

8 Metrics Every Customer Service and Support Leader Should Care About

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As business models and priorities evolve, and with ever-increasing pressure on service and support functions to reap the cost-efficiency and CX benefits AI offers, service and support leaders know they must reevaluate their metrics to better communicate functional value.

We recommend that leaders develop a hierarchy of metrics to demonstrate the contribution of service and support to broader enterprise goals. Start by articulating the function's business objectives and how they support enterprise goals, then build a cascade of metrics that demonstrate and drive service and support success against these objectives. While we recommend every leader undertake their own metrics reevaluation to take their brand positioning, channel portfolio, organizational structure, current maturity, etc., into account, eight metrics should feature in most organizations' metrics hierarchies (see Figure 1). This is because they support the two most common functional objectives of service and support leaders: driving growth through loyalty/disloyalty mitigation and reducing cost to serve.

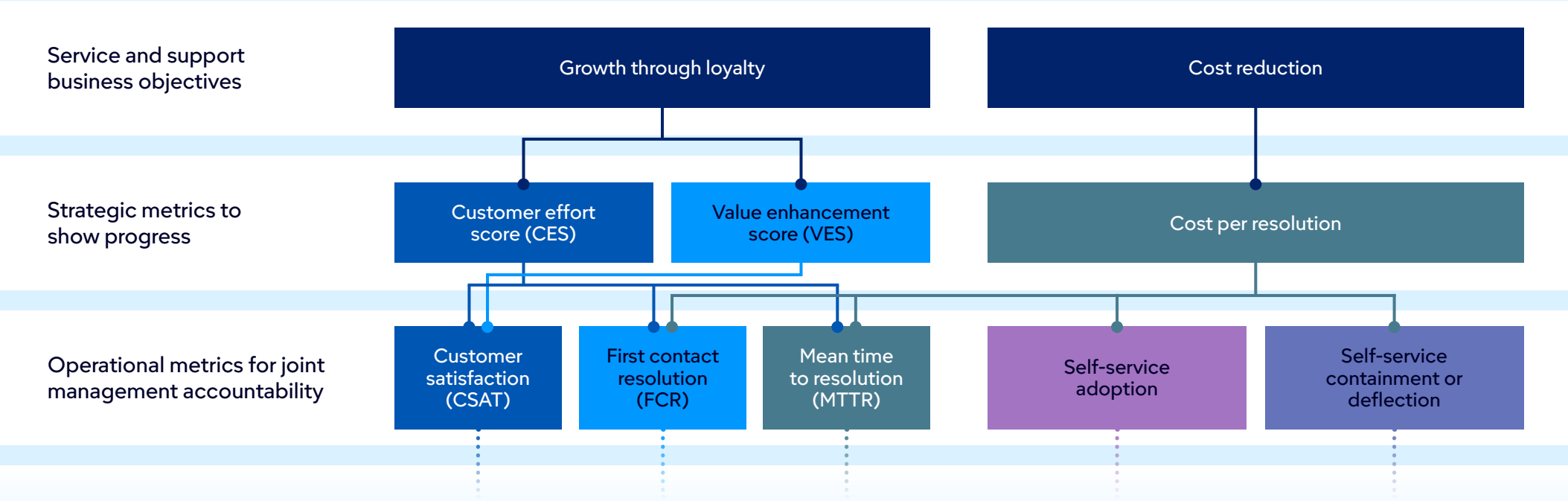
Often, however, these measures are either not measured at all, misprioritized in leaders' metrics hierarchies or calculated inaccurately, diminishing their power and the associated CX and cost improvement opportunities. **This insights report sets out how these eight metrics should be used within a service and support metrics hierarchy, the common challenges that prevent them from reaching maximum utility and follow-on deep-dive insights on each measure.**



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Figure 1: Eight metrics customer service and support leaders should care about

Strategic and operational metrics that support common business objectives



Source: Gartner

Strategic Measures

Strategic measures are the highest-level metrics in the service and support organization. They play a critical role in demonstrating direct achievement of the function's objectives to senior management and the board of directors. Leaders must present only one or — at most — two measures per objective.



