

geckoboard



# Customer Support KPI Guide

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# Introduction

**A**t Geckoboard, we care deeply about metrics. We know that being able to measure, track and share metrics effectively can make or break your business. Without accurate metrics, it's impossible to know how well your team is performing. You can't know what needs to be improved, whether things are heading in the right direction, or make any of the decisions you need to make!



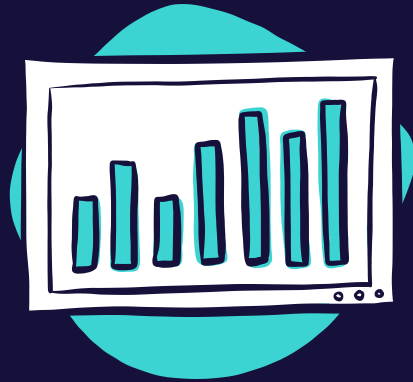
Being able to measure,  
track and share metrics  
effectively can make or  
break your business



But they are also really tricky to get right. Focus on the wrong things, and you'll end up creating a team of robots that care only about efficiency and world domination.



In our recent [Customer Support Experience Report](#) we found nearly half of Customer Support Teams' most important KPI was CSAT (Customer Satisfaction). But focusing on just one metric never tells the complete picture.



That's why we've created this guide. With decades of experience managing and measuring customer service teams, we know the pitfalls that teams can fall into when they become more data-focused. And we also understand how enlightening metrics can be when they're done well.

We hope this guide will help you feel the magic of metrics so you can keep a pulse on your customer support team's performance, and provide an even better customer experience.



# Agent Touches per Ticket

*AKA: Replies per Resolution and Replies per Ticket.*

**Definition:**

The average number of times an agent replies to a customer before the ticket reaches a resolution.

$$\frac{\text{TOTAL TICKET TOUCHES}}{\text{NO. TICKETS}}$$

You can also calculate the median average touches per ticket by listing all the touch times in value order and finding the middle value (see the glossary for more information on how to calculate medians).



## Why track Touches per Ticket?

This metric gives you an idea of the amount of time an agent spends working on a single support conversation, as well as an idea of the effort required by the customer to get their issue resolved. Filtering your Average Ticket Touches by agent, team, product area, or time zone shows where improvements can be made. Follow this up by monitoring the tickets above the median number of touches to look for any anomalies. If an agent has a higher than average number of ticket touches it may indicate that they're reaching out to customers unprepared, or need to ask for help more. You can rectify this by providing more training and coaching for your agents and by creating more documentation or support tools.



Get an idea of time agents spend on single conversations as well as customer effort to resolve issues



## Things to watch out for:

Fewer touches aren't always better. If, say, an agent resolved an issue and did so with a few extra replies here and there to build a friendly rapport and offer additional value this may result in a more satisfied customer. By measuring the number of agent touches you can try to find that sweet spot between "*robotic*" and "*overly chatty*". It's important that agents don't feel overly pressured to reduce their ticket touches when there's a genuine need to go back and forth with customers. To dig deeper into this metric, compare it with the agent's First Contact Resolution ratio. If their FCR is in line with your team's expectations, then everything is likely okay and they are only having extended conversations when required. If their FCR is low and their average touches number is high, then additional training may be required so they can solve problems more quickly in fewer touches.

Fewer touches aren't  
always better



# Average Handle Time (AHT)

## Definition:

Average Handle Time (AHT) measures the average length of time an agent spends on each call or ticket they open, not including any time that the customer spends in the queue. Typically used in call centers to determine the average length of time it takes for an agent to resolve a call, it can also be used to measure chat and email handle time as well.

$$\frac{\text{TOTAL TIME SPENT ON CALLS}}{\text{NO. CALLS}}$$





- AHT for phone calls typically includes the time spent on the call, time on hold, and any follow-up time for typing up notes and taking action.
- AHT can also be calculated for email and chat where total time includes time spent working on the conversation including any follow-up tasks.

## Why track Average Handle Time?

Average Handle Time is a useful metric to understand how long agents, on average, spend on each call or ticket they open. For larger support teams spanning different response channels, AHT can help measure your agents' productivity and output, which can then inform future staffing and coverage requirements.

