

# GOVERNMENT CONTACT CENTER SATISFACTION INDEX (GCCSI)

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REPORT | 2018

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# INTRODUCTION

Since 2010, CFI Group's annual Government Contact Center Satisfaction Index (GCCSI) has measured the customer experience across the government customer service journey. In this eight-year span, the role of contact centers has become increasingly complex. Agents are not just expected to answer questions, but understand all aspects of customer service channels. Understanding how to integrate the role of the contact center into this increasingly complex customer service experience is critical to a successful customer service journey.

The GCCSI emphasizes the importance of measuring satisfaction across three primary channels:

- 1 DIGITAL PROPERTIES
- 2 AUTOMATED INTERACTIONS
- 3 LIVE AGENTS

## CFI GROUP SOLUTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT



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Sheri manages offices across four continents from the CFI Group world headquarters in Ann Arbor, Michigan.



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Rodger manages accounts in the public/military sector as well as others in both consumer and business-to-business contexts.

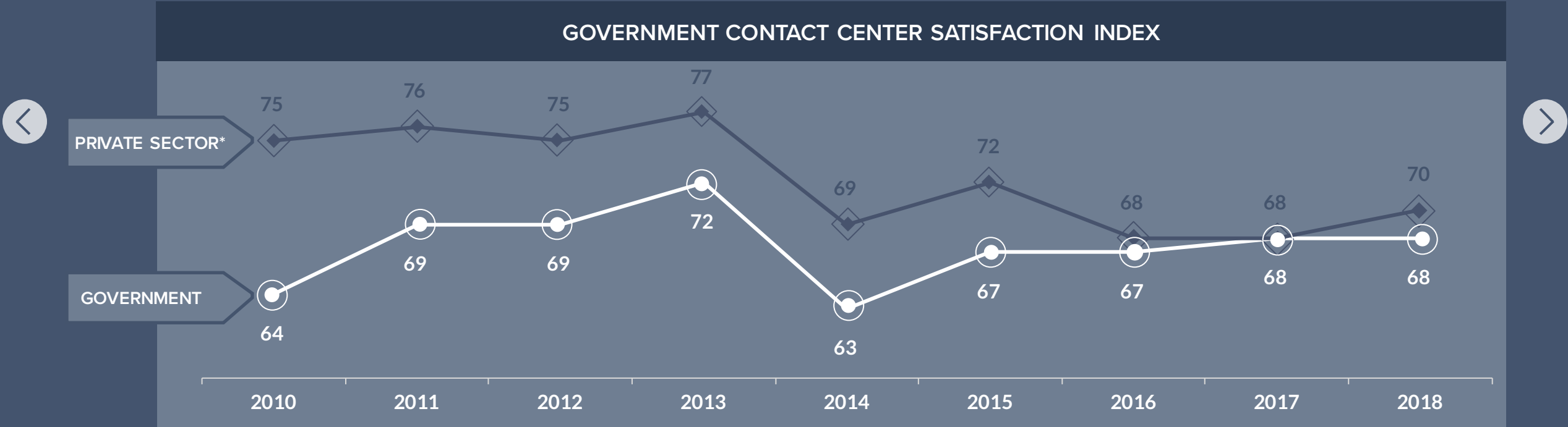


**GOVERNMENT CONTACT CENTER SATISFACTION INDEX (GCCSI)**

# GOVERNMENT CONTACT CENTER SATISFACTION REMAINS FLAT

The Government Contact Center Satisfaction Index (GCCSI) is 68, as measured on a 0-100 scale, unchanged from 2017. These results are based on a survey of 732 respondents who had contacted an agency or organization within the federal, state, or local government for customer service in the last 30 days.

Historically, the Private Sector contact center has run a few points higher than the public sector. The gap closed in 2016, but it opened back up in 2018, as the private sector index moved up to 70.

