

Customer Experience in ITSM

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Background & Methodology

Recent SDI research suggested that customer satisfaction is the most significant indicator of success on the service desk. This could indicate that in the near future, traditional Service Level Agreement (SLA) measures, such as speed to answer, first time fix, number of escalations, and so on, may become obsolete, as Experience Level Agreements (XLAs) and Customer Experience (CX) focused targets become a new approach to measuring more emotional, customer-focused agreements between service desks and their customers. This research will look at whether this is already gaining traction within the industry, and to what extent this is the case, along with how you can leverage CX measures to support your business.

Given that SLA targets are currently the most common way to manage customer expectations and communicate performance to the business, claiming that they may become obsolete as customer satisfaction or CX measures become more valuable to measuring service quality and performance may sound extreme. However, previous SDI research and the data gained from this survey suggests that this statement is not completely irrational.

Between January and March 2018, the Customer Experience survey was sent to a wide variety of service desk professionals, from both public and private sector service desks and a large range of organisation sizes.

Introduction

Arguably, individual customers are largely unconcerned with SLA targets or how well the service desk is performing against them. They are likely to be interested in whether their experience of the service has met or exceeded their expectations; be it whether the analyst they spoke to exhibited excellent customer service skills, whether the self-service portal experience was straight forward and easy to use, or simply that they were kept well informed with the progress of their incident or request through its lifecycle.

Customer satisfaction is not a new concept; it is a very common measure among service desks currently. However, there is a slight difference between this and the customer experience. Customer satisfaction is typically measured by sending surveys to customers to ask if they were satisfied with the service, and perhaps prompt them to give feedback on how the service desk can improve. Focusing on the customer experience is more proactive and aims to build a relationship with the customer to promote loyalty and a positive perception of the support function, as well as keep the customer happy. There are a few ways to measure the customer experience; for example, customer satisfaction surveys can be used in conjunction with communicating with customers themselves to gain an insight into the customers' experience of your service.

Why are we seeing this shift?

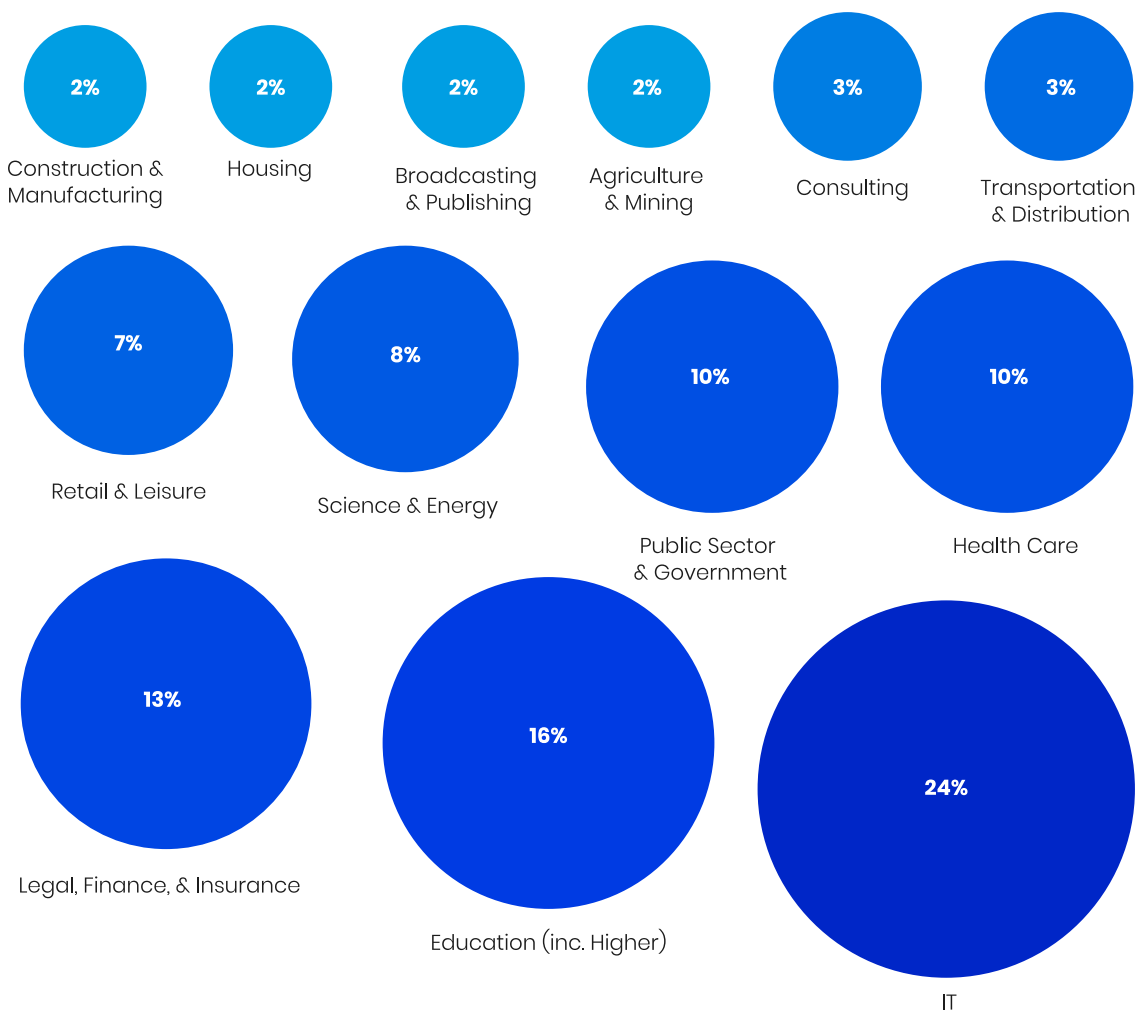
Customer service in the consumer world is evolving rapidly, be it through implementing new products, services, technologies, or even frameworks, all of which are devised to improve the experience customers have when engaging with consumer services. Customers then come to expect similar levels of customer service and a better overall experience of the services they are provided in a working environment. At some point, corporate business IT departments will need to develop their approach to service and use customer feedback to improve the service they provide. When done well, this can elevate the customer experience as a whole, as well as improve the perception and profile of the service desk.

SDI research has found that of the 64% of service desks that feel pressure to provide excellent customer service, 33% felt this pressure derived from customers. So clearly, meeting customer expectations is important and is shaping the way the service desk is changing.

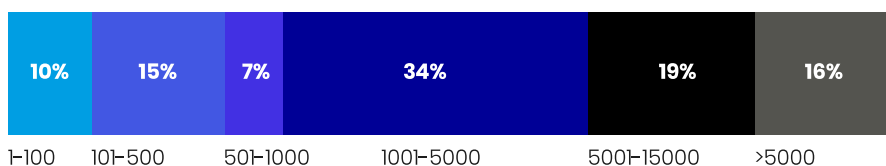
In the near future the traditional SLAs the service desk is familiar with, which could define targets for any metric from call wait times to first time fix rates, may see the shift to a heavier focus on the customer experience. Perhaps merging these two approaches, to measuring service desk performance and quality may become the norm, and as this report suggests, for many it already is.