Depending on a company's approach to the customer experience and the products/services they offer, AHT is typically used to help reduce the time customers spend on hold, increase the numbers of calls handled by agents, and to improve customer satisfaction. It's also used to help optimize call times, but it's a careful balance between a lower AHT, where agents feel



pressured to hurry customers off the phone, and a higher AHT, where agents aren't moving conversations on quickly enough. The reality is there's no shortcut to fulfilling a customer's needs. Your AHT should be enough for customers to get the appropriate support they need but balanced with what your support team is capable of, both in terms of skills and coverage.

## Things to watch out for:

AHT can be a powerful metric, but it can also lead you astray. If you focus too closely on wrapping calls up quickly, you might miss out on the opportunity to build a closer customer relationship. Or the customer might sense that you're trying to rush them off the line. Neither results in a great customer service experience. Balance tracking AHT with a quality metric (such as customer satisfaction, or quality assurance tracking) to ensure that you're not sacrificing a good experience for speed.



*Focusing on quick calls could mean missing out on the opportunity to build closer customer relationships*



# Average Reply Time (ART)

## Definition:

The time elapsed between a customer messaging support and an agent replying to it. Unlike First Response Time, Average Reply Time includes any time a customer has to wait for a reply. It is not limited to First Touch.

TOTAL CUSTOMER  
TIME SPENT WAITING  
FOR A REPLY

---

NO. CUSTOMER  
MESSAGES NEEDING  
A REPLY



Most help desks will calculate this automatically, but will offer a number of options as to how it's calculated, such as including time spent in "on hold" status, or using business hours ([see the glossary for more info](#)).



Reply time is  
often a major source  
of dissatisfaction  
among customers



## Why track Average Reply Time?

Reply time is often a major source of dissatisfaction among customers and by measuring yours you can make sure that customers aren't kept waiting for long periods of time. When customers take the time to call or send a message to your business it's likely as a result of having a problem. This is why it's so important to respond promptly, whether it's the first contact or a later interaction.



Tracking ART is particularly useful if you're trying to understand why other metrics are lagging. ART will give you more granular information about why resolving tickets is taking longer than you want or expect. You can also dig into the difference between First Reply Time and Average Reply Time to see if agents are prioritizing first replies, but then dragging on subsequent replies (perhaps through no fault of their own, if they are waiting on internal updates from finance, sales, or engineering).



*If Average Reply Time increases, it's important to react promptly*

If Average Reply Time increases, it's important to react promptly. That may mean updating your workflow to make sure agents are prioritizing customer replies properly, improving the efficiency of your support help desk, or hiring more agents.



## Things to watch out for:

Usually, CS teams prefer to look at Average Reply Time that doesn't count time outside of business working hours. So, as an example, if a customer emailed at 11:00 pm on a Sunday, but office hours didn't begin until 9:00 am on Monday, and the customer is not replied to until 10:00 am, the reply time for that customer would be 1 hour rather than 10. However, looking at your Average Reply Time as the customer actually experiences it (i.e. including all hours) is also useful and may justify extending support coverage to more time zones or even the weekend.

Average Reply Time can be heavily influenced by outliers, so it's important to check the distribution of your reply times. Are there specific types of questions that are stretching into the days or weeks to get replies? Are you putting tickets "on hold" but then not getting back to them? Are tickets being worked on in one time zone, and not being picked up by the next shift? Diving into the outliers can result in the most valuable insights.



# Average Resolution Time

*AKA: Average Time to Resolution, Average Ticket Resolution Time and Mean Time To Resolution (MTTR).*

**Definition:**

The average time taken by your support agents to solve all tickets opened in a given time frame.

TOTAL RESOLUTION  
TIME FOR ALL  
TICKETS SOLVED

---

NO. TICKETS  
SOLVED



# Why track Average Resolution Time?

Average Resolution Time is a measurement of efficiency, but it can also have a direct impact on CSAT since customers don't want to wait around for a resolution. Keeping ART reasonably low means that you're able to consistently help customers quickly.



