

*Healthcare
Contact Center
Survey:
Results & Insights | 2024*



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Research conducted by:



A Special Thanks ...

This survey was partially funded by LVM Systems.



A special thank you to LVM Systems for supporting the continuing education of the healthcare contact center industry.

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Introduction and Methodology



Introduction and Methodology

- ❑ This 2024 Contact Center Survey is an update to similar surveys completed in previous years by a consortium led by *Healthcare Call Center Times*, most recently in 2021.
- ❑ The goal of this survey is to collect objective information on the services, challenges, performance and future of healthcare call and contact centers.
- ❑ The survey was designed to collect a wide variety of data on the current priorities and activities of today's contemporary healthcare contact center and provide a roadmap to the future as well as objective, usable industry benchmarks.
- ❑ The survey, in the field from December 2023-March 2024, was administered via SurveyMonkey to healthcare call center leaders.
- ❑ Respondents were invited to participate via email and those who finished the survey and provided their work email, could choose either a gift card or a charitable donation as an incentive.
- ❑ 54 call center leaders responded to the survey.
 - *Note: Survey questions were not mandatory, therefore sample sizes change throughout the report.*

Key Takeaways

Overview of the Findings



Key Takeaways

- The 2024 survey generated actionable insights for contact and call centers leaders. Below are key takeaways:
 - **Doing more with less?** Over the next two years, most respondents expect their call center staff size and budgets to grow, although perhaps not at the anticipated rate of service growth. And it's a positive statement for the industry that most leaders plan to spend the next 5 years and/or the rest of their career in the contact center world.
 - **Feeling valued:** While over 90% of call center leaders believe the call center is somewhat or very important to the organization, less feel that it is important to executive stakeholders. Additionally, “being valued for the contribution they make to the organization” is a top improvement priority indicated by respondents.
 - **Staffing:** Priorities for staffing include improved efficiency, embracing technology and the need for better training, retention and acquisition. As expected, staffing costs increased across the board with the average clinical staff member being paid \$41/hour and the average non-clinical staff member being paid \$19/hour.
 - **Call center services:** Most call centers offer both clinical and non-clinical services, and most organizations have 2-5 formal call centers rather than a single consolidated call center.
 - **In-House services:** Only 19% of respondents indicated they outsource their call center functions; as such overwhelmingly, call centers are an internally managed resource.

Key Takeaways, *cont'd.*

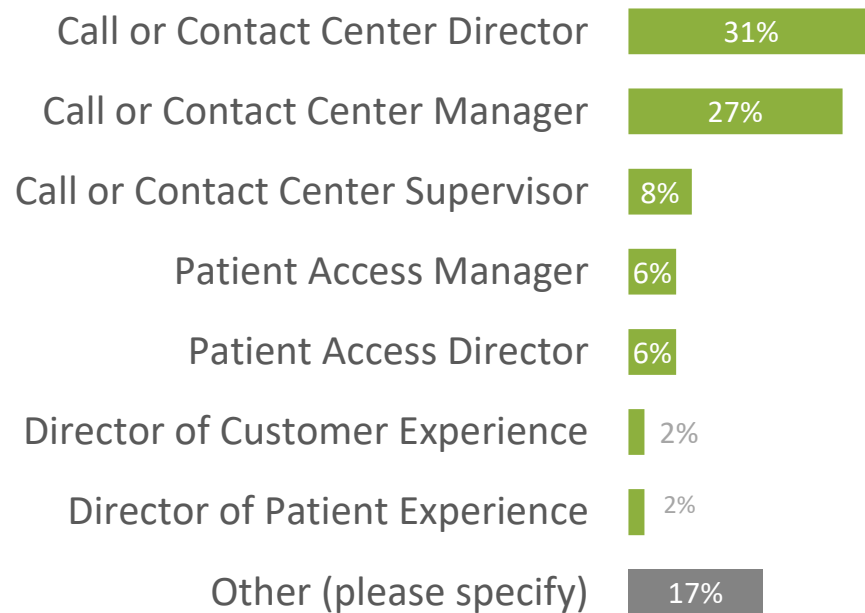
- **Reporting relationships:** The typical call center is now significantly more likely to report to Clinical Services or Administration than to Marketing/Communications, which is a flip from 2021.
- **Triage services:** Approximately 68% of call centers provide triage services (up from 2021), and of those who charge for the service, the average charge is \$17.50 per call.
- **Remote working:** Remote working has increased since the pandemic and appears to be here to stay. This shift requires different types of training for remote staff (as indicated in verbatim responses).
- **Embracing Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Only a quarter of call centers state that they use AI to enhance self-service options. However, another 40% are actively looking into using AI for their call center organization.
- **Recruitment:** Recruiting both clinical and non-clinical staff has become easier since 2021.
- **Performance:** Although volumes are generally up, basic performance measures (e.g., abandonment rates and ASA) have stayed within industry standards.
- **Non-Voice channels:** The contact centers involvement in providing non-voice channels of communication has significantly increased over the past three years.

Respondent Demographics

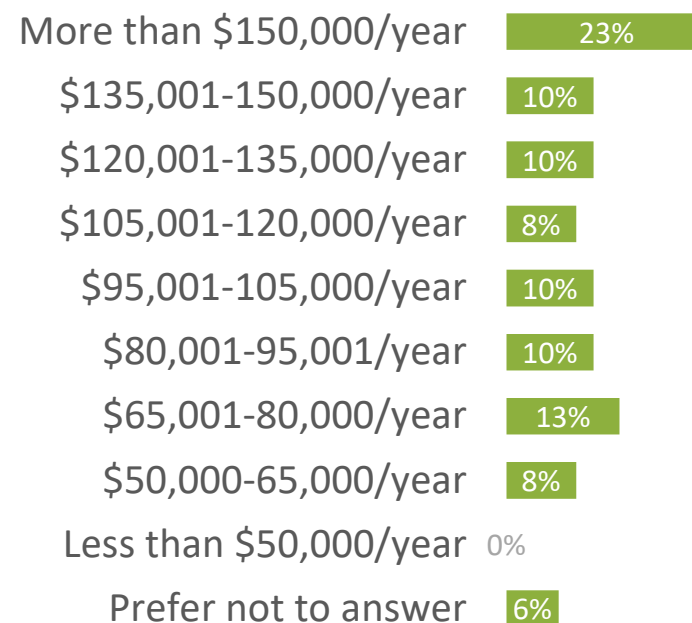


- The top two titles among respondents are Contact Center Manager and Contact Center Director.
- Over half of the respondents have salaries \$100K+.
- Most respondents plan on staying in the industry for at least 6 years or the rest of their careers.

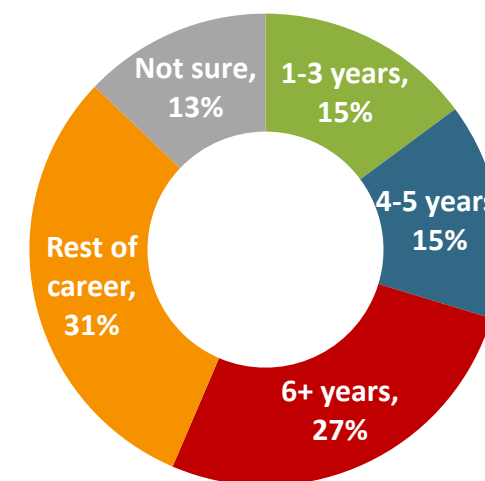
Respondent's Job Titles



Annual Salary of Contact Center



Length of Time Planning to Stay in Industry



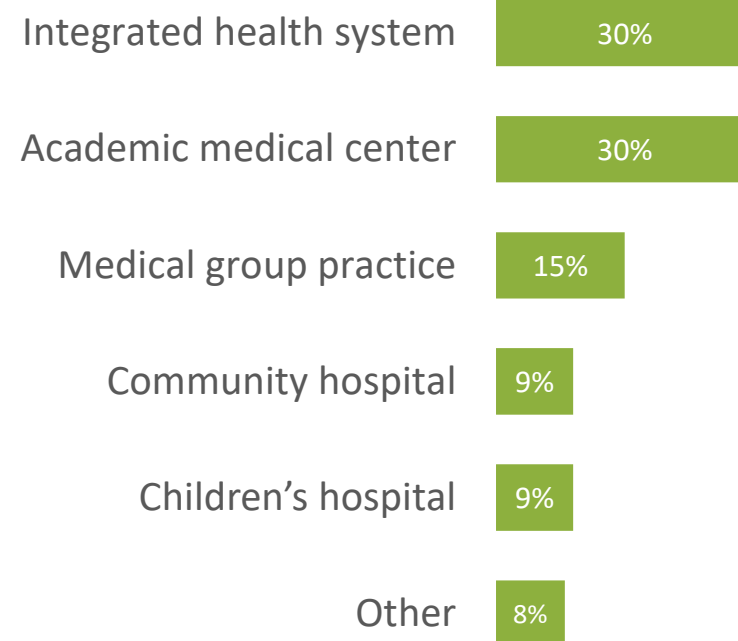
Q56 Which one of the following titles most closely represents your current title? Please pick one from the list or if you don't see your choice, enter it under "other." n=48
 Q57 What is your annual base salary range? n=48
 Q58 How long do you see yourself remaining in this industry? n=48

Call Center Demographics



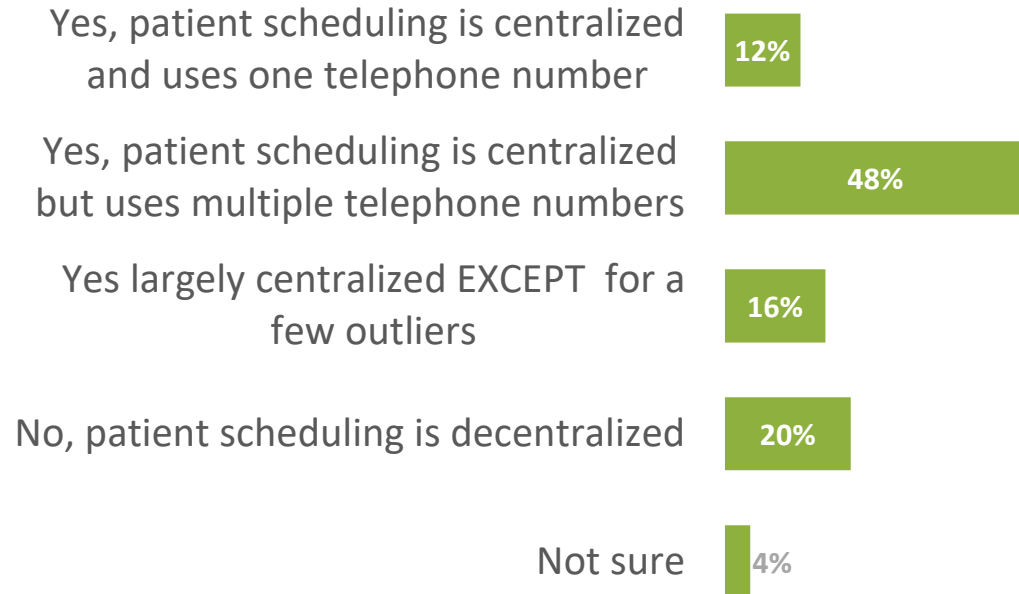
Respondents belong primarily to AMCs, Integrated Health Systems and Medical Group Practices.

Type of Organization Contact Center Belongs To

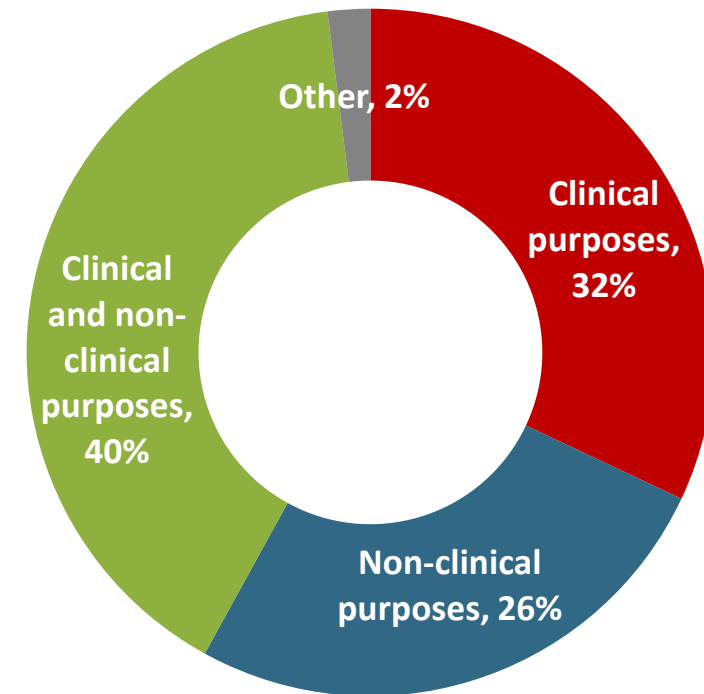


- Most responding organizations indicate their scheduling functions are at least partially centralized.
- And most provide clinical services (alone or in combination) with non-clinical services.

