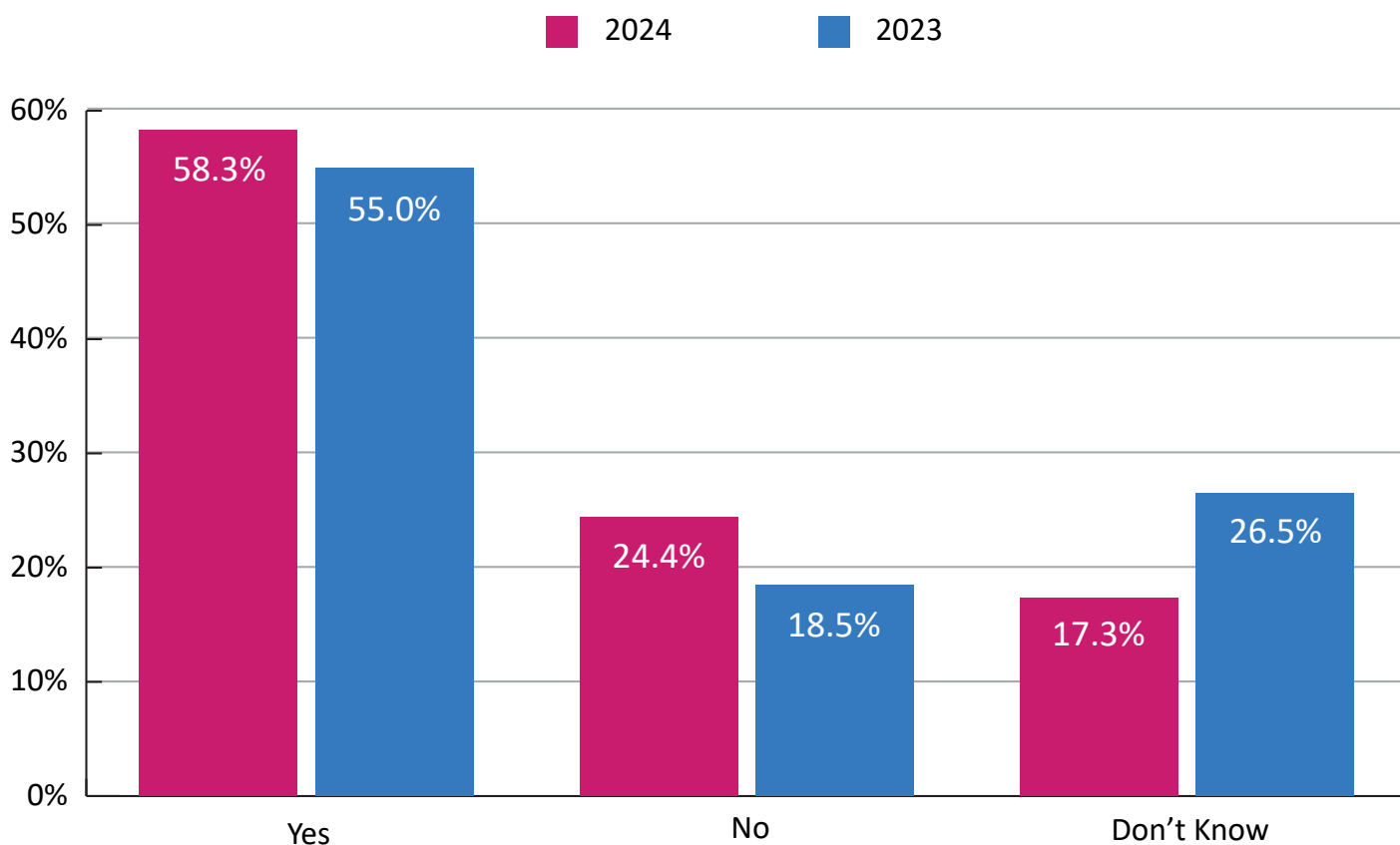
Every Agent Should Know How to Recognize and Support a Vulnerable Customer

Given the scope of personal challenges that can lead to a person being defined as vulnerable – whether that's temporarily because of their financial situation, or longer term because of a disability, to give just a few examples – it's clear that every contact centre agent should know how to recognize and support a vulnerable customer.

That aside, it's promising to see a small shift – from 55% to 58.3% – in the number of contact centres saying "yes" that they do feel they are doing enough to support vulnerable customers. Hopefully, this upward trend will continue in the months and years to come.

12. What Barriers Stop You From Running Your Dream Contact Centre?

Surge in AI Causing Many to Feel Left Out and Wanting More

When asked "What barriers stop you from running your dream contact centre?", budget (67.3%), conflicting business priorities (49%), and needing new technology (48.4%) took the brunt of the blame.

What Barriers Stop You from Running Your Dream Contact Centre?

Barrier	Percentage
Budget	67.3%
Conflicting Business Priorities	49.0%
Need New Technology	48.4%
IT Issues	43.8%
Broken Processes	39.2%
Not Enough Staff	30.1%
Not Being Aligned with Other Departments	29.4%
Technology Not Joined Up	26.1%
Management Buy-In	21.6%
Lack of Time / Human Resources	20.3%
Lack of Skills / It's Too Complicated for Our Existing Team	17.6%
Dealing With New Channels	14.4%
Advisor Buy-in	13.7%
Floor Space	10.5%
Writing a Business Case	6.5%
Wrong Advisor Targets	4.6%

12. What Barriers Stop You From Running Your Dream Contact Centre?

Most notably, this knocked broken processes out of a top spot when compared to 2023 findings, where the top three barriers were named as budget (66%), conflicting business priorities (48.1%), and broken processes (45.2%).

It's particularly interesting to see the need for new technology climbing the ranks, as AI features are becoming increasingly available to contact centre leaders (who can secure the budget for them).

Concerns About Not Having Enough Staff Have Tailed Off Since the Height of Covid

Interestingly, concerns about not enough staff have tailed off since the height of Covid in 2020/ 2021 – down to 30.1% – suggesting that, for many, staffing challenges have stabilized.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2023	2024
Budget	67.4%	80.0%	76.8%	80.6%	72.7%	60.3%	58.3%	66.0%	67.3%
Conflicting Business Priorities	31.3%	39.7%	40.7%	47.9%	53.0%	45.0%	50.9%	48.1%	49.0%
Need New Technology	39.9%	42.0%	46.9%	53.8%	45.9%	N/A	37.0%	44.2%	48.4%
IT Issues	N/A	N/A	N/A	59.1%	49.4%	40.3%	46.7%	41.3%	43.8%
Broken Processes	27.9%	31.5%	38.0%	40.9%	44.3%	43.3%	50.0%	45.2%	39.2%
Not Enough Staff	N/A	N/A	N/A	38.8%	29.6%	38.0%	43.5%	36.4%	30.1%
Not Being Aligned with Other Departments	N/A	N/A	N/A	32.1%	34.4%	26.3%	30.1%	28.2%	29.4%
Technology Not Joined Up	35.4%	35.9%	36.4%	30.6%	24.9%	53.0%	27.3%	23.8%	26.1%
Management Buy-In	28.1%	35.9%	36.1%	29.7%	28.1%	26.3%	27.8%	27.2%	21.6%
Lack of Time / Human Resources	24.5%	27.8%	29.9%	35.3%	31.2%	24.7%	25.9%	23.3%	20.3%
Lack of Skills / It's Too Complicated for Our Existing Team	15.0%	20.3%	23.2%	24.1%	20.2%	20.7%	24.5%	17.5%	17.6%
Dealing with New Channels	10.7%	10.5%	16.4%	16.5%	19.4%	12.3%	12.5%	16.5%	14.4%
Advisor Buy-In	18.6%	14.2%	16.5%	11.2%	20.2%	14.3%	19.4%	17.5%	13.7%
Floor Space	N/A	N/A	18.3%	21.8%	23.7%	14.7%	13.9%	9.7%	10.5%
Writing a Business Case	N/A	N/A	14.3%	10.0%	9.5%	8.7%	8.3%	11.2%	6.5%
Wrong Advisor Targets	N/A	N/A	10.8%	8.5%	11.9%	10.3%	8.3%	7.3%	4.6%

Advisor Experience & Engagement

The Advisor Experience & Engagement chapter is sponsored by Sabio.

Sabio Group is a global digital experience transformation services specialist with major operations in the UK (England and Scotland), Spain, France, Netherlands, Denmark, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa and India.

The Group delivers solutions and services that seamlessly combine digital and human interactions to support brilliant customer & employee experiences (CX & EX).

Through its own technology, and that of world-class technology leaders such as Amazon, Avaya, Genesys, Google, Microsoft, Salesforce, Twilio and Verint, Sabio helps organisations optimise their customer journeys by making better decisions across their multiple contact channels.

The Group specialises in contact centre, AI, CRM and data insight technologies and works with major brands worldwide, including Aegon, AXA Assistance, BBVA, BGL, Caixabank, DHL, loveholidays, Marks & Spencer, Rentokil Initial, Essent, GovTech, HomeServe, Sainsbury's Argos, Telefónica and Transcom Worldwide.

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13. How Would You Rate the Level of Employee Engagement in Your Organization?

Only 6% of Contact Centres Say Their Employee Engagement Is Poor

It's promising to see that the vast majority of contact centres rate their level of employee engagement relatively highly – with a combined total of 94% rating their employee engagement either excellent, good, or reasonable, compared to a combined total of just 6% rating it poor or very poor.

How Would You Rate the Level of Employee Engagement in Your Organization?

Rating	Percentage
Excellent	15.3%
Good	46.7%
Reasonable	32.0%
Poor	4.7%
Very Poor	1.3%
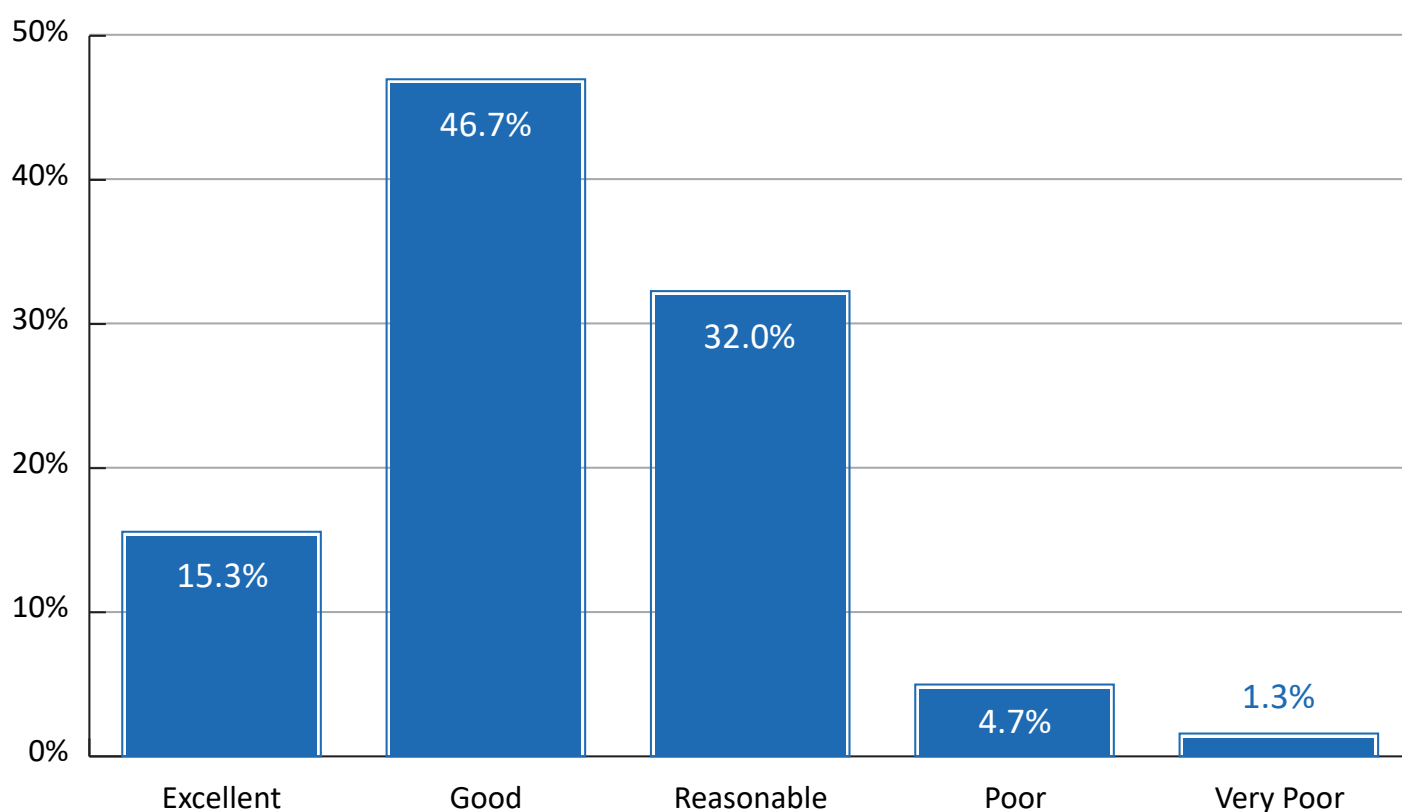
Excellent Remains a Status for the Privileged Few

Somewhat disappointingly, these figures are almost identical to those shown in the 2023 What Contact Centres Are Doing Right Now report, with only 15.3% of contact centres considering their levels of employee engagement to be excellent year on year.

Interestingly, the other ratings have remained fairly static too. This suggests that those working in the realms of good (46.7%) and reasonable (32%) have done very little to shift the dial and give their employee engagement initiatives a much-needed boost. Worse still, those who consider their employee engagement to be poor or very poor have done nothing to improve the situation for their colleagues either.

14. Do the Managers and Leaders in Your Organization Understand How to Engage Their Teams?

Almost a Fifth of Leaders Are Clueless About How to Engage Their Teams

Shockingly, 16% of survey respondents felt that the managers and leaders in their organization did not understand how to engage their teams.

This goes some way to explaining why some contact centres are experiencing consistently low levels of employee engagement – as explored in Question 13 – How would you rate the level of employee engagement in your organization? – as the leadership team simply lacks the skill set to drive it.

Overall, these findings highlight where available technology, such as wellbeing, gamification, and workforce management tools, are being underutilized in this space – consequently compromising the leadership team's ability to proactively deliver a more tailored, flexible, and engaging workspace for their agents.

This could also be symptomatic of "The Magic Weekend" phenomenon, whereby many contact centre managers (and team leaders) step into a new leadership role on a Monday morning having had little to no training on how to engage their teams – compromising the experience for all involved.

Do the Managers and Leaders in Your Organization Understand How to Engage Their Teams?

2024

No — 16.0%
84.0% — Yes

2023

No — 11.1%
88.9% — Yes
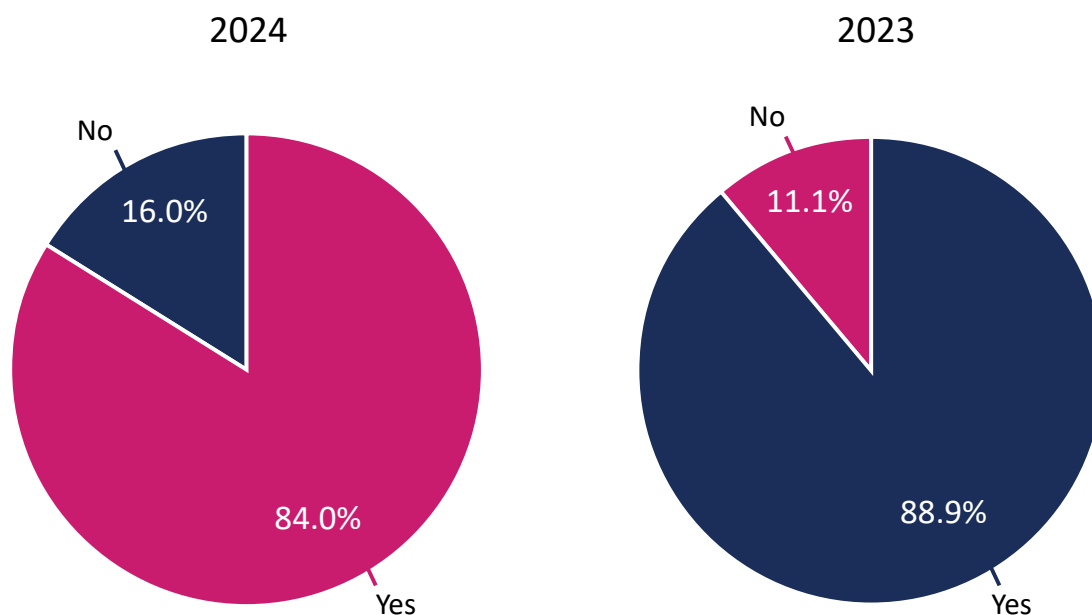
Lack of Employee Engagement Skills Is a Growing Issue

More worrying is how this figure is a marked increase year-on-year (up from 11.1% back in 2023), suggesting this is a skills gap that needs some serious attention right now.

For example, by giving more tailored training to contact centre leaders (to help close the skills gap) and make sure all agents are benefiting from leaders with a firm understanding of what it takes to nurture an engaged workforce.

15. Have You Considered Using Technology to Monitor the Wellbeing of Your Advisors?

Over Half of Contact Centres Don't Realize Wellbeing Technology Even Exists

The contact centre industry still has a long way to go in acknowledging and fully utilizing the benefits of wellbeing technology. When asked "Have you considered using technology to monitor the wellbeing of your advisors?", 53.6% of survey respondents said "No, I didn't realize this technology was available".

Furthermore, when combined, only a third answered "yes" to considering using technology to monitor the wellbeing of their advisors, of which only 12.6% were actively using it as a key tool – a stark contrast to the two-thirds who said "no".

Have You Considered Using Technology to Monitor the Wellbeing of Your Advisors?

Bar chart with values: Yes, It Is a Key Tool: 12.6%; Yes, But We Don't Know Much About it: 22.5%; No, I Didn't Realize This Technology Was Available: 53.6%; No: 11.3%
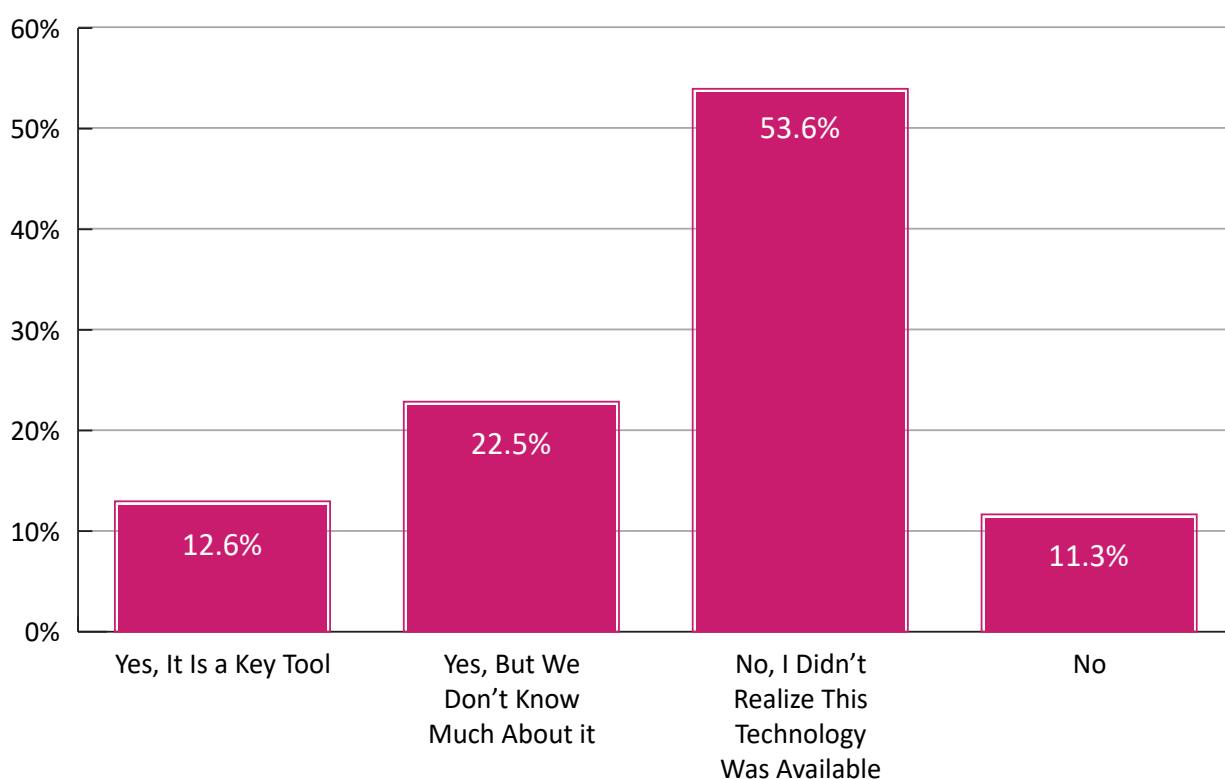
Are Contact Centre Leaders Drawing the Line at Mental Health First Aiders and Wellbeing Rooms?

