The Power of a
360 Performance View
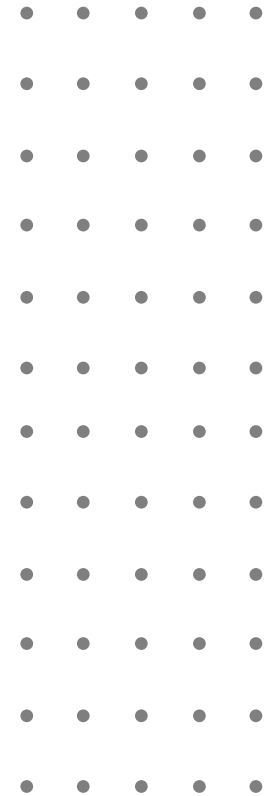
Survey Report, August 2024

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Introduction and Key Findings

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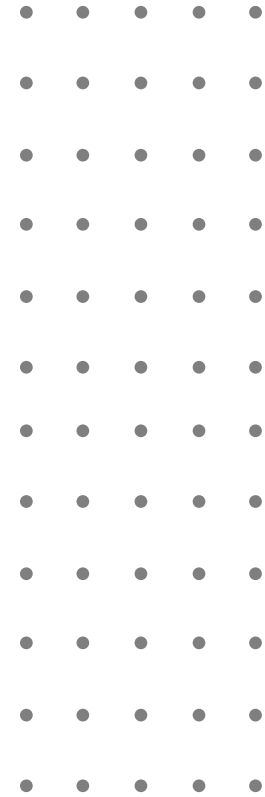
Introduction & Methodology

The contact center industry has been undergoing a transformation in recent years, driven by the need to enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and simultaneously elevate both customer experience (CX) and employee experience (EX). Consequently, the view of contact centers as cost centers has shifted to seeing them as strategic business enablers.[1]

The hybrid work model – popularized during the Covid-19 pandemic – has significantly affected the way contact centers are run. Companies have been forced to adopt a more agile approach to managing their employees, and ensure they are motivated and inspired to minimize burn out and reduce attrition rates. In addition, many contact centers now facilitate omnichannel customer support directly from the agents' desktops, transforming both the way they work and how they should be measured.

Given that "time is money", it is crucial for companies to have full visibility into their customer service employees' work behaviors so that they are better able to rapidly identify trends, issues and opportunities to optimize performance and ensure maximum productivity. Performance management programs that are enhanced by gamification and application analytics not only provide AI-powered insights derived from tracking employee work behaviors and KPI achievements over time, but also boost EX – and ultimately CX.

As builders of solutions for companies with contact centers, we at NICE are always keen to learn about how performance management is being leveraged within the market and whether advanced analytics features are being utilized fully by companies to broaden their contact center capabilities. The aim of this report is therefore to explore how attitudes to performance management programs and their usage have changed, particularly in relation to gamification, which has emerged as a popular strategy to address challenges associated with remote work, boost employee productivity and enhance engagement.

Methodology
To get more insight into the state of performance management, we commissioned a survey of 400 contact center managers and operations professionals to shed light on current trends, challenges and priorities.

This report was administered online by Global Surveyz Research, an independent global research firm. The survey is based on responses from customer care, customer service, and contact/call center leaders, including supervisors (20%) and managers/directors/VPs (80%). The respondents hailed from companies in the US (85%) and UK (15%) with contact centers of various sizes (33% with 500 employees, 33% with 500-1,000 employees, and 34% with 1,000-1,500 employees.

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The respondents were recruited through a global B2B research panel and invited via email to complete a survey, with all responses collected during May 2024. The average amount of time spent on the survey was 6 minutes and 52 seconds. The answers to most of the non-numerical questions were randomized to prevent order bias in the answers.

Sources:

[1] *Revolutionizing Contact Centers: The Impact of Generative AI, Performance Analytics, and Process Intelligence Technologies* (an Everest Group [report](), 2023)

Key Findings

1 **80% of companies running a performance management program observe a significant improvement in employee productivity, making it an invaluable investment for contact centers.**

According to the respondents, the best method for boosting performance in contact centers is performance management (Figure 10). 64% of companies report that they are currently running a performance management program that provides them with measurable results, and 34% are planning to run one in the next year (Figure 1), indicating a high level of confidence in this type of solution to provide a reliable ROI. This makes performance management a valuable investment for companies seeking to not only monitor and transform employee work behaviors for maximum performance and customer satisfaction, but also to outshine their competitors. In addition, all respondents reported that performance management increases their productivity, with 80% indicating the impact is significant (Figure 2). Given that productivity is one of the main KPIs for managers, this finding reinforces how important it is for every contact center to have a performance management program in place. The level of productivity maintained among employees directly impacts multiple factors that ultimately affect the company's bottom line.

2 **76% of companies say that gamification has a significant effect on productivity, but 35% admit they struggle to measure its ROI.**

Three-quarters of contact center leaders report that gamification had a significant positive effect on productivity, whether the employees work fully in the office or fully remotely (Figure 4). Their top reasons for incorporating gamification are (Figure 5) increased engagement and improved performance (27%), and employee loyalty, satisfaction and retention (23%). Indeed, the fact that 99% of companies (Figure 3) are either already using some form of gamification (61%) or are planning to start using it in the next year (38%), is testament to the widespread endorsement of gamification as a means to improve contact center performance management. It's therefore notable that a third of the respondents (35%) say their top difficulties with ROI measurement relate to gamification (Figure 11). This may well be resolved, however, by a performance management solution that includes AI-powered ROI measurement capabilities.

3 **59% of contact centers use both digital and voice channels concurrently to interact with customers, increasing the need for better visibility into agent activities.**

In the digital, hybrid-work era, customer service agents are required to use a wide range of channels – often simultaneously – to offer support. Most companies (59%) offer or facilitate both digital channels (such as email, chat, social media and messaging apps) and voice (traditional phone calls) to interact with customers (Figure 14). It is

therefore crucial for performance management solutions to include robust desktop analytics that can evaluate employees' work behaviors and the effectiveness of the various communication channels they use. This analysis can provide important insights into which channels need to be optimized or prioritized to maximize productivity and to boost CX.

4 **82% of companies report that using a performance management solution featuring desktop analytics has increased their productivity significantly.**

The most important driver for contact centers when increasing operational efficiency through improved performance (Figure 7) is monitoring and visualization of desktop activities (40%). This makes sense in the era of hybrid work, because it allows supervisors to keep track of productivity levels whether employees are working in the office or remotely. It further enables them to provide the necessary guidance to improve individual employee performance, thereby lifting the performance of the contact center as a whole. However, 99% of companies experience difficulties in measuring the ROI of their performance management initiatives (Figure 11), with the top difficulty being limited access to comprehensive analytics tools (36%). It is therefore no wonder that 82% of contact center leaders agree that a robust desktop analytics solution would help identify the root cause behind performance gaps and drive productivity more effectively (Figure 9).

5 **97% of companies say that implementing a performance management solution featuring both gamification and desktop analytics has a positive impact.**

Virtually all companies (97%) say that implementing a performance management solution featuring both gamification and desktop analytics has a positive impact (Figure 15), either by increasing transparency and accountability (56%), or improving customer satisfaction (13%), or both (28%). What sets some brands apart from others is the quality of the experience they are able to provide to their customers, but CX is the result of more than just technologies and processes – it is also a reflection of the people behind them. Performance management solutions are therefore also rated based on their ability to motivate and inspire employees, because the 'happier' the contact center team, the better the customer service they provide, and the higher the CSAT scores companies can expect as a result.

6 **90% of the top gamification motivators are intangible.**

Contrary to common belief, contact center employees value the social aspects of gamification above monetary rewards. According survey respondents, employees are primarily motivated to engage in gamified activities (Figure 12) by: recognition and praise for achievements by both managers and colleagues (22%); opportunities for career advancement and skill development (22%); intangible rewards such as a sense of accomplishment (21%); the enjoyment of participating in challenges and activities (13%); and heathy competition (12%).

