



We Asked, Zappos Answered: Contact Center Metrics, Omni-Channel & Chatbots



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We went one-on-one with Zappos to get a sneak peek into the contact center famous for their customer service.

Huge thank you to Jovahn Bergeron and Rob Siefker at Zappos for their overwhelming kindness and responses to our questions.

The best [Zappos customer service story](#) is the legendary "10 Hour Call." Steven, a Zappos contact center agent, had such a great connection with the customer on the other end of the telephone that they talked for 10 hours. No big deal. Just another day at Zappos.

But if you work in a contact center, you cringe at the thought of a 10-hour call. We all know [Zappos empowers their agents](#) to go above and beyond, but don't they care about [average handle time](#)? Don't they [track metrics](#)?

We were curious, too. In fact, we realized we knew very little about the metrics Zappos tracks. So, we started digging for any article we could find that provided some insight. Nothing we found sufficiently satisfied our curiosity – quite the opposite. It only made us more curious about what Zappos thought regarding a few more topics, mainly omni-channel, and chatbots.

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performance?

We measure all sorts of metrics at a high level, but our front-line employees are only responsible for a few. Attendance, after call work, general adherence (we mainly look at utilization/time spent), customer feedback, and any team specific additional quality process. Ideally, preference is to try to keep this piece as simple as possible for our front-line employees. We're not always perfect on this, but that's my preference.

In general, we're looking at a lot of metrics for the entire contact center operation. Volume, service level, forecasts, costs/investments by team, efficiency metrics, overall handle time, customer feedback, sales, conversion, wrap up code information, product type sold in the contact center, and the list goes on to anything and everything that touches the contact center via a customer contact. We will analyze and look at anything we can measure or start measuring.

To follow up that question, does Zappos ever need to adjust strategy? For example, if there's a significant increase in average hold time, how would Zappos combat that?

The simple answer would be to figure out a way to have more people answer the phone. So, we'd either leverage internal resource or move resources and people around, or we'd hire more people. It's why we constantly evaluate our forecasts, metrics, hiring plans, and attrition. We'll make any and all adjustments necessary to provide the best possible experience in a responsive manner. Hold times happen to contact centers, and we understand that, but we're very focused on meeting our service level goals. For phones, that means we want to answer 80% of calls under 20 seconds. Any miss below 70% of calls answered in under 20 seconds is cause for concern, so we will figure out how we can get to a place where we don't repeat that performance. It doesn't mean that we don't fail from time to time here, but on aggregate, we always perform to our targets. Some days might not be great, but each month and year we will make sure we're meeting our responsiveness promise to customers.

Which customer service channel does Zappos wish more customers would use?

Currently we have email, chat, and phone call contact options but out of those three, we'd prefer to have more people calling in and having that Zappos experience. We only speak to roughly 4% of our customers via phone and we'd love to see that number go up and emails go down. Having a live person to chat with and receive great customer service is a game changer for us here at Zappos.

Any talks about creating a Zappos chatbot?

We'd like to keep our point of contacts as real people. As neat as a chatbot would sound it could ruin the Zappos experience we've worked so hard to build. Imagine trying to get an answer from a customer service rep, and instead, a chatbot takes over and tries to provide that same level of customer service. We believe the chatbot would simply let us down and take away from what it means to have organic engagements with our customers. A chatbot wouldn't hear your dog bark in the background and ask

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totally customer service centric.

We were most surprised that they track so many metrics, but it was clear by the end of the second response that tracking metrics isn't done to maximize profits. They track metrics because they understand that each customer touch-point, no matter how insignificant it may seem, affects the overall customer experience.

Zappos's answers to questions three and four only reinforced what we already know – Zappos craves a connection with their customers. They WANT people to call. So, on the day Steven talked to a customer for 10 hours, only one metric mattered – Steven connected with his customer. Zappos's passion for customer service is real, and it oozed from their responses to every single one of our questions.

And in case you were wondering – yes, as huge fans of Zappos, we were totally geeking out over these answers.

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