

NACC

National Association of Call Centers

In Queue

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

Volume 7, Issue 4 - May 4, 2012



Our Contact Info:

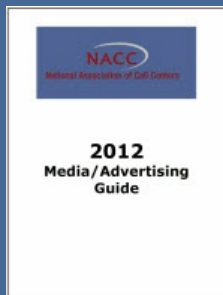
Paul Stockford
Research Director
National Association of Call Centers
100 South 22nd Avenue
Hattiesburg MS 39401
Tel: 480.922.5949
Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org
<http://www.nationalcallcenters.org>

Circulation

In Queue circulation 25,632

Advertise with Us

Click on the image below to view the NACC Advertising Page where you can view our channels and prices.



To advertise with the NACC, please contact the NACC at:
Tel: 601.447.8300
Fax: 601.266.5087
E-mail: Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org

Underwriters

All leading call center companies and suppliers should examine the NACC Underwriting opportunity in 2011 as evidence of their dedication to the growth of the call center industry. See the [NACC Advertising Page](#) for more information.

Share the Knowledge

Send this newsletter to colleagues by clicking "[Forward this message to a friend](#)".

Guests Galore!

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

In this issue we feature work from two guest authors whose work we think you will find both informative and useful.

First up is Kevin Simms of Enghouse Interactive. The NACC has received several inquiries regarding Enghouse Interactive since we started publishing their material in our *In Queue* newsletter and sent information to our members and subscribers on their behalf. As a result, we asked Kevin to write a brief article to introduce you to the company you very likely already know! His article is below and includes a link to the page where you can enter to win a chance to win a tropical vacation giveaway. If you haven't already entered this giveaway, go to http://info.enghouseinteractive.com/TropicalPromo_NACC-alt2 and enter now. Somebody's got to win this tropical vacation. It might as well be you!

Next up is Michele Rowan. In case you don't already know Michele, she is the leading industry expert on the subject of work-at-home contact center agents. Besides leading workshops and seminars on the subject all over the country, she also finds time to publish articles on at-home agent strategies and we are fortunate to have one of those articles in this month's issue of *In Queue*. If you have at-home agents, or are considering deploying at-home agents, you will find a wealth of information on her website, <http://www.athomecustomerscontacts.com/>.

The "New" Brand You Probably Already Know

Kevin Simms, Senior Marketing Manager, Enghouse Interactive
ksimms@enghouse.com

In recent months, NACC In-Queue readers like you have probably seen Enghouse Interactive mentioned in various articles and white paper offerings. But you may be saying to yourself, "who or what is Enghouse Interactive?" The name may be new, but chances are that you already know one or more of the interaction management brands that make up Enghouse Interactive. This article will provide a high-level view of the who, what and why behind the new brand you probably already know.

If you have anything to do with contact center and/or IVR, you may know Syntellect or CosmoCom premise and cloud-based contact center suites. If you've looked at IP call recording, you may already be familiar with the Telrex family of quality management solutions. And, if you use an attendant/operator console for a Cisco or Avaya Blue (Nortel) PBX you are probably deploying an Arc or Datapulse console or directory services solution respectively. Until recently, these brands you might already know operated independently of each other for the most part, until their parent company, Enghouse System Ltd based in Toronto, decided it was time to combine their strategic acquisitions of interaction management technology under one brand to offer customers and channels a broad portfolio of solutions spanning structured, unstructured and self-service interactions (more on these in a moment).

And so Enghouse Interactive was formally born to provide software and expertise to help organizations optimize the value of their customer interactions. Now a single, global organization, Enghouse Interactive delivers flexible and scalable solutions that will meet a company's communications needs across their organization, including: global communications management, contact center solutions, attendant consoles, IVR/self-service and call recording and quality management tools.

By uniting the once separate companies under a single brand, Enghouse Interactive is better able to address the current and future needs of their end users and channel partners. The company's comprehensive portfolio of flexible communications solutions can be easily deployed and modified to address a variety of customer interaction needs. The interaction management suite of applications works well together or as standalone solutions. Mixed telephony switch support enables deployment across a multitude of telephone systems and implementation models, ranging from on premise to cloud-based to cover the full spectrum of customer interactions.

So what are the elements of "full spectrum" that we mentioned above? **Structured** interactions are typically higher-volume, lower-value communications handled through a contact center environment and normally involve a defined process, such as information provision or a financial transaction. **Unstructured** interactions typically enter organizations through the "front door" via an operator or attendant and tend to be more consultative in nature with less defined caller requirements. These interactions can be quite valuable, so it is

Quote

"The world is filled with willing people; some willing to work, the rest willing to let them."

