SERVICE
EXCELLENCE
COCKPIT

Service Excellence Cockpit

Summary Report 2017

Including excursus The digital Service Center

www.service-excellence-cockpit.org

Zurich, September 2017

Editorial

Dear reader

We are pleased to present you the fourth report on the Service Excellence Cockpit. It suits the purpose of the **constant striving for better customer satisfaction and higher quality in customer service**. This year, a lot more participants took part in the survey. There are also many participants from Germany, Austria, Spain and other European countries.

In a "measuring and competition society" like ours, objective performance indicators are an important orientation aid. Everyone can discuss about numbers and with numbers, you can compare yourself, argue, correct or counterattack.

This also applies to the subject of digitalisation, which is on everyone's lips. In this report, you will find an excursus on the digital service center with interesting conclusions:

- Omnichannel is widely available; only with consistent channel control and use of self services can the full potential of digitalisation be used.
- The implementation of speech and text automation is in progress. Here remains much more potential to unlock.
- The possibilities from analytics and Big Data are still being systematically converted into a growing automation and simplification. There is a lack of end-to-end processes and a meaningful use of artificial intelligence.

Because service centers are constantly evolving with customer expectations and the strategic orientation of the company, the Service Excellence Cockpit is constantly being further developed. Together with our expert group, we have created the “business unit” as a new peer group, in addition to various minor adjustments. This allows you to compare even more precisely with similar service centers.

Johannes Kroker of Entega Energie says: "The Service Excellence Cockpit allows me to look beyond the business and industry boundaries. What I especially like is how the cockpit team responds to the requests of the users. We have encouraged the introduction of the key figure number of contacts to number of customers. In the next survey this KPI (Key Performance Indicator) was installed!"

Daniel Hügli of the Lucerne Cantonal Bank added "Partly, we were able to confirm past decisions with the cockpit. On the other hand, this gave us a basis for discussion for certain organisational questions."

And for Joseph Jossen from the Swiss Federal Railways, "the constant comparison with other service centers ensures not missing the market trends. The Service Excellence Cockpit is ideally suited as a performance benchmark."

The **aim of the Service Excellence Cockpit** remains, to make **customer service measurable** and **comparable** and thus create the foundations to continuously improve the quality in the service centers. For we are convinced that **customer service** in our world of interchangeable products and services is **becoming a decisive competitive advantage**.

We are pleased to present a detailed summary of the relevant market data for the service center industry in this report.

With excellent greetings

Daniel Stiefel and Rémon Elsten
Service Excellence Cockpit

Authors

Rémon Elsten

Daniel Stiefel

Contact

Crystal Benchmark AG

Gessnerallee 38a

CH-8001 Zürich

Switzerland

Telefon: +41 44 350 13 20

E-Mail: info@service-excellence-cockpit.ch

www.service-excellence-cockpit.org

Service Excellence Cockpit

Service centers are organisational units that enable service-oriented and efficient dialogical communication through the use of modern information and communication technologies while preserving company objectives. The increasing interchangeability of products and services has made customer service more and more important for companies.

Measurement and comparison of the service quality of service centers

An interactive customer dialogue between companies and their customers is linked to the competences of the employees and the successful integration of the communication channels. The control of these communication channels is becoming more and more complex due to its multiplicity and is becoming an important competition criterion. One difficulty with the integration is the lack of generally accepted and established benchmarks or key performance indicators (KPIs).

For service centers, many operational, but little to no generally accepted and established strategic KPIs exist that support the management of customer service. This means that standards are missing for measurement and comparison with other service units.

The research project of the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences, Crystal Partners and CallNet.ch developed a framework based on DIN EN 15838, supported by technical specialists from Credit Suisse and Swisscom. The "DIALOGUE KPIs" represent the service quality for the management of service centers. The framework consists of the five dimensions:

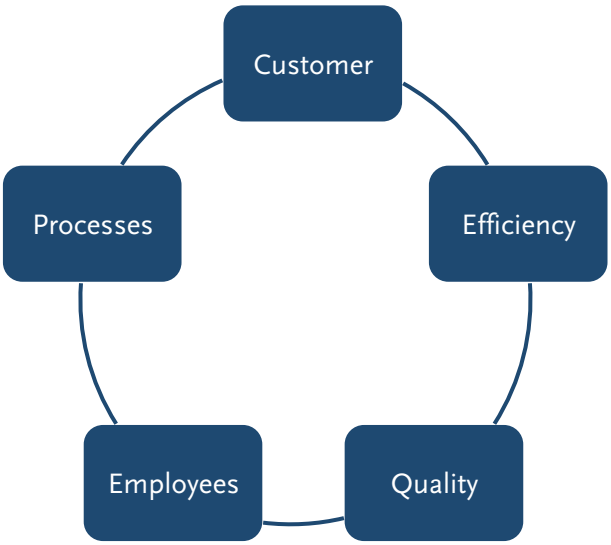


Figure 1: Framework of the Service Excellence Cockpit

The framework is the basis for comprehensive benchmarking of service centers. The analyses of the differences are intended to facilitate the development and improvement of competitive advantages. The comparison can refer to different objects (services, processes) and target sizes (cost, quality, time, satisfaction). For the classic communication channels, but also for the social media channels, the average response time for the various channels can be determined and compared. The comparison allows an assessment of the company's own business, also with regard to available best practices, and thus shows a potential need for action. The informative value can be increased by taking account of overall conditions, e.g. branch-specific opening times. In order to point out the starting points for the closure of the gap, the framework also allows the analysis of the deviations.

Service Excellence Cockpit

Compared to the standard studies, the framework provides, in addition to a location determination, also concrete analysis possibilities and recommendations for action for the own service center. This allows companies to gain a competitive advantage through excellent customer service.

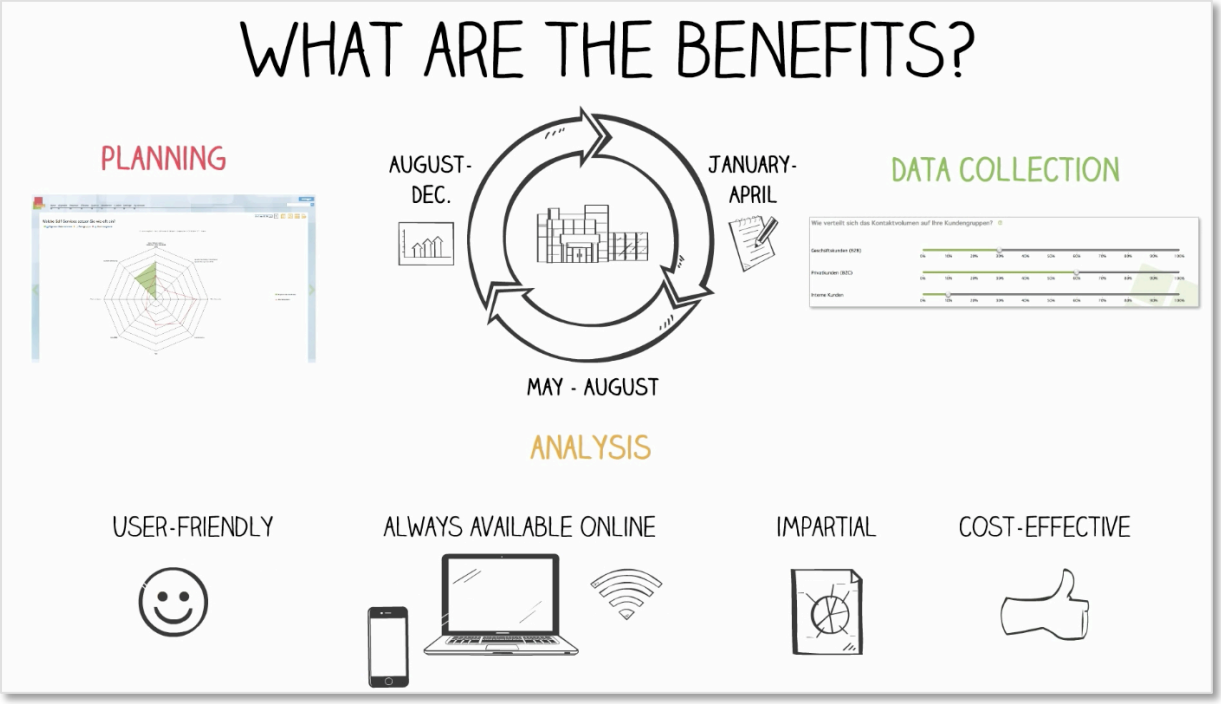


Figure 2: Advantages and objectives of the Service Excellence Cockpit

The Service Excellence Cockpit provides in-depth analysis and is thus an effective management tool for the planning, control and monitoring of service centers.

