


EBOOK

YOUR GUIDE TO

# Tracking Customer Support KPIs



**Consumers have  
never been so hard to  
please and marketers  
have never had as  
many opportunities  
to please them.**

”

Sridhar Ramaswamy,  
former Senior Vice President of Google Ads

**A** recent forecast report states that [global e-commerce sales are on pace to hit nearly \\$6 trillion by 2022](#). This is exciting for businesses, but it also raises an important question: With so many companies competing for business, what does it take to convert prospects into loyal customers and capitalize on this upward trend?

According to consumer behavior research, trust plays a big role in this. Consumers come to trust (or not trust) brands by sifting through online reviews, receiving recommendations from their inner circles, having positive interactions with brands, and doing much of their own on and offline research.

Of course, this alone itself isn't surprising. Here's what is: when a consumer makes a decision that

involves risk, like purchasing from an online [retailer, he or she is often more influenced by \*intuition\* than \*deliberation\*](#). That's right. Things like website aesthetics, positive brand interactions, reviews, and other brand elements that suggest trustworthiness can be *more* instrumental in winning over new customers—and keeping existing ones—than materials like consumer reports and white papers.

In this ebook, we'll show you why a solid system for evaluating your company's customer support efforts is important. We'll also walk you through the KPIs top businesses use to ensure their support teams are equipped to collect the data they need to improve their end-to-end customer experience.

## **Keep Reading to Learn:**



Why your brand needs a strong customer support system



How to track your brand's customer support efforts



How real brands apply support metrics to their customer experience

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# 01

## The Benefits of a Strong Customer Support System

Many digital consumers value their experience with a brand as much as the product or service itself. To drive long-term growth for your business, an effective customer support system is more than important, it's critical.

While 80% of companies think they deliver great customer experiences, only 8% of customers agree. (That's worth reading a second time!) These numbers highlight how businesses—even those that claim to be customer-

focused—can incorrectly gauge how their customers feel about them.

A strong customer support system can help close this perception gap, while benefiting your company in a number of other key ways. Let's dive into each.

# Disrupting Competition and Gaining Market Share

Customer support teams play a huge role in getting prospects and customers timely, helpful information. Their responsibilities run the gamut, from answering customer questions to responding to complaints and suggestions. Positive brand

experiences help businesses stand out against their competition, and in today's customer experience-centric world, this has never been more important to supporting new and returning business.

# Using Feedback Loops to Improve Products and Services

Much of the feedback that your brand receives on its products or services will go through your customer support teams. By developing effective feedback loops your company can make updates to its products and services that align with customer feedback and help improve the overall customer experience.

## Here's an example:

Say one of your customers was unhappy with a change your business made to its return policy and they shared this feedback in a recent customer satisfaction survey you sent out. If your company follows an established feedback loop, the actions taken might look something like this: your customer service team receives this feedback, documents it, follows up with the customer, and passes the feedback on to stakeholders to prioritize and act upon it.

Of course, this doesn't mean every piece of feedback will be implemented. Feedback loops ensure decision-makers are made aware of patterns and can take them into consideration when making updates to their products or services.



# Keeping Employees Engaged

Employee turnover may not be the first thing that comes to mind when you consider why your company should invest in building a strong customer support system, but it's a crucial one. When your customer support system is functioning optimally, your support team members will feel more connected to the business and its mission because they'll be able to see how their work connects to its success.

Plus, because the customer support team is often a person's first point of contact with a brand, your business has a vested interest in making sure it has the training and tools to offer top-notch support to its customers. A recent report claims that [67% of customers are now “serial switchers”](#)—customers who hop from one brand to the next following a negative customer experience.

# Painting the full Customer Experience Picture

It's been said that customer experience is the new brand, and in many ways that's true. A person's impression of a brand can be made or broken in a single exchange. When someone has a particularly great experience, they often feel compelled to share it, and if they don't, well, they're often even more compelled. A strong customer support system illuminates areas where customers are satisfied, or not satisfied, so businesses have a fuller picture of the experiences their customers have with their brands and can make the necessary adjustments to improve them.