Centralized Scheduling



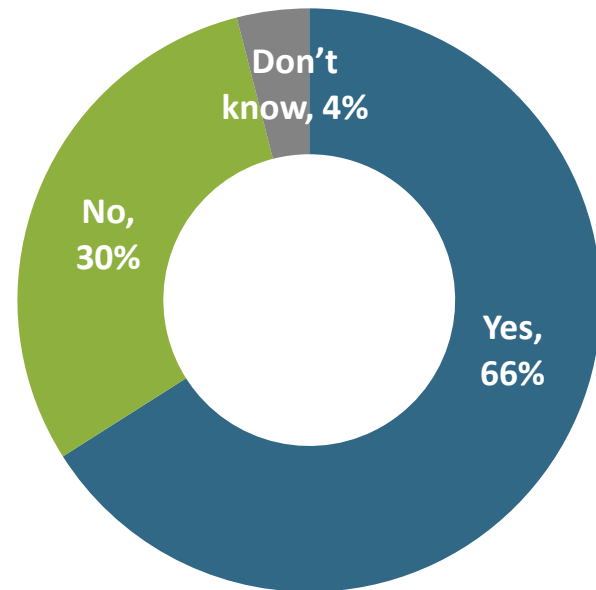
Purpose of Contact Center's General Operations



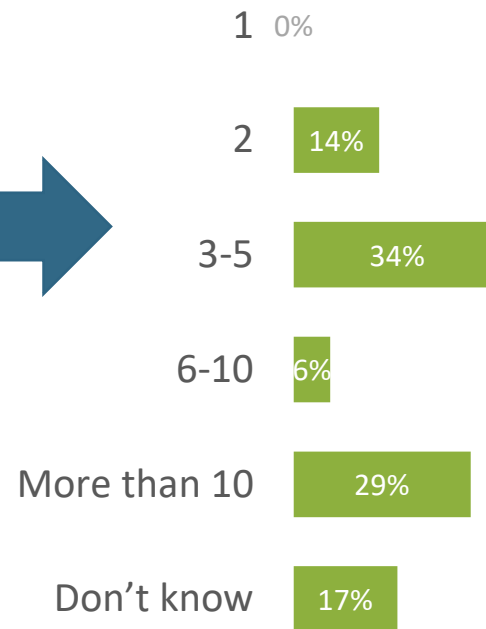
Q41 Is there a single telephone number for patient scheduling (e.g., centralized number promoted on your website or in your marketing materials) for your organization? n=50
 Q7 Which of the following best describes your contact center's general operations? n=53

- Most respondents have more than one formal call center. Of those, almost half have between 2-5 formal call centers and another 29% have more than 10.
- Eight in ten call centers are managed in-house.

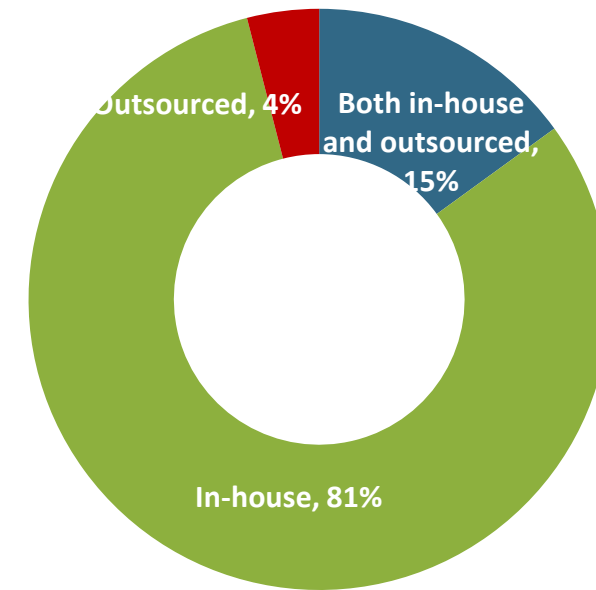
Organization Has Other “Formal” Call Centers



Number of Other “Formal” Call Centers



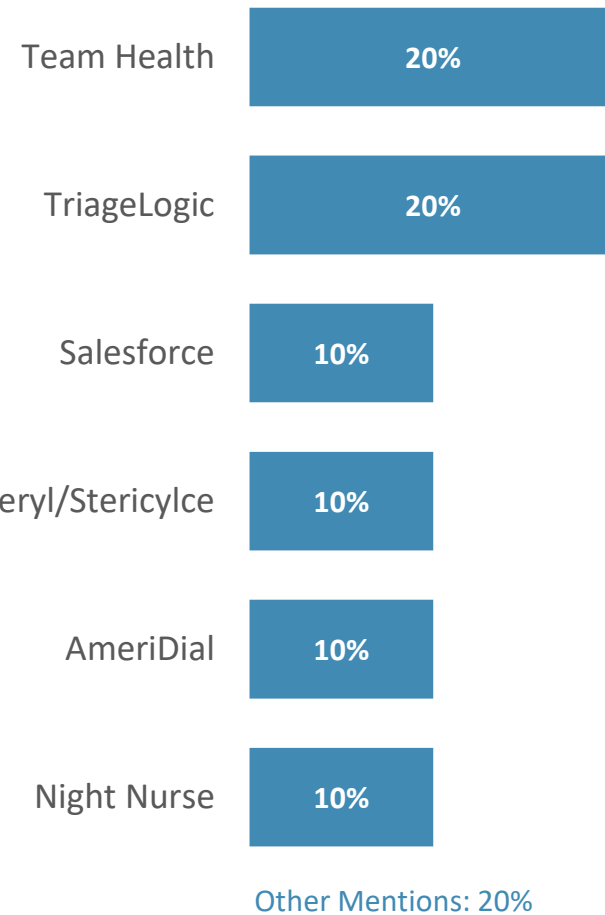
Where Contact Center is Managed



Q9 Thinking beyond your particular call or contact center – the one you directly lead or manage – does your organization have other “formal” call or contact centers? n=53
 Q10 How many other “formal” call or contact centers? n=35
 Q11 Which one phrase best describes your contact center? n=53

- Only 19% of responding organizations indicated that they outsource call center operations.
- The top companies that provide outsourced services to these Call Centers are Team Health and TriageLogic.

Popular Call Center Outsourced Companies

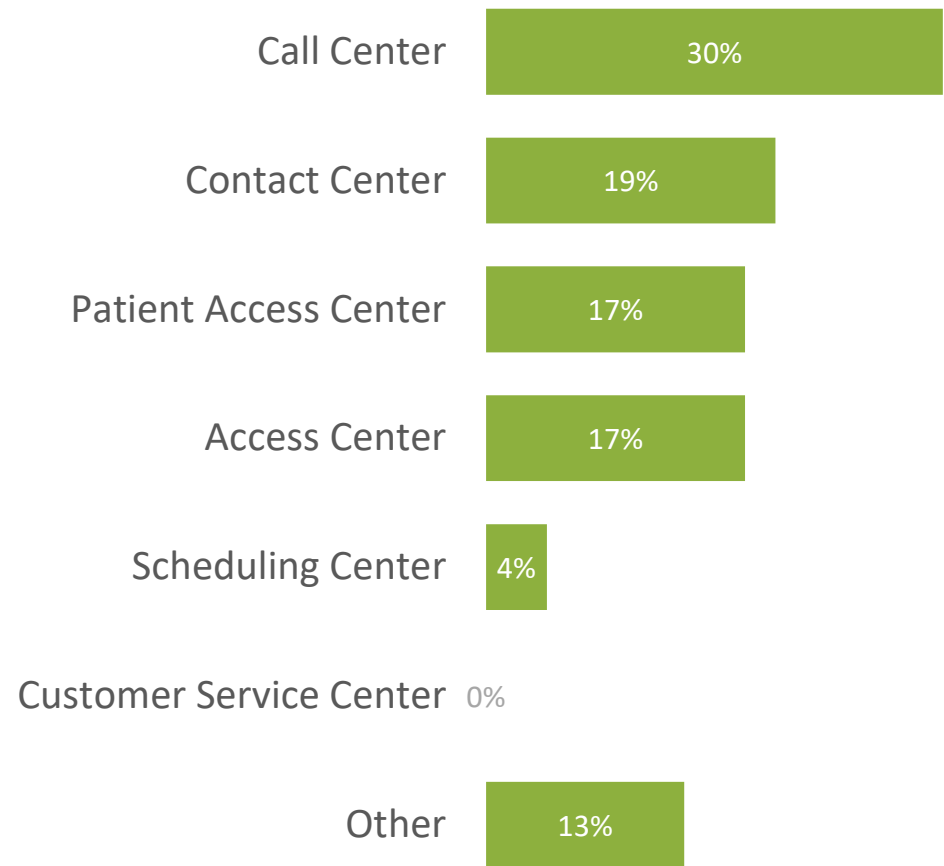


Fully 81% of responding organizations indicated that they have an internally managed call center



These centers are called by many titles but “call center” is still a popular choice.

How Call Center is Branded



Services

Services Provided by Healthcare Call Centers



Although many services are offered through today's healthcare call center, the top services include scheduling, nurse triage and outbound calling.

Services Offered

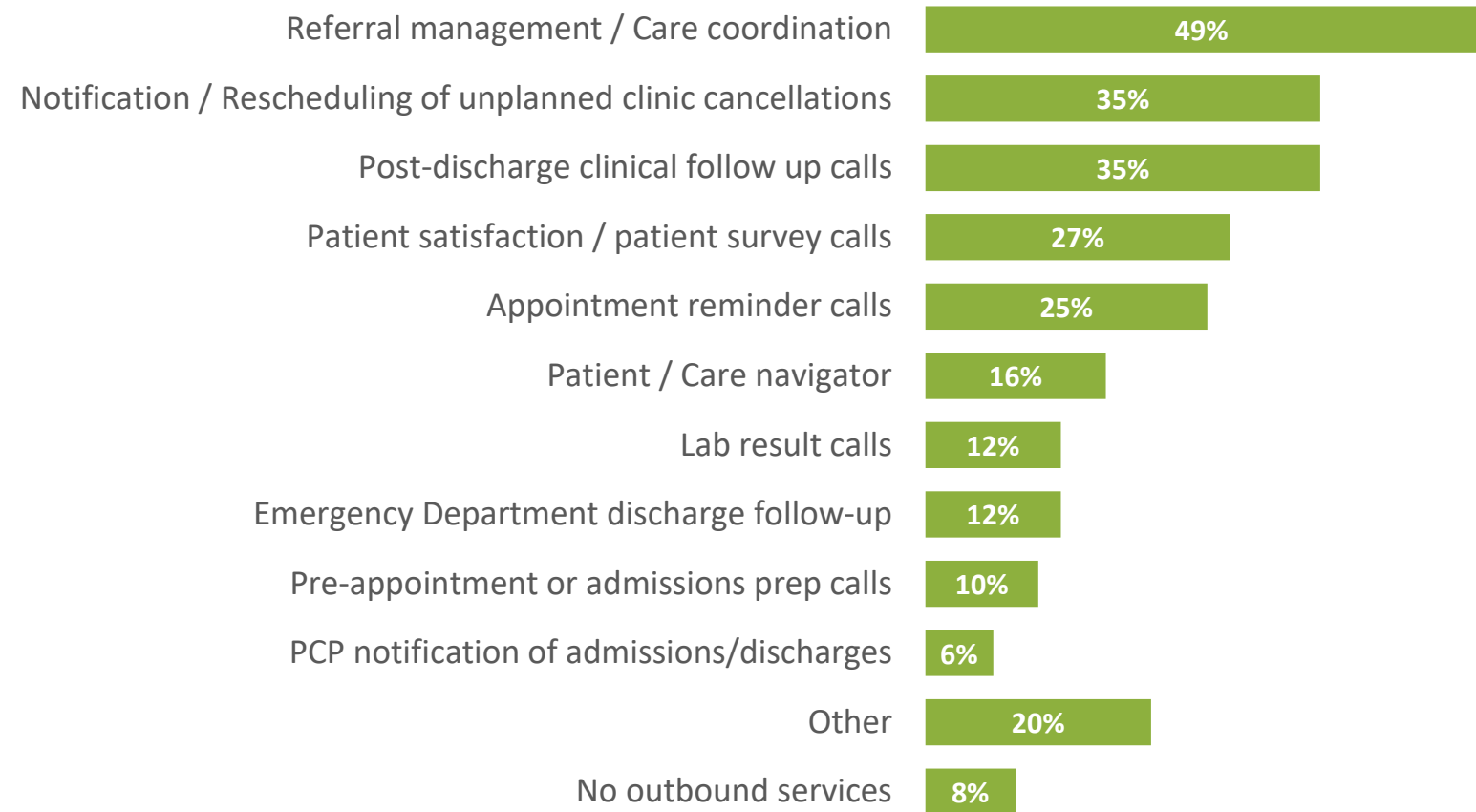


Q8 What inbound call services are offered through the call or contact center you lead (e.g., your call or contact center)? Mark all that apply. n=53



Outbound services are offered through today’s healthcare call center primarily include referral management, rescheduling and clinical follow up calls.