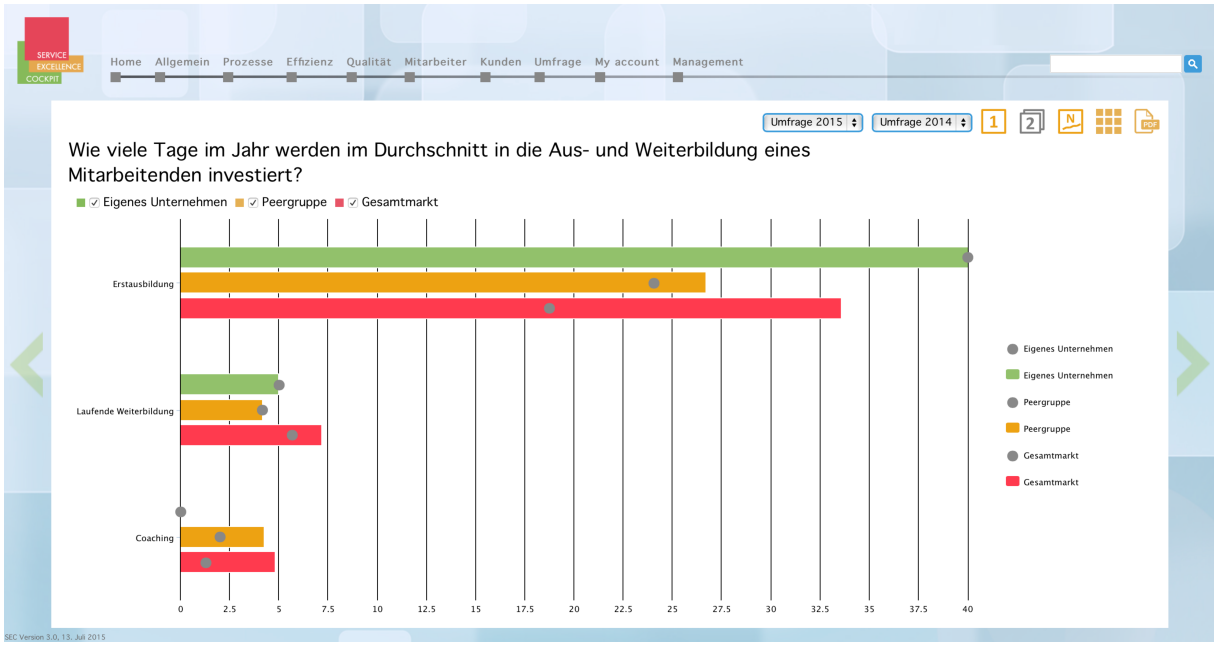


Figure 3: The interactive Service Excellence Cockpit

Customer service becomes more strategic and plays an increasingly important role in the company. With the Service Excellence Cockpit, we address a broad target group: managers of service centers, marketing managers, controllers, financial managers and not least the entire management. On the basis of hard facts, the cockpit offers numerous possibilities:

Presentation and analysis: The Service Excellence Cockpit offers interesting comparisons with the overall market, different peer groups (e.g. own industry, centers of similar size or similar structure), the own and third-party figures or the individually defined target values.

Simulations: The Service Excellence Cockpit can be used to simulate the dependencies of the KPIs and the potential impact of interventions by the management. In the case of upcoming investment decisions, the business case pays off more easily and the comparison base will be substantially larger. The assumptions made can be objectivised.

Optimisation options: With the Service Excellence Cockpit, optimisation potentials in service centers can be systematically evaluated and forward-looking measures taken to improve on the basis of comparative values.

Summary

Companies differentiate themselves from the competition with exceptional customer service services. However, it is challenging to plan, control and execute the interactions between the customer and the company so that the customer is satisfied with the services in the end. As the Service Excellence Cockpit shows, general criteria, processes, efficiency, quality and employees of the service center play the decisive role.

This year's report is based on data from 180 service centers in Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Spain, Luxembourg and Poland and covers the following industries:

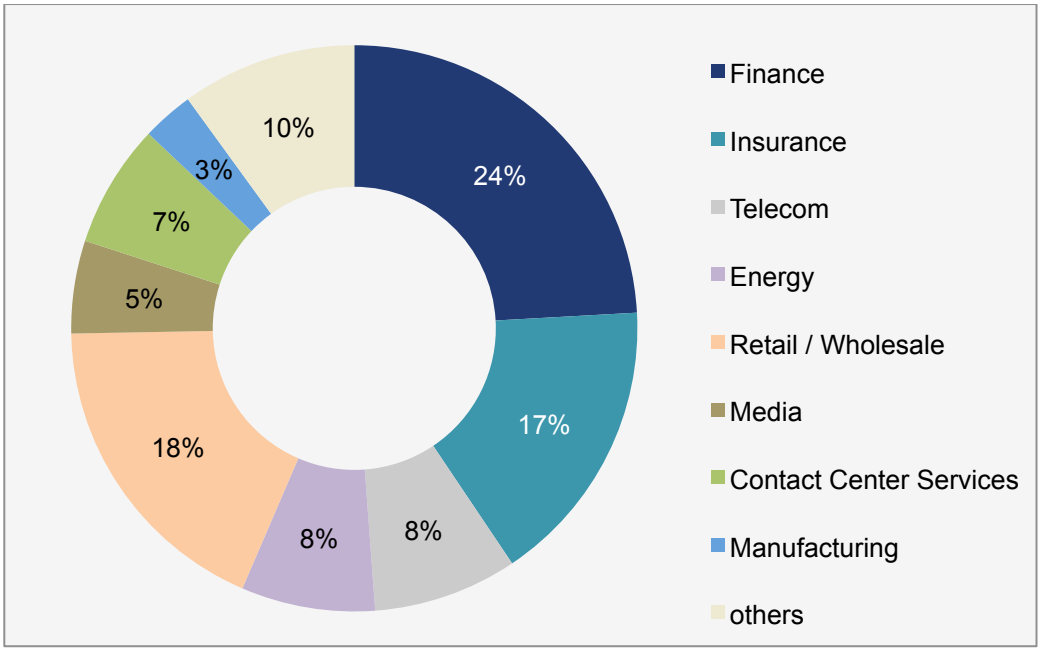


Figure 4: Industry distribution of survey participants (n=180)

The most important findings are as follows:

Strategic importance of the service center

The latest results of the Service Excellence Cockpit are on the market. Companies are increasingly understanding the profiling potential of customer service and are obviously also willing to invest. Behind this, is clearly a desire to differentiate by means of excellent customer experience in the service. After all, 85% of the participants in this study are convinced that the importance of customer service will increase in the next 5 years. Thus, the trend already measured in recent years continues increasingly.

In summary, the results of the Service Excellence Cockpit 2017 can be interpreted as follows: Strategic differentiation with committed employees and modern technology yes, only the method and the detailed knowledge of the value of the contacts for the customer and company are missing to be able to prioritise this.

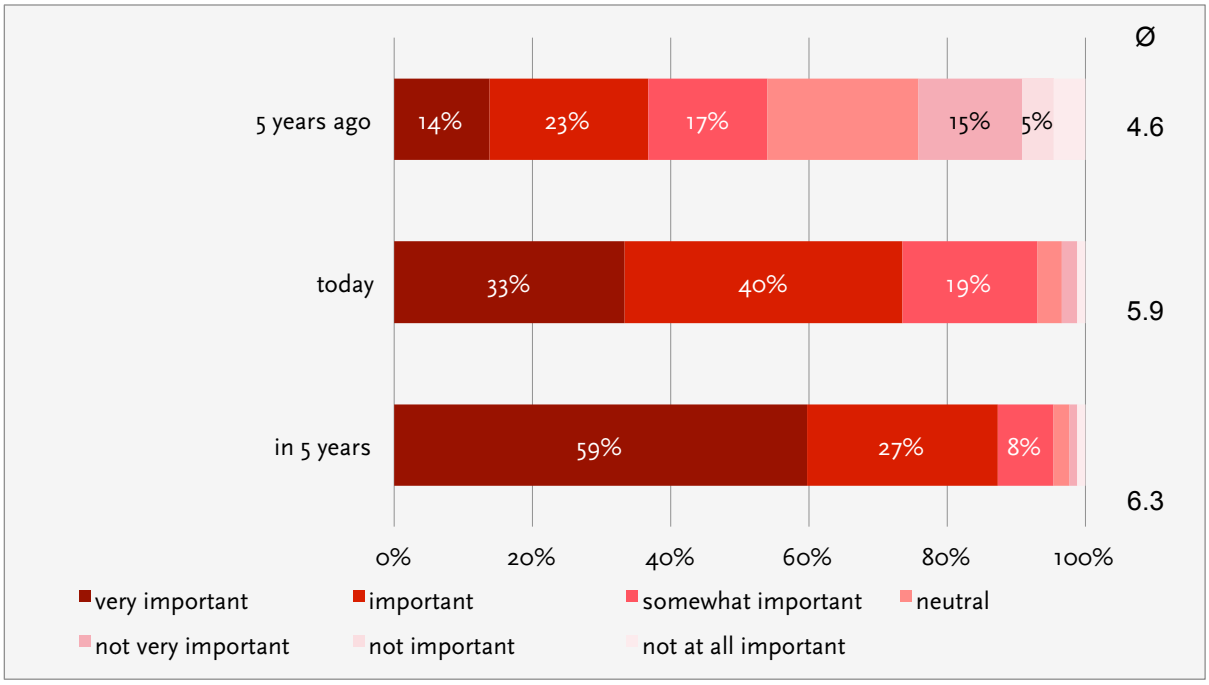


Figure 5: Strategic importance of service centers from the perspective of the service center management in 2017

Service is the new marketing

The marked development towards a more conscious strategic perception of customer service is also confirmed by an ever-widening application of the Net Promoter Score, Customer Effort Score and Churn Rate as strategic measures for customer satisfaction.

Currently, 32% of the respondents use the NPS and another 18% plan to implement it. Less common is the Customer Effort Score. The average Net Promoter Score achieved is 36 and the average Customer Effect Score is 4.8.

