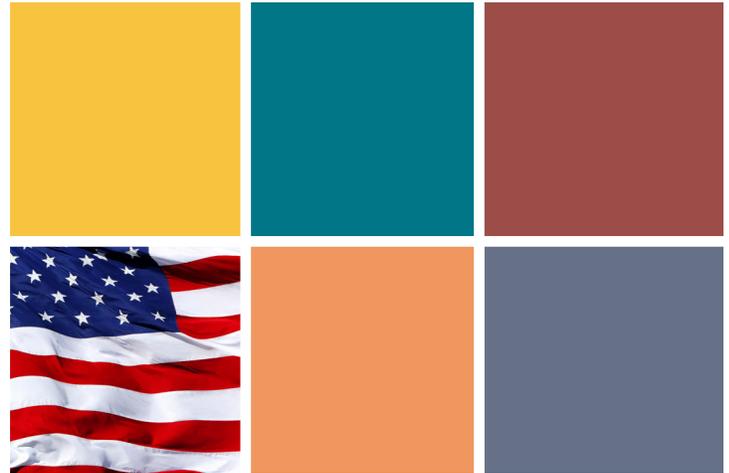
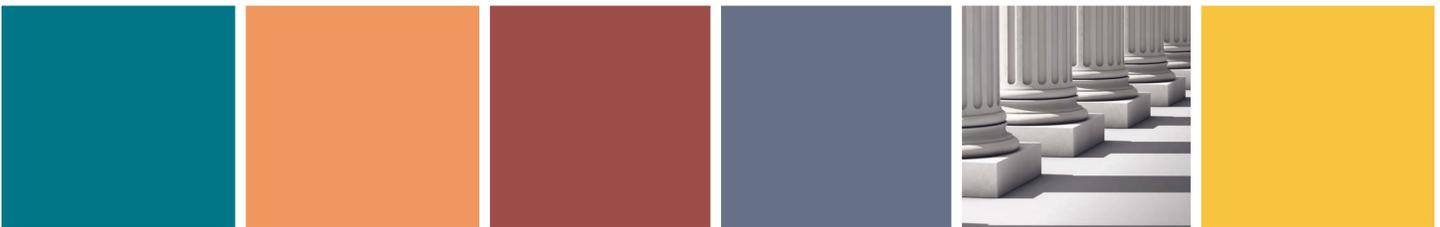


ABOUT THIS STUDY

This is the eighth 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). The panel approach has been used throughout the eight years of this study. 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.



**GOVERNMENT
CONTACT CENTER
SATISFACTION
INDEX 2016 (GCCSI)**



ABOUT CFI GROUP

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 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.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Government contact center satisfaction was unchanged at a rating of 67 this year. Measured on a 0-100 scale, CFI Group's **Government Contact Center Satisfaction Index (GCCSI)** has been measuring citizen satisfaction annually for eight years. This year's score of 67 places satisfaction squarely inside its historical range and 3 points higher than the all-encompassing Federal Government rating of 64. This report dives into the key factors that influence the satisfaction of those contacting the government and provides decision makers with the knowledge of where to invest in order to get traction in driving satisfaction higher.

IVRs ARE MISSING THE MARK IN THE GOVERNMENT SECTOR

The first key driver of satisfaction we see is the nature of the contact a caller has with an agency. Analysis of the GCCSI results shows an unmistakable distinction in satisfaction between citizens who connect directly with a live representative and those who interact with an automated IVR system. The satisfaction score of 75 for callers who immediately reached a live person is significantly higher than the 61 for those who first connected to an IVR. Some companies in the private sector have taken note of the frustration individuals have for automated answering systems and have responded by using live representatives to handle all customer service.

Perhaps more telling than this stark difference in satisfaction are the actions of those who do encounter an automated system at the other end of the line. Of those who dealt with an IVR, half tried immediately to exit the automated system and speak with an agent. Another 8% wanted to route to an agent right away but found no option to do so and 37% showed a willingness to interact with the IVR and attempted to use it to get their questions answered only to end up needing the help of a live agent to accomplish their task. This leaves just 4% of all IVR users who were able to utilize the automated system to get the information they needed.

THE BENEFIT OF THE HUMAN TOUCH AND THE IVR CHALLENGE

These statistics speak to the personal touch callers are looking for when contacting an agency. Whether the aversion to the automated systems is rooted in past experience or a disbelief that their particular issue can be handled by a recording, there is no mistaking that most citizens consider IVRs to be a barrier to accessing information rather than a helpful resource.

Agencies must find the right balance between the cost savings that IVRs provide and the higher citizen satisfaction levels attained by employing additional live representatives. With only 4% of users getting the information they need from the call center IVR systems, this requires a major overhaul as opposed to a few tweaks. Since a complete phase out of an IVR system is likely impractical for most agencies, the key for improvement lies in restructuring these automated tools in a way that serves citizens' needs.

To ensure that contact center interaction is efficient and issues are resolved, it is important to understand the specific channels people use to contact the government. Phone calls still account for the majority of government contact, with over half of respondents using the phone for their most recent interaction. Direct contact with an agency's website and email make up the other primary ways of contact, with alternative channels such as interactive chat and social media outlets accounting for the other contact methods being used. Despite the prevalence of online usage among the general public, there is a clear preference for direct interaction with a representative over the phone among the majority of respondents. Several leading private sector companies have implemented a "call back" option for individuals contacting their call center. This type of innovation eliminates excessive hold times and efficiently connects callers with live representatives.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FIRST CALL RESOLUTION

Resolving citizen issues is essential to the success of each agency's contact center. Mimicking the stagnant GCCSI, issue resolution statistics have been unchanged since 2014 with under half (47%) of issues resolved with a single contact and 11% of individuals reporting their issue remains unresolved. Whether the reason for contact is to gather basic information or to work through a more complex situation, full resolution to each issue is critical in attaining an optimal level of satisfaction. The tangible effect that efficient issue resolution has on satisfaction is illustrated by the erosion of the GCCSI as additional contacts are needed to resolve a given issue. The 47% who had their issue resolved on their first contact rated satisfaction at 79, well above the overall score of 67. The score drops into the 60s when multiple contacts are required for resolution.

