

16 Essential KPIs for Lead Gen Call Center Profitability



If you can't measure it, you can't improve it.

And, if you don't know the most important outbound call center metrics you should be tracking, you'll never achieve your performance potential. But with the right data analytics and real time reporting you can pivot priorities throughout the day to drive efficiencies for your leads, your lists, your agents, and your dialing strategy.

Below you'll find **16 essential KPIs** used by successful outbound sales and lead generation call centers metrics to boost ROI.

This list of [outbound call center](#) metrics will help you gain improved efficiency and profitability for your operation. Each outbound call center KPI is linked to a description below, so feel free to jump or scroll.



Lead KPIs

- Cost Per Acquisition (CPA)
- Connection Rate
- Lead Conversion Rate
- Speed to Lead (or Lead Response Time)



List KPIs

- Contact Rate
- Average Talk Time
- Total Revenue
- List Profit and Loss



Agent KPIs

- Talk Time
- Wrap-up Time
- Pause or Wait Time
- Calls Per Agent
- First Call Close



Dialing KPIs

- Average Hold Time
- Abandoned Call Rate
- Dropped Call Rate

Are you tracking the right KPIs for your outbound call center?

With so many variables, some call center admins rely on only a few simple outbound call metrics. Unfortunately, this may skew their perspective of what's really going on. They're making decisions based on inaccurate or insufficient information.

John Gallagher, CEO of lead gen consulting firm Thrive Marketing, is a numbers man. He lives and breathes KPIs and all things call center analytics. The way he puts it, "There are a variety of KPIs and they're all really valuable to the ultimate profitability of the business. Profitability for me is everything."

The relationship of performance metrics and analysis

If you routinely measure and understand how to interpret your KPIs in relation to one another, you'll have the means to strategically guide your call center operation toward growth and profitability. This is true whether you use a predictive dialer, a power dialer, or another dialing mode.



Some call center performance metrics should be monitored in real time throughout the day. Some metrics should be analyzed over time—your historical metrics reveal trends over a day, a week, a month, a quarter. There are KPIs (say Agent Talk Time) that need to be viewed throughout the day, averaged over time, and in relation to Number of Sales/Transfers/Conversions and Number of Calls. You need to determine the right types of KPIs that are relevant to your unique operation (e.g.,

Lead to Transfer Rate, if you do transfers); this may mean customizing reports with filters.

Now let's look at some key outbound call center metrics used by the most successful operations. From enterprise scale to 25 agent businesses, and from in-office centers to virtual call center ops, it all comes down to data analytics. While not a comprehensive list, these results driven KPIs give you the tools to improve outbound dialer metrics and agent performance, which you can effectively monitor in your customizable dashboard. We'll finish up with some Versatile KPI Reporting Tools we recommend.



LEAD KPIs



The best in class contact centers focus on their cost per acquisition at a lead vendor level, and how much revenue comes out of those leads. Unfortunately, many contact centers don't measure CPA – they only look at it on a cost per lead (CPL) basis. They're making strategic decisions about how they're operating their call center, but they don't have the whole picture.

The **smartest path to lead efficiency** is to really understand what's going on with those leads by persistently monitoring real-time reports that show you specific, active lead metrics.

Your agents, your leads, and the cost of the dialer are the major numbers in determining your cost per acquisition. But you also need to break that down on a lead source level so you know what the ROI is on an hourly basis by both agent and lead source."

Nima Hakimi

CEO & Co-Founder of Convoso (taken from his article ["Outbound Calling Strategies: Accelerating Lead Efficiency"](#))

1. Cost Per Acquisition (CPA)

Your CPA provides a high-level view into the costs associated with converting leads. This should be the top KPI for your outbound call center. CPA measures the total cost to get one specific acquisition, whether that's an agent-sold lead or a billable lead that you pass off to your client.

Understanding this metric allows you to:

- Get clear insights into spending and saving opportunities
- Optimize your call center's return on investment (ROI)
- View your call center's various activities in one simple metric
- Calculate the lifetime value of each acquisition, marketing costs, and expected profit

2. Connection Rate

Connection Rate tells us the efficiency of the leads. It's short term and gives you a daily snapshot. Here we look at the number of calls placed on a given day to leads. To determine the rate, divide the calls answered [including voicemails] by the total calls placed. For example, 25 calls answered / 100 calls dialed = a Connection Rate of 25%.