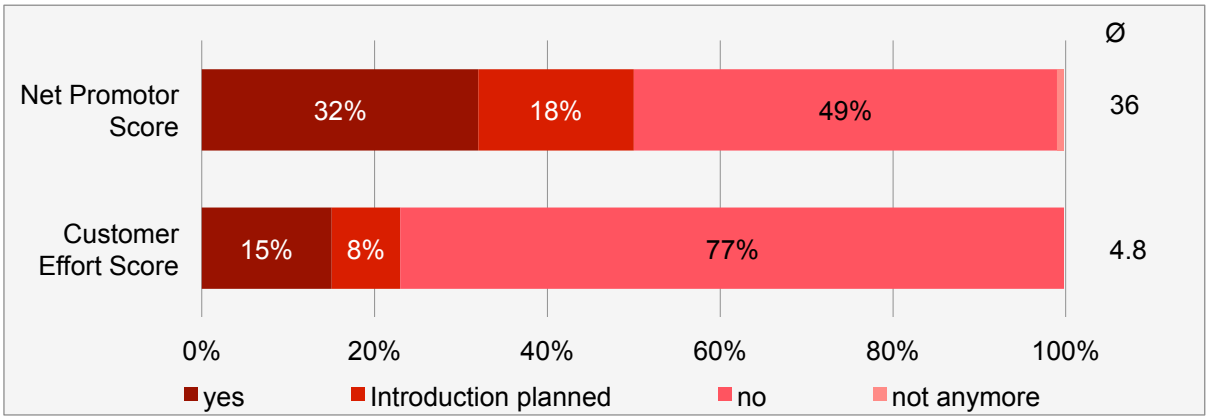
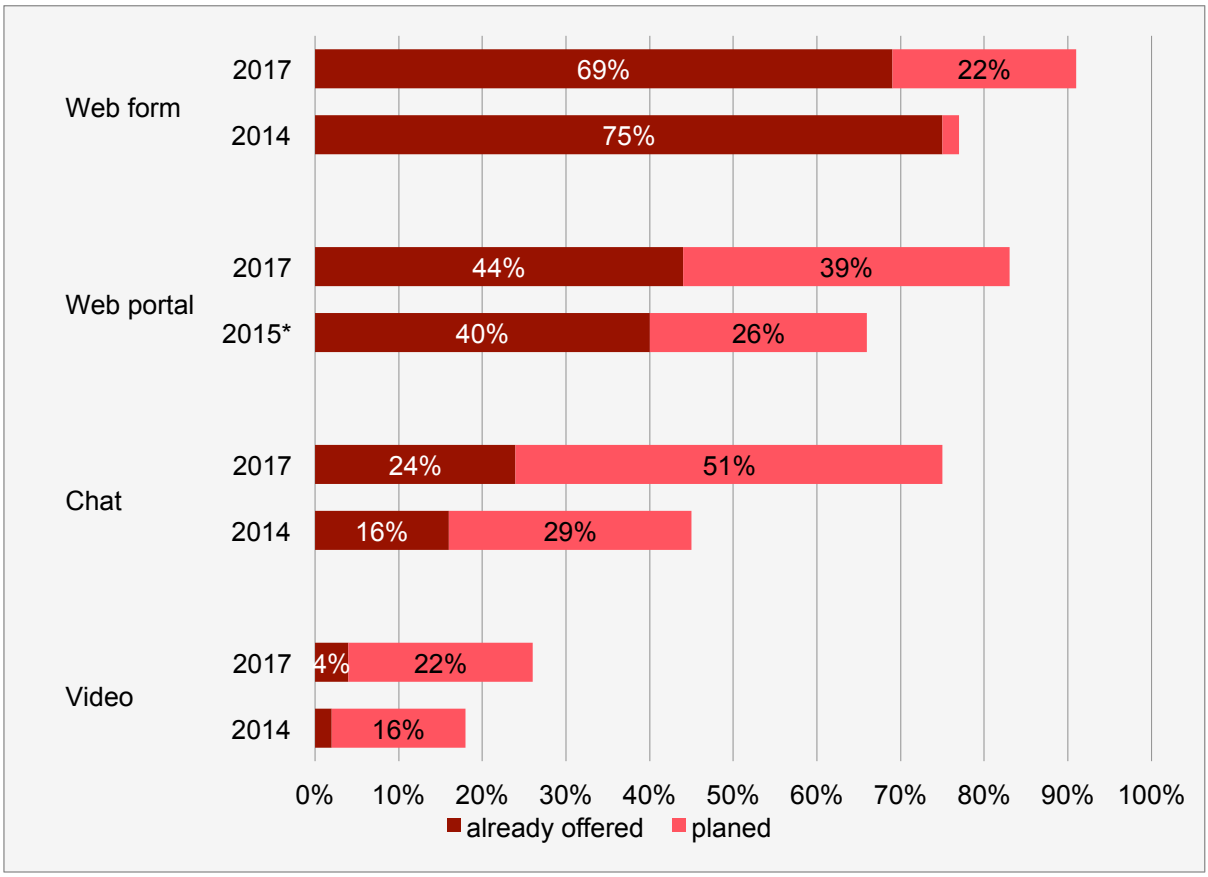


Figure 6: Application of the Net Promotor Score and Customer Effort Score 2017

Omnichannel - Expansion of online channels continues

The results also show a clear trend towards the availability of online channels. The chat channel can be viewed as an example. As early as 2014, about a third of the companies planned to introduce it. Today, this share has increased to 50% and around a quarter of the respondents already used this medium. Consistent developments can be seen in the web portal, and the video channel is also increasingly being tested and introduced.



*Figures available for web portal since 2015

Figure 7: Which contact channels are you planning to offer your customers, year-to-year comparison

Self service serves customer satisfaction and efficiency

The use of self services is an expression of the increasing expectations of many customers: they expect a constant availability, fast response to service requests and the independent execution of activities. More than two-thirds of companies use self services, with the primary goals of increasing customer satisfaction through constant availability and saving resources through increased efficiency. Compared to the previous year, the share of service centers that offer apps and web forms increased. The same applies to the speech recognition, even if only at a low level so far. We are looking closely at how quickly a trend towards biometric applications will be established.

Interesting are the significant differences by industry, with the information and telecom industry playing a leading role.

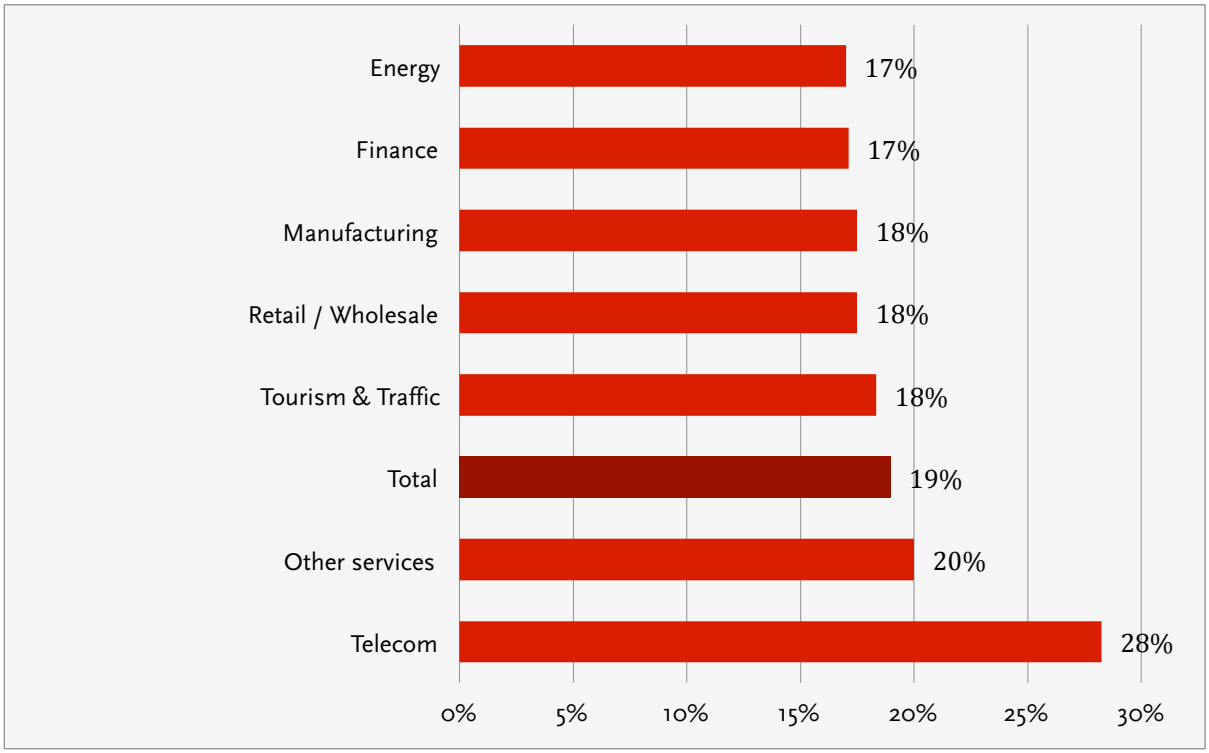


Figure 8: Use of self services in different industries 2017

In most industries, more than 80% of enquiries are highly repetitive, written or spoken. If, therefore, an automation of the service counters is considered, modern chatbots come into consideration for the simpler requests of the customer. This is software that is capable of engaging with people in a meaningful dialogue. This must be taught through dialogues between customers and companies. In this context, machine learning and the resulting artificial intelligence is worth mentioning.

