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CALL CENTER RESEARCH LABORATORY

In Queue

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

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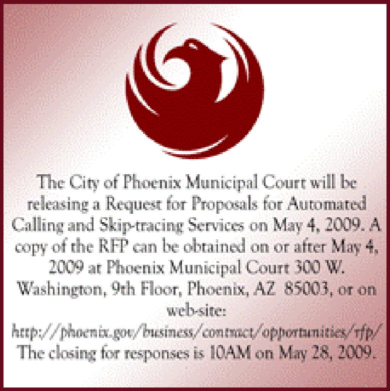
The City of Phoenix Municipal Court will be releasing a Request for Proposals for Automated Calling and Skip-tracing Services on May 4, 2009. A copy of the RFP can be obtained on or after May 4, 2009 at Phoenix Municipal Court 300 W. Washington, 9th Floor, Phoenix, AZ 85003, or on web-site: http://phoenix.gov/business/contract/opportunities/rfp/ The closing for responses is 10AM on May 28, 2009.

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Web 2.0 in the Contact Center: More than Just a Passing Twitter

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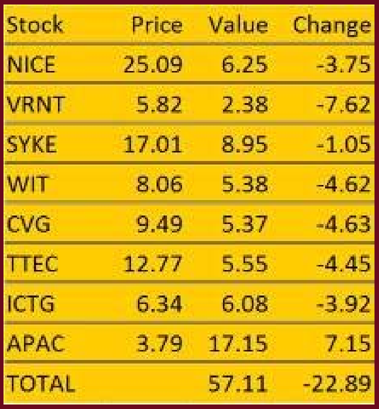
As we continue our series on the expected impact of Web 2.0 in the contact center, it is important to remember that Web 2.0 services will mean more than just managing Facebook and Twitter among agents and customers. Web 2.0 as a business strategy will also extend into the technology architecture of the contact center itself. As operational managers gear up to understand and manage the impact of social networking tools on the customer service function, information technology (IT) managers will as have to start thinking about how they will eventually migrate their contact center to a Web 2.0 framework.

Web 2.0 services will bring to the contact center the type of flexibility that the industry has been seeking for years but has yet to find in such past developments as computer-telephony integration (CTI) and customer relationship management (CRM) software. These solutions offered the user a great deal of customization, but the Web 2.0 framework will offer the contact center user a great deal of flexibility.

By definition, Web 2.0 provides interconnectivity and interactivity of web delivered content, whether on a handheld device, a social networking site or on the user’s desktop. Users of Web 2.0 on the desktop, such as agents, managers and executives, will find an unprecedented degree of flexibility in the ways in which they will be able to create a customized, personalized desktop with a minimum of intervention on the part of the IT staff. Agents will find the freedom to work in the same way that they have become accustomed to communicating with each other. Managers and executives will be able to support employees’ desire to use Web 2.0 services in the workplace while still being able to monitor usage and integrate Web 2.0 into workflows in a controlled manner.

Regardless of their position in the contact center, all users with a Web 2.0 enabled desktop will be able to take advantage of bringing together relevant services such as wikis, blogs and RSS feeds and combining them with other displays and functions to create an ultimately useful and efficient work experience. Users of Web 2.0 enabled desktops today often refer to this unified combination of services from different sources as a mash-up. In the contact center, a mash-up could consist of a single view of the Web 2.0 services described above along with commonly used desktop tools. Web 2.0 application processor interfaces (APIs) will enable the flexible integration of traditional tools with new newsletter or sign up for this newsletter by clicking here.

NACC Investment Portfolio



Stock	Price	Value	Change
NICE	25.09	6.25	-3.75
VRNT	5.82	2.38	-7.62
SYKE	17.01	8.95	-1.05
WIT	8.06	5.38	-4.62
CVG	9.49	5.37	-4.63
TTEC	12.77	5.55	-4.45
ICTG	6.34	6.08	-3.92
APAC	3.79	17.15	7.15
TOTAL		57.11	-22.89

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= $57.11, up almost $7.00 in the past two weeks. This is a great trend and I hope an indicator of good times to come. A interesting item to note about APAC was purchased at $2.21 per share back in November 2007. The trading price is now $3.79, up 58% from the time of purchase. Note also it is the only stock in the portfolio to be on the positive side sense that time. So keep an eye on APAC.

