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National Association of Call Centers

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newsletter for the
call center industry

Volume 7, Issue 11 - December 7, 2012

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Agents?

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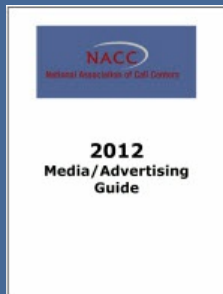
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All leading call center companies and suppliers should examine the NACC Underwriting opportunity in 2012 as evidence of their dedication to the growth of the call center industry. See the [NACC Advertising Page](#) for more information.

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

Quote

"Half the people you know are below average."

- Steven Wright

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

What's New in In Queue

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

Volunteer Memberships Available! Turnover isn't a phenomenon limited to agents only. Turns out a lot of managers and directors change jobs too. As a result, we have several NACC volunteer memberships available for 2013.

Volunteer memberships are provided at no cost in exchange for 30 minutes of your time during the one year membership period. All we ask of our volunteer members is to participate in our surveys, which typically take four minutes or less to complete. In 2012 we ran a total of three surveys. In 2013 we might run one per quarter but we still promise to ask for no more than 30 minutes of your time during the year.

NACC membership gives you access to reports, our Job Board, business opportunities as they come to us, and the opportunity to tap into the membership network for inquiries, advice and review. We promise to ask for no more than 30 minutes of your time in total to participate in our brief surveys during the course of the year. It's a great deal. If you'd like to join us, send me an e-mail with the word "Volunteer" in the subject line and I'll set up your membership. If you have questions don't hesitate to contact me.

To sample one of our surveys, and help us out at the same time, please go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2012NACCsurvey> and complete this year's survey. Even if you aren't interested in volunteer membership, we'd greatly appreciate it if you would take this year's survey. You can get it done in about three minutes. The results will be reported in this newsletter throughout 2013 and will provide us a foundation for further research throughout the next year.

The NACC is a not-for-profit organization so our resources are limited. We rely on our readers to support our efforts. If you've been wracking your brain wondering what to give David and me for Christmas, I just made it easy for you. Click on the survey link above and complete our survey. Thanks for your help.

Heard Any Good Podcasts Lately? If not, let me direct you to www.saddletreeresearch.com where I've just posted a few really good ones. The purpose of the podcast is to provide you with as much information as possible in about 12 minutes or less – about the time it takes you to drink a cup of coffee at your desk.

I know you don't have hours to dedicate to the dozens of webinar invitations you get each week, but these podcasts cram lots of information into a very short period of recorded time – typically about 10 to 12 minutes.

If you've been confused by "Simplexity" be sure to listen to the podcast on the subject at www.saddletreeresearch.com. Click on the "Podcasts" tab and listen to your heart's content or just go directly [here](#). I guarantee you'll learn something. Not a bad investment of about ten minutes.

While you're there, take a listen to the podcast covering the results of the real-time performance management survey we conducted a couple of months ago. Entitled "Real-Time Performance Management – Benchmark Research Results and Case Study," the podcast covers the research highlights and the application of real-time performance management at 1-800-FLOWERS.com. Go [here](#) to listen to this informative podcast.

At-Home Agents are HOT! As far as trends for 2013 go, the at-home agent trend is hot. This issue of In Queue offers an article that builds on the data that was provided in last month's In Queue newsletter. On top of that, there is a podcast on the topic that was just posted at www.saddletreeresearch.com. Give it a listen. You'll find lots of data and trend discussion regarding the rapidly growing at-home agent movement in the contact center industry.

While doing your at-home agent homework, be sure to download this [free publication](#) courtesy of Plantronics if you haven't done so already. This past Tuesday we sent you an e-mail invitation to get this e-book. It's called [Home Working and the Contact Center: Working Your Way Home](#). This publication dovetails nicely with the recently completed home agent research that we wrote about in last month's newsletter. If you have at-home agents, or are thinking about sending a percentage of your agent population to work from home, be sure to download this e-book.

Quality Assurance Buyer's Guide Now Available. Next Tuesday we'll be e-mailing you an invitation to download the latest quality assurance (QA) buyer's guide to assist with your purchase decisions in 2013. If you want to get a jump on the process you're invited to download the guide now. Click [here](#) to get your copy now.

Follow Us On Twitter! My Twitter handle is "pauloncc" as in Paul on Contact Centers. I only tweet about industry issues so you'll never have to see a picture of what I had for lunch or have to read a re-tweet of any other equally useless information. [Follow me on Twitter](#) and see what I mean.

Walkin' in a Wiki Wonderland. This month's guest author, Brian Hinton of Strategic Contact, presents an argument for utilizing wikis in the contact center. Brian's article can be found in its entirety directly below. Don't miss it!

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 2012 Data

State of the Call Center Industry Report: 1st Quarter 2012 Data

Contact Center Mobility Study: May 2012

State of the Call Center Industry Report: 4th Quarter 2011 Data

State of the Call Center Industry Report: 3rd Quarter 2011 Data

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

Wikis: A Step Forward In Knowledge-Based Service

Brian Hinton, Principal Consultant, Strategic Contact
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At Strategic Contact, we continuously "beat the drum" for reducing complexity at the agent desktop to increase efficiency, increase revenue, and improve service. One way to reduce complexity is ensuring agents have access to the right information at the right time to resolve customer issues during the first contact. Wikis are an effective tool to address that requirement.

Wiki – What?