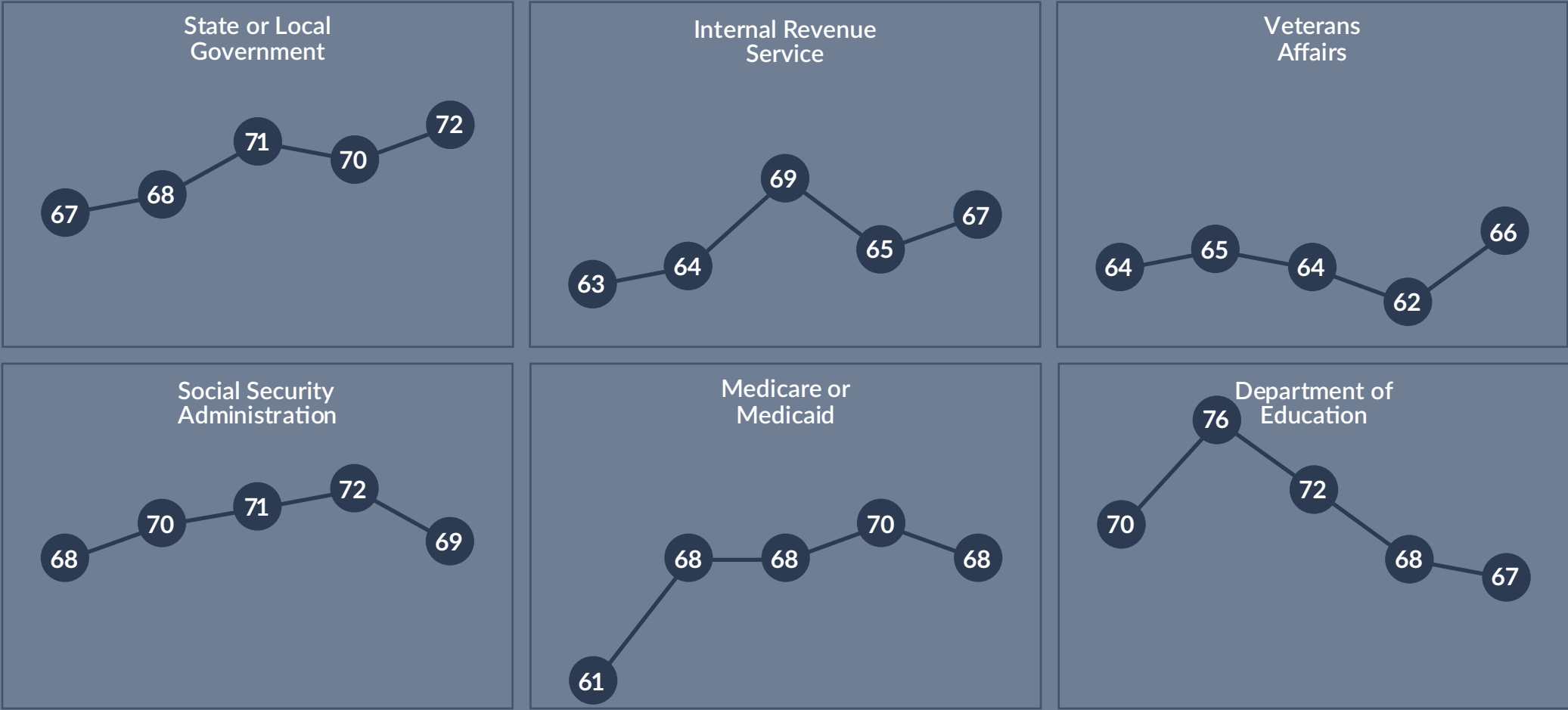


\* See full CCSI Report at <https://cfigroup.com/resource-item/contact-center-satisfaction-2018/>

# GCCSI 5-YEAR TRENDS

The 5-year GCCSI trends by key agency/sector are mixed.

## CONTACT CENTERS MEASURED IN THE GCCSI



# GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE SATISFACTION DRIVERS BELOW PRIVATE SECTOR

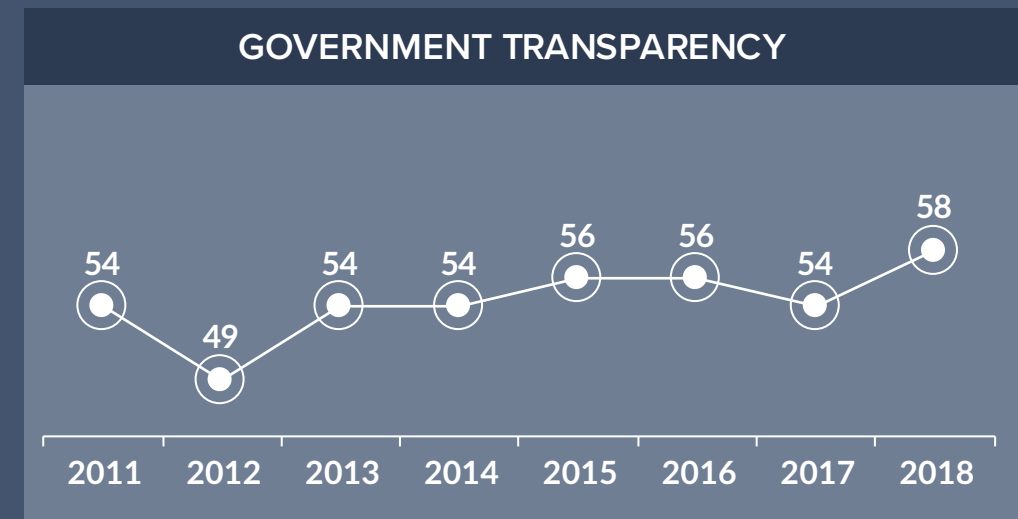
For 2018, scores for the Government satisfaction drivers are 3%-7% lower than scores for the Private Sector. In both sectors, the area of agent Empowerment scores the lowest, indicating both the importance and challenge in allowing contact center agents to exercise discretion when addressing a customer service issue.

GOVERNMENT VS. PRIVATE SECTOR			
AGENT DRIVERS	Pvt 2018	Gov 2018	Δ
1 Demeanor	82	78	-5%
2 Communication	80	77	-4%
3 Knowledge	76	73	-4%
4 Effectiveness	74	72	-3%
5 Empowerment	72	67	-7%

# GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY REACHES AN 8-YEAR HIGH

A key desired outcome from the contact center experience is a customer's sense that the agency and government overall are transparent. Transparency became an emphasis under the Open Government Initiative. Under this initiative, agencies are encouraged to be more transparent, publicly accessible, and collaborative.