NACC Composite Index

services, presenting the user with a single log-in and a common look-and-feel across applications.

Although this all may sound too good to be true, development of the contact center Web 2.0 framework is already underway. Companies like Calabrio (www.calabrio.com) are embracing social networking and are creating a Web 2.0 framework that will work in concert with their workforce optimization offerings and other common contact center applications. They showed their Web 2.0 container desktop at a recent tradeshow and are expected to have a product ready for delivery before the end of the year.

It's true that when most people think of Web 2.0 today they think of services like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. For contact center executives, however, it's time to start thinking of Web 2.0 in the broader context of its role in the customer service function not only as a familiar communications tool for the next generation of workers, but as a framework to build agent desktops and customer services that interact seamlessly to address customer needs and requirements. Web 2.0 is rapidly evolving from a fun way to stay connected to the basis for a serious customer service strategy. It will change the way we deploy and manage the customer service function in the near future. Web 2.0 is clearly more than just a passing Twitter.

From the Trenches

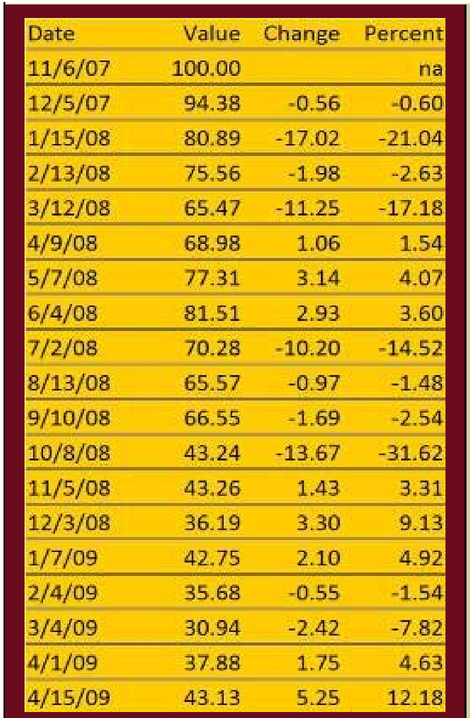
Technology Optimization Part 2: Reporting

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

If I were to poll a cross-section of call center leaders, I'd probably find a love-hate relationship with reporting software. They love the technology for cranking out tons of data and reports. But they're not crazy about how difficult it is to find the meaningful information among all that data. Since reporting is the key tool for assessing the health of the center and identifying areas for improvement, and one nearly every center invests in, let's talk about how to get the most out of that investment.

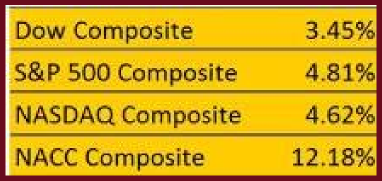
First, I hear and appreciate the frustration with many vendor reporting packages. One hundred or more standard reports can be overwhelming. It's tempting to provide access to lots of reports for fear that a useful insight might otherwise be lost. It's equally tempting to avoid the overload by using a few reports for a few simple things or worse, the wrong things, thus missing the opportunity to create focus on the business goals. Apparently the strongest temptation, because we see it so often, is dumping data into Excel or Access, presumably to get it into a manageable form in a familiar tool. The latter may "work," but it's not a good long-term strategy.

It pains me to see clients spend tens if not hundreds of thousands of dollars on management reporting packages to accompany their routing and skills capabilities, and then deploy small armies to manipulate data in spreadsheets. Beyond the obvious hit to the bottom line, it's a time-intensive, error-prone coping mechanism that doesn't scale. The mysteries of these one-off reports result in second-guessing and data distrust, and sometimes independent calculations that reap different results. Heaven forbid one report (which we've even heard referred to by the author's name, such as the "Bob Report") from one data manipulation guru – I mean analyst – says something different about a crucial performance indicator than another report.