-Robert Frost

Reports from the 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.

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 2nd Quarter 2011 Data](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 1st Quarter 2011 Data](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 4th Quarter 2010 Data](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 3rd Quarter 2010 Data](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 2nd Quarter 2010 Data](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 1st Quarter 2010 Data](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 4th Quarter 2009 Data](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 3rd Quarter 2009 Data](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 2nd Quarter 2009 Data](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 1st Quarter 2009 Data](#)

[North American Contact Center Industry 2008-2009: The Year in Review and a Look Ahead](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 4th Quarter 2008 Data](#)

[60 Ideas in 60 Minutes: 2008 Session](#)

[60 Ideas in 60 Minutes: 2007 Session](#)

...essential that they are processed efficiently and professionally to enhance and maximize the customer experience. Finally, **self-service** is defined as interactions that are generally serviced through an automated resource, such as IVR, and enable customers to efficiently manage their own interactions entirely, or provide the front end to pass information to live agents or attendants for more efficient and satisfying structured or unstructured communications.

No matter how customers communicate with a company, these touch points and interactions need to be streamlined to: improve efficiency, maximize revenues, optimize resources, improve service levels and retain and grow customers. That is exactly what Enghouse Interactive is here to help with. You can learn more about Enghouse at www.EnghouseInteractive.com.

Finally, if you haven't had an opportunity to take advantage of the complimentary download of the **2012 ContactBabel US Contact Center Decision Makers' Guide** and bonus **Evolution of the Multichannel Contact Center** white paper you can do so by visiting http://info.enghouseinteractive.com/TropicalPromo_NACC-alt2 or by clicking the banner in this issue. When you do you'll automatically be entered into a drawing for a tropical escape. Good luck.

Work At Home Is Game Changing

Michele Rowan, President, At Home Customer Contacts
www.athomecustomercontacts.com
mrowan@athomecustomercontacts.com

Three new and compelling markers in the home working model have surfaced in the past 12 months:

1. Analysts indicate that home agents are the fastest growing segment of customer contacts today, replacing off-shore as the number one growth segment.
2. At Home Customer Contacts research reveals that once companies move beyond proof of concept and pilot phase, they tend to expand rapidly, i.e. doubling the size of their work force at home in 18-24 months.
3. Productivity improvements are tangible, and as measurable and impactful as facilities cost savings.

When organizations successfully reach beyond the confines of bricks and mortar sourcing, they tap into a vast labor pool filled with unprecedented talent. And when they re-engineer their scheduling models to enable more flexibility, employee satisfaction climbs. Right along with it, the customer experience improves, and delivers incremental revenue and sustained loyalty.

What's the hitch? Just one, companies need to leverage their technology platforms. Call delivery, access to applications, content management, virtual learning, and collaboration tools are all readily available. Often these tools reside on the existing corporate platforms but not in the contact centers. Along with the technology comes many decisions--lease or buy; bundle or unbundle products; house the data, host it, or both.

We have more options and flexibility than we've ever had in the past to satisfy our own infrastructure and cost requirements, to meet our customer demands, and to embrace the changing face of the mobile employee.

For the better part of this decade, a number of large BPOs, some of whom utilize home agents exclusively, have had material footprints in teleworking. And they've been successful for the very same reasons that the rest of us are now interested (best talent, best cost, best customer experience).

The key differentiator between seven or eight years ago and now is that the technology has fully arrived. Call delivery, security, access to networks and applications, hardware and software not only meet, but exceed, baseline requirements across all of our business sectors.

Drivers for engaging home agents generally fall into these categories:

- Companies are growing, need seats and refuse to make any additional unnecessary investments in real estate.
- High value customers are being moved back on shore.
- Pursuit of the best talent while reducing costs, pure and simple.

So, the heavy lifting is in the business process revision. Technology investments are minimal, which is why companies accelerate quickly once they have vetted their proof of concept.

Two Returns Companies are taking to the Bank

1. Applicant flow quadruples and nets unprecedented talent

Applicant flow doubles when companies market home working positions in existing, local communities (i.e. neighborhood model), and it quadruples when hiring long distance.

As soon as the stigma associated with "bricks and mortar call center positions" is removed, companies are able to market their sales, customer service, retention and recovery positions to thousands of people who would not consider a role in a contact center. Full-time and part-time posts are highly appealing, with part-time offering the broadest reach across the expanded labor markets.