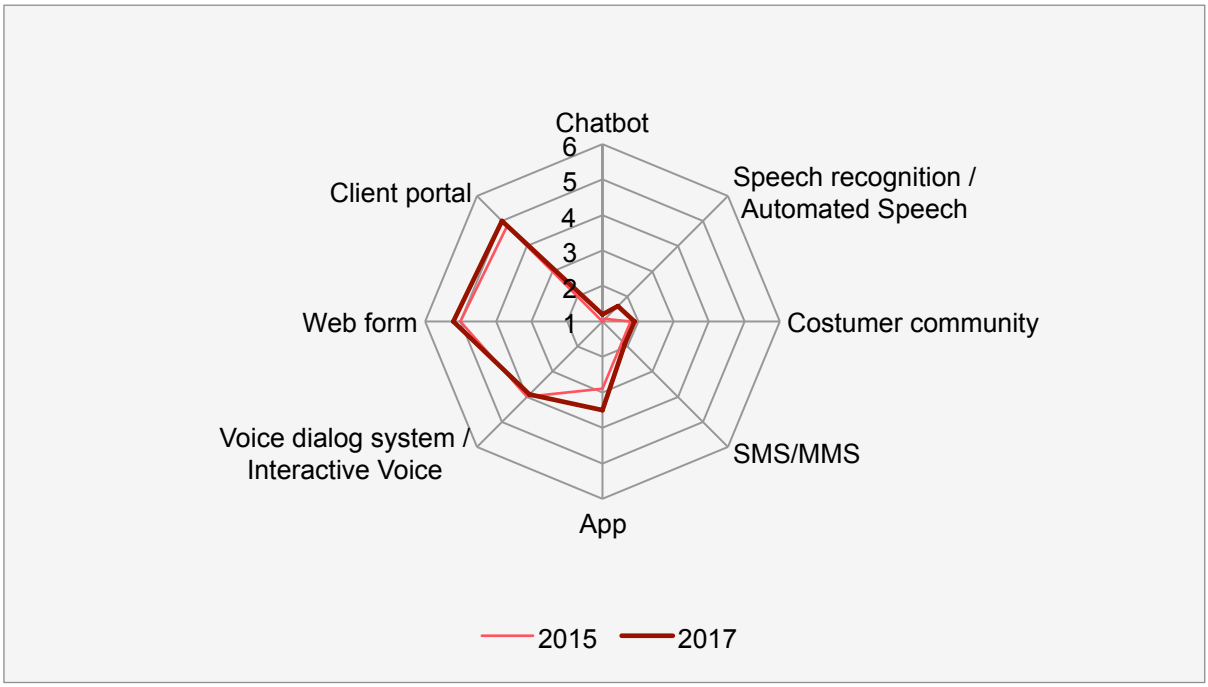


Figure 9: Use of self services, year-to-year comparison 2015 and und 2017

Employees remain the decisive success factor in the service center

Employees are the most valuable resource in a service center. For simple, routine customer enquiries in the service center, self services are increasingly used. What remains are the complex tasks, which must also be done by people in the future because they require a high degree of professional qualification and empathy with the customer.

This has led to increased demands on employees in the service center. Such employees, however, are always more difficult to find and the fluctuation is comparatively high.

Employees react very positively to greater responsibility and independence in operational activities. People provide better results when they are able to choose from alternatives and make decisions independently. The majority of surveyed service centers have implemented this approach: 64 percent of the surveyed service centers claim to allow employees to issue customer credits (e.g. a cash amount).

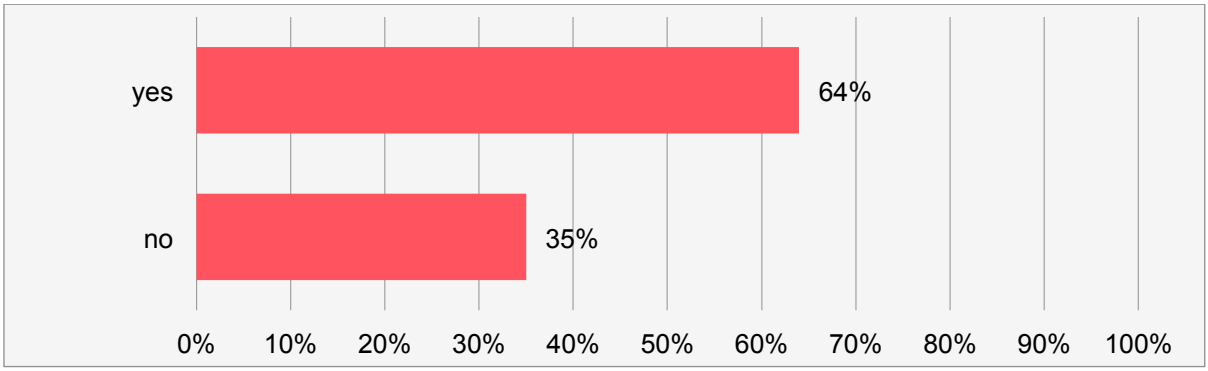


Figure 10: Are employees allowed to issue customer credits?

Quality in the workplace

The quality of the customer service is dependent on countless factors such as channel offer, response time, competence of the employees and many more. Important to mention as well in this context is the equipment of the workplace. A well-equipped workplace not only increases employee satisfaction, but can also directly improve the quality of customer contacts, for example by reducing background noise in a service center.

According to the survey, a large portion of the surveyed companies try to improve the quality of the workplace by noise protection or acoustic optimisation of the building. Ergonomic workstations and wireless headphones are already provided by many service centers.

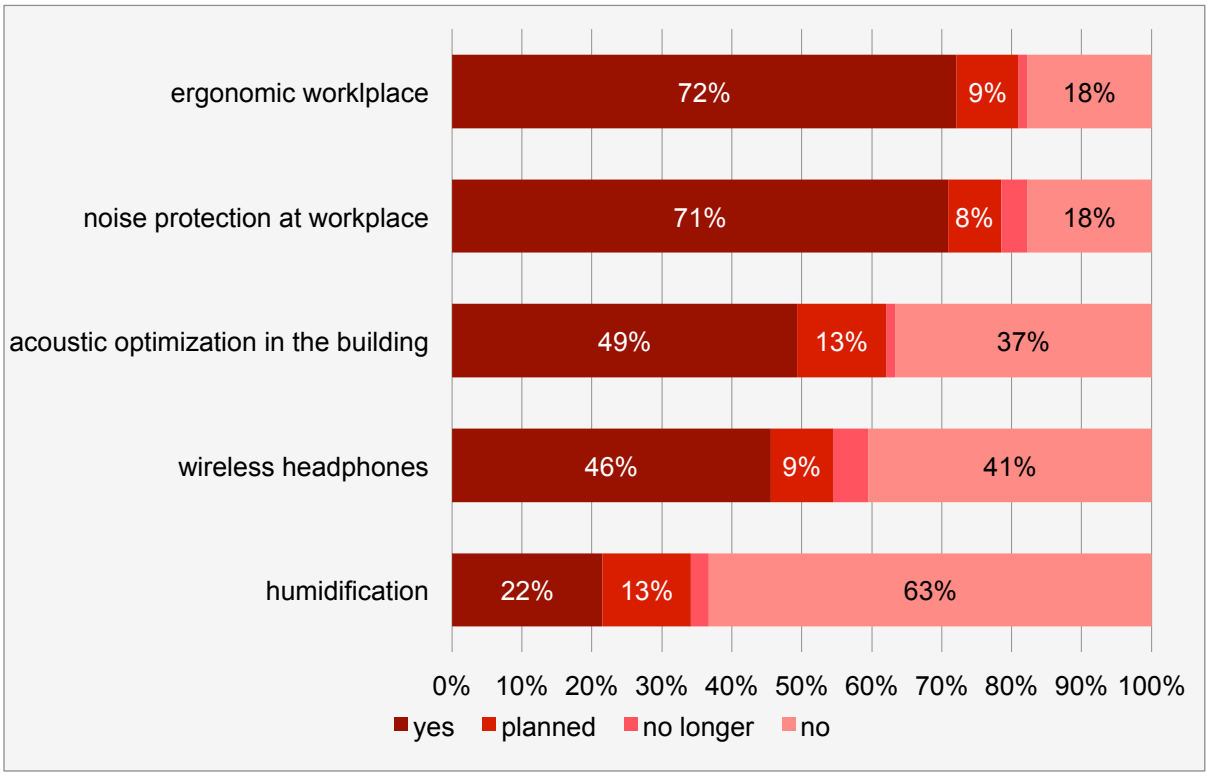


Figure 11: Tools for improvements of the quality of workplaces

Table of Contents

1 General Information

Service centers work in a very dynamic environment, which is characterised by high customer expectations, new technologies and efficiency improvements. In this context, the value contribution of service centers is often questioned, as the costs, but not the success, are transparent to the decision-makers. This lack of transparency can lead to false strategic decisions. In order to make fundamental changes to the service center, the current market data and its effects must be examined. The market data is an important basis for the creation or adaptation of the service strategy in the company.

1.1 Location of the service center

Of the 180 service centers, 66 percent come from Switzerland and a quarter are based in Germany. A further 4 percent operate in Austria and 3 percent in Spain. The remaining service centers are from other European countries.

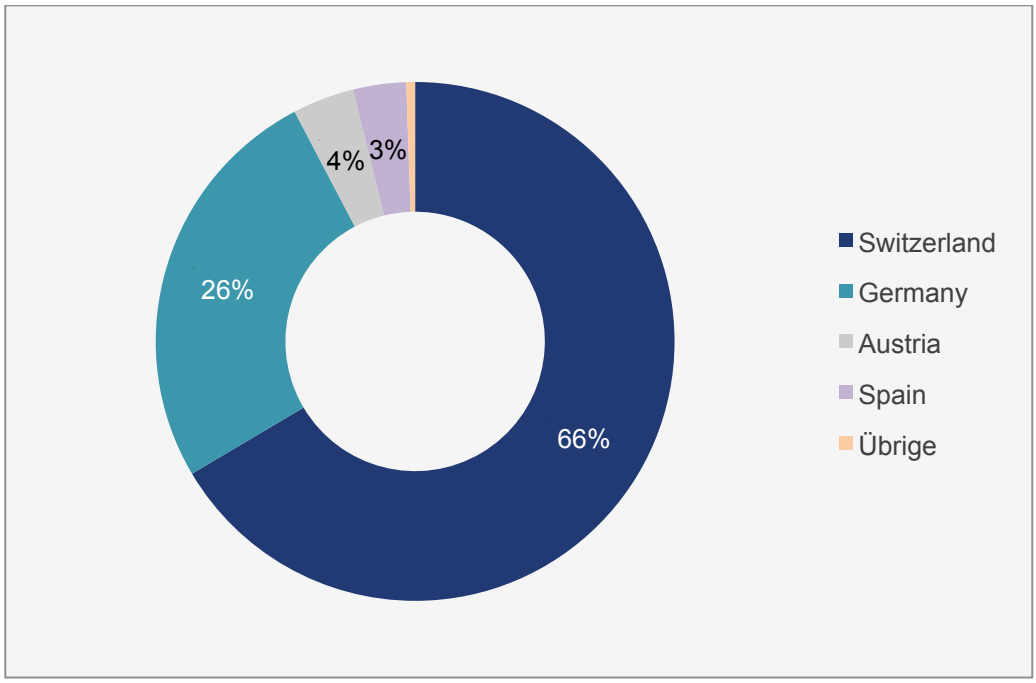


Figure 12: Location of the Service Centers (n=180)

1.2 Industry distribution

In the grouping according to industry, it is clear that from 180 service centers, which participated in the survey, a large part works in the service industry. Service centers from the financial sector predominate, followed by those from the insurance and health insurance industry which are then followed by the Retail and Wholesale industry. But excellent customer service concerns all companies. Throughout the industries, companies are developing viable strategies to meet changing market conditions.