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

The *NACC Composite Index* was up again this week by 12.18%. This is a huge gain and suggestive that the call center industry is seen as a recovering industry in the economy. Hopefully this means that those companies in the call center industry that froze to inaction will now realize that there are great opportunities to be made during this recovery period.



Dow Composite	3.45%
S&P 500 Composite	4.81%
NASDAQ Composite	4.62%
NACC Composite	12.18%

The *NACC Composite Index* was up this week as were the other indices but the composite index far exceeded the others by 300%. Yes, we kicked butt the past two weeks and are holding out heads high.

Quotes

"*When written in Chinese, the word crisis is composed of two characters. One represents the danger and the other represents opportunity.*"
-John F. Kennedy

Picture of the Week

Stolen Flowers

I'm also concerned about folks who focus almost exclusively on historical reports and the "I know what happened" explanation that comes with it. Real-time reports offer the possibility of doing something about what is happening, addressing key performance requirements such as Service Level. Reports aren't meant to be yesterday's news. They are calls to action – both tactical and strategic.

Here are some actions you can take to optimize reporting technology and its application in the center:

1. Define a metrics strategy to focus on the right key performance indicators for your business and operational goals. Then specify what information should go to whom, how often, in what form, via what channel. Create a consistent focus across the organization and use reporting to reinforce and optimize performance. [Stay tuned for a discussion of scorecards and dashboards in my next column.]
2. Create a business analyst role to maximize the value you get from your real-time and historical reports. Define "triggers" to address performance issues in real-time along with appropriate action plans. Use trending and analysis to define strategic changes in processes, staffing, technology use, and more. Work with routing and skills analysts, quality monitoring staff, training, and IT to institute changes and track results.
3. Use the systems on which you've spent the big bucks. Invest in training so your people know how to use the tools and customize only when necessary. Make sure your front line supervisors and managers work effectively with the information they receive. And help CSRs understand how the information can help them balance productivity with quality service to the customer.
4. Define governance for report creation and distribution to avoid becoming slaves to the system and constantly creating unique, little used reports. Have a business reason for creating new reports, adding new metrics (more is not always better), and distributing more information to more people.

Call Centers and the Economic Stimulus Bill Part II

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

In the Stimulus bill, starting on page 14, the bill provides for a "Broadband Technology Opportunities Program" in the amount of $4,700,000,000. This bill provides this huge amount of money to bring broadband internet access to areas that are underserved at present within the United States. The philosophy of the bill is that the internet, and internet commerce, is like the US highway systems after World War II, or the trains before that is the main communication link with the country and the world and as such everyone should have an equal access. Everyone can and should have access, and if you are bypassed, you miss out and a person or a community can whither. So what does this have to do with call centers?

To be competitive to land a call center in a community, the town must have available a strong IT infrastructure. This was true 10 years ago, and since that time, call centers, like most organizations, are eating up more bandwidth and have become IT and energy hogs. So the access to IT is even more important today than it has ever been. I have received scores of phone calls over the years from smaller communities who say, "we have great workers, they have skills, they don't need much to live since cost of living is low, can you help us get a call center for our community?" Invariably, these communities had many of the

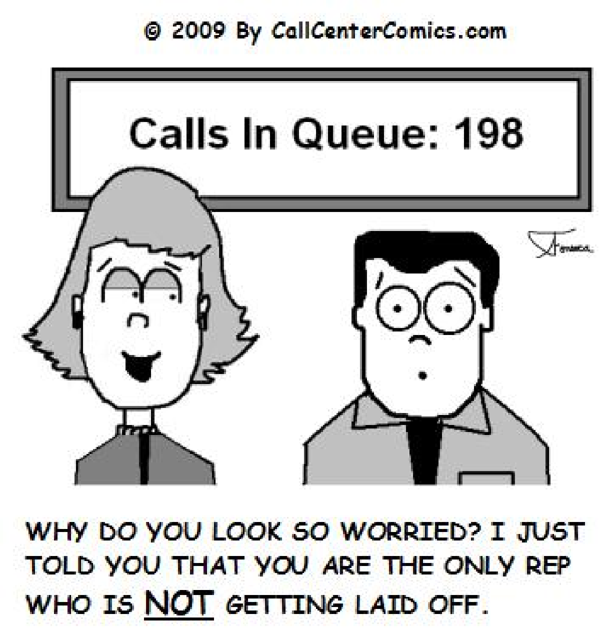
More Stolen Flowers!