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Survey Report Findings

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Are Companies Running Performance Management Programs with Measurable Results?

When asked whether they are currently running a performance management program that provides measurable results, most of the respondents (64%) said "Yes". This is a reflection of their confidence in this type of solution to provide a reliable ROI through monitoring their contact center employees over time and transforming their work behaviors to maximize performance.

Almost two thirds of companies are leveraging performance management solutions with measurable results, and a third of companies (34%) are planning to start in the coming year. This indicates that performance management is seen as a must for companies, not only so that they can maximize productivity and customer satisfaction, but also to help them excel in a competitive market.
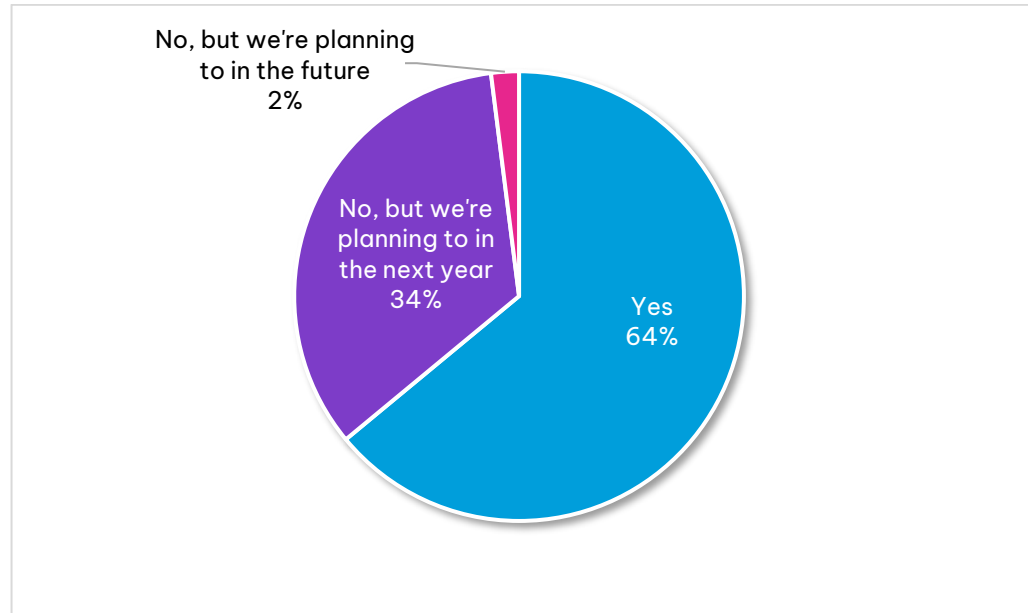

Figure 1: Are Companies Running Performance Management Programs with Measurable Results?

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Performance Management program refers to enabling employees to take ownership of their work, aligning performance with organizational goals, and providing transparent, continuous feedback. Good performance is rewarded; underperformance triggers action to address the problem.

[Learn more about the best practices for managing a performance management program](#).

Performance Management Impact on Productivity

All the respondents reported that performance management increases their productivity, with 80% indicating the impact is significant.

Given that productivity is one of the main KPIs of any workforce, this finding reinforces (once again) how important it is for every contact center to have a performance management program in place. The level of productivity among employees directly impacts multiple factors that ultimately affect a company's bottom line.
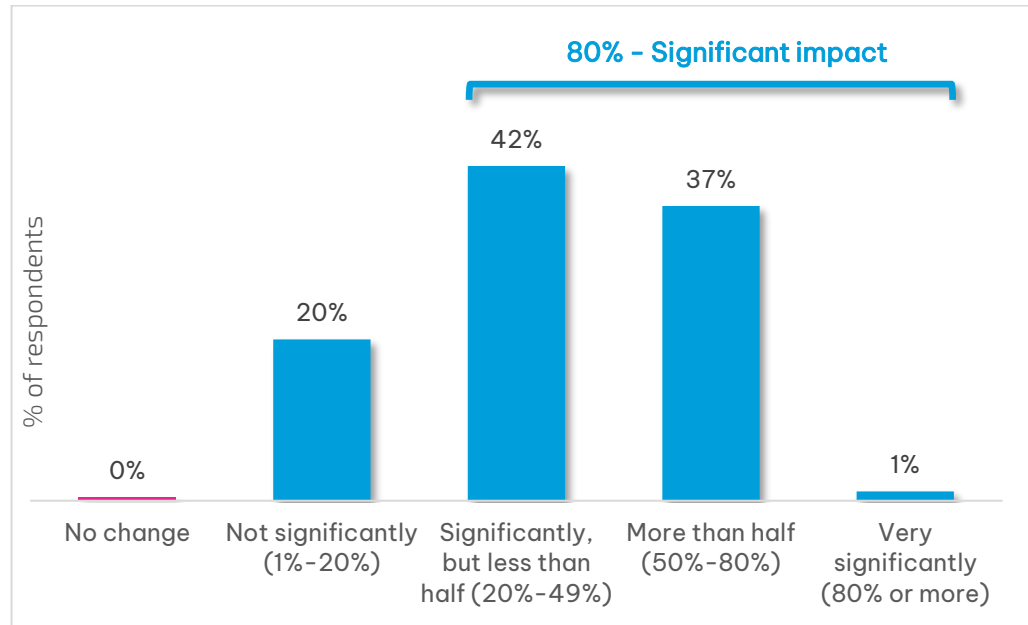

Figure 2: Performance Management Impact on Productivity

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Use of Gamification in Performance Management Programs

Overall, 61% of the companies surveyed use gamification in their performance management programs. Such integration of gamification is common regardless of whether the employees work fully in the office (54%) or remotely (72%).

The higher adoption rates of gamification among organizations with remote employees may be a result of the fact that they feel less engaged than those on-site. This suggests that organizations should consider investing more substantially in EX, and that gamification can have a positive effect on employees.

