National Association of Call Centers
In Queue

The fun, informative, and unique newsletter for the call center industry

Welcome to the July 2017 issue of the NACC In Queue newsletter!

Is Your Contact Center Future Ready?

Erica Marois, Community Strategist, ICMI, estrother@icmi.com

According to Accenture, 45% of customers are willing to pay more for better customer service. Furthermore, recent ICMI research affirms that more than half of contact center leaders believe customer experience is now the single greatest competitive differentiator businesses can leverage. Customer support is increasing in importance while continuing to grow in complexity. How will this impact your career as a contact center leader? Is your team ready for what's next?

In January, ICMI asked industry experts to weigh in with their bold predictions for the year ahead. What trends did they believe will shape life in the contact center? The experience economy, the uptick of chatbots, and a heightened focus on employee engagement were three of the top-rated trends.

As Sarah Reed, Editor of Relate by Zendesk, puts it, "brands will stop looking at their closest competitor for what's next, what's important, and what's relevant. Instead, they'll look to the companies driving innovation and customer experience. Customers have expectations and they will transfer to you."

It's true. One great customer experience raises the bar for every other business a customer interacts with, and as brands like Amazon continue to innovate and technology continues to evolve, expectations will only rise in 2018.

The future is now and ICMI can help you prepare. ICMI Contact Center Demo will empower you with the knowledge, tools, and resources to achieve and exceed today's expectations, as well as the future expectations of your contact center.

Taking place this September 25-27 at The Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, ICMI Contact Center Demo is a favorite event for customer service professionals and is an essential forum for an educational experience.

Whether you're a CTO, Senior Level VP, new manager, or frontline agent, there's something for you at this conference. Experience powerful networking, hands-on workshops, exclusive behind-the-scenes local contact center tours, technology demos, and more! Every aspect of the program this year is designed to help you discover what's trending in customer expectations and technology requirements, learn from and network with respected experts, and meet valuable long-term industry contacts.

Are you in? Register by July 31st to save $300 off any conference pass. Bonus: use promo code **NACC** to take advantage of an additional $100 in savings! After you register, be sure to connect with us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. You can follow our official event hashtag, #CCDemo, for conference updates, resources, and the chance to connect with other attendees.

Questions? Feel free to reach out! estrother@icmi.com. I hope to see you in Las Vegas!

Employee Engagement Dominates Early Survey Results

Paul Stockford. Research Director. NACC and Chief Analyst, Saddletree Research, Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org

Although we're only about halfway through this year's survey process, I thought the early results were interesting enough to start talking about. The results will be more interesting, however, the greater the participation we have from the industry. We would really appreciate it if our In Queue subscribers would take a quick detour to https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NACC-2017 and complete the survey. Not only will we be very

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Pearls Of Wisdom

"Those who don't believe in magic will never find it."
~ Roald Dahl

Reports From NACC

The NACC has been burning the midnight oil and typing until our fingers are sore to bring out reports to our members. Each is listed below. If you are interested to see what we are writing about, click on the links below and download the executive summary of each. If you like what you see, join the NACC so that you can view these reports and others that will be coming out soon on our website. These reports will ensure that you know the latest trends in the industry.

- NICE Introduces Nexidia Analytics: Omni-Channel Analytics For The Contact Center: January 2017
- Text Analytics Market Update: April 2016
- Kodak Alaris Launches AI Foundry To Deliver Artificial Intelligence-Based Solutions For The Contact Center: November 2015
- HireIQ Candidate Optimizer Disrupts The Status Quo, Powers Revolution In Customer Service Human Capital Management: May 2015
- Verint Jumps Into The Gamification Game: April 2015

quick detour to https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NACC-2017 and complete the survey. Not only will we be very grateful, the results shared here will be more useful for everyone. Those who have completed the survey have assured me that it can easily be completed in less than 10 minutes.

Not surprisingly, employee engagement still dominates the concerns of those with boots on the ground in the North American contact center industry, and for good reason. So far, 48 percent of survey participants intend to hire new headcount during the next 18 months. While overall agent headcount is set to increase in the year ahead, 39 percent of survey respondents consider agent attrition/turnover to be a major problem that needs to be immediately addressed.

Employee engagement is shaping up to be a major theme for 2017 and through 2018. So far, 81 percent of survey participants have stated that Employee Engagement is a highly important component of their operational strategy, and this is starting to manifest itself in a number of ways. For example, 20 percent of your peers who have responded to our survey are using gamification as a means to increase job satisfaction and agent retention. If gamification is in your plans for the next 18 months, you're not alone. 40 percent of our survey participants will be implementing gamification before the end of 2018.

If you are among those customer service professionals who are concerned about employee engagement in the near future, you'll be interested to know that 17 percent of your peers are using agent/employee communities or forums to keep their agents connected to the workplace and to their fellow agents. 12 percent use agent chat rooms to encourage communication between agents and engagement among employees. Beyond these numbers, 26 percent are now using both communities and chat rooms as part of their employee engagement strategy.

Keep in mind that these are early results and are bound to change the greater the survey participation is. If you've found this look at your colleagues' and peers' attitudes and intentions valuable in your own decision-making and strategy formation, please consider joining us as a survey participant. We'd really appreciate your help as we greatly value your opinion as a means to better understanding the contact center industry. Please take a quick detour to https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NACC-2017 and give us less than 10 minutes of your time. In return, we'll continue to report the most interesting results in this newsletter. Thank you in advance.

Workforce Optimization In The Cloud

Paul Stockford, Research Director, NACC and Chief Analyst, Saddletree Research, Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org

If you're among the thousands of customer service professionals in the industry who still have questions about if, when, and why you should consider moving contact center applications to the cloud, I have another resource to offer.

Last month I participated in a webinar sponsored by NICE, the subject of which was the if, when, and why you should consider moving your workforce optimization (WFO) solutions to the cloud. This webinar will save you many hours of Google searches and sales presentations. You can find a recording of the webinar here.

As the industry continues its march to the cloud, whether moving the entire contact center infrastructure to the cloud, or moving in the direction of hybrid solutions where some applications and data reside in the cloud and some reside on premises behind the firewall, the trend toward the cloud contact center is real. We know your time is limited and valuable, so we created this webinar to provide you with what you need to know in a short period of time. Check it out.

What's So Artificial About Artificial Intelligence?

Paul Stockford, Research Director, NACC and Chief Analyst, Saddletree Research, Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org

If you're wondering what the hype around artificial intelligence (AI) is all about, you're not alone. Not only is AI in industry news on an almost daily basis, there seems to be a great deal of latitude in terms of what actually qualifies as AI. Is artificial intelligence the same as machine learning? To what extent will artificial intelligence be able to replicate human decision-making capabilities?

If this is of interest to you and you've got 10 minutes, give a listen to this podcast I recorded with Tobias Goebel of Aspect. Tobias is one of my go-to guys for gaining a better understanding of emerging technologies. In this recording, Tobias doesn't pull any podcast punches in laying out exactly what AI is and isn't, and beyond that, why any of us should care. Download it to listen to later or give it a quick listen the next time you're taking a 10-minute desk break. I guarantee you'll learn something about AI in exchange for the 10 minutes it will take to listen to this podcast.

Call Center Comics

If you like this comic and would like to see more, write Ozzie at callcentercomics@yahoo.com and visit his website at http://callcentercomics.com or just click on the comic to tak you to his page. The NACC appreciates Ozzie letting us use some of his comics in our newsletter.

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Offers a job board where top employers & candidates go to find their next call center rock-star! **Click here for more...**

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