Sadly, it looks as though overall awareness of and interest in wellbeing technology has fallen. Whilst "yes, it is a key tool" has grown marginally from 12.1% to 12.6% year on year, the number of those saying "No I didn't realize this technology was available" has risen from 45.6% to 53.6%. Not only that, but the combined "yes" responses have fallen from 40.8% in 2023 to 35.1% in 2024, whilst the combined "no" responses have risen from 59.2% to 64.9%.

Why is this happening? It's possible that contact centre leaders are only putting so much of their stretched resources and budget into wellbeing, and perhaps feel that rolling out initiatives such as mental health first aiders and wellbeing rooms are ticking the box – leaving the bigger wellbeing picture untouched in favour of tackling other challenges in the contact centre.

It's also likely that the broader distraction of AI has somewhat left any innovation in wellbeing technology on the sidelines for now, as contact centres scramble to get a piece of the next big thing. So, it will be interesting to see how this picture unfolds.

16. Which Barriers Are Stopping You From Improving the Advisor Experience?

Budget Continues to Be Seen as the Biggest Barrier

Somewhat unsurprisingly, budget maintains its top spot as the biggest barrier to improving the advisor experience – blamed by almost 60% of survey respondents.

These findings align with the broader question of "What Barriers Stop You From Running Your Dream Contact Centre?" (Question 12), where 67.3% blamed budget, and which sadly only serves to highlight that CX and EX will always be at the mercy of the purse strings.

Which Barriers Are Stopping You From Improving the Advisor Experience?

Legend: ■ 2024 ■ 2023

Barrier	2024	2023
Budget	57.8%	58.4%
Contact Volumes / Workload	51.7%	53.0%
Coaching Skills of Managers	40.8%	43.1%
Poor Technology	40.8%	40.6%
Pressure to Perform / Targets	32.7%	31.2%
Remote Working	29.9%	32.7%
Shifts / Schedules / Time off Requests	20.4%	23.8%
Other	4.1%	5.5%
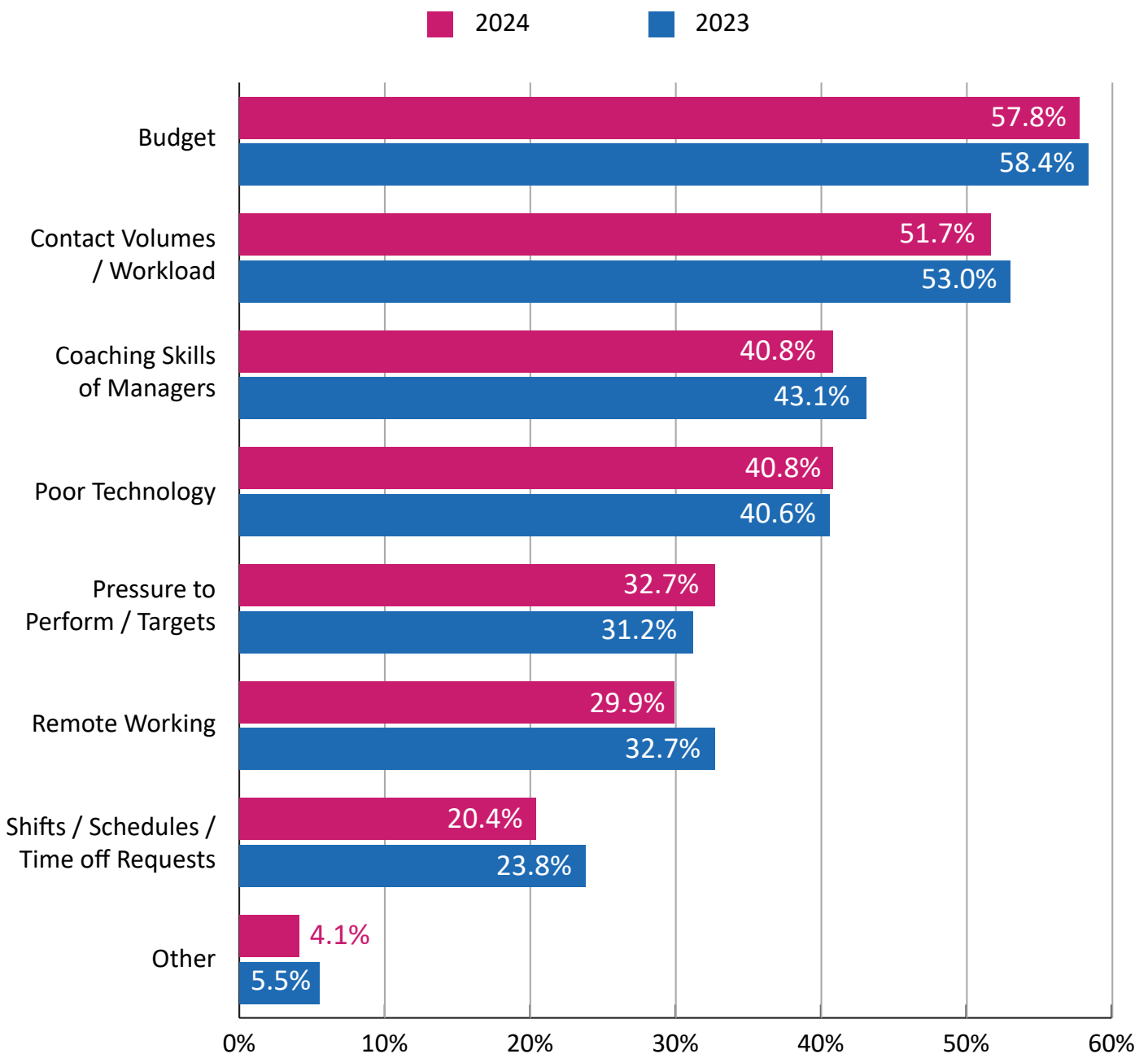
16. Which Barriers Are Stopping You From Improving the Advisor Experience?

Less Blame Placed on Scheduling Issues as WFM Adoption Rates Increase

It's interesting to see the year-on-year drop in shifts, schedules, and time-off requests being blamed as a barrier to improving the advisor experience – down from 23.8% in 2023 to 20.4% in 2024.

This could possibly be due to the parallel year-on-year increases in workforce management software adoption rates, which have been rising steadily since 2016 and making scheduling and time-off requests less of a headache for those using them.

Remote Working Off the Hook as Contact Centres "Pick a Lane"

The debate around remote, in-office, and hybrid working has now been settled, as most contact centres have picked their lane and are staying in it.

This is perhaps why remote working is seen as less of a factor in 2024 – dropping from 32.7% in 2023 to 29.9% in 2024 – as those who are running with a permanent remote working or hybrid strategy have found a way to make it work for them, whilst others have discounted it entirely.

Either way, it's good to see it being used less as a scapegoat for any contact centre issues.

Younger Employees' Attitude to Working Also Takes Some Blame

Additional challenges cited by some survey respondents also included process automation, cross-team functionality, lack of leadership from the top and, most alarmingly, younger employees' attitudes to working – an area where leaders clearly need to focus more of their attention to effectively engage with this generation.

Have You Actively Put in Place Processes to Tackle Attrition in the Contact Centre?

No, We Don't Have the Budget / Resource — 19.5%

Yes, and it's Working Well, Our Attrition Rates Have Stabilised / Decreased — 24.1%

Yes, But We've Seen No or Limited Change — 18.8%

No, We Don't Have a Problem With Attrition — 37.6%
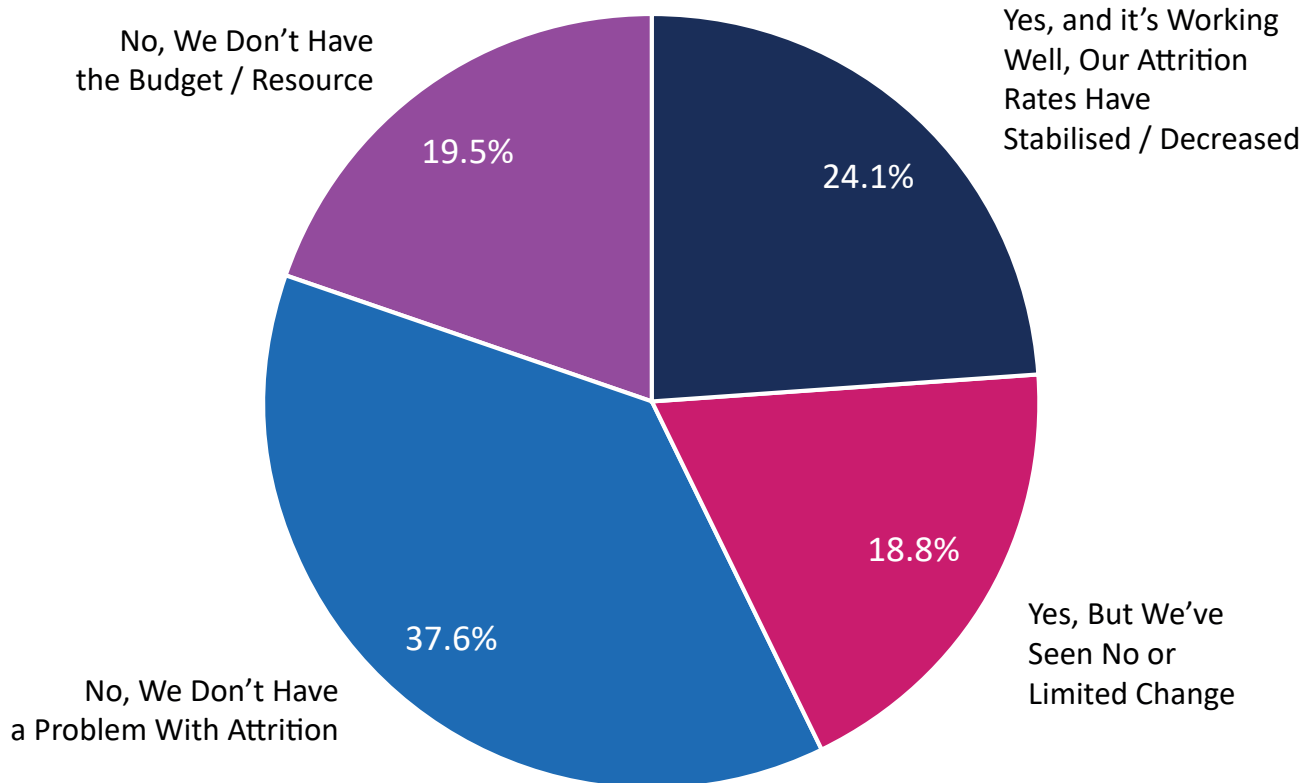
Growing Numbers Say They Don't Have a Problem With Attrition

It's good news! The number of those claiming they **don't** have a problem with attrition has risen from 23.4% to 37.6% year on year – whilst those saying a combined "yes" that they **do** have an attrition problem has dropped from 56.1% in 2023 to 42.9% in 2024.

	2023	2024
Yes, and it's Working Well, Our Attrition Rates Have Stabilized / Decreased	30.2%	24.1%
Yes, But We've Seen No or Limited Change	25.9%	18.8%
No, We Don't Have a Problem With Attrition	23.4%	37.6%
No, We Don't Have the Budget / Resource	20.5%	19.5%

17. Have You Actively Put in Place Processes to Tackle Attrition in the Contact Centre?

Attrition Rates Are Unique to Every Contact Centre Environment

However, the spread of results here reinforces that attrition rates are very much the product of each unique contact centre environment – from those clearly doing an excellent job of maintaining a thriving contact centre culture (who don't have a problem with attrition – 37.6%), to those struggling with the issue and any attempt to change it (yes, but we've seen no or limited change – 18.8%).

Almost 40% of Contact Centres Struggling to Turn Poor Attrition Rates Around

What's perhaps most concerning is the dichotomy in success rates of those trying to improve their attrition rates – as 24.1% have put in place strategies that have worked, compared to the 18.8% that have failed.

Whilst a further 19.5% blame lack of budget and resource for not being able to address high attrition rates – highlighting that almost half of contact centres are struggling to turn poor attrition rates around.

Artificial Intellience

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Founded in 2011, Zoom is publicly traded (NASDAQ:ZM) and headquartered in San Jose, California.

zoom.com

18. Where Is Your Artificial Intelligence Strategy?

An Increasing Number Now Have a "Work in Progress" AI Strategy

The year-on-year change in how seriously contact centres are looking into AI has been really promising to see, with a notable decrease in those saying they don't have an AI strategy – down from 43.1% in 2023 to 31.1% in 2024, and a comparable increase in those saying "working on it" – up from 33% in 2023 to 44.1% in 2024.

Where Is Your Artificial Intelligence Strategy?

Legend: 2024 ■ (magenta) 2023 ■ (navy)

Category	2024	2023
Departmental Strategy / Strategies	13.1%	13.2%
Joined up Strategy in Place (Central Team)	11.7%	10.7%
Working On It	44.1%	33.0%
Don't Have One	31.1%	43.1%
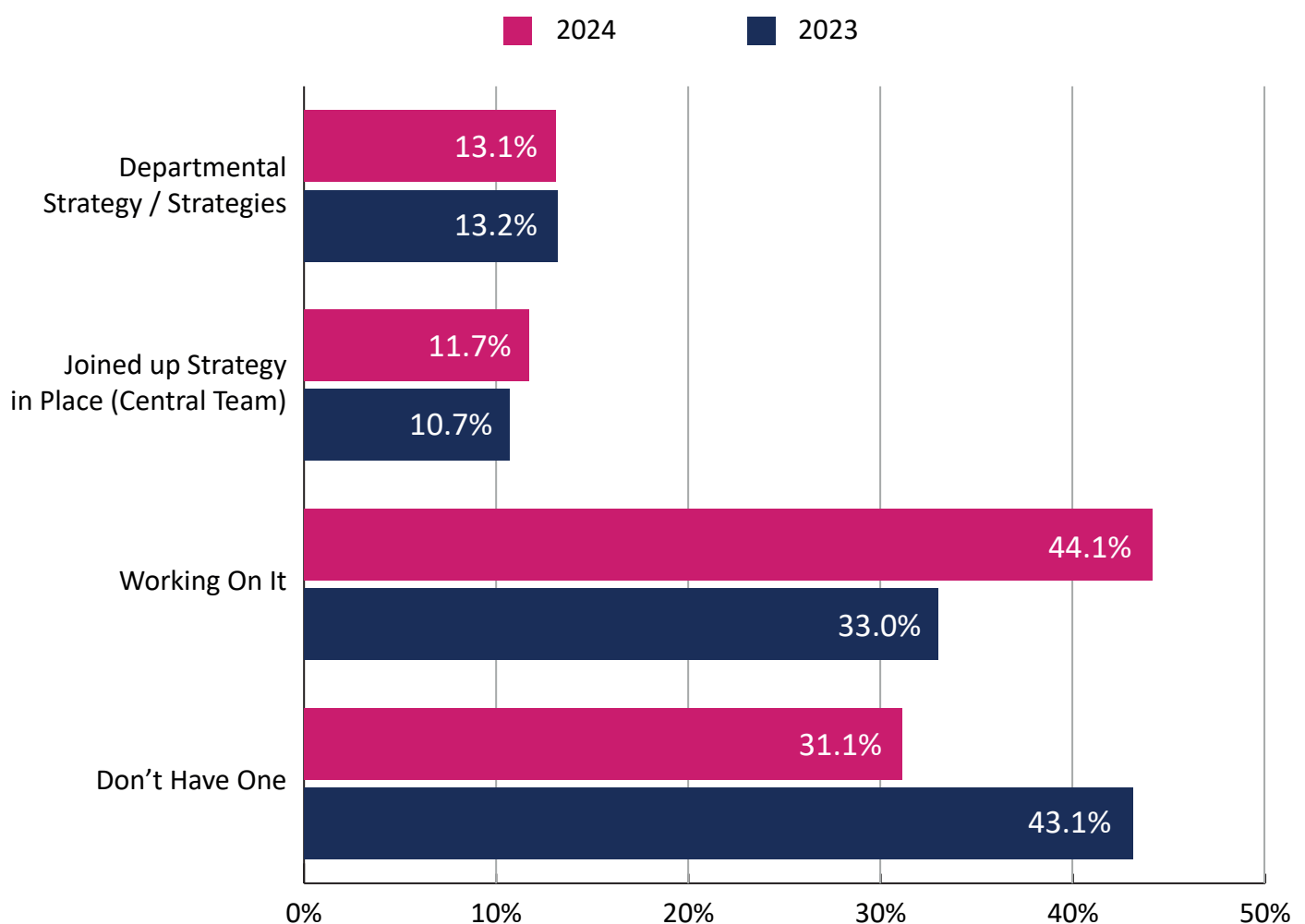
This shift is somewhat unsurprising given the push tech vendors have made in the last 12 months to incorporate more AI into their solutions and showcase them too – putting these AI enhancements front and centre of their sales and marketing strategies, as well as annual conferences. This is a trend set to continue as more and more case studies are published on how these first movers have successfully utilized AI.

There's Still a Lot of Work to Do Behind the Scenes

That being said, there's been very little movement year on year in those saying they actually have strategies in place – with only 13.1% saying they have a departmental strategy, and only 11.7% saying they have a joined-up / central strategy in place – implying that there's still a lot of work to do behind the scenes before AI is firmly embedded in every CX strategy.

19. What Would Be Your Biggest Driver for Implementing AI?

What Would Be Your Biggest Driver for Implementing AI?
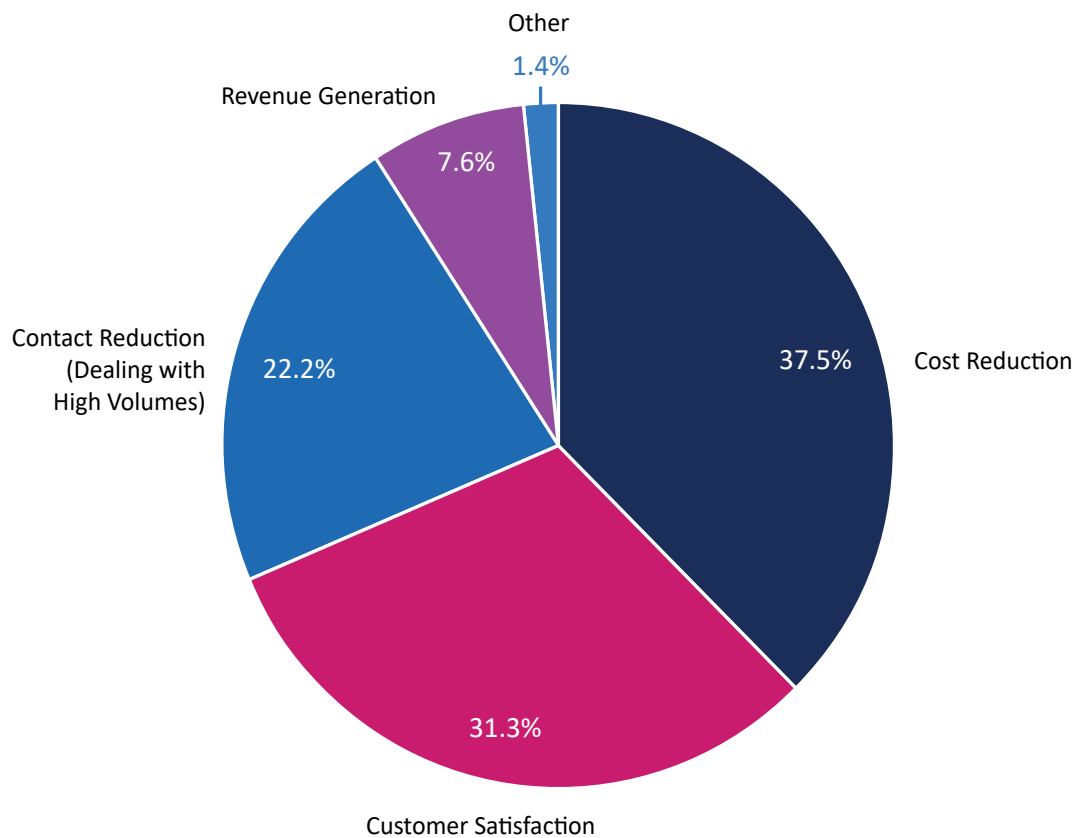
Cost Reduction Is a Key Driver for Implementing AI…

It's somewhat unsurprising to see cost reduction as the biggest driver for implementing AI, given the vast amount of efficiency gains being promised in the market right now, and the sheer potential of AI-driven solutions to save time across the board in everything from after-call work (ACW) to agent training and coaching, and scheduling.