Customer effort score



The most crucial task for service organizations is to defend loyalty by meeting customer expectations for low-effort experiences.¹ Seventy-one percent of customers with a low-effort service experience are likely to remain loyal, compared to only 13% of customers with a high-effort experience.² Low-effort service is a prerequisite for any additional, value-enhancing activities the function may undertake. Yet lower-effort experiences are increasingly challenging to deliver due to more complex customer requests and siloed customer journeys.

While leaders increasingly recognize the need to deliver low-effort experiences to defend loyalty, only 32% of service and support functions assess their performance using the CES.³ Capture CES as a strategic metric, derived from both VoC survey questions (capturing customer perceptions of whether the organization did everything possible to deliver a low-effort experience) and indirect and inferred analytics tools (capturing customer verbatim, sentiment and activity).

¹ Research Foundations: Inside the Low-Effort Service Organization.

² 2025 Gartner State of the Customer Survey.

³ 2024 Gartner Technology Trends in Service Survey.

Figure 2: CES questions

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

[The company] made it easy for me to handle my [issue].

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Source: Gartner

Figure 3: Example of a follow-up question with multiple choice options

We are disappointed to hear that you didn't have an easy experience. What was the reason for your score?

(Select all that apply)

- I had to repeat myself
- I had to be transferred
- I had to make multiple contacts
- I unsuccessfully tried to find the answer online
- Other: _____

Source: Gartner

Value enhancement score

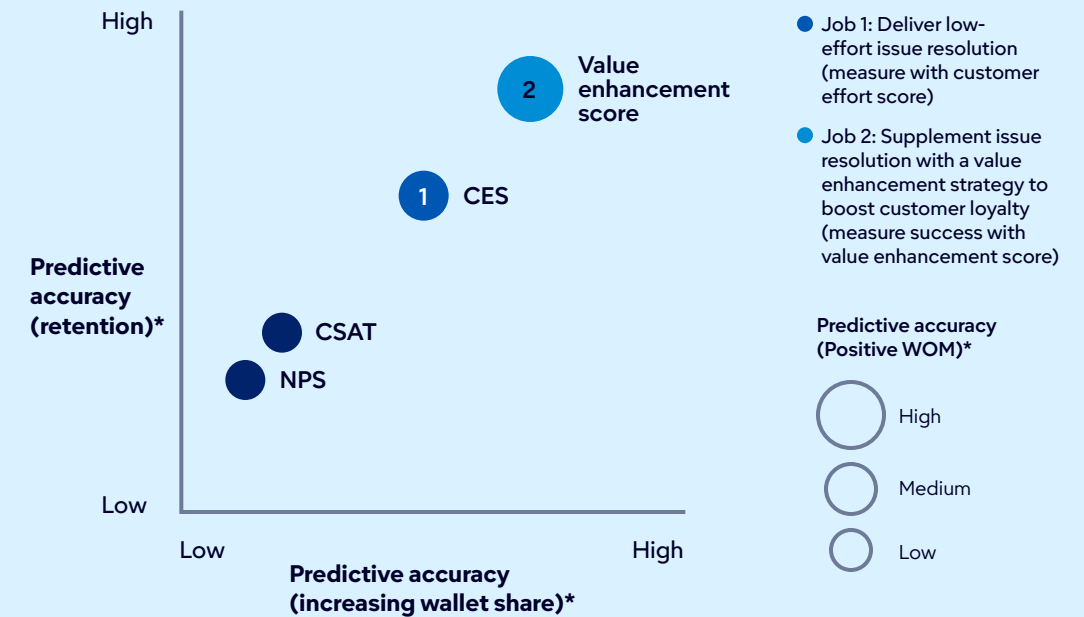


With growth under pressure, enterprise leaders are looking to service and support to drive larger contributions to enterprise and customer value beyond resolving issues. Yet many teams focus solely on resolution, missing the opportunity to help customers realize more value from their purchase. Furthermore, demonstrating service and support contribution to financial or renewal outcomes can be challenging.

Where this is the case, leaders should leverage the VES, which assesses whether a service and support interaction has enabled customers to achieve more with their product/service and increased their confidence in their decision to purchase. Compared with CSAT, CES and Net Promoter Score (NPS), this strategic metric is the most predictively accurate measure of the function's contribution to customer retention, wallet share and positive word of mouth.

