CFI Group
CLAES FORNELL INTERNATIONAL

CONTACT CENTER SATISFACTION INDEX (CCSI)

REPORT | Q1 2022

Managing the Entire Customer Experience

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Recent estimates indicate there are nearly a half million call center agents across the US.[*] With COVID-19 quarantines generating a spike in online ordering, the critical role played by contact centers has become even more evident. While various sources place "typical" annual contact center employee turnover at approximately 30-40%, it is likely even higher now due to the "Great Resignation". This can create serious customer service challenges as customers indicate they are three times more likely to have increased their reliance on contact centers since the start of the pandemic. More customers are self-serving online, often finding solutions to simpler problems. That leaves more complex issues for contact center agents to address as customers have fewer options and/or more concerns about trying to discuss them in-person.

Companies can boost customer satisfaction by effectively managing the entire customer experience, from pre-contact internet searches or company website visits, to direct contact with a customer service agent, and to post-contact engagement through social media channels. Effectively managing the entire experience requires integrative thinking from contact center managers that stretches beyond the specific customer service interaction.

The CFI Group Contact Center Satisfaction Index study measures customer satisfaction after service interactions with contact centers. This year's report provides the latest information on customer experience, key drivers of customer satisfaction, trends in pre-contact website self-service, the impact of interaction with the agent, and post-contact interaction on social media as part of customer service.

[*]https://www.ibisworld.com/industry-statistics/employment/telemarketing-call-centers-united-states/

CFI GROUP SOLUTIONS FOR BUSINESS

SHERI PETRAS
CEO
Sheri manages offices across 4 continents from the CFI Group world headquarters in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

KELLY STALLARD
Program Director, Public Sector
Kelly manages CFI Group's practice for Citizen Satisfaction, Website Satisfaction, and Contact Center Satisfaction for public sector clients.

DAVID HAM
Program Director
Dave helps various public and private sector clients measure and manage customer, citizen and employee experiences.

RODGER PARK
Director of Customer Analytics
Rodger manages accounts in the public/military sector as well as others in both consumer and business-to-business contexts.
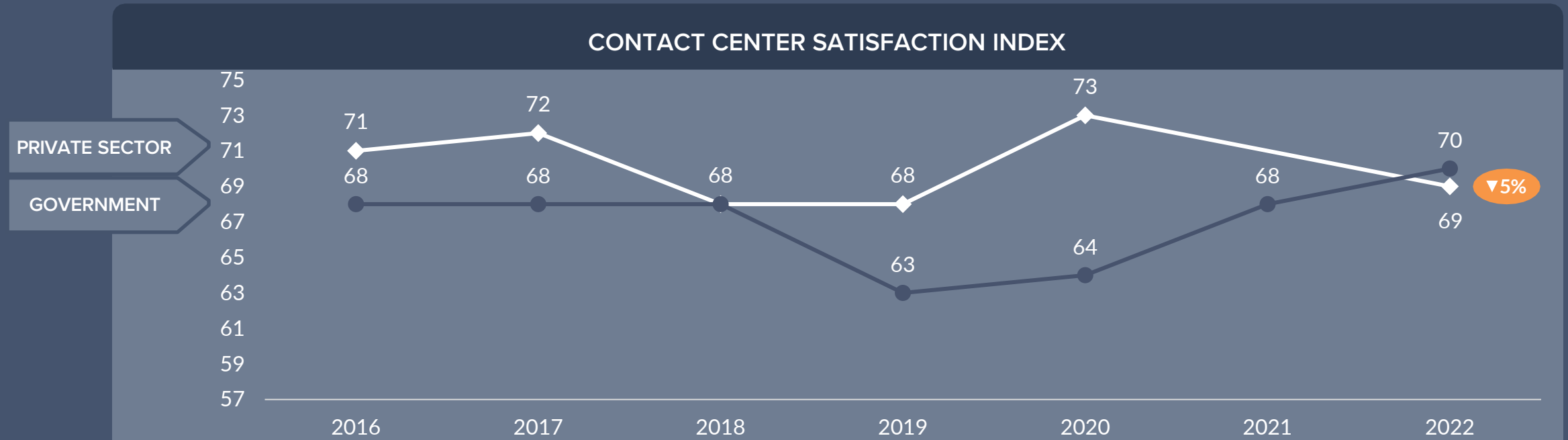
MICHAEL MAAS
Program Director
Michael manages largescale satisfaction and service improvement programs measuring both customer and employee satisfaction.