3. Lead Conversion Rate

How many calls did it take to make a sale? In a nutshell, that's the focus of this metric. Your conversion rate is the percentage of calls/leads resulting in a successful sale or transfer. A low conversion rate increases your cost per lead and impacts your company's overall revenue.

Use real time reporting to track this KPI. It indicates whether a list is performing well, so you can make strategic decisions about data throughout the day.

Getting to the bottom of, and ultimately correcting, sluggish conversion rates is important to seizing your growth potential. Some of the most common drivers of low conversion rates include:

- Low contact rates
- Low-quality leads
- The wrong scripts and ineffective calls-to-action
- The wrong outreach channels

Once you understand what's behind your lead conversion rates, there are a variety of strategic corrective actions you can take, from improving your caller ID reputation to investing in higher-quality leads.

Dig into these strategies and more in our guide to diagnosing low outbound conversion rates.

[Learn more](#)

4. Speed to Lead (or Lead Response Time)

For some call centers and sales operations, speed to lead—or lead response time—might be the most crucial outbound call metric to keep track of. Speed to lead is a measurement of how long it takes from when a lead opts in and enters your pipeline to the time you attempt to make contact.

In most cases, this lead response time is something that should be measured in seconds. Because every single second adds up. Internet leads in particular have a very short lifespan. Wait too long—even beyond just five minutes—and the sale or conversion may already be gone.

To improve speed to lead, rely on a dialer software that closely integrates with your sales and lead gen process and can automatically prioritize your freshest, warmest leads, moving them to the front of the queue as soon as they hit the hopper.

Additional KPIs Some of Our Customers Track

- Cost per Lead and Revenue per Lead are metrics used to calculate KPIs like Lead Conversion Rate and CPA



Learn more about the importance of speed to lead

[Learn more](#)



LIST KPIs

List KPIs track data performance by list and list source. Outbound call center expert Heather Griffin talks about the value of list metrics.



I can see if a list is burnt because our contact rates are super low. I can see a list that's converting. And more importantly, I can turn off lists where we talked to a lot of people and it didn't result in sales."

5. Contact Rate

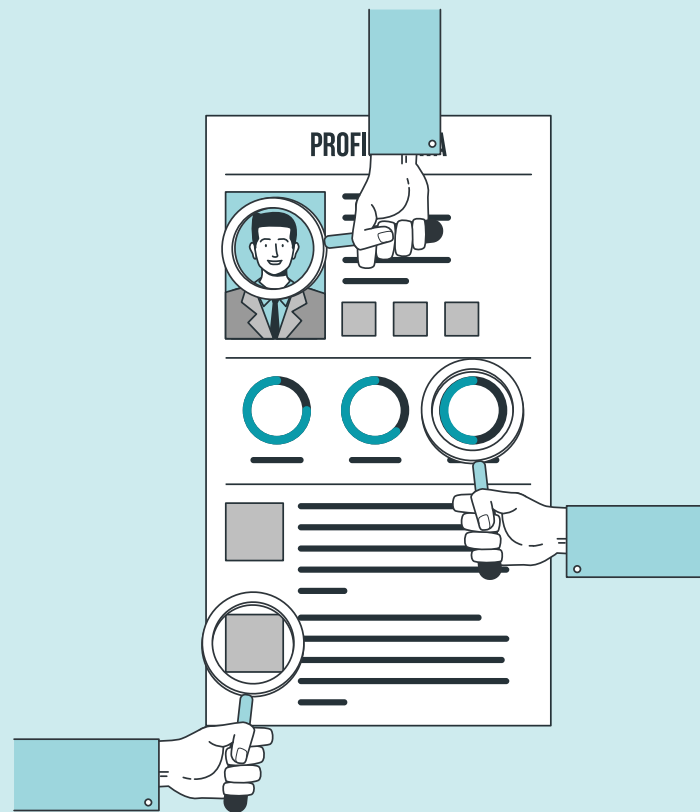
Contact rate is a list level metric and is the key to understanding the quality of the lead list, and how well your campaigns are performing. It also indicates whether your agents and software are reaching the right leads at the right time.

Contact rate measures the percent of leads reached out of your total leads. To determine the rate, we divide the number of live person contacts by the total leads on the list. For example, 20 people pick up the call / 200 leads = a contact rate of 10%.