…Closely Followed by Customer Satisfaction and Contact Reduction

Beyond this, there's a clear indication that contact centres are also expecting AI to improve customer satisfaction and support contact reduction – both of which are possible through augmentation and automation (respectively speaking), where again, endless possibilities are being promised.

This view is juxtaposed with some of the latest Gartner research, which shows that some customers aren't actually a fan of AI. So, it may be some time before what the tech vendors offer, what contact centres implement, and what customers actually want fully align.

(Remarkably, only one survey responder said they wanted AI "to drive a greater staff experience" – highlighting that the core focus of AI is more around CX and efficiency gains than EX right now.)

Contact Centre Leaders Are Beginning to See What AI Can Really Do

Interestingly, the initial driver for implementing AI back in 2023 was that it would help with high contact volumes (33.2%), which has now dropped to 22.2% in 2024, whilst in parallel, the focus has shifted more towards cost reduction – rising from 20.4% in 2023 to 37.5% in 2024. It's possible this may be due to the rising exposure to what AI actually looks like embedded in key technology offerings – as opposed to in 2023, when there was more speculation than fact.

20. How Exciting Do You Find Each of the Following AI Technologies?

Interaction Analytics, Predictive Routing, and Chatbots Most Sought-After AI Tech

In a world where everyone wants to know "why are call volumes so high today?", it's obvious why contact centre professionals are most excited about interaction analytics to finally get a clear answer to this question when it comes to implementing AI technologies – with only 4.3% saying they don't find it exciting at all.

Equally, it's unsurprising to see predictive routing (62.8%) and chatbots (56%) following so closely behind, as the benefits and understanding of these technologies are very transparent in the market.

How Exciting Do You Find Each of the Following AI Technologies?

Legend: ■ Very Exciting ■ Somewhat Exciting ■ Not Exciting at All

Technology	Very Exciting	Somewhat Exciting	Not Exciting at All
Interaction Analytics	70.9%	24.8%	4.3%
Predictive Routing	62.8%	28.6%	8.6%
Chatbots	56.0%	34.1%	9.9%
Robotic Process Automation	53.2%	32.4%	14.4%
Customer Prediction Modelling	52.1%	37.9%	10.0%
Automated Insight Generation	49.7%	38.1%	12.2%
ID and Biometrics	32.4%	39.6%	28.0%
Campaign Modelling	26.4%	42.9%	30.7%
Augmented Reality	24.6%	37.0%	38.4%
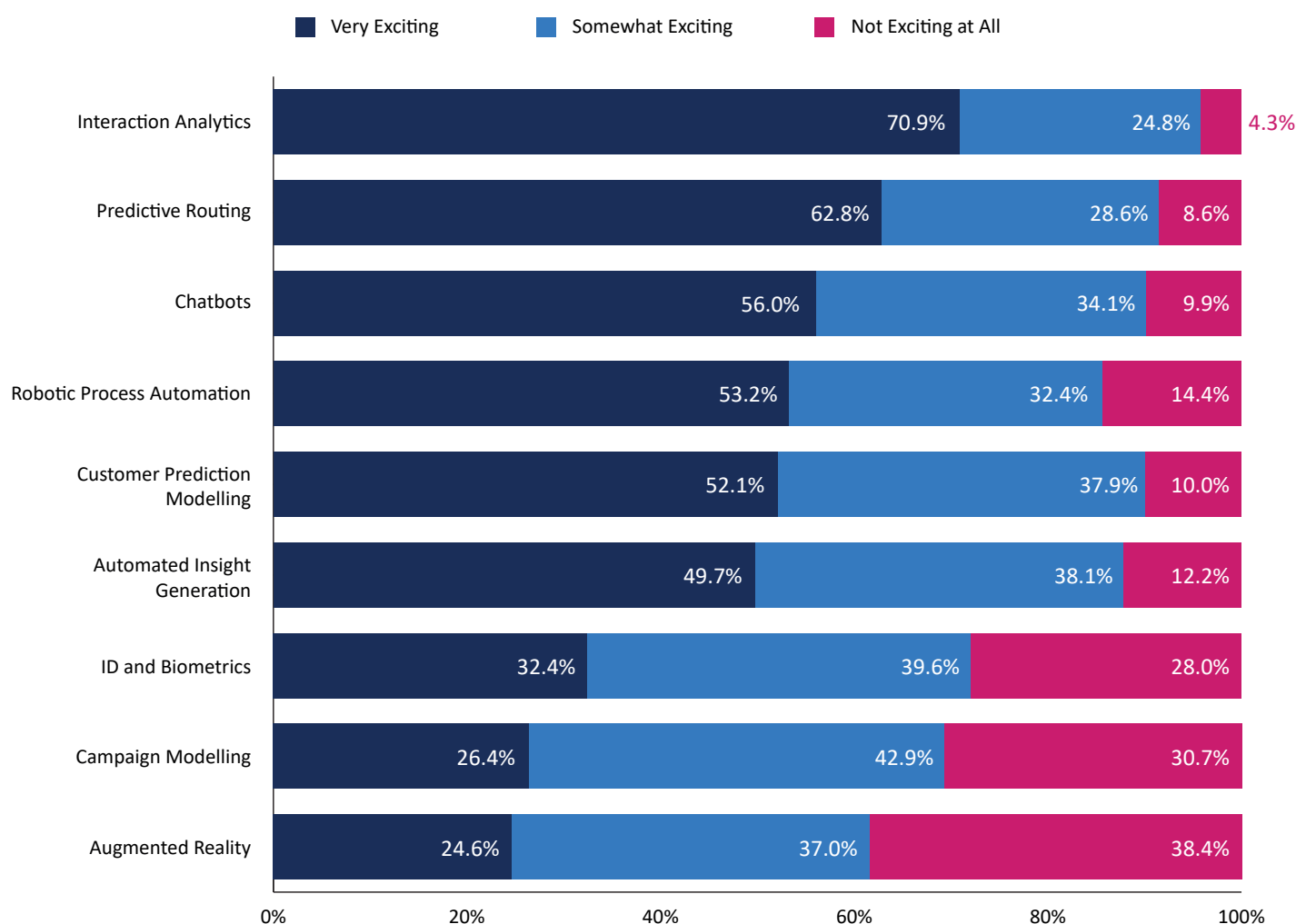
20. How Exciting Do You Find Each of the Following AI Technologies?

Vendors Must Do More to Build Excitement Around Lesser-Known AI Innovations

By contrast, augmented reality (24.6%), campaign modelling (26.4%), and ID and biometrics (32.4%) are arguably more complex product concepts to understand straight off the bat, and perhaps feature so low on the scale due to a general lack of awareness and education around what these products can offer.

With so much new language for contact centre professionals to learn before they can begin to understand the full benefits of AI, this may also explain the significant year-on-year drop in excitement for ID and biometrics (down from 42.9% in 2023 to 32.4% in 2024) and augmented reality (down from 33% in 2023 to 24.6% in 2024). This suggests that there's some onus on the technology vendors in this space to do more to raise awareness (and build excitement) around these lesser-known AI innovations too.

Although, of course, the significance and impact of these will always vary between industries too, as (for example) the more heavily regulated industries of finance and insurance will be far more invested in ID and biometrics than lesser-regulated industries.

	2023	2024
Interaction Analytics	69.0%	70.9%
Predictive Routing	60.1%	62.8%
Chatbots	56.6%	56.0%
Robotic Process Automation	54.7%	53.2%
Customer Prediction Modelling	52.7%	52.1%
Automated Insight Generation	50.8%	49.7%
ID and Biometrics	42.9%	32.4%
Campaign Modelling	28.6%	26.4%
Augmented Reality	33.0%	24.6%

21. What Has Been Your Experience in Dealing With Other Organizations' Chatbots?

The Majority of Chatbot Experiences Are Mediocre

Sometimes it seems as though everyone has a horror story to share about chatbots, doesn't it?

They just don't have the best reputation, and these stats make it clear why – with a majority (59.3%) saying their experience with other organizations' chatbots is mediocre.

What Has Been Your Experience in Dealing with Other Organizations' Chatbots?

Legend: ■ 2024 ■ 2023

	Excellent	Good	Mediocre	Bad	Terrible
2024	5.5%	20.0%	59.3%	12.4%	2.8%
2023	9.7%	20.0%	57.4%	10.3%	2.6%
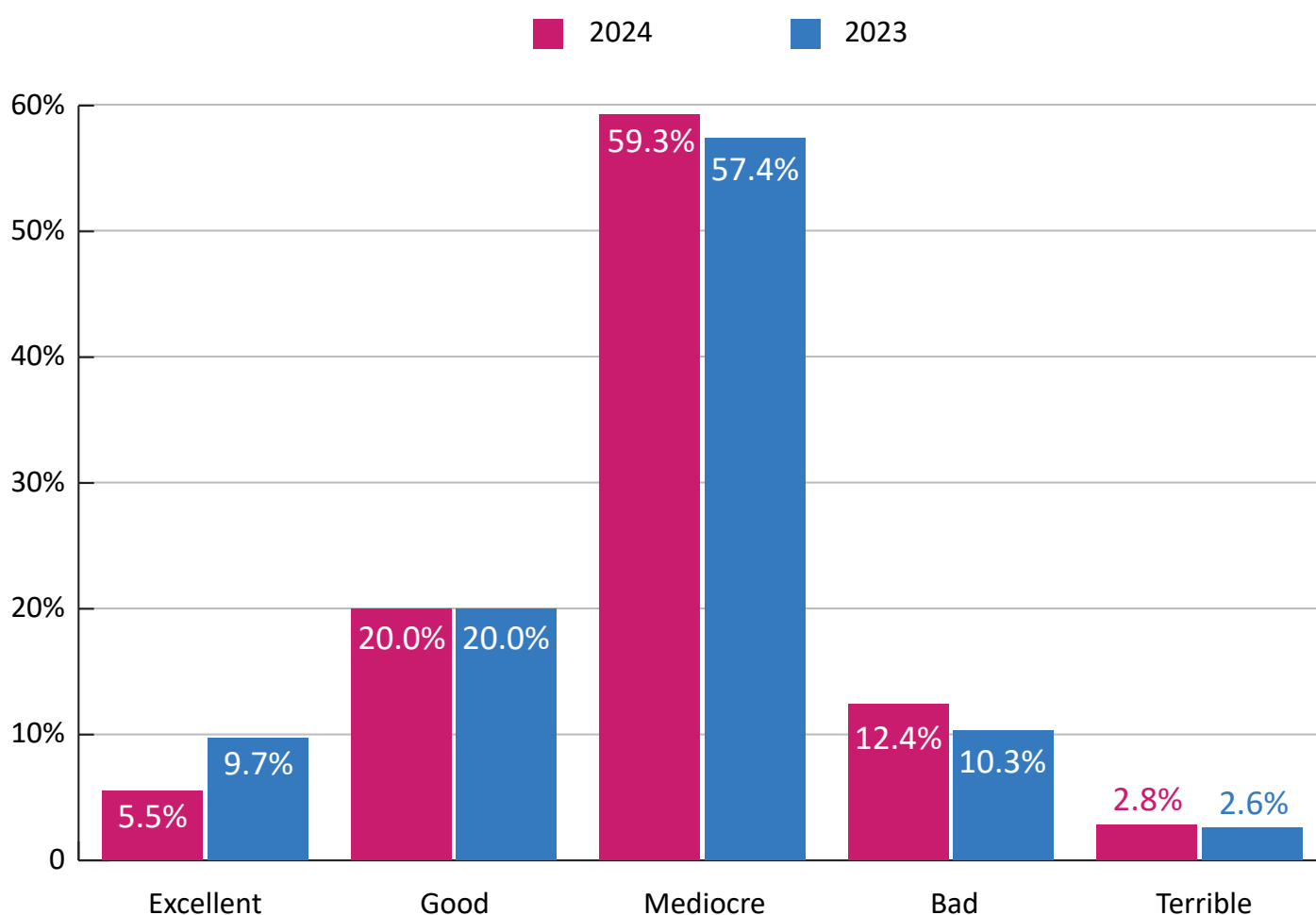
Polar Opposites in Play Across the Industry

This is further explained by the varying ends of the spectrum at play here – with 5.5% of chatbot experiences being deemed "excellent" and 20% "good", compared to 2.8% considered "terrible" and 12.4% "bad".

21. What Has Been Your Experience in Dealing With Other Organizations' Chatbots?

Why are we seeing such extremes?

This is very likely to be a management issue – with those delivering bad and terrible experiences falling into the trap of a one-and-done roll-out, whilst those offering good and even excellent experiences are dedicating ongoing time and resources to training and improving their chatbots to work for customers.

Yet Interest in and Deployment of Chatbots Is Still Rising

The picture is getting worse!

There's been a decline in excellent experiences from 9.7% in 2023 to 5.5% in 2024, whilst bad experiences have increased from 10.3% in 2023 to 12.4% in 2024.

Despite this, it doesn't seem to have dampened the interest in deploying this technology, as when asked "How Exciting Do You Find Each of the Following AI Technologies?" (Question 20), 56% said they found chatbots "very exciting".

Furthermore, when asked "What Technology Do You Have in Your Contact Centre?" (Question 2), 42.6% said they had chatbots (up from 37.5% in 2023, and 30.8% back in 2020) with 32.7% having it on their wish list.

Are chatbots simply the technology we all love to hate?

22. What Do You See as the Biggest Barrier to AI Adoption in Your Organization?

Data Privacy and Security Concerns Are a Serious Threat

We've all heard the stories about customers getting chatbots to swear and misbehave, but there's a darker side to this, such as a prompt injection attack – a targeted cyberattack whereby criminals manipulate generative AI systems into leaking sensitive data or spreading misinformation.

That's why it's somewhat unsurprising to see data privacy and security concerns high on the list of barriers to AI adoption – if anything, it's startling that this figure isn't higher!

Quite simply, contact centre leaders need peace of mind from their chosen vendor that the data they'll be feeding into the system will be handled securely. For example, to know that they are ISO 27001 and GDPR compliant, and operating securely in Azure, Google Cloud, or AWS (if they are a cloud-hosted solution).

What Do You See as the Biggest Barrier to AI Adoption in Your Organization?

Barrier	Percentage
Cost of Implementation	29.3%
Data Privacy and Security Concerns	22.8%
Integration with Existing Systems	20.7%
Lack of Clear Use Cases or ROI	15.0%
Employee Resistance to Change	8.6%
Lack of Technical Expertise	3.6%
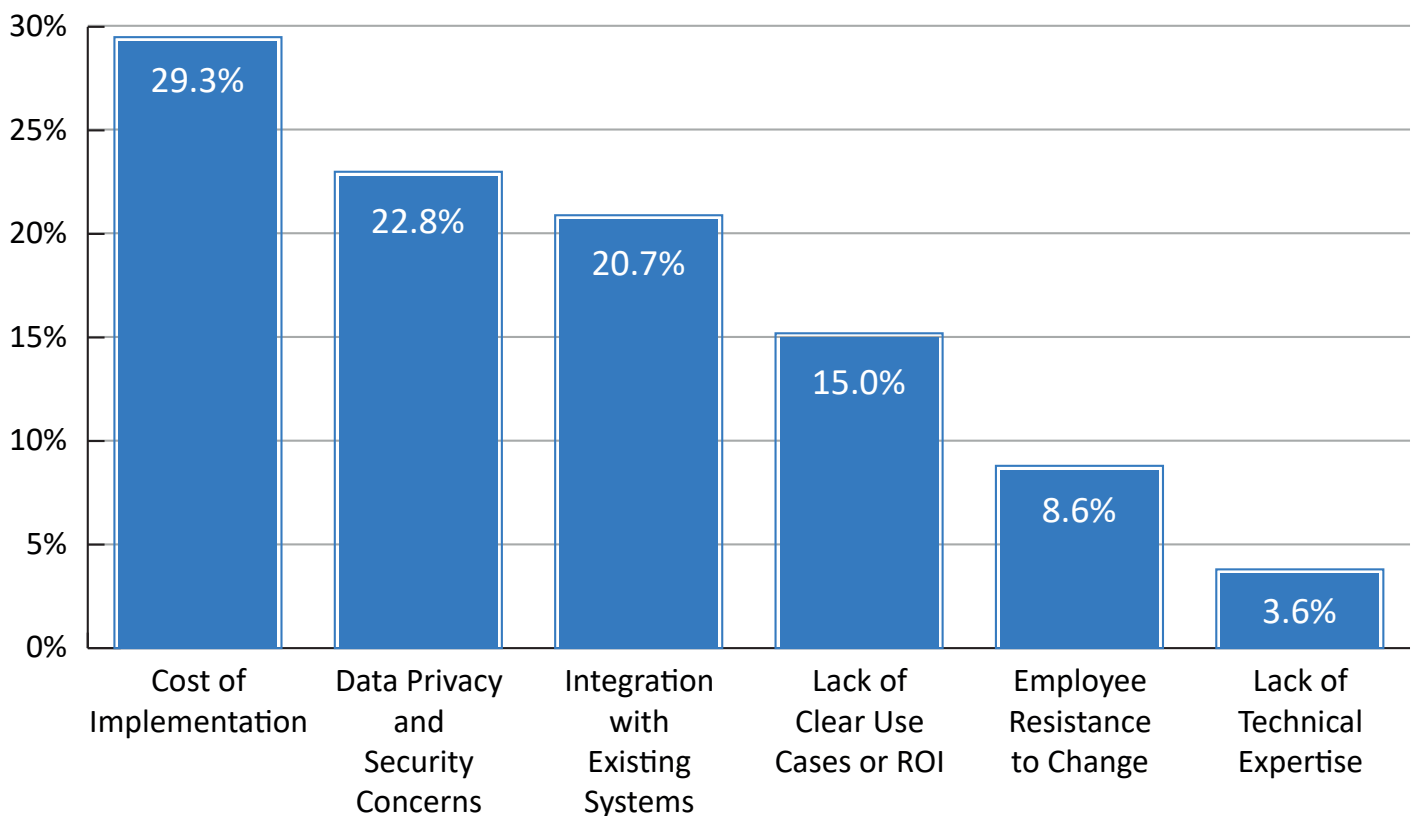
22. What Do You See as the Biggest Barrier to AI Adoption in Your Organization?

People Are Less of a Challenge as Industry Becomes More Comfortable With AI

It's positive to see people factors rated quite low on the scale here, with employee resistance to change at just 8.6% and lack of technical expertise at 3.6% – suggesting that the industry is feeling more comfortable with the concept of AI and investing time and resources in preparing their workforce for it (instead of fearing it).

Costs and ROI Are a Significant Challenge for Almost Half the Industry

Given the trend for blaming lack of budget for other weaknesses across the industry, it's no real shock that cost of implementation is seen as the biggest barrier to AI adoption – cited by 29.3% of survey respondents.

An extension of this is the 15% who stated "lack of clear use cases or ROI" as a barrier to AI adoption, putting financial reasons front and centre – with a combined total of 44.3% – as a barrier to AI adoption right now.

Customer Experience

The Customer Experience chapter is sponsored by Five9.

The Five9 Intelligent CX Platform provides a comprehensive suite of solutions to engage with customers across their channel of choice, empower managers with insights and intelligence into contact centre performance, and elevate your business to deliver better business outcomes and Bring Joy to CX.

Five9 innovates on their platform with partners and continues to lead the contact centre industry, bringing together the power of people and technology to enable businesses to drive CX success.