Although the transparency score for government (58) remains low, 2018 represents an eight-year high.





A background image of two women with curly hair, one in a white sweater and one in a polka-dot shirt, smiling and looking at a tablet together. The image is slightly blurred to make the text stand out.

**44%** SHARE THEIR CUSTOMER  
SERVICE EXPERIENCE  
WITH OTHERS

**MEASURING THE CUSTOMER SERVICE JOURNEY**

# MEASURING THE CUSTOMER SERVICE JOURNEY

Government agencies need to measure the entire customer service journey to understand the full customer experience. It is no longer sufficient to simply measure interactions with contact centers in isolation. A customer's attempt to find answers via other channels will significantly impact their contact center performance evaluation and customer satisfaction overall.

## THREE CHANNELS OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICE JOURNEY

### DIGITAL PROPERTIES

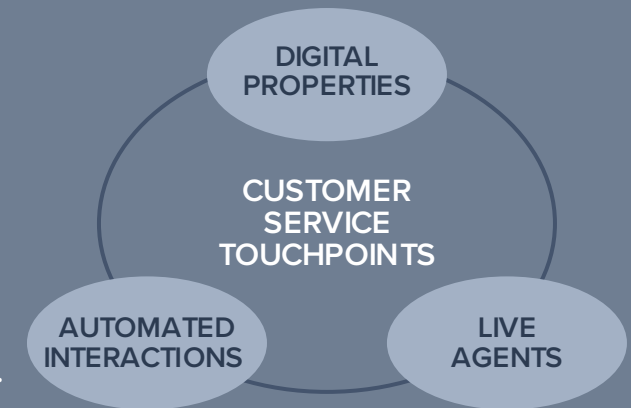
Websites, mobile apps, etc.

### AUTOMATED INTERACTIONS

Chatbots, IVR, visual IVR, etc.

### LIVE AGENTS

Voice, chat, email, social media, etc.



# MAPPING THE CUSTOMER SERVICE JOURNEY

When customers seek to resolve an issue, they go through a series of steps before reaching a live agent. While each customer takes a very individual route to finding answers to their questions, agencies can group and measure some of the more common paths taken by customers.

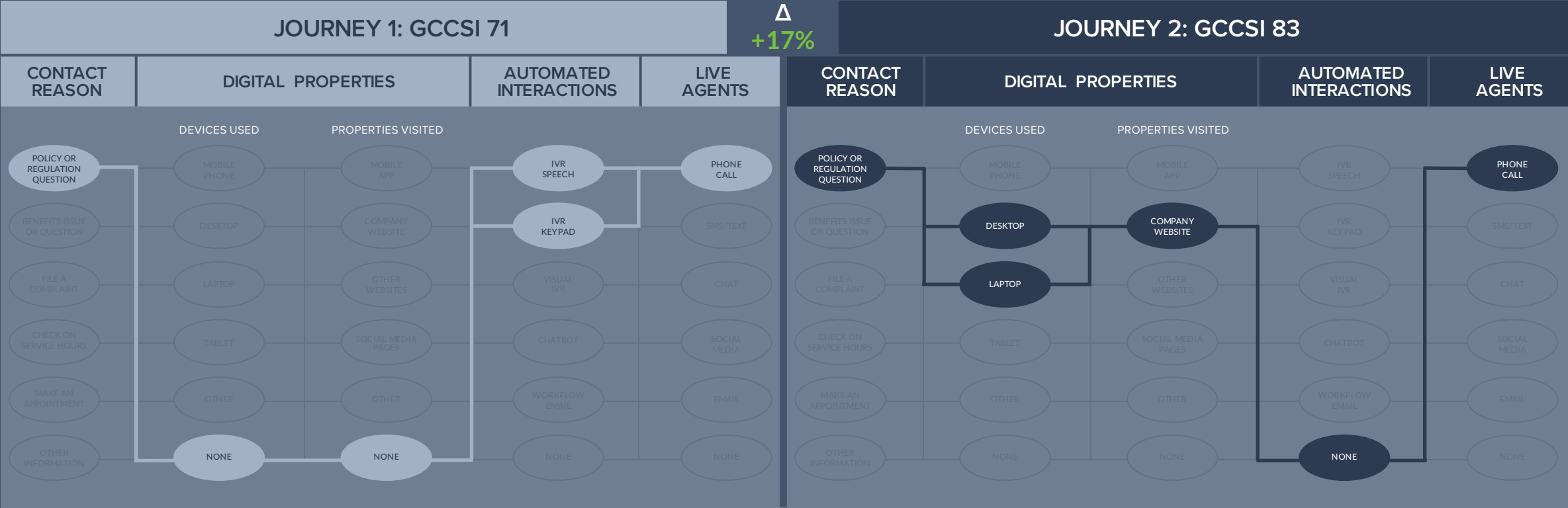
The customer service journey typically starts with an initial online search at one or more digital properties. If the problem isn't resolved, contact is made with automated interactions, live agents, or both.