Notably, 99% of companies are either already using gamification to some extent (61%) or are planning to start using it in the next year (38%). This represents widespread endorsement of gamification as a means to improve contact center performance management.
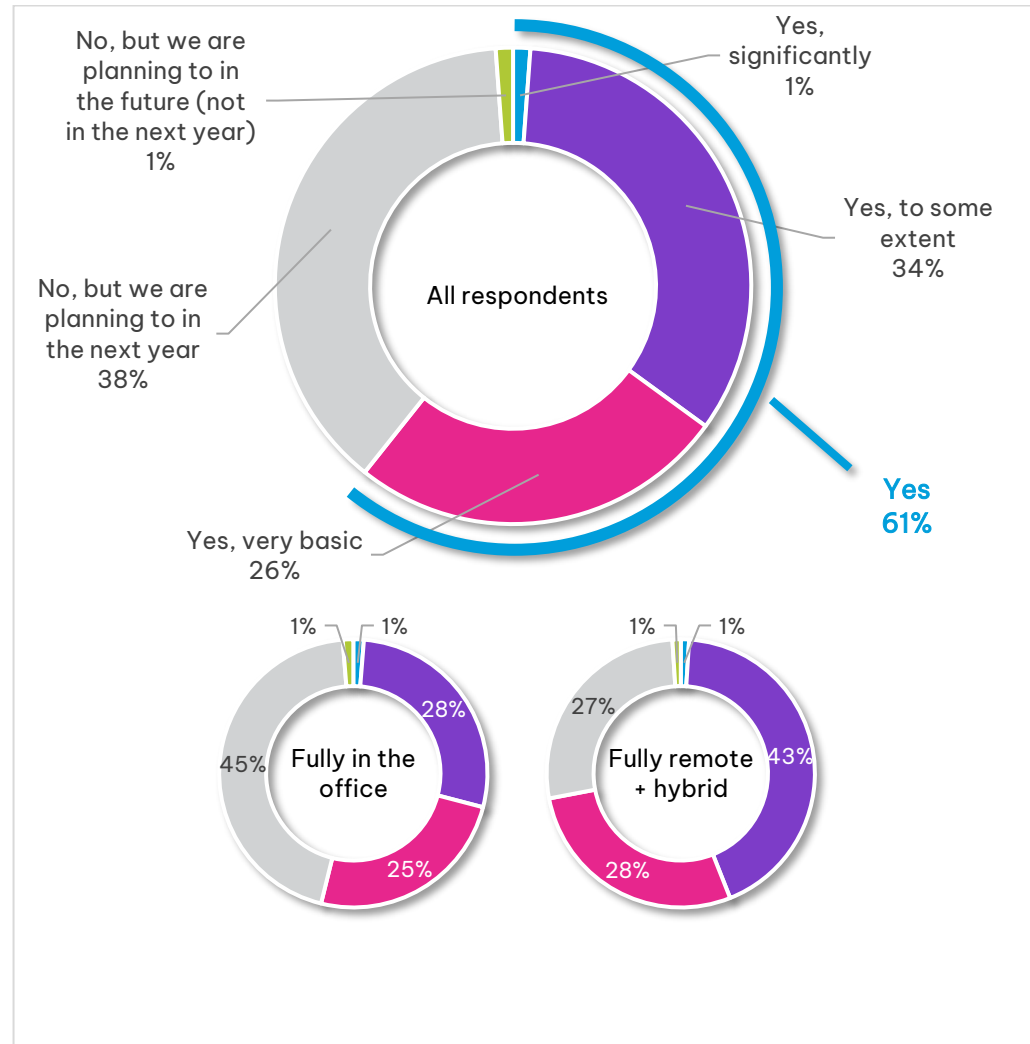

Figure 3: Use of Gamification in Performance Management Programs

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The Effect of Gamification on Productivity

We asked respondents to what extent gamification has increased productivity, which is one of the primary KPIs for contact center employees. **Seventy-six percent reported that gamification has had a significant positive effect on productivity, whether employees work in the office or fully remotely.** This clearly supports the previously noted finding that most companies are using gamification in their performance management programs due to its effectiveness.
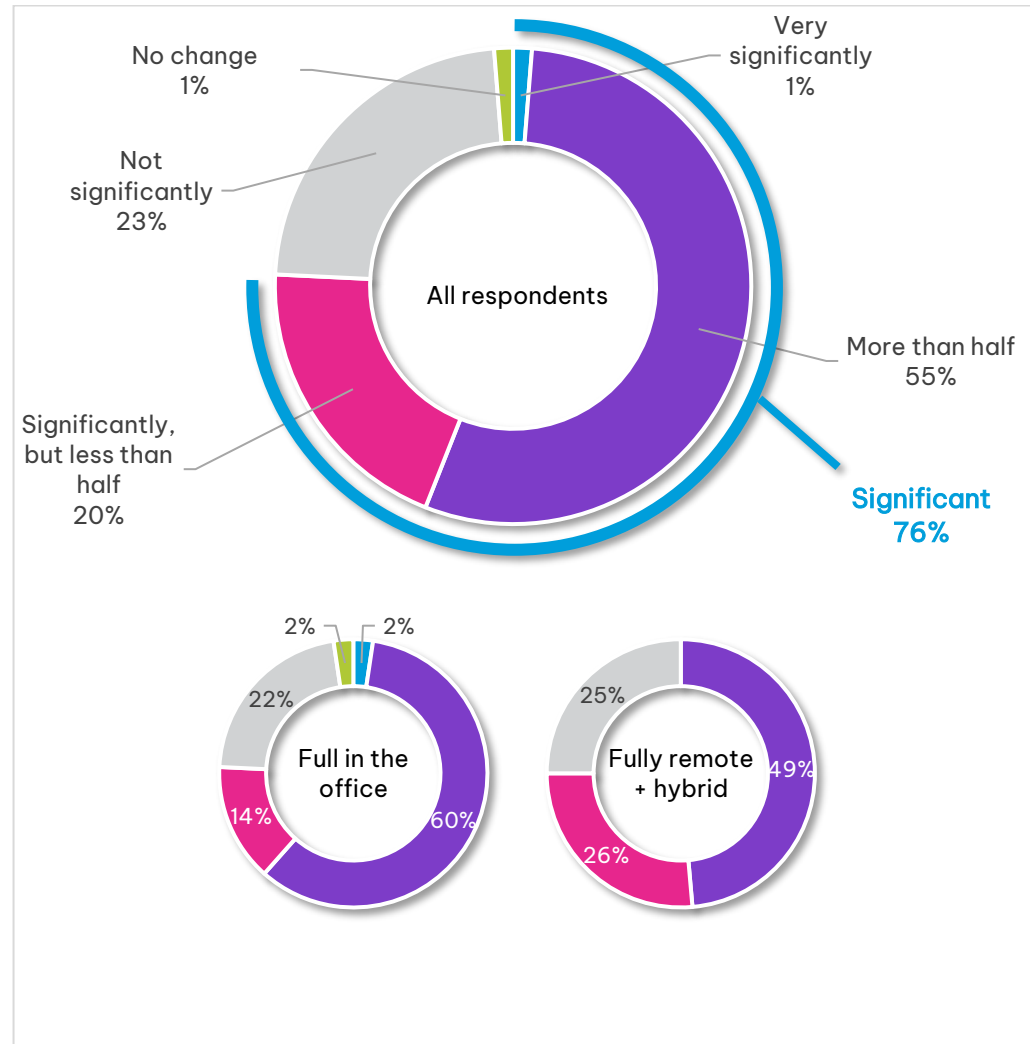

Figure 4: The Effect of Gamification on Productivity

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Reasons For and Against Incorporating Gamification

We asked respondents to share the top reasons for or against incorporating gamification and rewards programs in their organization.

Unsurprisingly, **the top reason for incorporating gamification is increased engagement and improved performance among contact center employees (27%).**

The top reason for not incorporating it is the prioritization of other initiatives perceived to be of higher strategic importance (57%), which is primarily an indication of a lack of resources (personnel) to run a performance management program. Concerns over a negative impact on team dynamics and morale (21%), budgetary considerations (11%) and uncertainty regarding implementation (11%) were cited far less by the respondents.
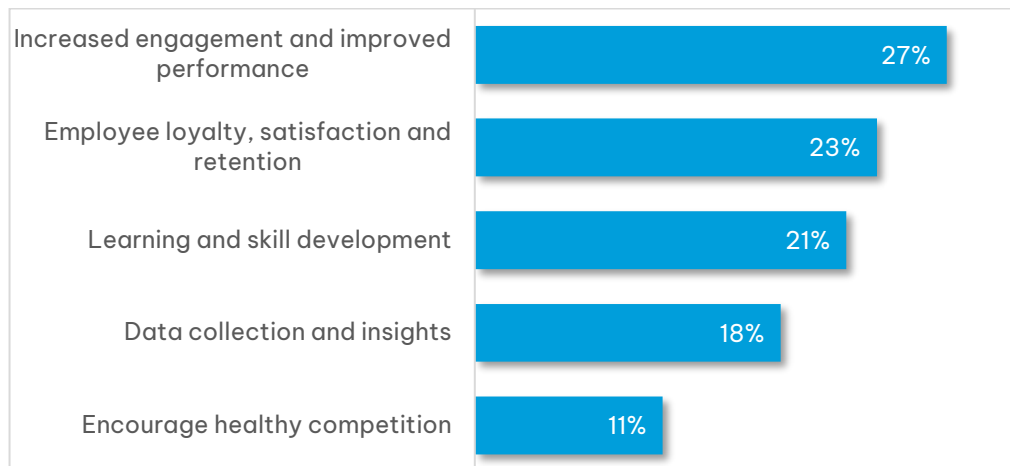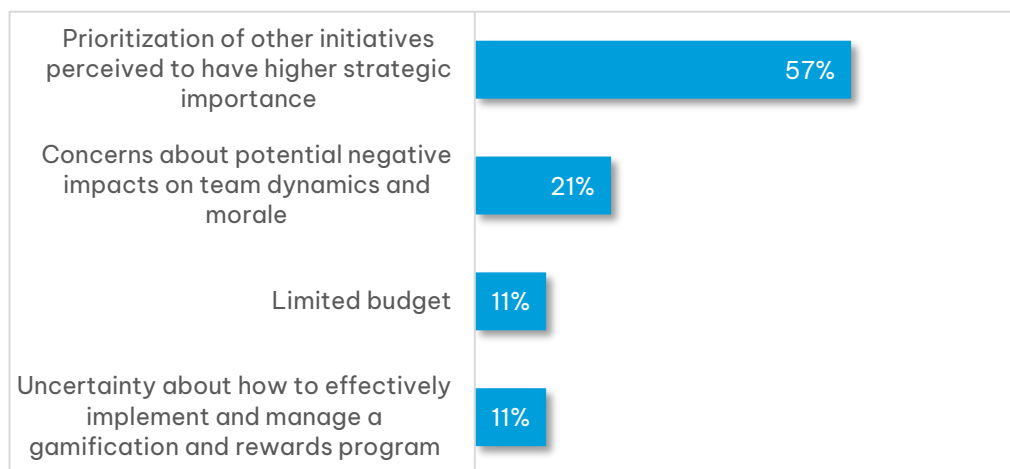
Figure 5: Top Drivers for Incorporating Gamification

