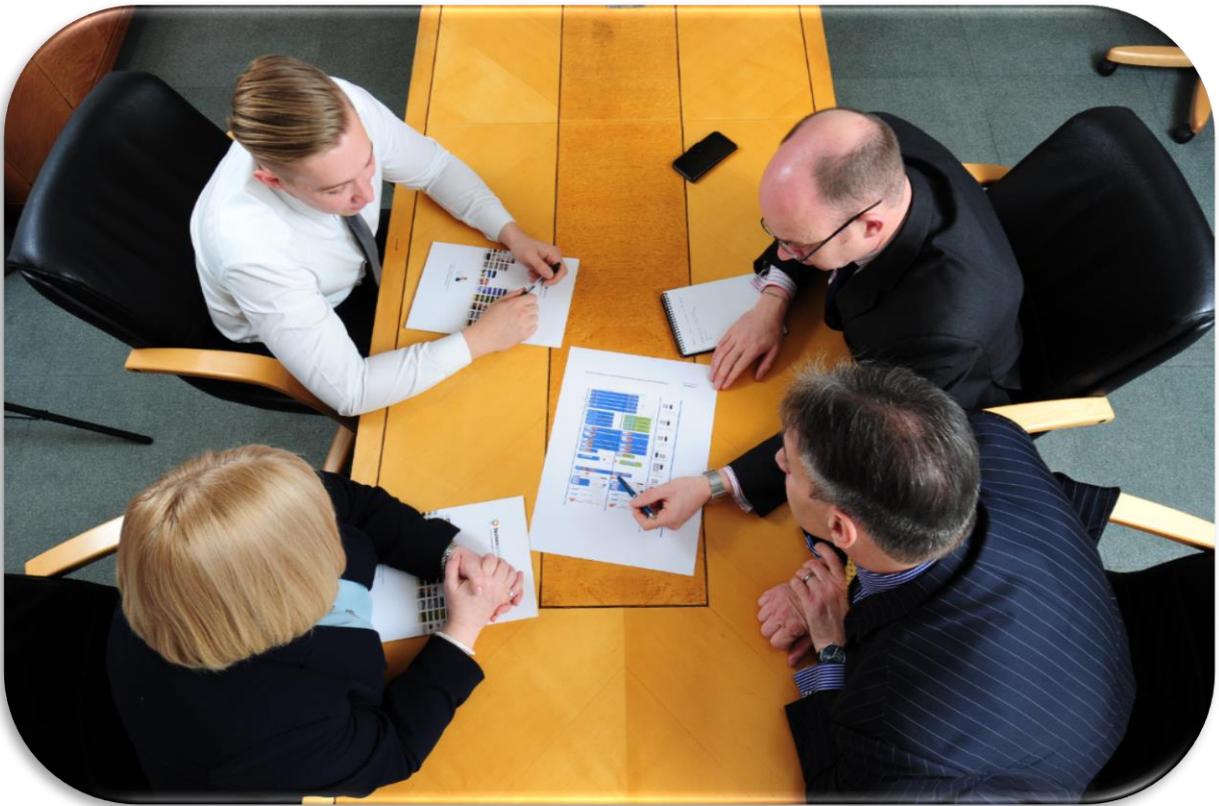


CUSTOMER SERVICE IN 2015



REPORT COMPILED BY BUSINESS SYSTEMS (UK) LTD USING SURVEY RESULTS FROM
OVER 100 CONTACT CENTRE PROFESSIONALS.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
THE SURVEY	3
Q1. WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE YOUR BIGGEST CUSTOMER SERVICE CHALLENGES IN 2015?	3
Q2. WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE BIGGEST EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT CHALLENGE YOU WILL FACE IN 2015?	3
Q3. WHAT DO YOU PREDICT WILL BE YOUR BUSIEST CHANNEL FOR CUSTOMER CONTACT IN 2015?	4
Q4. WHAT PERCENTAGE OF CUSTOMER CONTACT DO YOU EXPECT ACROSS THE FOLLOWING CHANNELS IN 2015?.....	5
Q5. WHAT'S ON YOUR TECHNOLOGY WISH LIST IN 2015?.....	5
Q6. WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR TECHNOLOGY TO DELIVER FOR YOU?	6
Q7. IF YOU COULD IMPROVE ONE THING IN YOUR CONTACT CENTRE WHAT WOULD THAT BE?	7
SURVEY RESPONDENTS BREAKDOWN	8
Q8. WHERE IS YOUR CONTACT CENTRE BASED?	8
Q9. WHAT SIZE IS YOUR CONTACT CENTRE?.....	8
Q10. WHAT MARKET SECTOR DOES YOUR CONTACT CENTRE OPERATE IN?.....	9
CONCLUSION.....	9

INTRODUCTION

Customer service has never been more challenging, as technology advances evermore, organisations struggle to keep agents engaged, motivated and present in the workplace, whilst ensuring a consistent service is delivered on any of the channels a customer may use for contact.