CUSTOMER SERVICE JOURNEY				
CONTACT REASON	DIGITAL PROPERTIES		AUTOMATED INTERACTIONS	LIVE AGENTS
	DEVICES USED	PROPERTIES VISITED		
POLICY OR REGULATION QUESTION	MOBILE PHONE	MOBILE APP	IVR SPEECH	PHONE CALL
BENEFITS ISSUE OR QUESTION	DESKTOP	AGENCY WEBSITE	IVR KEYPAD	SMS/TEXT
FILE A COMPLAINT	LAPTOP	OTHER WEBSITES	VISUAL IVR	CHAT
CHECK ON SERVICE HOURS	TABLET	SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES	CHATBOT	SOCIAL MEDIA
MAKE AN APPOINTMENT	OTHER	OTHER	WORKFLOW EMAIL	EMAIL
OTHER INFORMATION	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

# TWO CUSTOMER SERVICE JOURNEYS

These two journeys begin with the same contact reason and end with a call to a live agent. However, GCCSI for these two journeys differs considerably based on the touchpoints involved. In Journey 1, poor IVR interactions drive GGCSI down 17% below GCCSI for Journey 2.

In Journey 2, customers attempt to self serve at the agency website using a desktop or laptop before contacting customer service. When they call customer service they reach a live agent directly without being required to navigate an IVR.





A man with short dark hair and a light beard is sitting on a brown leather couch, smiling as he looks at a laptop. He is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt. The background shows a modern living room with a large potted plant, a copper-colored lamp, and a window with sheer curtains. A semi-transparent grey box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text. At the bottom left, there is a blue overlay with white text and a navigation arrow on the left and a chevron on the right.

**76%** VISIT DIGITAL PROPERTIES  
TO RESOLVE THEIR ISSUE  
BEFORE CONTACTING  
CUSTOMER SERVICE

**1**

## **DIGITAL PROPERTIES**

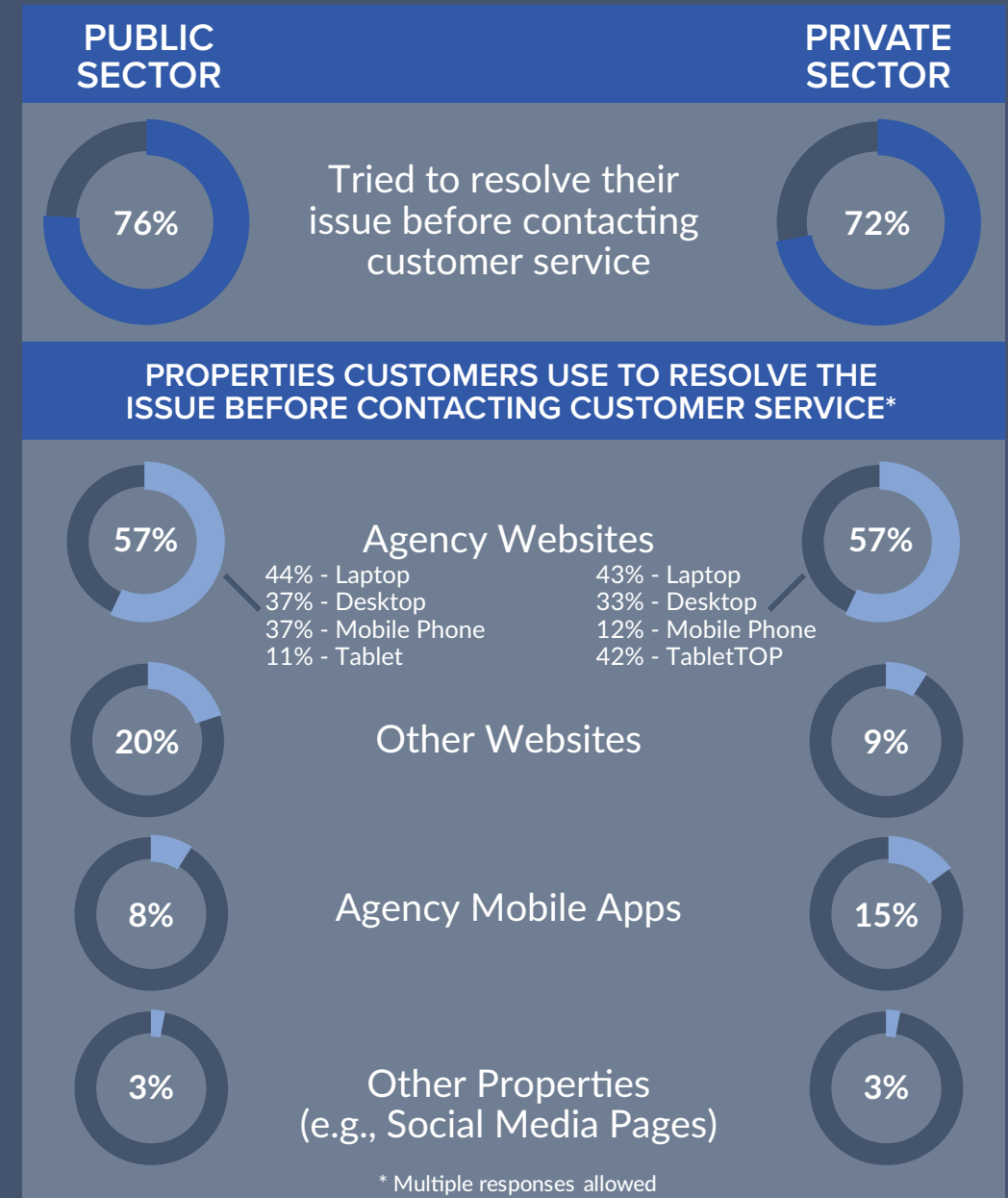
*Customers Expect Online Self-Serve Tools*