With Five9 you can:
• Move fast with a trusted cloud provider
• Empower agents to deliver results anywhere and anytime
• Scale with AI and a digital workforce
• Streamline with AI and automation

Five9's cloud-native, scalable, and secure platform includes everything you need to deliver excellent customer experiences: A reliable Contact Centre solution; omnichannel engagement; Workforce Engagement Management; extensibility through more than 1,400 partners; and innovative, practical AI, automation, and journey analytics that are embedded as part of the platform.

five9.com/en-uk

23. Above All, What Do Your Customers Value Most?

First Contact Resolution Most Valued by Customers

28.4% said their customers valued first call resolution (FCR) the most, closely followed by knowledgeable advisors (23.4%).

This highlights the key focus areas for CX strategies – as contact centre leaders strive to keep up with their customers' demands.

Above All, What Do Your Customers Value Most?
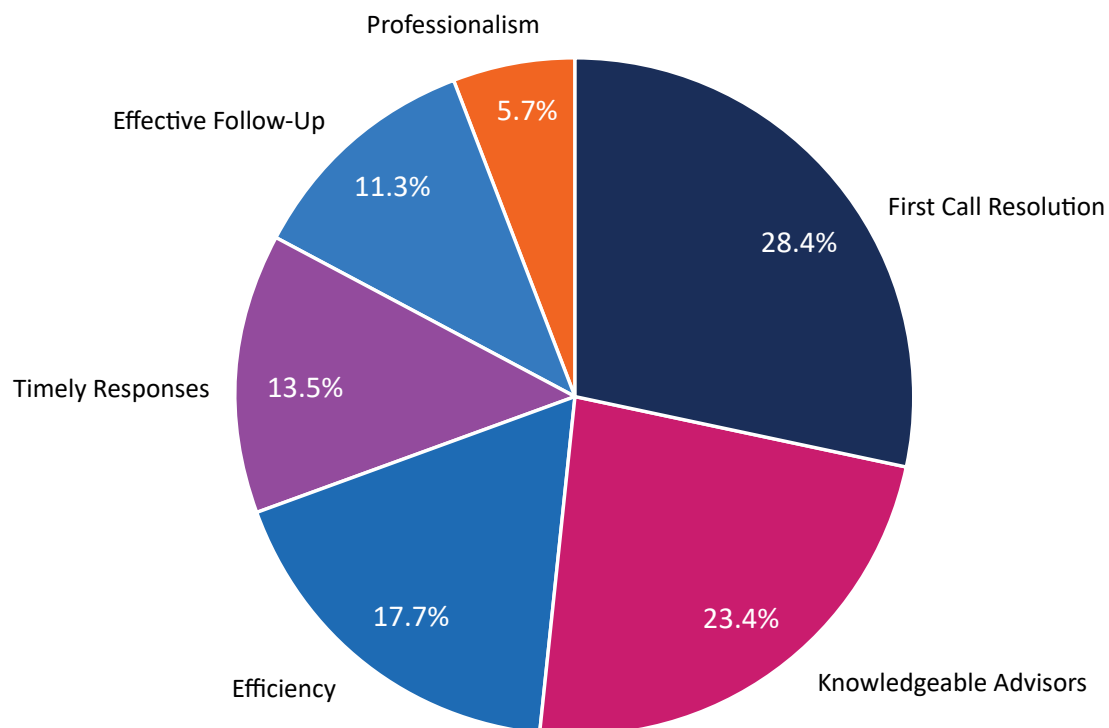
Efficiency and Effective Follow-Up Becoming Increasingly Important

That being said, the picture is quite different from 2023 – as there's been a notable drop in those claiming first call resolution (down from 31.9% in 2023 to 28.4% in 2024) and knowledgeable advisors (down from 29.3% in 2023 to 23.4% in 2024) are most valued by customers.

By contrast, the emphasis on efficiency is up from 9% in 2023 to 17.7% in 2024, whilst effective follow-up is also up from 8.5% in 2023 to 11.3% in 2024. This suggests that customers' preferences are shifting towards a speedier service.

	2021	2022	2023	2024
First Call Resolution (FCR)	29.4%	24.0%	31.9%	28.4%
Knowledgeable Advisors	31.6%	26.0%	29.3%	23.4%
Efficiency	13.0%	9.0%	9.0%	17.7%
Timely Responses	11.3%	22.0%	13.8%	13.5%
Effective Follow-Up	8.5%	10.0%	8.5%	11.3%
Professionalism	6.2%	9.0%	7.5%	5.7%

24. What Is the Most Important Element in Customer Experience Design?

Concerning to See So Much Reliance on Customer Feedback in CX Design

When asked "What Is the Most Important Element in Customer Experience Design?", a staggering 77.3% said "customer feedback", massively outweighing other factors, including technology capabilities (12.1%) and employee feedback (6.4%).

What is the Most Important Element in Customer Experience Design?
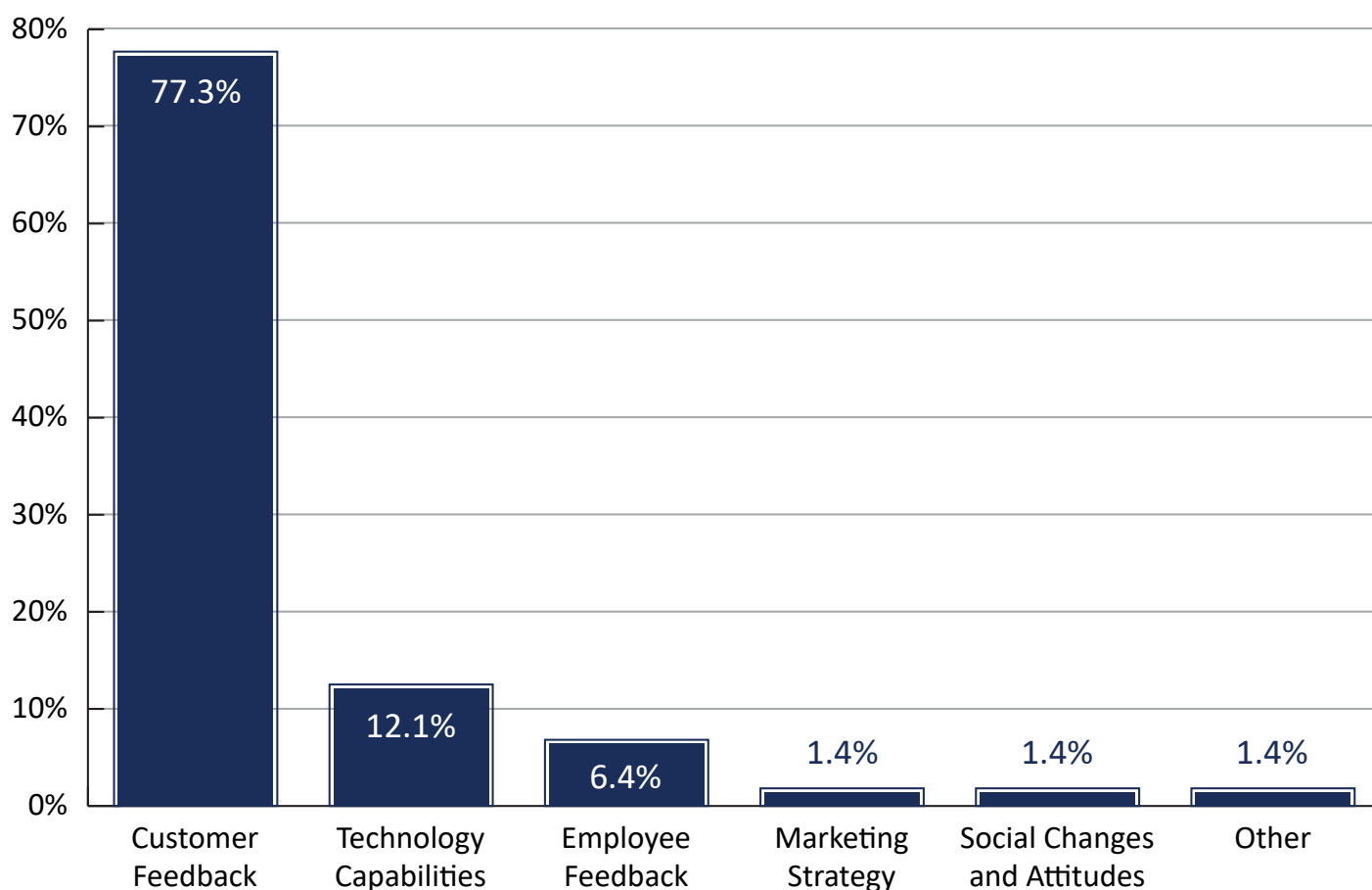
This is particularly concerning given that so much customer feedback is captured through structured surveys, with typically low take-up rates, representing just a small fraction of the customer base. (As shown in Question 25 – How Do You Capture Customer Feedback?, where 59.3% of contact centres said they were capturing customer feedback via email surveys.)

To see that this fractional view is being relied on so heavily as the most important element in customer experience design is concerning – particularly considering that employee feedback is being overlooked, when this voice can offer a far more holistic view of the end-to-end customer experience.

It's also disappointing to see technology capabilities taking a back seat to CX design, when so much of what's possible is driven by the latest innovations in this space.

Overall, a concerning picture on such a significant strategic element of the contact centre.

25. How Do You Capture Customer Feedback?

Heavy Reliance on Surveys for Capturing Customer Feedback

When asked "How do you capture customer feedback?", the industry's reliance on surveys was clear – with 59.3% using email surveys, 46.4% using transactional surveys, 19.3% using SMS surveys, and 18.6% using website surveys, and even 6.4% saying they used postal surveys.

This is unsurprising given how accessible surveys are for reaching customers, but it definitely has its drawbacks. For example, low take-up rates can skew insights (and potentially even strategic CX decisions), whilst common process challenges – including failure to close the loop on key learnings – have the potential to nose-dive engagement rates over time.

How Do You Capture Customer Feedback?

Category	Percentage
Email Surveys	59.3%
Voice of Employees	50.0%
Transactional Surveys	46.4%
Customer Reason Codes	40.0%
Customer Research	30.0%
Social Listening	23.6%
SMS Surveys	19.3%
Website Surveys	18.6%
Speech / Text Analytics	12.1%
Postal Surveys	6.4%
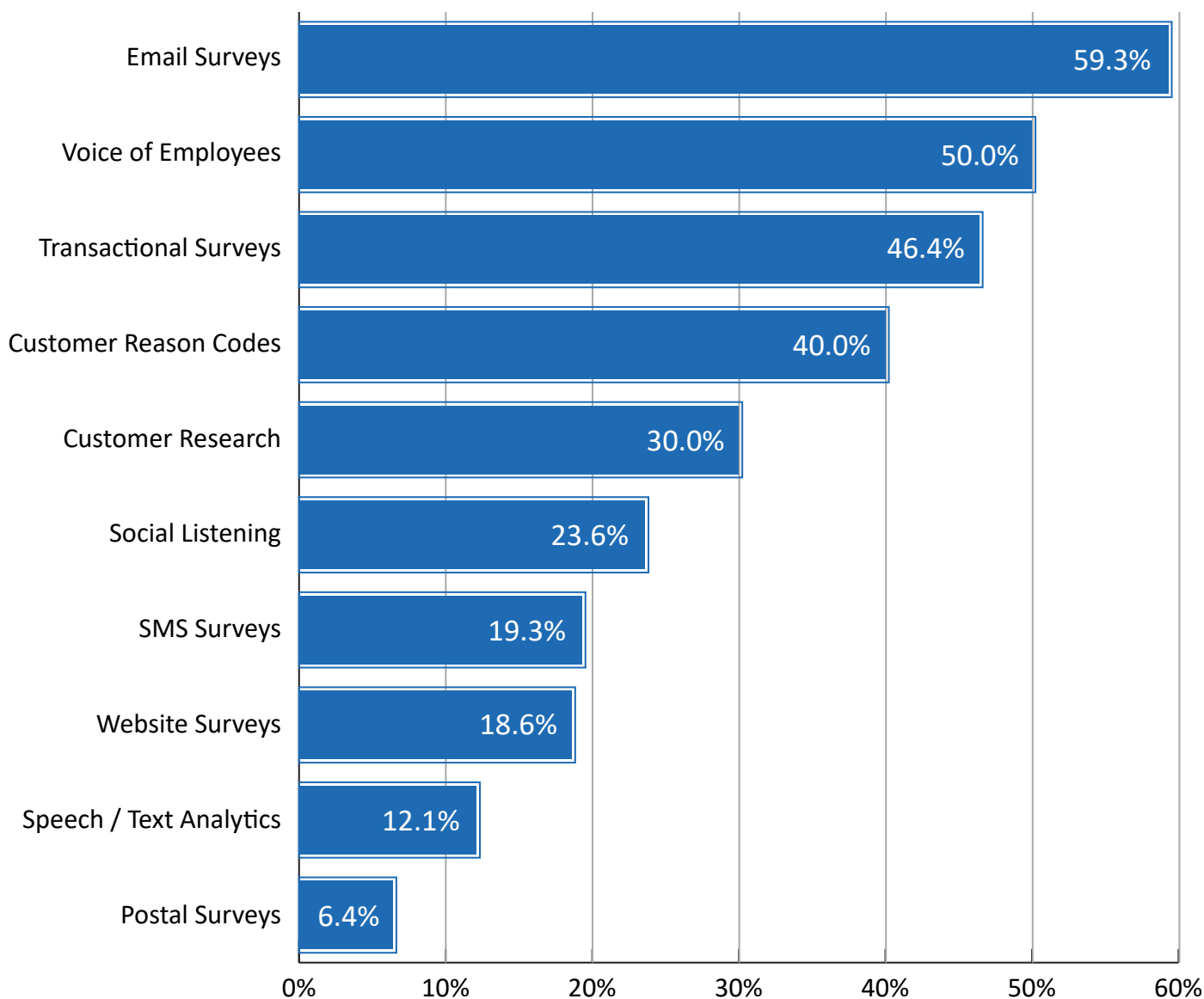
25. How Do You Capture Customer Feedback?

This makes it all the more concerning that this reliance on email surveys and transactional surveys has increased year on year – with email survey use up from 49.7% in 2023 to 59.3% in 2024, and transactional survey use up from 44.9% in 2023 to 46.4% in 2024.

Minority Putting Significant Resources Into Capturing Customer Feedback

The good news is that more insightful, broader methods for capturing customer feedback are in use too – including customer research (30%), social listening (23.6%), and speech/text analytics (12.1%).

However, these are used by far fewer contact centres as a means to capture customer feedback, arguably because they take up more time, cost and resources – even though the insights and longer-term outcomes are typically more fruitful.

It is disappointing to see such a picture, but not surprising given all-round budget challenges and industry pressures.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Email Surveys	N/A	N/A	54.3%	53.9%	49.7%	59.3%
Voice of Employees (VoE)	69.6%	58.8%	59.0%	51.8%	56.7%	50.0%
Transactional Surveys	73.5%	61.8%	N/A	N/A	44.9%	46.4%
Customer Reason Codes	N/A	N/A	41.0%	40.1%	37.4%	40.0%
Customer Research	40.4%	42.2%	41.6%	31.9%	37.4%	30.0%
Social Listening	35.7%	31.7%	22.5%	18.4%	24.1%	23.6%
SMS / Messaging App Surveys	N/A	N/A	20.2%	19.5%	24.6%	19.3%
Website Surveys	N/A	N/A	35.3%	24.1%	25.1%	18.6%
Speech / Text Analytics	9.6%	16.6%	13.9%	16.3%	19.3%	12.1%
Postal Surveys	N/A	N/A	8.1%	6.0%	6.4%	6.4%

26. When Improving Customer Experience, Where Do You Think Organizations Can Get Maximum Value for Money?

Self-Service and Personalization Are "Where the Money's At"

When asked "When improving customer experience, where do you think organizations can get maximum value for money?", self-service was ranked most highly by survey participants for the second year in a row – even showing a slight increase, up from 39% in 2023 to 40.1% in 2024. Personalization was ranked next at 20.5% – also up from 2023 at 19.2%, very likely showcasing the positive knock-on effect of the enhanced capabilities offered by AI in this space.

When Improving Customer Experience,
Where Do You Think Organizations Can Get Maximum Value for Money?

Legend: ■ 2024 ■ 2023

Category	2024	2023
Self-Service	40.1%	39.0%
Personalization	20.5%	19.2%
Proactivity Tools	12.4%	13.4%
Mobile Apps	10.2%	4.3%
Chatbots	9.5%	8.6%
Diagnostic Tools	5.1%	5.9%
Website Capabilities	2.2%	9.6%
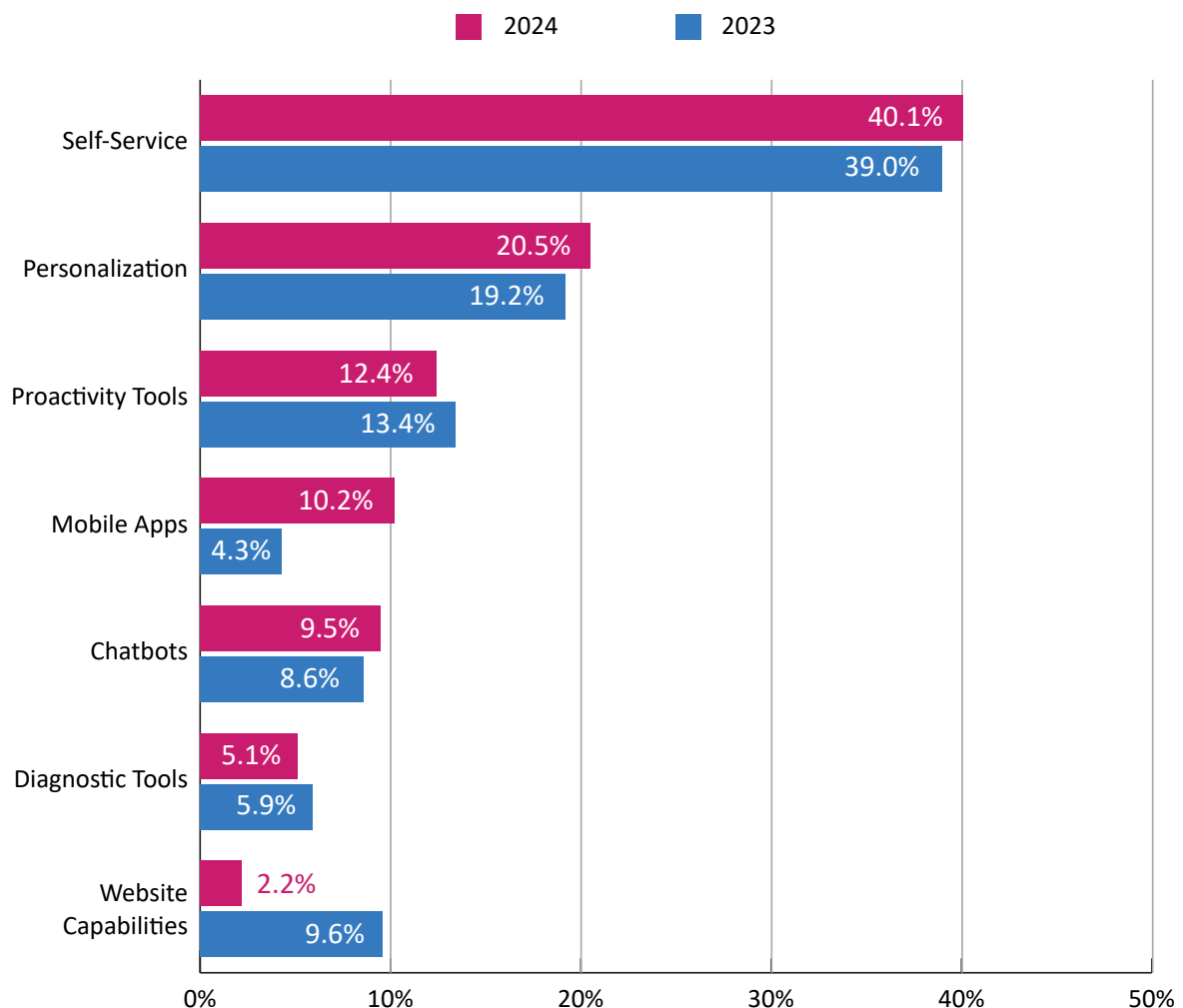
Changing Perception of Chatbots and Mobile Apps

Interestingly, chatbots and mobile apps are increasingly being seen as ways for organizations to get value for money – although these are still held in less high regard than self-service and personalization.

By contrast, and getting far less attention, were productivity tools, diagnostics tools, and website capabilities – which appear to be falling out of favour.

