

What's your most important customer service standard?

When we asked, “What is the most important or unique customer service standard that your organization has established?” as part of our recent *Customer Service Newsletter Service Standards & Benchmarking Survey*, participants had a variety of responses from the practical to the philosophical.

Some companies are just exploring different options that might work for their organizations. Some have indeed taken first-call resolution as their service mantra. Others pride themselves on keeping customer service “live.” However, most of our respondents suggest that their goal is to keep the customer first in their minds, whether that’s expressed as a higher-level service mission or as observable behavior on the frontline.

What’s your most important or unique service standard? Here’s how some of the companies participating in our survey responded:

- “We’re looking for more ways to measure productivity in a non-call center/inside account management environment. On-time delivery is our only formal measure to date.”
- “Twenty-five percent of calls monitored each week are cross-referenced with account notes and action taken to ensure quality standards.”
- “We look at overall customer satisfaction, which is done through outbound surveys to customers within 30 days of initial contact with the company. This is the only standard used throughout the company to gauge customer satisfaction.”

- “Our most important goal is schedule adherence. Second would be courtesy and first-call resolution as measured through our monitoring system.”

- “We aim to handle 80 percent of our calls in 30 seconds or less.”

- “We have a switchboard operator. In our current times, with so many poorly designed telephone menus — with options missing and no ‘out’ option — we pride ourselves on the fact that our members and customers receive a live person to assist them.”

- “This isn’t exactly a standard, but we have increased the training provided to call center reps on various customer service issues.”

- “Answer delay, call count, and handle time are our most important standards.”

- “We have a live voice on every customer contact. We do not use automated telephone services to route our calls unless it’s after business hours. Therefore, all of our customers reach someone who can help them on call one.”

- “Our most important metric is first-call resolution.”

- “Our goal is ‘responsible freedom’ — we teach reps how far to go

with a client to keep them happy and how to keep the bottom line.”

- “We want to provide proactive, competent, and friendly customer service — and we track this through call monitoring and our customer retention rate.”

- “What’s important is keeping a smile in your voice when speaking with a customer, and also resolving their issue as quickly as possible.”

- “We are a hospitality company and we measure customer feedback at every touchpoint — onboarding (during the welcome process), reservation confirmation, and through post-visit feedback.”

- “Our most important goals right now are to reduce the transfer rate and improve our first-call resolution.”

- “We started to take phone orders last April, so we are measuring the number of orders taken by phone. For every order that is entered, the agent must indicate the sales origin of the order — i.e., was it taken by fax, phone, email, etc. Once a week, we pull the stats to see how we are doing.”

- “We use call quality monitoring to ensure that reps are giving correct information and treating the

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client as if he or she were our only client.”

- “Each time a new accident claim is reported, the rep is required to ask the caller if they are OK. The purpose is to express our concern for the individual who has been involved in an auto accident or incident of some kind.”

- “Our firm measures client satisfaction. Our goal is to have 92 percent of our customers report that they are Satisfied or Very Satisfied, with 5 percent or less indicating that they are Dissatisfied.”

- “All contacts are responded to within 24 hours of initial contact. Most are responded to within 8 business hours.”

- “My organization tries its best to make sure that customer complaints or inquiries are dealt with during the first contact.”

- “The most important standard for us is the percentage of calls resolved by support — rather than having to be escalated — and first contact resolution.”

- “Satisfaction is assured through audits and follow-up contacts with customers. We are a one-stop shop.”

- “Call answer speed is our most important measure. If we don’t answer quickly enough, more customers will hang up and we lose the ability to help them in a timely manner.”

- “Our goal is to create one measure that we can report to senior management. Right now it is that

98 percent of our customers receive service that is ‘Satisfactory’ or better.”

- “We use an ‘efficiency rate’ that determines how much of the day the rep was on the phone or available to take a call.”

- “We pride ourselves on providing exceptional service to every customer and are driven to hit monthly sales targets. We have a unique concept that all sales and service managers sit together with the customer service team. It’s a very dynamic environment.”

- “We aim for first-call resolution in under 3 minutes for phone calls and under three hours for emails during normal business hours.”

- “Our goal is to have our phones answered by real people.”

- “We have ‘net promoter’ scores tied to work teams.”

- “We have a set of values in place and pride ourselves on having ‘fast, friendly, and effective service’ and having our customers walk away feeling great about our organization.”

- “Our goal is to have customer service reps handle the first call quickly, efficiently, and promptly, without transfer, thereby exceeding customer expectations.”

- “In order of importance, our most important standards are abandoned call rate, number of calls handled, and number of errors per rep.”

- “We conduct regular customer and sales surveys to assure quality of customer service.”

- “Our group has instituted cus-

tomers service upselling and cross-selling goals.”

- In addition to individual performance, all staff is evaluated on behavior competencies including the following criteria: 1) performance management, 2) customer service, 3) effective communications, 4) technology and tools, 5) well workplace.”

- “90 percent of calls should be answered within 30 seconds.”

- “Call quality is the most important standard. If the rep services the customer in the appropriate manner, it will reduce call-backs to the service center and the customer will remain happy.”

- “Orders received are to be processed the day they are received. All phone calls and emails received need to be responded to within 2 hours.”

- “We have established a ‘Going Above and Beyond’ recognition program for the entire company — not just employees with direct customer contact. This helps establish the fact that everyone’s job affects the customer.”

- “Customer satisfaction surveys are our most unique driving force in terms of how well we are taking care of our customers.”

- “After-call wrap-up time is kept to a maximum of 2 minutes.”

- “Make sure that customer call-backs are done on the same day the customer called in.”

- “Thank the customer for every complaint, and turn the complaint into a compliment.”