Figure 4: Loyalty through customer service-predictive accuracy of key CX metrics

Predictive accuracy of key CX metrics: NPS, CSAT, CES and VES



n = 2,196

Source: Gartner Loyalty Through Customer Service and Support Survey

*Scale uses log odds as predictive accuracy.

Cost per resolution

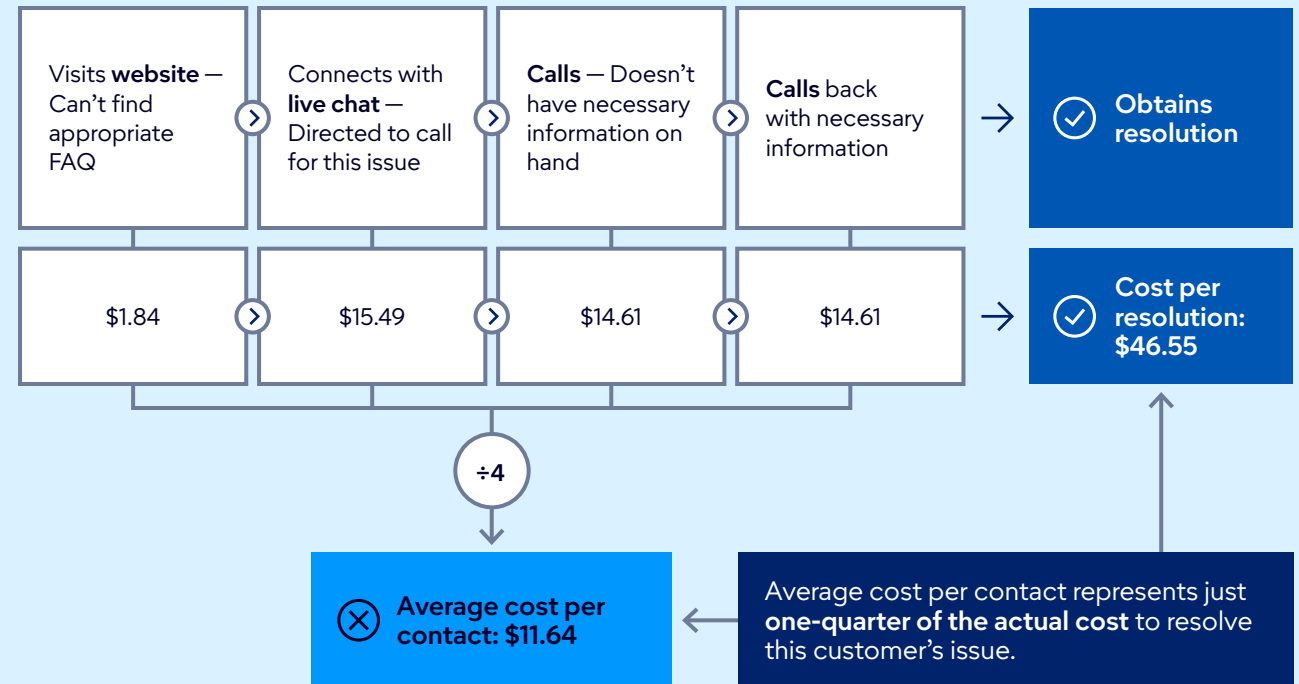


While more popular cost per contact or case measures help understand the total costs of specific interactions or assisted service cases, they fail to account for the cost of multichannel service and support journeys — and, in the case of cost per contact, repeat contacts — which are common. They can also incentivize short-term cost reduction efforts that erode CX.

Leaders should incorporate these measures into a more holistic, strategic cost per resolution measure that considers the cost to serve end-to-end customer journeys across channels and interactions. Doing so helps leaders prioritize cost-efficiencies through improved understanding of the cost drivers as well as the channels used, contacts required to resolve, and total fixed and variable costs for customer service and support.