27. What Type of Resources Do You Find Most Useful When Exploring the Benefits of AI and CX in the Contact Centre?

Case Studies Hailed as the Key to Exploring AI and CX in the Contact Centre

When asked "What type of resources do you find most useful when exploring the benefits of AI and CX in the contact centre?", case studies took the lead.

Given how new so much of this technology is, this is unsurprising, as industry professionals seek to understand others' journeys so far – and learn from the industry pioneers who've been brave enough to go first.

What Type of Resources Do You Find Most Useful When Exploring the Benefits of AI and CX in the Contact Centre?
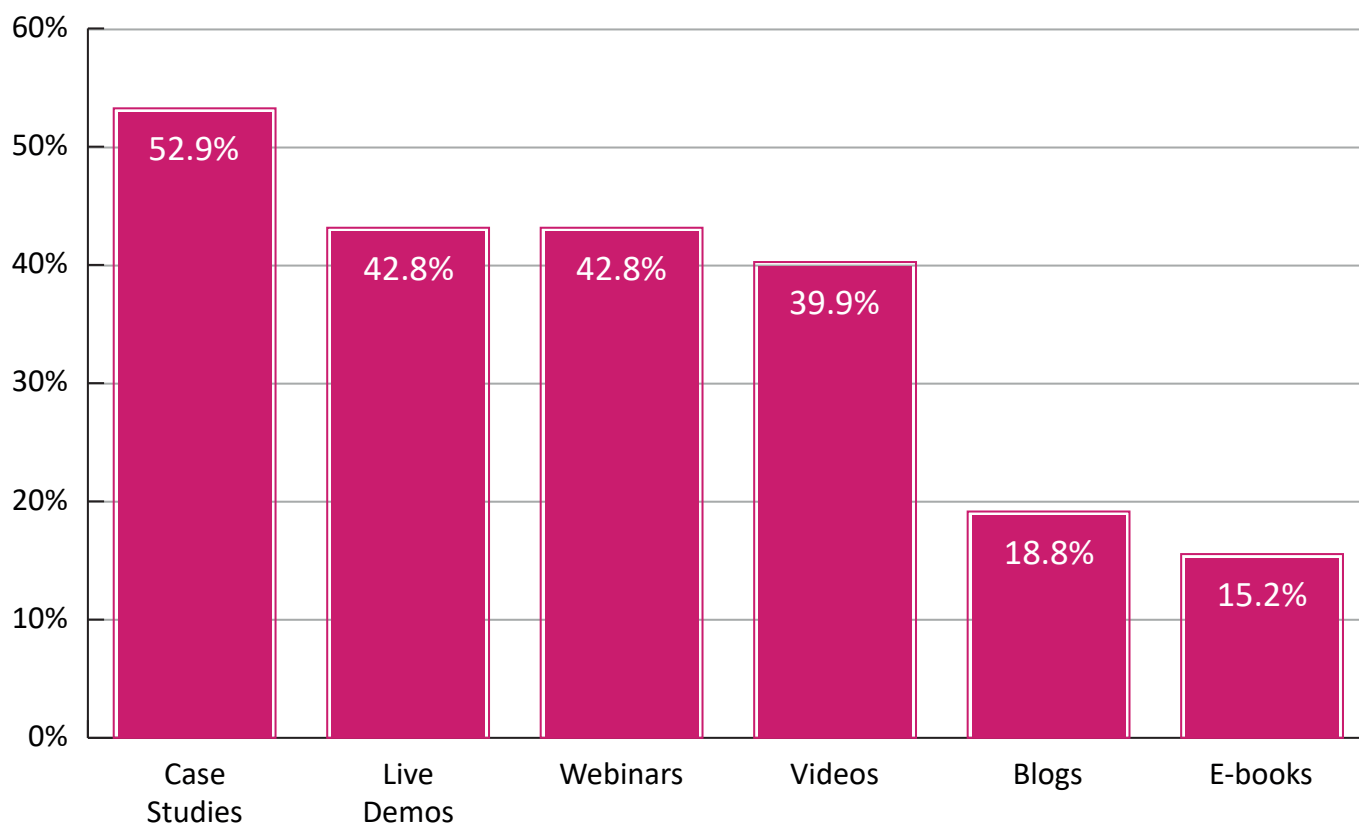
This was closely followed by live demos (42.8%), webinars (42.8%), and videos (39.9%) – highlighting the need for watchable content, which is perhaps easier to share across the contact centre, view on social media, or watch together in a team meeting.

By contrast, e-books were least popular, perhaps because of the quantity and depth of information, making it more time-consuming to digest. Despite this, they were still considered useful by 15.2% of survey respondents.

However, what's undoubtedly clear is that there's no shortage of material to choose from, giving industry professionals the opportunity to learn in whichever format best suits them.

Headsets

The Headset chapter is sponsored by Jabra.

Jabra is a world leading brand in audio, video and collaboration solutions – engineered to empower consumers and businesses.

Proudly part of GN Group, we are committed to bringing people closer to one another and to what is important to them. Jabra engineering excellence leads the way, building on over 150 years of pioneering work within GN. This allows us to create integrated tools for contact centres, offices, and collaboration to help professionals work more productively from anywhere; and true wireless headphones and earbuds that let consumers better enjoy calls, music, and media.

Founded in 1869, GN Group employs more than 7,000 people and is listed on Nasdaq Copenhagen (GN. CO). GN's solutions are sold in 100 countries across the world.

jabra.com

28. Do You Offer Your Advisors a Choice of Headset?

Two-Thirds of Contact Centres Don't Offer Advisors a Choice of Headset

When asked "Do you offer your advisors a choice of headset?", around two-thirds of survey responders said "no", whilst only one-third said "yes".

This suggests, for the most part, that advisors pretty much get what they are given when they join a contact centre – with little care and attention to any personal preferences, such as binaural vs. monaural headsets.

This is possibly because monaural headsets tend to be cheaper, so giving agents less choice in the matter has financial benefits for the contact centre.

Although it's worth considering that this lack of choice can have a detrimental impact on employee engagement and onboarding, and therefore comes at its own (arguably more hidden) cost.

Do You Offer Your Advisors a Choice of Headset?

Not Sure — 5.1%
Yes — 36.9%
No — 58.0%
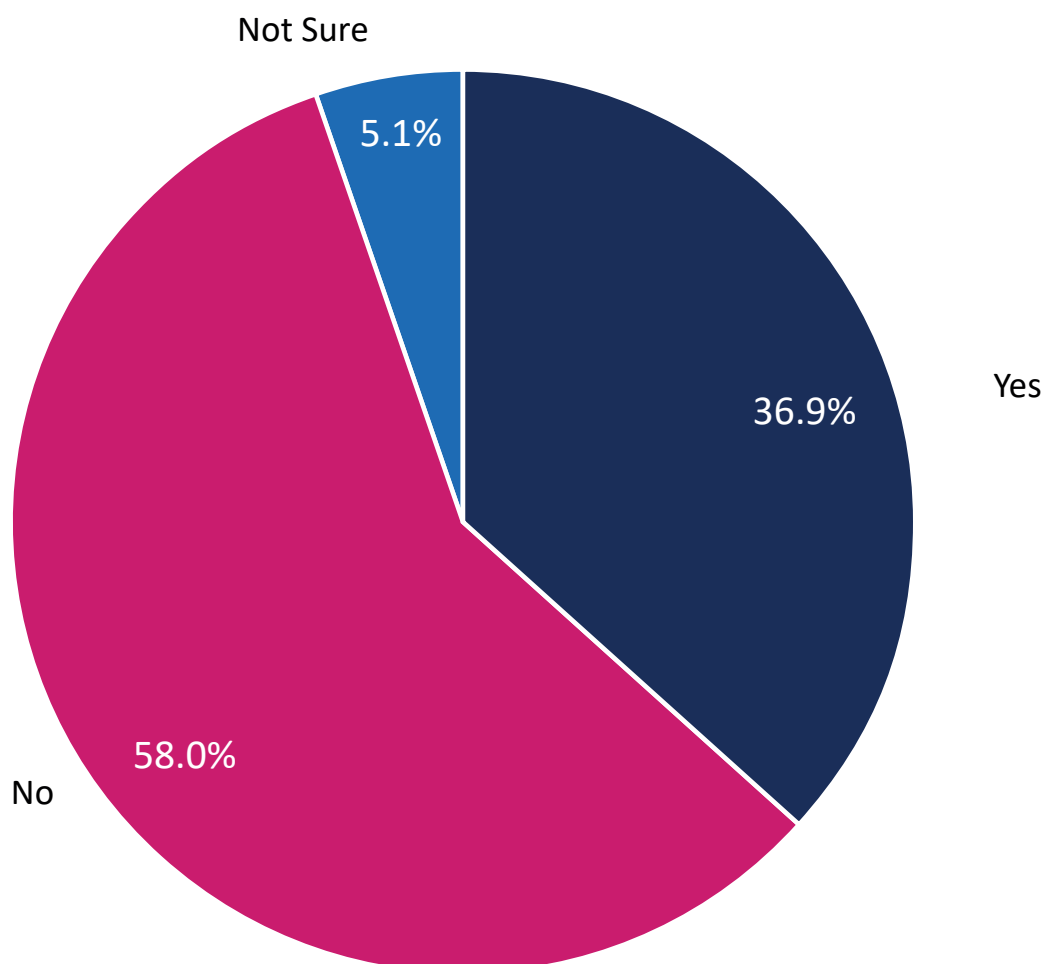
28. Do You Offer Your Advisors a Choice of Headset?

Findings Only Skewed During the Height of Covid

Looking back year-on-year, the findings in 2024 are near identical to those seen back in 2017 and 2018 – i.e. pre-Covid.

The only anomaly is seen in 2021, at the height of Covid, when the number of agents offered a choice in headset jumped to 71.2%.

Why such a change?

It's possible a forced remote working strategy led to more individual orders for headsets and more choice (as a byproduct of this) as equipment was sent directly to home addresses – instead of bulk ordered to head office.

It's equally possible that, for hygiene and social-distancing reasons, headsets were not passed on to new team members, and so more choice was given as new orders were made with each new starter, a trend that has settled back to normal post-Covid.

	2017	2018	2021	2024
Yes	36.2%	38.2%	71.2%	36.9%
No	54.1%	58.1%	25.3%	58.0%
Not Sure	9.7%	3.7%	3.5%	5.1%

29. Are You Using Wireless Headsets?

Are You Using Wireless Headsets?

- Not Sure 44.2%
- Yes 37.0%
- No 18.8%
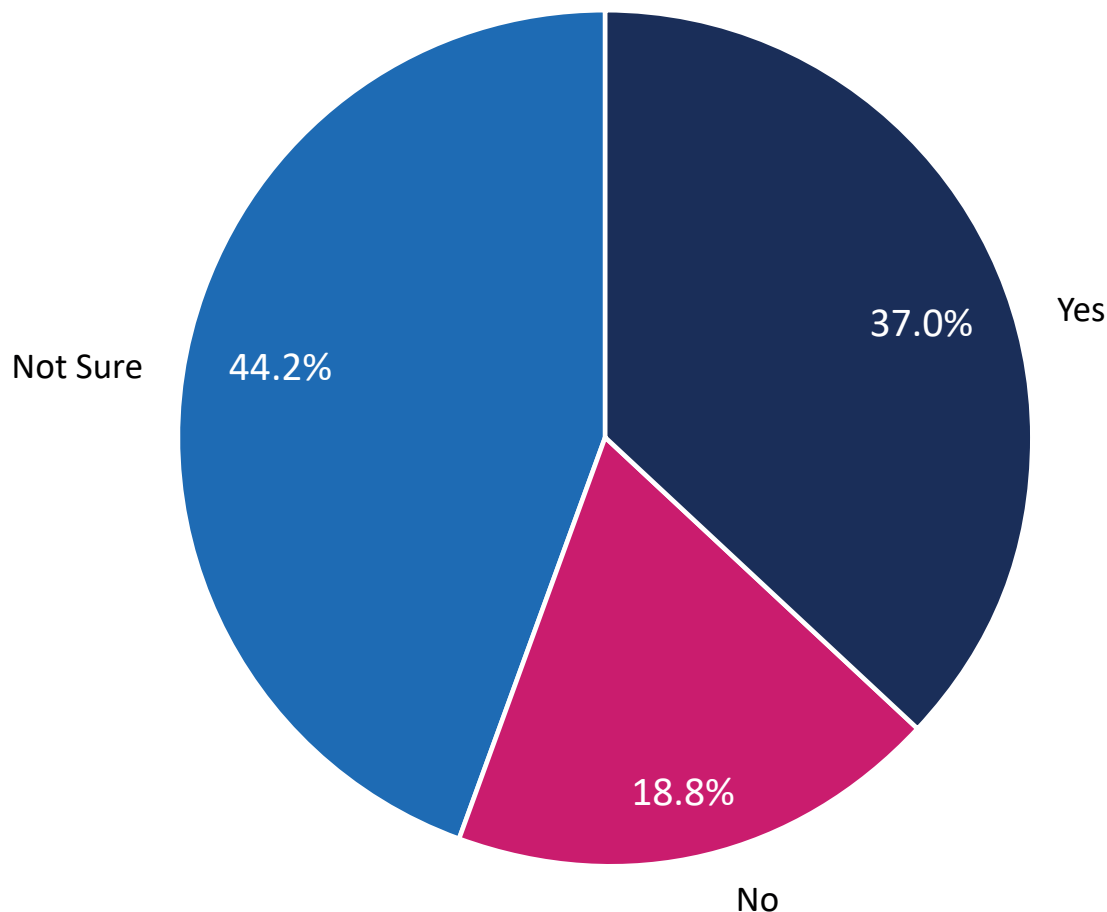
User Rates for Wireless Headsets Continue to Remain Static

When asked "Are you using wireless headsets?", only 37% of survey responders replied "yes" – a figure that's only risen marginally since 2017 – showing a clear preference for wired headsets by two-thirds of the industry.

Why? This is arguably due to the common perception that wired headsets offer better sound quality and eliminate any worries about battery life.

Beyond this, these findings could also indicate matters of cost and lack of choice for agents, as many contact centres bulk-buy more affordable products, and so even though individual agents might prefer to use a wireless headset and see the benefits, the contact centre is unprepared (or unable) to foot the bill.

	2017	2018	2021	2024
Yes	31.0%	30.1%	32.5%	37.0%
No	69.0%	69.9%	67.5%	18.8%
Not Sure	N / A	N / A	N / A	44.2%

30. What Does Your Contact Centre Headset Connect To?

85.4% of Contact Centre Professionals Connect Their Headset to a Computer

When asked "What does your contact centre headset connect to?", 85.4% said "a computer" compared to just 24.8% who said "a deskphone / handset" and 5.1% who said "a smartphone / tablet".

Interestingly, these figures are somewhat different from those last seen back in 2021 – showing more contact centre professionals are now connecting their headset to a computer (up from 78.8% to 85.4%), compared to fewer connecting to a deskphone / handset (down from 27.7% to 24.8%) and a smartphone / tablet (down from 7.7% to 5.1%).

What Does Your Contact Centre Headset Connect To?

■ 2024　　■ 2021

	2024	2021
A Computer	85.4%	78.8%
A Deskphone / Handset	24.8%	27.7%
A Smartphone / Tablet	5.1%	7.7%
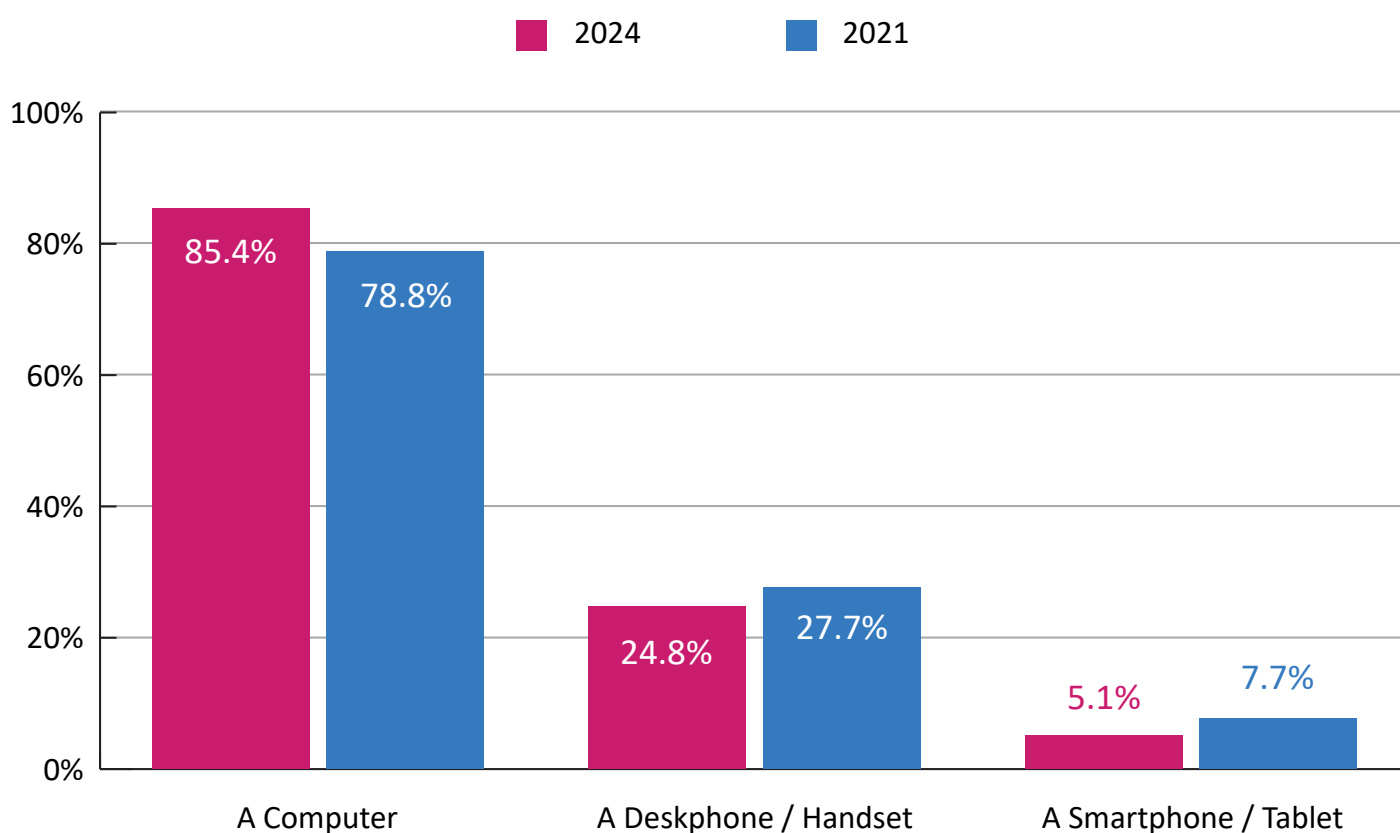
These trends align with more and more contact centres rolling out smarter contact centre solutions in this same period, requiring more agents' headsets to be connected to a computer – such as callback from queue solutions (up from 47.6% in 2021 to 63.1% in 2024) and workforce management software (up from 44.8% in 2021 to 55.7% in 2024) – decreasing overall demand for agents to connect to deskphones / handsets.

It's also possible that more people were connecting their headset to a smartphone / tablet in the height of Covid (circa. 2021), as they did their best with an improvised remote working strategy and/or also used these devices to check in for micro-shifts – both of which are less common practices now as this working style has matured.

