

REPORTING · DIAGNOSTICS · 2026

Five Numbers Your Phone System Should Tell You

Five questions to put to whatever system you already have. Each answer is something you can act on this week. If the system cannot answer at all, that is the finding.

The monthly report looks fine because averages are built to look fine. An average wait is dominated by the easy calls and describes nobody. A good daily figure routinely hides two broken half hours. Ask these five instead.

The five questions

Ask for this	Not this	What the answer tells you
1. Who gave up, and when? Abandons, bucketed by how long they waited.	A single abandonment percentage.	Under 30 seconds is a design problem, usually silence in the queue. Past three minutes is a staffing problem. Australian self reported figures for 2026 sit near a 9% average and a 5% median.
2. What did the worst served tenth get? The 90th percentile wait.	The average wait.	The average describes nobody. The 90th percentile is the experience that generates complaints, and it is usually several times the average.
3. How did we do by half hour? The day broken into 30 minute intervals.	A daily or weekly total.	A respectable day almost always hides two bad intervals. They are nearly always the morning open and just after lunch, and both are fixable by rostering rather than hiring.
4. Who rang us twice? Repeat callers within 48 hours.	First call resolution claimed by staff.	The cheapest honest proxy for whether problems are actually being solved. A second call usually means the first one produced nothing.
5. How hard is the team really working? Occupancy, meaning talk time as a share of logged in time.	Calls handled per person.	Above roughly 85% is not efficiency. It is a queue with no absorption capacity, and the next sick day becomes a bad week.

If your system cannot answer these, that is the answer

Every one of the five is standard reporting, not contact centre exotica. A platform that cannot produce them is not giving you the information you need to manage the phones, and **the reporting is the problem, not the team**. Ask your provider for all five in writing before you accept that the numbers do not exist. If the honest answer is that the platform cannot do it, that belongs in your next renewal conversation.

■ What to do this week

- 1 Ask for question 1 and question 3 first. Between them they explain most of what feels wrong, and they are the two most likely to already exist.
- 2 Look at the two worst half hours. Check the roster against them before you consider headcount.
- 3 Put something in the queue that is not silence. A position announcement or a callback offer changes the sub 30 second abandons immediately.
- 4 Count repeat callers for one week by hand if the system will not. Two hundred calls is a morning of tallying and it is usually the most surprising number of the five.
- 5 Write down today's figures before you change anything. Without a baseline every later claim about improvement is an argument.

■ If you are a team of four

- All five still apply, and three of them matter more, not less, because there is no slack anywhere.
- Occupancy is the one to watch. A four person team at 85% has no absorption capacity at all.
- You do not need a contact centre licence for this. You need a system that will report honestly.

■ The traps in each number

- An average that excludes abandoned calls flatters itself. Ask whether abandons are in or out.
- Service level measured against a target nobody chose is theatre. Pick the target first.
- Occupancy computed on scheduled hours rather than logged in time reads far lower than reality.

This is the summary. The guide has the detail.

The full article works through each question, what a good answer looks like, the Australian benchmarks, and the version for a small team. If you would rather talk it through, call **1300 663 222** or visit vocphone.com/about/contact-us.