

From: NACC In Queue

Subject: NACC In Queue -- Fixing IVR, Multi-Channel Contact Centers and More!



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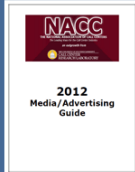
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Quote

"Flaming enthusiasm, backed up by horse sense and persistence, is the quality that most often makes for success."

—Dale Carnegie

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 images below and download the executive summary of each. If you like what you see, join the NACC so that we can send you these reports and others that will be coming out soon to ensure you know the latest trends in the industry.



Our New Look!

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

Regular readers of the NACC's *In Queue* newsletter will notice something different with this issue. Just about everything!

We have created a new look and feel for our monthly newsletter, modeled after our new website that is due to launch in the next week. The newsletter will soon be linked to the new website with complete articles found there rather than on the newsletter itself. That will make the newsletter easier to scan and access what is of immediate interest to readers.

The new website will house all NACC reports as well as the newsletter archives. NACC members will receive a password to access data directly from the new website. The new site will also archive many of the podcasts we have done and will offer a new feature – a job board available to members for posting open positions and accessible to all job seekers regardless of membership status.

Also new to the newsletter this month is the guest author program that will feature articles by industry authors that we hope will be familiar to many of our readers. This month's guest author is Walt Tetschner, editor and publisher of ASR News. Walt has a depth of experience in speech technologies that dates back to the 1980s when he led the team that brought DECTalk to the market. Since 1998, Walt has been an independent analyst with a focus on speech technologies and the companies in that market segment. It's fair to say that when Walt sets his sights on a topic and goes after it, it tends to be a full frontal assault! Don't miss his article on the problems with IVR in the contact center in this issue.

In response to member feedback, we will be launching quarterly conference calls in which members can discuss current topics of interest with other members. The first conference call will cover an issue we have heard about from many members – first call resolution (FCR). Watch for details on this conference call on the home page of the new website, www.nationalcallcenters.org.

Thanks to all the members who provided us feedback regarding what would be interesting and useful for you and thanks to all readers for your patience during this transition to the new NACC.

The Evolution of the Multi-Channel Contact Center

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

If you manage a multi-channel contact center, or if your contact center is moving toward becoming a multi-channel contact center, be sure to watch for an e-mail from the NACC next week inviting you to download a white paper entitled "The Evolution of the Multi-Channel Contact Center." Written by ContactBabel and underwritten by Enghouse Interactive, this paper reviews the history of the multi-channel contact center, including statistics covering inbound interactions by channel over the past few years and forecasts of customer interactions by channel over the next three years.

The paper provides an in-depth analysis of current multi-channel contact center trends and issues including topics such as channel effectiveness, channel availability, ease of use, cost of use, and speed of conclusion. Also discussed is the rapid adoption of social media communications channels and the challenges presented to those tasked with the responsibility for managing a contact center's social media initiative.

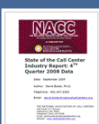
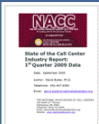
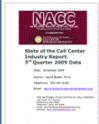
We encourage you to download and read this paper when you receive our e-mail invitation to do so next week. If you prefer, you can download a copy immediately by clicking on the Enghouse Interactive banner at the top of this newsletter.

Self-Service and IVR: A Problem That Needs To Be Fixed

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The biggest problem that callers have with using self-service is that they are asked to provide information to an automated system, and then asked to provide it all over again when they reach a live agent. This is invariably identified as a top problem in every survey that asks for user opinions. Ask any stray set of callers what they think. It's certain that it will be mentioned as an irritant. Unanimity exists on this. Everyone agrees that it is a problem and that the entire context of the call must be passed when the caller moves to a different environment. This problem needs to be fixed. No point in talking about Big Data, Social Networks, Mobile, Chat, and other customer communication mechanisms unless we are able to pass the context without having to repeat it.

Computer Telephone Integration (CTI) was first hailed in the early 1990s as the solution to this problem. It was promoted as a highly cost-effective technology. It would save both the time of the caller and the agent. Everyone would win! Virtually every IVR implementation over the last two decades has



and CTI infrastructure in place to assure that the caller provided information is passed to the agent.