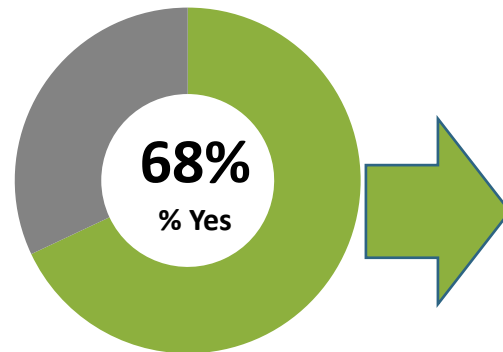
Outbound Call Services Offered



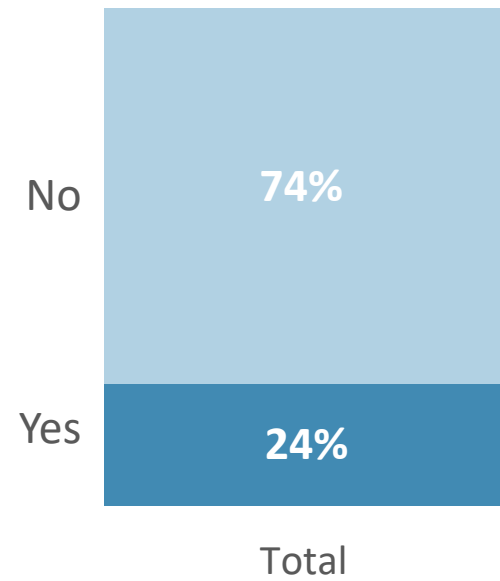
This year’s top two outbound functions are “new” to the list , neither showing up in the 2015 or 2018 surveys and leapfrogging the previous top outbound functions of post discharge follow-up and patient satisfaction calls.

- More than two-thirds of the respondents provide clinical triage services.
- About a quarter of those charge for triage calls at an estimated average of \$17.50 per call.
- A majority charge for triage calls by the call rather than by the minute.

Provide Triage Services



Charge for Telephone Triage Handling



Average* Charge per Triage Call



\$17.50

88%

Charge Per Call for Call Handling

Q39 Whether you charge by the call or the minute, generally speaking, what is the average charge per telephone triage call? Please round to nearest whole dollar amount n=7
 Q36 Does your call center provide telephone triage services? n=50
 Q37 Do you charge external and/or internal customers for telephone triage call handling? n=34
 Q38 Do you charge per call or per minute for call handling? n=8
 * Average is an approximation calculated from counts of ranges

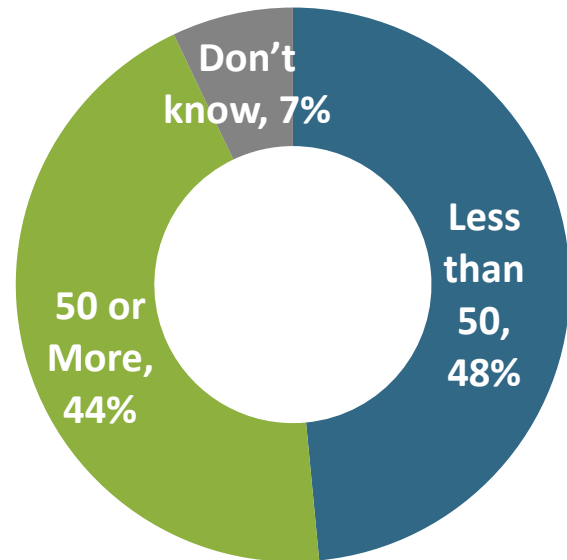
Staffing

How Call Center is Staffed with Relative Benchmarks

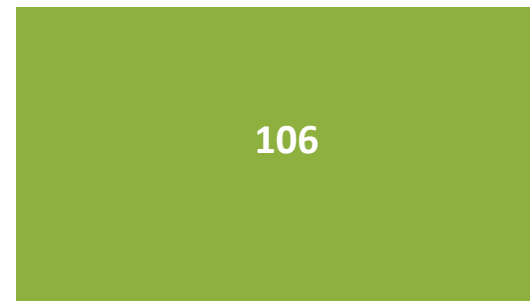


About half of the organizations have less than 50 FTE employees, although on average call centers employ 106 FTEs.

Number of FTE Employees



Average* FTEs Among Call Centers



Total

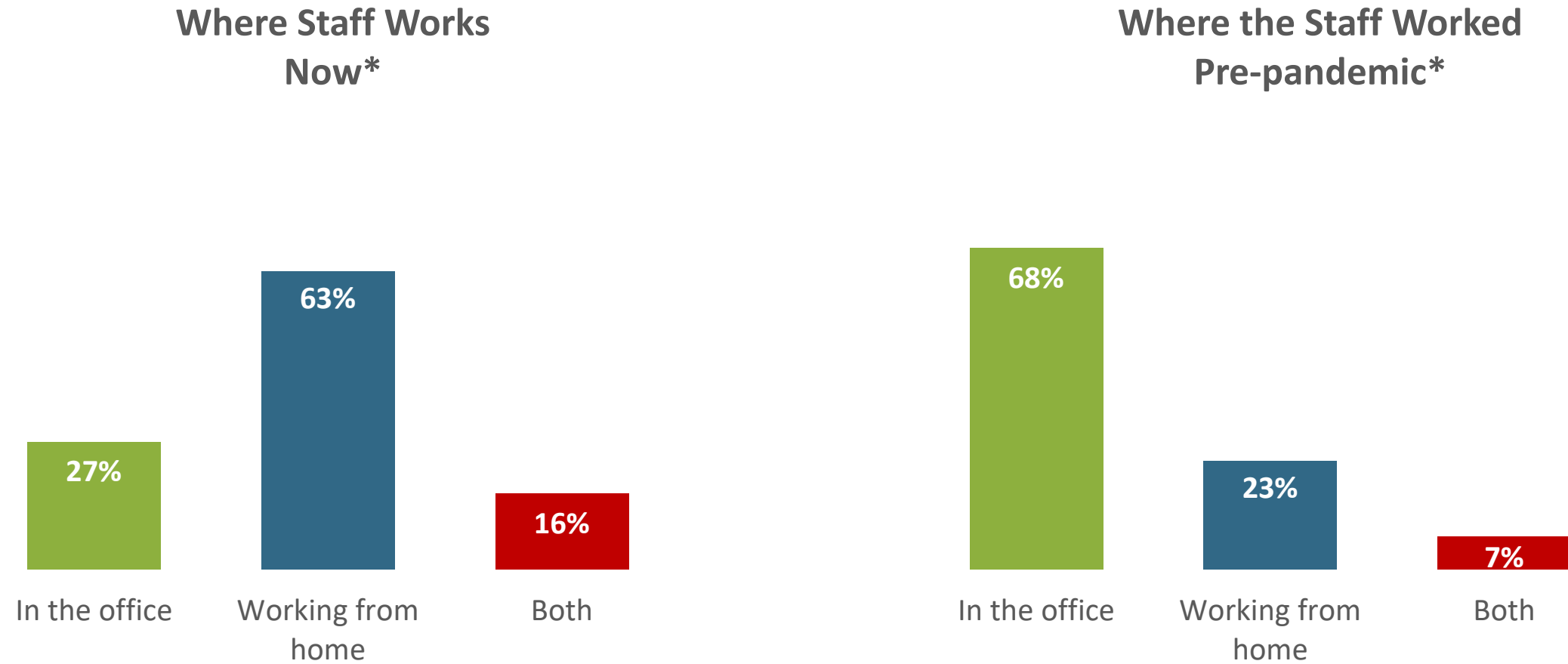
*Most call centers have a **3:1 ratio** of full to part time employees*

Q17 During your most recent typical year, how many Full Time Equivalent (FTEs) staff members were part of your call center? n=50

Q18 What is the approximate breakdown of your call center staff between full- and part-time employees? The total of both full and part time should roughly equal 100% n=51.

* Average is an approximation calculated from counts of ranges

Like many other businesses, the percentage of staff working from home increased dramatically when compared to pre-pandemic numbers.

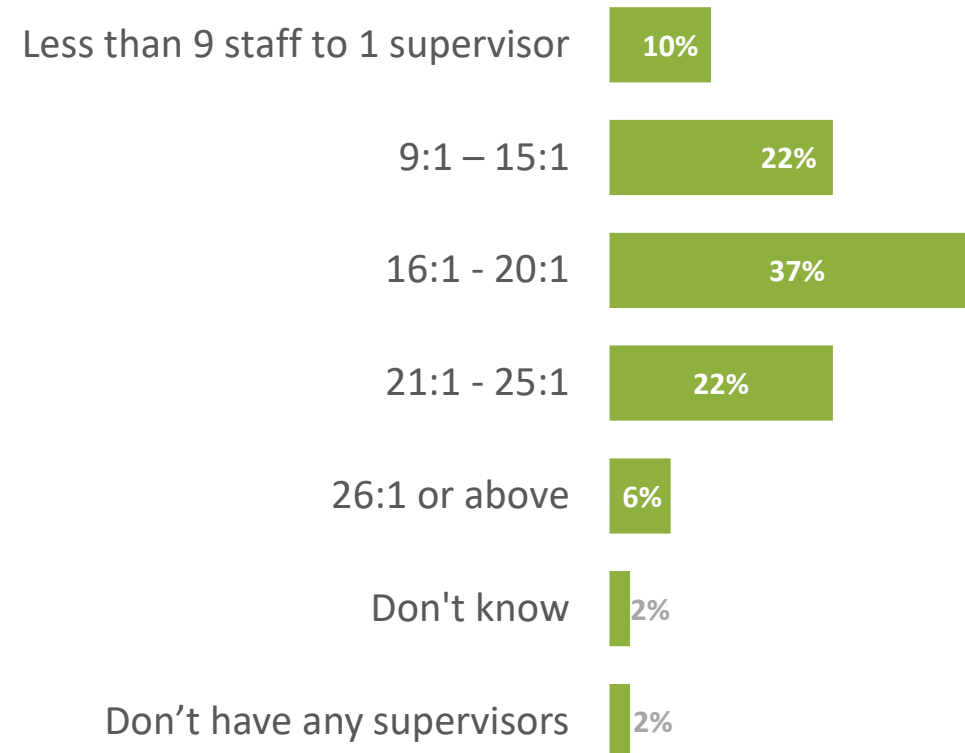


Q19 First, thinking of a typical year, where does the call center staff physically work? And second, what was the proportion prior to the pandemic? The total for each column should roughly equal 100%. n=51

* Average is an approximation calculated from counts of ranges

Most of the responding call centers reported **at least a 16:1** staff to supervisor ratio.

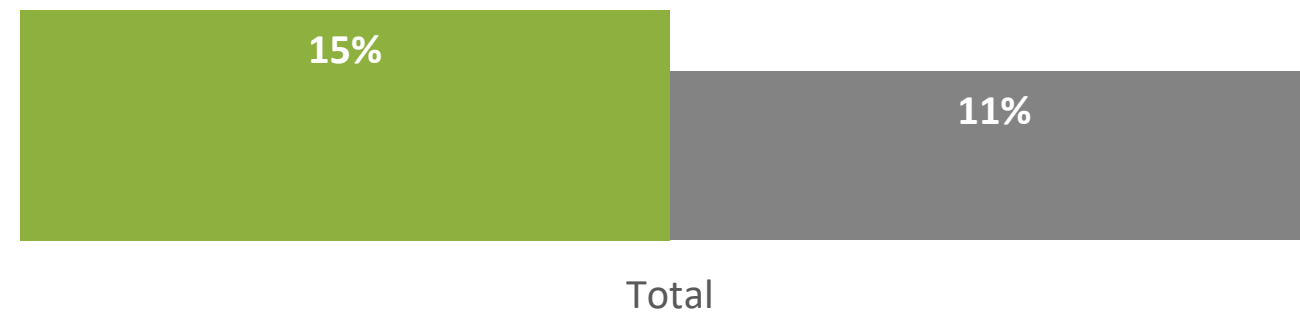
Staff to Supervisor Ratio



Q20 What is the approximate ratio of staff to supervisors in your call center? n=51

Among the responding call centers, those with primarily clinical operations experienced a lower turnover rate in 2023.