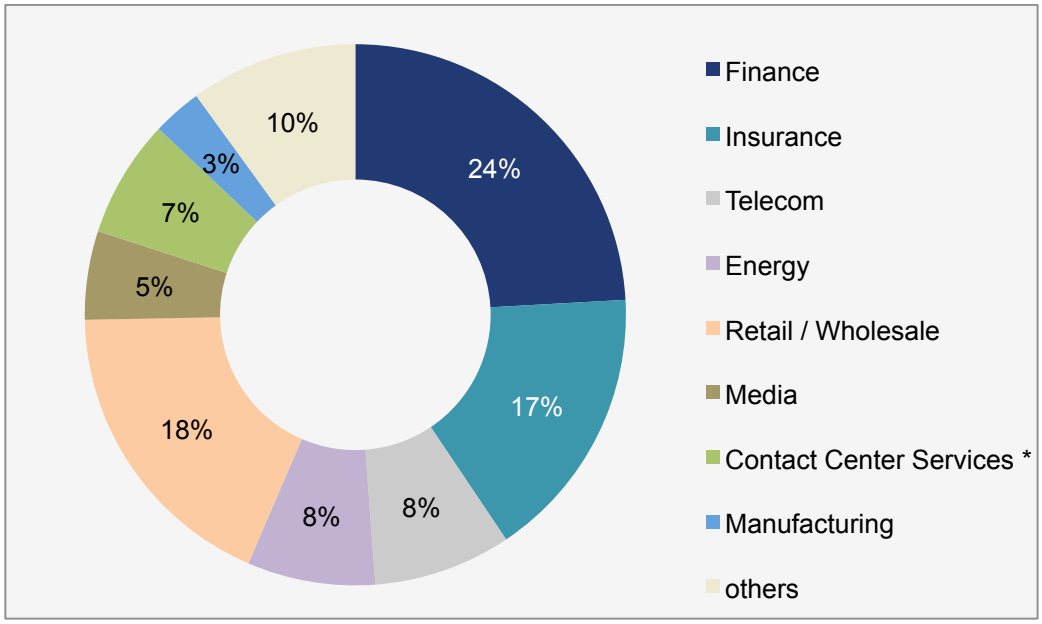


Figure 13: Industry distribution of survey participants (n=180)

1.3 Strategic importance of the service center

The perception of the strategic importance of service centers in companies has changed significantly according to the survey. While only 37% of the respondents had rated the importance as very high or high 5 years ago, already 73% do so today. From the point of view of the service center management, the strategic importance is likely to continue to grow over the next 5 years, so that until then, a clear majority of the respondents would place a very significant importance on the service center.

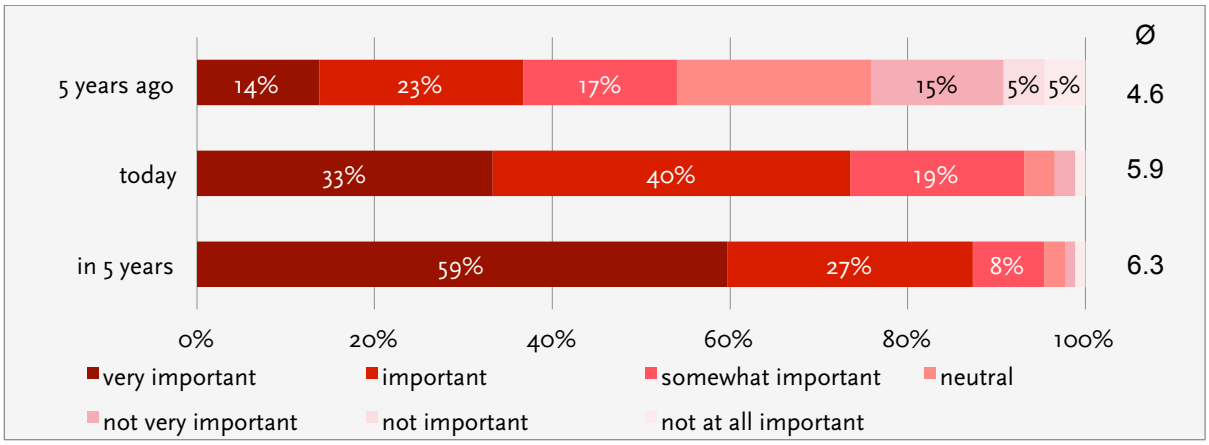


Figure 14: Strategic importance of service centers from the perspective of the service center management 2017

What should be considered in this context:

- Does the service center organisation meet the growing strategic requirements?
- Are adequate strategic management figures available?
- Do the concerns of the service center reach the ears of the management as they should?

1.4 Goals of the service center

The primary task of a company is the realisation of the company's goals, because the existence of the company depends on it in the long-term. All business units must make their contribution to the goal. A service center has a cross-section function and thus contributes value to internal and external customers. The increase in customer satisfaction and service quality is defined by the service centers as a very important goal. Interestingly, in 2017, the quality goal is weighted higher than the efficiency goal, while in 2016 this was the other way around. Increasing efficiency in service centers is a continuous process that can only be achieved through the targeted use of resources and efficient processes by means of optimal use of technologies. Compared with the results of the past year, the main goal is still to increase customer satisfaction and quality.

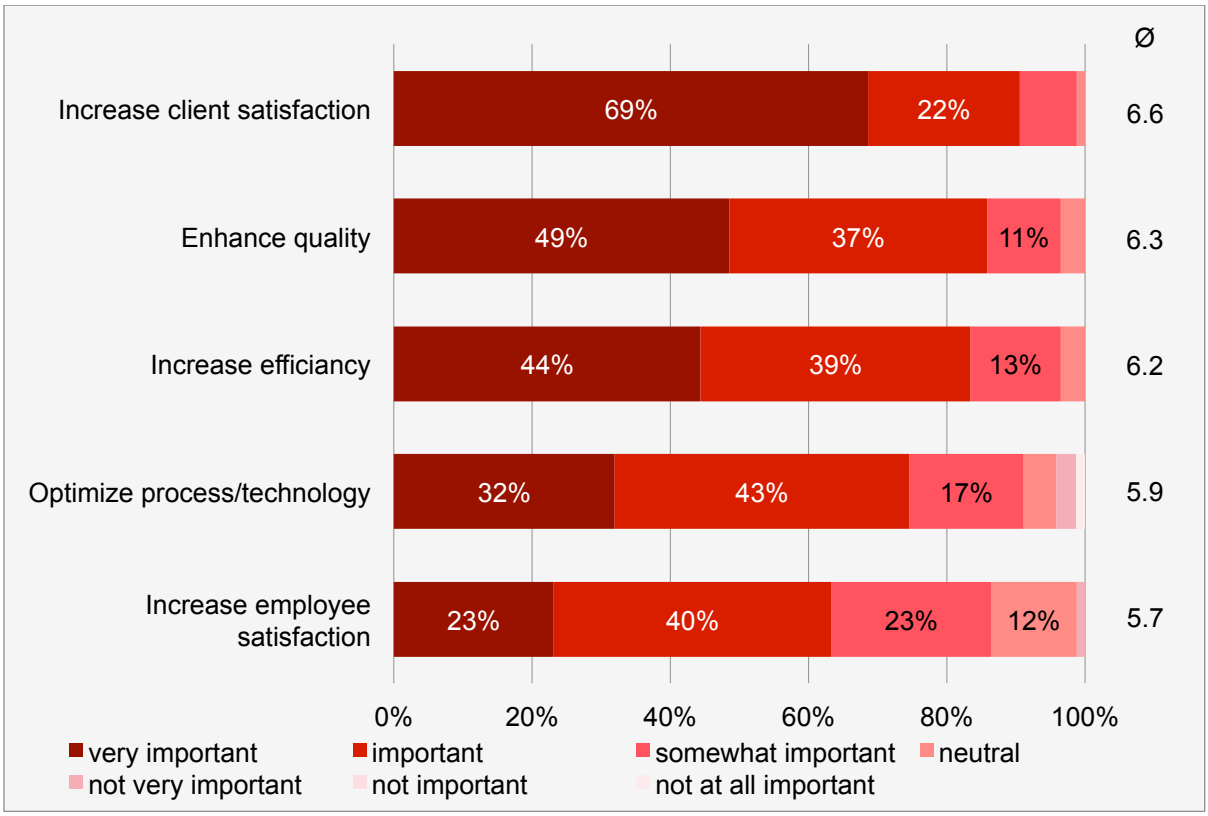


Figure 15: Importance of goals

What should be considered in this context:

- The service center goals should be ambitious and in line with company objectives.

In this context, a certification of the quality system must also be checked (see also chapter 4.3).