Respondent Demographics

What industry is your service desk in?

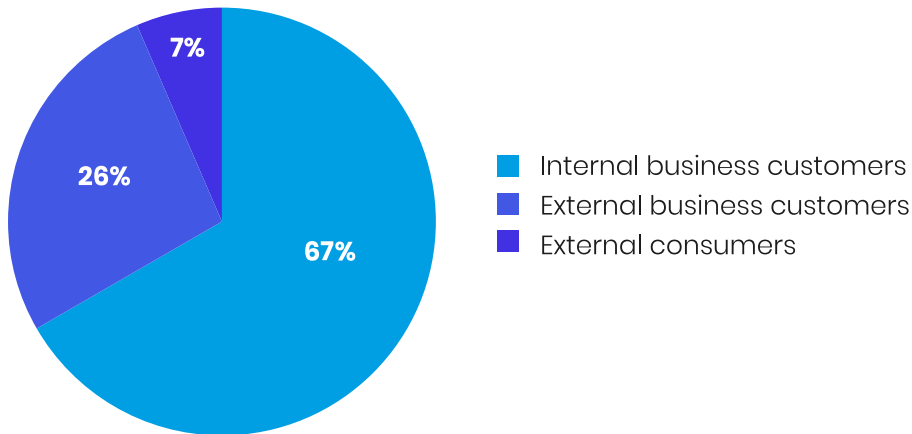


What is the size of your organisation?

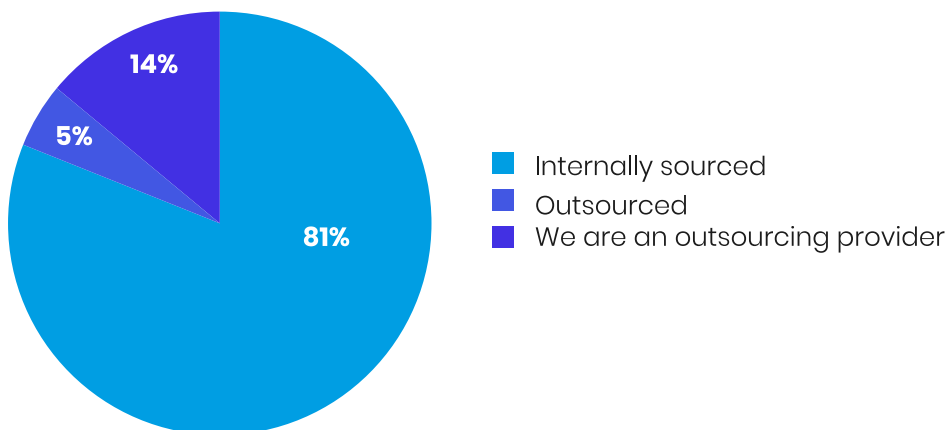


Respondent Demographics

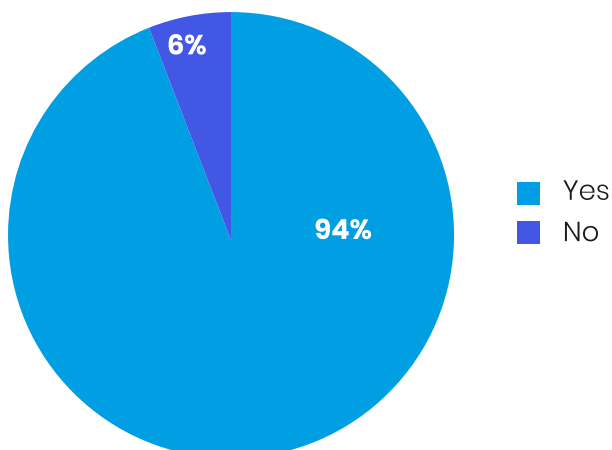
How would you describe your customers?



Is your service desk internally sourced or outsourced?

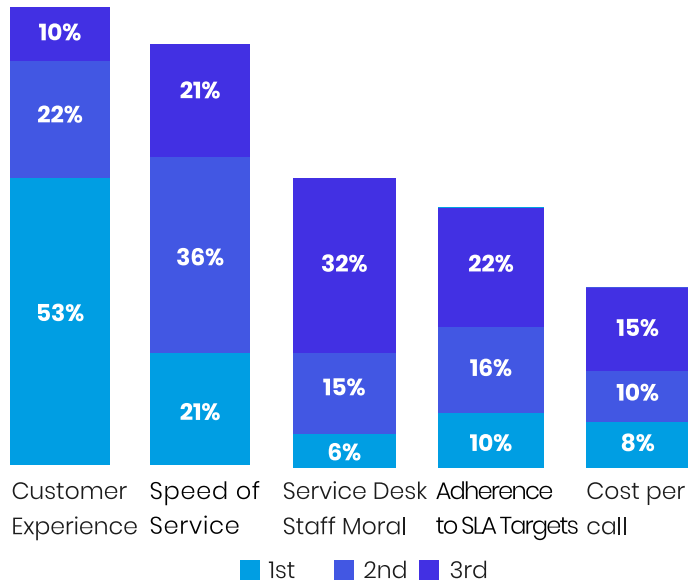


Outsourced: Is an improved Customer Experience a selling point for your service?



The Importance Of Customer Experience

Please rank these in terms of importance to the service desk.



This graph shows how often each option was ranked 1st, 2nd, or 3rd, in terms of importance to the service desk. Positively, Customer experience was ranked as the most important by over half of respondents. Furthermore, it appeared in the top 3 rankings more than any other option. This is an incredibly encouraging sign, as it shows that service desk professionals see the customer experience as an important part of their service.

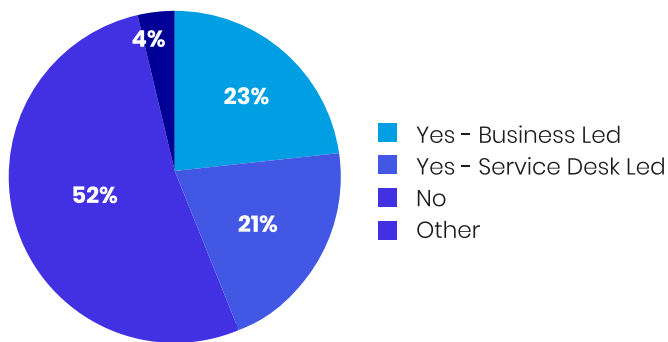
Speed of service was the second most common option to be ranked highest and took the biggest majority of placing 2nd in importance. Focusing on the speed of service can be a double-edged sword for service desks. On the one hand, a service which is fast and efficient can facilitate a good customer experience, among other things. However, if there is too much of a focus on the speed of service, analysts may feel the need to increase their availability by reducing call duration, therefore doing less diagnostic work, and potentially escalating work unnecessarily. It may also signify that analysts do not spend ample time ensuring their customers are satisfied and can make the service feel rushed and impersonal. This can, of course, have a detrimental effect on the customer experience.