**For example,** you may not know that a significant number of your business's customers are unhappy with your website's new checkout experience. But by surveying your customers on their ease of experience through the Customer Effort Score (CES), which we'll dive into later, your teams learn that many say it's "extremely difficult" to complete. This is valuable feedback that flags to your business that it may need to reevaluate this aspects of its sales process.

## 3 Customer Support KPIs

Now, that you know why your business should invest in a strong customer support system, let's talk KPIs. Measuring the effectiveness of your customer support efforts will help your company make changes that enable business growth and invest in programs that are proving effective. The KPIs that are ideal

for your business may not be ideal for another. It's important that you consider what you're looking to answer before deciding the best metrics to use. In this section, we'll go over a few metrics your business can use to measure customer support-related efforts, beginning with the net promoter score.

# Satisfaction

## How to measure it: Net Promoter Score (NPS)

### Detractors

Those who have formed a bad impression of your brand

### Promoters

Those who are eager to speak well about your brand



### Passive Consumers

Those with neutral feelings about your brand

Let's start with what's arguably the most commonly used KPI for measuring customer satisfaction: the net promoter score (NPS). NPS reveals how likely your customers are to recommend your brand to others. It works on a scale of 0 to 10 and its results are sorted into three

categories: the promoters (those who are eager to speak well about your brand), the passive consumers (those with neutral feelings about your brand), and the detractors (those who have formed a bad impression of your brand).

### How to calculate your brand's NPS:

$$\% \text{ of promoters} - \% \text{ of detractors} = \text{NPS}$$

# Why Brands like NPS:

1

It's a pretty easy way to identify unhappy customers that may be at risk of churning and take action. For example, a brand might reach out with an offer to walk the customer through new features that would benefit them or introduce them to a lower-priced plan.

2

Businesses that implement an agile strategy can use NPS to measure customer satisfaction with changes to products or services. NPS can give you a general sense of sentiment so your teams can make smarter iterative decisions.

3

Regular NPS surveys can help businesses track how their customers feel about their brands over time. This can help you understand how changes—like new product offerings, phased-out features, and organizational changes—might have impacted customer sentiment.

# Final word on NPS

It's quick, it's easy, and it allows brands to move nimbly. However, NPS is far from perfect. It's important to remember that since people's opinions of a brand can change over time, the NPS should be considered fluid rather than permanent.

# Satisfaction

## How to measure it: first response time (FRT)

Your brand's first response time (FRT) is so important because it signals to your customers that "help is on its way." While your business' FRT will differ depending on the communication method (e.g., phone, e-mail, chat, or social media), setting benchmarks for your customer support team helps to standardize its response process.

**While it varies from business to business, the average FRTs are:**



**A few seconds for chat and messaging**



**Less than 2 hours through social media**



**Half a day through e-mail**

**Source:** [bitly.is/firstresponse](https://bitly.is/firstresponse)

# Why Brands like FRT:

1

A timely FRT can positively impact your brand's NPS (just as a slow FRT can negatively impact it), so keeping an eye out on both helps to give brands a fuller picture of their customer support efforts.

2

Creating FRT benchmarks helps support teams prioritize their response efforts.

**Some customer support channels require fewer than 5 minutes to respond to a request before your brand runs the risk of losing its business.**



# Final Word on FRT

A brand's FRT is often their customers' very first impression of its support team. A timely FRT can win customers over but too many delayed ones can damage a brand's reputation. While FRT is great for showing how quickly

a brand responded to a customer, it doesn't show how satisfied customers are with the response itself. To do that, brands tracking FRT should also track our next customer support metric: CSAT.

# Satisfaction

## How to measure it: Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)

By asking the question, “How satisfied were you with your experience today?” brands can collect a customer satisfaction score (CSAT) across the customer lifecycle. This score is derived from calculating the average of all customer responses and can use numbers, questions, or visuals, like stars or smileys, normally on a 3 or 5-item scale.

# Why Brands Like CSAT:

1

Much like the other KPIs we've mentioned, the CSAT is short, straightforward, and simple. As a result, it often results in high response rates.

2

The CSAT can be applied across an entire customer journey to get a better predictive analysis of overall satisfaction—at checkouts, in follow-ups, and in thank you emails, or after contacting the help center.

