

NACC

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THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
CALL CENTER
RESEARCH LABORATORY

In Queue

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

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NACC Investment Portfolio

Real-Time Discussion Forums Considered for NACC Members

Paul Stockford, Research Director, National Association of Call Centers and Chief Analyst, Saddletree Research, Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org

As we work our way out of the summer doldrums and start to plan activities for the rest of the year, the NACC is considering hosting member forums or teleconference discussions that would allow participants to share advice and ideas with peers regarding topics that are relevant to those participating. These teleconference-based forums would be moderated by David Butler and/or me, would last a specified period of time and would be recorded and transcribed for future use in the NACC member library.

Back when contact center industry trade shows were in full vigor and were well-attended, well-run events there were often times set aside so that attendees could get together with other attendees to discuss common interests, challenges, etc. Called "Birds of a Feather" or other such descriptive names, these peer gatherings proved to be very popular among attendees and highly valued as an informal way to gather practical advice and solutions.

We propose to do something similar for the NACC membership, but it wouldn't require travel or any additional expense. We would establish a conference call dial-in number that would be provided to members who sign up in advance to participate in a particular forum or teleconference. Each forum would have a single, specific topic based upon member input and participants would be expected to discuss that topic, offering their experience and expertise or soliciting practical advice from other members.

Members could participate in the teleconference chat, or forum, anonymously or have the option of identifying themselves if it made sense for follow-up or other reasons. Moderators would keep the discussion on topic and on time. The only requirement for participation would be NACC membership.

Before we continue with our plans to establish these teleconference discussion forums, we would like to ensure that you find value in this sort of participatory forum. If you do, we would also like to know what topics would be of interest to you. We thought the best way to gather this information was through our favorite research medium – the survey.

We have put together a very short, three-question, 30-second survey in order to gather your initial feedback. To participate, please go to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=XJKg3zq10PLzPGuPKzWTYw_3d_3d.

If you would like to send your comments to either David Butler or me via e-mail, that feedback would also be welcomed. If there is sufficient interest from the readership you can look forward to hearing more about these discussion forums as the fall season approaches.

Stock	Price	Value	Change
NICE	28.48	7.09	-2.91
VRNT	12.50	5.10	-4.90
SYKE	20.35	10.71	0.71
WIT	14.83	9.90	-0.10
CVG	10.74	6.08	-3.92
TTEC	16.70	7.26	-2.74
ICTG	10.23	9.82	-0.18
APAC	5.51	24.93	14.93
TOTAL		80.89	0.89

Original Value start 11/6/2007
=US\$90.00 or US\$10.00 per stock.
Then Nortel went bankrupt so we
have adjusted the investment
portfolio and now the new start
value would be \$80.00 or \$10.00
per stock.

Total Portfolio Value Now= \$80.89
down about one dollar from last
week, but still squeaking out a
profit. I have written an essay in
this issue of the newsletter on how
the portfolio looks now compared to
the values and composition at its
inception in November 2007. Give it
a read and see how the industry has
changed in the past year and a half.

NACC Composite Index

From the Trenches: And She Told Two Friends...

Lori Bocklund, President, Strategic Contact, Lori@strategiccontact.com

I had a most interesting interaction as a customer recently. It made me think the holy grail of transforming the contact center from a cost center to a profit center may actually be achievable if social media takes hold. But this transformation won't take place by the centers working on their own. The relevance and future of the contact center may depend on how well we work with marketing and other areas of the enterprise that hold the keys to the social media kingdom.

Something to post on my Facebook!

This customer interaction experience started by good old fashioned "word of mouth" – a friend telling us about something and then sharing a discount code for purchase. In spite of the fact that I had seen many ads previously (some with famous spokespersons), I wasn't inspired to purchase until my conversation with my friend. I proceeded to purchase – on the web, although I could have called to order or ask questions. As a thanks for my order, I received an email that included a "coupon" with these lines (along with some clever and flattering filler):

Feel free to send this coupon via email, Twitter, Facebook, MySpace...

To make your life even easier, we wrote a sample email that you can forward to your buddies. You can find the sample email (and a sample Tweet) below.

Thanks again for spreading the word...

This company isn't passively hoping I'll interact via social media – they are encouraging and even facilitating it for those less certain about what new thing to tell their friends and family. The "a-ha" I had with this email was that social media is not just a thing I am going to read about (or write about) – it is for real, and could truly redefine the world of commerce. While I've been thinking about, reading about, and writing about Web 2.0 for many months, this stark reality hit me and made me wonder what the implications are – right now – for the contact centers we know so well.

If you have an outlet (and some friends), you can be a seller too

It used to be the company's responsibility to do the selling through marketing, advertising, and sales people. They might hope for old-fashioned word of mouth, but they had to work hard to get our attention, interest, and commitment. As social media enters the stage, the "seller" becomes a friend or family member. There is a fundamental shift from the impersonal company telling us we want or need something to very personal connections telling us.

Am I more likely to trust someone I know to encourage me to purchase a product or service? Absolutely. Does a "discount" or "coupon" mean more if a friend has forwarded it to me than if it arrives in my mailbox, email, or front door, or from an upsell offer from a call center rep? Absolutely.

If it's all about "eyeballs," think how much more likely companies are to get eyeballs on something if they use a personal network to give it attention. Other characteristics make the promotion I received effective as well. They offer channel choice, provide ready made text to cut-and-paste into the referral email or tweet, and they use humor effectively, flattering both me and themselves. It is, if I dare say, "hip."