Increased engagement and improved performance	27%
Employee loyalty, satisfaction and retention	23%
Learning and skill development	21%
Data collection and insights	18%
Encourage healthy competition	11%

Figure 6: Top Reasons for Not Incorporating Gamification and Rewards

Prioritization of other initiatives perceived to have higher strategic importance	57%
Concerns about potential negative impacts on team dynamics and morale	21%
Limited budget	11%
Uncertainty about how to effectively implement and manage a gamification and rewards program	11%

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Top Performance Drivers for Increasing Operational Efficiency

We asked respondents which performance drivers are most important for increasing operational efficiency in their organization. **The most important driver they cited is monitoring and visualization of desktop activities (40%).** This makes sense in the era of hybrid work arrangements, because it allows supervisors to keep track of productivity levels whether employees are working in the office or remotely. If desktop activities of certain employees reflect a low level of productivity, supervisors can provide them with the guidance needed to improve their performance. Success with highly focused assistance to individual employees lifts the performance level and efficiency of the contact center as a whole.
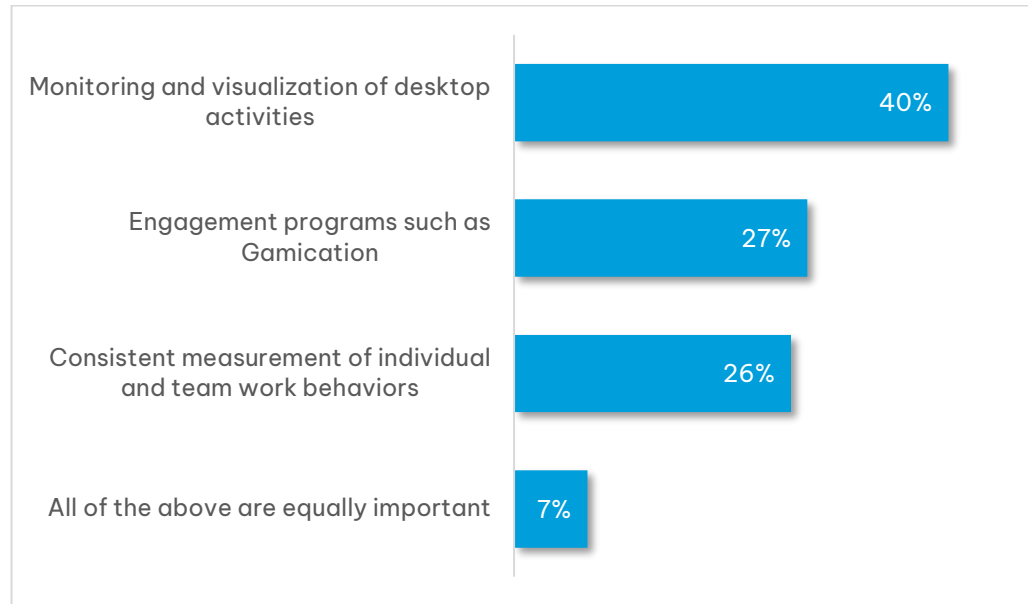

Figure 7: Top Performance Drivers for Increasing Operational Efficiency

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Use of Desktop Analytics in Performance Management Programs

Eighty percent of the respondents reported using desktop analytics in their performance management program.

In the digital, hybrid-work era, customer service agents are required to use a wide range of channels – often simultaneously – to offer support. It is therefore crucial for performance management platforms to include robust desktop analytics that monitor not only the employees' work behaviors, but also the effectiveness of the various communication channels they use. This analysis can provide important insights into which channels need to be optimized or prioritized to maximize productivity.
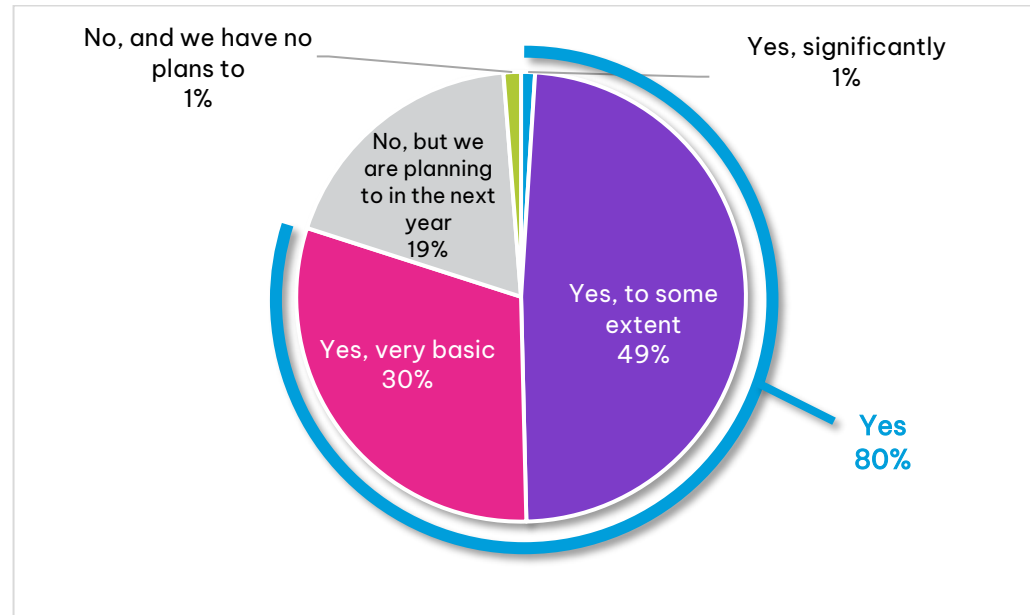

Figure 8: Use of Desktop Analytics in Performance Management Programs

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How Performance Management Programs Featuring Desktop Analytics Impact Productivity

Most of the respondents (82%) reported that performance management programs featuring desktop analytics increased their productivity significantly.

