



In Queue
The fun, informative and interesting newsletter for
the call center industry.

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Our Contact Info:

David Butler
Executive Director

National Association of Call Centers
100 South 22nd Avenue
Hattiesburg MS 39401
Tel: 601.447.8300
Fax: 601.266.5087

David.Butler@nationalcallcenters.org
<http://www.nationalcallcenters.org>



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Survey Results Yield Equal Shares Optimism, Pessimisms

By Paul Stockford, NACC Advisory Board Member

About a month ago we launched what I hope will be the first of many surveys this year that will provide NACC members and the readers of this newsletter with greater insight into what your colleagues in the industry are thinking and/or doing. Unfortunately the response to this first survey was less than stellar and I'm not sure why.

The survey was designed to be completed in less than 3 minutes and as I promised, no respondent to the survey was contacted by me, vendors, salespeople, charities, collection agencies, political fundraisers, aliens, religious groups, non-profits, for-profits, consultants or other undesirables. In fact, responses were completely anonymous.

If you're snapping your fingers right now and saying to yourself, "Darn, I meant to do that survey," it's not too late. If you click on the link below and give us 3 minutes of your time, we'll still be happy to have your participation.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Ao5IAuJge5nJmE39L1mznm_3d_3d.

Reviewing the results of the survey provided some interesting insights. I've written about some of these findings in the NACC blog under the title "Smarter than the Average Manager." If you're interested in seeing how your colleagues responded to some of the survey questions, follow the link below and please feel free to leave us your comments on this or any of the previous postings. Your input and opinions are always welcomed. http://nationalcallcenters.typepad.com/nacc_blog/.

Walk-in Contact Centre?

A recent newspaper reported an interesting happening in Swansea. Normally Swansea, which is in Wales, UK, would not normally grab my attention, however, my sister is currently working on a Masters degree in this town so the article intrigued me. As I read the article, I began to scratch my head in wonder.

This article reported as its title "Swansea 'walk-in' contact centre proves to be a hit." This was odd to me for several reasons. One, a contact centre to me is a location where business is conducted at a distance, via phone or internet for the most part. Two, why would a contact centre, which are often in non-descript buildings, open their office to walk-in business? This contact centre actually belongs to the city council so locals go to this site to handle issues such as taxes, housing repair, street lighting and other such city services. The article continues to spout out numbers of service numbers, service level, average wait time, etc. but all for walk in business. It is almost as if someone had taken a class in call-centre speak and then just turned it into a walk-in business. Ms. Cole, one of the team leaders (also a call centre term) was quoted as saying, "What our figures also show is that 99% of people who came to the contact centre in January had their business dealt with in less than 15% minutes." She goes on to add the "speed at which we can get things done is good news for service users."

I cannot tell if this is indicative of the call center model evolving out of the phone-based contact centre into walk in services or whether maybe one day we will be opening many existing phone-only contact centres to walk in business? Has anyone else heard of any similar occurrences elsewhere or is Swansea unique?

NACC Investment Portfolio

Stock	Price	Value	Change
NT	9.93	5.46	-4.54
NICE	32.87	8.18	-1.82
VRNT	14.9	6.08	-3.92
SYKE	17.28	9.09	-0.91
WIT	12.29	8.20	-1.80
CVG	15.39	8.71	-1.29
TTEC	23.16	10.07	0.07
ICTG	8.01	7.69	-2.31
APAC	1.18	5.34	-4.66
TOTAL		68.83	-21.17

Original Value start 11/6/2007
=US\$90.00 or US\$10.00 per stock

Total Portfolio Value Now= \$68.83

The *NACC Investment Portfolio* lost ground in the past two weeks. It is not a new low, but it is clearly down. I am pleased to announce that TeleTech is in now in positive territory in our portfolio and Sykes is close to breaking even. Countering these two stocks are Nortel and APAC which are both down near 50% since the portfolio inception.

NACC Composite Index

Date	Value	Change	Percent
11/6/07	100.00		na
11/8/07	94.62	-5.38	-5.69
11/16/07	94.94	0.32	0.34
12/5/07	94.38	-0.56	-0.60
12/26/07	97.90	3.53	3.60
1/15/08	80.89	-17.02	-21.04
1/29/08	77.54	-3.35	-4.31
2/13/08	75.56	-1.98	-2.63
2/27/08	76.72	1.16	1.51

The *NACC Composite Index* was up 1.51% over the past two weeks. When the *NACC Composite Index* and *NACC Investment Portfolio* were created it was suspected that they might diverge, but this would occur very rarely. However, once again this week one was down overall and the other was up, reaffirming the need to have multiple measures of the industry's performance to get a more solid overall picture.

Other Composites Same Period

60 Ideas in 60 Minutes Round VI

For an introduction to the "60 Ideas in 60 Minutes" essays, or to read previously published rounds, please visit our archives and start with [Volume 2, Issue 22](#) of *In Queue*.

David L. Butler-You should know your company's quarterly and annual goals. And I don't mean the stuff that is in the annual report, I am talking about where they sit in the boardroom and say these are our quarterly goals, these are our annual goals. There will be two or three and you need to know what those are and have them printed out and taped on your monitor. All the decisions you make in your contact center should be reflected through that lens. You are part of that organization and the easiest way to align yourself with that is to know what those goals are and try to achieve them as best possible through your contact center.