# MOST CUSTOMERS TRY TO SELF SERVE ON DIGITAL PROPERTIES

An agency's set of digital properties forms a critical component of its overall customer services efforts. Before customers reach out to contact customer service about an issue, more than two out of three will first visit one or more digital properties in an effort to solve the issue on their own.

Digital properties for an agency can include agency websites, other websites, mobile apps, or other properties. Many agencies still make the mistake of measuring and managing digital properties separately from the contact center.

Customers most often turn to the agency's website for self help, consistent with those who contact private sector customer service, while 20% try other websites (e.g., group forums, or pages from a search result about an issue). And 8% even use the agency mobile app. These visits to digital properties prior to reaching the contact center have an impact on the interaction customers have with customer service agents. However, not every question can or should be answered online.

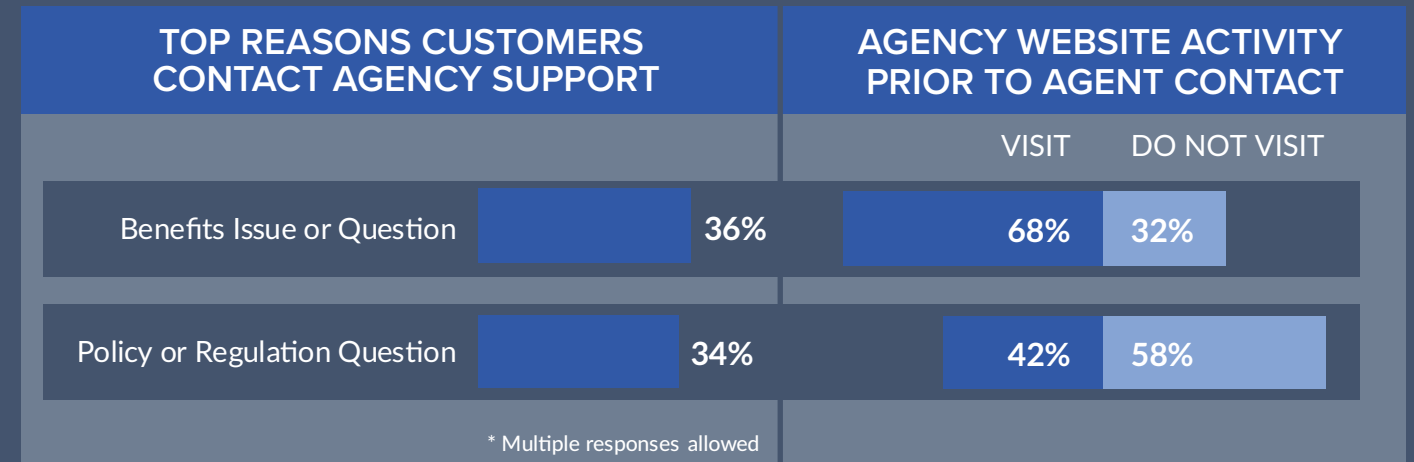


# AGENCIES SHOULD UNDERSTAND WHICH ISSUES CAN AND CANNOT BE ANSWERED ONLINE

Contact centers should explore opportunities to help customers solve issues when visiting digital properties. Agencies can analyze call data to determine the best opportunities for developing new self-help tools and encouraging customers to explore digital properties for help.

For customers who visit an agency website, the agency should provide the self-serve tools needed for customers to resolve their issue.

For customers who do not visit the website, the agency should provide mechanisms for informing customers that answers to their questions can be found on the website.





85%

WHO REACH AN IVR  
END UP TALKING TO  
A LIVE AGENT TO  
RESOLVE THEIR ISSUE

2

**AUTOMATED INTERACTIONS**










*IVR and Virtual Agent Technology is not the Solution*



# AUTOMATED INTERACTION TECHNOLOGY IS EMERGING

Contact centers are experiencing a seismic shift in how customer service is delivered. Exciting new technologies are quickly emerging that will change how customers self serve via automated interactions, making it easier, faster, and more intuitive for customers to resolve issues on their own.

The impact that these tools will have on the customer experience remains to be seen. Current IVR technologies are generally not well received by customers, who tend to prefer speaking to a live person. How well these solutions create a great experience will depend largely on how well they can replicate a live agent.