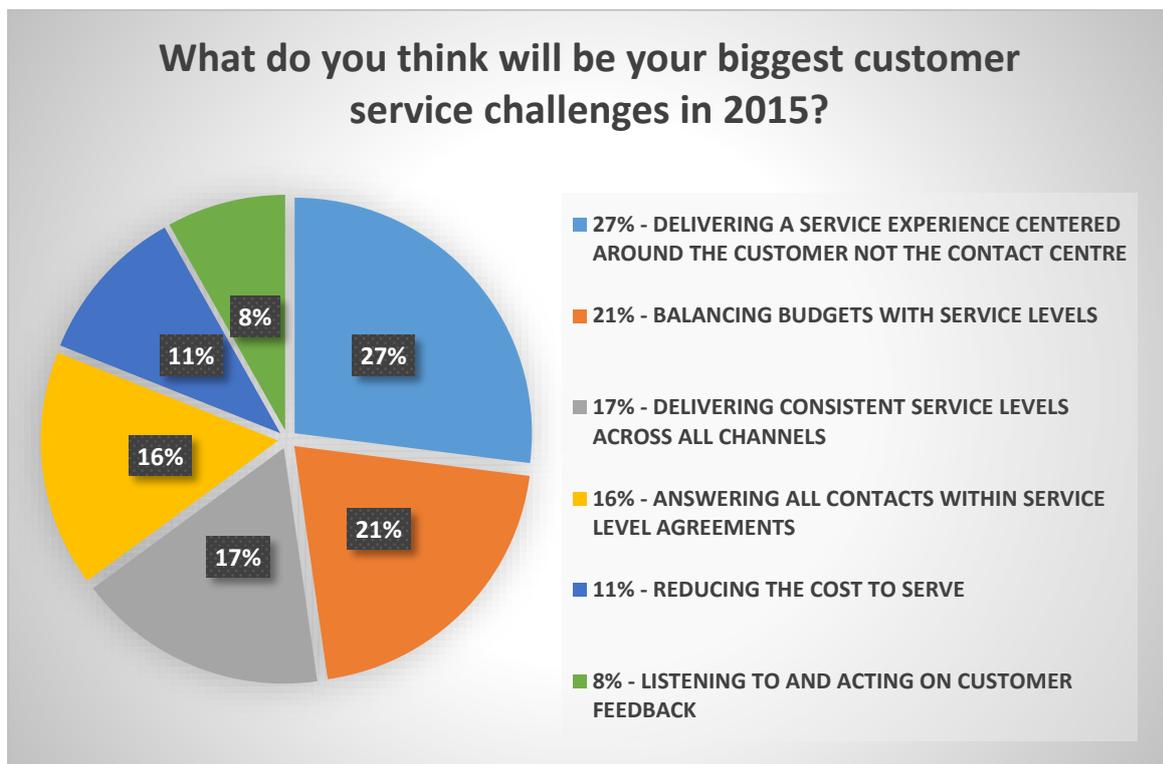
We are told that the days are long gone, when it was ok to respond to an email within 24 hours and that **39% of modern consumers expect a reply within 4 hours** [1] yet we still see automated responses from some sectors that suggest an answer may take up to 7-10 working days.

THE SURVEY

To try and get a better handle on what 2015 holds for customer service and how contact centres intend to use technology to respond to some of the challenges they may face, Business Systems partnered with Call Centre Helper to run a survey. The following report consolidates the results from over 100 contact centre professionals, spanning a variety of industry sectors to identify and share the industries customer service priorities for the year ahead.

Q1. WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE YOUR BIGGEST CUSTOMER SERVICE CHALLENGES IN 2015?

The results below indicate that the **delivery of service experience is still primarily focused around the contact centre** rather than looking at processes from a customer's perspective.