Keeping ART reasonably low means that you're able to consistently help customers quickly



If your Average Resolution Time begins to increase, you'll need to investigate the underlying problem. It could indicate either that your support team needs additional help and training to handle more complex customer queries or a lack of coordination between the support team and those brought in to assist with complex queries, such as engineering. When ART is measured in combination with effective tagging and





categorization of tickets you can see if the tickets that are taking the longest to be solved correlate with those that require, for example, additional engineering work or input from finance.

If the numbers support that view, you can begin exploring the deeper reasoning behind the delays. Is there a bottleneck, where one individual's knowledge and skills are key to the resolution of these types of tickets? If so, then there may be ways to reduce the number of times you need to call upon them e.g. subject training for support agents or improving your self-service content.

*If your Average Resolution Time begins to increase, you'll need to investigate the underlying problem.*



## Things to watch out for:

There can be multiple resolution times in the life cycle of a ticket. First Resolution Time measures the duration between when a ticket is first created and the first timestamp the ticket is marked as solved, whereas Full Resolution Time counts the final, or most recent, time the ticket was marked as solved. If a ticket is reopened, the full resolution time will extend. First Resolution Time can be preferable when customers are offered a long duration, say 14 days, to reopen a ticket after it's marked as solved.

But note that you'll want to see these two resolution times as close together as possible. Maintaining a low Full Resolution Time that is close to First Resolution Time means that your team is solving issues the first time around without having to reopen tickets. If, however, your resolution times are too far apart then you might need to improve your Next Issue Avoidance strategies to prevent customers from needing to contact you a second time.



# Call Abandonment Rate

**Definition:**

The percentage of inbound calls to a call center where the customer hangs up before their call is answered by an agent.

$$\frac{\text{NO. CALLS ABANDONED}}{\text{TOTAL NUMBER OF CALLS}} \times 100$$

Sometimes you may need to calculate the number of calls abandoned first by deducting the number of calls answered from the total number of calls received.



# Why track Call Abandonment?

Call Abandonment correlates strongly with customer satisfaction, so it's an important metric to keep low for companies that provide phone support.



Call Abandonment  
correlates strongly with  
customer satisfaction



A high Call Abandonment Rate is most often the result of long hold times and is likely to result in poor customer satisfaction. Other problems affecting Call Abandonment Rate include poorly designed IVR (Interactive Voice Response) menus and excess transferring between departments. A low Call Abandonment Rate (around 5% is considered acceptable) usually indicates calls are being answered promptly. Fewer abandoned calls generally mean that your transference or IVR settings are correct and easy for customers to understand.



## Things to watch out for:

When calculating Call Abandonment Rate it is common to exclude calls that are very short to avoid misdials and other accidental calls from affecting the stats. However, care is required not to adversely impact the metric by excluding too many calls. It's also important to track how many callers hang up while going through a self-service menu. These calls likely shouldn't count towards your abandonment rate, as the customer got what they needed - that's a success!



There's a limit to how low Call Abandonment Rate can be, some calls will end for reasons outside of your control

Also, note that there's a limit to how low Call Abandonment Rate can be, some calls will end for reasons outside of your control. For example, the caller's connection may drop or need to go do something else. If your Abandonment Rate is already low, improving it further is unlikely to meaningfully improve Customer Satisfaction.



# Customer Effort Score (CES)

**Definition:**

A type of customer satisfaction survey that asks customers to rate how easy it was to get the help they needed.

TOTAL SUM OF  
CUSTOMER EFFORT  
SURVEY SCORES

---

NO. SURVEY  
RESPONSES

A customer effort survey asks: *"To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:*



*Company A made it easy for me to handle my issue."*

Customers respond on a scale from one to seven, where one is *"strongly disagree"* and seven is *"strongly agree."*

To calculate your CES, calculate the average of all the scores.

## **Why track Customer Effort Score?**

Your Customer Effort score is a key health metric because it can shed light on how effective your support experience is. Are your customers able to get the help they need from the different support channels you offer and is it clear which channel offers them the fastest solution for their issue?