## How to calculate your brand's CES:

$$\frac{\text{\# of satisfied customers}}{\text{\# of satisfaction survey responses}} \times 100 = \% \text{ of Satisfied Customers}$$

# Final word on CSAT

CSAT is relatively straightforward to put into effect. However, choosing the right moment to ask the question can be tricky. Responses might be influenced by the emotions of the moment. For example, if your brand asks the question too soon before a client has been able to make up their mind, they may report that they feel less satisfied. On the flipside of that, if you ask the question *too long* after they have experienced or received a product or service, they may forget how satisfied they once were.

# Satisfaction

## How to measure it: Customer Effort Score (CES)

The customer effort score (CES) gauges customer satisfaction. Brands use CES to understand how easy a particular action is for customers. Research shows that brands that offer customers low-effort experiences receive better reviews, more word-of-mouth recommendations, and

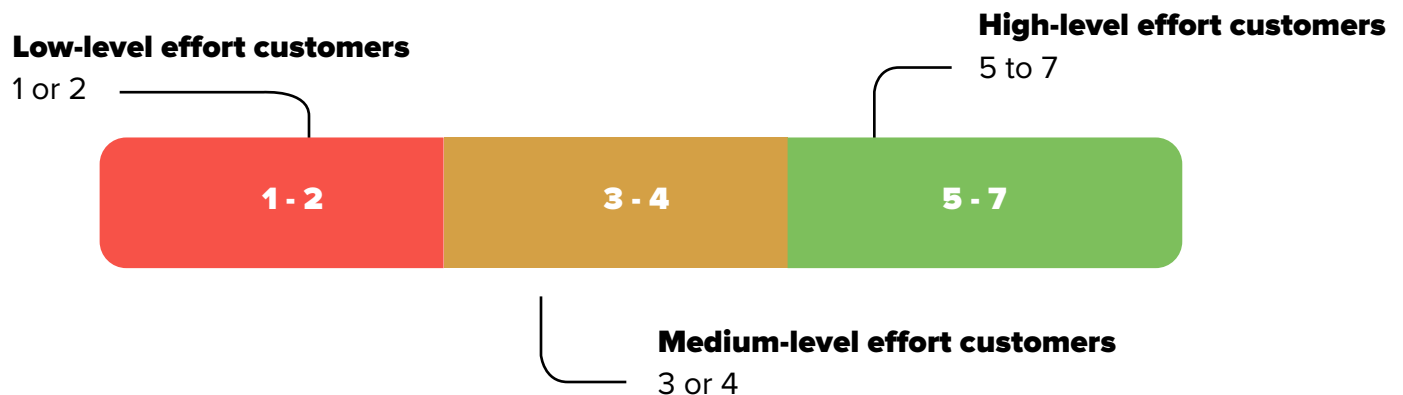
are more likely to have a higher repurchase rate. In fact, a recent customer effort survey revealed that 96% of customers who had high-effort experiences reported [being disloyal to a brand](#), while just 9% of customers with low-effort experiences reported disloyalty.

Low-effort experiences reduce costs by decreasing up to 40% of repeat calls, 50% of escalations, and 54% of channel switching. Overall, a low-effort interaction costs 37% less than a high-effort interaction.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>[What's Your Customer Effort Score?](#)

# Satisfaction

How to measure it: Customer Effort Score (CES)



## On a scale of 1-7

1 = Extremely easy  
2 = Very easy  
3 = Fairly easy  
4 = Neither

5 = Fairly difficult  
6 = Very difficult  
7 = Extremely difficult

**How to calculate your brand's CES** :  $\% \text{ high-level effort} - \% \text{ low-level effort} = \text{CES}$

## Why Brands like CES:

1

It's a quick and straightforward way to measure how customers are responding to a particular brand experience. For example, once a customer completes a purchase on your site, you might ask them how easy (on a scale of 1 to 7) they found your check out experience.

2

It can give customer-facing teams a snapshot of how users feel about a particular engagement with the brand, which can highlight areas for improvement.

3

The CES methodology can be applied in a variety of ways, including after a customer downloads branded content, completes an online purchase, or connects with a customer service bot.