OVERALL SATISFACTION DECLINES

Contact Center Satisfaction Index (CCSI) is 69, as measured on a 0-100 scale, down three points from its peak in 2020. These results are based on a study involving a panel of 1,500 respondents who contacted customer service some time within the previous 30 days.

Private sector CCSI historically runs a few points higher than the public sector GCCSI, but government sector performance improved during the pandemic while the private sector declined.

Growing consumer preference for self-service means that contact centers are tasked with solving more complex problems. As a result, the data indicate that consumers must make more calls on average and endure more transfers until their issue is resolved. Customers are more likely to become frustrated and express those negative feelings on social media.

CONTACT CENTER SATISFACTION INDEX

PRIVATE SECTOR

GOVERNMENT

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Private Sector	71	72	68	68	73	70	70
Government	68	68	68	63	64	68	69

▼5%

* See full GCCSI Report at https://cfigroup.com/resource-item/gccsi-2020/

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AGENT EFFECTIVENESS AND EMPOWERMENT REMAIN AN ISSUE

To improve customer satisfaction with the contact center experience and their resulting actions, contact center managers must prioritize operational improvements among the six elements of the contact center experience.
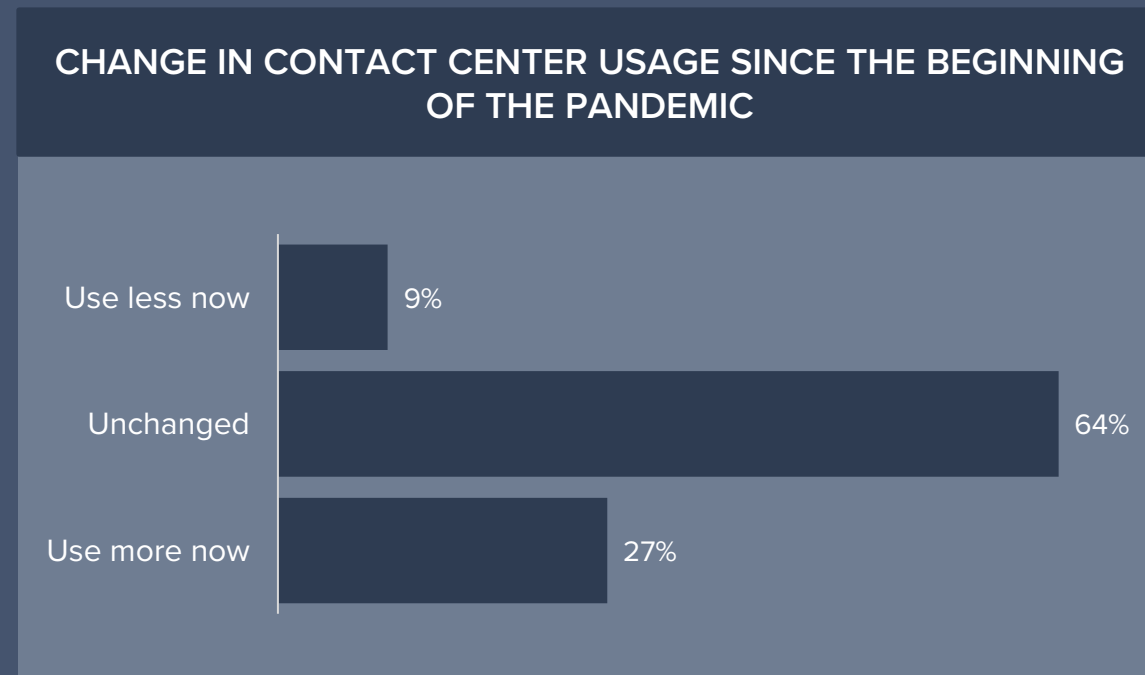
DRIVERS OF AN EFFECTIVE CONTACT CENTER EXPERIENCE