Figure 5: Calculate the cost per resolution for a multichannel journey

Add the cost per contact per channel, multiplied by the number of times it is used.



n = 2,196

Source: 2020 Gartner Loyalty Through Customer Service and Support Survey

*Scale uses log odds as predictive accuracy.

Operational Measures

Leaders should frame operational measures as the key performance drivers that the service and support management team can take action to improve, which subsequently drive success in the strategic measures above.



Customer satisfaction



Although customer satisfaction is the most widely used measure by service and support organizations today,³ it is often misused and fails to drive CX improvement. The typical “How satisfied were you with the service experience?” question framing lacks actionability. While frequently presented as the function’s “hero metric” or the ultimate demonstration of its contribution to loyalty, it is less predictive than the CES or VES.

Instead of positioning CSAT as their hero metric, leaders should consider it an operational metric. Increase its actionability by designing detailed satisfaction questions to measure specific aspects of customers’ experience (e.g., speed of resolution, agent communication skills or understanding of needs) that support the strategic measures above.

Table 1: Examples of CSAT survey questions

Less effective CSAT questions	Examples of more effective CSAT questions	
<p>“How satisfied were you with the agent you spoke with?”</p>	<p>Agent satisfaction “Based on your interaction with the agent, how satisfied were you with the following?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to help • Taking ownership of resolving your issue • Setting clear expectations 	<p>AI tool satisfaction “How satisfied are you with the help you received from our chatbot or AI-powered support?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time it took to find what you were looking for • Ability to resolve your issue/ answer question • Ability to reach a human agent
<p>“How satisfied were you with the service experience?”</p>	<p>Resolution satisfaction “How satisfied were you with the time it took to resolve your issue?”</p>	<p>Onboarding satisfaction “How satisfied are you with the support and guidance you received during your onboarding?”</p>
<p>“How satisfied were you with our self-service website?”</p>	<p>Self-service satisfaction “What is your satisfaction with the following regarding our self-service portal?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time it took to find what you were looking for • Ability to resolve your issue/ answer question • Clarity of the website content 	

Source: Gartner

³ 2024 Gartner Technology Trends in Service Survey.