Reducing the effort customers go through to get help is central to providing a great experience. Research by the CEB shows that effort is the number one driver of disloyalty. The easier you can make life for your customers, the more likely they are to return and refer your business to their friends and family.



When analyzing CES responses, it's easy to spot the places where customers are running into friction. Working to smooth those bumps along the way will result in happier, more loyal customers.

## **Things to watch out for:**

While measuring the average of CES is helpful to see trends, it's also insightful to look at the distribution of the scores. Are there many customers responding with 1's and 2's (very difficult)? Looking closely into these customers' journeys will make the most difference to your customer experience.

It's also worth noting that CES is measured in a number of different ways. Some brands recommend tracking it like Net Promoter Score and finding the percentage difference between customers that find it easy to do business with you and customers that find it difficult. Others suggest offering customers a 5 or 10 point scale to respond with. However, because this metric was created based on research from the CEB (now owned by Gartner), we recommend following their guidelines, as outlined above.





# Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)

**Definition:**

An indication of customer happiness based on a short survey typically sent after a conversation or ticket is resolved. This survey can take many different forms, but at its core asks the customer to rate their experience on a scale ranging from good/great to bad.

$$\frac{\text{NO. POSITIVE RESPONSES}}{\text{TOTAL NO. RESPONSES}} \times 100$$



# Why track customer satisfaction?



*"Conducting customer satisfaction research, such as CSAT surveys, can provide your company the insight to make informed decisions related to the retention and expansion of your customer base."*

- Luis Hernandez,  
VP of Customer Success at Geckoboard



Monitoring CSAT  
responses provides a  
real-time alert system



Customer satisfaction is helpful in understanding the quality of your support. It's a quick way to measure the customer's experience, typically on a per-ticket or per-conversation basis. Since this survey can be placed in the signature of an email or sent automatically after a ticket is closed, it helps capture how your support team is performing across conversations.



Measuring CSAT can provide help in two different ways. Firstly, support teams can follow up and close the loop with unhappy customers. Monitoring CSAT responses provides a real-time alert system that you can use to turn dissatisfied customers into loyal, satisfied customers.

Secondly, analyzing the overall performance of your CSAT can show where your service or product is causing dissatisfaction. If you're consistently seeing customers respond negatively after billing tickets, it's worth looking into your billing and pricing policies - perhaps a change is needed to improve the customers' experience.

## **Things to watch out for:**

The key with customer satisfaction surveys is to make it nearly effortless for customers to respond on a consistent basis. Otherwise, you'll only hear from customers who are very unhappy, or very happy, and take the time to seek out places to provide feedback, thus skewing your metrics.



# Escalation Rate

**Definition:**

The percentage of support tickets that have been escalated to a new support tier or to another team

$$\frac{\text{NO. SUPPORT TICKETS ESCALATED}}{\text{TOTAL NO. SUPPORT TICKETS}}$$

## Why track escalation rate?

Escalation Rate is a vital metric for measuring the effectiveness of your first-line support tier, particularly when you have a large team of agents with varying specializations.



Not all support tickets can be resolved by the first teammate who responds. Tickets that require deeper subject knowledge are often escalated to teammates with more specialization, but a growing Escalation Rate can indicate either an ongoing problem with your product or service, that the pathways to reach an agent with the right subject knowledge aren't clear enough, or that your support team requires additional help or training.

Tracking the number of interactions needed to resolve tickets may also highlight opportunities for senior teammates to proactively jump into conversations to avoid escalations, in particular situations where a frustrated customer demands an escalation.

Your escalation rate also correlates with Customer Satisfaction (CSAT). Customers generally dislike interacting with more than one agent to solve their issue, as this can lead to answering repetitive questions and a disheartening feeling that they're being bounced around. In many cases, customers who demand an escalation have passed the point where they'd consider leaving a good customer satisfaction rating, even if a manager has stepped in to resolve the issue.



## Things to watch out for:

Consider tracking this metric based on the reason for the transfer—whether that's a lack of knowledge, lack of permissions, or something else altogether. Implement a system where service associates input the reason for escalation when they transfer the ticket, so you can see the most common issues and work to reduce the need for escalation.