2020		2022	SATISFACTION DRIVERS		KEY MEASURES		
83	▼1%	82	AGENT DEMEANOR	Courteousness	Friendliness	Professionalism
81	▼4%	78	AGENT COMMUNICATION	Speaking/writing clearly	Explaining things in a way that is easy to understand	Using words that are easy to understand
78	▼3%	76	AGENT KNOWLEDGE	Ability to answer your questions in a timely manner	Ability to understand your situation	Ability to provide accurate information
76	▼3%	74	AGENT EFFECTIVENESS	Ability to answer your questions in a timely manner	Helping you find the information you need	Speaking/writing clearly
75	▼5%	71	AGENT EMPOWERMENT	Policies that make sense	Ability to offer a product or solution tailored to your situation	Being empowered to address your issues
58	0%	58	IVR SYSTEM	Ease of accessing information	Degree to which information met needs	Order of the menu options
--		73	CALL CENTER FEATURE IMPORTANCE	Call back to avoid holding	Caller recognition	Announcement of estimated hold time

*No data provided for 2021

PANDEMIC INCREASES CUSTOMER RELIANCE ON CONTACT CENTERS

With customers increasingly transacting online during the COVID-19 pandemic, they have also become more reliant on contact centers to handle issues as they arise. 27% of respondents report using contact centers more frequently during the pandemic — a subset three times larger than those who report using contact centers less frequently.

CHANGE IN CONTACT CENTER USAGE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PANDEMIC

Category	Percentage
Use less now	9%
Unchanged	64%
Use more now	27%

1 **PRE-CONTACT:** The Digital Experience

CUSTOMERS INCREASINGLY TRYING TO RESOLVE AN ISSUE BEFORE CONTACTING SERVICE

FREQUENCY OF TRYING TO RESOLVE ISSUES BEFORE CONTACTING CUSTOMER SERVICE

Response	Percentage
Always	36%
Most of the time	38%
Some of the time	21%
Never	5%