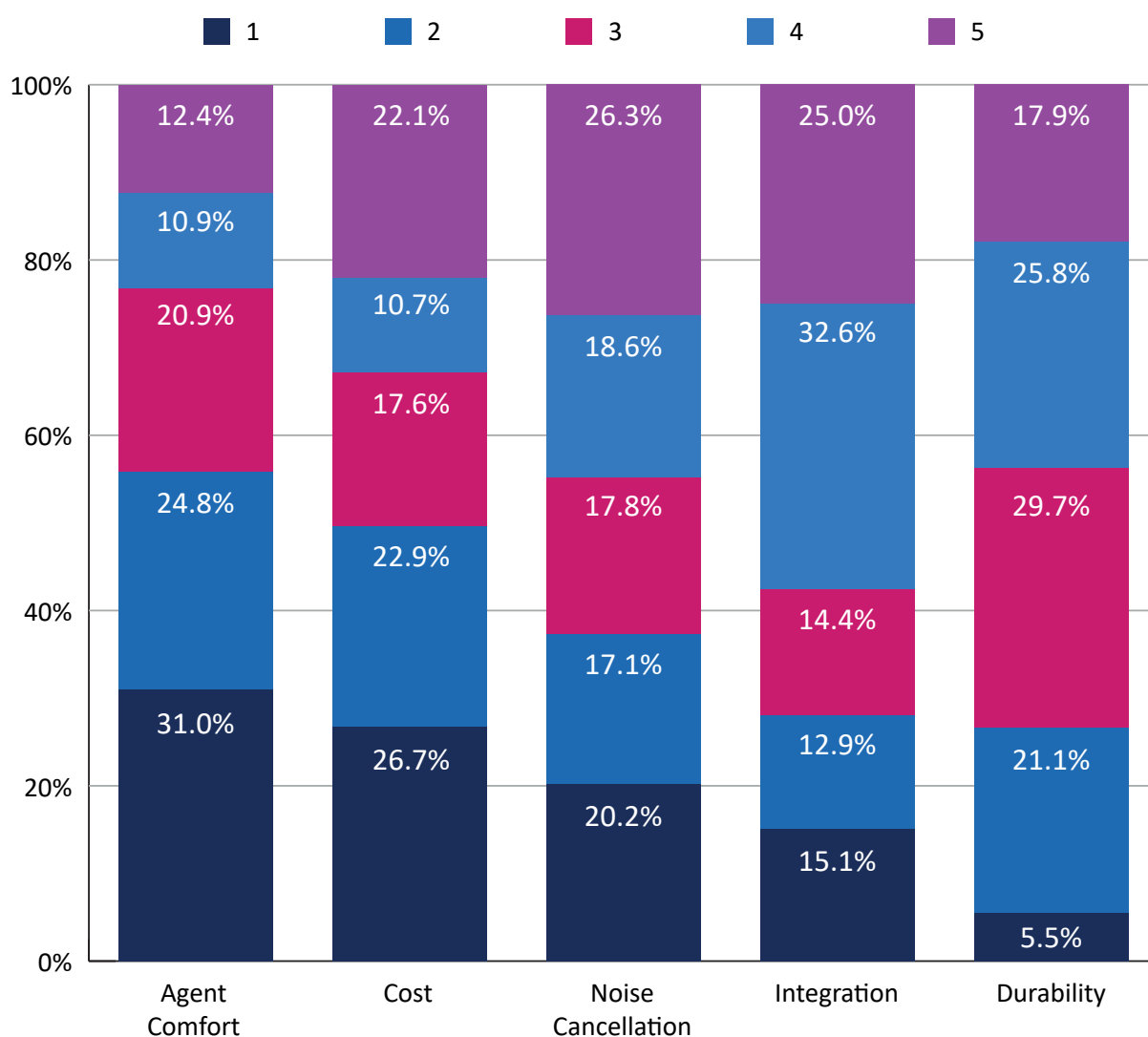# 31. What Are Your Main Priorities When Purchasing Headsets?

Positive to See Agent Comfort Trumping Cost

When asked "What are your main priorities when purchasing headsets?", agent comfort took the lead – with 31% of survey responders stating it was Priority 1 for them – closely followed by cost at 26.7%.

It's undoubtedly promising to see contact centre leaders putting individual comfort above cost.

It also reveals that while many may not be in the habit of giving agents much in the way of individual choice on headset preference, they are still appreciating their frontline's need for comfort and are looking at this closely in their buying criteria.

What Are Your Main Priorities When Purchasing Headsets?

Legend: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Priority	Agent Comfort	Cost	Noise Cancellation	Integration	Durability
5	12.4%	22.1%	26.3%	25.0%	17.9%
4	10.9%	10.7%	18.6%	32.6%	25.8%
3	20.9%	17.6%	17.8%	14.4%	29.7%
2	24.8%	22.9%	17.1%	12.9%	21.1%
1	31.0%	26.7%	20.2%	15.1%	5.5%

Noise Cancellation Has a "Marmite Effect" on Headset Buyers

However, as a Priority 2 factor, cost and durability were almost neck and neck – at 22.9% (cost) and 21.1% (durability) – showing that getting your money's worth both immediately and in the long run are of utmost importance to contact centre leaders.

Meanwhile, noise cancellation seemed to have a "Marmite Effect" – either love it or hate it – as it was ranked as the lowest priority more than any other option.

32. What Innovation Would You Like to See in Future Headsets?

When asked "What innovation would you like to see in future headsets?", the most popular innovations were cited as improved wireless functionality (27.5%), background noise measurements (24.7%), and sentiment analytics (21.7%).

What Innovation Would You Like to See in Future Headsets?

Category	Percentage
Improved Wireless Functionality - Range and Talk-Time	27.5%
Background Noise Measurements	24.7%
Sentiment Analytics	21.7%
Increased Comfort	17.4%
Advisor Sound Exposure / Acoustic Shock	6.5%
Other	2.2%
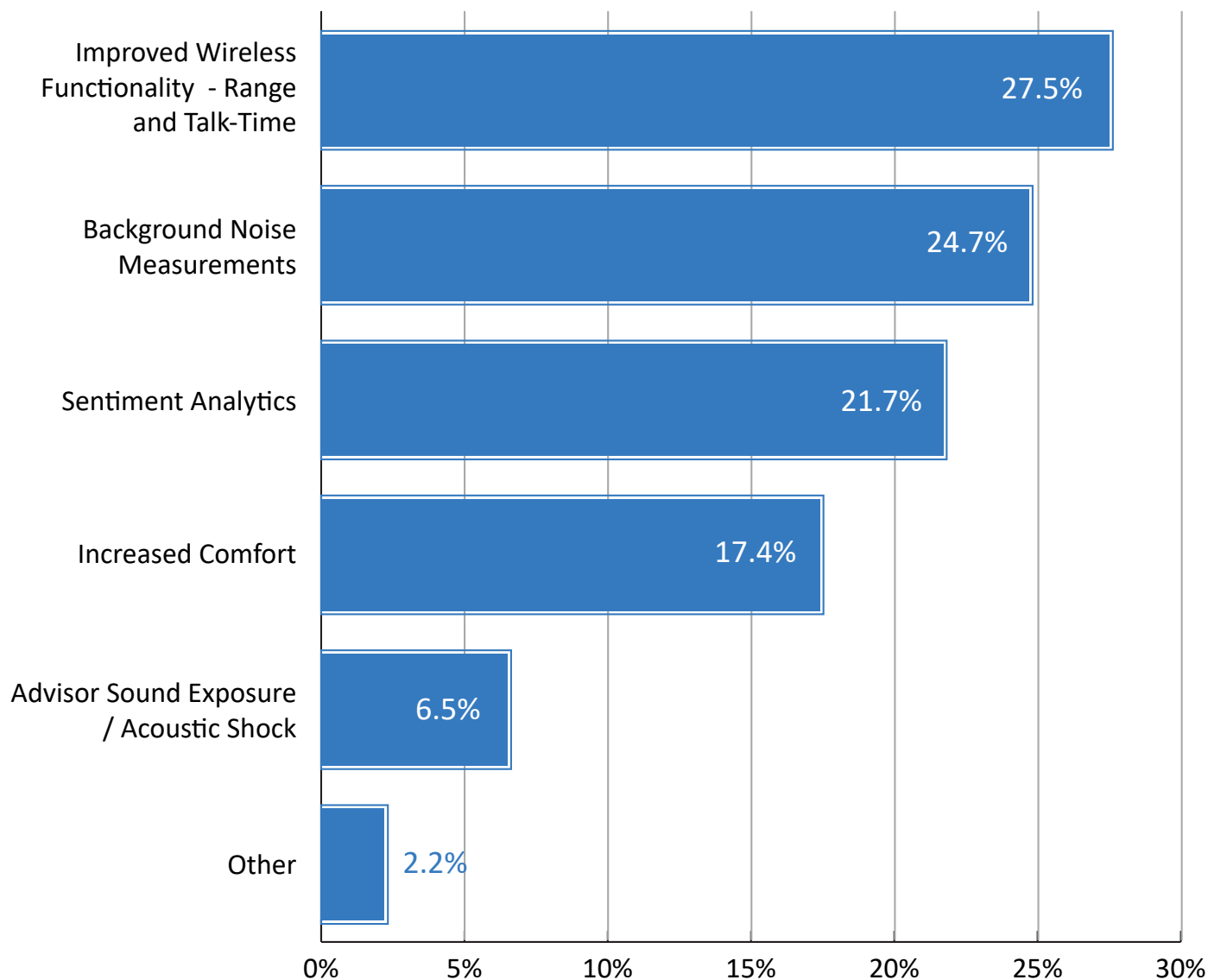
It's particularly interesting to see improved wireless functionality so high on the list, as this perhaps explains the lower uptake in wireless headsets – if they are perceived by some to need improvements to make them more fit for purpose.

Equally, the demand for increased comfort emphasizes the importance of this factor in the buying process.

32. What Innovation Would You Like to See in Future Headsets?

Leap in Technology Capabilities Raising Expectations of Headset Providers Too

As technology continues to evolve, particularly given the recent advancements in AI, it's clear to see contact centre professionals are expecting to see these advancements to come through in their headsets too – with background noise measurements wished for by 24.7% of survey respondents, and sentiment analysis by 21.7%. One survey participant even requested auto QA. Thus shows that users are expecting more from their headsets (and in turn their headset providers) than just the ability to have a conversation.

This shift in technological advancement is also apparent in comparison with the 2021 findings, where contact centre professionals were fundamentally looking for lighter and cheaper headsets with a longer wireless talk time – instead of lots of bells and whistles.

Quality Assurance

The Quality Assurance chapter is sponsored by Scorebuddy.

Scorebuddy is a market-leading contact centre quality assurance (QA) solution that uses embedded AI to improve operational efficiency, drive agent engagement, and uncover actionable insights.

Using AI, Scorebuddy allows you to analyse every interaction and identify the ones that need human review - so you can reduce cost per interaction, improve both agent and customer experience, and deliver personalized coaching that makes a real-world impact.

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33. What Would You Like to Change Most Within Your Quality Monitoring Programme?

Almost Half Want More Time Back in Their Working Day

When asked "What would you like to change most within your quality monitoring programme?", the majority of survey participants (40.2%) said "more time for analysing and calibrating". This was most closely followed by "moving away from spreadsheets" (28.4%).

Somewhat interestingly, beyond the additional factors of transparency, advisor buy-in, and a new scoring mechanism, some survey participants also wanted to see objective scoring and AI in their quality monitoring programme – highlighting a vast array of needs and requirements across the industry.

What Would You Like to Change Most Within Your Quality Monitoring Programme?
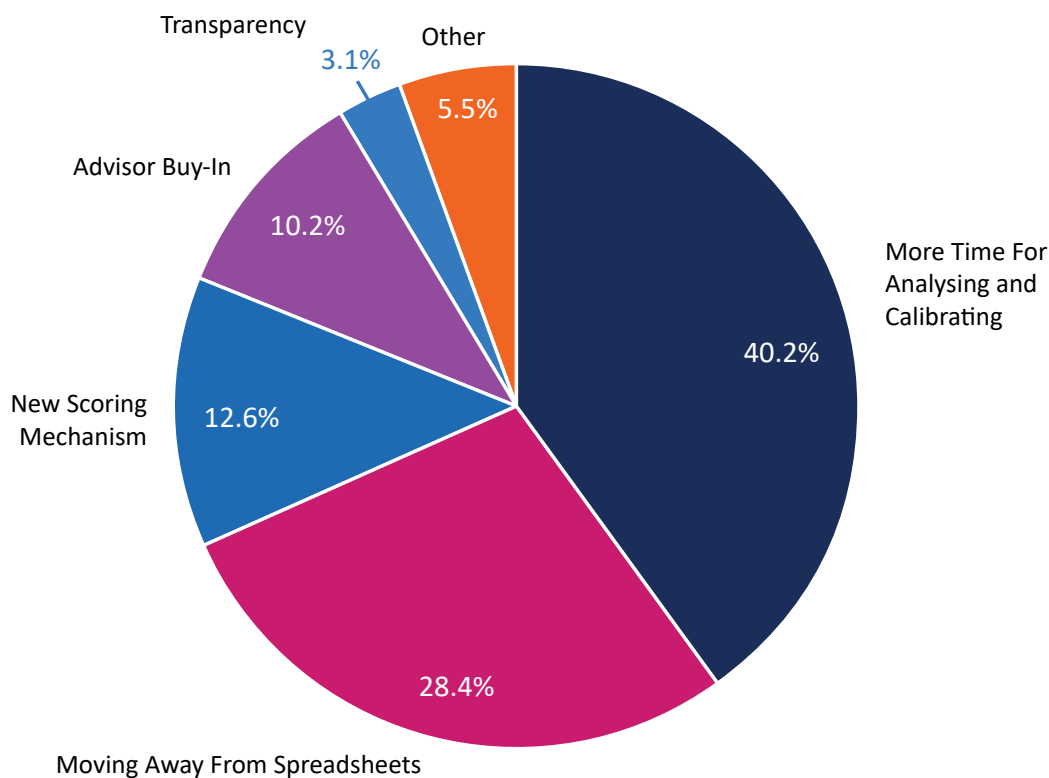
Sadly, for many, what appears to be top of their wish list overall is largely out of their control – either waiting for more resource in their teams to free up more time for the analysis they'd like to do, or for more business investment in technology to help them move away from spreadsheets (and subsequently also free up more time).

Promising to See 28.4% Wanting to Move Away From Spreadsheets

However, it is promising to see 28.4% of contact centre professionals wanting to move away from spreadsheets. This has jumped up from 18.8% in 2023 to 28.4% in 2024 – highlighting that demand for and awareness of smarter solutions is increasing. The real challenge is in contact centre professionals securing the budget for them.

34. When Did Your Company Last Change the Questions on Your Quality Scorecard?

Majority of Contact Centres Change Quality Scorecard Questions Annually

When asked "When did your company last change the questions on your quality scorecard?", the majority of survey participants said "in the past year" – suggesting this is an annual exercise at the very least.

By contrast, just 3.9% said they'd done it in the past week and 20.2% in the past month, suggesting that around a quarter of the industry are keeping a closer eye on and regularly updating the questions on their quality scorecards to keep them fresh and relevant to their agent training needs and customer experience.

When Did Your Company Last Change the Questions on Your Quality Scorecard?

Category	Percentage
Past Week	3.9%
Past Month	20.2%
Past Year	51.9%
Past 5 Years	10.1%
Never	13.9%
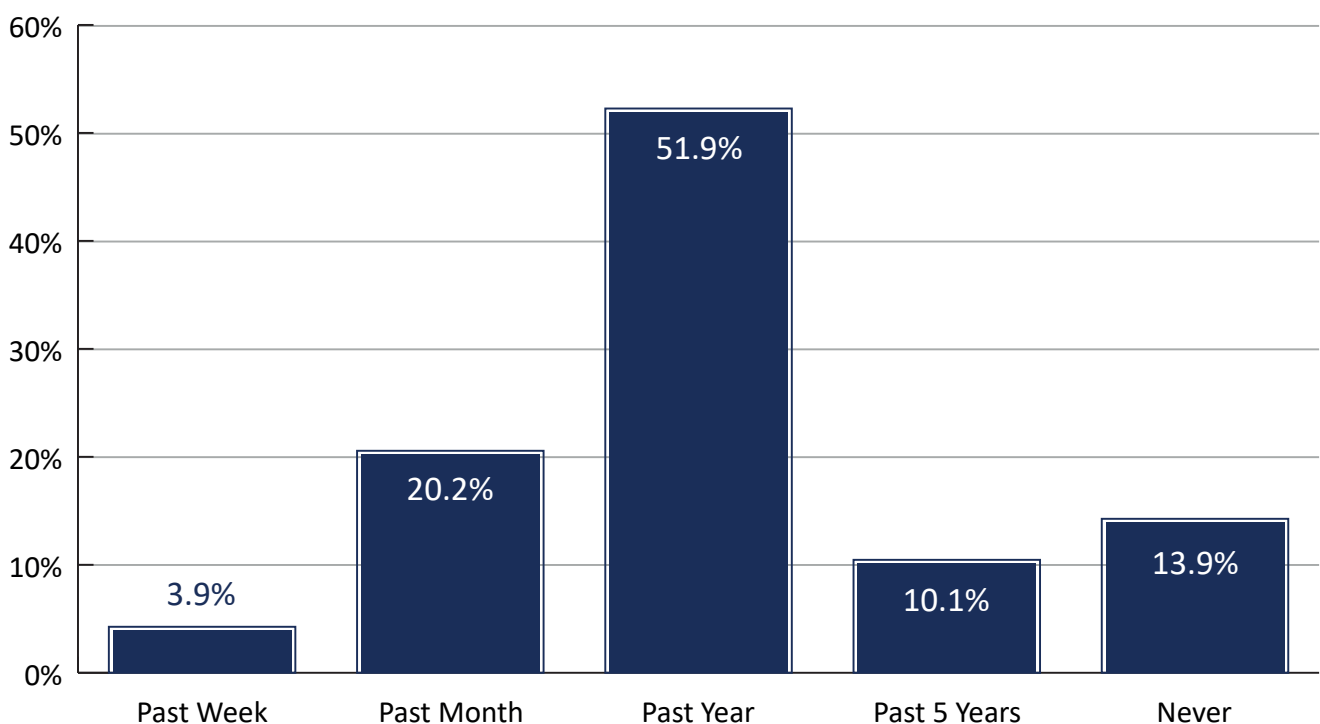
Even More Admitting to Never Changing the Questions on Their Scorecards

At the other end of the spectrum, 10.1% said they'd only changed the questions on their quality scorecards in the past 5 years, whilst 13.9% said they'd never changed the questions on their quality scorecards – highlighting that, for many, this task just keeps getting brushed to the wayside to the detriment of their overall quality monitoring programme.

Alarmingly, this figure has risen from 7.7% in 2023 to 13.9% in 2024 – suggesting the situation is getting worse, and that many contact centres simply aren't giving quality monitoring the time and attention it deserves to keep it fresh, relevant, and aligned with their CX strategy.

It's highly possible that this is because of the reasons stated in Question 33 – What Would You Like to Change Most Within Your Quality Monitoring Programme? – that contact centre professionals are in desperate need of more time in their working day to truly give quality monitoring the attention it deserves.
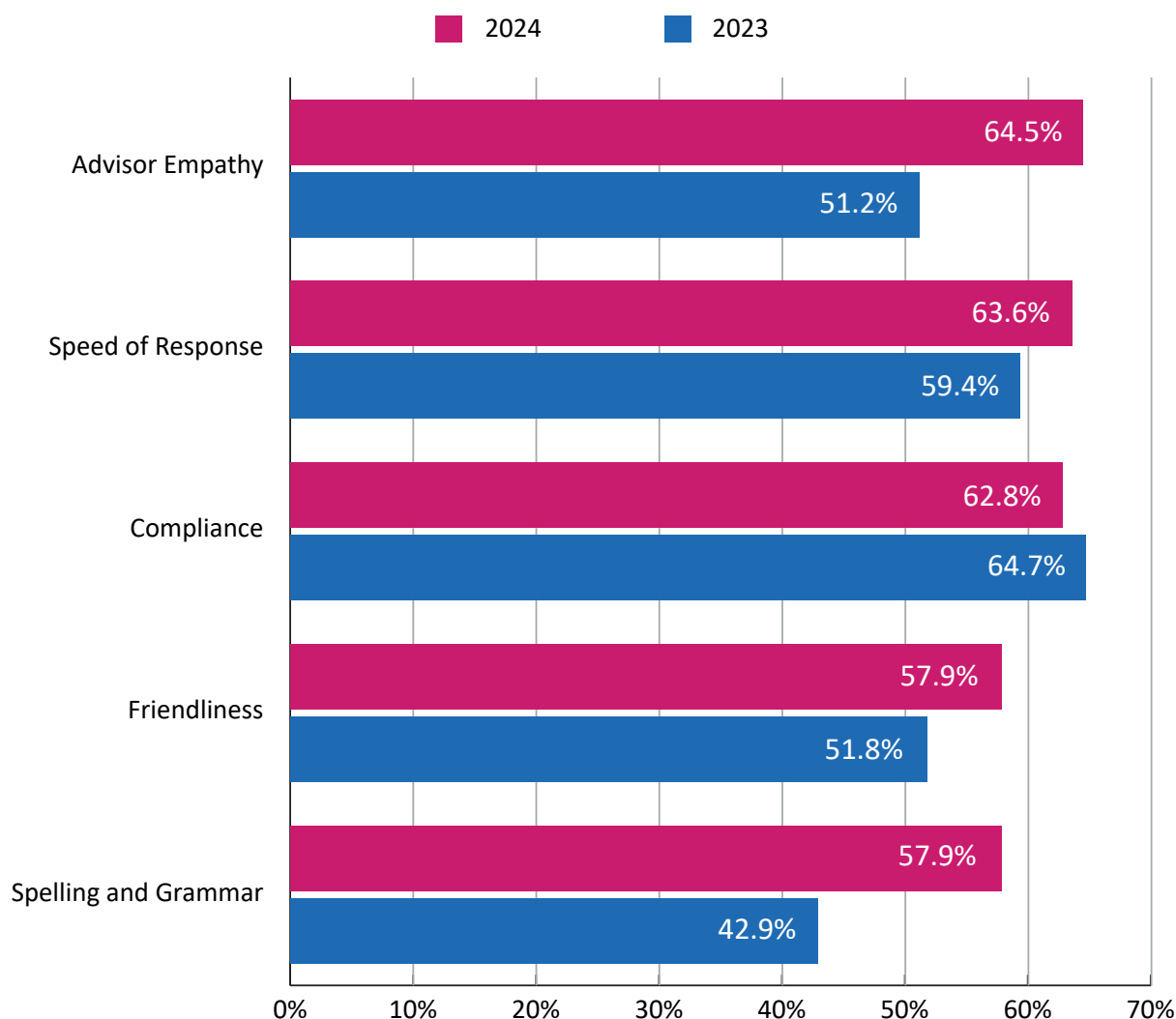
With more investment, hopefully this picture will improve in the coming years.