Now, two decades later, the situation is little better than it was prior to CTI being implemented. When you reach a live agent, invariably the first thing that you still need to do is repeat all the information that you have already provided to the IVR.

Despite this major problem's existence, it appears that we are really doing very little to fix it. Our attention is directed at things like social media, multi-channel, mobile etc. that are much more fun to deal with. We have webinar-after-survey that is intent on convincing call centers that they must embrace SMS, e-mail, twitter, Facebook, etc. or face the wrath of their customers who are demanding it. CTI? Old and boring stuff.

Why can't we fix this killer problem?

When the problem is brought up, the root cause is mis-diagnosed. The lack of CTI infrastructure is made out to be the villain. Enterprise call center managers are admonished to invest in CTI infrastructure. This turns out to be a totally incorrect assessment of what the problem is.

This is why the problem has existed for so long and is likely to continue to exist. If you don't fully understand the cause of a problem, you are likely to never resolve it.

CTI infrastructure is invariably in place and is working fine to transmit the caller provided information to the agent's screen. The issue is that the agent is simply not using the data. This isn't stray conjecture on my part. I've validated this with many, many calls. When I reach an agent that is requesting information that I've previously provided, I bore in with them. I ask them why they don't have it and get upset that I now am being asked to repeat it. What invariably occurs is that they "magically" find the data that has been missing. The CTI is working just fine. It's the agent not using the data that is the problem.

Exploring why the agents aren't using the data can be insightful. They are trained and ordered to use it. Yet they still refuse to use it. Why do they refuse to use the data? A very basic reason. Survival! The agents view the IVR as a competitor that is likely to take their job. Why on earth would they be motivated to assist the IVR? The answer is that they are not. They will do anything they can to sabotage the IVR. Basic human nature! The agents have been very successful in this. Everyone unfairly blames the IVR for this.

Further training of the agents is not the solution. I've seen call center managers bang their heads on the wall over this issue and give up in despair. Rigorously monitoring the agents to assure that they are using CTI is what is needed. Use speech analytics to assure that the agent isn't asking the caller for information that was previously provided.

This issue is, by far, the biggest problem with IVR. Callers are reluctant to use IVR because they perceive that they are just wasting their time providing information to the IVR and will need to do it all over again when they reach the agent. Only a fool would want to keep doing this. Solving this problem will have a lot more positive impact than debating the features that we should add to a mobile app. Unless we solve this basic problem, it won't really matter since no one will want to use the apps anyway.

The industry naysayers and gurus will argue that for complex call centers that have been patched together via acquisitions, implementing CTI can be an expensive proposition. These folks offer no solution that addresses the problem and appear to be content to live with it.

What's Up with Workforce Management?

[Paul Stockford, Research Director, NACC and Chief Analyst, Saddletree Research, Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org](#)

Workforce management (WFM) has emerged as one of the hot technologies for 2012. Despite the fact that market penetration of this solution exceeds 50 percent, interest in WFM is high. In our recent survey of end-users we discovered that eight percent of respondents own workforce management but plan to replace it in 2012. 20 percent of respondents intend to evaluate WFM for purchase this year and an additional six percent have already funded WFM for purchase in 2012. Altogether that is 34 percent of respondents will likely be buying a new WFM solution in 2012.

While 34 percent doesn't sound like a big number, if you apply it to our estimate of approximately 66,000 contact centers in the U.S., we find that over 22,000 contact center executives will be signing checks for WFM purchases this year. To my ears, that sounds like a big number!

If you're interested in what's up with workforce management and you have ten minutes available, listen to the podcast I recently recorded on the topic. It can be accessed by clicking on the "Podcasts" tab at www.saddletreeresearch.com. For this podcast, entitled "Workforce Management Renaissance: What's Behind the Spike in Demand," I'm joined by Bill Durr of Verint. As many of you already know, Bill is an industry author with several books to his credit and is a frequent speaker at industry events around the world. I think you'll find this podcast to be more than worth the ten minutes you'll invest in listening to it.

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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