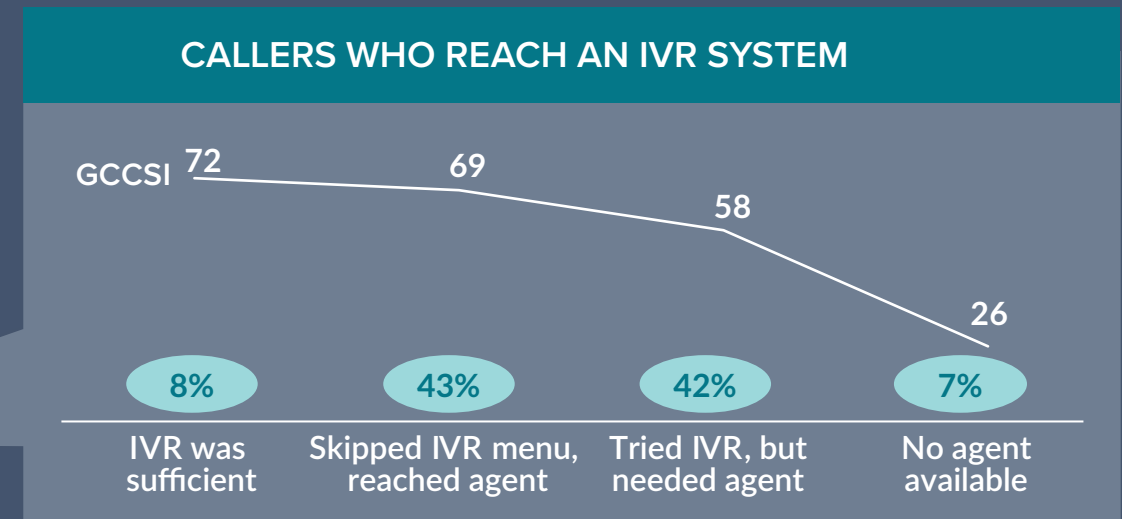
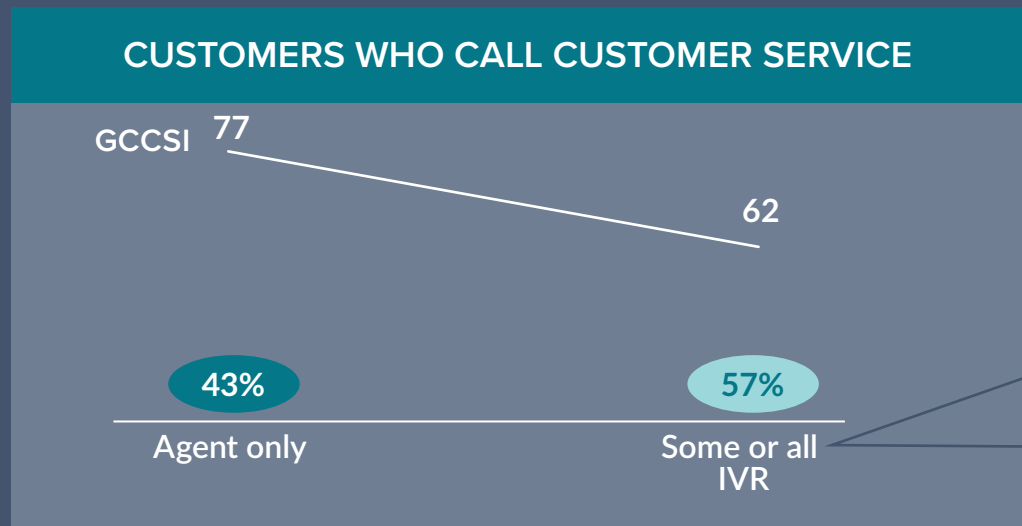
COMPANY/TECHNOLOGY	WHAT IT DOES	SAMPLE APPLICATIONS
 AMAZON LEX	<i>“Amazon Lex is a service for building conversational interfaces into any application using voice and text.”</i>	 
 WATSON CHATBOT	<i>“Use Watson to build robust, enterprise-grade chatbots to transform your customer service department and more.”</i>	  H&R BLOCK
 VISUAL IVR	<i>“Visual IVR On-Demand guides customers to answers through touch screen menus streamed to their smartphone.”</i>	 

# CUSTOMERS DON'T WANT TO SELF SERVE WHEN CALLING

By the time customers call customer service, most have already tried to self serve using a digital property and are no longer looking for self-serve options; they want to speak with a live agent who can help them quickly.

GCCSI is 77 for the 43% of callers who get connected directly to a live agent. For the 57% who reach an IVR, GCCSI is a much lower 62, due in part to the effort required to get past the IVR and get to a live person.

For the few callers who reach an IVR and say the IVR alone was sufficient to answer their issue, GCCSI is 72. Unfortunately, only 8% of all callers found IVR sufficient.