WHY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES NEED TO BE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The negative impact of an unresolved issue is compounded by the finding that bad experiences are more likely to be shared with others. For those whose issue was resolved at their first contact, 31% shared their experience, but 65% of the group who required 3+ contacts or have not yet had a resolution shared their experiences with the agency with others. Working hard to resolve issues efficiently will not only drive satisfaction higher but will eliminate the negative word-of-mouth that dissatisfied citizens are more prone to share.

More alarming than the predisposition individuals have in sharing bad experiences is the way in which they broadcast their negative feedback. Social media has become a primary outlet for bad publicity as 63% of respondents who shared their experiences with an agency's contact center did so on a social media platform. The good news here is the opportunity agencies have to address the issues raised and continue to work with individuals to resolve any lingering problems. Illustrating the positive impact this contact can have, 97% of those who were contacted by the agency after posting to social media said they appreciated the agency reaching out. This appreciation is evident in the satisfaction ratings provided by each group; those who were contacted by the agency following a social media posting have a collective satisfaction rating of 80, compared to 63 among those who were not contacted.

MOBILE APPLICATIONS OFFER CITIZENS A NEW OUTLET FOR INFORMATION

As agencies look for new ways to interact with citizens, this year's study also examined the role of mobile applications in providing an additional outlet for information. As this is a relatively new technology not yet offered by many agencies, only 19% of respondents said they have downloaded an agency's mobile app. However, this group's collective satisfaction rating is 79, a substantial 14 points higher than those who have not downloaded or used a government mobile app. This increased satisfaction among app users indicates the development of this type of new technology is a worthwhile endeavor for those agencies with sufficient resources. Also noteworthy is the fact that 73% of respondents were unaware that a mobile app was available, indicating an opportunity to promote the applications for those agencies that currently offer this resource.

While mobile app users are generally associated with higher contact center satisfaction, the usefulness and desire for the apps varies by demographic and government department. Unsurprisingly, younger respondents are more likely to use the apps. Thirty-one percent of respondents under 45 said they use a government mobile app, while just 6% of those older than 45 use them. This leads to an increased opportunity to leverage the apps for agencies who provide services to a younger demographic. With 41% of respondents who contacted the Department of Education citing use of a mobile app, this department leads the way in mobile app usage with no other department's respondents eclipsing 20%.

The findings of this year's GCCSI study equip agency decision makers with the knowledge of where the greatest areas of opportunity lie in driving citizen satisfaction higher. The primary objective of the contact centers should always be resolving citizens' issues and supplying them with the information they desire. Government contact centers can achieve improved efficiency and satisfaction through IVR system innovation, including the use of a "call back" option currently in use among several leading private sector companies. The development of mobile applications presents an additional opportunity for many agencies as a way of connecting with citizens and providing an alternative outlet for information. In summary, the agencies that focus on the specific needs and desires of citizens using their contact center and use this information to allocate improvement efforts efficiently will be the leaders in their field and drive satisfaction higher.

INTRODUCTION

The GCCSI maintains its gains from the previous year overall and holds steady at 67 on a 0-100 scale.

This is the eighth 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). The panel approach has been used throughout the eight years of this study. 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.

- Government 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—a catch all category
- State or Local government—an assortment

This report will focus on the aggregate set of respondents across the mix of government agencies measured. However, some comparisons of the specific agencies will be included where appropriate.

Contact centers play a vital role in supporting and delivering services offered by government. Given the scope of services provided by government, CFI Group focused its contact center study on those agencies that a typical citizen would most likely have an interaction.

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 CFI GROUP AND THE ACSI

Since 1988, CFI Group (www.cfigroup.com) 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 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.

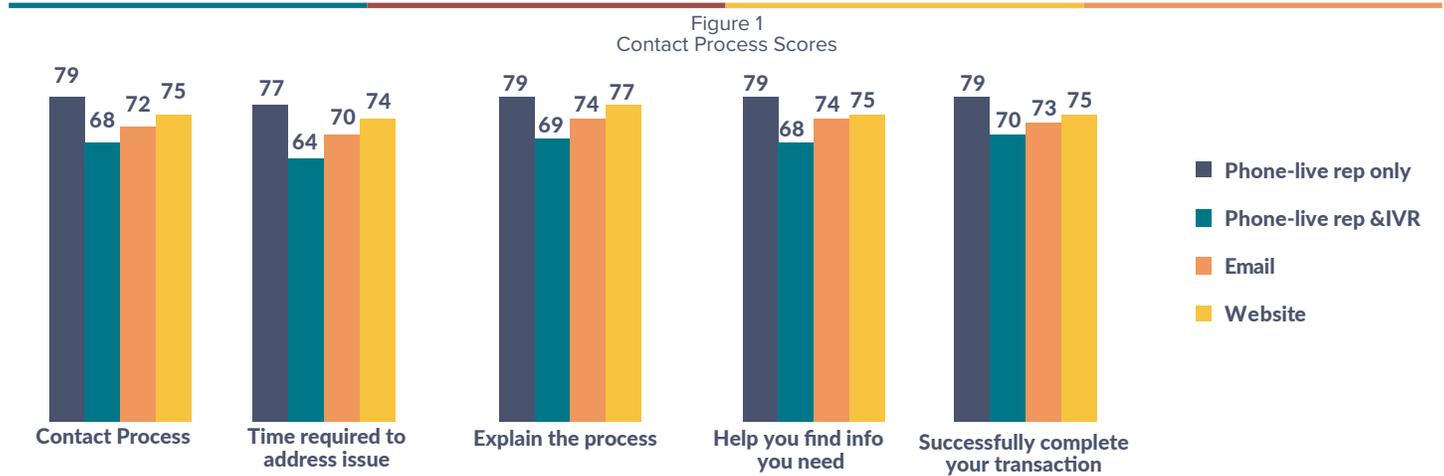
The American Customer Satisfaction Index is the only uniform, national, cross-industry measure of satisfaction with the quality of goods and services available in the United States. A key distinguishing feature of the ACSI methodology is its patented scientific approach to customer satisfaction measurement.