Monitoring of Digital Channels Taken Just as Seriously as Voice

When asked "Which attributes do you measure on digital channels?", it was promising to see an even spread across all listed attributes – showing that, on the whole, the industry is taking the monitoring of their digital channels just as seriously as their voice channels when it comes to delivering great CX.

Which Attributes Do You Measure on Digital Channels?

Legend: 2024 (pink), 2023 (blue)

Attribute	2024	2023
Advisor Empathy	64.5%	51.2%
Speed of Response	63.6%	59.4%
Compliance	62.8%	64.7%
Friendliness	57.9%	51.8%
Spelling and Grammar	57.9%	42.9%

Interestingly, across the board, all attributes were up from 2023 – except for compliance, which was down from 64.7% in 2023 to 62.8% in 2024. This is concerning given the new FCA Consumer Duty regulations that have come into play in the UK in the last 12 months, as you'd expect this figure to have risen – not decreased.

Highest-Rated Response Was for Advisor Empathy

That being said, the highest-rated response was for advisor empathy (64.5%) – up from 51.2% in 2023. This is perhaps due to contact centre professionals becoming more in tune with the need to show just as much empathy on digital channels. This also mirrors advancements in available technology for monitoring advisor performance and even emotions, making it far easier for contact centres to monitor advisor empathy than ever before.

36. Which Quality Tools Do You Use?

**Two-Thirds of Industry Heavily Reliant on Spreadsheets**

When asked "Which quality tools do you use?", the majority said they were using spreadsheets (65.9%). This was closely followed by basic reporting (50.8%).

This sadly shows that quality isn't seen as a priority area for investment in the contact centre and that any upgrades are more of a "nice to have", leaving many contact centre professionals making do with the bare minimum of resources to do their job.

Shockingly, 11.9% even admitted they are still using paper-based forms!

Additionally, survey respondents also cited in-house developed quality tools and assessments, self-built Excel forms, a tool built into the phone platform, and Microsoft forms – highlighting a fair amount of variety in the quality tools being used across the industry.

Which Quality Tools Do You Use?
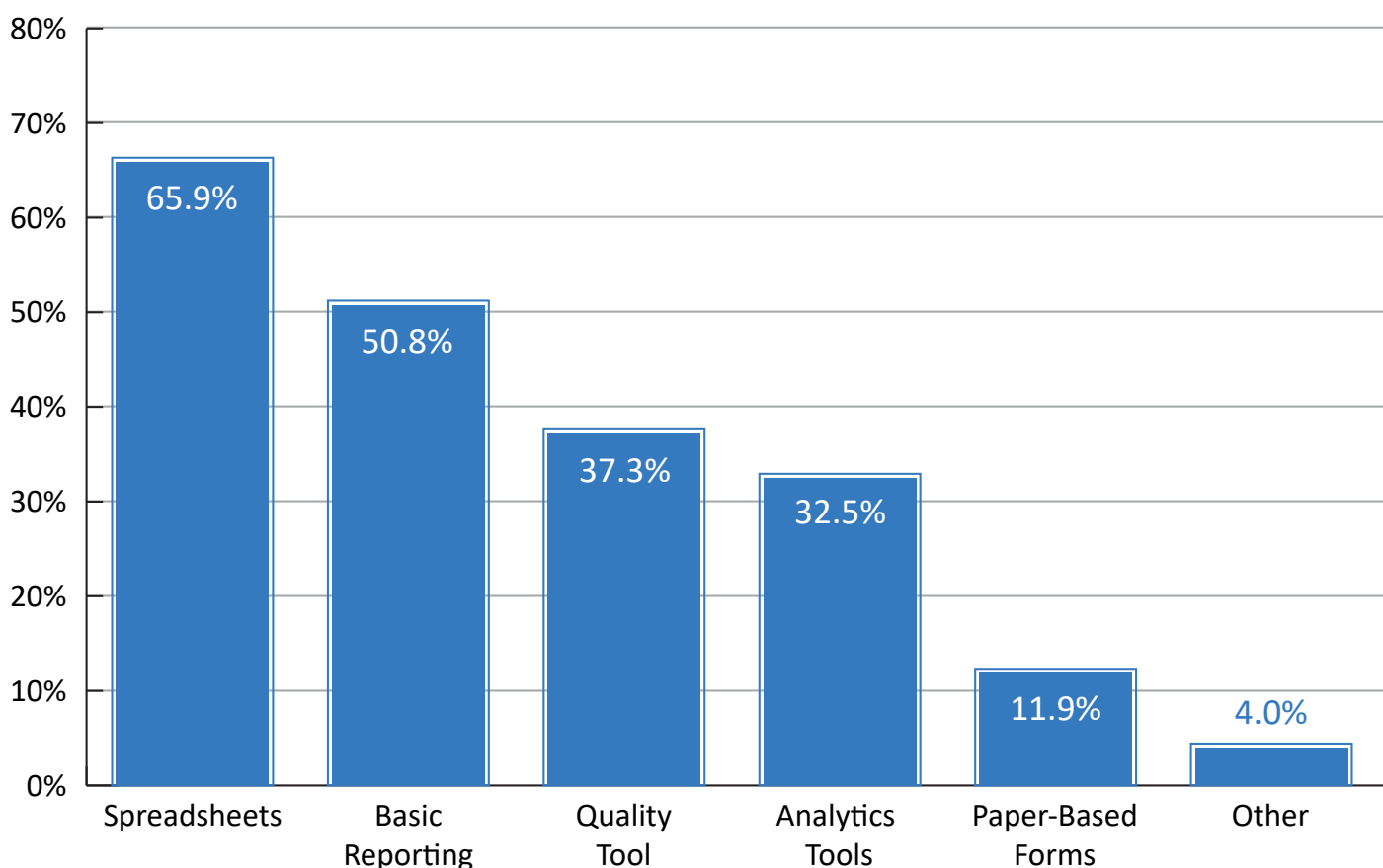
Disappointingly, all these figures have risen year on year, as spreadsheet use has jumped from 53.9% in 2023 to 65.9% in 2024, basic reporting has increased from 45% in 2023 to 50.8% in 2024, and even use of paper-based forms has increased from 11.1% in 2023 to 11.9% in 2024.

All of this points to the pressure of tighter budgets and contact centre professionals being expected to do more with less.

36. Which Quality Tools Do You Use?

Only a Third of Contact Centres Using Quality and/or Analytics Tools

By contrast, only 37.3% said they were using quality tools, whilst 32.5% said they were using analytics tools. This shows that some, at least, have invested in the latest tools to help automate repetitive tasks and make it easier to find the root causes of poor service.

Although even these more promising figures have taken a bit of a nose-dive year on year – again pointing to budget pressures – as the use of quality tools has fallen from 52.8% in 2023 to 37.3% in 2024, whilst the use of analytics tools has dropped from 42.2% in 2023 to 32.5% in 2024.

This behaviour may also highlight a training need, as some professionals may in fact have these tools as part of their integrated systems but are unable or unwilling to use them – and so inevitably default back to tried-and-tested manual techniques.
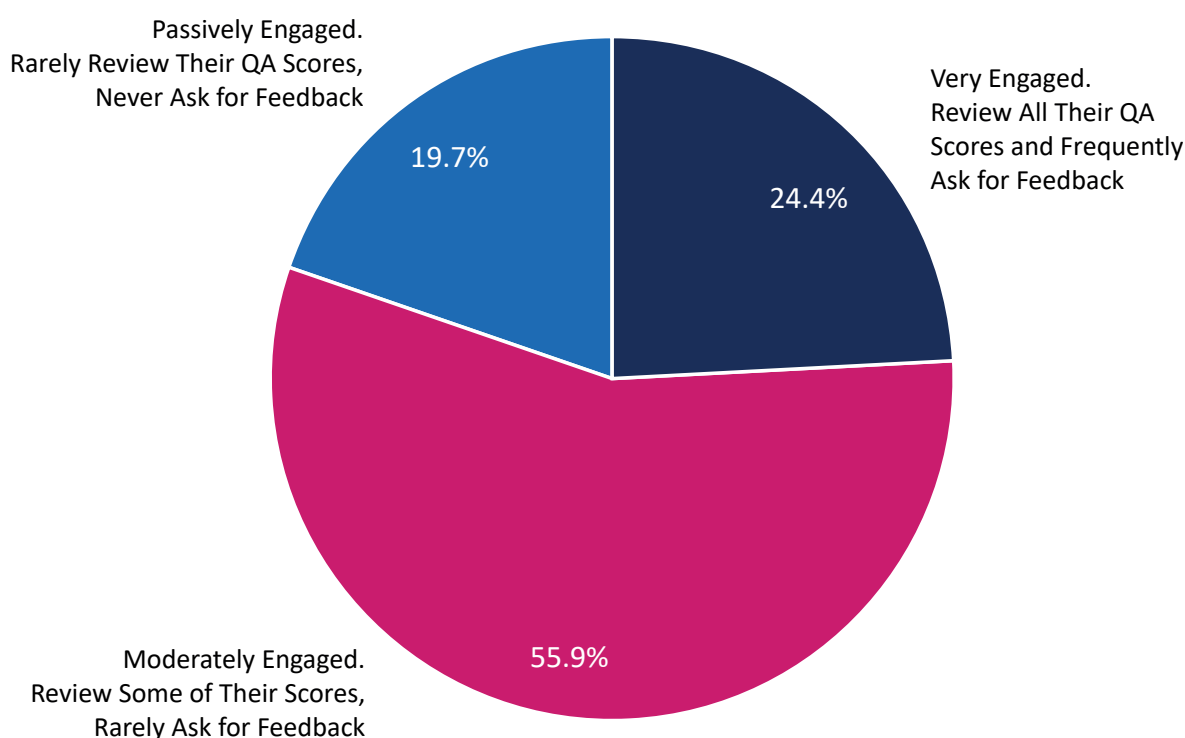
37. How Engaged Are Your Customer Advisors in the QA Programme of Your Contact Centre?

Three-Quarters of Contact Centres Struggling With QA Engagement

When asked "How engaged are your customer advisors in the QA programme of your contact centre?", 55.9% of contact centre professionals said their teams were "moderately engaged", whilst a further 19.7% said "passively engaged".

This sadly highlights a lot of wasted effort across QA teams, doing the front-end work for little end result, which is particularly depressing given how manual and time-consuming the QA role is for many in the industry – as explored in Question 36 - Which Quality Tools Do You Use? where 65.9% of contact centre professionals said they were heavily reliant on spreadsheets (with 11.9% even using paper-based forms!).

How Engaged Are Your Customer Advisors in the QA program of Your Contact Centre?

Passively Engaged.
Rarely Review Their QA Scores,
Never Ask for Feedback

Very Engaged.
Review All Their QA
Scores and Frequently
Ask for Feedback

19.7%

24.4%

55.9%

Moderately Engaged.
Review Some of Their Scores,
Rarely Ask for Feedback

Only a Quarter of Advisors Very Engaged in Their QA Programme

By contrast, only 24.4% of contact centre professionals said their advisors were "very engaged" in their QA programme.

However, it's highly possible there's a chicken-and-egg scenario in play here, where those with a failing QA programme and disengaged teams struggle to make a business case for further investment in QA tools, whilst those who have invested in the latest tools are reaping the rewards all round.

Sadly, however, this picture is changing for the worse – as year-on-year findings show that the number of very engaged advisors has dropped from 27.6% in 2023 to 24.4% in 2024, whilst the number of passively engaged advisors has risen from 16% in 2023 to 19.7% in 2024.

Workforce Management

The Workforce Management chapter is sponsored by NICE.

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NICE solutions are being used by over 25,000 organisations in more than 150 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies.
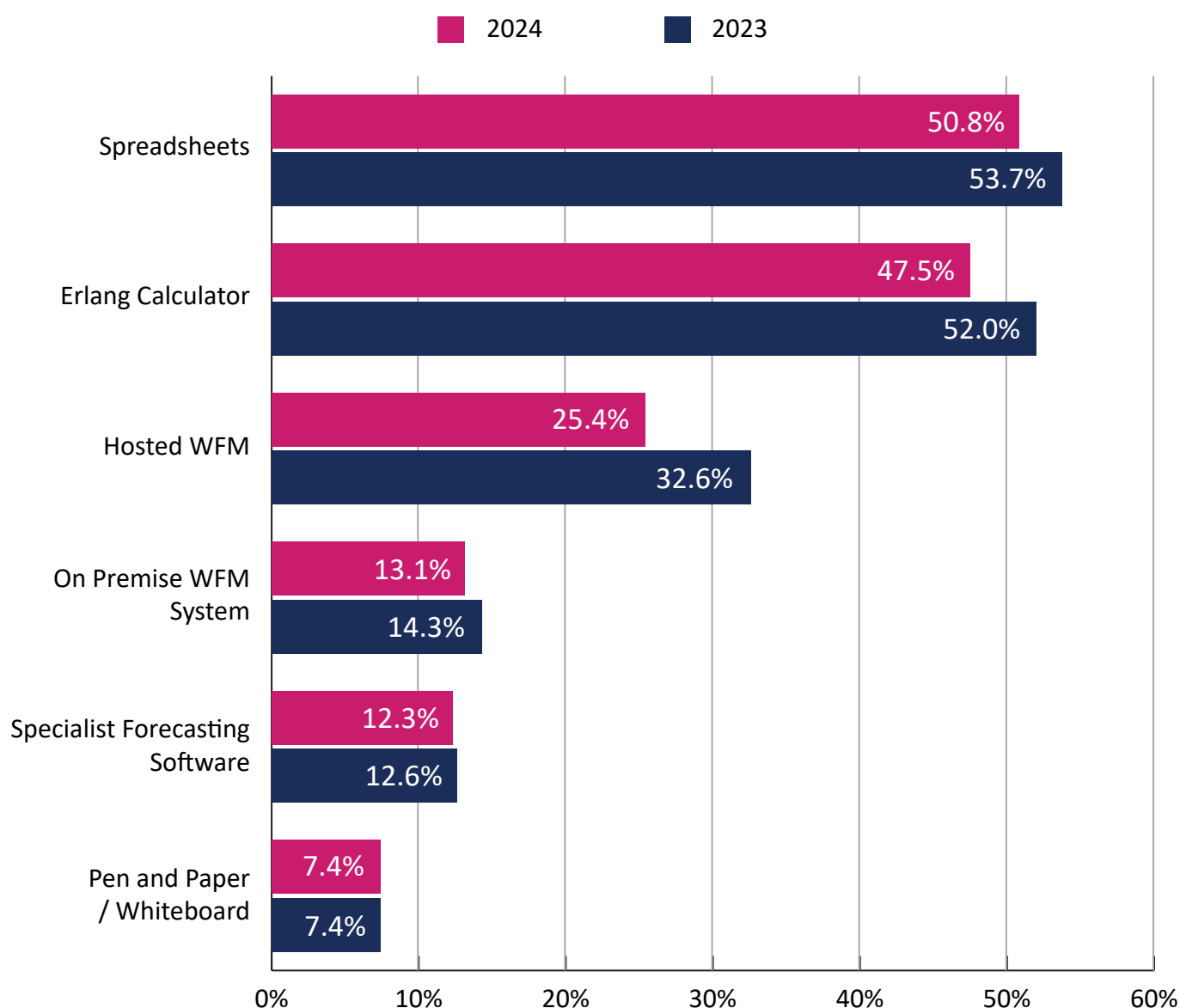
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38. What Equipment Do You Use for Forecasting and Scheduling?

Many Still Heavily Reliant on Manual, Time-Consuming Methods

When asked "What equipment do you use for forecasting and scheduling?", a majority said "Spreadsheets" (50.8%) and an "Erlang Calculator" (47.5%) – highlighting that many contact centre professionals are still heavily reliant on manual, time-consuming methods to complete their forecasting and scheduling. 7.4% even showed year-on-year to be using pen and paper/ whiteboards.

What Equipment Do You Use for Forecasting and Scheduling?

Legend: ■ 2024 ■ 2023

Equipment	2024	2023
Spreadsheets	50.8%	53.7%
Erlang Calculator	47.5%	52.0%
Hosted WFM	25.4%	32.6%
On Premise WFM System	13.1%	14.3%
Specialist Forecasting Software	12.3%	12.6%
Pen and Paper / Whiteboard	7.4%	7.4%

This may be more reflective of the size of the contact centres taking part in this survey – highlighting the contrast between the smaller operations who are less in need of a WFM solution and the bigger ones who simply need one for sheer scale of efficiency.

Either way, it's clear that far too many teams are still heavily reliant on manual methods, putting them on the back foot with real-time adjustments, bringing service levels under control, and more – unnecessarily jeopardizing the customer experience.

38. What Equipment Do You Use for Forecasting and Scheduling?

Hosted Takes the Lead in WFM Software

However, these findings also give additional insight into the half of respondents who said they had workforce management software in their contact centres – as seen in Question 2 "What Technology Do You Have in Your Contact Centre?".

As this graph shows, the approx. 50% can be broken down across hosted WFM (25.4%), on-premise WFM system (13.1%), and specialist forecasting software (12.3%). showing that when it comes to having WFM software in place, the overriding preference is for a hosted WFM solution.