Wikipedia, one of the best known wikis, defines a wiki as, "a website which allows its users to add, modify, or delete its content via a web browser..." Wiki software enables those with knowledge to create content collaboratively using standard editing tools. It captures and disseminates "tribal knowledge" with very little training required of the "publishers" or "consumers." Topic associations across pages enhance learning in a constantly changing information environment. Search capabilities make it easy for users to find the information they need. A "knowledge" wiki can be an internal intranet for contact center agents and other employees, or a community website for customers and agents. A wiki becomes a knowledge aid to create, browse, search, and consume information.

Wiki – Why?

Managing knowledge to optimize agent access can be difficult. Some companies are "stuck" at the hard copy stage. Agents often create "cheat sheets" that line cube walls. In these scenarios, companies struggle to ensure the information is consistent, up to date, and comprehensive. Most companies have progressed at a minimum to creating an intranet or using SharePoint as a basic document repository. While the "library" approach enables version control, searches often bring up multiple documents. The agent digs for the desired information buried in these documents. Handle times increase while both agents and customers grow increasingly frustrated.

By contrast, wikis can present more "bite-sized" and specific information that is quickly accessed through a search function. Subject matter experts create targeted content focused on contact resolution based on "typical" questions and problems. Search results lead to pertinent content with links to further information. Agent performance improves with familiarity with the tool and expansion of the wiki content. And customers get a much better experience.

Wiki – How?

There are multiple paths to acquiring wikis, including:

- Open Source
- SharePoint 2010
- Hosted/Cloud-based application
- Premise solution
- Element within another application (e.g., CRM)

Open source wiki software is available at no charge but requires development to build your wiki website. SharePoint 2010 offers a wiki component to use in developing your internal wiki. For companies wanting a more robust, user friendly, or specialized application, vendors provide licensed wiki applications that could be cloud-based or premise based, and could be standalone or part of a broader application such as a CRM solution. Whatever your source, you may want to add an advanced search engine for more refined multi-level searches. Many use Google search appliances.

As always, the technology is the enabler. Implementing with structured, documented processes, training, and reinforcement will ensure success. Open collaboration does not imply a "free for all." Appropriate governance is essential to ensure accurate content. Most wikis allow control over levels of access to different functions. Use best practices for knowledge management to establish rules and access for:

- Viewing
- Authoring (including providing templates for structure)
- Reviewing or editing
- Publishing
- Updating

The appropriate level of control depends on your business, your products or services, the nature of the information shared, and your compliance or other rules.

Implementing a wiki can be a relatively quick and low cost step forward in empowering your agents with easy access to the knowledge required to resolve customer issues. Develop a strategy and action plan soon

At-Home Agents: A Qualitative Overview

[Paul Stockford, Research Director, NACC and Chief Analyst, Saddletree Research,](#)
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Last month we provided a quantitative overview of the at-home agent movement that seems to be gaining momentum in the contact center industry. This month we'll broaden that discussion by taking a brief look at at-home agent trends that aren't based upon numbers.

Since last month's newsletter was published I had an opportunity to chat with Kim Sokol, who works for KellyConnect (www.kellyconnect.com). KellyConnect is a division of Kelly Services, a name familiar to anyone who has hired, or has been, a temporary employee. I was introduced to Kim by John Reynolds, my longtime colleague who runs the Veterans2Work organization. If you're not familiar with Veterans2Work be sure to visit their website, www.veterans2work.org and/or read my column in the July issue of Contact Center Pipeline magazine (www.contactcenterpipeline.com).

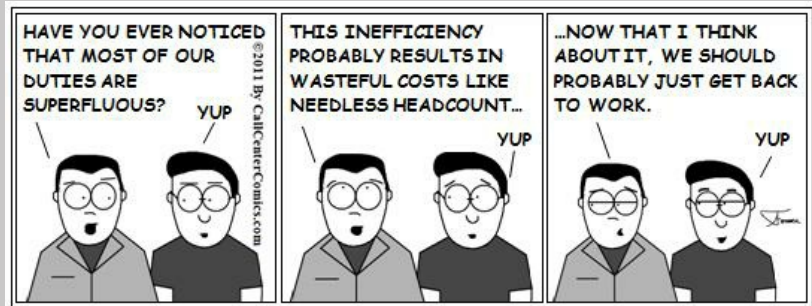
KellyConnect is an advocate of putting our veterans back to work and they walk the walk. They have a Government Solutions Group that focuses on veterans' initiatives and are finding considerable value in having these motivated, self-reliant and disciplined individuals as part of their work-at-home agent program. KellyConnect has also created a program that provides at-home agents on demand for their contact center

clients. This unique offering is completely staffed by at-home agents who are part of KellyConnect's core program.

It is generally believed that at-home agents are at least as productive as their brick-and-mortar counterparts, if not more so, and the assumption is that the at-home agent is generally happier in their job. This belief was tested by a survey question in which we asked if the respondent contact center's turnover rate had changed over the past 12 months. Of the respondents who stated that they had some percentage of their workforce working from home, 30% answered that their turnover rate had improved somewhat or significantly. Although we didn't quantify the exact turnover rate of all respondents, 33% of those respondents with at-home agents reported a turnover rate of between 11 and 20 percent while 28% of respondents with at-home agents reported a turnover rate of between 0 and 10 percent.

There is no question that the at-home agent trend is becoming a force in the contact center industry. NACC members are welcome to contact us for more information on the at-home agent study.

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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