# Final word on CES

Nearly every marketplace has seen increased competition in recent years. The result? Brands are taking big steps to minimize the effort their customers put into using their products or services. While CES is pretty simple to measure, the work to reduce customer effort is much bigger than the customer support team alone. In order for CES to be truly impactful, brands need organization-wide buy-in to act on the results, from marketing and engineering all the way up to leadership.



# Satisfaction

## How to measure it: Rate of adoption

The rate of adoption tells you the percentage of new users of a feature, product, or service. It's calculated by taking the total number of adopters and dividing it by the total number of users. For example, to calculate the rate of adoption of a new feature

in the month August, you'd take the total number of people who used the feature for the first time any time from August 1 to August 31. Then, you'd divide that number by the total number of users on August 31, the last day of the time period.

**How to  
calculate rate of  
adoption :**

$$\frac{\text{total number of adopters}}{\text{total number of users}}$$

# Why Brands use Rate of Adoption:

1

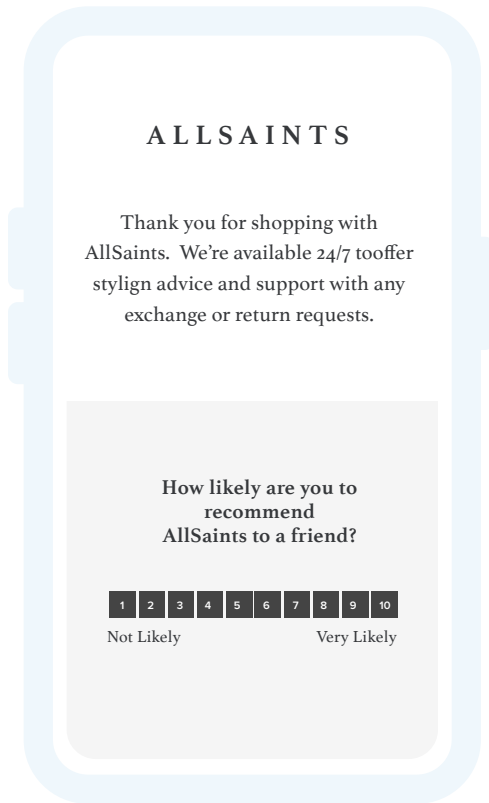
Adoption rate helps businesses understand how many people haven't used a new feature, product, or service they've have rolled out, so they can dig into *why* that might be.

2

They can target early adopters for marketing campaigns, since they tend to have an active presence on social media and are eager to review new products. Connecting with them can be a great way for brands to gain exposure to their early adopters' audiences.

## Final word on Rate of Adoption

Once you understand your brand's rate of adoption, it's important to dive deep into understanding what factors are affecting it. For example, maybe your business' low rate of adoption is tied to how much your product costs. Calculating your brand's rate of adoption for a feature, product, or service is the first step toward improving it.