The second biggest challenge was budget based with **just over one in five respondents citing balancing budgets with service levels** as being an issue in 2015.

Q2. WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE BIGGEST EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT CHALLENGE YOU WILL FACE IN 2015?

At the top of the list came empowering staff with **almost 1/5 of respondents feeling that they should be giving staff more responsibility**. This may also have a direct impact on the second biggest issue of keeping staff absence down. If agents were more empowered in the work place and felt that they had more responsibility and ownership this may lead to less instances of absence.



Q3. WHAT DO YOU PREDICT WILL BE YOUR BUSIEST CHANNEL FOR CUSTOMER CONTACT IN 2015?

Despite all the media hype around social, **phones are still predicted to remain the premiere channel for customer contact in nearly 60% of contact centres** who responded to the survey.

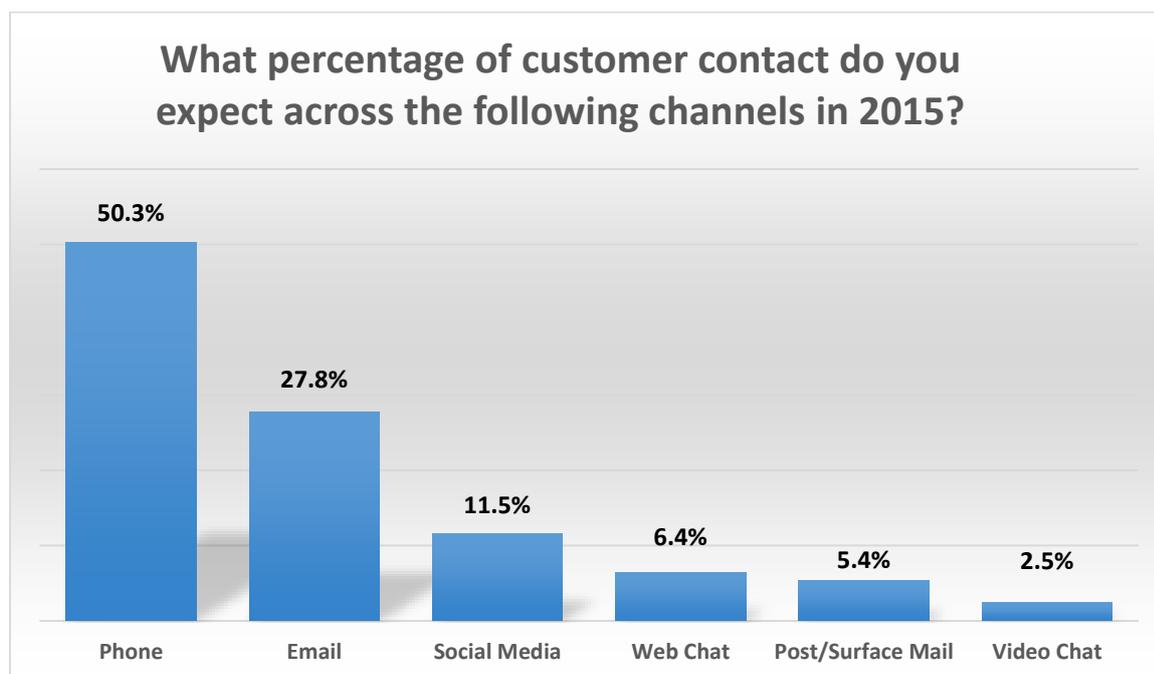
This of course encompasses calls from landlines, mobile and smart phones and industry analysts Forrester reports that 68% of call centre decision makers believe that mobile is important for the long term success of their customer relationships. [2]



Interestingly enough, of those organisations that predicted Social media would be their busiest channel, 31% of these were banking and insurance companies.

Q4. WHAT PERCENTAGE OF CUSTOMER CONTACT DO YOU EXPECT ACROSS THE FOLLOWING CHANNELS IN 2015?

Taken as an average across all responses received, contact centres expect at least **half of customer contact to come from phones in 2015**, followed by **just over a quarter by email** and **social media accounting for just over a tenth** of all customer contact.