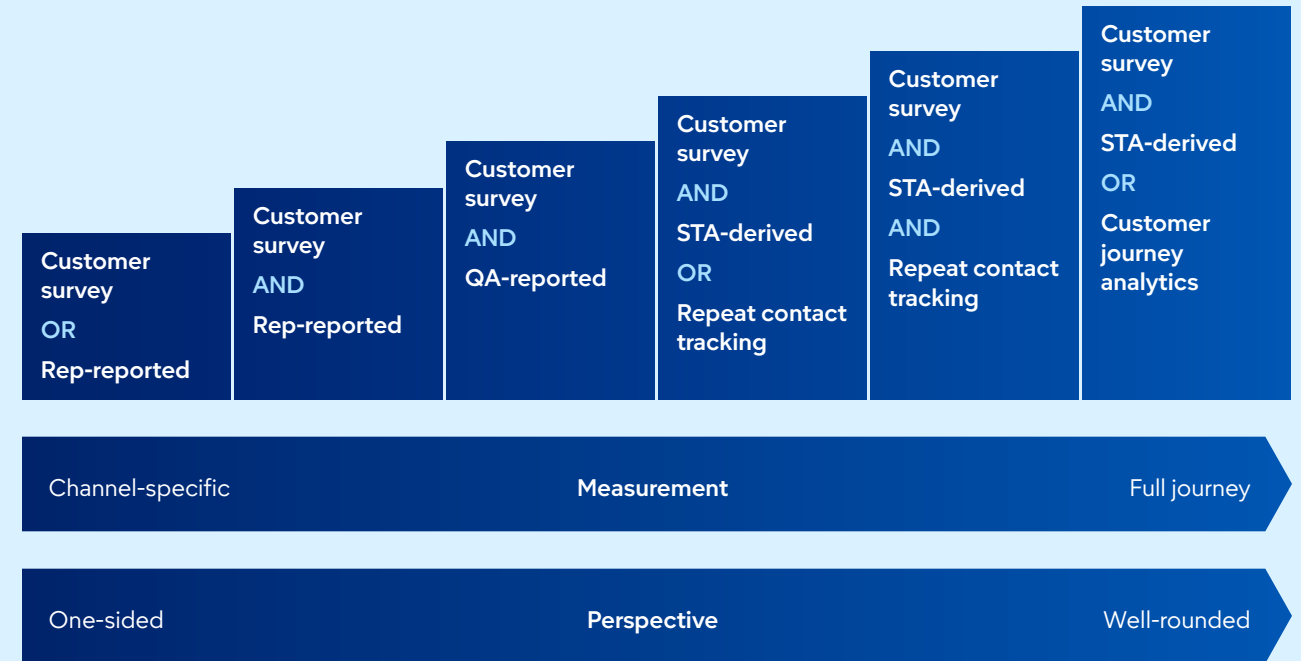
First contact resolution



The most important thing customers want out of a service interaction is resolution on their first contact with service and support, but only 30% of customers report achieving first contact resolution.^{2,4} Many leaders express disbelief at this figure; this is often because leaders calculate channel-specific views of first contact resolution (i.e., first “call” or first “chat” resolution, or FCR) with heavy reliance on agent reporting of case closure.

Instead, leaders must reposition first contact resolution to consider the customers’ broader multichannel journey across both self- and assisted-service and increase their measurement accuracy by multisourcing their data from sources like surveys, repeat contact tracking, conversation analytics and customer journey analytics.

Figure 6: FCR measurement maturity



Source: Gartner

QA = quality assurance, STA = speech and text analytics

Note: Exact combinations of measurement sources may vary, but increased maturity comes through the addition and combination of additional data sources.

² 2025 Gartner State of the Customer Survey.

⁴ 2024 Gartner Managing Customer Service Journeys Survey.

