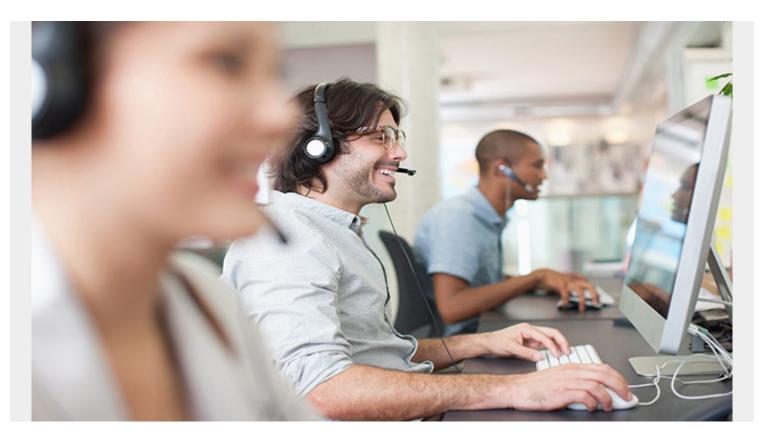# USING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION (CSAT) AS A SERVICE DESK METRIC

Current technology allows service desk managers to collect vast amounts of performance data. It is now easier than ever to collect data efficiently on everything from the percentage of first contact resolutions (FCR) to the average time it takes a team member to answer calls. Yet, amidst an abundance of data, it can still be difficult for managers to answer key questions about service desk performance. In fact, too much data can cloud the picture, making it hard to analyze performance properly, identify performance gaps, and make necessary adjustments.

As a result, it's important for service desk managers to identify key metrics to use to evaluate and improve service desk performance effectively. A key factor for service desk managers to keep in mind when going through this process is that when it comes to key metrics, it's less about having lots of data and more about having the right data.

The Importance of Using the Right Metrics

Given the time and resources that managers put into collecting and analyzing performance data, it's important to ensure that they're looking at and responding to the right data. As experts like to quip, "if you measure the wrong things, then you'll get better at the wrong things."

In contrast, using the right metrics enables managers to track performance over time and identify trends; benchmark performance; identify clear strengths and weaknesses; identify specific activities

to increase performance; and develop individual and team performance goals. Ultimately what this means is that for a service desk team to improve and meet performance goals consistently, it's essential that it measures and responds to meaningful metrics.

Why Customer Satisfaction is a Key Metric to Measure

One essential metric to measure is customer satisfaction. Experts in the industry suggest that it's a foundational metric that every service desk manager should track. There are a couple of reasons why this is the case.

First, customer satisfaction is the driving goal for service desk teams. The best teams are always working to maximize customer satisfaction, ensuring that customers consistently have what they need when they need it, and satisfying customer expectations. Since service desk teams are always working to develop methods to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, it logically follows that they should collect data around these same metrics.

Second, there are a number of key indicators that are impacted by customer service. As a result, measuring customer service provides information about a variety of organizational outputs and helps to simplify the data that managers use. For example, customer service metrics often include data on issues like average speed of answer, call quality, handle time, and first contact resolution. What this means for managers is that looking at customer satisfaction data can actually provide a good picture of the team's performance in a number of areas.

How to Develop Effective Customer Satisfaction Metrics

While it's important to use customer service metrics to drive service desk performance, it's not always easy to collect and use this data effectively. While the right metrics will look different for every team, there are a few best practices that service desk managers can follow when developing customer satisfaction metrics.

To develop effective metrics, service desk managers should start by asking themselves and their teams, "what data will give the right information?" As part of this analysis, they should consider what questions to ask to collect that information.

When going through this analysis, it's often helpful to determine what your team's critical success factors are as they relate to customer service. A few potential CSFs include:

1. It's easy for customers to contact the service desk, request help, and provide feedback.
2. The service desk communicates well with customers, keeps customers informed, and meets stated expectations.
3. Customer issues are resolved quickly and efficiently.
4. Customer requests are addressed quickly and efficiently.
5. Customer issues are regularly resolved by the first contact.

Creating a list of CSFs gives service desk managers a clear picture of what their team is working towards when it comes to customer satisfaction. From this list, managers can then develop the specific metrics, or key performance indicators, that they'll use to measure their team's performance towards these goals.

For example, for the first CSF listed above, relating to the ease with which customers can contact

the service desk, a manager might want to use metrics like:

- Can all customer interactions be initiated through either the phone or an online form?
- What is the percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds?
- What is the percentage of phone calls that are "abandoned" before being answered?
- What responses on a customer satisfaction survey shed light on "how easy is it to contact IT?"

Coming up with key metrics to evaluate each CSF is one effective way for managers to evaluate customer satisfaction effectively while using customer service as a key service desk metric.

Ways to Help Boost Customer Satisfaction Metrics

Some benefits of using strong metrics are that they will help to highlight your team's areas of strengths as well as weaknesses. While it can be challenging, identifying areas of performance gaps is a key component of helping your team to get stronger. With that in mind, after collecting data, it's often necessary for managers to develop ways to help their teams boost customer satisfaction. Even though all teams are different and have unique needs, there are a few effective ways to identify performance gaps that managers should keep in mind.

Utilize Automation

The more automated you can make your service desk, the more efficient it will become. Automation enables you to be strategic about how your team members spend their time, which makes your service desk run faster and more efficiently.

Create Self-Service Options

The more your team is able to develop its service portal, the more opportunities you give customers to handle issues on their own. Your service portal should give customers access to the service catalog and knowledge base. Effectively developing this option means fewer tickets and more thorough information about the tickets that do come across your service desk. Both lead to better and more efficient resolutions of customer issues.

Use Service Level Agreements

Service Level Agreements (SLAs) provide details about a ticket's scope of work while clearly setting expectations between the service desk and customer. Using SLAs helps customers understand what to expect while giving the service desk team guidelines for dealing with issues. Explore SLA Templates and SLA Best Practices on BMC Blogs.

Measure and Respond to Employee Feedback

Often, the service desk team can provide the most detail about what practices and procedures are most effective and the best ways to boost customer satisfaction. As a result, it's important to regularly survey team members, formally and informally, to get their feedback on the team's performance and potential areas of improvement.

Service desk managers have access to copious amounts of data. However, too much data can actually be counterproductive. Rather than getting lost in the data, consider focusing your team's

performance metrics on customer satisfaction. Developing strong customer service metrics is not always easy, but by using your team's critical success factors, you can create a list of key performance indicators to serve as this metric. Doing so will help to ensure that you're looking at the right data and effectively evaluating and constantly developing your team.

Additional resources

For more resources on IT service desk metrics and best practices, browse our Enterprise IT Glossary or view articles like these:

- Help Desk vs Service Desk: What's The Difference?
- Mean Time to Resolve (MTTR) as a Service Desk Metric
- Introduction to Critical Incident Response Time (CIRT): A Better Way to Measure Performance
- Creating a Service Desk Code of Conduct
- Introduction to the Enterprise Service Desk