It is possible to use desktop analytics applications independently of comprehensive performance management programs. However, this finding suggests that companies using desktop analytics as an integral part of their performance management program find it more effective in driving productivity.
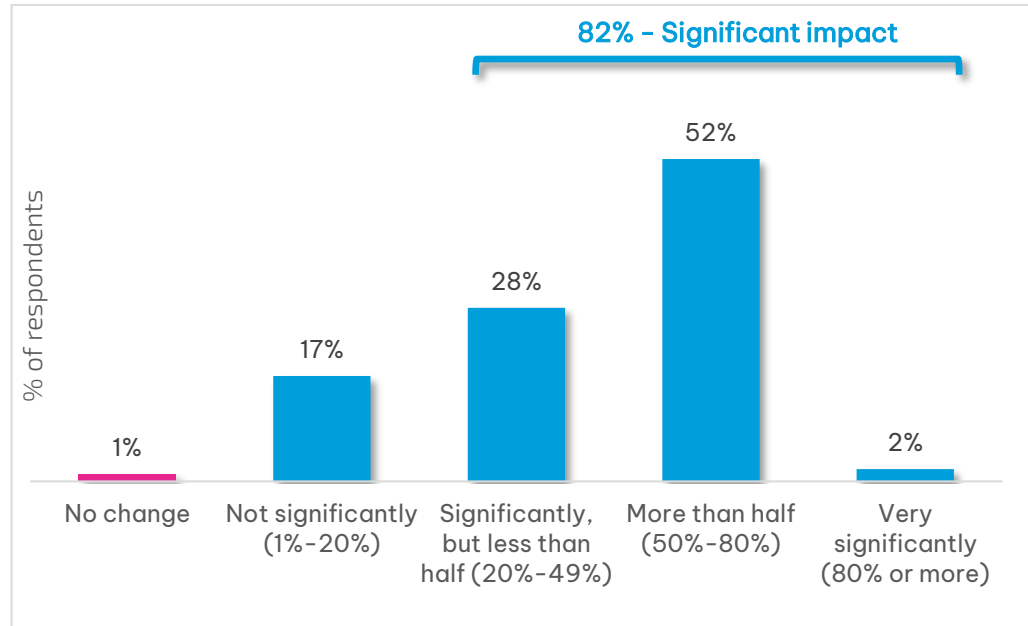

Figure 9: How Performance Management Programs Featuring Desktop Analytics Impact Productivity

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The Best Methods for Boosting Performance in Contact Centers

According to the respondents, the best method for boosting performance in contact centers is performance management (31%). This is understandable, as performance management platforms have emerged as a crucial tool for contact center managers to track employee work behaviors and ensure they are meeting their KPIs.

Flexible scheduling was rated as the second-best method (23%) for improving performance. This result is most likely due to employees being able to improve their own performance through better time management.
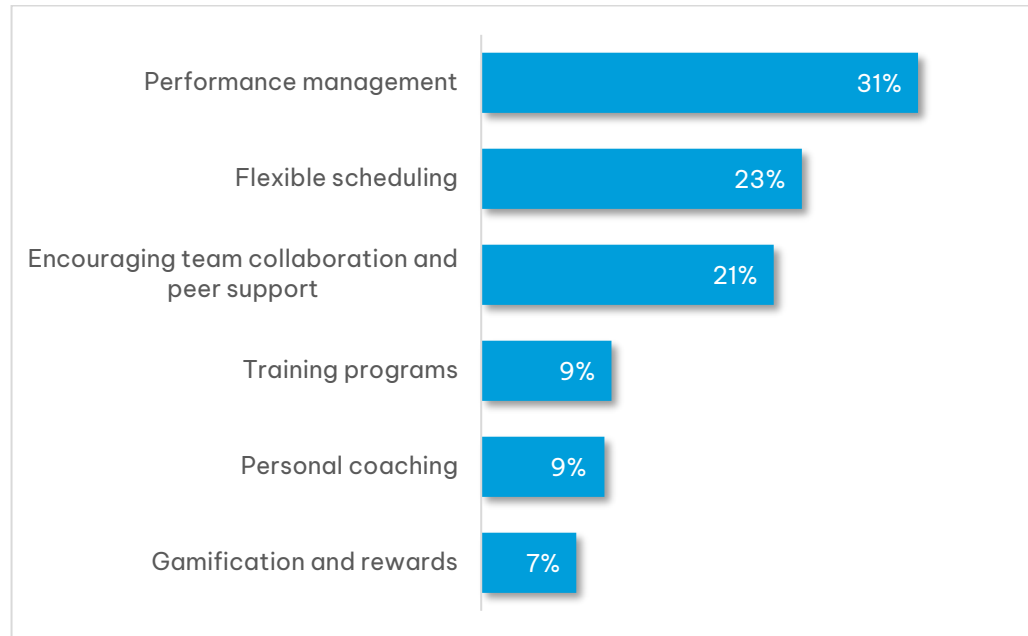

Figure 10: The Best Methods for Boosting Performance in Contact Centers

Reasons for Difficulty in Measuring Performance Management ROI

Almost all (99%) companies experience difficulties in measuring the ROI of their performance management initiatives. The main challenge they encounter is limited access to comprehensive analytics tools (36%).

Interestingly, a third of the respondents (35%) say that their top difficulties with ROI measurement relate to gamification initiatives. Although 76% of respondents reported that gamification had a significant effect on productivity (Figure 4), it seems that 19% of companies are struggling to correlate gamification efforts with business outcomes and 16% find it difficult to track the impact of gamification on key metrics. These issues may well be resolved through the use of a performance management solution that includes more robust gamification ROI measurement capabilities, as well as guidance on setting ROI goals more efficiently, and even occasionally seeking feedback from employees to gauge the value of the gamification initiatives. A performance management solution that includes AI models may be best positioned to provide these advantages.
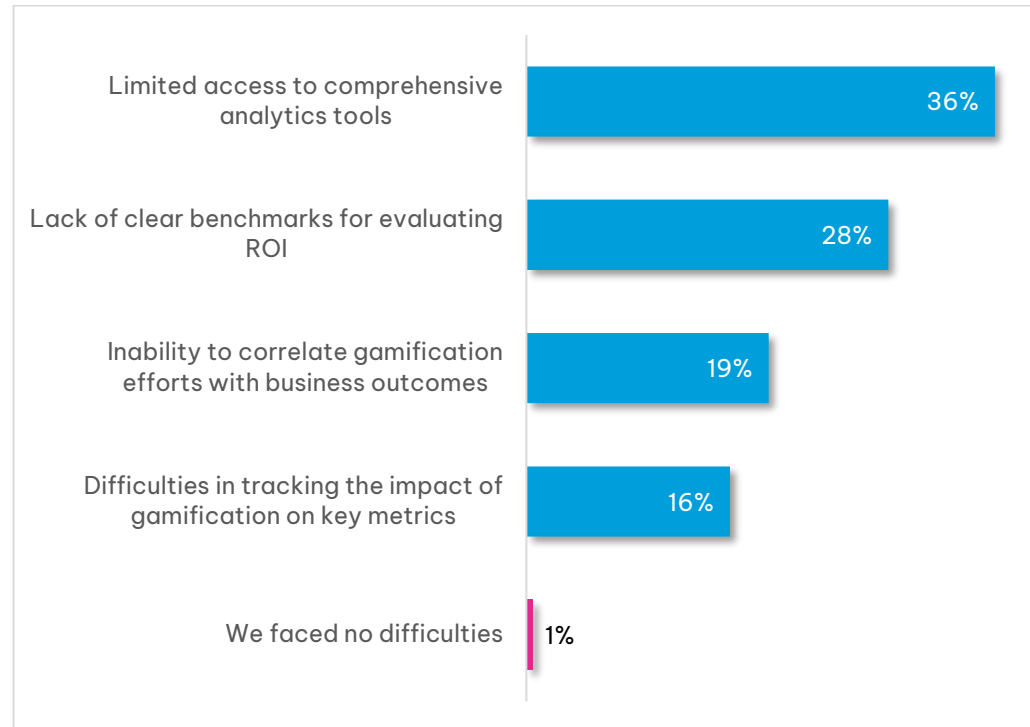

Figure 11: Reasons for Difficulty in Measuring Performance Management ROI

Rewards Motivating Employee Participation in Gamified Activities

When asked to identify the top rewards that are motivating employees to participate in gamification activities, 90% of the respondents mentioned intangible benefits, including: recognition and praise for achievements (22%), opportunities for career advancement and skill development (22%), intrinsic rewards such as a sense of accomplishment (21%), the enjoyment of participating in challenges and activities (13%), and heathy competition and peer recognition (12%).