The unique cause-and-effect methodology of the ACSI shows how satisfied customers are today, and how satisfaction leads to desired results. This one-of-a-kind methodology also gauges satisfaction with specific elements of the customer experience that influence overall satisfaction and future success.

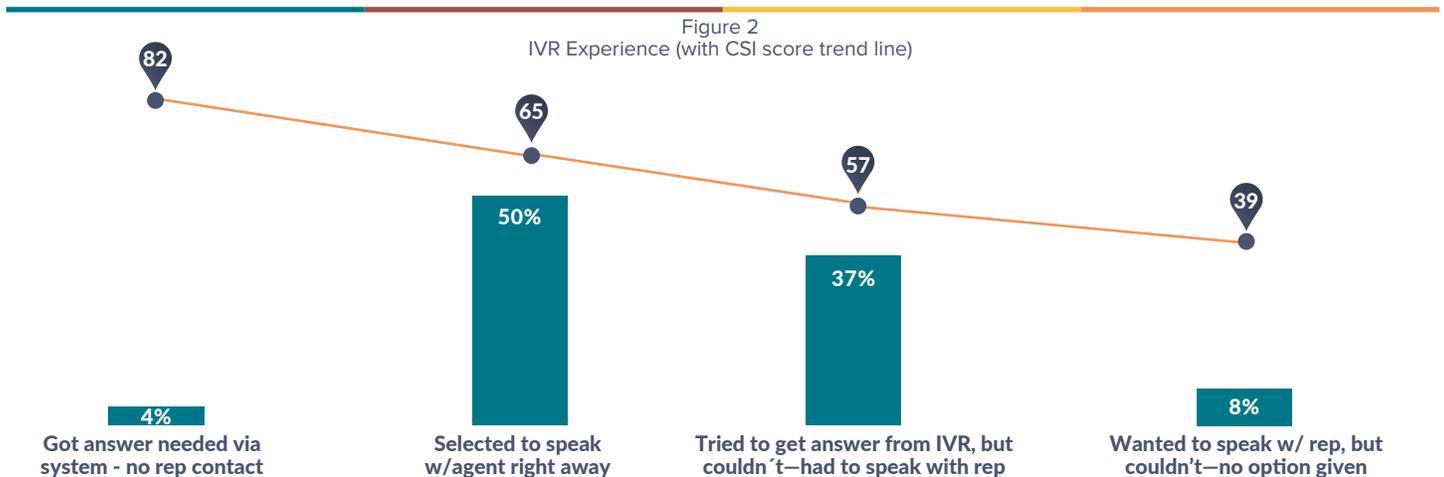
CONTACT PROCESS AND IVRs

The **Contact Process** score experienced a significant 3-point score decline to a 73, driven by lower ratings for the time required to address an issue, the contact center being helpful in finding needed information, and the ability to successfully complete a transaction. Ratings of these three areas experienced a significant decrease since the previous year’s study and indicate the process has become more burdensome for individuals in getting answers to questions or locating information.

Figure 1 highlights the differentiation of **Contact Process** ratings according to how individuals contacted an agency, most notably for callers who only speak with a live representative versus those who interact with an IVR system. Individuals who initially reach an IVR when calling rate attributes of the **Contact Process** significantly lower than those who immediately connect with a representative. While IVR systems help decrease call center staffing costs, the negative impact they have on callers’ satisfaction is unmistakable.



Among those who encounter an IVR system, only 4% were able to get the information they needed without eventually having to speak with a live representative (Figure 2). Half of the IVR group demonstrated their adverse attitude regarding automated phone systems by selecting options to speak with an agent right away. Another 37% of IVR users attempted to get answers from the IVR system but were ultimately unable to and needed to speak with a representative. The remaining 8% were the most dissatisfied and said they wanted to speak with a representative but found no option to do so. Figure 2 illustrates the strong correlation between the degree of IVR interaction and overall satisfaction.



Interestingly, a closer look at the IVR behavior of the relatively younger callers shows more of a willingness to interact with the automated system as 47% of callers under 45 said they tried to get their necessary information from the system before having to transfer to an agent. However, this willingness was not rewarded with a more satisfactory experience as this group's satisfaction rating was not meaningfully higher than the rest of the population at-large. Furthermore, only 6% of the under 45 group was able to get all needed information from the IVR without transferring to a representative.

Interaction with an IVR system has already been shown to negatively shape the typical caller's experience. Further illustrating the displeasure with the IVR is its performance rating of 56, far below all other non-IVR related measures. This score matches its previous year's rating, with just a slight improvement in the **Order Off the Menu** Options attribute. Bringing the IVR score up to par with the representative measures would require an overhaul of the system's capabilities, but there remains considerable opportunity for improvement without such drastic measures. Ensuring the most common reasons for calling are offered as the first menu options is important to eliminate the need for callers to spend more time listening to irrelevant choices. Providing an outlet to live representatives for callers is also essential as the most dissatisfied segment of respondents was those who were unable to leave the IVR to speak directly with an agent.