- The goals must be regularly reviewed and compared with competitors.
- In the case of goal deviations, necessary corrective measures must be initiated.

1.5 Client types

The classic understanding of service is changing. The great comparability of the products and services reinforces the importance of service centers in order to increase the customer value and differentiate themselves from competitors. Service centers evolve into a strategic customer interface to live the dialogue with the customer.

The surveyed service centers provide their services to a 61 percent majority in the private customer segment (B2C). Services for business customers (B2B) and internal customers are provided by 30 and 9 percent of service centers respectively as primary services. The results thus show the high importance of the services in the B2C area, which are also an incentive for a high-quality service. Compared with the previous year, the share of the service centers in the B2B sector rose slightly.

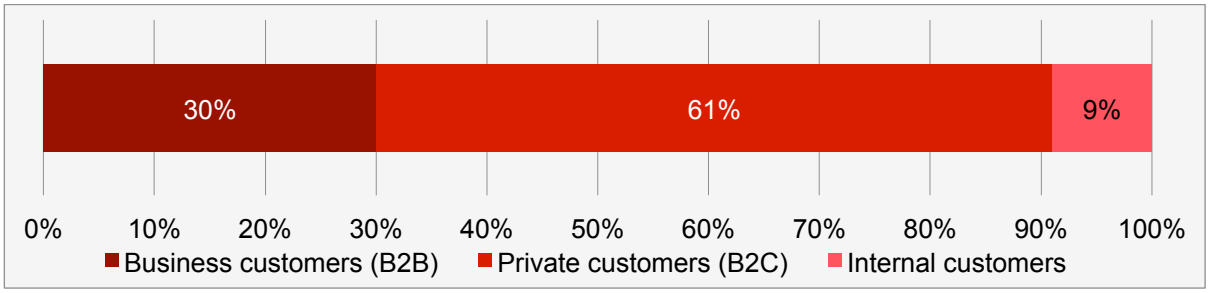


Figure 16: Distribution of the contact volume among client groups

Customer orientation must be self-evident to companies regardless of customer groups or number of contacts. In addition, it is important to monitor continuously whether the overall conditions, customer behaviour, customer expectations, technologies or service requirements change.

1.6 Types of service centers

The organisational form of a service center as well as the integration of the service center in the company are possible in many different ways. The criteria for this are the company strategy, the company structure, the type and size of the service center as well as the goals and interfaces to other areas of the company.

With the service center service providers, an industry branch has developed, which is specialised in providing service centers for companies. In chapter 3, the topic of outsourcing is dealt with in depth. The surveyed service centers are mostly in-house service centers, with the number and share of the participating service providers increasing over the past 2 years.

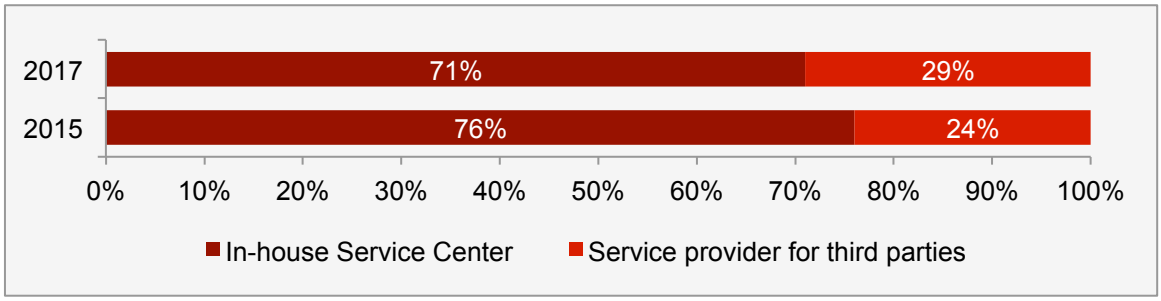


Figure 17: Types of service centers

1.7 Business fields

The surveyed service centers offer various services, the majority of whom offer general customer service activities. 33 percent of these are consulting and information. Approximately 15 percent of the contacts relate to orders and purchase processing as well as administration. With 10 percent, the proportion of complaints contacts is considerable. Internal and external helpdesk contacts amount to 12 percent and 8 percent of the contacts come from outbound activities. With only 4 percent, assistance and claims services are only marginally represented.

Subscribers to the online cockpit can select a business field as a comparison group and thus even more accurately compare themselves with similar service centers.

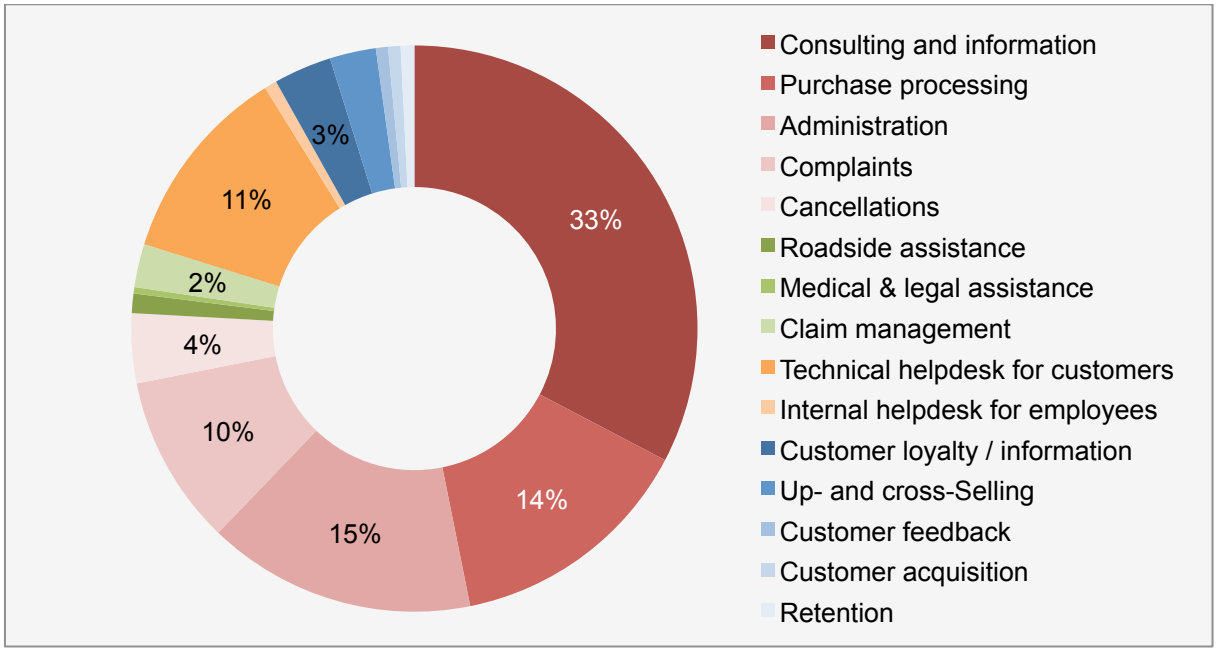


Figure 18: Distribution of contact volume on business fields

Excursus

The digital Service Center

Digitalisation is currently on everyone's lips and does not stop at the service centers. In this context, the 'Doomsday scenarios' are also prophesied in the media. Headings such as 'The call center agent has had his day' or 'Call center: Do we just have to talk with robots?' are not a rarity.

from Prof. Dr Nils Hafner, Lucerne School of Business

But this is not yet the case. In 2017, nearly 20 percent of all incoming customer contacts are processed as Self Services. Also, new touchpoints are planned, where self-service is possible or even obligatory. However, their share of the contacts is still low, as shown in Figure 45.

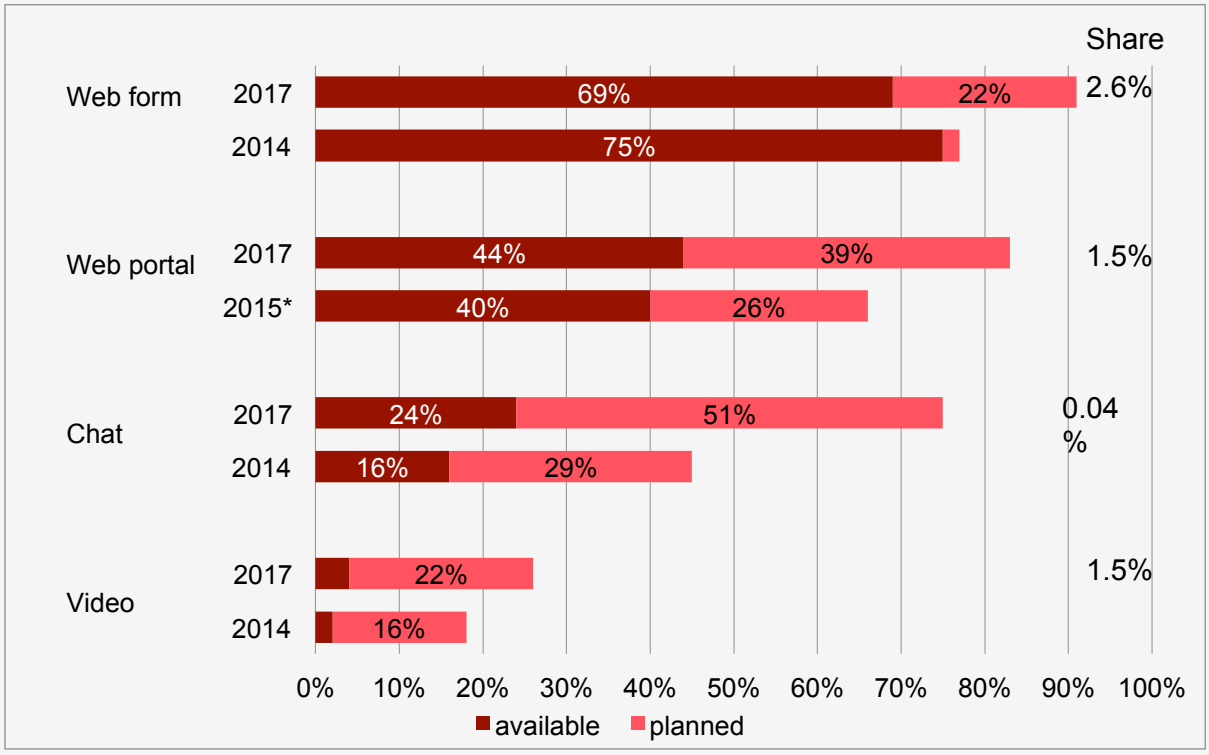


Figure 45: Omnichannel new channels on the advance, but still with a small proportion of the total contacts

Chat on the advance and first applications of chatbots

Just from chat, companies are hoping for high automation possibilities thanks to a combination of Big Data and Machine Learning. The goal is the development of so-called chatbots. This is software that is able to enter into a meaningful dialogue with people. It must be “taught” through dialogues between customers and companies.