Average* 2023 Turnover Rate for Clinical and Non-Clinical Staff



■ Non-clinical Staff ■ Clinical Staff

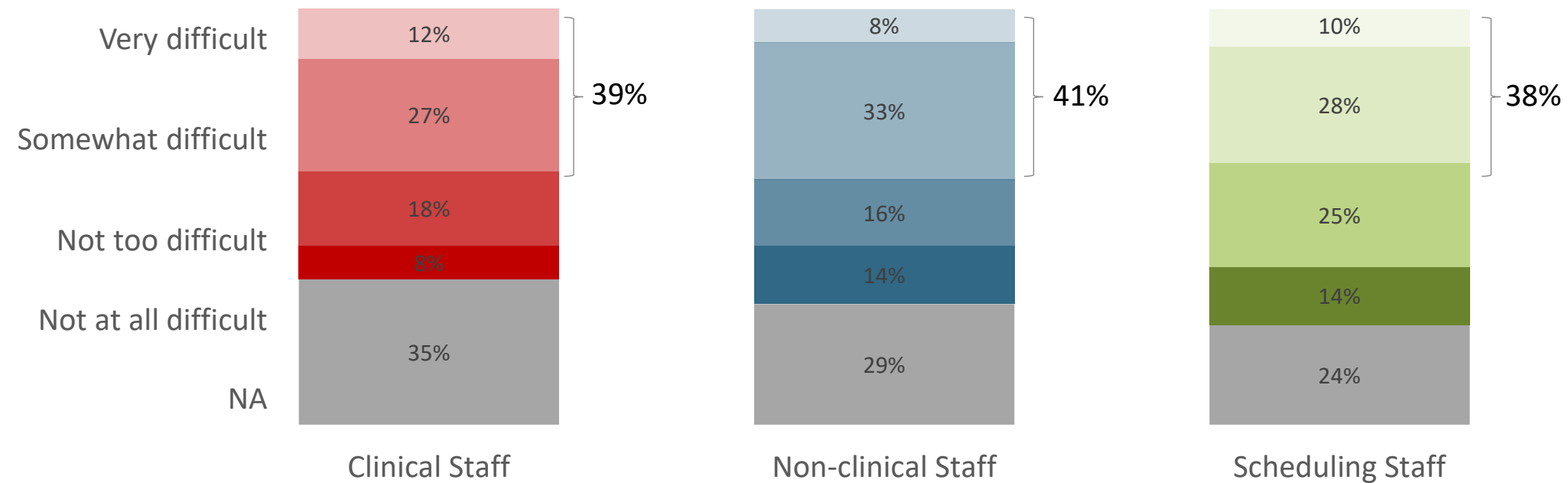
Q26 What was your overall turnover rate in 2023 for non-clinical call center staff? n=47

Q27 What was your overall turnover rate in 2023 for clinical call center staff? n=35

* Average is an approximation calculated from counts of ranges

No matter the function, over a third of respondents feel it is difficult to recruit staff.

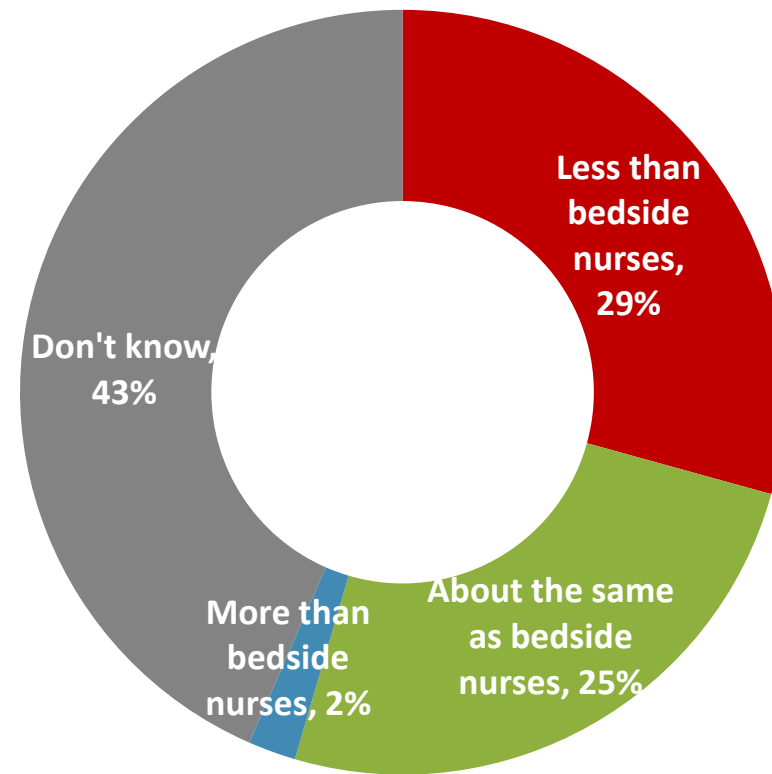
Difficulty of Recruiting Staff



Recruiting difficulties have eased since the 2021 survey

Most respondents don't know the salary comparison between contact center and floor nurses. Among those who do, they believe contact center nurses make about the same or less than floor nurses.

Contact Center Registered Nurses Pay Relative to Floor Nurses



Q24 In comparison to bedside nurses, do registered nurses in your contact center make.....n=51

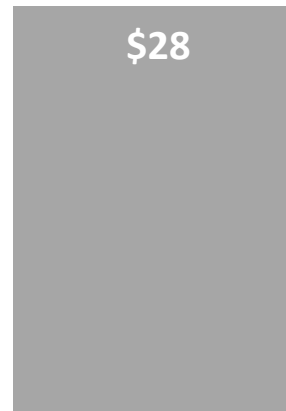
Across the board, hourly wages for call center staff have risen since 2021, which is not unexpected.

Average* Hourly Wage for Registered Nurses



Total

Average* Hourly Wage for Other Clinical Staff



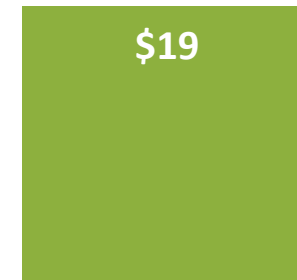
Total

Average* Hourly Wage for Non-Clinical Staff



Total

Average* Hourly Wage for Scheduling Staff



Total

Q23 What is the average hourly wage/rate for Registered Nurses in the contact center? Mark the answer that fits best overall. n=36

Q25 What is the average hourly wage/rate for Other clinical staff (MA, CNA, etc.) in the contact center? Mark the answer that fits best overall. n=19

Q22 What is the average hourly wage/rate for your Other non-clinical staff? Mark the answer that fits best overall. n=43

Q21 What is the average hourly wage/rate for your Scheduling Staff? Mark the answer that fits best overall.. n=44

* Average is an approximation calculated from counts of ranges

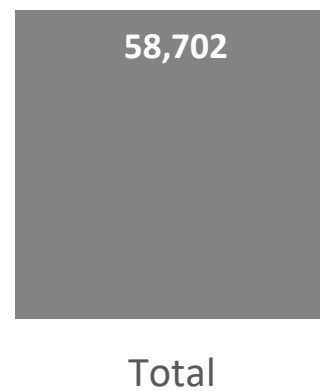
Operation Metrics

Benchmarks Typically Measured and Managed by Call Center Leadership

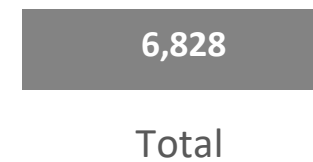


- The average call center **inbound** volume ranges between 55-60k calls a month.
- The average call center **outbound** volume ranges between 5-8k calls a month.

Average* Monthly **Inbound** Call Volume



Average* Monthly **Outbound** Call Volume



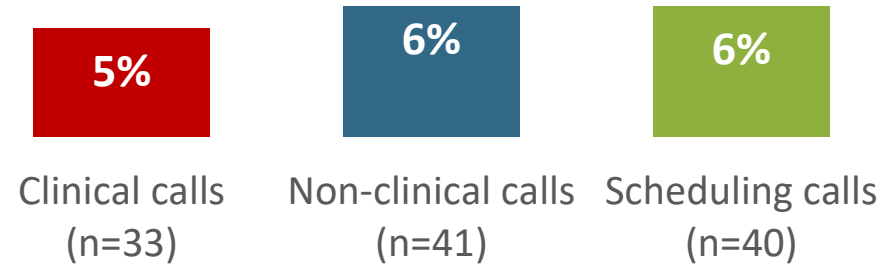
Q14 Thinking about your last typical year (most likely 2019), what was your average monthly inbound call volume? n=52

Q15 Again, thinking about your last typical year, what was your average monthly outbound call volume? n=48

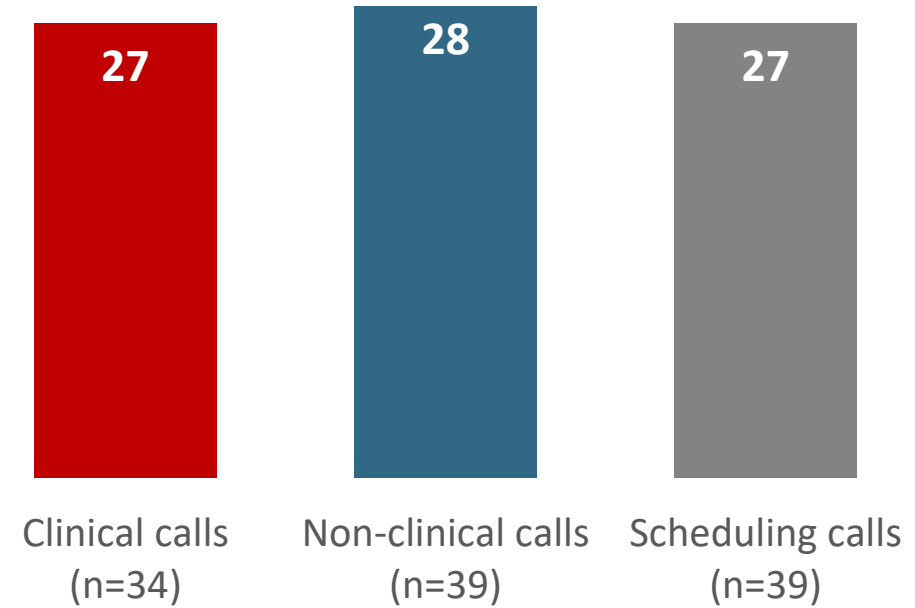
* Average is an approximation calculated from counts of ranges

- The average abandonment rate reported ranged from 5-6%
- The average speed to answer varies from 27-28 seconds.

Average* Abandonment Percentage



Average* Speed of Answer (ASA) in Seconds



Q34 In 2023, what was your call center's average speed of answer (ASA)? Please answer in seconds for each of the following:

Q35 In 2023, what was the average abandonment rate? Please round to the nearest percentage for each category and pick one response from each column.