The struggle to achieve high IVR scores exists in its natural conflict with the patience of callers. Unless a caller needs very simple information that is straightforward enough to make follow up questions unnecessary, a live representative is required. In today's environment, if this type of information is sought, many individuals will visit an agency's website rather than contact a call center. Under these conditions, when a caller encounters an automated system on the other end of the line, it is seen as a barrier to resolution rather than a resource offering a solution. This leads to impatience for the system, especially if the IVR is unable to quickly route the call appropriately based on voice prompts.

The IVR resources of individual agencies should be evaluated to find if the value they provide in saving staffing costs justifies the frustration they cause callers who are looking to connect with a live representative right away.

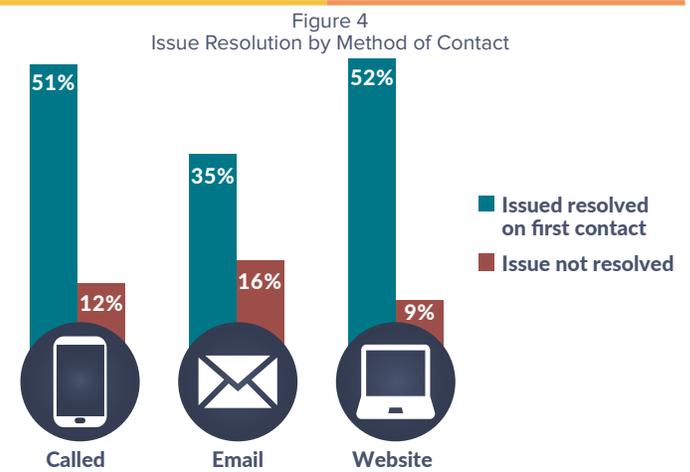
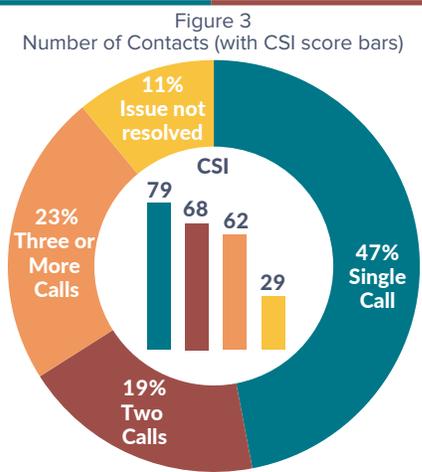
Agencies using an IVR system as part of the call center need to ensure that an option to directly connect with a representative is made available. IVRs can serve a purpose in providing basic information without the need to hold for a representative, but a large proportion of callers have no interest in the automated system and their preferences should be catered to as budgetary considerations allow in an effort to drive satisfaction higher.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESOLVING ISSUES

The fact that issue resolution is a critical factor in determining the satisfaction of an individual’s experience with the contact center is unsurprising, but understanding the magnitude of its role and where breakdowns in resolving issues occur is essential for improvement in this area.

Illustrating the strong relationship between the number of contacts made by an individual and the level of satisfaction, Figure 3 demonstrates the sharp satisfaction decline as additional contacts are required. Nearly half of issues are resolved upon the first contact, and this group rates their satisfaction at a very positive 79. A sizeable 11-point drop off in the CSI rating occurs when a second contact is required, and it falls even lower, to 62, when resolution to an issue takes three or more contacts.

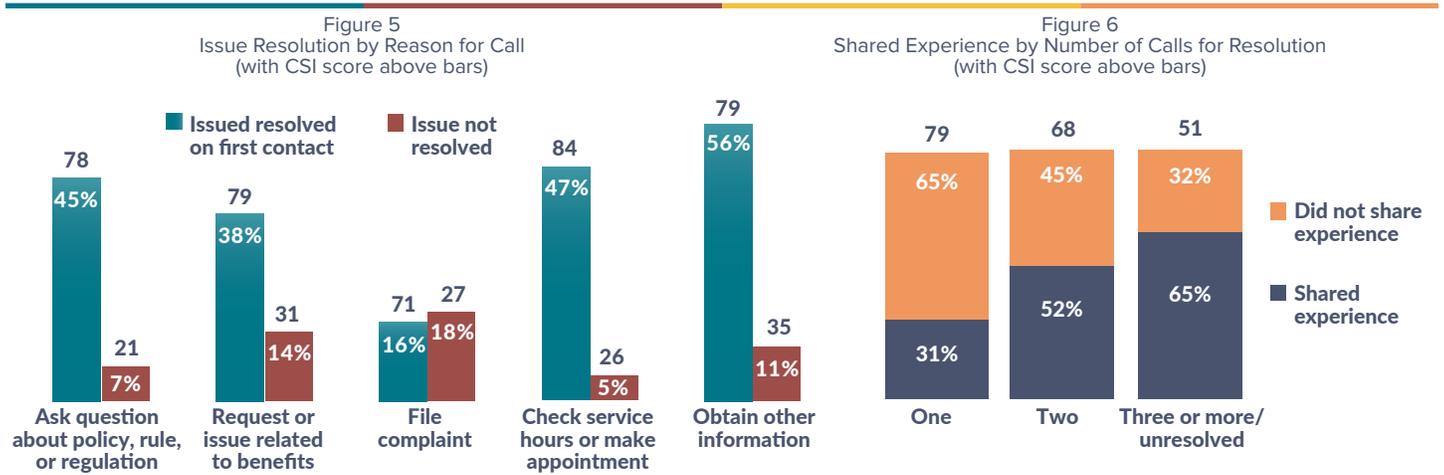
While resolving issues on the initial contact should be the goal, ensuring resolution is had regardless of the number of contacts is essentially a requirement in driving satisfaction higher as the CSI plummets to 29 for the 11% of respondents whose issue was not resolved. This segment alone drags down the aggregate CSI by 5 points.