Multiple responses allowed
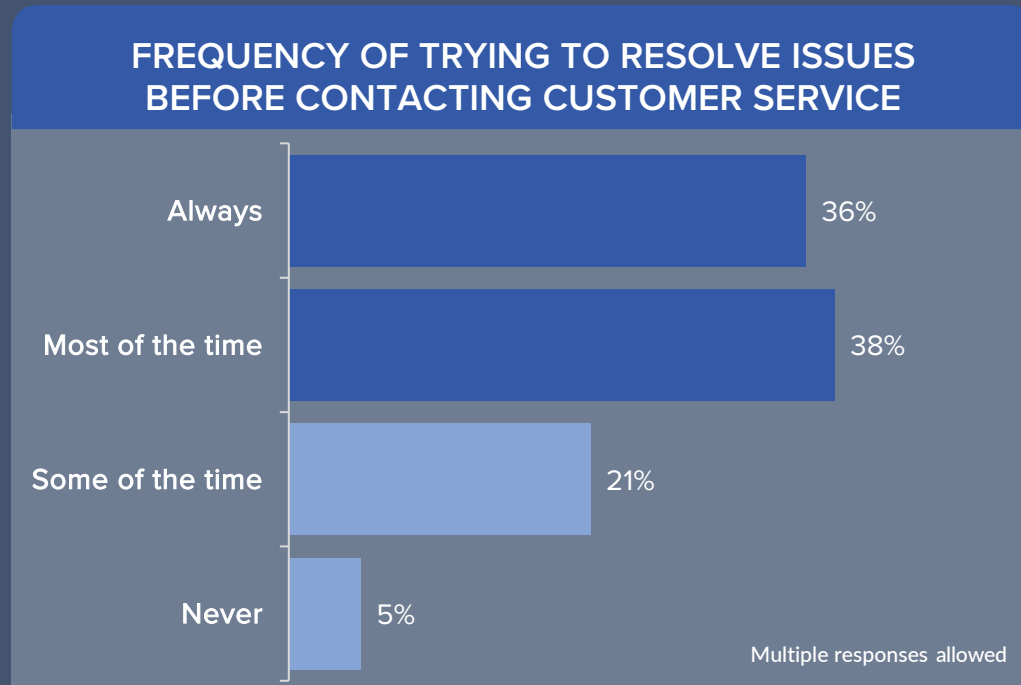
Before contacting customer service, most customers have tried resolving their issue on their own. Our study shows that 36% always attempt resolution before reaching out to customer service (up from 32% in our prior study), and another 38% (up from 34%) say they do so most of the time. The customer service journey begins as soon as a customer initiates their search for a way to resolve an issue.
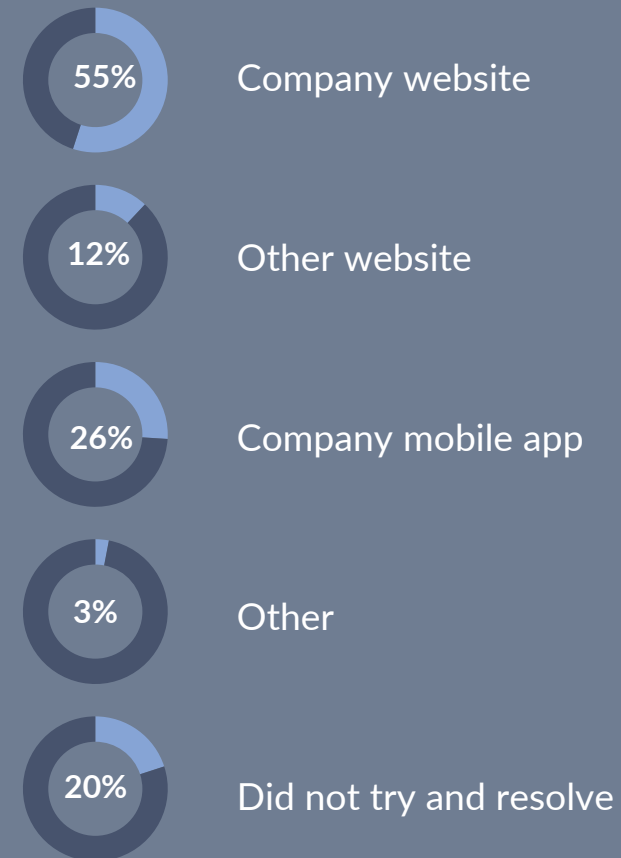
AS MORE CUSTOMERS TRY TO SELF-SERVE, DIGITAL CHANNELS GROW IN IMPORTANCE

Findings indicate that among customers who contact customer service, 55% have already tried to resolve the issue using the company website (up from 42%), and 26% (previously 19%) have checked with the mobile app.