Mean time to resolution

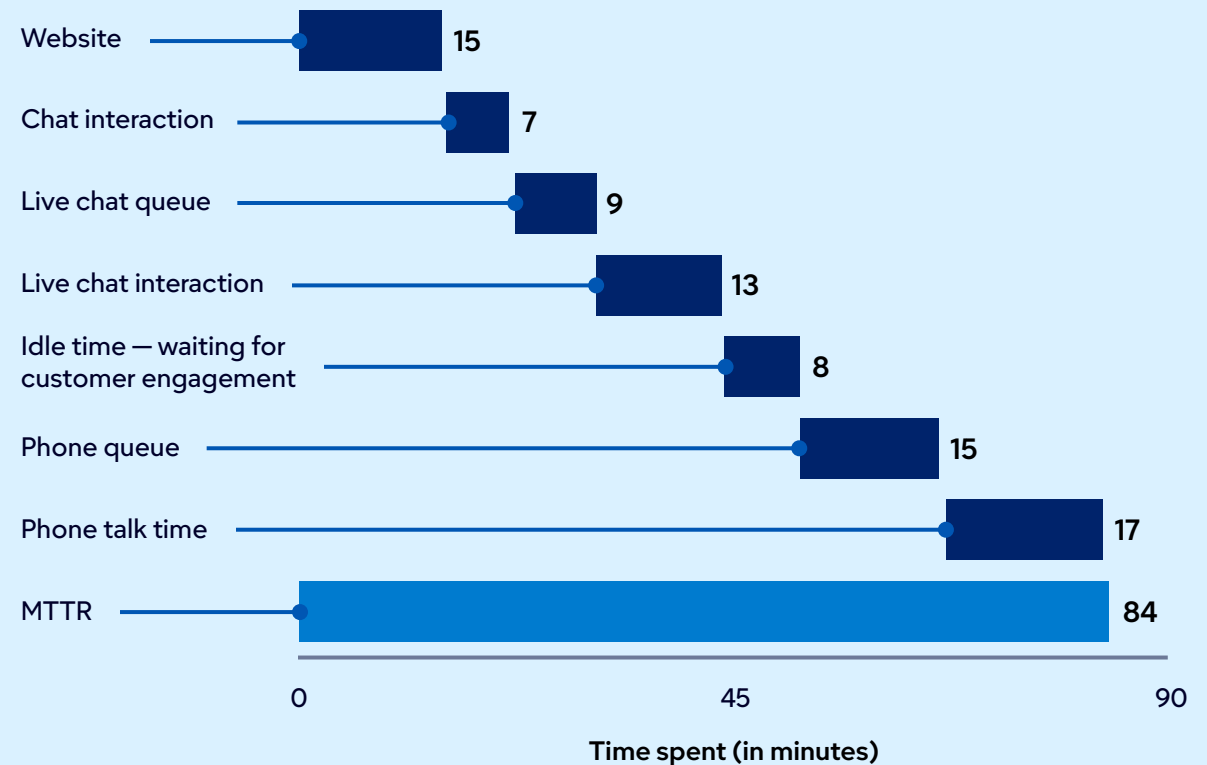


Although assisted-service interactions — commonly measured with average handle time (AHT) — often make up a significant portion of a customer’s time to resolve a service issue, customers also spend time interacting in self-service channels, transferring between self- and assisted-service channels, and following up where necessary to resolve a complex problem.

Leaders should consider this broader time spend — a significant contribution to perceptions of effort — when seeking to improve customer experiences with service. Focusing management on reducing the mean time to resolution across channels can drive investments in channel guidance and capabilities, more digestible knowledge articles and seamless handoffs between channels and agents.

Figure 7: Go beyond channel-specific AHT, to measure MTTR

Illustrative time spent on customer service journey



Source: Gartner

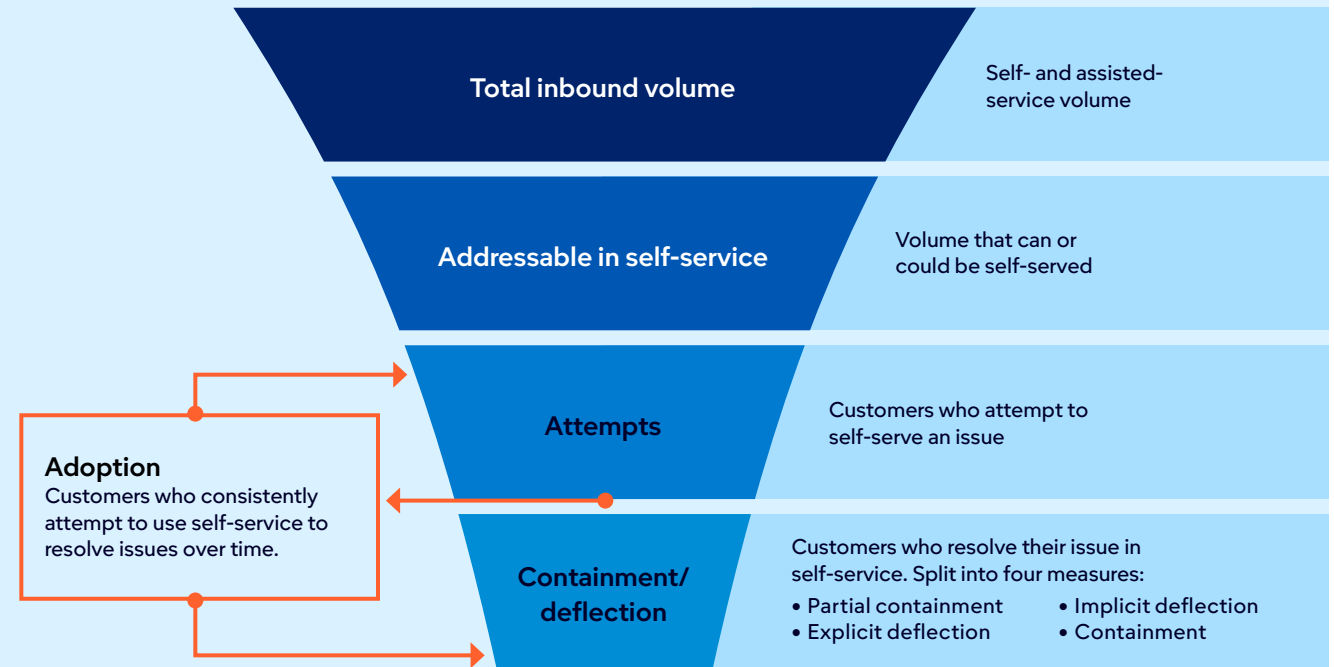
Self-service adoption



The ROI of self-service is driven by two main factors: the number of customers who attempt to solve their issue in these channels and the effectiveness of the capabilities offered. Self-service adoption is, therefore, an important measure to account for, as it considers whether customer engagement is sustained over time or whether a single bad attempt to use self-service puts customers off continued use of these tools.