Understanding the significance of issue resolution leads us to examine the nature of the contacts that are more likely to end without resolution. In terms of the method of contact, 16% of those emailing an agency report their issue has not been resolved, compared to 12% of callers and 9% of website visitors (Figure 4). Essentially, people who try to get their issue resolved via email do not fare as well as others.

The reason for calling is another determining factor of issue resolution. Individuals contacting an agency with the purpose of finding basic information are clearly more likely to accomplish their task than those who are filing a complaint. Figure 5 shows the range from an unresolved rate of 5% for those checking on service hours or making an appointment to 18% for those filing a complaint. Citizens looking to request benefits or address a benefits-related issue are also associated with a relatively high rate of issues remaining unresolved (14%).

In addition to the far lower levels of satisfaction unresolved issues produce, dissatisfied individuals are more likely to share their experience with others. At the aggregate level, there is nearly an even split among those who shared their customer service experience with others (46%) and those who did not (50%), with the remaining 4% unsure. This even split becomes unbalanced among respondent segments according to the number of times they contacted customer service and their current issue resolution status. Illustrated in Figure 6, just 31% of the respondents who needed a single contact to resolve their issue share their experience with others. When one additional contact is needed, this percentage climbs to 52%. The more concerning finding is that roughly two of every three of the **Three or More Contacts/Unresolved** segment shares their experience with others. Given this group’s collective satisfaction score of 51, it’s not unreasonable to assume what’s being shared is negative.



SHARING EXPERIENCES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media is one outlet for individuals to share their contact experience. This outlet turns out to be a prime channel for expressing an individual’s thoughts as 63% of respondents who shared their experience, did so on social media.

This can be advantageous for an agency as it presents an opportunity to examine the feedback and respond to the individual accordingly. This re-contact is currently being done by many agencies and has been proven to make a positive difference. Of those who shared their experience on social media, 57% received contact back from the agency and rated their overall level of satisfaction at 80—far higher than the score of 63 associated with the 40% who said they never received contact from the agency after posting to social media. Confirming the benefit of reaching out to these individuals, 97% of those receiving contact from the agency said it was appreciated. This is an important point as it demonstrates agencies have a last line of defense against the dissatisfaction of citizens that use their contact centers. Resource allocation devoted to contact centers delivering positive experiences should be prioritized over back-end resources that attempt to rectify bad experiences. However, this social media outreach can be a valuable asset in the overall goal of providing quality customer service.

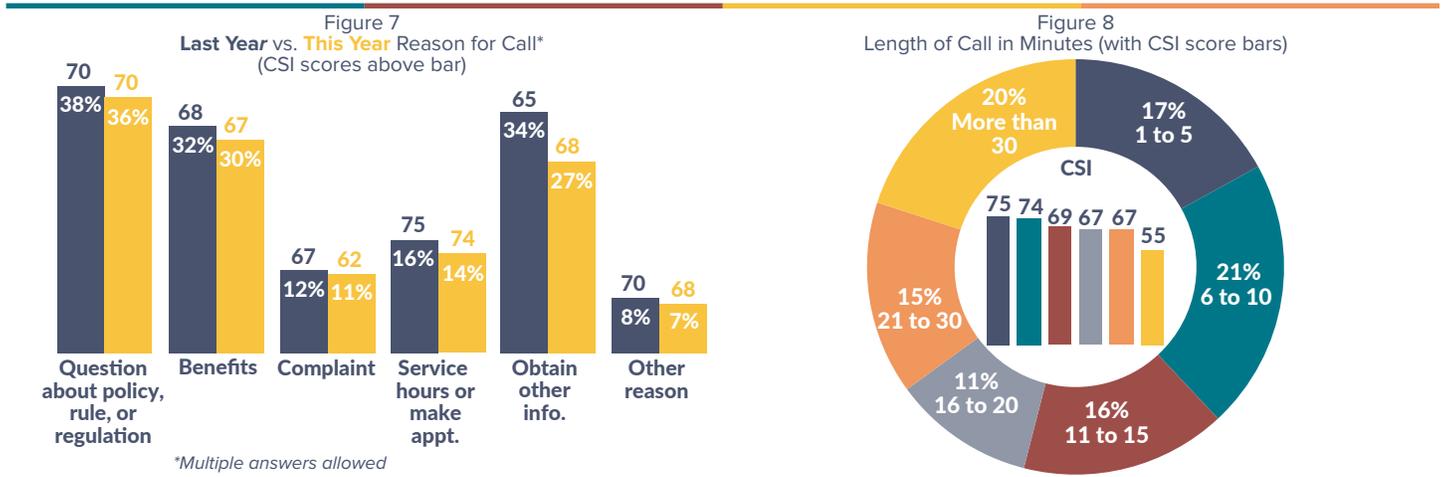
THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT APPS

As agencies continually look for new ways to interact with citizens and offer additional channels for information, many have launched mobile applications to augment their more traditional outlets. There does seem to be a market for these apps as 19% of all respondents say they have downloaded government apps on their phone. This group has a collective CSI of 79, compared to 65 for the remaining 81% who do not report using government apps. Those currently using these apps praised their convenience and quick access to information. The positive comments and higher satisfaction level of this group speak to the value the apps provide but are also indicative of the increased level of engagement these mobile app users have.

There is an opportunity to promote the available government apps as 73% of those who do not already have them on their phone said they are unaware these resources were available. An increased usage of government mobile applications will lead to more citizens being able to efficiently self-serve by finding needed information without the assistance of customer service staff, benefitting both the agency and the citizen.