William (Bill) Durr-Study after study indicates while internal quality monitoring scores tend to rise to the mid-90s over time, the actual customer experience and satisfaction are usually just a fraction of that. I use a study from Bain in some of my presentations to make that point. 364 companies surveyed by Bain, 80% say that they deliver an excellent customer service experience. They asked the customers. 8% of the customers felt that the company did. This is a huge gap in what the company's thought they did and what the customers thought. The moral of this story is that you need to start to have more customer feedback surveys and find out what the customers really value and how they perceive their experience. Maybe you need to recalibrate your internal quality monitoring team.

Penny Reynolds-Back to the averaging thing. You have to look at some averages, but the thing about service level is that it masks so many things. So what you have to do, a better alternative, would be to perhaps look at the number of contact hours during the day where you hit your goal. Not over, not way under, but where you hit the goal within 5%. If service level is 80%, for how many hours were you between 75%-85%? Give yourself a different kind of measure a measure that will help you pinpoint where you have problems. Instead of asking your customer to call at a different time (I am OK with suggesting the best times to call) you've got to make some adjustments in your schedules, and in the way you operate, to better cover. So it is better for your callers, it is better for your staff, and it is better for your bottom line and costs. So when you replace those averages with standard deviations where do you use that number? There are kinds of places where standard deviation makes sense. So you want to look at it as you are eye-balling your data going into your forecasting process so that you are getting the right forecasts in place for the schedules to start. That may be where you are going wrong in the first place. Certainly anyone doing call calibration and quality processing in your center needs to have a basic understanding of standard deviation so when four people evaluate a calling score it is within an acceptable range of scores. Or do we have a problem that we need to back in and redefine? So basic understanding of standard deviation, go back to Wikipedia, look it up, look at the calculations, and learn how to use it in Excel.

Garry Schultz-We talked about Jeff Bezos from Amazon.com earlier and his company has a wonderful program that he runs every manager, every executive, contact center agent, everyone has to go through it. Within the first six months of employment they have to get on the phones. I believe the term is two weeks on the phones. So you have a new CFO, you have a new agent, you have a new logistics manager, they spend two weeks on the phone talking to your customers. This probably resonates with everyone out there. How can you speak to an executive, someone you are reporting to, who really does not understand what is going on out there in the real world-people you are talking to every day? See if you can get them in your company to do the same. Put them on the phones. If you can't do that go to plan B. Plan B is record. Record a number of representative calls-good ones, bad ones, maybe an hour. Make them listen to that. It is going to be hard unless you have the dedication of someone like Bezos in the CEO title in order to make another executive sit in a contact center for two weeks.

Chris Crosby-I will just take ten seconds and comment on Garry's comment. When I was in the contact center we required all of our supervisors, managers, directors, everybody to spend a day or two on the phones every couple of months, once a quarter, or something like that. Two weeks may be a bit hard core but what that does is really opens your eyes to what your customers are saying but also two, what your agents go through each day everything like "how the heck does my telephone work and my computer to navigate the system." If you have an in-house software development team that builds your application, your CRM whatever that is. Put them on the phones for two or three weeks. In that case I would put them for two or three weeks because once they understand the pain that your agents go through it is amazing the product they will come out with. When we were developing software for

Dow Composite	1.13%
S&P 500 Composite	0.93%
NASDAQ Composite	-0.86%
NACC Composite	1.15%

The *NACC Composite Index* actually outperformed all of the other major composite indices. Hooray! I hope this means that the call center sector is potentially seeing a bottom to the down-turn.

Real Estate

If you are looking for a new call center location you should check out the *NACC Real Estate* page by clicking on this link to see some of the available existing sites.

Quotes

"Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society."
-Mark Twain (1835 - 1910)

Picture of the Week



Another photo from that intrepid American literature professor at Saint Martin's University in Lacey, Washington. Jeff Birkenstein says he is an avid traveler, napper, eater and amateur photographer. He is also a great and nice guy. This photo, like the one from last issue, was taken in December 2007 at Lake Tahoe in the Sierra Nevada mountains after a fresh snowfall.

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Latigin, I made my engineers spend time in the contact center because it is amazing how much more efficient your software will be when people understand how they are using it. So, if you not in the software business kind of take a step back, have a look at how your customers are using your product, and how your agents are handling calls and see how you can walk a mile in their shoes or a while and see what you come up with.

Kevin Hegebarth-Look at what is going on holistically across your enterprise from a customer's perspective. At the end of the day that is that person who pays the bills around there. Let me use an insurance example. Failure to process an insurance claim properly does what? It brings traffic to the call center. So understanding the different customer touch points throughout your enterprise whether they are directly to the customer as you would expect from a call center or indirectly to the customer as you would expect from claims processing. Understanding all of those customer touch points and understanding what customer expect across all of those touch points and understanding the failure of any one of those touch points to meet customer's expectations is very, very important to ensuring that you get good customer retention.

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.

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Tel: 601.447.8300
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