* Average is an approximation calculated from counts of ranges

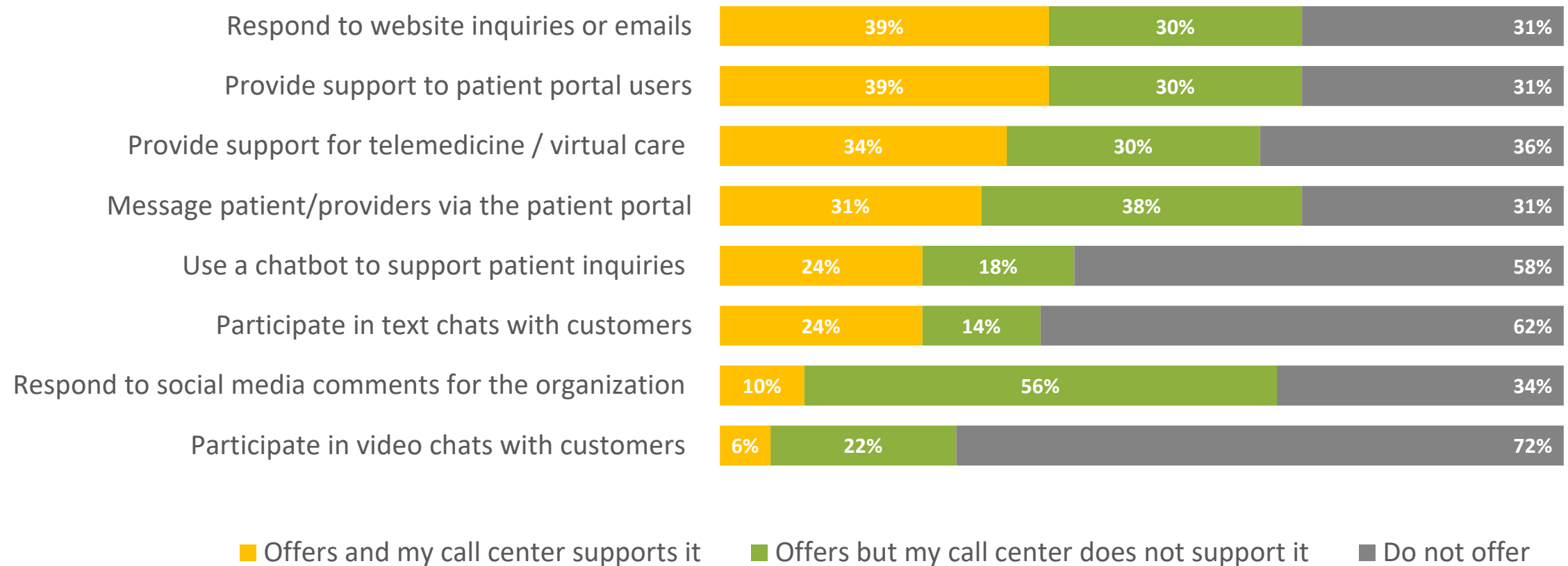
Infrastructure

Technology and Software Used in Healthcare Call Centers



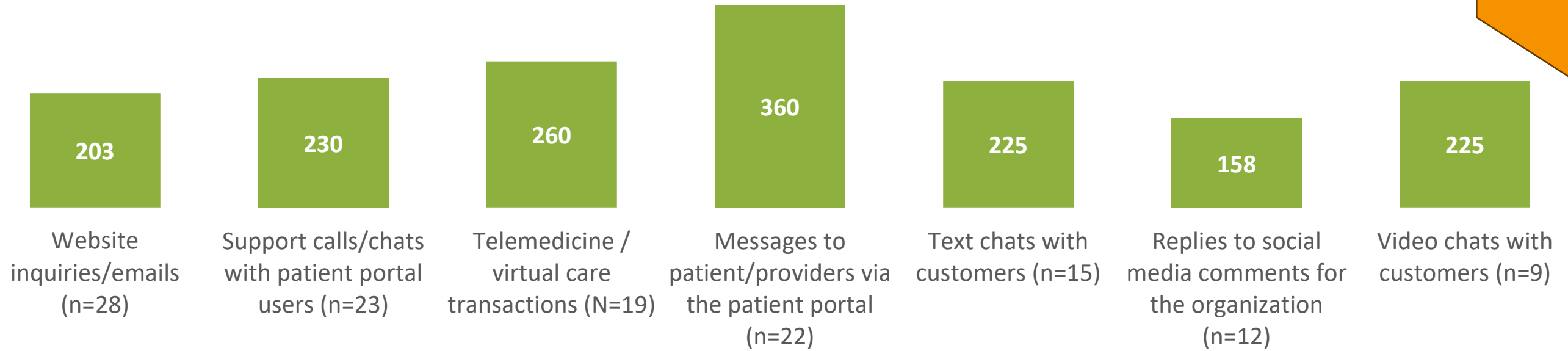
The most common non-voice channels that are supported by the responding call centers include responding to website inquiries, providing support to patient portal users/telemedicine and messaging patients and providers.

Non-Voice Channels Used In the Organization



Patient portal communications have the highest monthly transaction volume.

Average* Monthly Transaction Volume by Non-Voice Channels



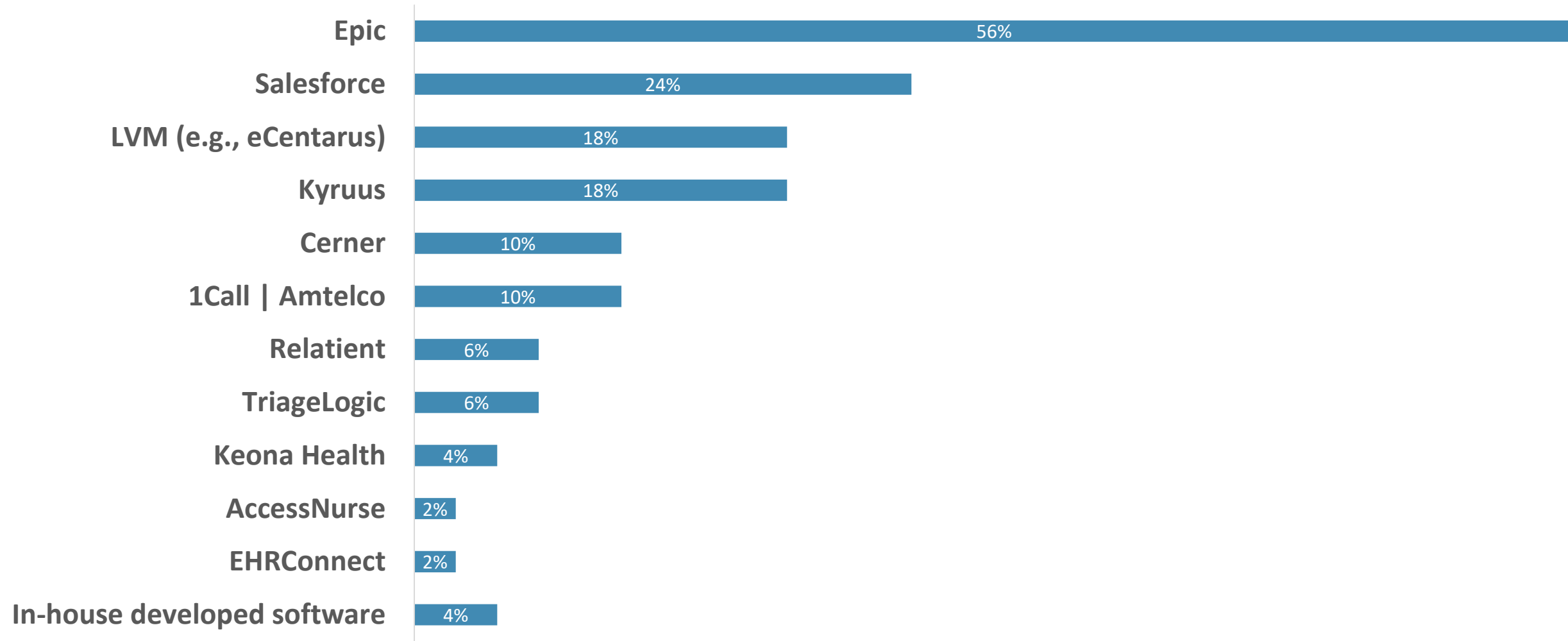
Non-voice transactions are on the rise since the 2021 survey.

Q31 For each of the following non-voice channels, please estimate your typical average monthly transaction volume?

* Average is an approximation calculated from counts of ranges

Epic is the most common supporting software.

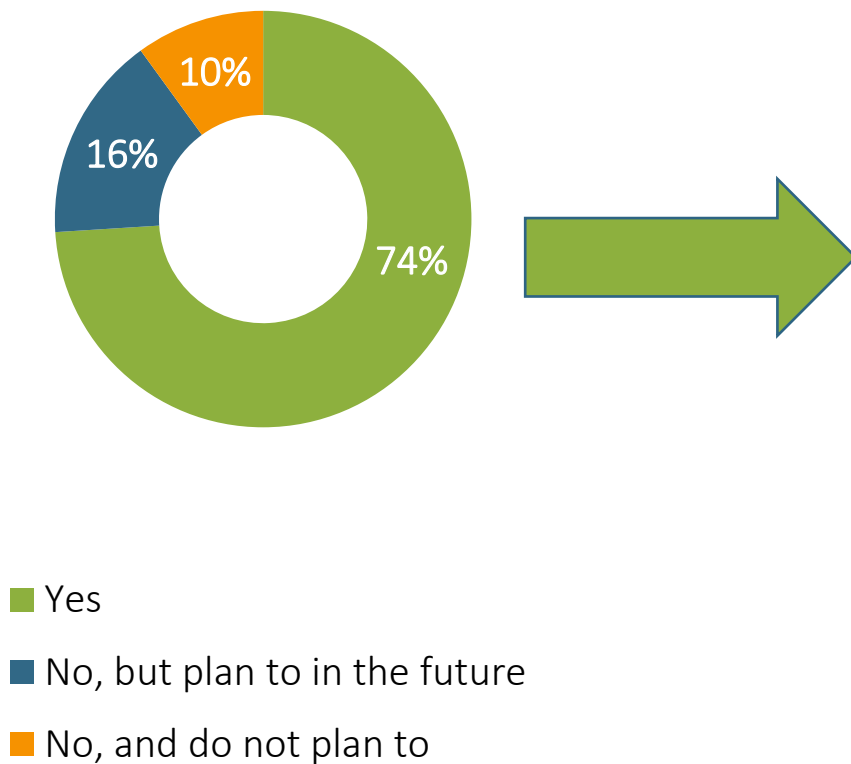
Software Supporting the Call Center



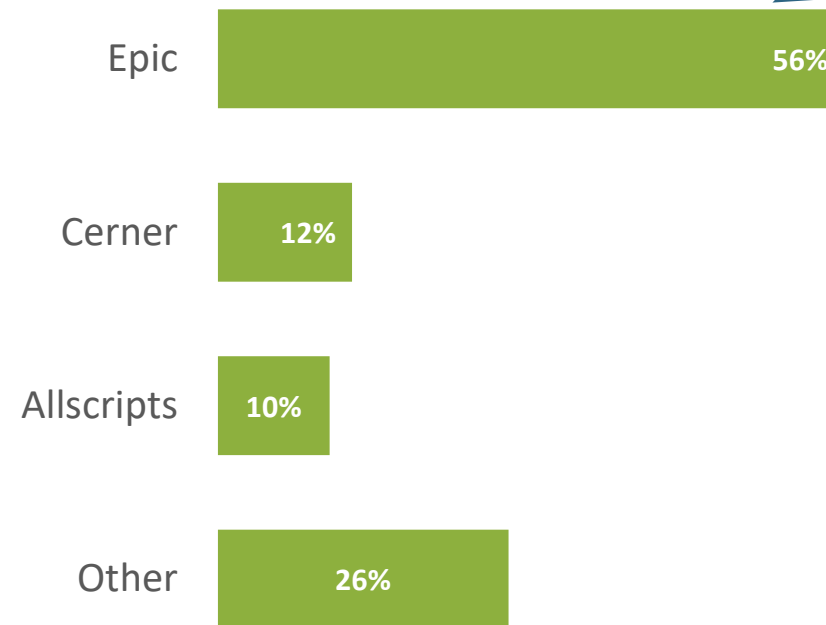
Other Mentions: 30%

Most call centers integrate with the organization's EMR, or plan to in the future.

Interface with the Organization's Electronic Medical Record



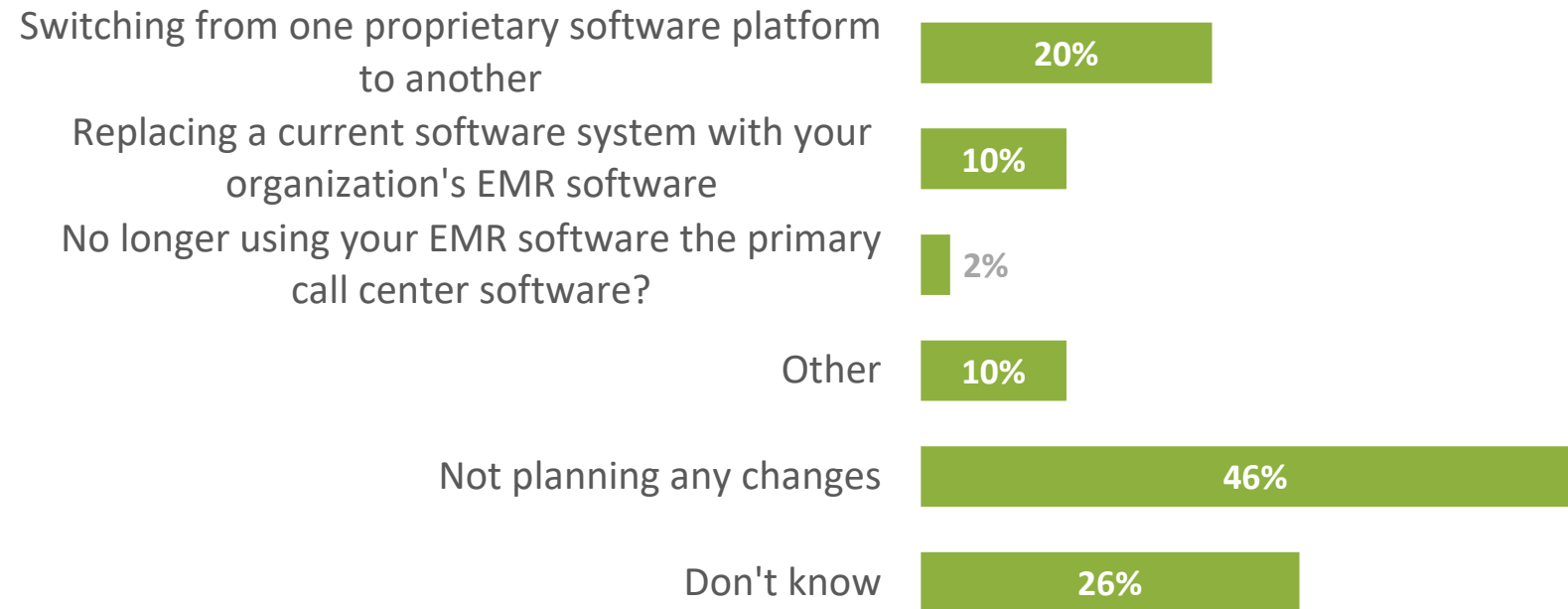
Which EMR?