If these customers had been able to locate the necessary information or tools to easily address their problem, they would not have tied up customer service resources.
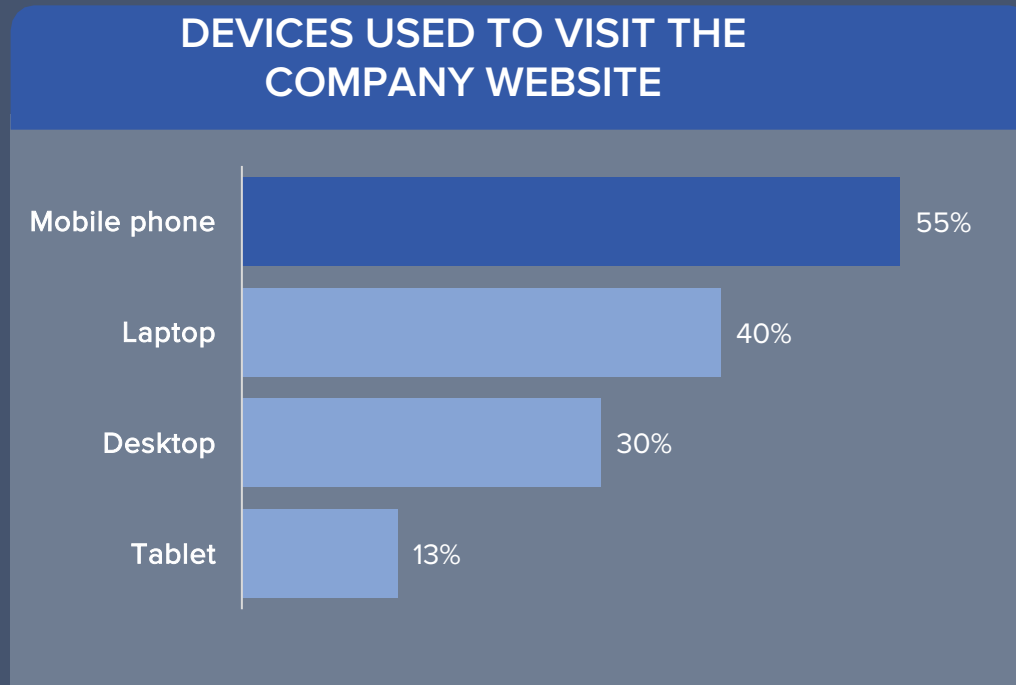
It must be noted that as more customers can resolve simple issues online, those who do contact customer service will do so with increasingly complex issues, making the average customer service contact more difficult to handle.

METHODS CUSTOMERS TRIED BEFORE CONTACTING CUSTOMER SERVICE

55% Company website

12% Other website

26% Company mobile app

3% Other

20% Did not try and resolve

* Multiple responses allowed

MOBILE DEVICES ARE USED OVER HALF THE TIME TO VISIT COMPANY SITES

DEVICES USED TO VISIT THE COMPANY WEBSITE

Device	Percentage
Mobile phone	55%
Laptop	40%
Desktop	30%
Tablet	13%

Over half of all website visitors use a mobile device prior to contacting customer service.

Providing access to mobile-friendly resources to solve common customer problems can greatly reduce customer effort as well as the overall contact center workload.

The fact that the channels used total well over 100% on this chart indicates that customers often make several attempts to find a solution online using multiple devices, often starting with mobile before moving to a laptop or desktop.

2 **CONTACT:** The Agent Experience

PHONE CALLS REMAIN THE MOST COMMON CUSTOMER SERVICE CHANNEL, SOMETIMES BY CHOICE AND OTHERS BY NECESSITY

Phone calls are still the dominant contact method, with 72% of those who contact customer service doing so over the phone.

This does not mean that contact centers can neglect other channels. Among customers using other means of contact, 27% use email and 15% use online chat (up from 10%). At the same rate as online chat, 15% of customers connect using an online contact form, though the communications delay with this approach poses a problem as customers seek real-time customer service, with ever-increasing expectations for timely responses.

Social media continues to grow as a channel for interacting with customer service. We see 7% of customers contact customer service through Facebook, while 4% use Twitter. We expect further growth in these channels as contact centers increasingly make social media a standard platform for customer service engagement.
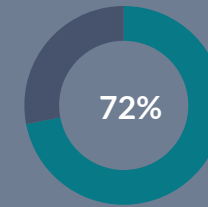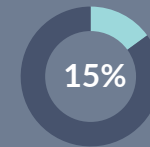
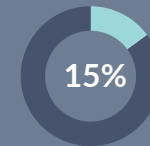**72%** **Contacted Customer Service by Calling on the Phone**
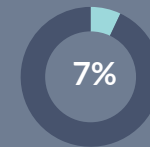
OTHER METHODS CUSTOMERS TRIED TO CONTACT CUSTOMER SERVICE

27% Email
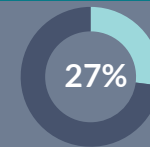
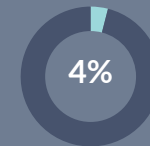**15%** Online contact form