You may also want to track Escalation Rate for individual service agents to see who has the most escalations and for what reasons. You can track this metric in combination with ticket touches for more information on whether agents are escalating enough (ie. if frontline agents have too many ticket touches and unusually low escalation rates, they may need to escalate sooner). With this information, you can create personalized training and share educational resources to help the agent solve more issues independently or know when to escalate. Building a review into the escalation process can help the agent who escalated the ticket see how the issue turned out, and learn from it.



# First Contact Resolution Rate (FCR)

**Definition:**

The percentage of customers' questions and requests solved the first time they reach out about it.

$$\frac{\text{NO. ISSUES RESOLVED ON FIRST CONTACT}}{\text{TOTAL NO. ISSUES}} \times 100$$



# Why track First Contact Resolution Rate?

First Contact Resolution rate can be a useful way to track efficiency and how thoroughly your CS team responds to inquiries. It can be a good indicator of customer satisfaction.

Customers, who spend less time and put in less effort in solving issues with the product or service they're buying, are happier. And as the Harvard Business Review explains, this is key to customer satisfaction:



*"First, delighting customers doesn't build loyalty; reducing their effort – the work they must do to get their problem solved – does. Second, acting deliberately on this insight can help improve customer service, reduce customer service costs, and decrease customer churn."*

Spending more time digging into a customer's issues and answering the questions the customer didn't think





to ask (ie. What happens next?), can improve FCR. Instead of rushing to respond to a customer quickly and requiring lots of back and forth, aim to respond thoughtfully the first time.

This metric is closely tied to Agent Touches per Ticket, as these complementary metrics both measure the number of replies to a ticket. If individual agents have a high number of touches per ticket, it's worth looking closely to see if their FCR is also low. If they often have long back and forths with customers and rarely resolve tickets in just one contact, additional training is needed. If they have long conversations with customers, but their FCR is high, it might mean that they need to escalate tickets more often.

## **Things to watch out for:**

You know that an issue is solved at the first contact when the answer is 'yes' to the two questions below:

- Is this the first time the customer has reached out with this request or question?
- Is the issue at hand fixed?



How you define fixed is very important. In Zendesk and similar tools, it usually depends on the customer support representative flagging the ticket as solved. If the customer gets back in touch regarding the same issue within a certain period of time, the issue is reopened and the ticket is no longer considered an FCR.

But what happens if your customer opens a new ticket about the same issue? While the first ticket may look like it was resolved quickly on the first contact, the customer doesn't have that experience. This can be solved by merging new tickets into past tickets, or by looking at the number of tickets a customer opens within a small time period. If a customer is contacting your team multiple times within the same 48 hours, your support agents may need more training on Next Issue Avoidance strategies.

It's also important to understand how the FCR metric can disincentivize teams to improve their self-service systems and documentation. This is because easier tickets to solve, that help keep FCR low, are reduced when the customer can help themselves. The support team is left with harder tickets to resolve and FCR goes down - despite the user getting a better experience.



# First Response Time (FRT)

AKA: *First Reply Time*

**Definition:**

The time elapsed between a customer raising a ticket and an agent first responding to it.

SUM OF FIRST  
RESPONSE TIMES

---

TOTAL  
NO. TICKETS



It can be a good idea to calculate your FRT based on the median instead of the average to avoid outliers skewing the data ([See the Glossary for more information on medians and averages](#)).

## Why track First Response Time:



*"Contrary to what we would assume, most customers prefer a quick but 'ineffective' response over a calculated, delayed answer. Immediate 'your inquiry has been received' responses are standard, so wow your customers with a quick, personalized first response."*

- **Tim Woo**,  
Marketing Director for Framed Data

Your Average First Response Time goes hand-in-hand with customer satisfaction (CSAT). Customers don't like to wait in queues to get their issues resolved. Faster response times demonstrate to customers that you're



here and ready to help them, even if that first response is a brief reply to reassure them that you're looking into their issue. These quick responses help avoid situations where the customer either starts a new chat in another bid to get your attention or leaves entirely. You've now got an opportunity to make your next reply as helpful and comprehensive as it needs to be, rather than rushing a series of replies that will only increase your Touches per Ticket.