Epic dominates in call center integration

Over 30% of respondents are contemplating a change to their call center software.

Software Changes Contemplating



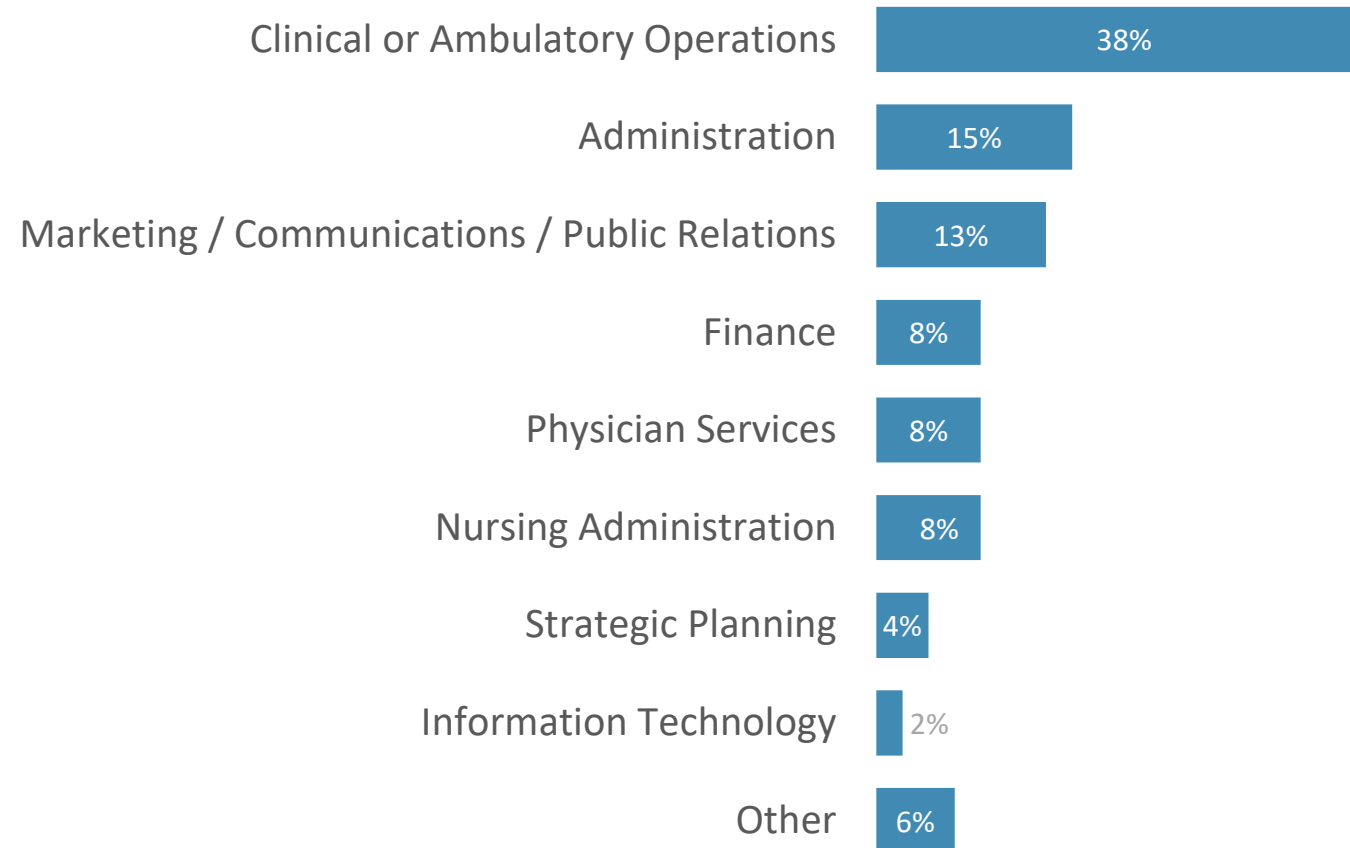
Performance

Reporting Relationships and Performance Benchmarks



Clinical/Ambulatory Operations is the most common reporting department for Contact Centers.

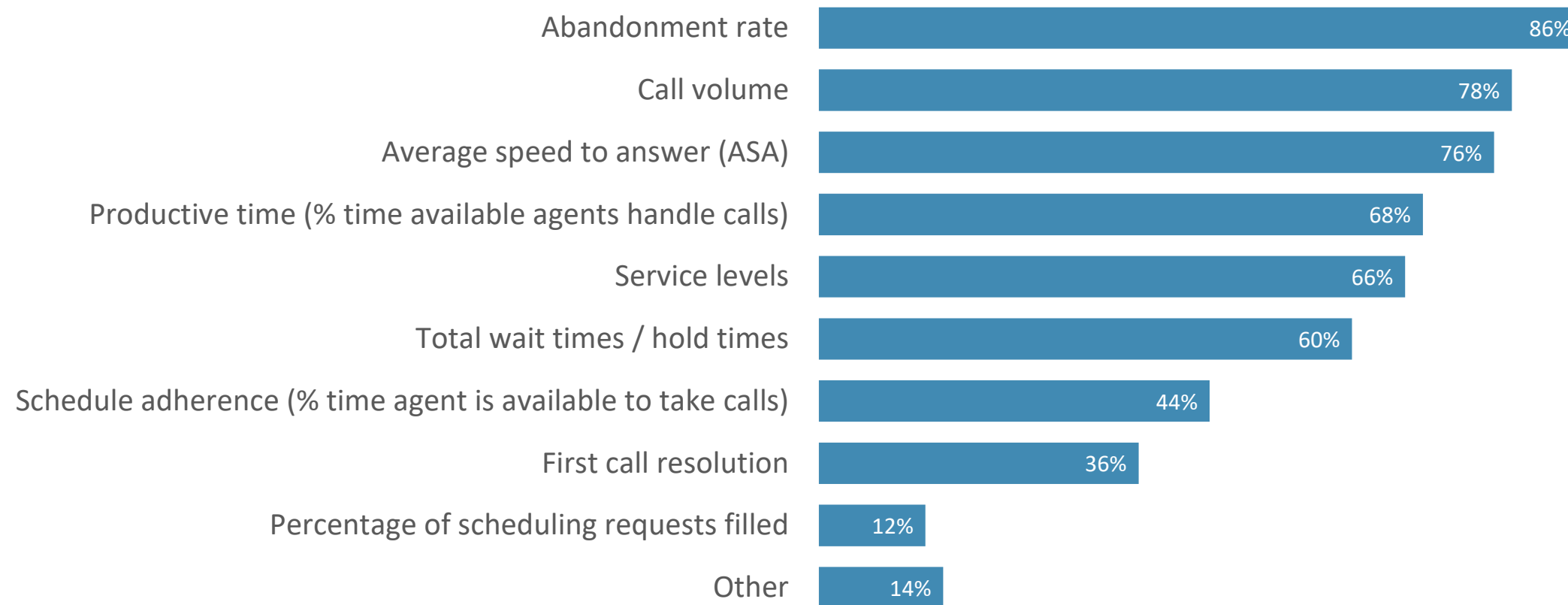
Reporting Relationships for the Contact Center



Marketing as the predominate reporting relationship has seen a decline in three years.

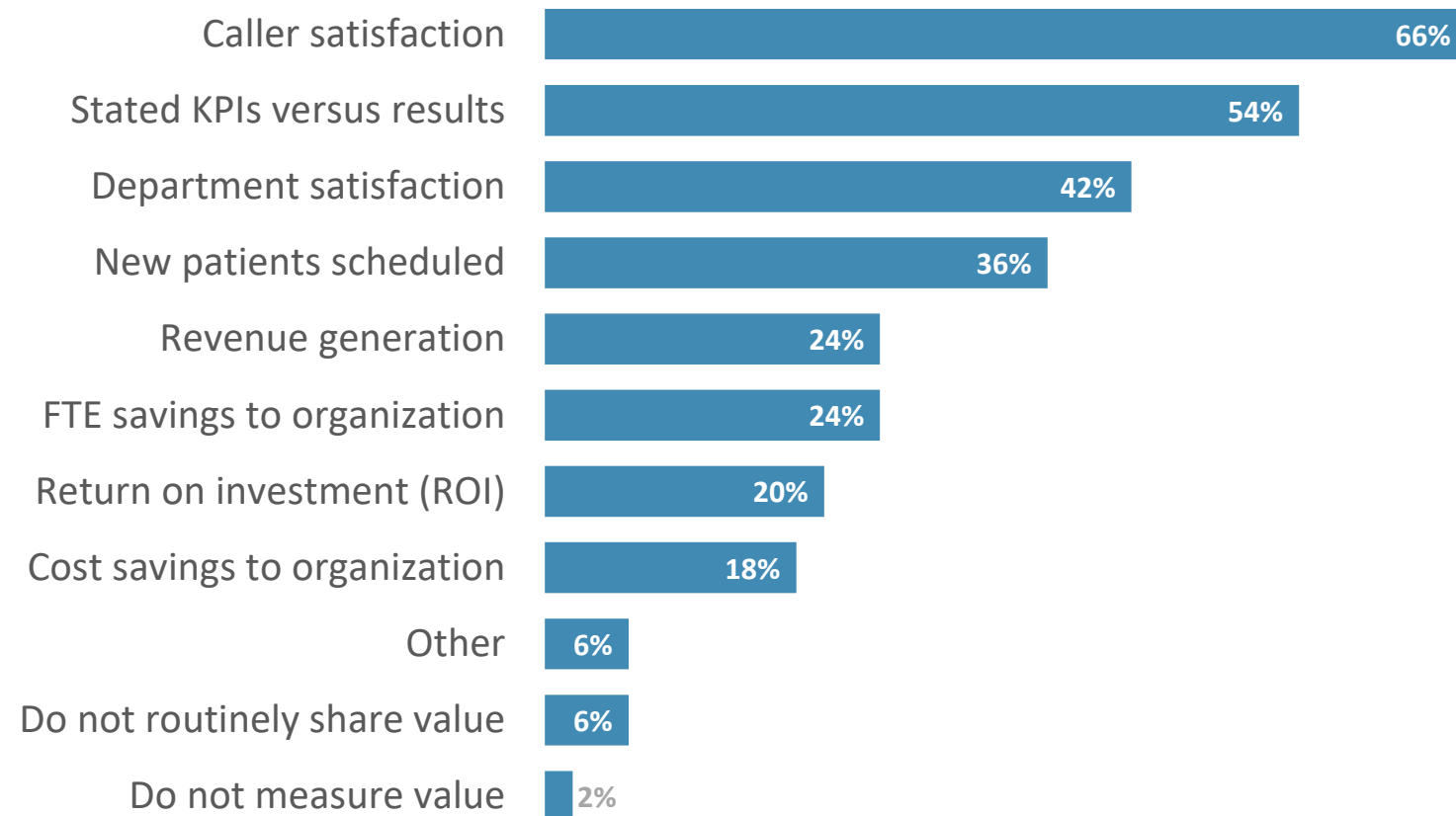
Typical call center metrics continue to be the measures used to demonstrate performance.

Measures Used To Demonstrate Call Center Performance



When showing the value of the call center to senior leaders, call centers depend on satisfaction and KPI metrics.