Service desk staff morale was ranked most important the least out of these categories, but by virtue of being ranked 3rd by 32% of respondents, it has placed 3rd overall. If service desk staff are not happy with their work environment, other things that impact delivering an excellent service may be affected by their mood. Therefore, a happy, motivated team will potentially be more effective in successfully achieving any service targets. Furthermore, happy and satisfied employees can lead to a better customer experience and create a positive perception of service.

The premise of this paper was to test the hypothesis that the industry is moving away from traditional SLAs towards more customer focused targets. Adherence to SLA targets was noted as the most important option to only 10% of respondents, showing a 43% difference between this group and the majority who ranked the customer experience as the most important option. Additionally, this category placed 4th overall, which further supports the hypothesis that traditional SLAs are becoming less significant in the industry.

The cost per call was ranked as the most important by only 8% of respondents and was highlighted in the top 3 by 33% of respondents. Balancing the cost, experience, quality, and efficiency of a service can be difficult. Placing too much focus on the cost per call can have a detrimental impact on other areas of the service, such as quality; too low a cost per call, could signify that the experience of the service is poor as, for example, the average handling time could be too low as per the needs of a technical call, signifying analysts are not taking enough time to diagnose and resolve issues. Therefore, it is encouraging to see that out of these 5 categories, cost per call placed 5th, as it shows that service desk professionals are more concerned with about the experience of the service for the customer than the pressure of cost control. However, a balance of service and cost is a significant factor to bear in mind for any organisation. Good service can come at a cost, but as long as the relevant financial implications are understood, then cost should not determine the level of customer experience delivered by any organisation.

Have these priorities changed in the last 12 months?

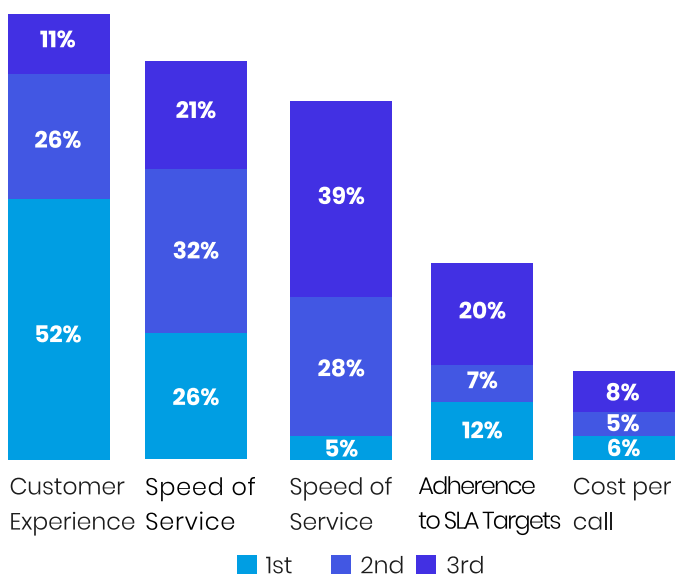


When asked whether these priorities had changed in the last 12 months, 44% of respondents highlighted they had, with 48% of these respondents' changes being led by the service desk. As a customer-facing business function, the service desk should be concerned with the customer experience, so it is encouraging to see that a proportion of the industry is involved in a shift towards a more customer-centric focus.

Within the "Other" category, some respondents identified that change derived from the customers themselves. This could be due to customers communicating their frustrations to the service desk and working holistically to shape how the service desk delivers the service in an effective and valuable way. Some highlighted that the change was a collaborative effort between the service desk and the business. This is indicative of an organisation where the business, IT, and the service desk are not siloed or considered separate entities, and the support function is a valued part of the business.

The largest proportion, 52% of respondents, specified that their service desk's priorities had not changed in the past 12 months. Upon further analysis of the data, it would appear that around half of this portion of respondents ranked Customer Experience as their top priority, which would suggest that their service has been customer-focused for a longer period of time. Upon further analysis of the data, of the 48% of respondents who highlighted their service desk's priorities had changed, over half of responses indicated Customer Experience as the top priority. This is an encouraging sign that the industry is shifting, and will continue to shift, towards a more customer-focused approach to service delivery.

Please rank these in terms of importance to your organisation.

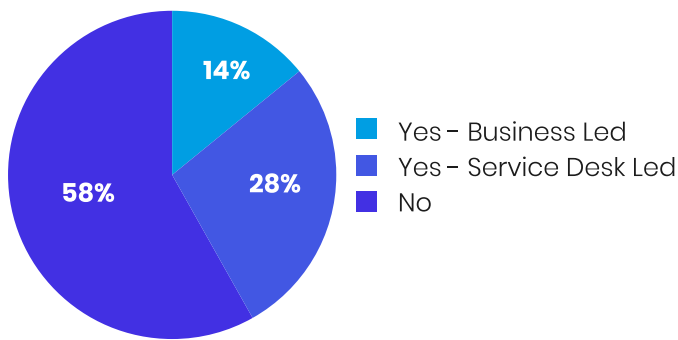


As this survey was answered by service desk professionals, this graph represents their thoughts on their organisation's priorities, so may not be entirely representative of the actual business. That being said, as an important business function, service desk professionals should be somewhat aware of their organisation's priorities.

When compared with the priorities of the service desk, those of the business shows little difference. Interestingly, the morale of service desk staff was ranked above the speed of service in terms of importance. With 26% more respondents identifying that service desk staff morale as a top 3 priority for the organisation, it is clear that the speed of service is not as important to the business as the people providing that service.

Similarly, over 80% of respondents highlighted that the customer experience is a priority for the organisation, with over half placing it as most important. In contrast, adherence to SLA targets was pinpointed as a top 3 priority by only 39% of respondents, which could suggest that even organisations are not entirely committed to traditional SLAs, despite it being an agreement which provides service definition and guidelines for the expected service their employees should receive.

Have these priorities changed in the last 12 months?

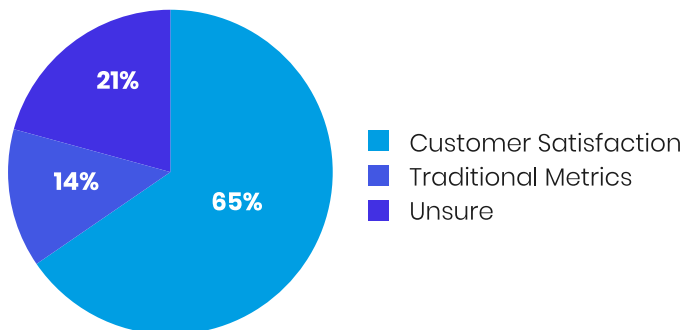


A slightly larger proportion of respondents highlighted that their organisation's priorities have not changed in the last 12 months. Compared to the 52% of service desks whose priorities had not changed, a smaller proportion of the businesses' top priority was Customer Experience, suggesting that the service desk is more concerned with their customers than businesses are with their employees.

Further analysis of the data showed that of the service desks whose priorities had changed in the past 12 months, yet their businesses' priorities had not, almost all of the businesses' top priority was Customer Experience, so it would appear that the service desk moved to align itself with the rest of the business.

28% of respondents highlighted that any change was led by the service desk. This suggests that the service desk has an influence on aspects of the business, which is interesting to note, as it may signify a break in the familiar trope that sets the service desk and the business as separate entities, when in actuality, they should work holistically to provide an excellent service to the business employees.