You can also filter First Response Time metrics by agent, team, or time zone to see where improvements can be made. If a specific time zone is showing longer FRT, it might be because the team there is overwhelmed and needs back-up, that they require additional training or access to engineering resources for troubleshooting, or that better internal documentation is needed.

## **Things to watch out for:**

Encouraging quick replies can result in agents rushing through responses, resulting in poor quality. It's good practice to work with your team to find your



*"Goldilocks Zone"*, where you set a balanced FRT target that enables your team to reply to customers in good time but not to the point where it becomes stressful and impacts the quality of their responses. This is also where detailed and organized help documentation can help, both internal and customer-facing. Not only do they enable customers to self-serve when your coverage is lower but they also provide your agents with ready-made first responses for common issues.

Calculating FRT requires you to make a number of decisions about what tickets to include. Your calculation should exclude automated responses (like those from chatbots or virtual assistants) and potentially exclude tickets that arrive outside of your stated business hours. However, while your team shouldn't be expected to reply to tickets outside of business hours, the customer is still waiting. If including non-business hour tickets dramatically increases your average FRT, it's time to expand your business hours so you can be available when your customers need you.



# Ticket Backlog

**Definition:**

The total number of unresolved tickets in your queue.

TOTAL NO.  
OPEN TICKETS

## Why track ticket backlog?

Tracking Ticket Backlog is an effective way to determine the efficiency of your customer support process and team. Do you have enough team members? Do you need to build out a self-service support center to handle repetitive issues? Does your team need more training or technical skills?



There could be a number of reasons for unresolved tickets lingering in your queue. The important part is knowing that it exists and actively working to reduce your backlog to zero.

The longer customers have to wait for an issue to be resolved, the more unhappy they're going to be. Monitoring ticket backlog (and the number of days each ticket has been open) helps you and your team focus on ways to improve your process and keep customers happy.

Ticket backlog is a  
complementary metric to  
ticket volume





## Things to watch out for:

Ticket backlog is a complementary metric to ticket volume. While your volume may stay consistent, if your backlog is increasing, you'll eventually run into a problem because you're not solving tickets as quickly as they're coming in. In most cases, your support team won't be able to devote 100% of their time to handling ticket backlog since they're likely handling other incoming support requests. It's important to track this metric in the context of your support department as a whole - total conversations, number of support team members, and other constraints such as technical skills.

Secondly, it's important to be realistic about the actual size of your ticket backlog, as it is possible to obscure the real number using On Hold statuses and the "snooze" function in your help desk. However, even if you put all your tickets On Hold, you'll still need to work through them eventually!



# Ticket Volume

AKA: Total Conversations, Total No. Tickets

## Definition:

The number of new tickets received (including chat, email, phone or any other contact channels) over a period of time, such as per day, per week, or per month.

NO. NEW  
TICKETS



# Why track your ticket volume?



*"Total Conversations helps give you a sense for the entirety of support. Tracking this over time can help understand when to hire someone new for the support team, and to give a macro-level view of support trends."*

- Micah Bennett,  
Support Lead at Zapier

Ticket Volume or Total Conversations gives you a high-level view of the workload for your customer support team. If you track one of these metrics as a trend, you can also spot patterns in volume and identify when you're most likely to have an increase in tickets or conversations.

These overview insights are important for two main reasons. First, you're able to manage staffing needs and know when you need to add team members. Second, you get an early warning sign if something is broken.



For example, if you have an unusual spike in tickets, a feature might not be working or perhaps the marketing team sent the wrong link in a campaign email. This spike in volume can evolve into a vicious cycle with exponentially more tickets being created as customers who are now waiting longer try to contact you through another channel (ie. social or phone).

## Things to watch out for:

This metric is a very surface-level overview of what's happening in your queue. Ticket Volume and Total Conversations are helpful first indicators that something has changed, but you'll need to dig deeper to figure out the cause. It's also worth noting that not all tickets or conversations are equal. Some will require more time than others. Tracking total replies or ticket touches may be more indicative of the level of work being done.