15% Interactive (online) chat

7% Facebook

4% Twitter

* Multiple responses allowed

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AS MORE CUSTOMERS SELF-SERVE, CALLERS MAY HAVE MORE COMPLEX NEEDS

FIRST AGENT RESOLUTION

CCSI

	1 Agent	2 Agents	3+ Agents
CCSI	79	64	45
%	55%	31%	13%

FIRST CALL RESOLUTION

	First	Second	Third	Fourth+	Unresolved
CCSI	82	68	58	53	31
%	47%	26%	14%	6%	7%

CALL HANDLE TIME

	1-5 min	6-10 min	11-15 min	16-20 min	21-30 min	> 30 min
CCSI	77	79	75	70	65	51
%	22%	22%	13%	9%	15%	20%
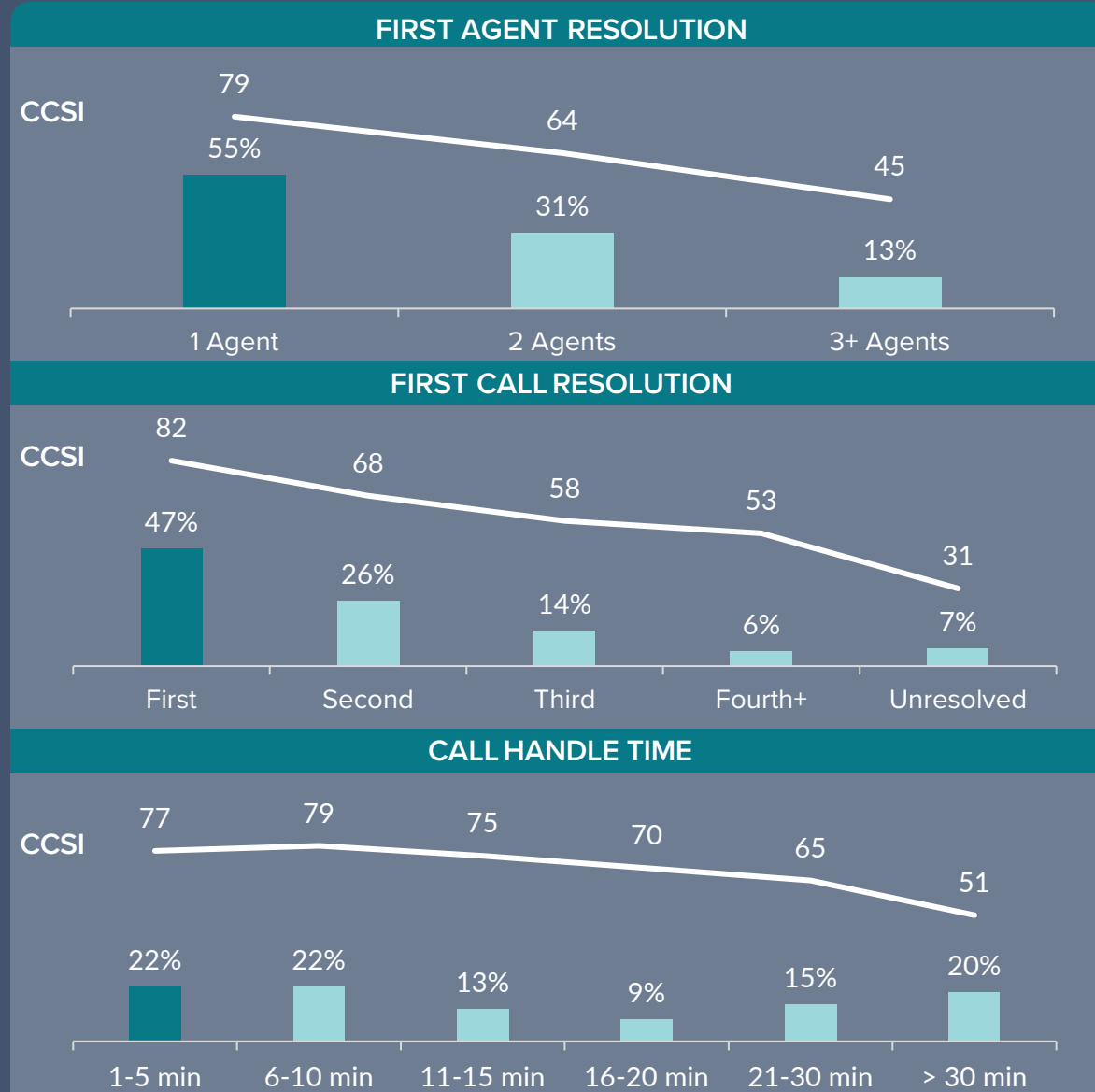
The key to a successful customer service call is an effective agent empowered by their organization to make decisions when addressing customer issues. Effective and empowered agents deliver on three key satisfaction metrics: first-agent resolution, first-call resolution, and low call-handle times.