This is both interesting and somewhat surprising. Rather than participating in gamified activities for the sake of monetary rewards, the majority of employees value these activities primarily for their social aspects, the desire to be recognized professionally by both managers and colleagues, and the opportunities they might present for advancing their careers.
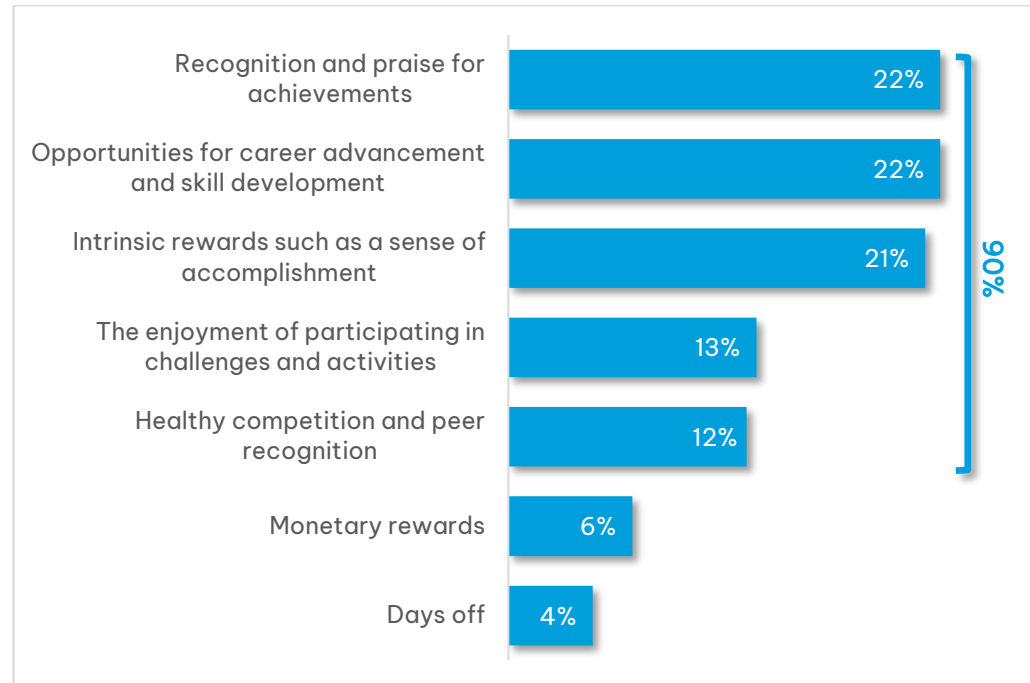

Figure 12: Rewards Motivating Employee Participation in Gamified Activities

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Top Priorities for Improving Customer Experience

The top priority for respondents when it comes to improving their company's customer experience (CX) is data collection and insights (24%). Notably, almost an equal proportion of respondents consider increased engagement to be the top priority (23%), which indicates how important EX is to a favorable brand identity.

This aligns with our earlier finding (Figure 5) that the top reasons for companies to incorporate gamification and rewards programs in their performance management programs are increased engagement and improved performance among their employees (27%), as well as employee loyalty, satisfaction and retention (23%). The rationale for prioritizing these goals is that the more satisfied and motivated the employees providing the customer service are, the better the experience will be for the customers.
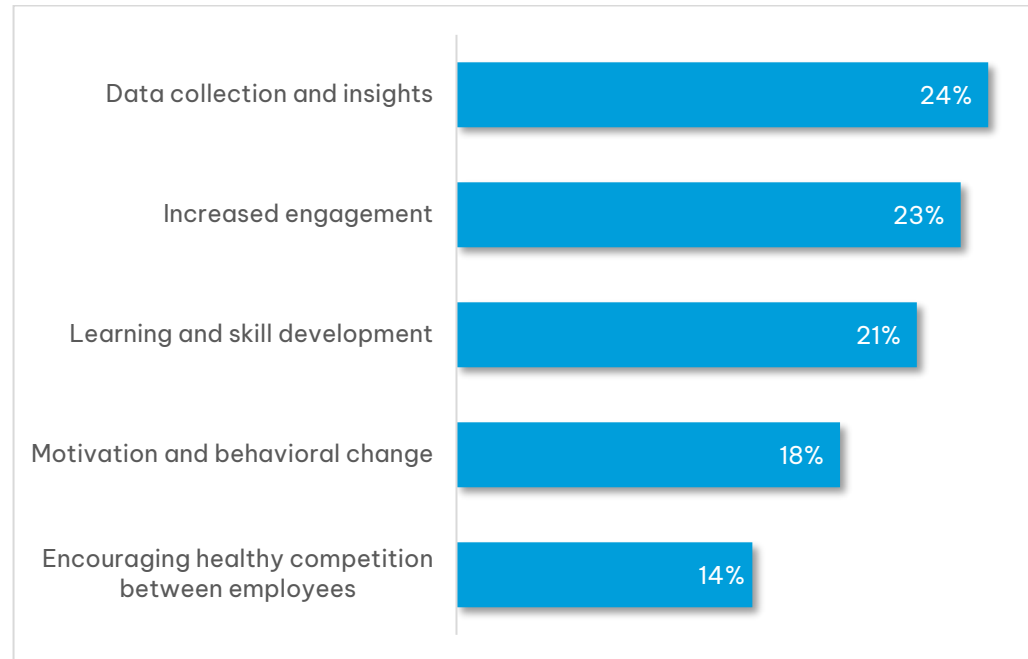

Figure 13: Top Priorities for Improving Customer Experience

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Types of Customer Interactions Facilitated by Contact Centers

We asked respondents which channels customers can use to interact with their organization. **Most of the companies (59%) offer or facilitate both digital (such as email, chat, social media and messaging apps) and voice (traditional phone calls) channels for customer interactions.**

When looking more closely at the breakdown of these results, we see that 65% of companies with a performance management program offer both digital and voice interactions. On the other hand, just under half (49%) of companies that do not have such a program also offer both types of channels.

