

Glossary

This glossary section defines terms specific to NocTel Flow and reiterates definitions of standard terminology used in relation to contact centers. The terms in the glossary sections are listed alphabetically.

Common Contact Center Terminology

Abandonment: Term used for when inbound callers to the contact center hang up from growing impatient waiting in queue. This is often remedied through overflow queues and call back options so callers don't need to wait in long excessively long or need to remain on the line in order to remain "in line" in the queue.

Agent: A contact center employee who takes calls from one or more queues.

Attrition: Also known as turnover. Describes the rate at which employees - typically agents - leave the organization. Attrition always bears a negative connotation, so having the same measurement being referred to as "Retention Rate" is uncommon but not improbable.

Automatic Call Distribution (ACD): A pattern or patterns used by the system to determine how calls are sent to Agents in a given Queue. The point of ACD is to improve calls handled efficiency by always ensuring that as long as there are calls in a Queue, whenever an Agent becomes available the next call is immediately dispatched. It can also attempt to leverage matching calls to Agents best suited to address their particular problem.

Automatic Number Identification: Generally the same as Caller ID.

Automated Speech Recognition: Speech input for IVRs.

Available Time: Also known as Idle Time. The amount of time an agent is online for and can take calls, but is not doing so or engaged in productive support activities. High Available/Idle Time is indicative of either an overstaffed queue per volume or a poor quality agent.

Average Call Duration (ACD): How long calls with customers - not including ACW time -

Average Handling Time (AHT): How long on average (for a queue or entire contact center) it takes for agents to handle a call from being answered to completing the inquiry, which may include Wrap Up (After Call Work) time.

Average Wait Time (AWT): How long on average (for a queue or entire contact center) callers are waiting for in queue before reaching an available agent.

Barging: A supervisor function that allows a supervisor to join an in progress call with an agent and caller.

Channel: Used to denote a communication method to reach the organization. Inbound calls to the contact center and outbound calls by agents from the contact center are considered "voice channel", whereas communication with customers via social networks would be considered a "social media channel". Each of these methods of communication with and to the contact center are a channel.

Contact Center: Close but not fully synonymous with call center. Contact center is frequently used to avoid pigeonholing an organization by implicitly suggesting customer support can only be reached through a voice channel when the organization's support can also be reached via email, social media, etc..

Customer Relationship Management (CRM): Typically systems that help businesses track leads, sales, and more at the core of business with customers. Stored information might include transaction history, notes of changes, and much more. Integration with external applications and services is becoming more commonplace as such systems have been found valuable for real-time interactions.

Flagging: An agent action that alerts a supervisor the agent requires assistance. In the context of contact centers, this is usually in regard to needing assistance or intervention by a supervisor and not a technical issue with the agent's workspace or device.

Flows: Though the product itself is called Flow, "flows" in the contact center sense typically mean the logical progression of how callers into the contact center are processed. Flows typically consist of some series of IVRs before callers even get placed into waiting queues to speak with agents if there are no currently available agents. They also consist of the scripts agents may follow when addressing the caller either as an explicit process they follow or as a required greeting or notice (e.g.: "Please affirm your consent this call may be monitored for training and quality purposes"). With CRM integration, this can also be extended to include what information the Agent is provided based on the caller coming or information the Agent inputs into the CRM from the call interaction.

Interactive Voice Response (IVR): Also known as Auto Attendant and Pre-Agent Menus. Pre-configured menu prompts for caller input - typically via keypad on the caller's handset, but can also operate with voice input. Caller inputs can be used for metric gathering purposes such as customer satisfaction or inquiry type, but are most typically used to funnel callers through decision trees to pare down the precise nature of the inquiry.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI): A metric that is typically used as a trustworthy measure of how well or poorly some aspect of the contact center is meeting quotas, goals, efficiency, etc.. These are generally consistent across most businesses, but just about anything can be made into a KPI if it's considered valuable enough to support or refute some aspect of performance.

Monitor: Supervisor function that allows a supervisor to listen in on an agent's in progress call without the caller or the agent knowing the supervisor is listening. It is different from bridging and muting the line as bridging often provides some audible indicator someone else who wasn't previously on the call has joined. Monitoring performed by a supervisor generally gives no indicator there is a "man in the middle" listening.

Service Level: A time threshold in which agents should respond to calls offered to them. Sometimes considered as "Time to Answer".

Skill(s): Some capability or term used to indicate knowledge of a topic or ability. Skills are used to determine what agents can take calls from various queues to ensure when an agent takes a call they have the proper qualifications to handle the caller's inquiry.

Queue: An abstraction of a holding area for received inbound calls to the contact center to account for the common situation where there are more callers than available agents. Routing logic to the contact center is used to determine which calls are placed in which queues. The most common strategy is to have a queue for each broad inquiry type such as "help desk", "sales", etc..

Status: The term denoting the availability state of an Agent. Status "codes" tend to capture the broad status of the Agent in real-time. These include Available, In-Call, Wrap Up, Idle, Break, Lunch, and Offline. Their intent is to quickly tell you what an Agent is doing currently. NocTel Flow implements additional Statuses for more granularity to pinpoint Agent activity.

Supervisor: A contact center employee who is typically responsible for the day to day activities of Agents supporting queues the supervisor is responsible for. Supervisors are generally expected to be able to handle and support calls some Agents working the Queue might have difficulty with or not be able to provide a definitive answer to an inquiry. Supervisors can be thought of team leads or first level managers of the working contact center staff.

Take Over: Supervisor function that allows a supervisor to transfer an agent's in progress call with a customer to themselves.

Utilization: Also referred to as Occupancy. This is the measure of time agents supporting a queue have spent engaged in activities taking customer inquiries. A higher ratio of time spent handling calls and wrap up indicates a high utilization.

Wallboard: A large display or series of displays placed in contact centers to convey information and metrics relevant to the general operations of the contact center. Such metrics generally include longest caller waiting time, number of calls in each queue, and calls handled over specific intervals.

Whispering: Supervisor function that allows a supervisor to speak to an agent on the line with a caller without the caller being able to hear what the supervisor is saying to the agent.

Wrap Up: Also known as "After Call Work" (ACW) that refers to necessary activities after an agent has ended a call with a customer. This is important for Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) because it accounts for the fact that while the agent is not speaking to a customer, they are still performing activities relevant to that last caller and therefore cannot take another call yet.