Last issue I showed the image at the top of some of my spring flowers that were stolen from my front lawn. The following Saturday, more flowers were stole (bottom picture). At this rate, 2 pots stolen per episode and 2x a week, my flowers would diminish within a few weeks. What is odd is that these flowers have little or no resell value, so this is not theft for instant cash creation. Because of this, I suspected teenage boys just causing trouble, I have been one, I know these things. So how do I stop them from stealing my flowers? I travelled to my local Home Depot to find an outside spot light that had a motion senor. While in that aisle someone asked if I needed help. I told them what I needed and why. They were appalled that someone

right ingredients but after a quick check, they did not have access to IT. It is this lack of access to this infrastructure that has left out regions, inner city and rural areas, where such infrastructure does not exist. Interestingly, since call centers are labor-intensive industries they often seek out inexpensive labor. Often the inexpensive labor is in the same locations where there is little to no IT infrastructure. So there is a chance, when this broadband network is built out fully, that some inexpensive labor areas that were not on the potential list for call centers can now emerge as completive locations potentially balancing out what has to date been an unbalanced location strategy for call centers.

Moreover, as call centers continue to expand in the United States as they have for the 14 of the 15 quarters we have tracked the data, they often feel as if they have run out of good available options to choose from. A city that looks promising to one call center often looks promising to another ten call centers and before you know it, the promising aspects of that city, namely lower labor costs and less competition for labor has turned into just the opposite. So with this new broadband network in place throughout the US, there should be more choices for business to locate in areas that were previously not accessible which will help to keep labor prices in check and give you more choices for location. Additionally, for communities, this allows these towns who before could not imagine hosting a call center to become more competitive for these jobs and sell their lower costs, better standard of living, hard working and loyal citizens to call center companies.

Call Center Comics!


© 2009 By CallCenterComics.com
Calls In Queue: 198
WHY DO YOU LOOK SO WORRIED? I JUST TOLD YOU THAT YOU ARE THE ONLY REP WHO IS NOT GETTING LAID OFF.

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.

would steal flowers. It appears if someone steals a car, wallet, computer, etc. it is not good, but people understand it. It happens. But stealing flowers, people thought that was the lowest form. So this Home Depot person, and then another who joined her, helped me for over 30 minutes brainstorming a way to keep these flower thieves away. Options were floated from infrared video cameras to mousetraps within and glued to the side of the pots. In the end I settled for a low cost for me but high frustration for the thieves. I took metal wire and strung all of the pots together. I had to thread the wire through the pot with a metal rod as if I were sewing. But in the end, each pot was wired to the other, all 20+. Moreover, I would not let the thieves change my lifestyle, so I bought more plants, just as beautiful, and replanted. So if the thieves wanted to take a plant, they would have to lift and pull all 20+ pots at the same time or arrive with a pair of wire cutters, assuming they could see the wire at night. Did it work? It seems so, no more pots stolen. One morning last week I woke to find one pot pulled to the side of the others, the wire tight between it and the rest of the pots, but still there. So it looks like the thieves came back, tried to lift a pot, probably fell on their butt because it was tied to the others, gave up and walked away.

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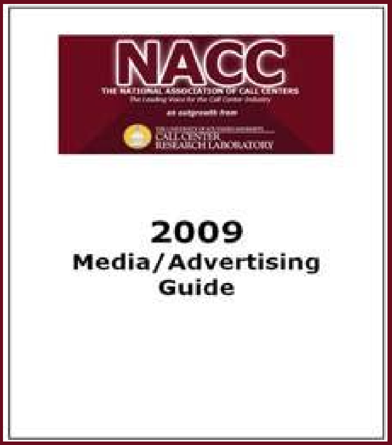

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