This finding reinforces the observation that contact center agents are required to use multiple communication channels every day to interact with customers. It also indicates the importance of using performance management platforms that can effectively monitor and measure the success of each channel to boost CX and maximize productivity.
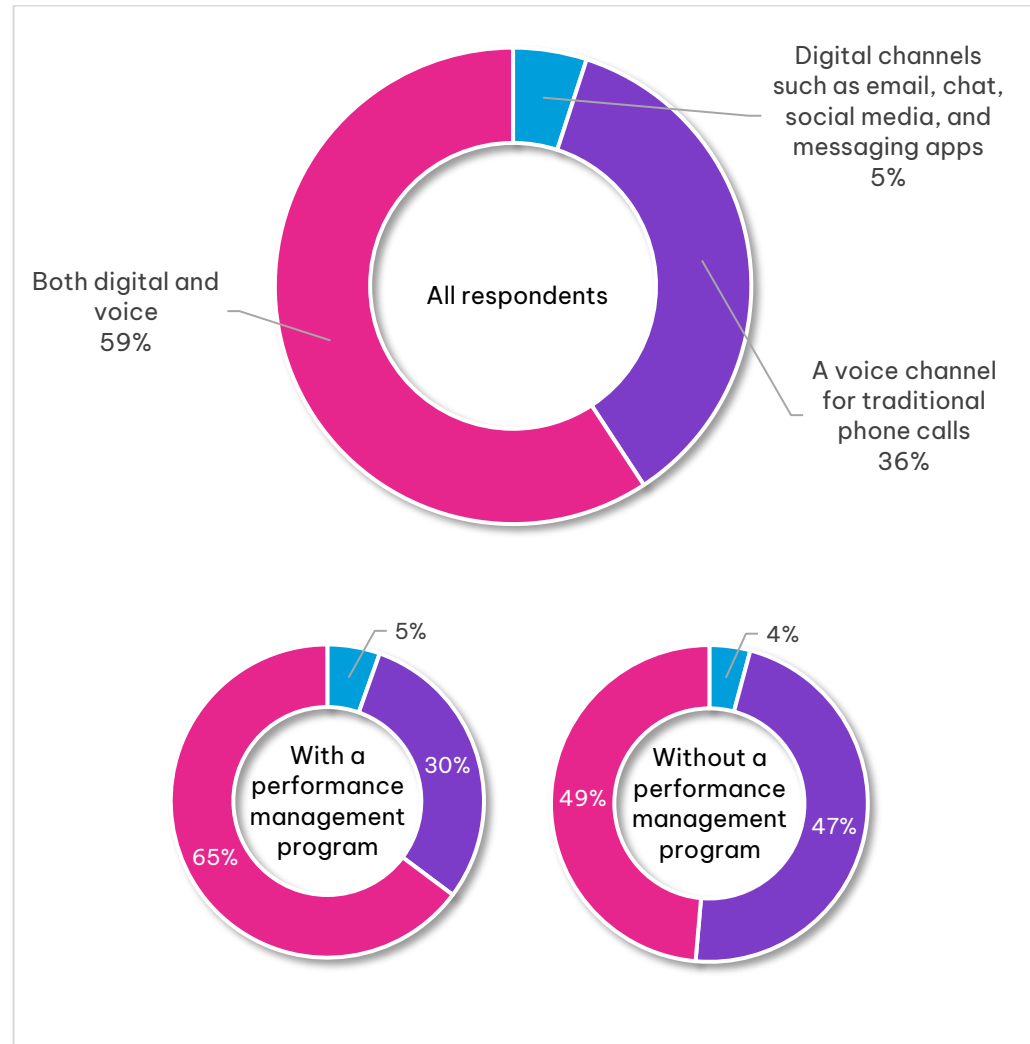

Figure 14: Types of Customer Interactions Facilitated by Contact Centers

Impact of Implementing a Performance Management Program with Gamification and Desktop Analytics

Virtually all companies (97%) say that implementing a performance management program featuring both gamification and desktop analytics has a positive impact, either by increasing transparency and accountability (56%), or improving customer satisfaction (13%), or both (28%).

This finding reflects current industry trends around empowering employees and providing them with a sense of pride in what they do.
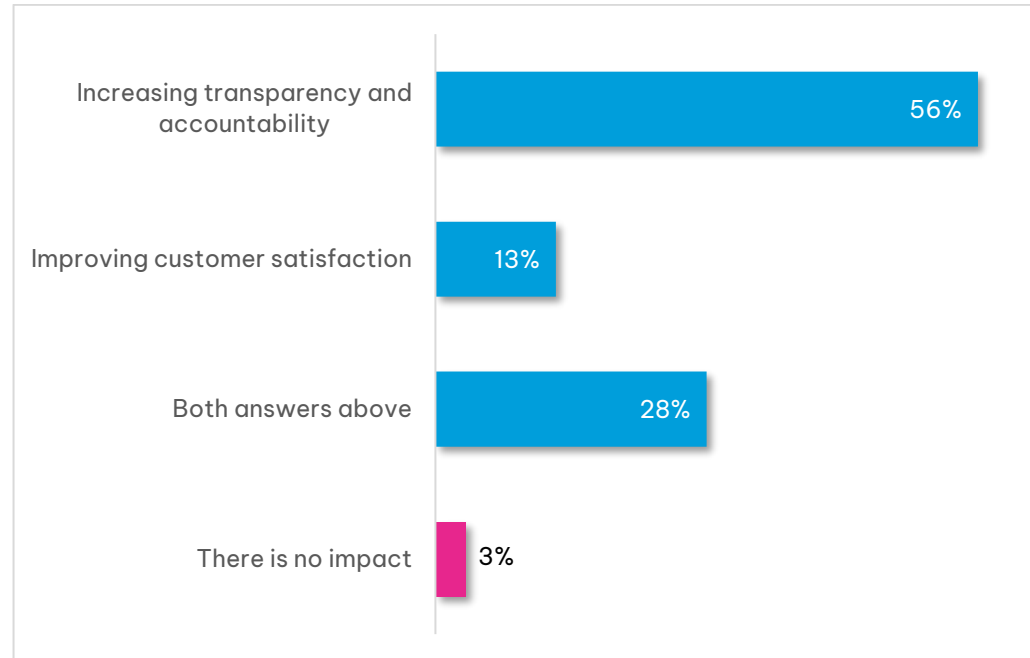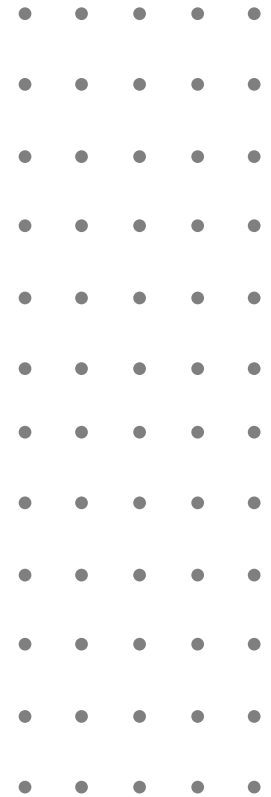

Figure 15: Impact of Implementing a Performance Management Program with Gamification and Desktop Analytics

Demographics

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Country, Industry, Job Seniority, Role, and Number of Employees

Figure 16: Industry

Industry	Percentage
Information Technology	21%
Financial Services	18%
Retail & eCommerce	11%
Banking	8%
Software Development	8%
Health & Pharma	6%
Travel & Hospitality	5%
Transport & Logistics	4%
Energy & Utilities	4%
Insurance	4%
Telecom	3%
Technology (excluding software development)	3%
Media	2%
Education	2%
Food	1%
Agriculture & Mining	1%
Industrials (Manufacturing,...)	1%
Public Services	1%

Figure 16: Industry

Figure 17: Country

- United Kingdom 15%
- United States 85%

Figure 17: Country

Figure 18: Job Seniority

- VP/C-suite 25%
- Supervisor/Team Leaders 25%
- Director 25%
- Manager 25%
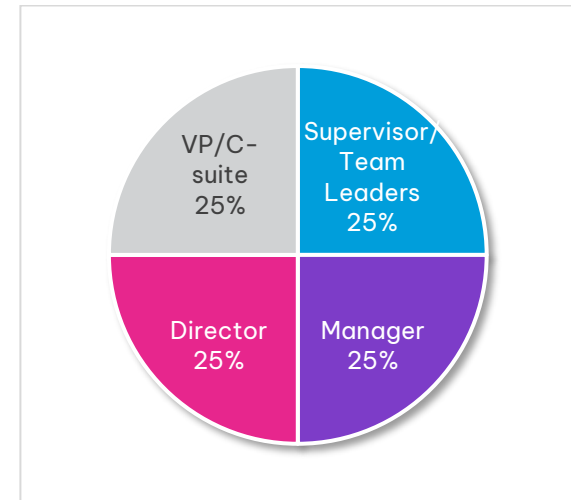
Figure 18: Job Seniority