Interestingly, these trends show a similar curve and weighting overall when compared with 2023 results, suggesting that very little has changed in this space in the last 12 months.
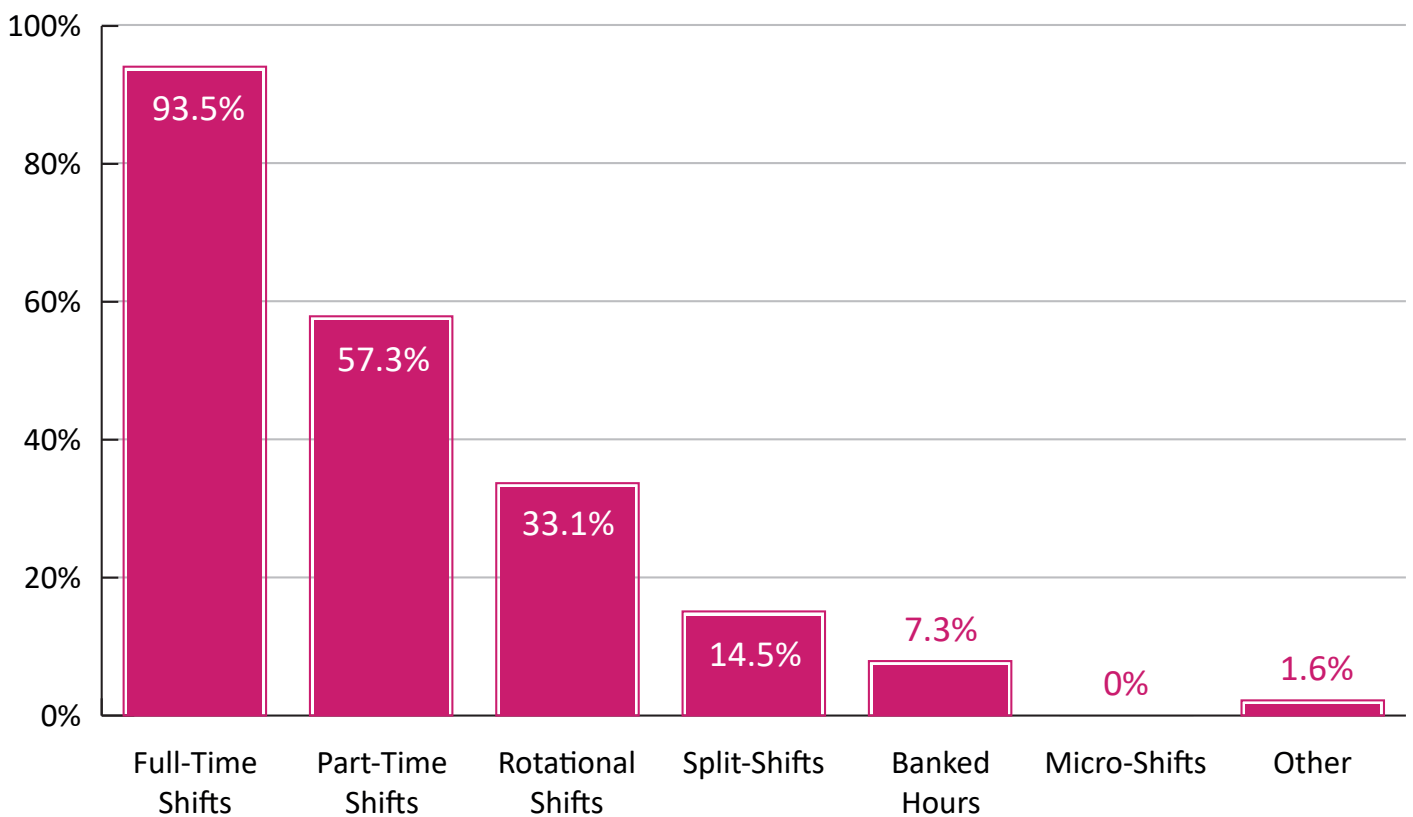
39. Which Shift Patterns Do You Use in Your Contact Centre?

Full-Time Shifts on the Rise

When asked "Which shift patterns do you use in your contact centre?", the vast majority (93.5%) said they were offering full-time shifts, whilst a further 57.3% said they were offering part-time shifts.

Interestingly, this shows a year-on-year rise in those offering full-time shifts (up from 90.5% in 2023 to 93.5% in 2024) and a decrease in those offering part-time shifts (down from 58.7% in 2023 to 57.3% in 2024).

Which Shift Patterns Do You Use in Your Contact Centre?

Shift Pattern	Percentage
Full-Time Shifts	93.5%
Part-Time Shifts	57.3%
Rotational Shifts	33.1%
Split-Shifts	14.5%
Banked Hours	7.3%
Micro-Shifts	0%
Other	1.6%

This is possibly due to a shift in power in attracting people to the workplace, and less competition for talent, putting the contact centre's need for full-time staff above flexibility offerings – with more choice and freedom to prioritize getting full-time people in and trained up (instead of part-time staff).

Equally, it could align with the attrition issues (highlighted earlier in this report) and a real need for contact centres to be getting maximum output from a new recruit on a full-time basis – if they are acutely aware they'll be losing them sooner rather than later.

39. Which Shift Patterns Do You Use in Your Contact Centre?

Micro-Shifts Abandoned as the World Returns to Normal

This is also the first year since 2020 that no one has said they are offering micro-shifts. These shifts (less than one hour) were popular with some contact centres during Covid, at the peak of remote working, when it was quick and easy to ask agents to jump online for a short burst of work to help offset high call volumes.

However, now that the world has returned to normal and many have now settled into an office-based or hybrid strategy, this is less practical. Also, staff are less likely to be available at short notice in their evenings and over the weekend – as people are typically busier, as normal social events and activities have resumed outside the home.

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Full-Time Shifts	90.2%	90.7%	90.5%	93.5%
Part-Time Shifts	47.0%	55.2%	58.7%	57.3%
Rotational Shifts	36.0%	32.8%	31.8%	33.1%
Split-Shifts	19.5%	20.0%	21.2%	14.5%
Banked Hours	6.7%	9.3%	12.9%	7.3%
Micro-Shifts (less than one hour)	1.8%	1.0%	0.6%	0.0%
Other	4.3%	1.7%	4.5%	1.6%

There seems to be a similar effect on split-shifts, again more practical with homeworking agents than those needing to return to the office to complete the other half of their shift – so somewhat unsurprising to also see this figure dip down to 14.5% in 2024.

Interestingly, some survey participants also mentioned that they are offering a 2-week shift pattern and the option for colleagues to pick their own shifts 75% of the time.

40. What Is Your Biggest Scheduling Problem?

Absence and Lateness Causing Headaches Across the Industry

When asked "What is your biggest scheduling problem?", it was immediately apparent that dealing with absence and lateness was causing headaches across the industry – as stated by 47.1% of survey respondents and, most concerningly, up from 35.7% in 2023.

What is Your Biggest Scheduling Problem?
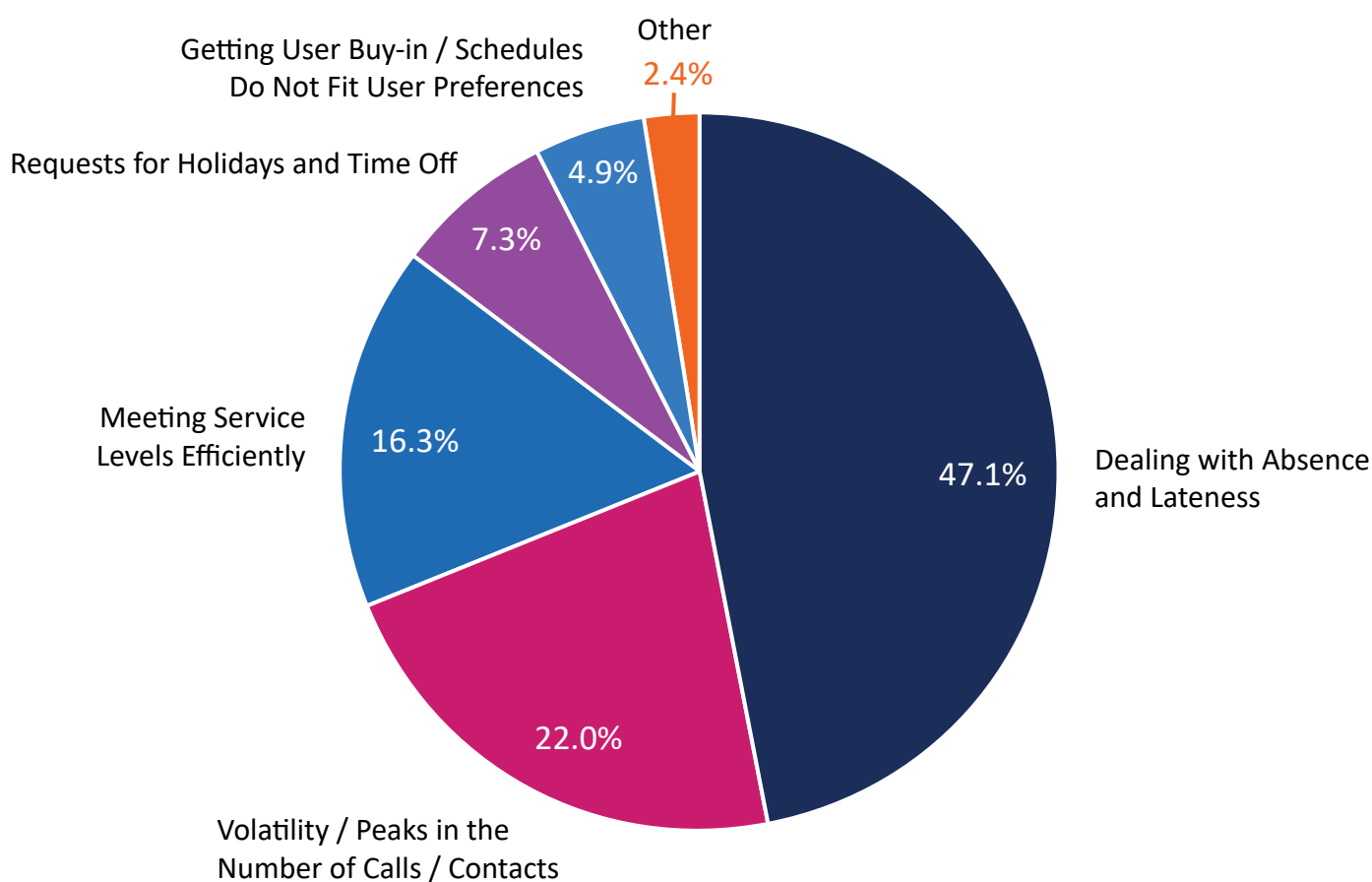
This is a clear people problem, challenging industry leaders to address individuals' behaviour and commitment to their shifts and workplace.

It could also be indicative of high stress levels and agents taking time off for mental health reasons, as well as a longer-term lack of engagement, which may have been impacted by the backward steps in agent empowerment and flexibility, as shown in Question 8 - What Initiatives Do You Currently Have in the Contact Centre? – where, between 2023 and 2024 alone, flexible shifts dropped from 56.7% to 47.1%, and advisor empowerment from 48% to 46.7%.

(Interestingly, one survey participant also cited "fitting around childcare" – suggesting that managing shifts for working parents is a challenge in and of itself.)

40. What Is Your Biggest Scheduling Problem?

The Uptake in WFM Systems Appears to Be Having a Positive Knock-On Effect on the Ability to Handle Any Volatility and Service Levels

By contrast, the rising adoption rates in WFM systems – as seen in Question 2 - What Technology Do You Have in Your Contact Centre?, where WFM uptake has risen from 31.4% to 55.7% in just 8 years – appears to be having a positive knock-on effect on the ability to handle any volatility and meet service levels efficiently.

This potentially explains the year-on-year drop in these figures – as seen in volatility dropping from 25.7% in 2023 to 22% in 2024, and meeting service levels dropping from 16.8% in 2023 to 16.3% in 2024.

|	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Dealing with Absence and Lateness	28.7%	25.4%	34.2%	35.7%	47.1%
Volatility / Peaks in the Number of Calls / Contacts	29.1%	29.0%	29.6%	25.7%	22.0%
Meeting Service Levels Efficiently	16.1%	24.9%	12.9%	16.8%	16.3%
Requests for Holidays and Time Off	7.9%	8.5%	10.8%	12.9%	7.3%
Getting User Buy-in / Schedules Do Not Fit User Preferences	6.3%	7.3%	7.3%	5.6%	4.9%
Other	11.9%	4.9%	5.2%	3.3%	2.4%

41. On Average How Long Do Your Callers Wait Before Abandoning?

Increasing Number of Callers Waiting Less Than a Minute Before Abandoning

When asked "On average, how long do your callers wait before abandoning?", 14.6% said "less than 29 seconds" and a further 23.6% said "30–59 seconds", revealing that a total of 38.2% of callers are prepared to wait less than a minute before abandoning.

Alarmingly, it looks as though some callers are becoming even more impatient, as this total has risen since the 2023 What Contact Centres Are Doing Right Now report findings, where this same figure was recorded at 36%.

On Average How Long Do Your Callers Wait Before Abandoning?
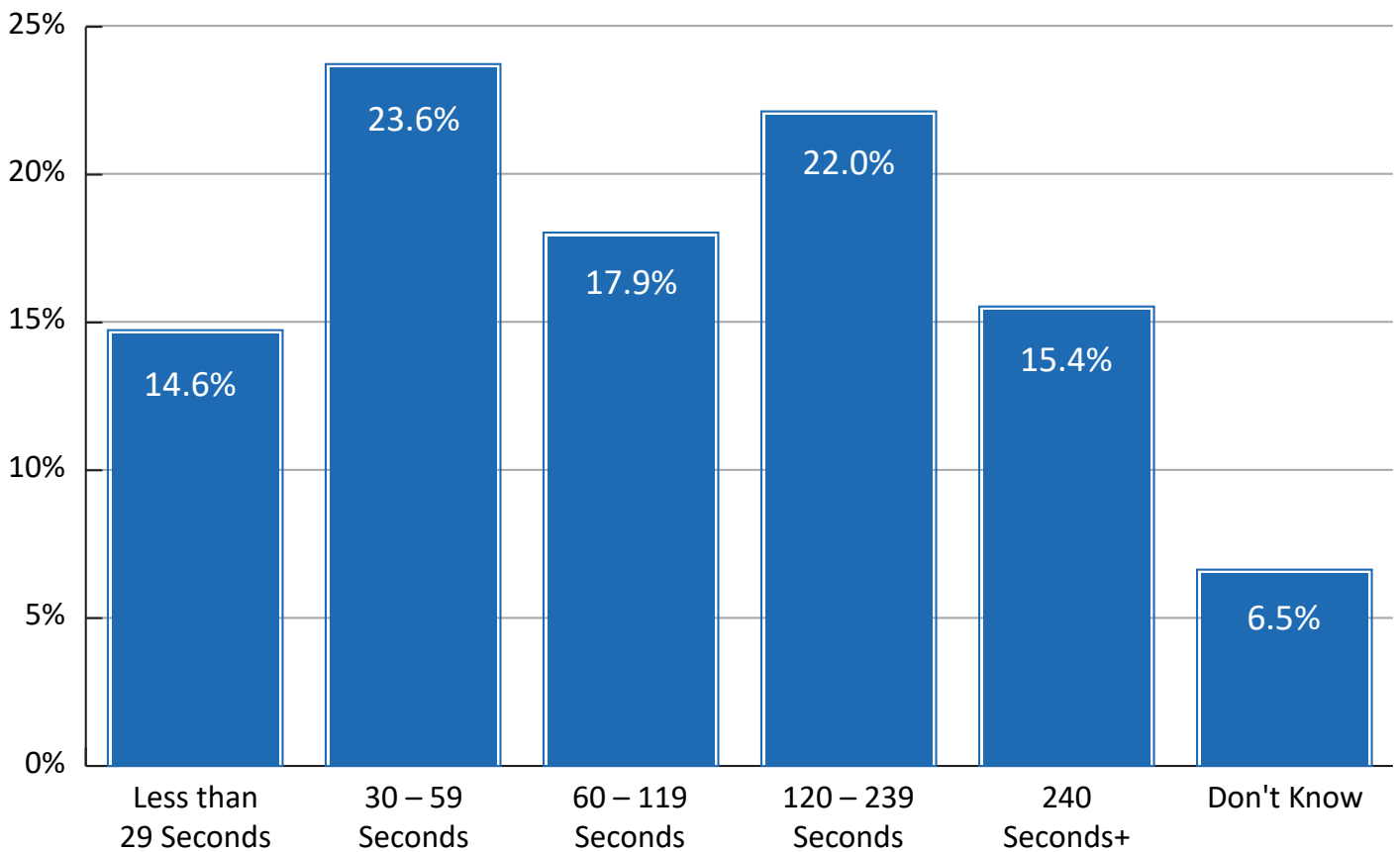
By contrast, there has been little year-on-year change in the callers prepared to wait for 120–239 seconds (21.9% in 2023 - 22% in 2024) and 240+ (15.2% in 2023 - 15.4% in 2024).
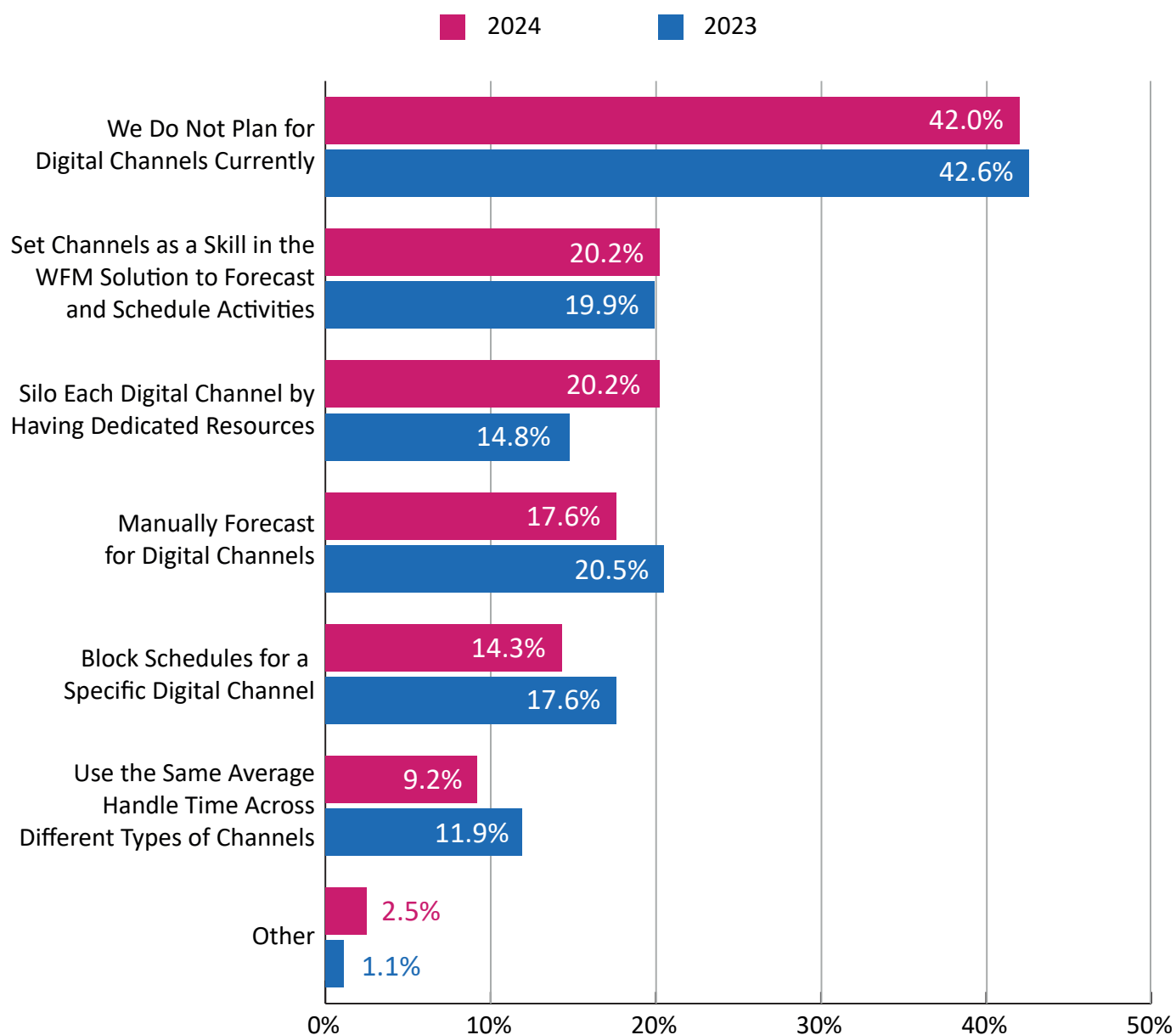
This spread of results is perhaps reflective of the different sectors participating in this research, where expectations and needs differ significantly between ringing a healthcare or insurance line (for example), compared to a retailer where the query is likely to be less urgent.

42. How Are You Managing Digital Channels Within Your WFM Solution?

Contact Centres Are Gradually Becoming More Adept at Managing Digital Channels

When asked "How are you managing digital channels within your WFM solution?", it was promising to see those manually forecasting for digital channels dropping from 20.5% in 2023 to 17.6% in 2024, as well as those who use the same average handle time across different types of channel dropping from 11.9% in 2023 to 9.2% in 2024.

How Are You Managing Digital Channels Within Your WFM Solution?

Legend: ■ 2024   ■ 2023

Category	2024	2023
We Do Not Plan for Digital Channels Currently	42.0%	42.6%
Set Channels as a Skill in the WFM Solution to Forecast and Schedule Activities	20.2%	19.9%
Silo Each Digital Channel by Having Dedicated Resources	20.2%	14.8%
Manually Forecast for Digital Channels	17.6%	20.5%
Block Schedules for a Specific Digital Channel	14.3%	17.6%
Use the Same Average Handle Time Across Different Types of Channels	9.2%	11.9%
Other	2.5%	1.1%

Overall, this shows a gradual shift towards better and easier ways of doing things when it comes to proactively managing digital channels (and, of course, treating them differently to voice!). However, the disparate results show there's still a long way to go to raise awareness of best practice across the industry.

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