Do you find more value in Customer Satisfaction measures or traditional metrics, i.e. first-time fix?

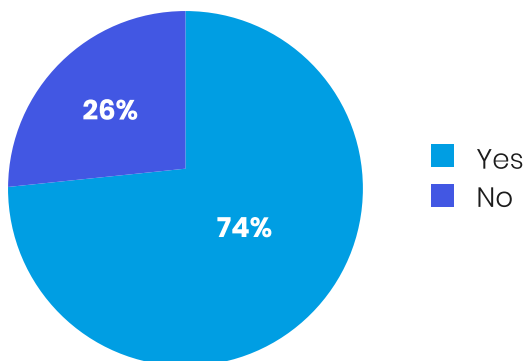


65% of respondents highlighted that they find more value in customer satisfaction measures in comparison to traditional measures. Customers can provide an excellent insight into your service; for example, if customer feedback specifies that it takes too long for their calls to be answered, this may signify that the service desk should review their staffing, or perhaps consider offering an alternative support channel or raise awareness of existing alternatives.

Only 14% of respondents specified that they find traditional metrics more valuable. While traditional metrics, such as first-time fix, speed to answer, and resolution time, can also give you an insight into your service desk potentially allow you to pinpoint areas for improvement, using customer satisfaction measures can allow you to identify these sooner. Following up on low survey feedback and starting a dialogue with disgruntled customers can highlight the areas your customers want to see improvements in, whilst making the customer feel valued, which can improve the customer experience as well the perception of the service desk.

SLAs to XLAs

Do you have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with your customers/organisation?

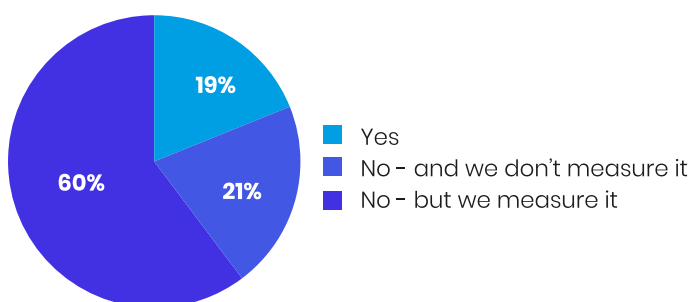


Nearly three quarters of the industry have an SLA. By definition, an SLA is an agreement between the customer and the service provider which documents the responsibilities of both parties, as well as a number of other pieces of useful information; from the types and quality of services provided, to the levels of service expected, to scheduled maintenance for IT services.

SLAs can be beneficial for service desks, as they can act as a way to manage customer expectations and provide clarity for both parties. However, there are some areas where SLAs tend to be lacking; for example, the targets set are not verified as achievable prior to agreeing them, which can mean that the targets are too aspirational and can set customer expectations too high, thus resulting in a poor customer experience.

Furthermore, it does not pinpoint the criteria for monitoring, measuring, and reporting against these targets, therefore if measuring is undertaken in a way which benefits the service desk, this can skew the reality of performance. An example of this could be if a service desk analyst closes a ticket before it is resolved in order to meet the SLA target, when in reality the incident has not been fixed. The obvious issue with this is that targets drive behaviours, and analysts may be more concerned with performance metrics than the customer experience.

Does your SLA include Customer Satisfaction?

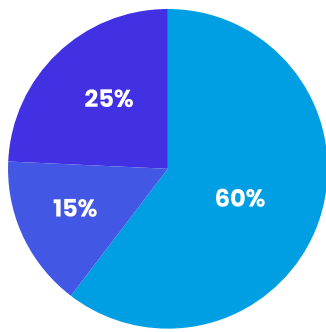


Interestingly, over 80% of respondents identified that their SLAs do not include customer satisfaction measures. We have already defined that SLAs are an agreement between the service desk and its customers, so it is intriguing that such a low proportion of service desks guarantee a certain level of customer satisfaction. It is positive to note, however, that 60% of respondents highlighted that while there is no specified SLA target, they do still measure customer satisfaction.

Traditional metrics can capture a service desks performance, and this can indeed be measured against targets. However, failing to measure customer satisfaction is a massive oversight. Even if all measures and reports indicate a that the service desk is performing well, if customers are not happy with the service then this can lead to problems with matters, such as; perception of the service desk, customer advocacy, business relations, and where applicable, adoption of new support channels.

At some point, we need to question whether customers are actually concerned with whether their call wait time breaches the SLA target, or if it takes longer than the SLA target to open a ticket for resolution. We should consider whether customers are more interested in the overall experience of the service; if an SLA target is too aspirational, or there is a surge of traffic to the service desk, it is likely that call wait times will breach an SLA target. Similarly, if the service desk is understaffed or spending too much time firefighting, it may take longer to open a ticket for resolution. However, in these instances, if an analyst exhibits excellent customer service skills, shows care by keeping the customer updated with the progress of their incident or service request, or recovers the situation effectively and creatively, the customers overall experience of the service may meet or even exceed their expectations.

Have you noticed a shift of focus towards monitoring Customer Experience over/alongside SLAs?



- Yes - and my service desk is focusing more on it
- Yes - within the industry but not on my service desk
- No - I have not noticed a shift

Three quarters of respondents highlighted they have seen a shift within the industry towards more customer-centric measures, with the majority specifying that their own service desk is focusing more on this.

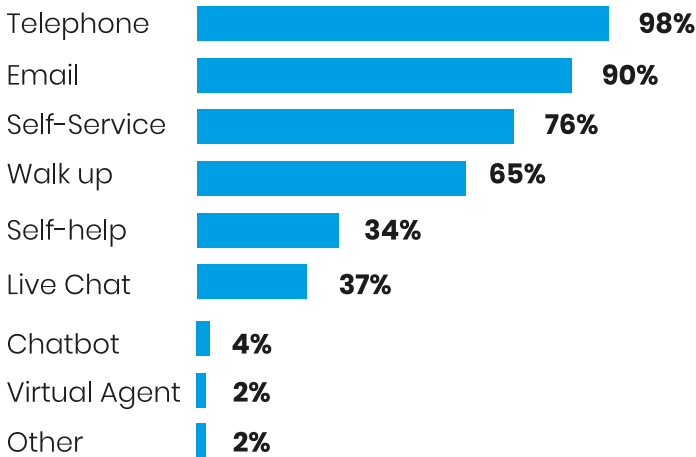
It is interesting to see that 15% of respondents specified that their service desk is not moving with the shift; we have previously noted the benefits that aligning the service desk closer with Customer Experience measures over SLA targets could have, yet there is still a considerable proportion of the industry that believe that traditional metrics are a better representation of the service desks performance.

Some industry professionals argue that there is a disparity between what the customer wants and what the business wants; the business requires more traditional metric reports to understand the performance of the service desk beyond how happy business employees are. Therefore, it is crucial to understand your business' needs, as every organisation is different.