Measures Used To Demonstrate Call Center Value to Senior Management and Stakeholders



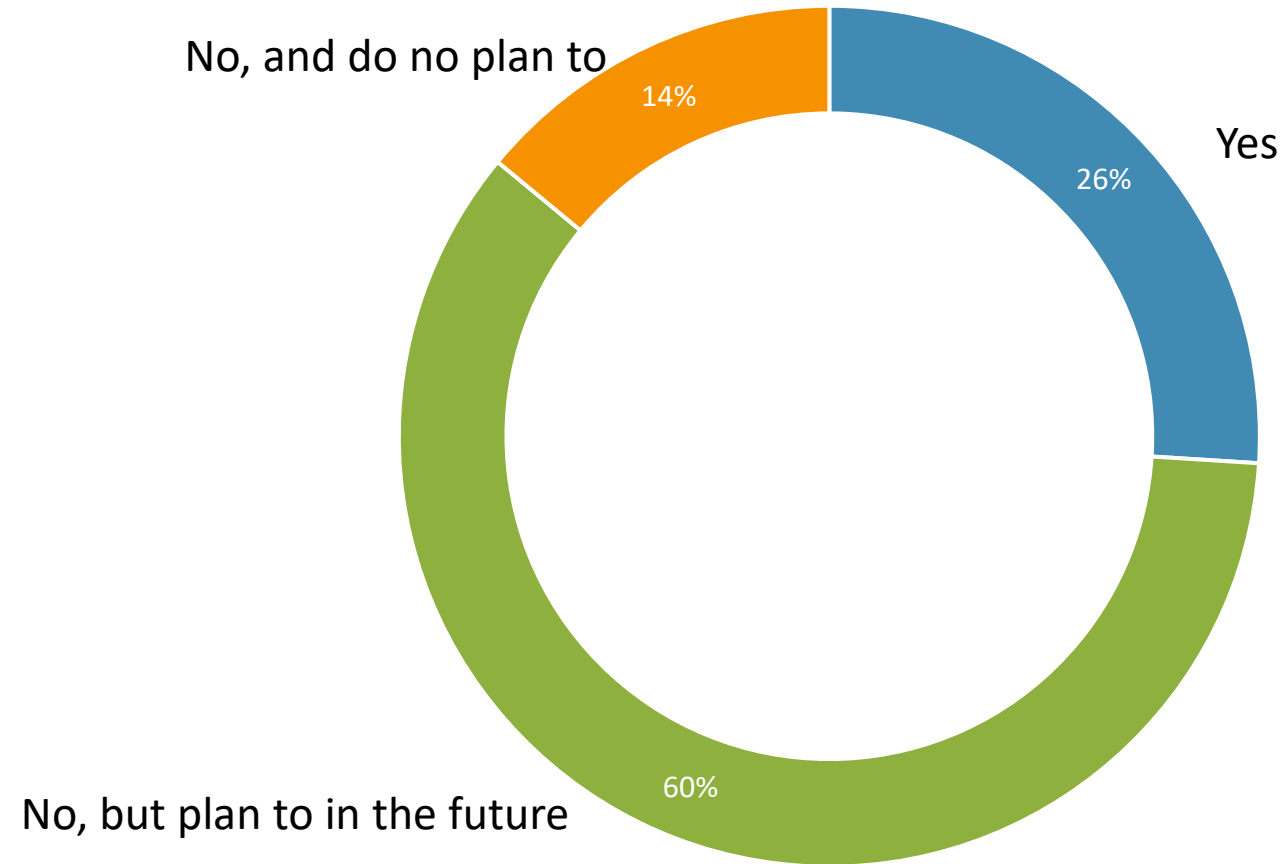
Q50

Earlier you identified how you measure the operational performance of the contact center. Now, we'd like to ask you how you demonstrate to the executive team the value provided by the call center to your health system. Mark all the ways you routinely show senior management and key stakeholders the value of the call center. n=50



Surprisingly, over half of the responding call centers don't currently measure their ROI.

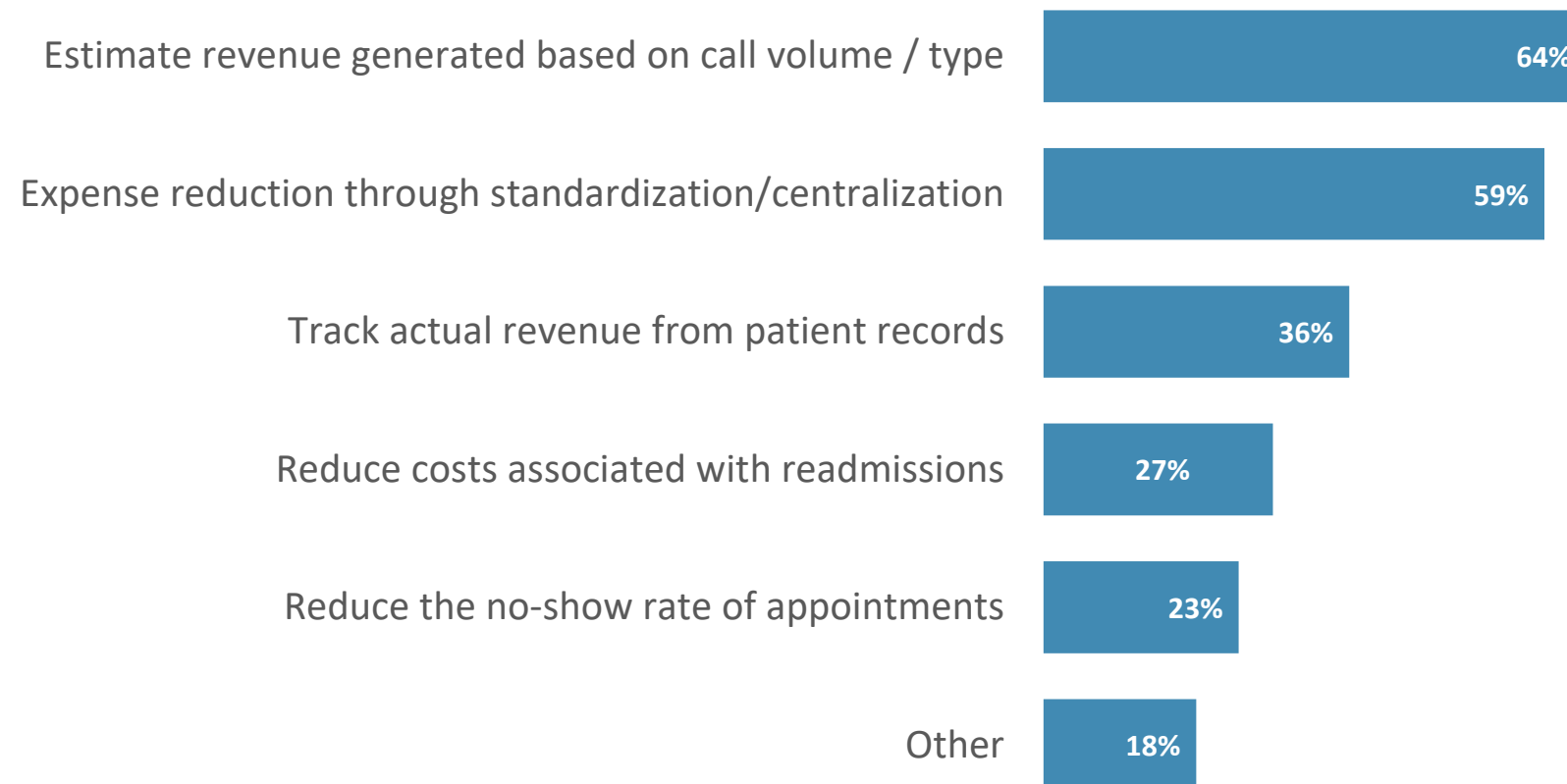
Do You Measure Call Center ROI?



Measuring ROI generated by a call center has declined in the last three years and is a huge miss.

Of those who measure ROI, typical methods include estimated revenue, expense reduction and actual revenue generated.

How Call Centers Measure Financial ROI (among those who measure it)



Q52 If so, how do you measure financial ROI? Mark all that apply. If you do not measure ROI, just check that code and continue. n=22

Top Three Challenges Faced by Call Centers

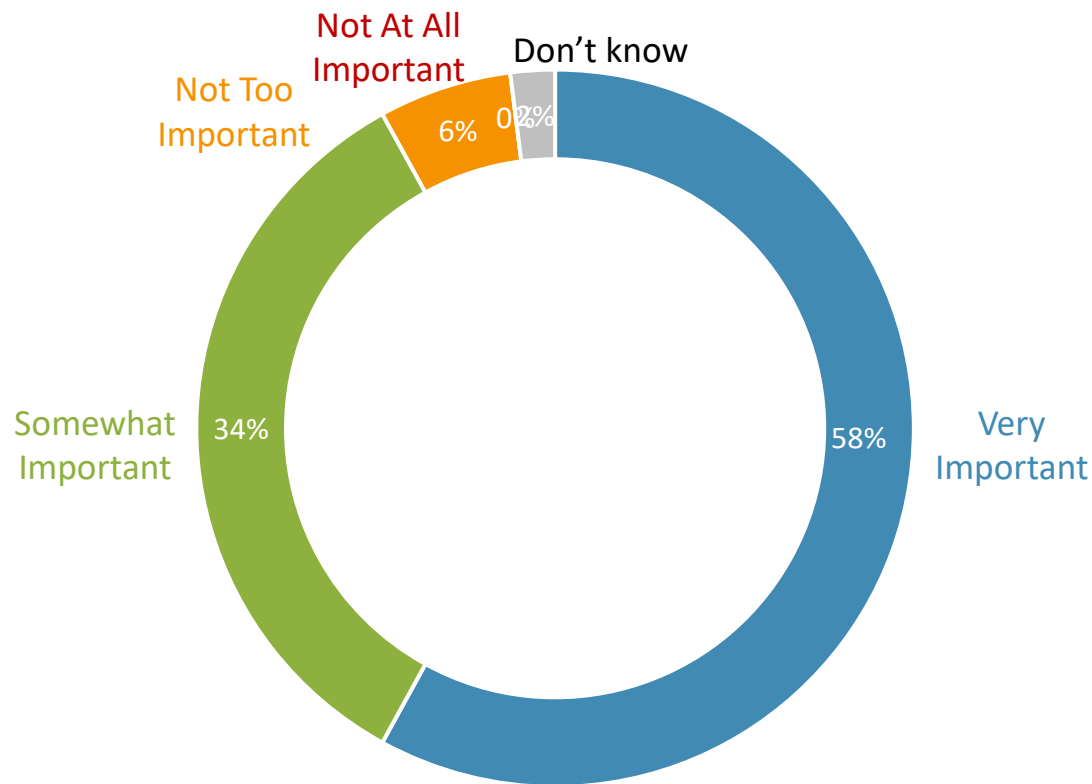


When asked to identify the top three challenges for today's call center, the primary themes included:

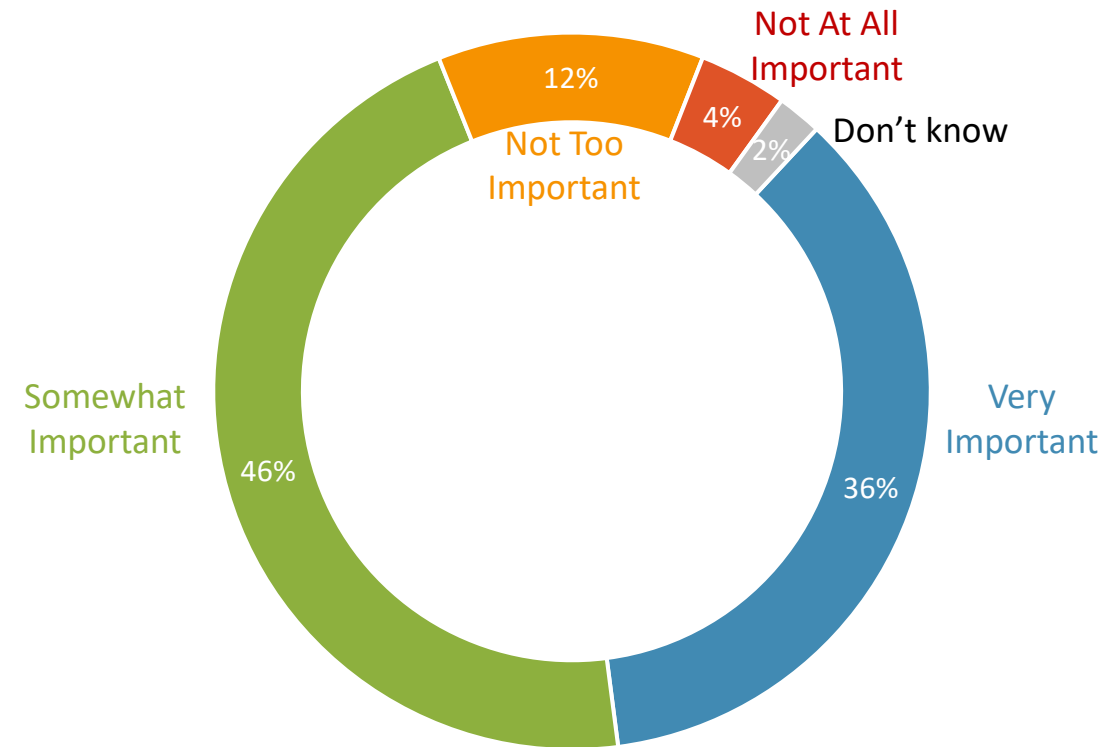
- 1) demonstrating value*
- 2) securing the resources*
- 3) managing service and volume growth.*

Over 90% of call center leaders believe the call center is somewhat/very important to the organization, but less feel that it as important to executive stakeholders.