With a higher contact rate, your agents can spend their time productively by reaching the right people, especially with higher-quality leads. If your dialer is able to dial fewer leads while delivering the same number of qualified leads to your agents, you're spending less to earn the same results. That's contributing to your bottom line.

Tools to Measure: Contact Rate Report

A contact rate report should give you ways to find out which call-to-actions and lead sources are converting more than others. In addition to showing calls answered, this report should tell you more details about the call, such as number of calls with no answer, voicemail detection, DNC tagged, busy, disconnected, call dispositions, total revenue, and more.



6. Average Talk Time

Talk time is a metric discussed in the Agent KPI section, when we're looking at agent productivity. But we also need to look at the average talk time on a list during a campaign. If you regularly track this, you'll notice when talk time is higher than average on a list and it may give you pause. You'll want to look at the conversion rate. If it's high, then maybe that extra talk time is worth it, needed even. However... well, let's hear what Heather Griffin, CEO & Co-Founder of Jenova Solar, has to say:



Opportunity costs are our biggest costs. We've got payroll, we've got overhead, we've got technology. So if I'm spending a long time talking to a lot of people and it's not resulting in sales, then I'm wasting a lot of payroll."

A well written sales script can make a huge difference in keeping your agents on track and guiding the conversation. Outbound call centers convert more leads when their agents know the right thing to say at the right time. Access guidance about [cold calling sales scripts that get results here](#), as well as tips on agent delivery of the script.

7. Total Revenue

Different sets of data have different revenue values, so you need to look at it in a comprehensive manner. Here's an example from our favorite numbers guy, John Gallagher, talking about efficiencies for your leads and lists.



You pay \$1,000 for a list that converts into \$15,000 in revenue and it takes 100 leads, which is \$150/lead in revenue. Another list bought for \$1,000 converts into \$30,000 in revenue, but takes 400 leads. In the second case, your revenue per lead is very low at \$75/lead. Now factor in your agent's time in terms of how much you're paying them per hour to get that conversion. And, you have to look at your manager's time. In this way you get a more accurate picture of total revenue when you look at the value of your lists and leads. Then it becomes really apparent where you should spend your time, and where you want to invest in the future."

8. List Profit And Loss

Use a **List Conversion Report** to provide a quick profit-loss for the period you run for your call center lists. View profitability of different lead and agent costs per list. Measure the quality of your data by combining revenue and billable hours, number of dials, to see raw performance as well as trends within certain lead sources. Get statistics such as number of dials, average talk time, number of sales / transfers, answering machine %, etc.

Your list conversion tool should handle computations to help you determine profit or loss of your data:

Revenue per hour = Revenue / Estimated
Billable hour

Agent Cost = Billable Hours * Agent Cost per hour

Total Cost = Agent Cost + Lead Cost + Minute Cost

Profit = Revenue - Total Cost

Additionally, you should have the capability to run reports from one of three list sources: Called List; Current List; or Original List. (This is based on where your leads originated, regardless of what lists your leads are in now, and is best used to gauge the revenue that a list produces and the quality of the leads.)



There is a list management system within Convoso that's really valuable to us. And when we use that, we're able to drill down by the reps to find out who's performing well. And at the same time we can manage our different data feeds to figure out which data feeds aren't performing well."

John Gallagher

CEO of Thrive Marketing LLC

Additional KPIs some of our customers track

- Lead to transfer rate and billable transfer rate
- Call to billable call conversion rate
- Cost per transfer & cost per billable transfer



AGENT KPIs

Understanding agent productivity starts with objective metrics that are tracked over time. The numbers show who your top producers are, who may need more training/coaching, and when someone may just be having an off day (unless it's the data, which is why we track list metrics simultaneously).



An agent who's normally a good performer could be having a bad week for some reason. We'd see those results in the data within 4 hours and we'd be able to address it. Sometimes they just need time off. They need a break. Sometimes the agents burn out."

John Gallagher
CEO of Thrive Marketing LLC

9. Talk Time

Sometimes, more time on a call is just what's needed to make a successful sale or transfer. Tracking talk time shows you whether this is about time to convert or the agent getting off track.

If calls are taking too long, try to streamlining your script. A call center solution that offers dynamic scripting will show your agents a clear path of conversation, addressing common questions, or even flagging an area that's giving them trouble in a sales call. Agents become more effective and efficient.

10. Wrap-up Time

Also sometimes called ACW or After Call Work, track this metric by individual agent and over all agents, both daily and over a period, so you can determine if this time can be tightened up.