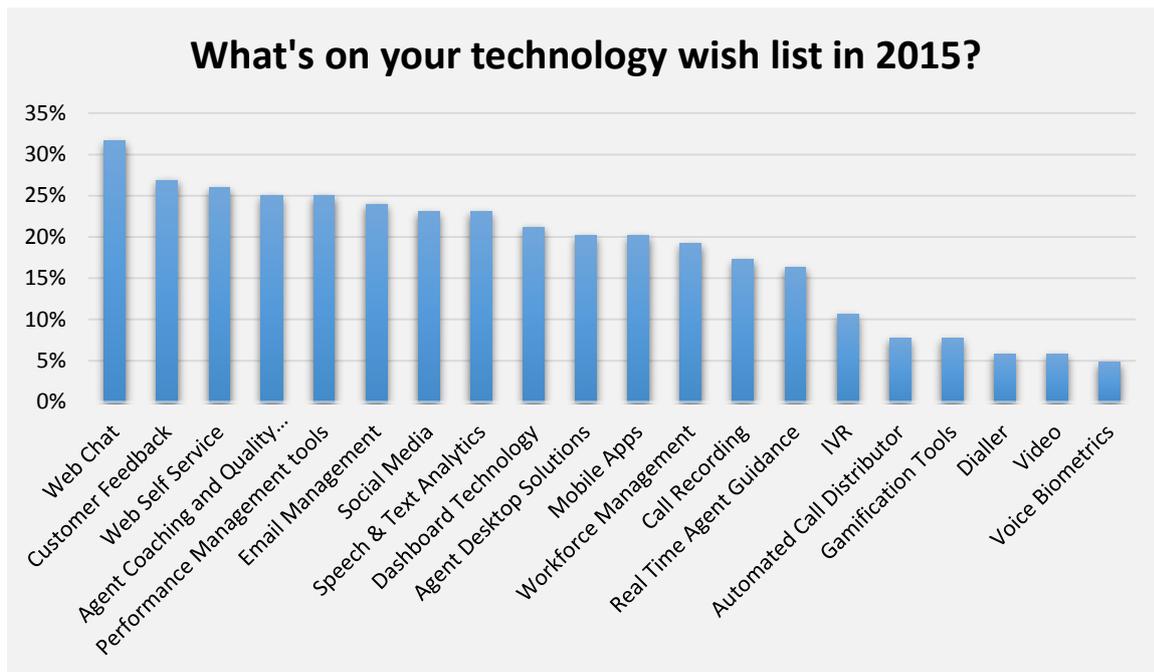
In some instances customer contact by phone accounted for 90% or above within a contact centre with housing being one of the main sectors predominantly handling a lot of phone calls. Where Social Media was expected to account for over 30% of customer contact in an organisation in 2015, responses were predominantly from banking and finance and travel and transport organisations.

Surprisingly post and surface mail still make it into the customer contact channel list and although a small percentage it is typically within just a few market sectors with housing, government, utilities and banking being the most prevalent.

Q5. WHAT'S ON YOUR TECHNOLOGY WISH LIST IN 2015?

In terms of technology investments this year, web-based technology seems to win the day with **31% of respondents stating web chat** was on their wish list and **26% hoping to invest in web self-service technology**. Web chat technology coming out highest on the list seems somewhat surprising as when taken as an industry average from these survey results, web chat is only expected to represent 6.4% of customer contact across all channels.

25% of respondents listed agent coaching and performance management based tools as being on their wish list which could help address those employee engagement issues flagged earlier on in the report around giving staff more responsibility and driving down absences. Similarly it does look like organisations are starting to think about addressing inbound customer emails more effectively with email management technology coming in at 24%. Social media technology follows closely behind at 23% indicating that investment in this channel is also a focus for the year ahead.



Q6. WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR TECHNOLOGY TO DELIVER FOR YOU?

First and foremost when implementing new technology it appears the biggest expectation on delivery of it, is that **it must improve the customer experience with over 62% of respondents stating this.**