While dialogues with chatbots were still largely unsatisfactory until 2016, since the bot did not always understand the client’s phrases, we expect a big leap forward in the next few years. Alexander Weidauer, Chatbot expert and CEO of the conversational AI start-up LASTMILE, explains that the conversation between bot and customer is not only about the learning speed of the system, but also about directing the customer through the dialogue with a skilful question technique. If the bot asks specific questions, the customer's decisions, and hence his will, are clearer. 'Who asks, leads' applies also to chatbots.

The basis for the future success of such bots is an infrastructure that has emerged since 2008 on the smartphones of more than 2 billion people. It is about messenger environments like Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Amazon Echo or the Chinese WeChat. The good thing about this is that since 2010 companies have been increasingly concerned with the phenomenon of social media. Today, for example, more than 60 percent of all companies surveyed by the Service Excellence Cockpit, monitor the dialogues of their customers on Facebook and determine how the brand is being talked about.

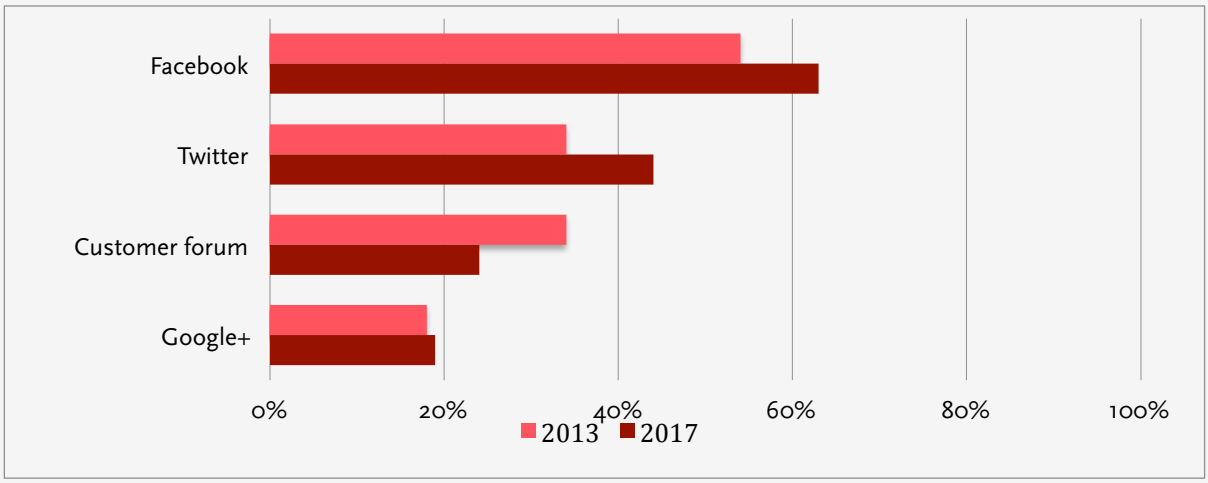


Figure 46: Track the communication about the company in 2013 and 2017

Now, the next step is to go from a pure 'monitoring' to value-creating dialogues. The more individual dialogues are responding to the needs of customers, the more successful they become. On this 'Conversational UI', companies can now chat with their customers. This has the advantage over the development of own service apps, that a comprehensible and generally accepted dialogue infrastructure is used, which is accessible to most users and thus to the customers.

And here the bots come into play, because they can handle thousands of parallel conversations. Bots serve the user as a conversation partner or integrate him into the dialogue between several human users. The core idea behind this is that the participants of the dialogue are guided automatically by the bot to products and services, which play a role in the dialogues. For example, holiday planning can take place in one conversation from flight bookings, to the hotel reservation, to the selection of excursions or restaurants without leaving the messenger environment to do research on prices and alternatives.

Such transactions, which are concluded by means of communication, are subsumed under the keyword *'Conversational Commerce'*. If the chatbot is integrated into a commonly used messenger platform, e.g. Facebook, it simplifies the daily routine, since less effort is required, for example, to order a flight with a short message and not have to go through the airline's app. However, the full potential is only reached if a trip planned via a bot does not go according to your wishes: For example, when a flight is delayed, the bot can make booking changes automatically to ensure that the planned dates are adhered to. The customer is unaware of what is happening. The airline is spared an abundance of unwanted service dialogue.
Since service requests occur in different degrees of complexity, the monitoring of the dialogues plays a special role. This applies in particular to the case when new or unusual service requests are made which are unknown to the bot. Here, the bot is not able to answer or his answer is unsatisfactory for the requesting customer.
It is important that the dialogue is taken over by a human contact person if the bot is not 'able to continue any further'. Afterwards, it is recommended to return the new service case to the learning bot. In order to provide the bot with a foundation for 'service knowledge', experts recommend the piloting of bots together with customers.

Thus, unsatisfactory dialogues should be reduced over time. In general, companies are only at the beginning of this development. Bots begin slowly with the solution of standardised problems and open up to the complexity of human dialogues bit by bit. An exciting perspective.

Increase in efficiency through automation of processes with large volumes

When it comes to digitalisation and automation, it is always important to assess the extent to which efficiency can be increased in the end-to-end view. The combination of processing time and First Contact Resolution (FCR) is a good indication of the efficiency of a channel. Figure 47 shows the comparison of telephone and email. Here the telephone channel still scores well. With almost the same FCR, the processing time is almost two minutes shorter.
Because email ping-pong can be avoided, companies with a high degree of maturity in the customer service, steer meanwhile more in the direction of telephone or chat. The rule 'input channel is equal to the output channel' has thus more and more become obsolete in times of digitalisation. So when a customer mail arrives, which the employee does not understand, because it is, for example, poorly formulated, this employee should call the customer back. For the probability that the customer suddenly writes more intelligently does not increase, just because the employee sends him a query by e-mail.

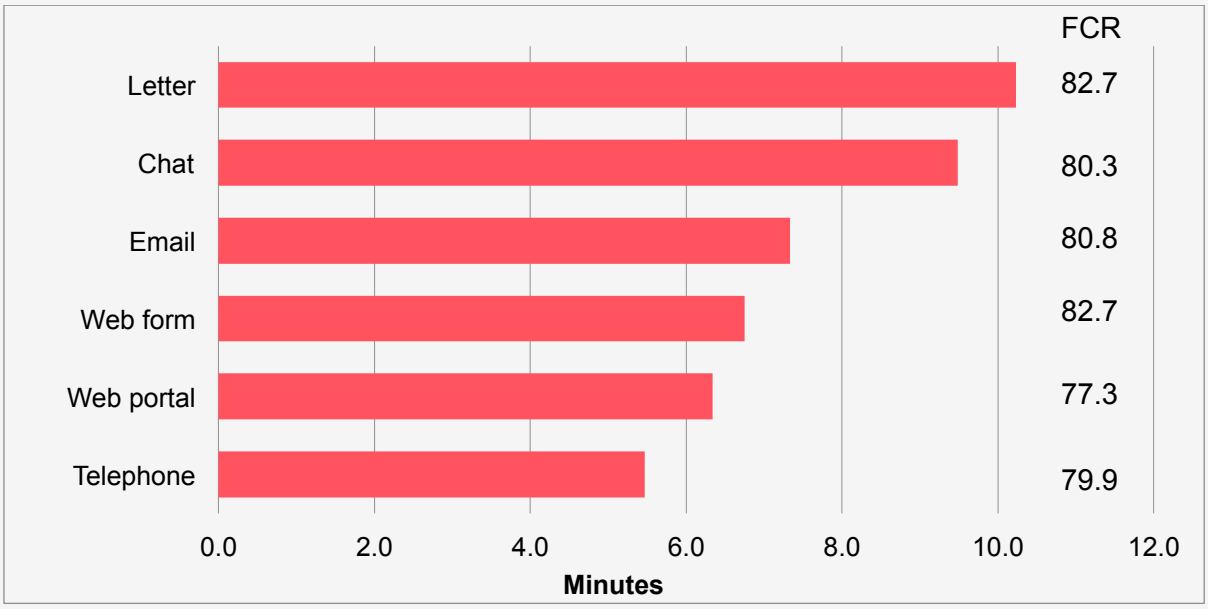


Figure 47: Average processing time and First Contact Resolution

Digitalisation must therefore take place where the processing time can be shortened. In the Service Excellence Cockpit, we have therefore examined, in which technologies supporting written communication is being invested. We have asked how much automatic email response, content analysis, or text building blocks are used. When looking at the currently used technologies, however, there is quite large expansion potential, as shown in Figure 48.

On the basis of the current contact volumes, companies have to consider which customer requirements can actually be automated in the service, which must be simplified and which, for example, result from mistakes of the company and thus could be completely avoided. And at least 20 percent of all customers have to contact the provider for a second time because of one single request.