FIRST-AGENT RESOLUTION — The CCSI is 79 for the 55% of callers who say their issue is resolved by the first agent (down from 63% last time). The CCSI falls as the number of agents needed to resolve the issue increases.

FIRST-CALL RESOLUTION — Only 47% of callers say that the issue is resolved within the first call (previously 60%), with an average CCSI of 82. CCSI declines as issues require multiple contacts.

CALL-HANDLE TIME — 22% of callers say the contact is handled in five minutes or fewer (up from 17%), with a CCSI of 77 (down from 81). Another 22% of all calls are handled within 6-10 minutes, with CCSI of 79. Beyond 10 minutes, satisfaction declines significantly. A key takeaway is that as the incidence of quick calls has risen, the satisfaction with such calls has decreased. The shortest calls could be resulting in customers feeling rushed.
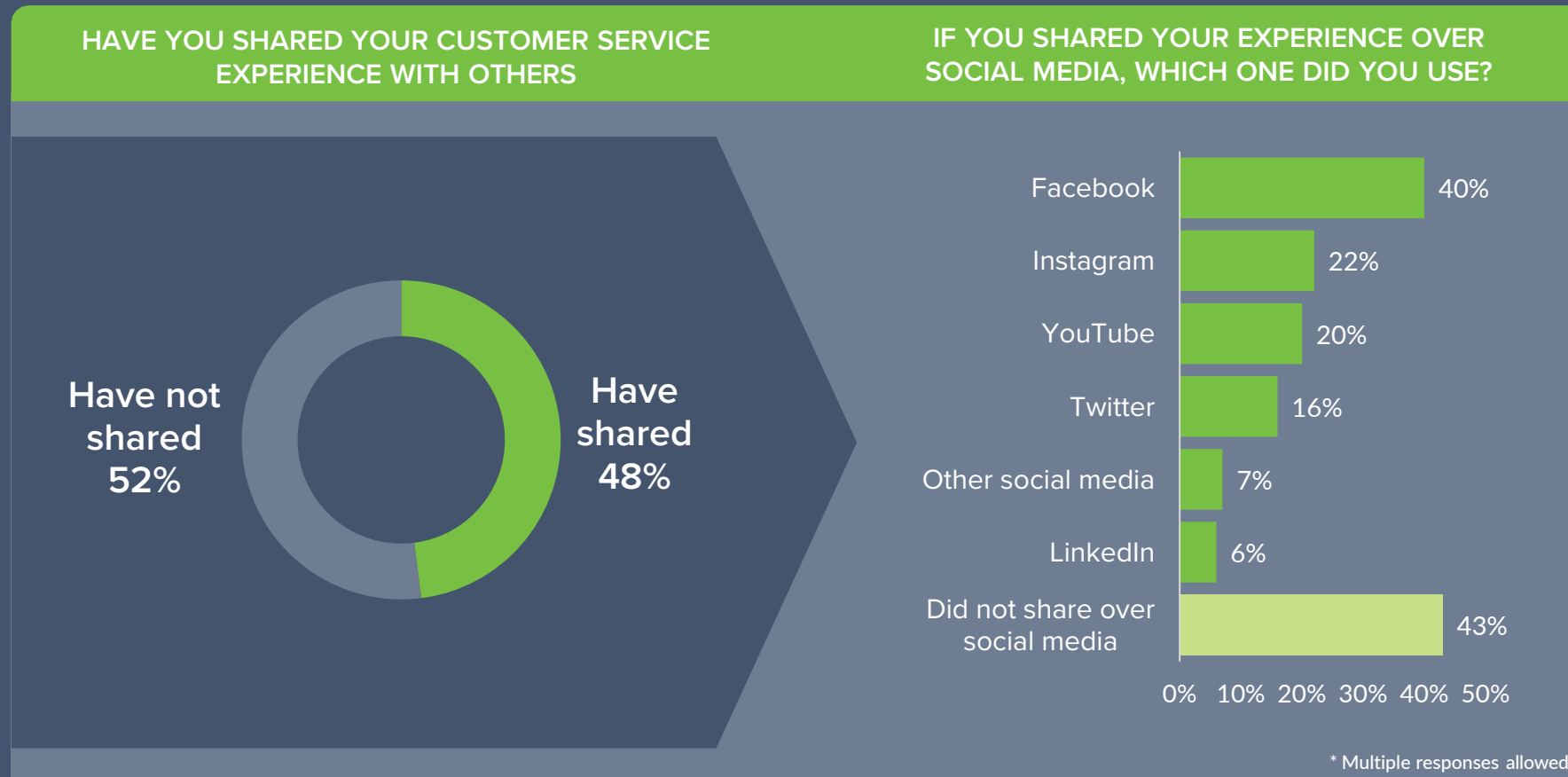
3 **POST-CONTACT:** The Social Experience