Minutes spent assigning dispositions, notes, and other manual tasks at the end of a call add up. Those accumulated minutes are costing you. That's time your agent isn't making other calls, and a break in the calling rhythm that makes your agents productive. Automating these tasks will add up to a noticeable improvement in productivity.

11. Pause or Wait Time

This metric tracks the amount of time between calls. Our customer Michael Velardi recently found that by increasing the pause or rest time for agents between calls—just slightly—that they ultimately became more productive, and weren't overdialing. Finding a balance is key—one that works for your operation.



Managers fear losing speed or lack of performance. We used to sacrifice the agent in a push to meet our fulfillment goals. By managing the list at a higher level, our contacts and conversions are at slower rates, but our agents are delivering optimal performance.”

Michael Velardi

Sr VP at Resource Marketing Corp

Of course you want to make sure your agents are productive so be sure to find the sweet spot by adjusting the wait time of your predictive dialer as you track this metric.

12. Calls Per Agent

Calls per Agent is a metric to indicate if your agents are on task. This can be an added challenge for a remote contact center operation where your agents work from home. Effectively managing productivity of your at-home agents means utilizing the agent monitoring tools and real time analytics of your cloud-based dialer.

To improve your Calls per Agent KPI, your system should have the capabilities to monitor agent performance, to automate workflows, to offer communication channels such as broadcast messaging and listen & whisper, to manage break requests and time clock, and to set auto logouts for pause codes.

Agent motivation naturally improves with a system that supports their success. Find and integrate features for your agents that streamline the calling process and automate tasks. Do your agents have access to these tools? Intelligent dynamic scripting to streamline calls and improve conversions, customizable dashboards, workflow dialing, and one-click to next call or transfer [Quick Dispo], saving time and maintaining a calling rhythm.

If your agents are consistently dialing, but your Calls per Agent metric is still low, the issue could be your dialer system. While automated dialing is now commonplace—hand dialing is obviously extremely

taxing—your dialer must be optimized for maximum dialing efficiency, for example by automatically resetting the list and finding the sweet spot for predictive dial levels.

13. First Call Close

The First Call Close (FCC) metric indicates the number of sales that were made on an agent's "first call" or contact with the customer. While closing a sale on the first call may be difficult for some business models or even campaigns, the ability to do so will not only drastically improve your business's overall efficiency, but will ultimately allow you to generate more revenue, faster.

Identify trends in the metric that have led to successful sales. Then constantly tweak and optimize your campaigns to account for those factors.

The best way to improve this KPI is by providing your sales reps/agents with a well thought out, dynamic script that will not only guide them through the success-proven process of a sales call, but will also help build your agents' confidence. When your contact center software provides dynamic scripting, your agents have a very calculated approach to building rapport on the first call. Build that script with proven closing techniques and phrases, as shown, for example, in this Hubspot blog, 31 Closing Phrases to Seal a Sales Deal.

Additional Agent KPIs some of our customers track

- Number of sales and revenue per agent
- Call to transfer rate (with separate metrics for types of transfers, i.e., to Closer or to Lead Buyers)
- Average connected duration (Transfer)
- Call to billable call conversion rate
- Billable time vs non-billable time
- Billable calls per hour

Tools to Measure Agent KPIs

An **Agent Calls Report** tells you the total number of calls an agent makes and takes each day/week/month/etc, and breaks it down into outbound, inbound and manual call backs. It should provide their call times, such as talk time, pause time, wrap-up time, etc.

An **Agent Productivity Report** gives an agent by agent breakdown of their time spent with the dialer. It's broken into total time, billable time (i.e., time they are making calls), login time, not ready time, and ready time.



We use this report to see how the agents are spending their time within the dialer. This is a huge help for us, as we are a 100% remote team (including the agents), so the supervisors can't be checking in on them as they would in an office."

Kyle Andersson

Director of Ops for Digital Market Media



DIALING KPIs

14. Average Hold Time

With automated dialing systems, customers are sometimes stuck on hold waiting for an agent to sell them a product or receive a certain deal. Prospects should not need to wait on hold before an agent answers an outbound call. It leads to call abandonment and reduces overall profitability.

If you see that your customers are waiting too long in queues, you will likely need to reduce your dialing level.