With effective marketing (and note that this is marketing to new channels that many companies have not visited before), organizations are attracting the attention of highly experienced and educated professionals from the likes of financial services, real estate, education, health care, and the arts. Disabled individuals with mobility challenges, returning military, new parents and baby boomers are the dominant profiles.

Employee referrals become the primary source of hires and the pool grows organically. Many individuals have voluntarily stepped away from full-time careers, have been displaced, and/or are simply retooling their professional lives on user-friendly, life-balancing alternatives with organizations that offer them the flexibility and benefits of telecommuting.

By automating first steps of the application process and appropriately filtering eligibility requirements, the expanded applicant funnel at the top is manageable. Recruiters can focus on building awareness of their new offering vs. clerical or administrative functions associated with manually qualifying applicants in early stages.

The net result: Costs associated with usual and customary forms of advertising and early-stage applicant qualification are reduced as the talent pool simultaneously expands.

2. Productivity improves: New hires and transfers home

Organizations that are smart about work force management realize these tangible productivity improvements with home agent deployments.

Reduced shoulder staffing. Through use of brief, staggered work segments at home, companies can schedule specifically and succinctly to peaks and valleys in volume during the course of the day and reduce scheduled labor hours. Shoulder hours (where we carry bricks and mortar agents unproductively to fill a need in a

labor hours. Shoulder hours (where we carry bricks and mortar agents unproductively to fill a need in a following hour) are reduced or eliminated. Home agents are happy to work multiple, staggered, short shifts, in as little as one-hour increments. Split shifts enable the new work force to more easily wrap their professional life around their primary passion or commitments. Organizations shave unproductive labor hours while catering to employee preferences – a true win/win.

Shrinkage drops. Home-based employees are delighted to be home, and they want to keep it that way. They put their best foot forward, working to exceed expectations, and minimize risk and/or frequency of returning to the office. A conscious effort is made to avoid and minimize distractions. Attendance improves. Home agents are more likely to “try to get to work” when not feeling 100%, as the effort only requires stepping into the next room vs. doing battle with an ugly commute.

Reduced overtime and seasonal staffing. Significant portions of the new applicant pool will consider expanding their part-time hours (i.e. up to 40 per week for 1-2 months) during seasonal or peak business periods, in exchange for extended time off later in the year (i.e. one month off at a time). Think Baby Boomers (who love to travel), retirees, parents and individuals with disabilities. Organizations that are savvy with this approach can significantly reduce temporary staffing, overtime and related ramp-up costs associated with highly seasonal customer contact management.

The net result: Productivity improvements - as tangible, consistent and important as the cost savings in facilities reductions - are realized.

Is Your Desk Job A Death Sentence?

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

Before you read too much into the title of this article, what I’m talking about is the recent media coverage of the potential dangers of prolonged sitting, such as what typically occurs when working at a contact center or when writing articles for industry newsletters.

Some doctors are now referring to “sitting disease” as the cause of a number of ailments that seem to be on the rise in the general population. At a conference of the American Institute for Cancer Research this past November, scientists presented a research report that discussed findings that indicated that the combination of too much sitting and too little exercise may be connected to as many as 49,000 cases of breast cancer and 43,000 cases of colon cancer each year.

American Cancer Society researchers found a similar association between prolonged sitting and higher all-cause death rates, regardless of the subjects’ level of physical activity when not sitting. Their 2010 study found that prolonged sitting may affect cholesterol, glucose, blood pressure and other factors associated with disease.

These relatively recent medical findings could add up to a serious issue for the contact center industry. With the majority of employees spending hours at a time seated in front of a phone and a computer with short breaks and little discretionary time to get up and walk around the building, even the most health-conscious customer service worker may be facing unexpected health problems in the future.

The NACC will continue to look into this potential threat to the industry in the months to come, including a closer look at European studies that found that sitting breaks as little as one minute can help reduce health risks. This is a looming problem that the contact center industry can’t afford to discount or ignore.

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/cartoon_categories.htm or just click on the comic to take you to his page. The NACC appreciates Ozzie letting us use some of his comics in our newsletter.

To view past issues of *In Queue*, please [click here](#).

If you would like to contribute to *In Queue*, please reply to this email with "Contribute" in the subject line.

Copyright 2012 National Association of Call Centers

[Click to view this email in a browser](#)

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

NACC
100 South 22nd Avenue
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
US

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.