REASONS FOR CONTACTING THE GOVERNMENT

The reasons citizens contact the government have remained largely the same. Cited by 36% of those surveyed, the most common reason for contact remains asking a question about a policy, rule or regulation, followed by 30% who said they contacted an agency to request benefits or address an issue related to benefits (Figure 7). The general category of obtaining other types of information was selected as a reason for contact by just 27%, a 21% decrease from the previous year, indicating more specific intentions for those contacting the government.



Satisfaction levels are commensurate with the reason for calling, with the highest satisfaction ratings associated with the more straightforward tasks of checking on service hours or making an appointment and the lowest satisfaction levels unsurprisingly coming from those who filed a complaint.

The nature of contact also influences the length of the call and as Figure 8 illustrates, longer calls are associated with lower satisfaction ratings. Specifically, 46% of all contacts took more than 15 minutes government-wide, but certain reasons for contact are associated with longer call times. For example, when the reason for contact was requesting benefits or addressing an issue related to benefits, call lengths were over 15 minutes 49% of the time. Conversely, those calling to simply check on service hours or make an appointment required more than 15 minutes just 37% of the time.

Figure 8 illustrates the inverse relationship between call length and satisfaction, where the shortest calls of five minutes or less are associated with a satisfaction score of 75, and the longest calls of more than 30 minutes have a collective CSI of 55.

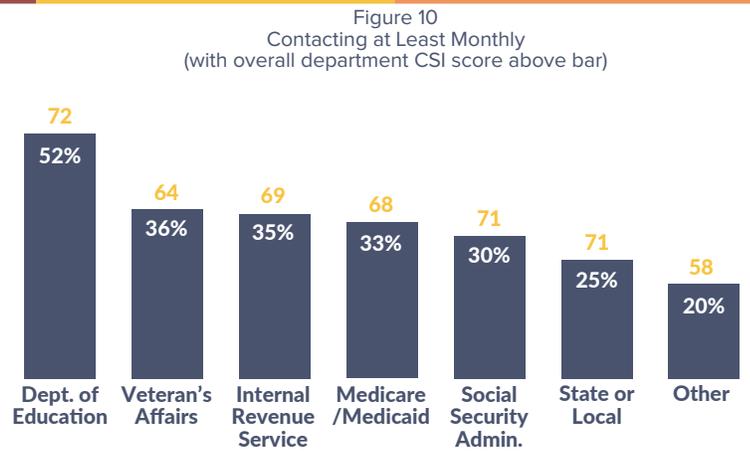
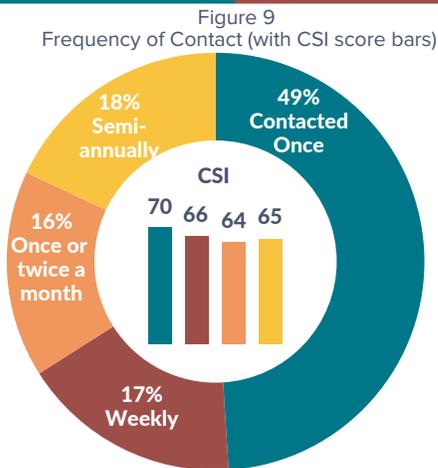
While certain reasons for contact are inherently more complicated and require longer amounts of time, agencies should focus on equipping representatives with the knowledge and authority to resolve issues efficiently in an effort to reduce the time burden for citizens and increase their overall level of satisfaction.

FREQUENCY OF CONTACT

As in previous years, there was a wide range in the frequency of contact among respondents this year. Just under half (49%) of those surveyed said they used a government contact center just a single time in the past year (Figure 9). This group has increased in its representation of the total in each of the past two years, highlighting the important point that, on average, every other citizen uses a contact center on a very infrequent basis. Given the increase in these inexperienced users, making a positive first impression is critical in driving satisfaction higher.

The remaining 51% of respondents who contacted the government more than once in the past year are fairly evenly distributed among those who used a contact center weekly, monthly, or just a couple of times annually.

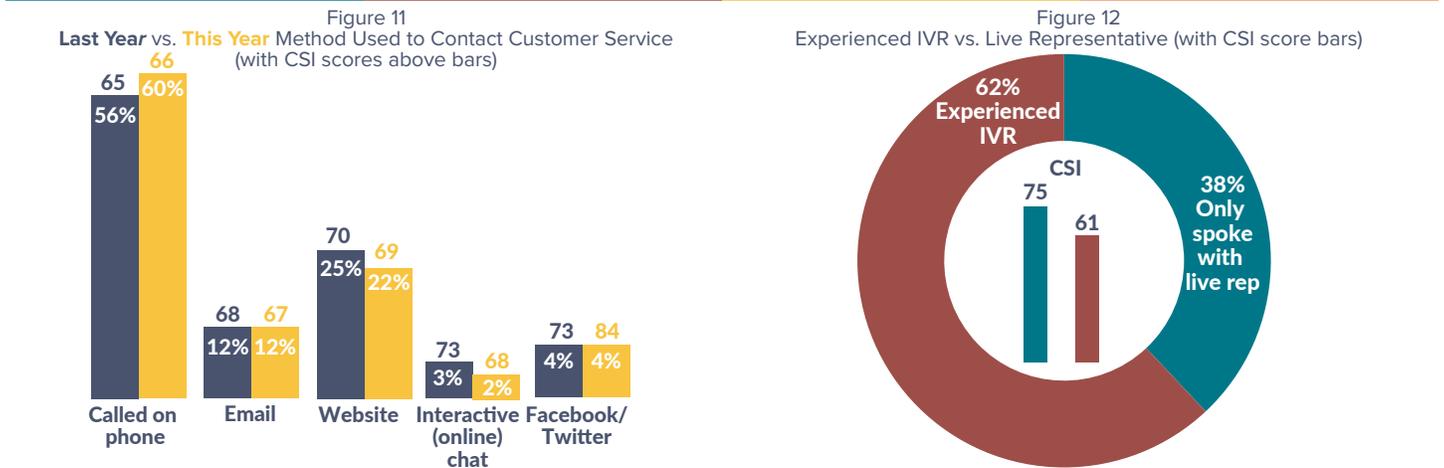
Satisfaction is highest among the single contact group and just slightly lower for those who have had multiple contacts in the last year.