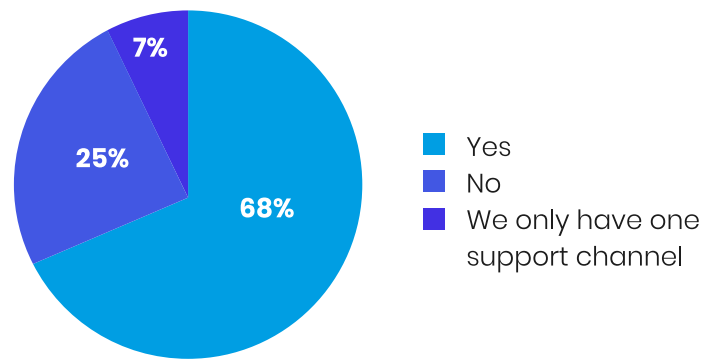
This data shows that there is a noticeable shift in the industry, but as with every trend, it hits different areas of the industry at different times. While some organisations are clearly working holistically to provide a better Customer Experience through the service provided by the support function, others are struggling to find the resources and time to even measure customer satisfaction. However, it is likely that as time goes on, the shift towards more customer-centric agreements between the service desk and the business will be more apparent and potentially more commonplace.

Currently Measuring

Which support channels do you use?



Do you use the same method and process to measure Customer Satisfaction?



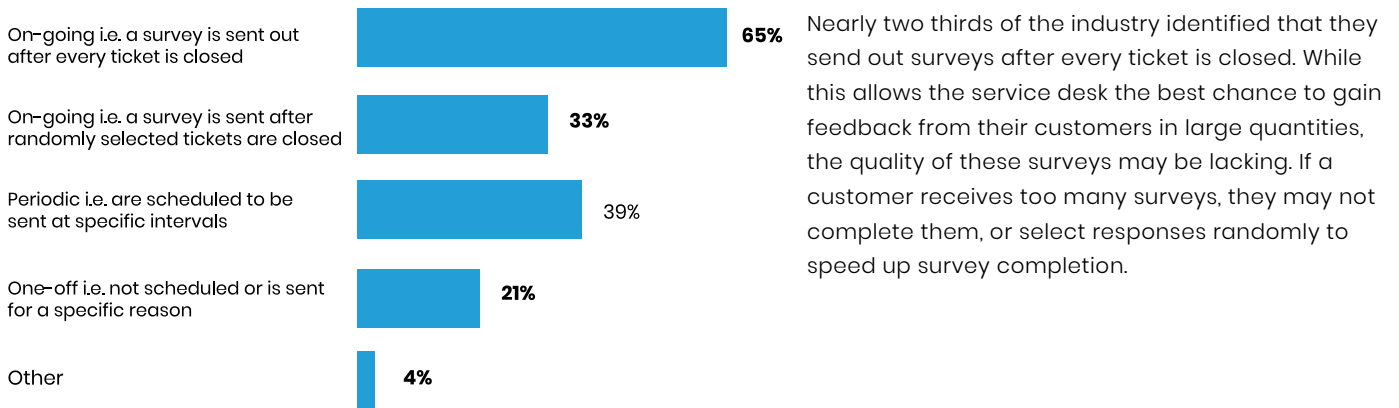
Despite a large amount of attention within the industry being placed on new and developing technologies, nearly all respondents specified that they use telephones as a support channel. Alternatives such as self-service, live chat, and chatbots trail behind at 76%, 27%, and 2% respectively.

If feedback surveys for alternative support channels are not sent, or completions rates are low, it can be difficult to gauge a customer's experience with the channel, particularly if there is no need for direct human interaction with the customer. However, it is important to understand the customer experience when using these channels, as it may enable you to identify if there are pain points which can be resolved. This can improve the customer experience and ensure customers feel valued. It can also help with the adoption rates of alternative channels, as working with customers and tailoring the interface or process to better suit them can increase the awareness of the channel, particularly if you promote the updates, and it resolves the reasons why customers avoid the channel.

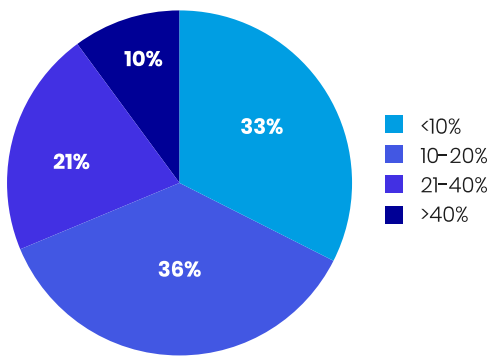
There can be positives and negatives to using the same method to measure customer satisfaction across multiple support channels. Nearly 70% of respondents highlighted that they use the same method, and while this allows for direct comparison with other channels, it may not give an accurate depiction of each channel's unique features. This could signify that there are aspects which cause customers issues but are not covered in a generic customer satisfaction survey.

The culture of shift left which is prevalent in the industry signifies that there is and will continue to be less and less direct contact between the customer and a service desk analyst through developing a more self-serving customer community. It is vital to ensure that there are adequate procedures in place to monitor the customer experience of alternative support channels.

What type of surveys do you use to survey customers?



What is the average response rate to Customer Satisfaction surveys?



Some respondents highlighted that they use two or more types of surveys. Periodic customer satisfaction surveys, also known as annual surveys, are a good way to evaluate overall customer satisfaction levels with products and services, and to identify any changes to services, processes, or products that customers feel would better meet their requirements. However, their generally lengthier nature can lead to a poor response rate. Therefore, it is important to develop a comprehensive customer experience programme as it is useful to trend customer satisfaction between periodic surveys.

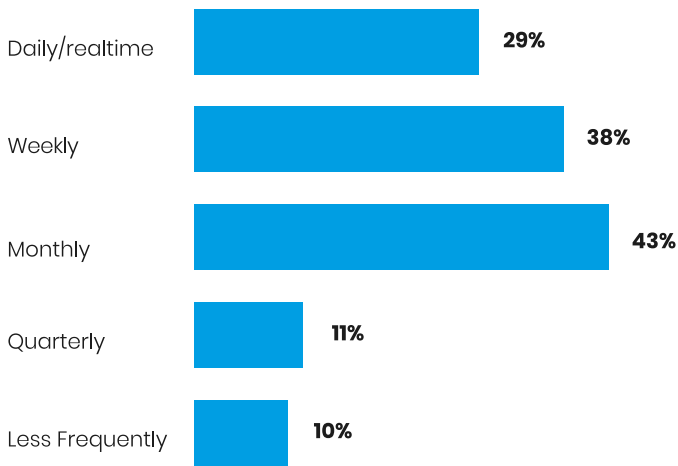
21% of respondents highlighted that they use one-off surveys. These can be especially useful to gauge customer satisfaction after a change to a product or service, particularly if the change was prompted by customer feedback.

Using a blend of these surveys and engaging with customer feedback can stand you in good stead to evaluate the overall customer experience of the service, and potentially understand the perception of the service desk. If necessary, this can then allow you to work towards improving these factors and use survey responses to monitor progress.

Anecdotally, customers only fill out a satisfaction survey if they've had either a very negative or a very positive experience, which may not be an accurate representation of the typical experience of most customers. Therefore, service desks need to find a way to influence customers to fill out surveys under normal circumstances, whether this be by using a different method to capture responses or incentivising survey completions.