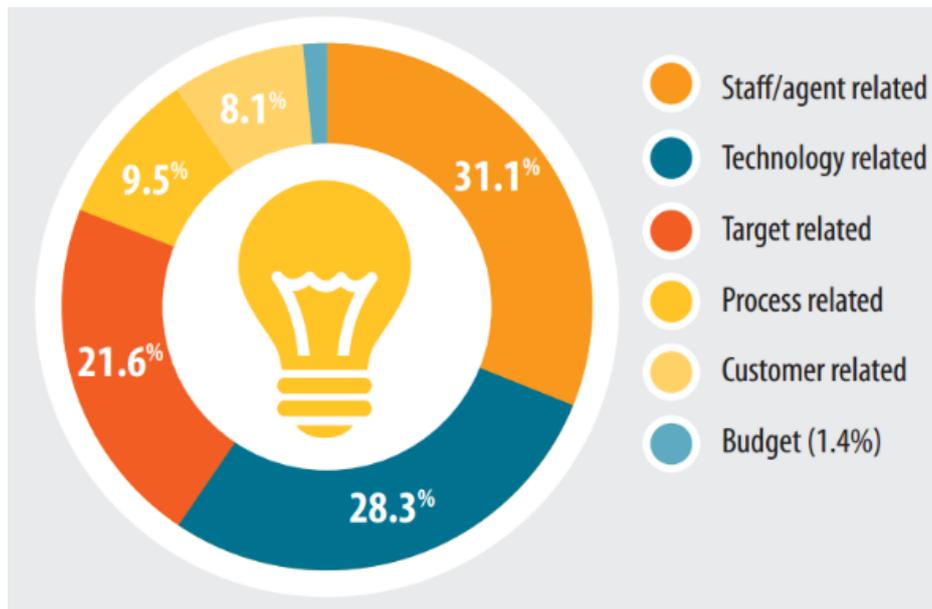


Improving first call resolution came in second at 45%, followed by better understanding the voice of the customer at 41%.

Less expectations were placed on the financial returns a technology investment would deliver such as reducing staffing costs or generating revenue through improved sales performance which is somewhat surprising as in many ways these are often the more tangible areas which can be measured.

Q7. IF YOU COULD IMPROVE ONE THING IN YOUR CONTACT CENTRE WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

Responses to this were wide and varied with no one particular area dominating. However when we categorised responses into 6 distinct areas as highlighted in the diagram below, agent related improvements came top at 31.1%.



The word cloud below provides a snapshot of some of the areas contact centre professionals highlighted they wanted to focus on for improvement in 2015.

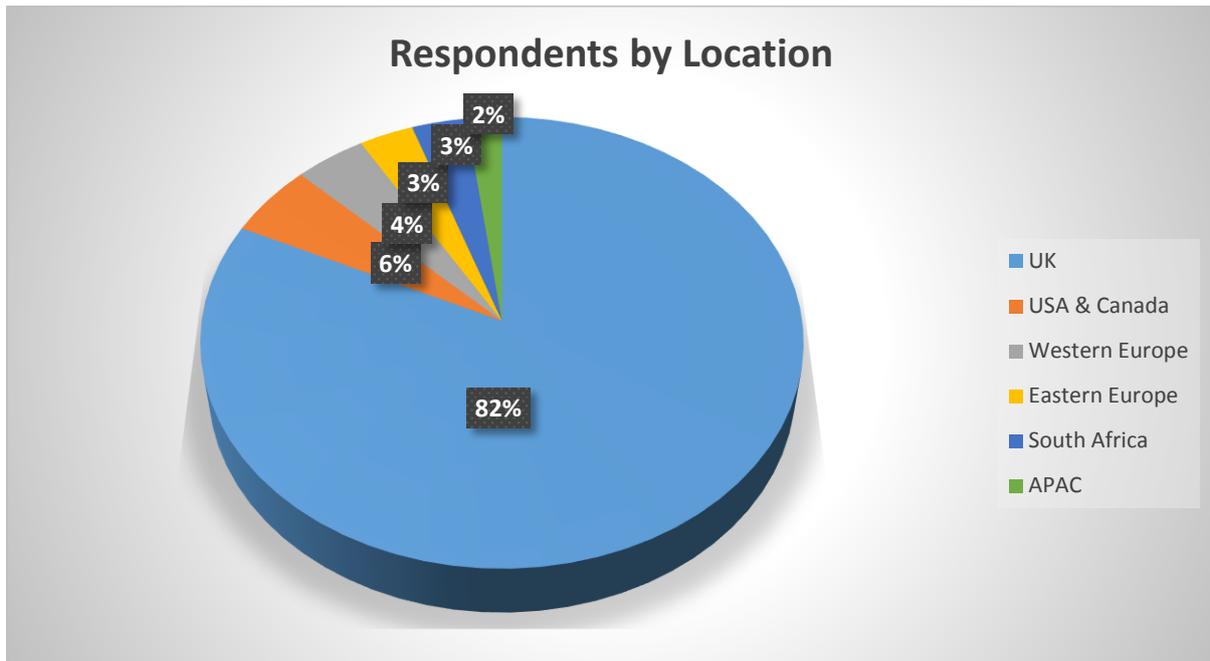


SURVEY RESPONDENTS BREAKDOWN

The information outlined below, provides a snapshot of the location, industry type and size of contact centre that respondents to the survey represented.