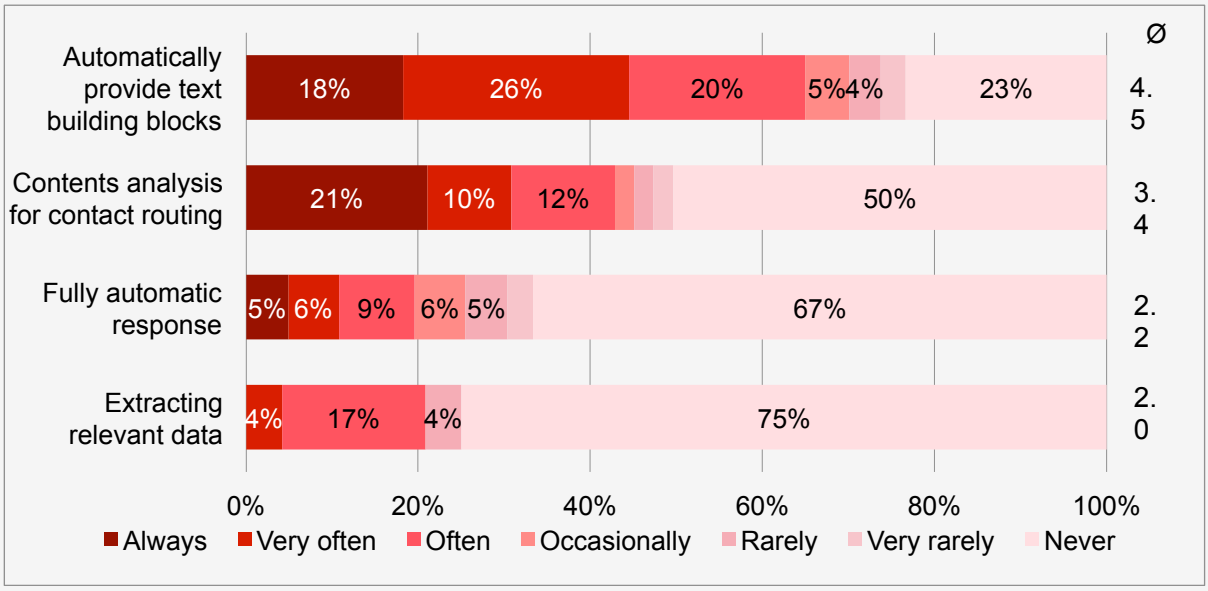


Figure 48: Technological support for written communication

Great development in speech technology

There is still little use of digitalisation tools in the voice area, but this can change rapidly. It is, for example, now possible to digitise and interpret spoken dialects. A health insurance company, for example, tries to measure and control customer satisfaction with individual telephone contacts. That was not the case two years ago. This raises the question which information the company needs in order to understand the customer better than the competition. It also creates new automatic possibilities for assessing customer satisfaction. Certainly, this is more empathic than to ask the customer after each contact with expectancy. 'So, darling, how was I, will you recommend me to others?'

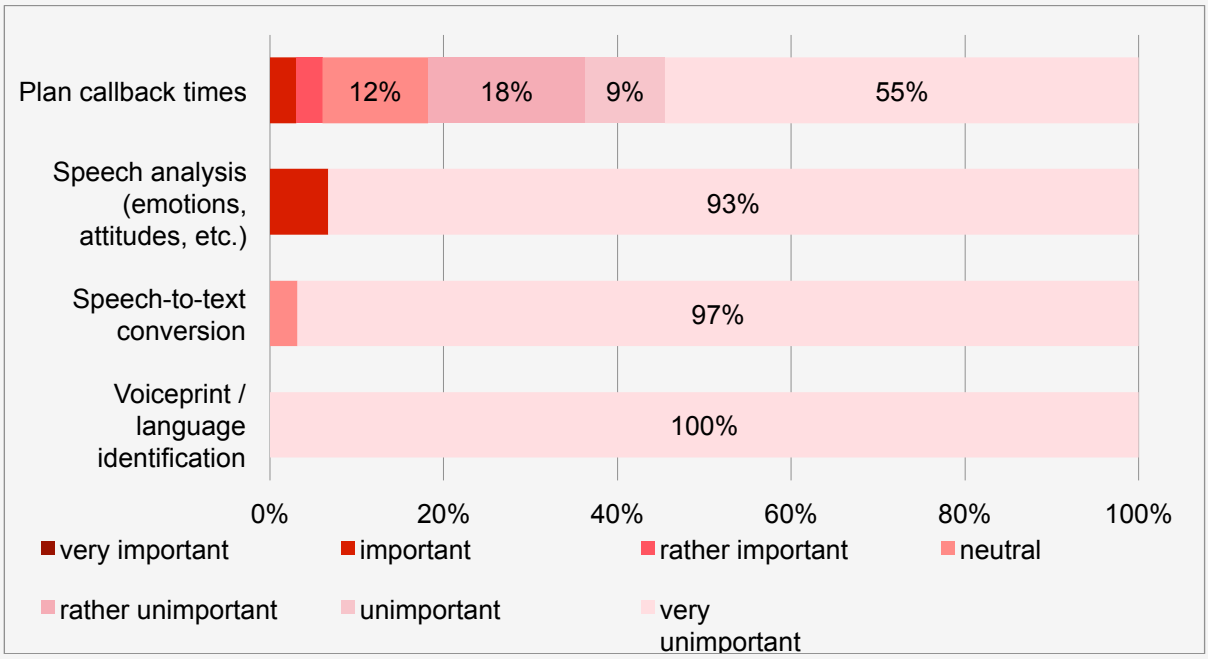


Figure 49: New technology for voice communication - still little used

Analytical instruments and Big Data

In the cockpit, it can be observed that the use of analytical engines has evolved over the last two years. In this context, the distribution of the contact volume of companies to individual touchpoints cannot

be taken as a surprise. After all, new data is constantly being produced by the customer via the digital touchpoints.

In this context, the question for many service departments is: When do you measure what? In addition, there is still the perspective on the integration of external service data. For example, a coffee machine manufacturer has linked his database with the knowledge about the degree of water hardness at the customer's place of residence and the knowledge about the material fatigue of his own coffee machines and can predict exactly when a machine will break down. At the same time, the manufacturer knows what it costs if a customer has a machine defect: What the buyer DOES NOT buy and how likely it is that he will switch to the competition because of this defect. And because of this knowledge, the company can make the customer a great deal for a new coffee machine before the problem arises. This is called *'Predictive Servicing'* and is a new development

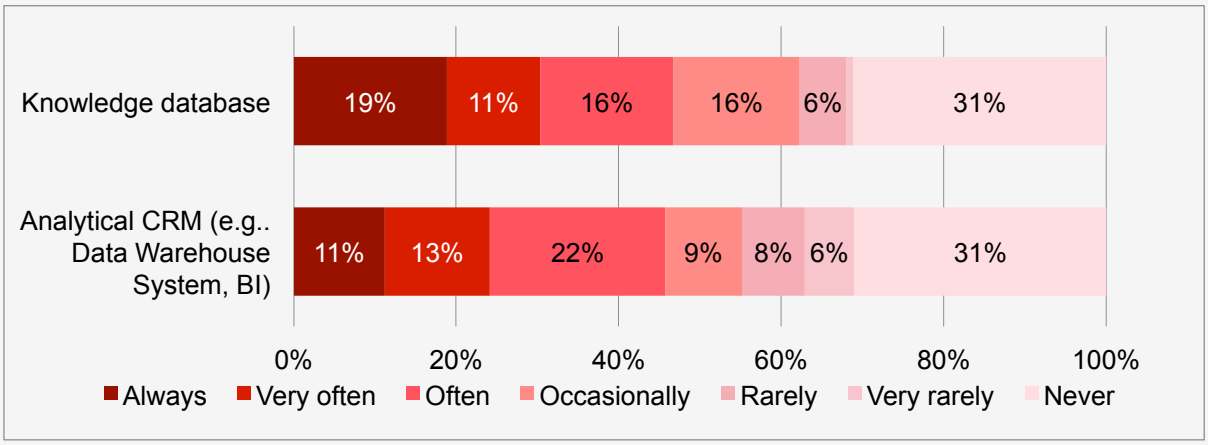


Figure 50: Knowledge and data usage in the service center

What is striking in this context is that, Big Data or not, analytics and knowledge databases are still far less widespread than operational customer service tools like CRM, workflow systems, universal queuing, collaborative tools or ticket systems. There is potential for development.

This is counteracting the investment in the technology made last year. One can interpret the results of the Service Excellence Cockpit 2017 so: Strategic differentiation with modern technology yes, only the method is still missing. Let us hope that the future benchmark year will bring a new perspective!

Conclusion Digitalisation in the Service Center

1. Omnichannel is widely available; only with consistent channel control and use of self services can the full potential of the digitalization be used.
2. The conversion of voice automation and text automation still leaves much to be desired. Here lies much more potential to unlock.
3. Social media provide the basis for a conversational UI and create new commercial offers from service dialogues.
4. Strategic considerations on the use of analytical data are scarce. At present, new technologies are first being tested.
5. The findings from Analytics and Big Data are still not being very much applied in increasing automation and simplification. Here there is a lack of continuous processes and a meaningful use of artificial intelligence.

Methodology

Survey method	Online survey on www.service-excellence-cockpit.org
Duration of the survey	January 2017 to middle of May 2017
Participants	180 service centers in Europe
Calculation of averages	For some of the questions, the average values are shown in addition to the relative information. For the calculation the answersopportnites were assigned to scoring values from 1 to 7. (e.g. "Very dissatisfied" = 1 to "very satisfied" = 7). For the calculation of the averages, the scores were weighted based on the number of entries.

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