69% of respondents highlighted that the average response rate to surveys is 20% or less, with almost half of this group obtaining less than a 10% response rate. Depending on the size of the organisation, it could be argued that 10% is not a large enough proportion of the customer base to give you an accurate representation of the experience had by all customers. Obtaining up to a 20% response rate is certainly an improvement on this, but the 31% of respondents who are achieving 21% or more are likely to have a better insight into their customers' experience of the service and a better understanding of the perception of their service desk.

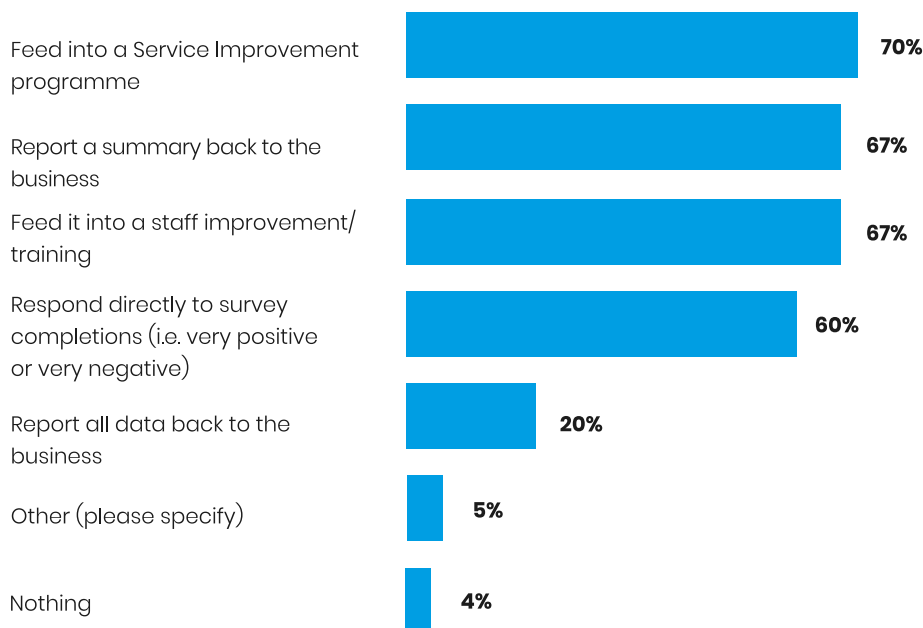
How often is feedback reviewed and analysed?



It is important to regularly review and analyse feedback gained from customer satisfaction surveys; this feedback can give you invaluable insight into the customer experience, as well as if and where they are having issues with the service. Failing to regularly review this data could mean that constructive and useful feedback or suggestions are being missed, and this could signify that customers feel that their voices are not being heard, which may inhibit them from completing customer satisfaction surveys in the future. Apart from reviewing periodic or annual surveys, which should be reviewed regularly in-line with the frequency of the surveys, SDI recommends that you should review customer feedback on a monthly basis at the very minimum, particularly if surveys are sent out after every ticket is closed. Among other factors, longer review cycles may make it more difficult to pinpoint the cause of a dip or peak in customer satisfaction scores.

On the other hand, it is necessary to balance review cycles with what is achievable for your service desk, particularly if the data is reported back to various stakeholders. Nearly half of respondents identified that they review feedback gained from surveys monthly, and 38% specified they do so weekly. Interesting, 29% of respondents highlighted that they review and analyse survey feedback daily or in real-time. This is beneficial if it is necessary to follow up on negative feedback, or to see if a change to a service or product has had an impact on customer satisfaction. If the service desk is able to, and benefits from reviewing feedback this often, then there may be tangible benefits in doing so; for example, if a customer's feedback points out an area for improvement, and the service desk can implement this, they can revert to the customer and inform them that their feedback has been taken into consideration. This will then contribute to the customer's perception of the service desk and potentially make them feel valued. However, many service desks struggle with firefighting or a lack of resources, therefore reviewing and analysing data weekly or monthly may be the most achievable length of time between review cycles.

What do you do with this data?



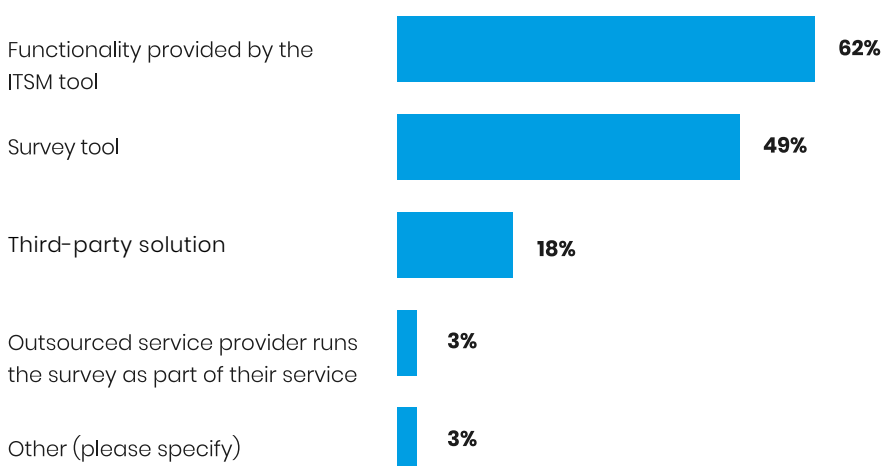
Reviewing and analysing feedback surveys at any interval is almost valueless if nothing is done with the data gained from surveys. 70% of respondents highlighted that they feed the data into a service improvement programme. Throughout this report, the benefit of customer feedback in pinpointing areas for improvement have been repeated. Therefore, it is promising to see that a large majority of the industry recognise the value of customers' opinions and experiences in improvement initiatives.

Reporting the data back to the business, be it a summary or the complete data set, specified by 67% and 20% of respondent respectively, can demonstrate the value of the service desk to the business and potentially act as a basis for a business case when attempting to gain buy-in for new projects.

Customer feedback may highlight issues with service desk staff, so it may be necessary to use this data to feed into staff training programmes. 67% of respondents specified that this is exactly what they do with the data gained from customer satisfaction surveys.

Previously, we have alluded to the fact that a benefit of satisfaction surveys is the ability to address specific responses, which can be particularly beneficial for dealing with disgruntled customers who have given exceptionally negative feedback. 60% of respondents highlighted that they respond directly to significant completions, and this can help to improve the customer experience and demonstrate to the customer that the service desk cares about their experience.

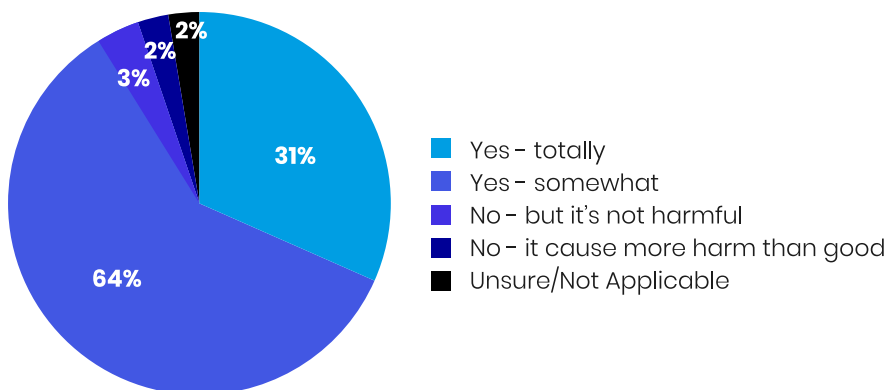
What platform are you using for measuring Customer Satisfaction?