Not all tickets or  
conversations are equal



# Next Issue Avoidance

## Definition:

A measurement of how effective agents are at fully solving a customer's issue, and therefore preventing future issues, calculated by looking at the number of customers opening multiple support tickets within a certain period of time.

**NO. CUSTOMERS WHO  
RAISE 2 OR MORE  
TICKETS IN A SET PERIOD**

---

**TOTAL NO. CUSTOMERS  
WHO RAISE A TICKET IN  
THE SAME PERIOD**



## Why track Next Issue Avoidance?

If you just track the total number of tickets, you won't see how many are from the same customer. Next Issue Avoidance looks at the number of customers opening multiple support tickets within a certain period of time. With this metric, you analyze data from larger numbers of support tickets to look for patterns in why customers open another ticket after their initial issue was resolved.

The goal with Next Issue Avoidance is to anticipate what the customer might need help with in the future, so the same person doesn't need to come back with another (probably related) issue.

Say a customer opens a ticket because they are locked out of their account. The customer service agent resets the account, sends the customer a temporary password, and closes the ticket.

But then the person contacts your team again a little while later because they don't know how to change their password. Your Average Resolution Time (ART) for



each ticket might be low, but the customer (and your agent) actually spend longer trying to resolve the issue because they have to open new tickets for every aspect of the problem.

To reduce repeated tickets, the agent should determine what additional information the customer is likely to need after resetting their account and send it along with the new password. This will save time and frustration both for your customer and for your customer service team.

Next Issue Avoidance serves as a useful health metric if you track speed-focused metrics like ART or First Response Time (FRT).

## **Things to watch out for:**

Being able to effectively resolve future issues and keep next issue avoidance low comes hand in hand with seniority in the role. Newer team members simply won't have enough experience or thorough enough understanding of the customer and product to correctly anticipate what they need next. And in many cases,



*"guessing"* at the next solution that might be needed could actually lead to providing misleading information.

No matter how much information you provide, you can never avoid every issue a customer might run into. Watch out for agents trying to cram everything into one reply - it might actually create more effort for the customer.

When calculating Next Issue Avoidance, choose the time frame that works best for your business. A week may be too long or too short for you to tell if your customers are actually coming back on the same issue. Looking at the average time to resolve an issue and the average time for a reopen to occur can help you make this decision.

*No matter how much information you provide, you can never avoid every issue a customer might run into.*





# Glossary

## Business Hours

Business hours is the chunk of the day that your team is officially available. They might change depending on the channel (ie. Live chat available Monday-Friday 9am - 5pm PST). While having clear business hours is great for customer expectations, it will have an impact on your metrics calculations, specifically average and first reply times.

If a customer writes in on Sunday at 2pm, your business hours are Monday - Friday 9am-5pm, and your agent replied at 2pm on Monday, was the customer waiting 7 hours or 24 hours?

Both of these calculations are helpful. Knowing how long customers are kept waiting during business hours can help you decide if you're working quickly enough. But also calculating the total time (including out of business hours) can show you if customers are waiting



too long from their perspective. Your customers in Australia don't really care that your UK office isn't open yet. They just know they have a problem and they need help. If your business hour calculation is dramatically different from the real time calculation, you may want to consider expanding your hours, or hiring in different parts of the world.

## Averages: Median vs Mean

Averages are a way of summarising a set of data into a single value typical of the set.

Usually when people talk about averages they're referring to the mean average. The mean is calculated by dividing the sum of all the numbers by the number of items in the list.

Find the mean of these five numbers:

$$6 + 3 + 100 + 3 + 13 = 125$$

$$125 \div 5 = 25$$

The mean is 25.



However, the mean can be affected by extreme outliers that really skew the data and don't necessarily give a representative picture. So sometimes the median, which is the middle value, is a better metric to track. To find the median, order the numbers from smallest to largest and see which one is in the middle of the list. If there are two middle numbers, the median is the halfway point between them.

Find the median of these five numbers:

Eg 3, 3, 6, 13, 100 = 6

The median is 6.

Examples of when this might be important include an extremely long running ticket or slow response time. It's often useful to look at both.



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## Give your customer support team a boost

Create real-time KPI dashboards that surface the data your support team needs to excel.

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