NEARLY HALF SHARE THEIR CONTACT CENTER EXPERIENCES AND THEY TEND TO BE LESS SATISFIED CUSTOMERS

Many customers tell others about their experience with customer service. Our study found that nearly half (48%, up from 36%) actively share details of their customer service experience. And over half of those who share now do so on social media. Most social media posts regarding customer service experiences are made on Facebook (40%), followed by Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter (16%-22%). Contact center managers should actively monitor the most relevant social media platforms for their customer base and engage with posts as an extension of the customer service journey.

Customers who shared their experiences have a CSI of 68. Those who did not had a higher satisfaction score of 71.

HAVE YOU SHARED YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE WITH OTHERS

Have not shared
52%

Have shared
48%

IF YOU SHARED YOUR EXPERIENCE OVER SOCIAL MEDIA, WHICH ONE DID YOU USE?

Platform	%
Facebook	40%
Instagram	22%
YouTube	20%
Twitter	16%
Other social media	7%
LinkedIn	6%
Did not share over social media	43%

* Multiple responses allowed

ABOUT THE APPROACH

Since 2007, CFI Group has conducted an extensive study of contact center customer satisfaction using proven technology powered by our patented customization of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®). All survey panel respondents had contacted customer service within the previous 30 days. This report analyzes the aggregate set of respondents across the industries measured.

The purpose of this study is to help managers better understand how to measure and manage the whole customer service journey including the pre-contact, contact, and post-contact experiences.

Contact centers play a vital role in supporting and delivering a company's products and services. CFI Group focuses its contact center study on six primary industries:

- ✓ Bank/Credit Union
- ✓ Cable or Satellite TV
- ✓ Cell Phone Service
- ✓ Insurance – Property and Casualty
- ✓ Insurance – Health
- ✓ Retail

Within this group, the range of functions performed by the contact center is far-reaching. Centers must provide technical support, give policy information, and handle complaints, often among countless other responsibilities.

This year's CCSI study continues the exploration of how well contact centers deliver services and resolve issues. It examines trends and offers recommendations to improve satisfaction with the contact center experience.

ABOUT US

CFI Group delivers customer experience measurement and business insights from its Ann Arbor, Michigan headquarters and a network of global offices.
As founding partner of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®), CFI Group is the only company within the United States licensed to apply customized ACSI methodology in both the private and public sectors. Using this patented technology and top research experts, CFI Group uncovers the business drivers and financial impact of customer experience.

For more information, visit **cfigroup.com** or contact:

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