There are several methods service desks can use to measure customer satisfaction, but the majority, according to this data, use the functionality provided by their ITSM tool. The benefits of using in-built functionality is that reporting and gathering data can be exponentially easier than some other methods.

Nearly half of respondents specified that they use a survey tool, and 18% use a third-party solution. Each of these will have their own processes for gathering data, though reporting may require more input from the service desk manager or team leader.

Do you trust data gained from Customer Satisfaction surveys?



Promisingly, an overwhelming majority of respondents trust the data gained from their customer satisfaction surveys, with 31% trusting it implicitly. It's important that you trust survey responses, as it signifies that the data is valuable and can be used in improvement initiatives and trending over a period of time.

Only 3% of respondents specified that they do not trust the data gained from customer satisfaction surveys, but they do not find it harmful. Encouragingly, no respondents highlighted that they find that the survey responses cause more harm than good.

What could you do to improve your level of trust?

For this question, we asked respondents to provide ideas on how they could improve their trust. Two common themes revolved around engaging with the customers more, to either build relationships or improve their understanding of the customer feedback process, and reviewing the actual survey process itself, be it the rating system, the type of survey, or the method.

Some suggestions include:

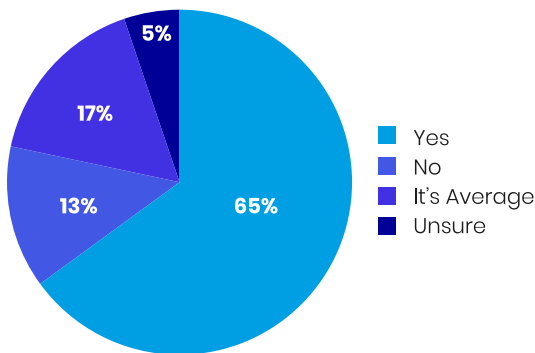
“Education and more communication about what we do with the results for the users.”

“Improve how ratings are described as users constantly mis-select answers.”

“Be even closer to the customer and ensure sentiment is understood.”

“We should seek feedback through more channels rather than relying on one only, in order to obtain a more complete picture of how we’re doing.”

Do you believe that your Customer Experience is above average?



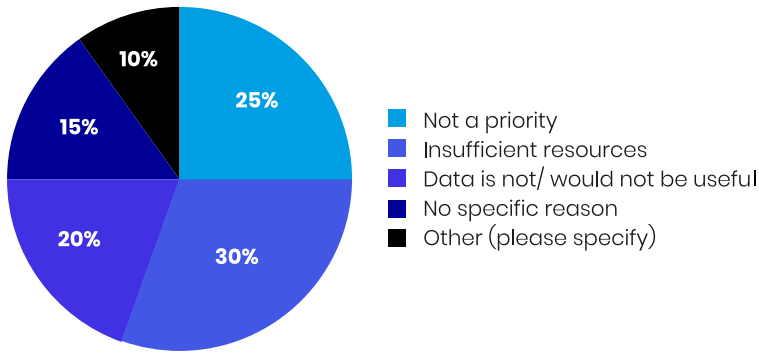
The customer experience can be monitored in a number of ways; customer satisfaction surveys, engaging with customers, and asking for feedback from the business to name a few. An “average” is always subject to interpretation, for example it could be an industry average, an organisation-wide average, or an average against the service desk’s previous performance.

65% of respondents believe that their Customer Experience is above average; if the feedback from customers and the business confirms that their experience is meeting or exceeding their expectations, and the perception of the service desk is good, it is reasonable to assume that the customer experience is above average.

17% of respondents highlighted that their CX is average, and 13% believe it to be below average. There are several ways service desks can improve the customer experience, from involving customers in improvement initiatives to training staff in customer service to using customer advocates to review changes or implementations before they are rolled out.

Currently Not Measuring

Is there a specific reason your service desk does not measure Customer Satisfaction?

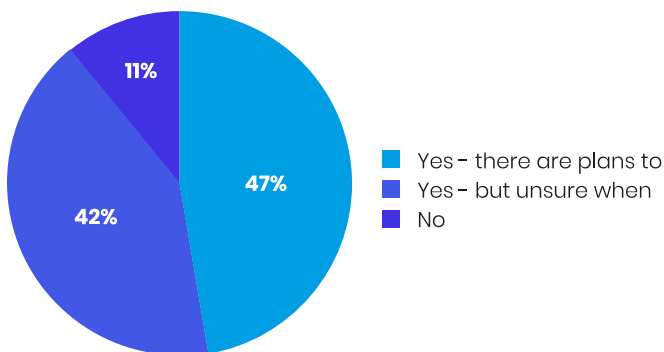


Turning to the 21% of respondents who identified that their service desk does not measure customer satisfaction, it is important to understand the reasons behind this. The largest portion, 30%, specified that they do not measure customer satisfaction due to insufficient resources. We have already established that a significant proportion of service desks spend the majority of their time firefighting, which can signify that their team lacks time and staff to review and analyse customer feedback.

The next largest group highlighted that customer satisfaction is not a priority for their desk. Certainly, if other areas of service are underperforming, the main priority should be to improve those areas. However, providing an adequate service will already have some impact on the customer experience, and working with customers and the business to improve the service can improve CX alongside this.

20% highlighted that they would not find the data useful; whether this is due to a low completion rate or a lack of process surrounding what the data is used for, customer feedback can provide insight into the service and potentially what can be done to improve it. There are steps which can be taken to improve completion rates, and certain best practice frameworks detail what can be done with feedback, which may be a good place to start if the service desk is uncertain how best to use the data.

Do you think that your service desk will begin measuring Customer Satisfaction in the near future?



Promisingly, nearly 90% of respondents highlighted that their service desk will begin measure customer satisfaction in the near future, with 52% of them specifying that there are plans to do so. Throughout this report, we have seen the benefits that measuring and improving the customer experience can have. Therefore, it is incredibly encouraging to note that the proportion of service desks who do not measure customer satisfaction will diminish in the near future. This supports the idea that the shift towards service desks becoming more customer-focused will continue and gain traction as time goes on.

Industry Commentary

We asked respondents if they had any final thoughts or comments on how they see Customer Experience measurement compared to traditional SLA measures; the responses were very positive, and many supported the idea that CX can be more valuable to the service desk and the business than traditional SLA measures.

Many industry professionals noted the importance of earning and maintain a good customer perception, and that CX measures are better for gauging the value and success of your service.

“Customer satisfaction is the most important thing. If a customer is happy overall but accepts that from time to time an SLA may be breached, they are far more likely to invest in a long-term relationship.”