15. Abandoned Call Rate

The abandoned call rate shows us the percentage of callers who hang up, or abandon the queue, prior to connecting with a live agent. This represents a possible lost lead, and indicates there may be issues with your dialer settings.

Here's how to calculate Abandoned Call Rate for a selected timeframe. Exclude the first 5 seconds of calls to remove dropped calls due to incorrect dials and wrong number dials.

$$\text{Abandonment Rate} = \frac{[\text{Total Abandoned Calls}]}{[\text{Total Number of Calls}]}$$

To fix abandonment, look at adjusting call forecasting. Your outbound efforts might be too effective at certain times—leaving customers without a live agent to talk to.

You should constantly be upgrading your messaging if you see your customers leaving during their IVR or in-queue messages.

16. Average Dropped Call Rate

If no agent is available to take a call when a dialer has dialed, the call will be dropped. Monitoring the dropped call KPI is critical because, for legal reasons, your drop rating should not be above 3% over a 30 day period. You should be able to view the average drop rating for all of your campaigns.

If your dropped call rating is too high, that's a clear indication you are burning through leads, which is simply an inefficient dialing strategy for any call center trying to be profitable.

To minimize dropped calls, make sure you have enough agents working on the dialer, and that you're using quality data. Balancing Agent Wait Time with the Drop Rate will create an efficient use of the dialer and leads. Keep tweaking your dial levels to find your sweet spot.

Versatile KPI Reporting Tools

Your cloud based contact center software should be able to customize reports. From standard reports, you want to be able to access metrics easily in the combinations that give you the most insight by using filters, fields, and breakdowns.

With good reporting tools you'll quickly find out which lists, lead sources, and agents are performing—and which aren't. A wide range of filters will let you set the reporting criteria that gets the information you need. At a minimum, your dialer's reporting capabilities should provide the following:



Conversion Reports

Which of your lists are performing and which are not? Easily find out by comparing and sorting all of your lists based on success rate.



Lead Reports

Your leads are valuable assets. View all their information at a glance, filtered by status, campaign, list, and user.



Contact Rate Reports

An effective campaign begins with reaching your leads. Quickly see how many of your calls are making contact and how many are missing the target.



Agent Calls

Are your agents experiencing too much down time? Track call counts by agent and adjust workflows accordingly to increase productivity.



Custom Reports

Create your own reports to suite your operation's needs. Filter reports and drill down based a variety of variables, from call type to dispositions.



Scheduled Reports

Running reports manually wastes valuable time. Increase efficiency by scheduling reports to be run and emailed automatically at a specific time — hourly, daily or weekly.

For KPIs and Metrics, keep in mind that...

Monitoring many KPIs with snapshot reports can be critical for quick decisions in a daily call center operation. They're like taking the temperature. But alone they are inadequate to assess the health of a campaign, because they don't reflect the influence of factors that need to be reviewed comprehensively, as well as over time.

Strategic decisions based on a strong grasp of your outbound KPIs creates greater efficiencies for your leads/lists, agents, and management. Improving these efficiencies will yield a dramatically higher ROI.

Is your call center TCPA compliant?

Compliance is more important now than ever in our ever changing and increasingly regulated industry. If you're monitoring the KPIs discussed here and using smart dialing strategies, you're taking actions to ensure compliance. Convoso's software platform and support is designed to help contact centers stay in compliance. By using the right tools and strategies, you can prevent call blocking and maintain a strong Caller ID reputation.

But compliance is about more than protecting your caller IDs. To support compliance with the TCPA and increasingly complex state-level regulations, you need to take proactive approach. Work with expert counsel and the right technology partner to implement TCPA best practices and stay on top of the latest developments.

DISCLAIMER: This information is provided for general education purposes only and is not legal advice. Convoso does not guarantee the accuracy or appropriateness of this information to your situation. You are solely responsible for using Convoso's services in a legally compliant way and should consult your legal counsel for compliance advice. Any quotes are solely the views of the quoted person and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of Convoso.



Get Dramatic Results for Your Call Center

Convoso is the ultimate dialer solution for sales and lead generation teams. Our outbound call center customers report dramatic increases in contact rates of up to 3X when they switch to our omnichannel contact center software, giving them higher conversions and significantly improved ROI.

The Convoso system works best with 20 or more seats, and scales efficiently to over 1000 seats to meet enterprise level requirements.

See for yourself with a live demo how Convoso can help to boost the productivity of your outbound contact center operations.

[Schedule a demo](#)