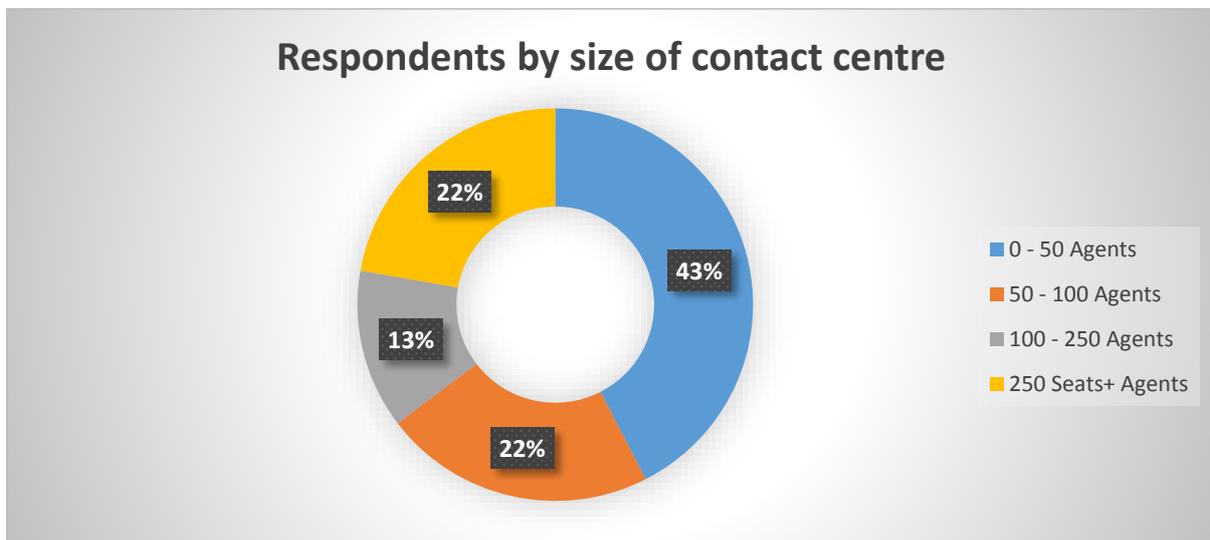
Q8. WHERE IS YOUR CONTACT CENTRE BASED?

Where this information was provided the majority of respondents to the survey were based in the UK, with smaller numbers represented by countries including; Denmark, India, Kenya, Latvia, Malaysia, Malta, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia.