Others noted that SLAs are still necessary for monitoring the performance of the service desk and are more pertinent to business and management stakeholders, but CX is essential for understanding whether the work the service desk does is meaningful and appreciated by customers.

“SLAs are just business numbers that mean nothing to end users. Measurements need to mean something for the customer and at the end of the day Service Management is about delivering good customer service and that can only be measured by the customers satisfaction.”

Even respondents who specified that their team currently focuses more on traditional measures stated that CX is a good indicator as to whether the service you are providing is right for the customer.

“We have focused on numbers whilst setting up the new team but see customer experience as the most important; it is the measure that tells you if you have it right and how to keep moving forwards to delight your customers.”

At the beginning of this report, it was noted that part of the reason for this shift can be explained by the rapid evolution of customer service in the consumer world, with corporations like Amazon and John Lewis, and the experience customers have with this in their personal lives. This then signifies that they bring this expectation of an elevated service experience to their work life, and corporate IT departments need to work with customers to define and deliver a level of service quality that is achievable, consistent, and meets or exceeds customer expectations. This point was reiterated by some respondents.

“Performing to an SLA target is not good enough in this digital age. Customers expect the service they receive in other areas of their lives and expect the experience to be one of simplicity, always available, and fulfilling their needs at the time. Those things keep customers coming back, not just performing to the targets.”

Some less positive comments noted that customer experience measures are too subjective, and that customer expectations are unreasonable. However, as other responses have shown, it can be beneficial to balance traditional measures, such as speed to answer, first time fix, number of escalations, and so on, with CX measures to gain a more overarching view of how your service desk is performing as well as how your customers find the service and whether they are happy. Furthermore, if customer expectations are too high, there may be an issue with the targets set within an SLA, which may signify that service desk management needs to reassess what the support function is capable of achieving.

Conclusion

The outcome of this research has shown that the service desk industry is aware that change is on the horizon. The service desks who are already working with customers and finding value in measuring and improving the customer experience are prepared for and, to some extent, facilitating this change. Those who have recognised that there is a shift happening in the industry but are currently not making changes to adapt to it may find themselves falling behind in this fast-paced industry. It is encouraging to see that over 50% of service desks consider Customer Experience to be a top priority, and the lower ranking of adherence to SLA targets further supports the hypothesis that the industry is shifting away from traditional SLAs. Part of becoming more mindful of the customer experience includes communicating with customers past analysing survey feedback, and actively asking customers how the service could better suit their needs and making necessary changes to improve their experience of the service.

Nearly every respondent specified that they use the data they gain from feedback surveys, and a good proportion feed it into improvement processes. This will undoubtedly benefit the customers, as the service desk is making changes to better their experience and it shows that the service desk values their opinions, and it also benefits the service desk as it could make their service and processes more efficient and potentially improve the perception of the support function.

Overall, this research confirms that Customer Experience is becoming a more prevalent measure of service desk success within the industry. Service desk professionals are working with customers and using their feedback and suggestions to improve their service, and this trend will only continue as time goes on. Past the interpretation of this data, comments from industry professionals also supports this claim, with a number of professionals confirming that Customer Experience is measures are significantly more effective for understanding the value and success of a service.

HappySignals is proud to have sponsored this survey. The survey supports and underscores the conclusions we ourselves have reached over the last two years. During that time, it has become increasingly clear that, intellectually and emotionally, a change has already taken place, but that the actions that should stem from that change are still lagging one to two years behind.

About HappySignals

HappySignals shifts businesses' internal-services focus towards employee experience by measuring and analysing employee happiness and productivity.

Finding the right balance between service costs, lost worktime and employee satisfaction means happier people and a healthier bottom line.

HappySignals can integrate with any ITSM-tool to deliver high response rates and easy-to-analyse results and benchmarks.

A Powerful Need for Change

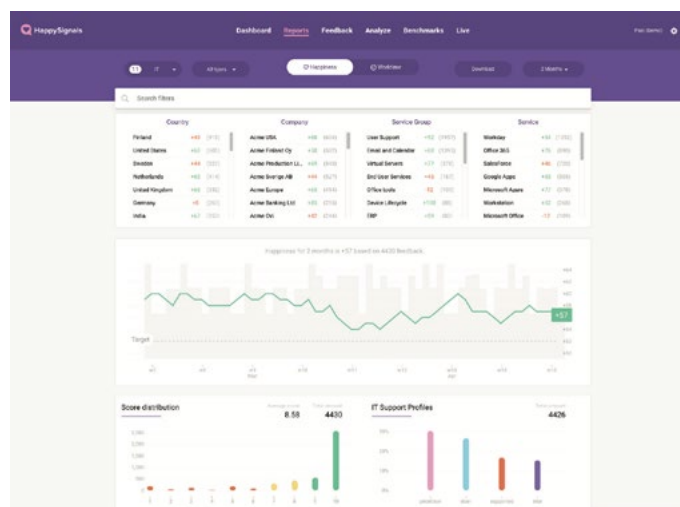
At HappySignals our mission is to support and drive this change towards providing employees with better services. We want Service Desks and Service Management to focus both on the employee/customer experience and also on the total cost of incidents and requests. Our key point is simple but important; for too long the sector has limited itself to optimising the internal efficiency of IT without taking in consideration employees' lost productivity. In HappySignals estimation the total cost of an incident is the IT/ticket cost + the lost productivity. Our product measures both this lost productivity and employee satisfaction. According to our global benchmark data Happiness Score™, on average enterprises lose 3h17minutes per incident!

Why HappySignals?

HappySignals is an easy way to start measuring employee/customer experience and to turn that valuable feedback into equally valuable actions. Our tool integrates easily to any modern ticketing system.

Try our demo:

<https://happysignals.com/try>



Our approach is to make what we offer 'easy and actionable'; easy for employees to answer, easy for Service Desks and Service Managers to analyse, and easy for decision makers to translate into action!

HappySignals offers numerous benefits:

- 1) An average response rate of 40%
- 2) Ready-made surveys designed with the help of hundreds of regular employees from dozens of different sectors.
- 3) Easy integration with leading Service Desk tools like ServiceNow, BMC, JIRA, Cherwell.
- 4) Benchmarking data - compare your performance profile to that of others; overall, by country and by channel.
- 5) Measures lost productivity across your business.

Service Experience is the new SLA - Insights from the SDI report.

Our Head of Product, Pasi Nikkanen, has looked into the data in further detail and has produced an additional analysis that you can download from our website:

<https://happysignals.com/service-experience-new-sla/>

About SDI

The SDI company mission is to inspire service desks to be brilliant. To achieve this mission SDI has developed a set of goals by which it aims to inspire service desks to:

Embrace:

To raise the quality of service delivery by valuing best practice

Engage:

To create an inspiring and engaging customer experience

Invest:

To empower their teams to be inspired, take action and be better

Shine:

To demonstrate and deliver exceptional business value

SDI sets the globally recognised best practice service desk standards that provide clear and measurable benchmarks for service desk operations and professionals. The standards are designed to encourage service desks to embrace and value best practice in order to raise the quality of service delivery.

For more information about SDI please visit www.servicedesk institute.com