80% CALL ON THE PHONE  
WHEN CONTACTING  
CUSTOMER SERVICE

3

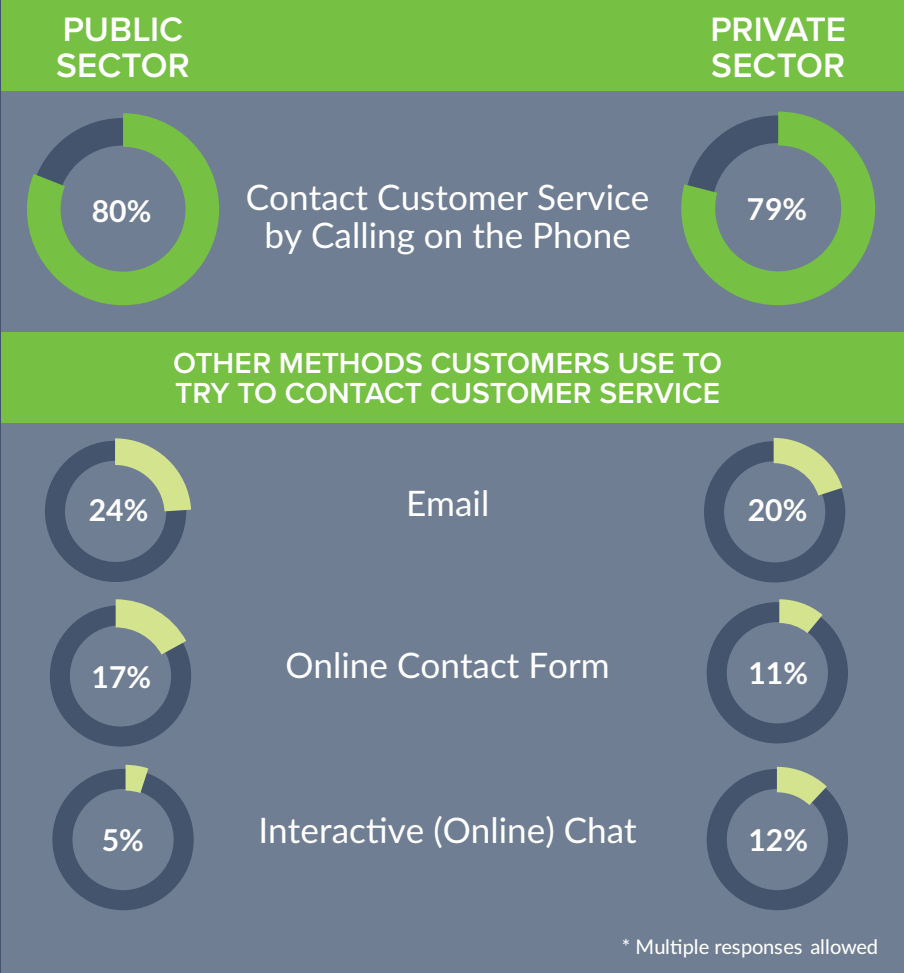
**LIVE AGENTS**

*Professional Agents Still Drive Customer Satisfaction*

# PHONE CALLS REMAIN THE PREFERRED CUSTOMER SERVICE CHANNEL

Despite the continued growth of multi-channel contact centers, a voice phone call still dominates as the customer’s channel of choice. A full 80% of customers who contact customer service do so over the phone, a number comparable to the 79% for the Private Sector.

Obviously, the heavy use of phone for customer service does not mean that contact centers can neglect other channels. Currently, 24% use email with ever-increasing expectations on response times, 17% use an online form to initiate the contact, and 5% use an online chat feature—a method that we expect to continue to grow in use.