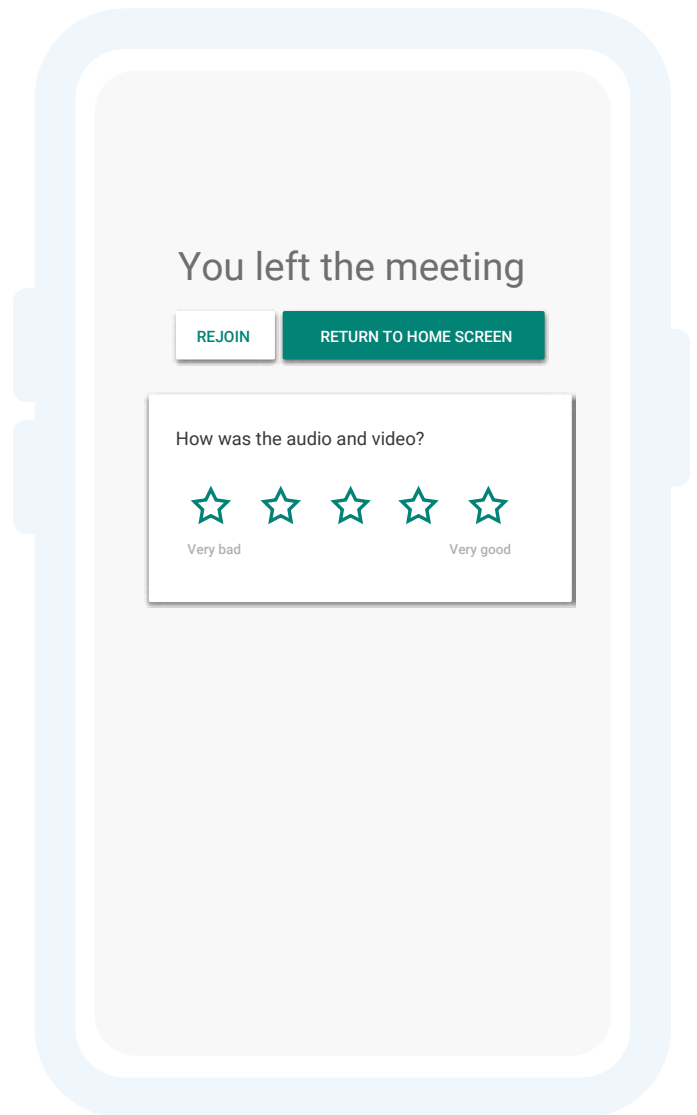
## 03

# How real Brands Apply Customer Support Metrics

AllSaints has served customers a NPS survey after their checkout experience. Did you notice the customer support plug? It's no coincidence that they also include a note about their free 24/7 advice and support offering before asking customers whether they'd recommend their business!

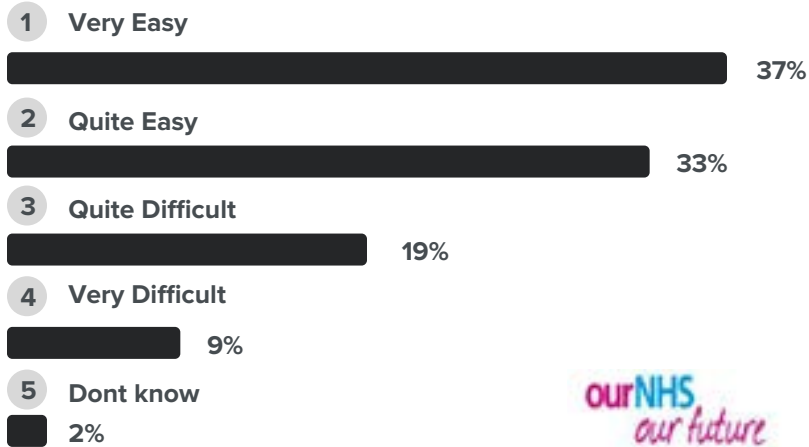
# Google

If you've taken a call on Google Hangouts Meet recently, you may have noticed this CSAT survey. It uses a five-item scale, from "very bad" to "very good." Google captures this feedback as soon as users end their calls, so if the audio, visual, or other fact is compromised during the session, that may be reflected in the survey results.



## Polling Question

Thinking about your last visit to the GP, how easy was it to make an appointment at a time that suited you?



## NHS

The NHS, England's healthcare system, collects information on user effort with this quick and straightforward poll. Brands with self-service appointments benefit from

relieving their phone attendants and satisfying customers by giving them more flexibility with when and how easily they can schedule them.

# About Sales Layer

Sales Layer has been taking product curation to the next level since 2013. We offer the most complete and versatile Product Information Management solution to all types of industries and businesses. We make working with digital catalogs faster

and more efficient. Our software is now helping enterprises in the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, Thailand, Europe and South Africa, and leads the Spanish and LATAM markets.



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partnered to bring  
you this ebook.**



## About Bitly

Bitly empowers you to embed short, branded call-to-action links in your communications, with tools, analytics, and insights to maximize the impact of every digital initiative. We've been around for over 10 years and have become the gold standard in link management, helping businesses brand, acquire, and connect

strategies—from small companies just starting out to two-thirds of the Fortune 500, and everything in between. We're headquartered in New York City and have offices in San Francisco, California and Denver, Colorado. Learn more about us on our website.



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