An examination of the frequency of contacts among the specific departments measured shows the Department of Education stands out as receiving the most repeat contact (Figure 10). Over half (52%) of those surveyed who recently contacted the Department of Education said they contact the department at least monthly. The Department of Education also has the highest CSI rating of the individual departments measured, indicating increased contact frequency does not, by itself, cause frustration and lead to dissatisfaction.

METHOD OF CONTACTING THE GOVERNMENT

Citizens use a number of methods for contacting the government, but phone calls remain the most prominent, accounting for 60% of the contact for those surveyed (Figure 11). Websites account for another 22% of the contact, down slightly from its usage rate last year, and email contact was cited by 12% of this year's respondents. Alternative methods of contact such as interactive chat and popular social media outlets remain sparsely utilized.



While phone calls, agency websites, and email account for the vast majority of all contact, each of the three options display unique characteristics that impact their scores. A relatively higher percentage of email contact is regarding a question about a policy, rule, or regulation (49%) or to file a complaint (26%). Agencies should anticipate complaints from citizens coming in over email and ensure representatives are able to efficiently address these concerns so the issues leading to the complaints are resolved in a timely manner.

The respondents who contact an agency website had a higher level of overall satisfaction than phone or email users and gave the highest **Contact Process** rating of the three groups. Website users in particular provided high ratings for the timeliness of addressing an issue as well as the overall explanation of the process. This discovery highlights the value of agency websites as an initial resource for individuals who are looking for information. When these individuals are able to self-serve through the website in a clear and easy manner, they are likely to be more satisfied with the process while saving the agency additional contact center staff resources.

Individuals who have contacted an agency over the phone have done so to file a complaint only 7% of the time, less than both email and website users. Despite the relatively low proportion of calls being related to complaints, which are inherently associated with lower satisfaction, those calling on the phone have a slightly lower CSI than those using the other popular methods of contact. This relatively lower satisfaction is due in part to the experience these individuals have with the IVR systems. The IVR component of the contact experience was rated in the mid-50s for those who had experience with these resources. These individuals also rated their satisfaction at 61, compared to 75 for the callers who bypassed any automated IVR system (Figure 12).

THE GOVERNMENT CONTACT CENTER SATISFACTION INDEX 2016

The GCCSI score of 67 matches the previous year’s rating. Figure 13 shows the leveling of the score after a precipitous decline in 2013, followed by a significant rebound in the 2014 measure. The unchanged GCCSI score is consistent with the Federal Government average as measured by the ACSI, which maintained its previous year’s rating in 2015. The GCCSI score of 67 is 3 points higher than the comprehensive Federal Government rating of 64 but does indicate there is considerable room for improvement.

Figure 13
GCCSI Score by Year

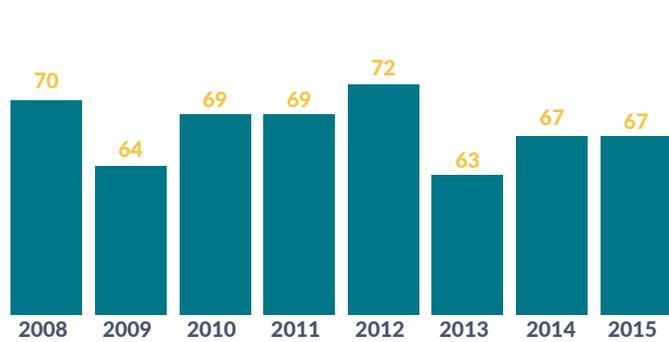
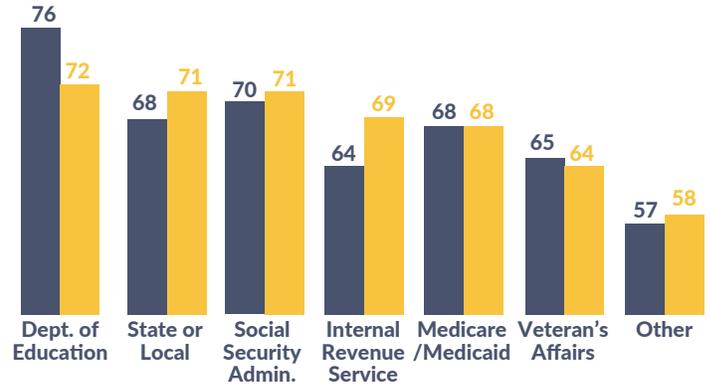


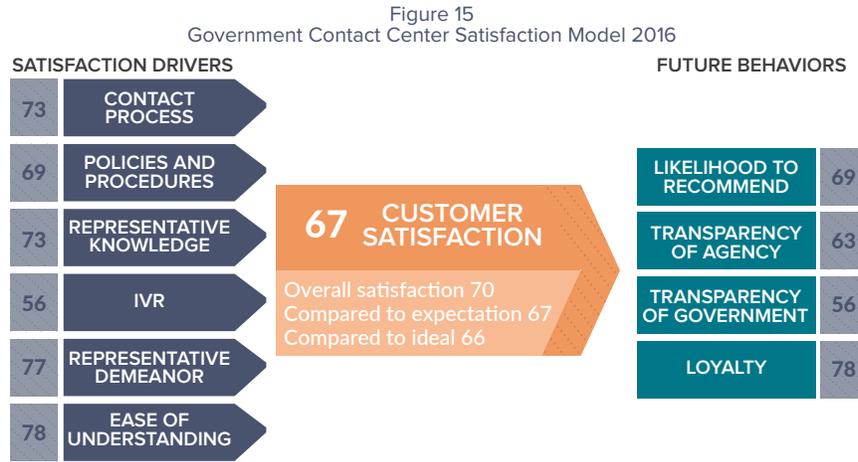
Figure 14
2014 vs. 2015 CSI Scores by Dept.