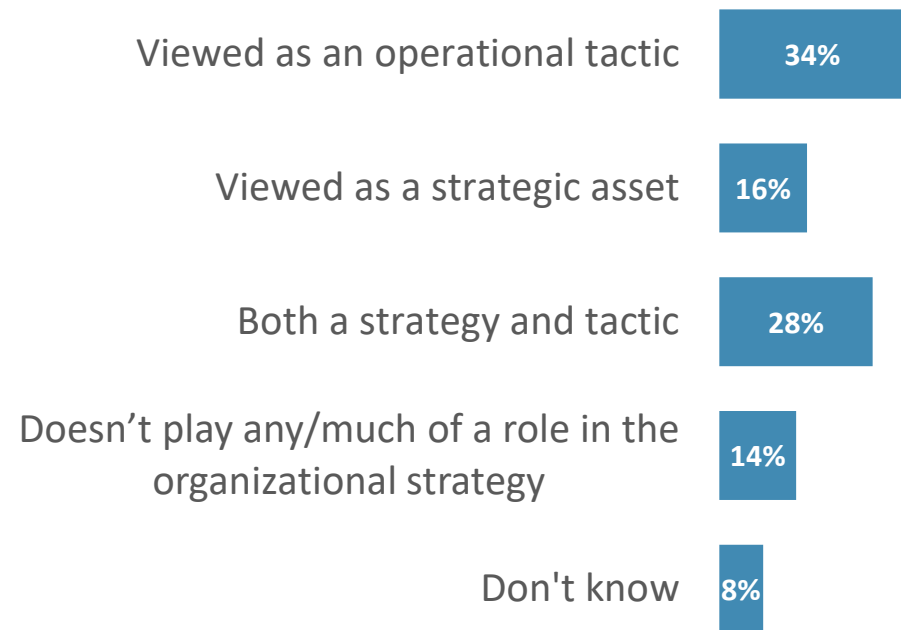
Strategic Importance of the Call Center to the **Organization**



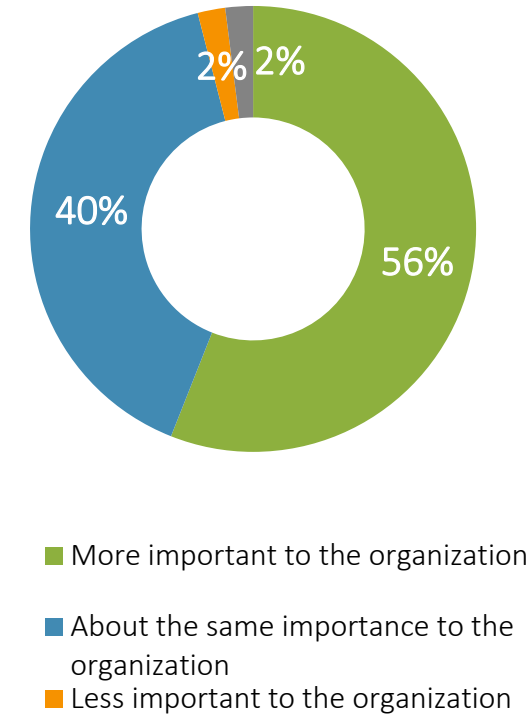
Strategic Importance of the Call Center to **Executive Management**



How Contact Center is Included in the Organization's Strategic Plan and Initiatives by the Purpose of the Call Center



Importance of Call Center Over the Next Two years



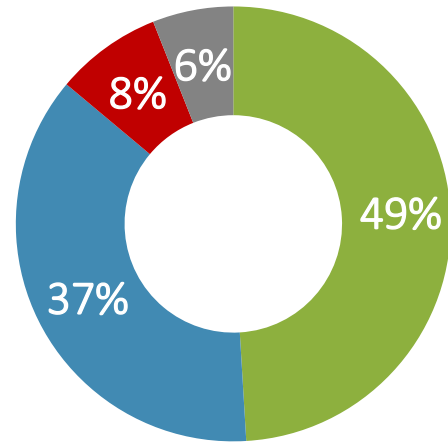
Q48 How is your call or contact center included in the organization's strategic plan and initiatives? n=50

Q49 Over the next two years, do you think your call center will be ...n=50

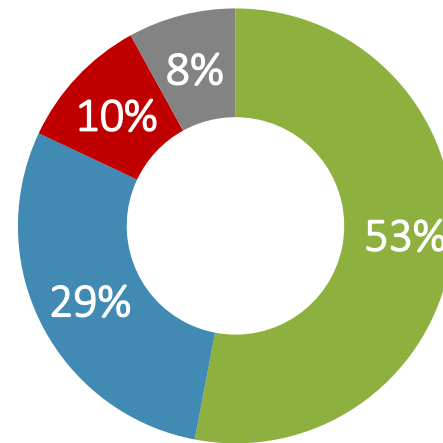
Overall, there is an expected growth in budgets, staff and services.

Resource and Service Expectations Over the Next Two Years

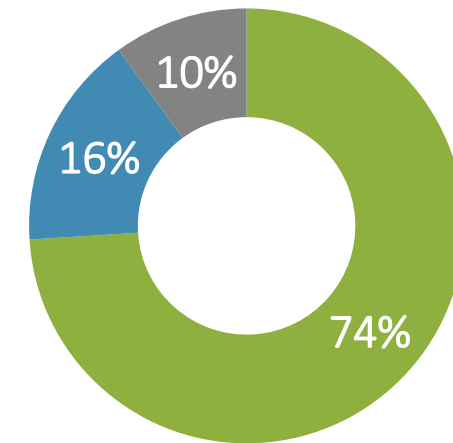
Call Center Budget



Call Center Staff Levels



Service Offerings



■ Expect it to increase ■ Expect it to stay about the same ■ Expect it to decrease ■ Don't know

Q53 Over the next two years, do you expect the following items will increase, decrease or remain the same? n=49

Improvement and Growth Priorities

A Visual Summary of Desired Call Center Improvements



The One Addition to Grow Your Call Center

“

That we have the ability to make appointments real time virtually using live chat features.
 Grow our contact center to house any needs for division that can be done remotely.
 More triage training opportunities
 Measure of caller satisfaction specific to department/call center experience.
 Ability to utilize technology to meet patients where they are.
 Symptom Screening software
 2nd level triage, extend triage services to UPH. Shared daytime triage
 Growth in physician referral services.
 A quality team to help with QA's
 Analytic tools that would provide insight on what most patients need and if they vary in different times of the year
 my Work force management team and reporting dashboards
 Roll out Rx Renewal services to all FM and IM providers. Centralize and standardize all Post Discharge Follow Up Calls.
 More specialties onboarded for scheduling
 Adding triage and other clinical functions. Centralize current non-centralized areas.
 Rx refill expansion- ePA management
 Continue to embrace technology and create guidelines and boundaries for AI.
 AI - this is going to help us to deliver more with less resources.
 Secondary medical and or behavioral triage via telehealth for calls needing additional triage
 data driven emergency preparedness planning to support our organization through surge events
 Additional functionality that includes, Chat bot, automated outreach, etc.
 AI to better direct pts, automation of communication to offices for quicker patient service.
 More community providers, to be the largest pediatric telephone triage center in the North Texas Region

”

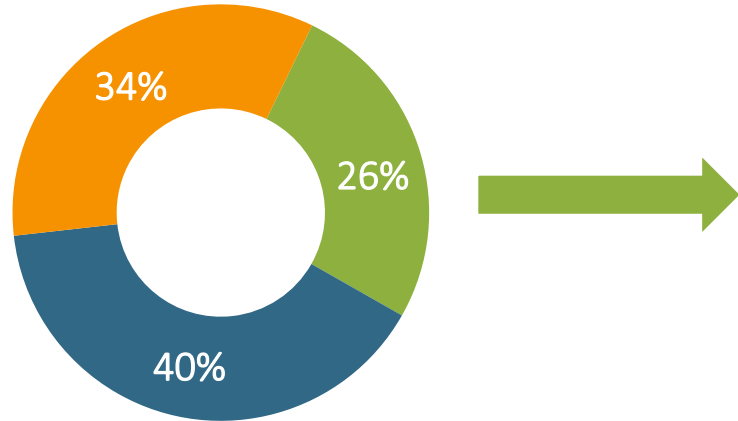
Artificial Intelligence

The Impact of AI on Call Centers



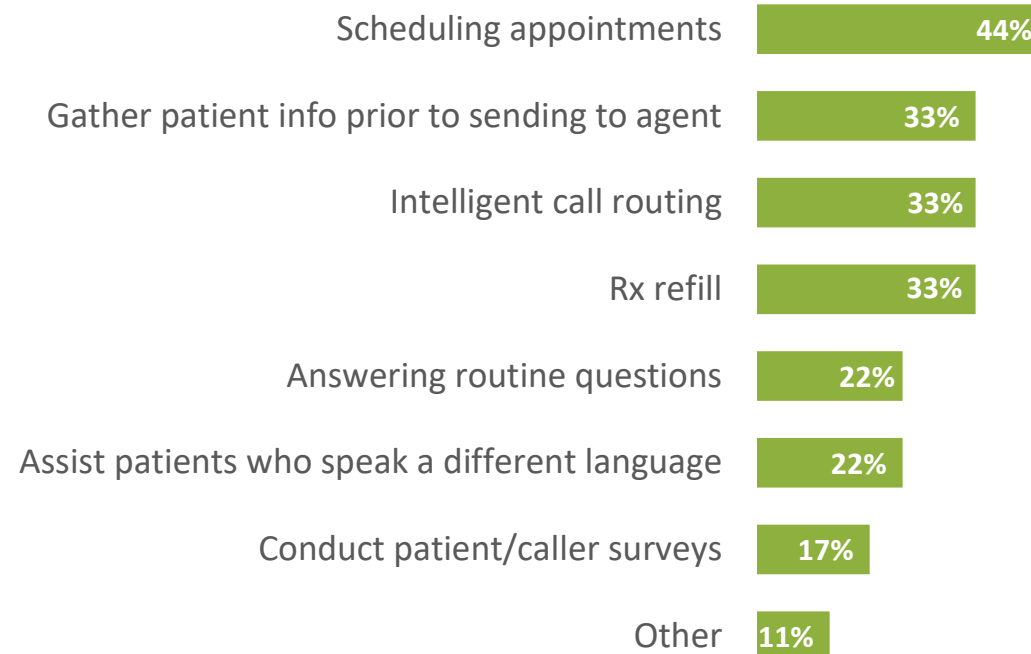
Only a quarter of call centers currently use AI technology to enhance service options.

Use of AI Technology to Enhance Self-Service Options



- Yes
- Not presently, but actively looking into it
- No

Use of AI Services



Q32 Does your contact center use any artificial intelligence technology to enhance self-service options or to speed service to callers/patients? (e.g., provide quick answers to routine questions, support appointment scheduling or changes, help callers evaluate symptoms and choose care options, etc.) n=50

Q33 How does your contact center use artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance self-service options or to speed service to callers/patients? Please mark all that apply. n=18

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Now in its 28th year, Greystone.Net provides:

- **Professional services** including call center and access-related consulting, web/digital strategy consulting, vendor selection assistance, and more
- **Professional development options** including the well-known and highly-regarded annual Healthcare Internet Conference (HCIC) and the Backstage Pass webinar series
- **Solutions and products**, including gSightSM, our voice of the customer research product, and Greystone Engage, a benchmarking tool, both designed to help marketers benefit from the rapidly-evolving trends and technologies in the healthcare MarTech space, and Greystone Connect to help vendors connect with marketing professionals in healthcare.

Greystone.Net has worked with hundreds of hospitals and health systems as they strive to develop, implement and integrate interactive marketing strategies, including call centers and access solutions. We add valued strategic thinking to digital healthcare. And we continue to develop new strategies and products to enable healthcare organizations to establish and grow their brand in an environment where consumers expect 24/7 access, information and service.

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