Be proactively engaged, not blindsided

We have a long history in the contact center of being blindsided by promotions sent out by marketing of which we have no advanced notice. We've all experienced that painful moment when the agent says, "I'm sorry, I'm not

Date	Value	Change	Percent
11/6/07	100.00		na
12/5/07	94.38	-0.56	-0.60
1/15/08	80.89	-17.02	-21.04
2/13/08	75.56	-1.98	-2.63
3/12/08	65.47	-11.25	-17.18
4/9/08	68.98	1.06	1.54
5/7/08	77.31	3.14	4.07
6/4/08	81.51	2.93	3.60
7/2/08	70.28	-10.20	-14.52
8/13/08	65.57	-0.97	-1.48
9/10/08	66.55	-1.69	-2.54
10/8/08	43.24	-13.67	-31.62
11/5/08	43.26	1.43	3.31
12/3/08	36.19	3.30	9.13
1/7/09	42.75	2.10	4.92
2/4/09	35.68	-0.55	-1.54
3/4/09	30.94	-2.42	-7.82
4/1/09	37.88	1.75	4.63
4/15/09	43.13	5.25	12.18
4/29/09	48.53	5.40	11.12
5/13/09	50.72	2.19	4.31
5/27/09	55.66	4.94	8.88
6/10/09	61.67	6.00	9.74
6/24/09	55.06	-6.61	-12.00
7/8/09	54.48	-0.59	-1.08
7/22/09	66.48	12.00	18.05
8/5/09	73.97	7.50	10.13
8/19/09	72.54	-1.43	-1.98

The *NACC Composite Index* was down about 2 points this past two weeks. The economy is recovering but it is a nervous recovery. Investors are jumpy, they seem to get excited about good data and start to buy and then some bad news comes up and they turn around and sell again. Stocks are not for the faint of heart and I always purchase for the long-term, so I am more interested in the long-term recovery of the US economy and global economic system than I am about the jobs numbers from last month. The big question which is unknown is how much inflation should we expect to see when the economy rebounds about the same time that the stimulus is in full swing?

Dow Composite	-0.02%
S&P 500 Composite	-0.63%
NASDAQ Composite	-1.21%
NACC Composite	-1.98%

The *NACC Composite Index* was down up about 2 percent while the Dow was flat, the S&P 500 was of

familiar with that promotion..." In the world of Web 2.0, those promotions could increase, spread, and grow fast and furiously.

So perhaps it's time to accept that this transition to social media is not just a threat but a reality. The center could move up in importance – or disappear into the shadows – depending on the role we play in a company's customer interactions, including selling (to current or future contacts). The center may or may not be a lead player in social media, but in the centers that want to remain relevant, they will be an active player or risk becoming a bit player forever relegated to a cost, not revenue, center.

Centers have unique insights on customer interactions, and need to ensure marketing, eCommerce, product management, or others who have a key role in social media get that. It wouldn't be difficult to start experimenting with these types of campaigns, whether you have fancy CRM, analytics, and other tools, or not. If you're not already actively engaged, when you finish reading this article, make a lunch date with those people and start figuring out how you can participate.

And if you're wondering, yes, I did forward the offer to some friends. Now, excuse me, but I need to go "tweet" about it.

Making Money: The NACC Investment Portfolio Then and Now

David Butler, Executive Director, National Association of Call Centers, David.Butler@nationalcallcenters.org

The NACC Investment Portfolio started in November 2007, and almost from its start it was losing money. I could not have picked a worse time to put money into the stock market and the call center sector.

The goal of NACC Investment Portfolio is to give the call center professionals who read this publication an insight into the larger economic and financial issues of the industry, the big picture, something that too few get to see given the amount of work most of you have that is piling up and never seems to end.

It is interesting to note that of the top three lowest percentages on the list, two are technology companies.

Moreover, only two of the three original technology companies listed are left since Nortel filed for bankruptcy and their stock went to zero.

This would be in part because technology stocks were bid up too high before the crash.

Moreover, outsourcers can make a convincing argument to companies during a recession to hand over call center work for savings where the argument to purchase a new piece of technology is a harder sell with a longer return cycle than immediate savings on labor.

We hope to see the technology part of the call center sector make a strong and sustainable recovery, and to see the outsourcers continue their growth and increasing total market share for the industry.

about half a percentage point and the NASDAQ as moving towards the NACC Composite Index with a loss of 1.2%.

Quote

"Doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is absurd."
- Voltaire (1694 - 1778)

Picture of the Week



Source:

www.agilitynut.com/06/3/luling.jpg

Last week I drove to Texas with my wife for a family event. While travelling on Interstate 10 West of Houston but before you get to San Antonio we turned off the interstate and travelled northwest. The first town we came to was Luling. And the first thing you see when you enter the town is this water tower, painted as a giant watermelon.

I love seeing things like this that challenge conformity and make locations unique. I planned on stopping on the way home to take a picture but on the way back the trees obscured the tower until we were so far out of town before I finally saw it and did not want to

Symbol	Start Price	Current Price	Difference	% Change
VRNT	24.50	12.5	-12.00	51.0%
CVG	17.67	10.74	-6.93	60.8%
NICE	40.16	28.48	-11.68	70.9%
TTEC	23.00	16.7	-6.30	72.6%
ICTG	10.42	10.23	-0.19	98.2%
WIT	14.98	14.83	-0.15	99.0%
SYKE	19.00	20.35	1.35	107.1%
APAC	2.21	5.51	3.30	249.3%

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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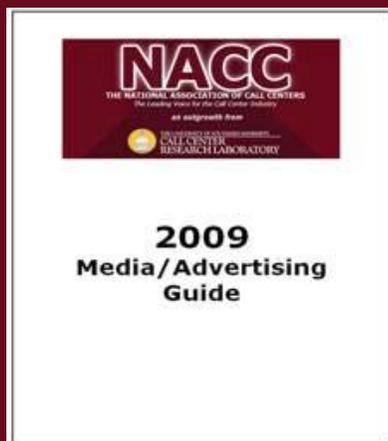
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