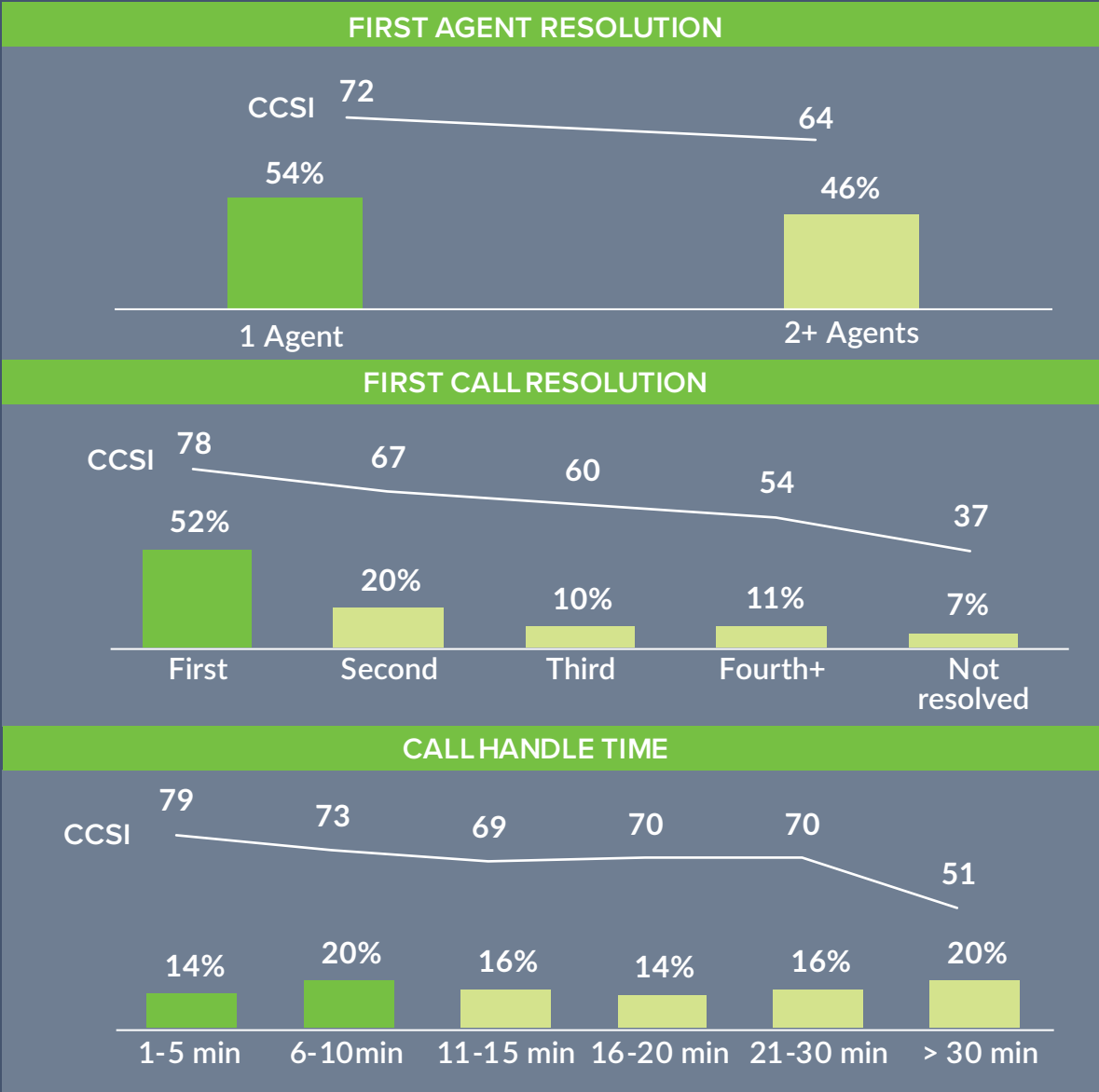
# PROFESSIONAL CALL HANDLING BY AGENTS LEADS TO A GREAT EXPERIENCE

Professional agents who can deliver first agent resolution, first call resolution, and low call handle time are critical for ensuring a great contact center experience.

**FIRST AGENT RESOLUTION** – Only 54% of callers say the issue is resolved with the first agent, resulting in a GCCSI of 72. GCCSI falls if more than one agent is needed to resolve the issue.

**FIRST CALL RESOLUTION** – Just 52% say that the issue is resolved the on the first call, with an average GCCSI of 78. GCCSI dips as the issue requires multiple contacts.

**CALL HANDLE TIME** – A mere 14% of callers say the call was handled in five minutes or less, with a GCCSI of 79. Another 20% of all calls are handled within 6-10 minutes, with GCCSI at 73. After 10 minutes, GCCSI levels off at 69-70, then drop precipitously after 30 minutes.



# PROFESSIONAL LIVE AGENTS DRIVE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

CFI Group's ACSI-powered technology calculates the relative impacts of the drivers on customer satisfaction. Our modeling shows that the top two drivers for contact center satisfaction are the overall effectiveness of the agent and the degree of empowerment agents have to address the issue. Government contact centers operating on limited resources should prioritize improvement efforts on areas that demand the most focus.

**EFFECTIVENESS** – Agents must be able to explain the process, help customers find information, and complete the transaction quickly.

**EMPOWERMENT** – Agents should be given the authority when possible to offer a tailored solution, empowered to address the issue, and equipped to help customers understand and navigate applicable policies and procedures.

**MOST FOCUS**

**LEAST FOCUS**

	EFFECTIVENESS	EMPOWERMENT	KNOWLEDGE	DEMEANOR	COMMUNICATION
KEY MEASURES	Explaining the process to address your issue	Policies that make sense	Ability to answer your questions in a timely manner	Courteousness	Speaking/writing clearly
	Helping you find the information you need	Ability to offer a solution tailored to your situation	Ability to understand your situation	Friendliness	Explaining things in a way that is easy to understand
	Successfully completing your interaction	Being empowered to address your issue	Ability to provide accurate information	Professionalism	Using words that are easy to understand

# ABOUT THE APPROACH

This is the ninth year CFI Group has conducted an extensive study of customer satisfaction with call or contact centers using the proven methodology of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). We surveyed 732 respondents in Q1 2018. All respondents to the survey had recent contact with a federal agency service center. The purpose of this study is to provide managers with a better understanding of how to meet the needs of their contact center users.

This report analyzes the aggregate set of respondents across the mix of government agencies measured. Given the scope of services provided by government, CFI Group focused its contact center study on those agencies with which a typical citizen would most likely have an interaction.

Contact centers measured in the GCCSI include:

- Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- Social Security Administration (SSA)
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service (CMS)
- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Department of Education (DOE)
- Other Federal Agencies
- State or Local Government

Within this select group, the range of functions the contact center must perform is far-reaching. Centers must provide technical support, give policy information, handle complaints, and potentially play countless other roles. Contact centers are often the initial and primary point of contact with citizens.

This year's GCCSI study continues the exploration of how well government contact centers are delivering services to citizens and resolving their issues. It examines trends and offers recommendations to improve satisfaction with the services provided by government contact centers.

# ABOUT US

Since 1988, CFI Group has delivered 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 the federal government. Using our patented technology and top research experts, CFI Group has proudly serviced 100% of U.S. Executive Branch Departments.

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