Track self-service adoption — the percentage of customers who consistently attempt to use self-service over time for various issues — not just one-off attempts to use self-service or the resulting containment or deflection.

Figure 8: Measuring self-service success



Source: Gartner

Self-service containment and deflection

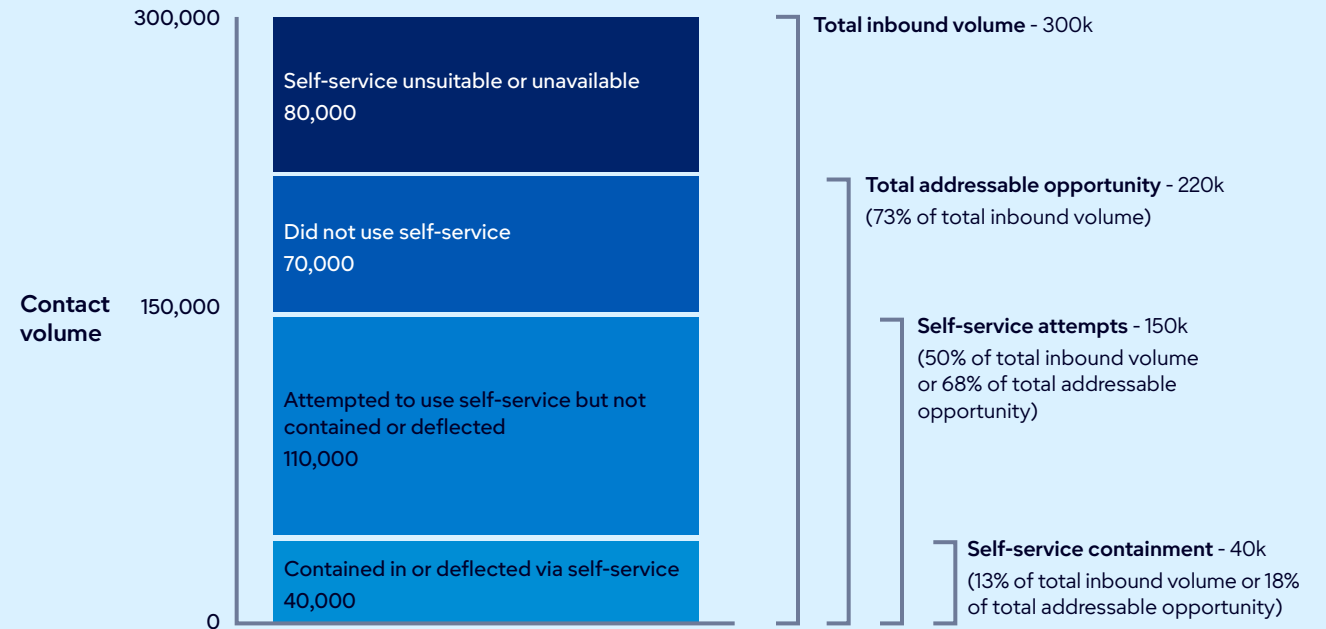


Containment (more commonly measured in B2C and the public sector) and deflection (common in B2B) are often calculated as the percent of total inbound volume resolved in self-service, overlooking that not all issues are suitable for digital resolution.

Instead, measure containment/deflection as a share of addressable issues, and distinguish between partial containment (where a purposeful handoff to assisted takes place); explicit deflection (customers abandon escalation after finding an answer); implicit deflection (customers resolve without escalating); and broader containment (regardless of whether the customer intended to reach out for assisted service or raise a ticket). This approach reveals where self-service truly adds value and where improvements are needed.

Figure 9: Measuring self-service success





Illustrative



Source: Gartner

Actionable, objective insights

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