Figure 19: Role

Role	Percentage
Customer care/service	33%
Contact center management	28%
Contact center operations	22%
Call center services	18%
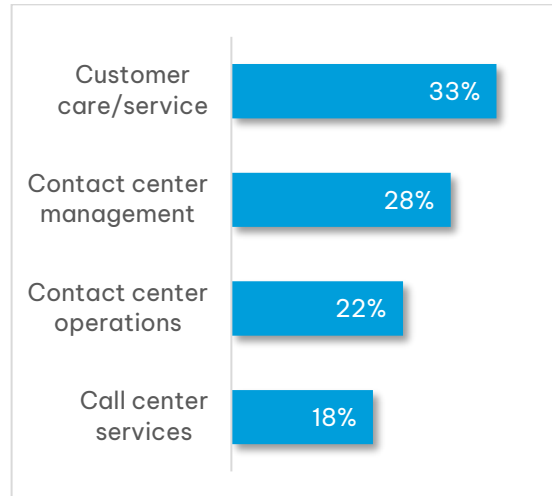
Figure 19: Role

Figure 20: Number of Employees

150-300	300-500	500-999	1,000-4,999
25%	25%	25%	25%

Figure 20: Number of Employees

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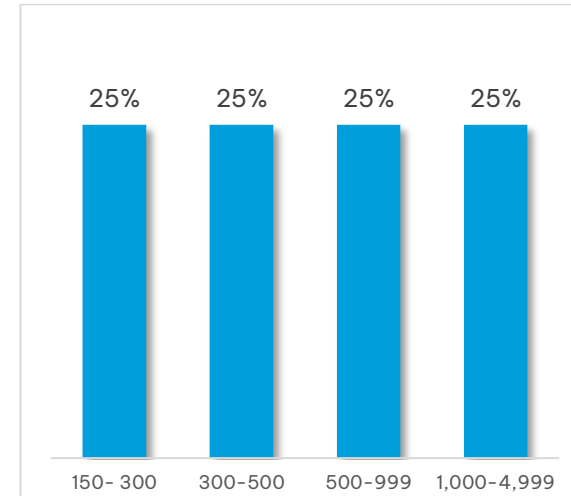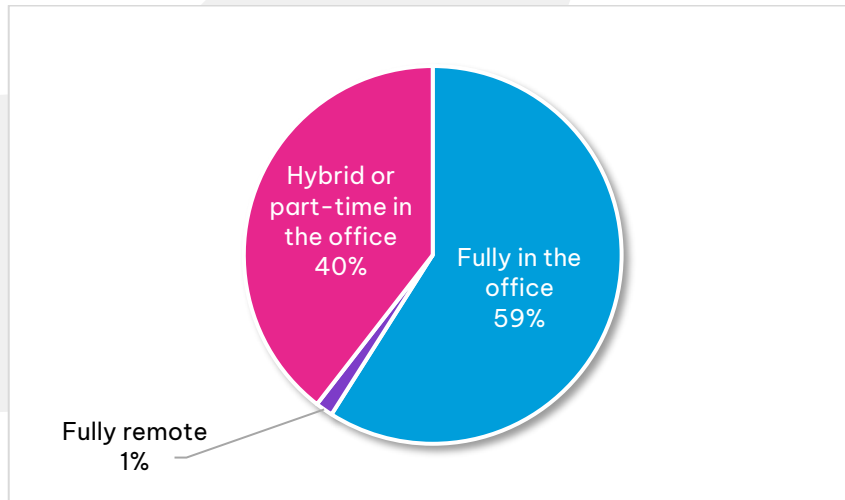
Work Situation and Type of Customer Interactions

Figure 21: Work Situation
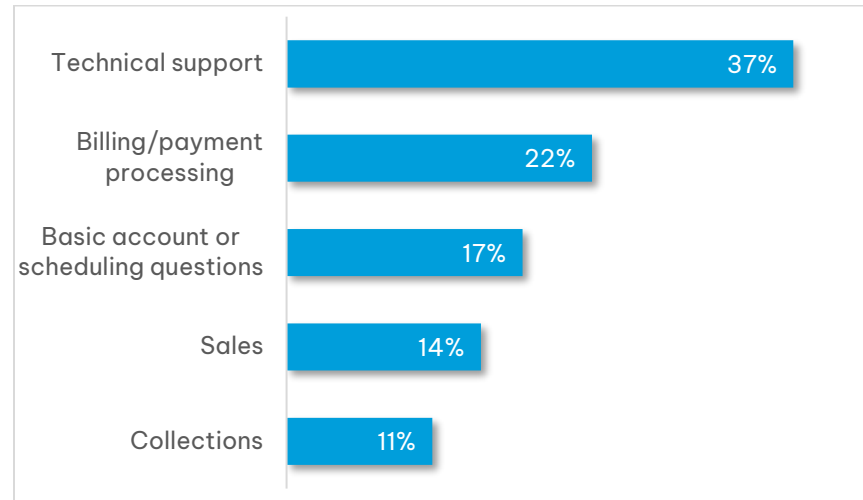
Figure 22: Type of Customer Interactions

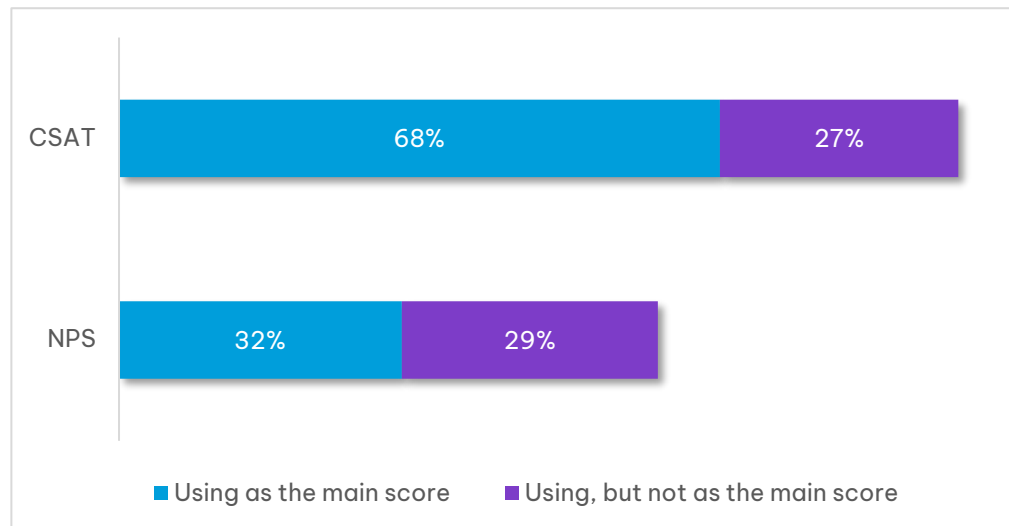Figure 23: Customer Satisfaction Scoring Methods

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About NICE and How We Can Help You

With NICE (Nasdaq: NICE), it's never been easier for organizations of all sizes around the globe to create extraordinary customer experiences while meeting key business metrics. Featuring the world's #1 cloud native customer experience platform, CXone, NICE is a worldwide leader in AI-powered self-service and agent-assisted CX software for the contact center – and beyond. Over 25,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies, partner with NICE to transform - and elevate - every customer interaction.

NICE CXone Performance Management, the market leader for aggregating, integrating and analyzing multichannel performance data, brings together AI-enhanced desktop application analytics and customized gamification in a single powerful solution. The Desktop Discovery feature provides full visibility into all employee desktop activity, in any work environment, monitoring, timing and categorizing every mouse click, application use, website visit and idle time. With real-time and historical data, you can discover the performance, process and execution gaps that are impacting your productivity, and which best practices help optimize operations and improve customer experience. CXone Performance Management further supports employee skill development and motivation through interactive gamification tailored to individual performance metrics. The solution provides the tools to personalize gamification goals and rewards in line with each employee's specific professional development needs and preferences, for engaging self-directed positive behavioral change that empowers employees to continuously improve.

Click here to learn more

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