Call Abandonment Rate: Comprehensive Guide

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VERNON, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA, November 16, 2022 / EINPresswire.com/ --

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What is [Call Abandonment Rate](#)?

Traditionally, the [call center](#) abandonment rate is defined as the percentage of customers that hang up before they get connected with an agent. For example, when customers call a contact center and are put on hold after they have gone through the voice menu, they might hang up out of frustration before they get to talk to an agent. Therefore, the call abandonment rate is metric call centers use to measure the frequency of abandoned calls.

It should be pointed out that many call centers evaluate call abandonment rates from a holistic approach. For example, it is not uncommon for call centers to measure abandoned calls from customers who hung up before reaching an agent and from abandoned calls while talking with an agent.

Call abandonment rates can vary by call reason, industry, customer type (e.g., B2B or B2C), line of business, day of the week, and throughout the day. In addition, call abandon rates can be impacted by call-answering goals, strategies, agent staffing, and service level performance.

Why do customers abandon calls?

• The most common reason is the wait time to reach an agent is too long.
• The IVR menu used to route customers to the right agent is too complicated.
• The agent put the customer on hold, and it took too long before the agent got back to them.
• While talking with the agent, the customer found a solution, so they hung up the phone.
• The customer was dissatisfied with the agent they were talking to, so they hung up the phone.

- There was a technical issue, and the customer got disconnected from the agent.

Why is lowering the call abandonment rate important?

Unsurprisingly, customers will rate their customer service poorly when they abandon a call. However, if the customer's initial call was abandoned but called back and was able to resolve their call reason, they do not consider it First Call Resolution (FCR). In addition, because it took two calls, they have lower customer satisfaction (Csat). For many call centers, a high call abandonment rate is among the highest drivers of low FCR and Csat performance.

Also, if the customer can use other companies and abandons the call with your call center, many will choose to use your competitors. Few call centers measure the impact of lost revenue opportunities due to abandoned calls, but they should measure it.

What is a good benchmark for call center abandonment rate?

The benchmark average for the call center industry for call abandon rate is 6%. Generally speaking, call center abandonment rates of less than 5% are considered good. Sometimes, it is acceptable if the rate is between 5% and 10%. However, if the rate is over 5%, in most cases is viewed as too high.

The call abandonment rates can vary depending on the industry, call reason, line of business, time of day, and day of the week. Furthermore, most call centers with great Csat have a 3% or less call abandon rate.

It is essential to mention that false call abandonment rates happen within the first 10 seconds of a call and represent up to 2% of call volume. Therefore, for accuracy and benchmarking purposes, the call abandon rate calculation should include calls abandoned within the first 5 or 10 seconds criteria.

How to measure the call center abandonment rate?

Measuring the call center abandonment rate can help discover opportunities to improve related issues to workforce management, resource allocation (e.g., agents, helpdesk. escalated agents), FCR, and Csat. Now let's discuss how to calculate the call center abandon rate.
1. Determine the number of received calls.
The starting point is to determine the number of received calls. Typically, most call centers will measure call abandonment rate on a weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual basis.
2. Subtract the number of calls abandoned for 10 seconds or less.
Decide the number of calls abandoned in seconds criteria you want to use. Furthermore, it is common for the number of calls abandoned in seconds calculation to be 5 or 10 seconds or less.
3. Subtract the number of [calls handled](#).

After you have determined the number of received calls and subtracted the number of calls abandoned based on the second criterion used, you are ready to subtract the number of calls handled.

4. Divide the result by the number of received calls.

Once you have determined the number of received calls (e.g., use the below numerator criteria) result, you are ready to divide by the difference for the number of received calls (e.g., use the below denominator criteria) result.

Call Abandonment Rate Formula

Call Abandonment Rate = (Number of received calls - # of calls abandoned in ten seconds or less - # of calls handled) / (Number of received calls - # of calls abandoned in ten seconds or less) x 100

For example: if your call center received 1000 calls and 50 of them were abandoned within 10 seconds, but also 900 calls were handled, the calculation for the call abandon rate is:

• (1000-50-900) / (1000-50) = 5.2%

Note: For the numerator, the 50 calls not identified in the calls abandoned and handled could be attributed to multiple factors, such as disconnections, etc.

How can you improve the call center abandon rate?

The business case for increasing FCR and Csat performance by improving the call center abandon rate is strong. Therefore, call center management should consider the identified tactics in this blog to improve the call center abandonment rate. So, let's look at some of these tactics for improving the call abandon rate.

1. High Customer Satisfaction will decrease callbacks and, therefore, reduce call volume. Measure Csat by day and hour to determine the impact of call abandon rate on customer service and targeted improvement opportunities. Also, measure and hold agents accountable for Csat score performance. Csat score measures customer satisfaction with the call center or agent service a customer experienced. Csat score can be calculated for different periods (e.g., past 30 or 90 days and year).

2. Improve First Call Resolution will also decrease callbacks and reduce call volume. SQM's research shows that the call center industry benchmark average for the First Call Resolution (FCR) rate is 70%. The FCR rate means that 30% of customers have to call back the organization about the same inquiry or problem. For many call centers improving FCR represents one of the most significant opportunities for improving the call abandon rate. Again, when customers call back after they abandoned their initial, they do not consider the call FCR because it took two calls.

3. More agents are available to receive calls, which may seem obvious, but customers tend to abandon their call when there are high wait times during peak call times (e.g., Monday, 9 to 5). The call abandon rate needs to be evaluated by day and time to determine peak call times and staffed appropriately to reduce the abandon rate. Lowering the call abandon rate requires better forecasting and scheduling of agents for peak times.

4. Use callback technology to prevent abandoned calls. The main advantage of the callback technology feature is that customers do not have to wait on hold to reach an agent. For example, customers value the ability to call back instead of being on hold waiting for an agent. The bottom line, the callback technology feature enhances customer experience and improves call abandon rates and Csat.

5. Assess your IVR navigation menu to determine where customers are dropping out. It is helpful to assess the number of layers and options to determine what is causing drop-out. Furthermore, we recommend surveying your customers right after they use the IVR to navigate to the right agent to determine the opportunities to reduce the drop-out rate and improve customer experience. Finally, consider using intelligent skill-based routing to lower call abandon rate and improve Csat.

6. Improve on-hold messages because customers often abandon the call if they keep hearing the same message while waiting to reach an agent. Therefore, it can be helpful to use relevant messages by call type that improve customer experience and reduce call abandonment rates. It might also be beneficial to slow down the frequency of repetitive on-hold messages.

7. Assess Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to determine the impact on the call abandonment rate and improvement opportunities. Important KPIs to assess include service level, occupancy rate, call duration, schedule adherence, after-call work time, and accuracy in forecasting.

8. Re-direct low-complex calls to self-service touchpoints to improve CX and lower call abandonment rate. While on hold, provide customers with low-call complexity information about self-service touchpoints to resolve their call reason. Moreover, while customers are talking to customers and the call complexity is low, educate them about self-service touchpoints they can use in the future to avoid having to phone or email the call center.

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