The call center satisfaction levels among the various departments surveyed (Figure 14) are mostly in line with the previous year’s results, with the greatest score changes being a 5-point increase for the IRS and a 4-point decline for the Department of Education. Despite the decrease, the Department of Education maintains the highest satisfaction rating of 72, while Department of Veterans Affairs has the lowest score of 64. This disparity in satisfaction is not wholly attributable to the call center performance but also a result of the intrinsic nature of the work these various departments do. Department scores are the product of not only the performance of the contact centers but are also influenced by the most prevalent reasons for contacting the agency. Departments that receive a higher proportion of calls inherently associated with higher satisfaction levels are at an advantage over those tasked with handling relatively complex issues.

THE GOVERNMENT CONTACT CENTER SATISFACTION MODEL 2016

Figure 15 shows the key aspects of the government contact center experience along with the Customer Satisfaction Index and Future Behavior ratings measured.



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The *Policies and Procedures* of government agencies and their contact centers have traditionally been influential factors in determining citizen satisfaction. The policies themselves are the lowest rated aspect of this component, as the *Policies That Make Sense* attribute was rated a 66. While government policies are outside the control of representatives, the service they provide in explaining the policy so it is easily understandable and offering tailored solutions can overcome initial frustration caused by the perception of an unreasonable policy.

These aspects of the *Policies and Procedures* component are rated relatively higher, but the *Empowered to Address Your Issue* rating of 71 and *Offering Tailored Solutions* score of 69 indicate there is room for improvement in the areas that are within the control of the contact center and its representatives.

Policies could be seen as irrational due to a lack of understanding, making it imperative that representatives are able to clearly communicate policy details and then offer tailored solutions for each individual caller.

REPRESENTATIVE MEASURES

It is important that representatives set proper expectations as certain policies do not always make the citizen's desired outcome possible. Fully explaining what is possible and the reasons why is essential in eliminating any confusion surrounding the reason for contacting an agency.

Representative Demeanor is rated relatively well at 77, though this is a significant 3-point decline from its previous measurement. An erosion of this score could bring this area to the forefront for citizens and indirectly affect other aspects of the contact center experience, dragging down scores in areas that have more of an impact. **Representative Demeanor** should be expected to rate higher than most other components, and further score declines would signal more troubling issues with the contact centers as a whole.

The final representative aspect measured, **Ease of Understanding**, also has a relatively high score and is another basic aspect of the contact center experience that should be expected to rate near the top of all components, which it does with a score of 78. Citizens expect interacting with a representative who speaks clearly and effectively. If anything less is experienced, not only will the **Ease of Understanding** score decline, but many other aspects of the experience can be expected to suffer.

OUTCOMES OF SATISFACTION

With no change in the overall level of satisfaction from the previous year's measurement, the outcomes of satisfaction have mostly followed suit, with very little movement in this year's results. The **Likelihood to Recommend** the agency metric rose a single point and the **Loyalty** to the organization metric slipped 2 points in this year's study. The **Loyalty** measurement can be expected to trend higher than many others given the fact that most government agencies are the exclusive outlet for many public services, essentially eliminating the choice to remain loyal.

The **Transparency of Agency/Government** ratings were also stable when compared to past GCCSI results and remain 7 points higher than the comparable scores of the government-wide ACSI benchmarking study.

SUMMARY

There is no substitute for the personal touch of a live representative for callers. Respondents who interacted with an automated IVR system consistently reported lower satisfaction levels and rated the IVR component itself at 56—far below all other aspects of the contact center experience. As websites become a prevalent resource for basic information among citizens, IVRs have become less useful, as indicated by the finding that just 4% of IVR users were able to use it to get the information they needed without ever connecting to a live representative. While IVRs can reduce the burden of additional call center staff, they must be strategically used and offer easy-to-access outlets to be transferred to a live representative to limit the frustration they cause for a large segment of callers.

Whether requesting benefits information or filing a complaint, the ultimate goal for all interactions is to bring the reason for contacting an agency to complete resolution. Ideally, providing all requested information or resolving a complaint occurs on the first contact, which yields the highest levels of satisfaction. As additional contacts are required, satisfaction falls, but the critical outcome to avoid is the case where an issue is never resolved. Satisfaction plummets when this occurs, and this segment has been shown to be more likely to share their negative experience with others than those who have a positive experience with the contact center. Where possible, agencies should monitor social media platforms—a common outlet for sharing government customer service experiences. Nearly all respondents who shared their experience on social media and were subsequently responded to by an agency said they appreciated the contact and were associated with much higher satisfaction levels than those who were not responded to. First call resolution is always a critical factor for any contact center in the private or public sectors, and being able to anticipate the nature of calls and emails will help decision makers allocate resources accordingly.

The GCCSI score of 67 indicates there is room for improvement in providing a better experience to citizens. Focusing on the key areas that have been shown to influence satisfaction will guide decision makers in setting the priorities and allocating resources that give individuals the helpful service they are looking for.