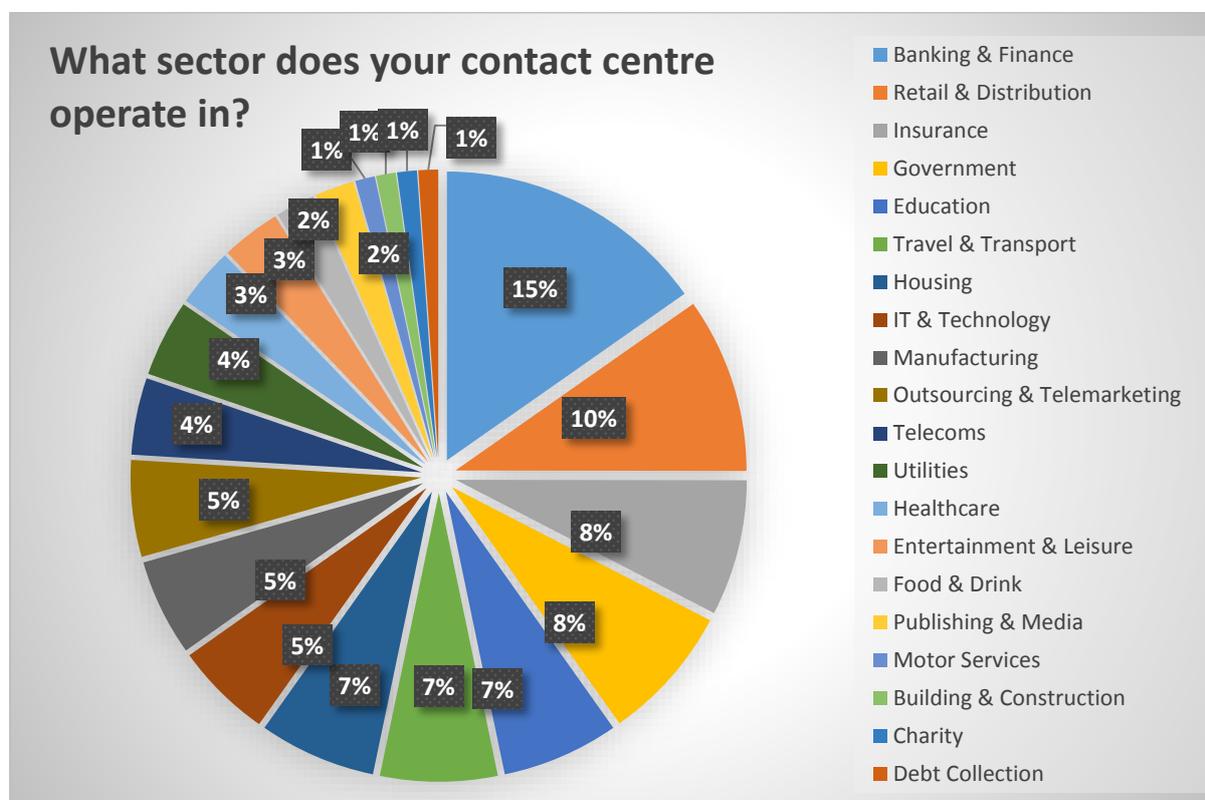
Q9. WHAT SIZE IS YOUR CONTACT CENTRE?

Just under half of respondents came from smaller contact centres represented by 0-50 agents. The remaining 57% were over 50 agents with a healthy 22% represented by the larger contact centres consisting of over 250 agents.



Q10. WHAT MARKET SECTOR DOES YOUR CONTACT CENTRE OPERATE IN?

Unsurprisingly **banking and finance comes out top with 15% of our survey respondents working within this sector**. According to a recent Contact Babel report, the finance industry is the largest employer with over 212,000 contact centre jobs in the UK. [3] Overall the survey respondents spans a healthy proportion of many different market sectors.



CONCLUSION

Across the industry, phone is still expected to be the predominant channel for customer contact in 2015, but social media does appear to be gaining on inbound emails and may even surpass it going into 2016.

Delivering a service centred around the customer and not the contact centre appears to be the biggest challenge for the year ahead and this is also reflected in the responses given to technology investments with 'web chat' and 'customer feedback' coming out top. Respondents may feel that these technologies in particular can help assist with developing a more customer friendly service centered less around the needs of the business and more around the desires of the customer.

The biggest challenges around employee engagement for the year ahead focussed on empowering staff and giving them more responsibility. To combat this, investment in agent coaching and quality monitoring technologies may feature heavily in the year ahead. It came 4th in the list of 20 technologies contact centres have on their wish list for investment and can help create a more collaborative culture with constant feedback and training, giving staff more ownership over their own development programme.

Conversely voice biometrics, gamification and video based technology came bottom of the technology wish list for the year. These are all relatively new and less established technologies in comparison to others listed and this may indicate a general lack of awareness as to the benefits of these technology offerings as well as the need for some proven case studies or reference sites to start emerging.

In terms of expectations from technology investments in the year ahead improving customer experience trumped all others followed closely by first call resolution (FCR). Those technologies which can clearly demonstrate how they will positively impact service experience and FCR are more likely to fair well.

Sources

[1] **FastCompany**: <http://www.fastcompany.com/3013177/creative-conversations/why-the-future-of-customer-service-is-self-service>

[2] **My Customer Contact Centre Guide, Pg 55**: <http://www.businesssystemsuk.co.uk/paper/mycustomer-contact-centre-guide>

[3] **UK Contact Centres in 2015: The State of the Industry and Technology Penetration (12th Edition)**
<http://www.contactbabel.com/pdfs/dec2014/UK%20SOITP%202015%20Marketing.pdf>

Contact centre technology solutions and advice are available from Business Systems (UK) Ltd
W: www.businesssystemsuk.co.uk T: 0800 458 2988  @BSLHQ