NACC
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CALL CENTERS
The Leading Voice for the Call Center Industry

In Queue

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

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Scoreboard

In Queue circulation 34,830
NACC members 3,572
Calendar of Events Listings 32
Job Board Listings 43
Real Estate Listings 4

In This Issue

Share the Knowledge

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NACC Investment Portfolio

Data close of market 11/16/2007

Stock	Price	Value	Change
NT	18.51	10.17	0.17%
NICE	32.07	7.99	-2.01%
VRNT.PK	21.00	8.57	-1.43%
SYKE	19.00	10.00	0.00%
WIT	14.05	9.38	-0.62%
CVG	17.10	9.68	-0.32%
TTEC	21.52	9.36	-0.64%
ICTG	10.80	10.36	+0.36%
APAC	1.85	8.37	-1.63%
TOTAL		$83.88	-6.12%

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

Total Portfolio Value Now= $83.88

NACC Composite Index

Date	Value	Change	%
11/6/2007	100.00	na	na
11/8/2007	94.62	-5.38	5.69%
11/16/2007	94.94	.32	.34%

Other Composites Same Period

Contest

OK, here it goes. I have convinced Ozzie, the artist behind Call Center Comics, to draw some original pieces for our *In Queue* newsletter. Though I have gazillions of ideas for comics myself, I thought I would open it up to readers of *In Queue* to contribute some original ideas since you are just such neat people. Just think of the daily bizarre happenings in your call center world each day and how ripe those are for a comic. So here is how the competition works

1. You submit your idea for a comic to me via email at David.Butler@nationalcallcenters.org.
2. Give me as much detail as possible, imagine it in your mind, write it out.
3. I will select the top comics from the entries.
4. Ozzie will draw them.
5. The comic will appear in a future edition of the *In Queue* newsletter.
6. Ozzie and Call Center Comics will retain the copyright to all comics.
7. Your name will be mentioned as the grand idea person behind the comic in the issue and I might even send you a few goodies for winning.

60 Ideas in 60 Minutes

Paul Stockford (NACC Advisory Board Member, Saddletree Research, and essayist for *In Queue*) asked me to serve on a panel at the ICCM Toronto call center conference in October this year. Each panelist was given 1 minute to give their idea for improving call centers before the next panelist's turn. Stockford moderated and kept time for 60 minutes. I recorded and have transcribed the session with the first round of ideas is listed below. I will be sharing other rounds in future issues of *In Queue* and may even convince some of the panelist to write an essay for us expanding on one of their one minute ideas.

The panelist, besides me, included:
•Bill Durr, Verint Witness
•Garry Schultz, Sonic Roxio
•Kevin Hegebarth, GMT
•Penny Reynolds, The Call Center School:
•Chris Crosby, Cisco

Round 1
Butler-Fire worst performer, most complaining, and most irritating in your call center to improve overall morale in your call center.
Durr-Start budgeting process by setting every budget to zero. A common mistake is to start with last year's budget and applying some sort of growth factor.
Reynolds-Let your agents have fun and get together in small groups and play doctor. Let them come together to cure some verbal viruses like common uses of the phrases "Um, Ah, and Like."
Schultz-(in response to Butler) Bottom performers. Good innovation in bottom performers. Go and talk to them and you may find a diamond in the rough. Coach, don't catch.
Crosby-Don't ask vendors to recreate what you already have. See what you can do with the new stuff instead of retrofitting it.
Hegebarth-Throw away the scripts. Let the agents take the conversation. Let the customer lead the conversation. And let the agent guide the result. Then ask if the customer is satisfied and if they can help them with anything else.

What the Call Center Industry Can Learn from Manufacturing: Part II

Dow Composite	-.67%
S&P 500 Composite	-1.10%
NASDAQ Composite	-2.00%

It is worth noting that the NACC Investment Portfolio was down for the week while the NACC Composite Index was up for the same period and why we have the two different measurements for the industry's financial health since any one measure may not give someone a complete or full picture.

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

"The Americans have need of the telephone, but we do not. We have plenty of messenger boys."
-Sir William Preece
chief engineer of the British Post Office, 1876

Picture of the Week

This is a view of one stained glass window in the cathedral Sainte-Chapelle, Paris. Though lesser known than the nearby Notre Dame cathedral (they are on the same island in the river), this place has the best stained glass windows I have ever seen. The whole chapel is illuminated by these multistory windows sitting close side by side. Many architects are amazed that these windows are still in tact since most of the walls and buttresses hold the heavy weight of the ceiling. When you carve out places in the walls for windows, these usually become weak spots that are not supporting the ceiling and thus have the potential to break, crack, or weaken the overall structure of the building. This cathedral is lined wall to wall with these enormous windows yet it still stands and supports it weight.

The other interesting story about this cathedral was its survival during World War II. There was a story told that the government used this building for file storage. The file cabinets filled the cathedral from floor to almost ceiling. It is this fact that somehow preserved the windows during World War II. I know the story does not make sense and I have missed some key part, but that is all I can remember about it. Maybe one of you can fill me in to the missing punch line of the story.

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In Part I of this essay in the last issue of *In Queue* (*Vol 2, Issue 21*), I introduced the notion that the call center industry can learn a lot from manufacturing, that the enviable track record of year-over-year (YOY) improvement in quality, productivity and customer satisfaction was worthy of study. I also covered the first leverage point: define the process exactly.

Part II of this essay will discuss why the bulk of the improvement efforts should focus on improving the process itself, not on trying to improve the agents working on the process.

Improve the process not the workers. A friend of mine is running the call centers for a Fortune 500 company. He recently was evaluating a number of outsourcers, some of the biggest names in the industry, to give a big chunk of his seasonal business to. He asked every one of them the following question: “I am giving you this [number] of calls, with this kind of historical performance for C-Sat, Handle-Time, and Quality. What are you going to do to improve it for me? In every single case, he got one and only one response from the potential outsourcers: “We are going to monitor and coach the agents.”

I am going to ruffle a lot of feathers with this next statement, but I will go the mat on it: we all need to wake up to the fact that the one-agent-at-a-time approach to improvement that dominates our industry will never systematically raise call center output measures. And even if you could move the needle on those measures, there is not a positive return on investment (ROI) from the effort.

There are a lot of reasons for this, but one simple one is the stratospheric levels of turnover in call centers. Your process improvement efforts and investment are quitting all the time and being replaced by lower performing agents.

But let’s go back to manufacturing whose track record of improving all output measures is unassailable. Do you honestly think if you went into one of the plants that is driving dramatic YOY improvement in quality, productivity, and C-Sat that you would find them video-taping the workers and giving them feedback once or twice a month? You would not. You would find them spending all their energy studying, experimenting with, learning and improving the process the workers are working on.

In Part I, I discussed establishing a single process and giving technology and voice applications to the agents to execute that process. Imagine the implications of say 100 agents more or less executing the same engineered process and only varying it as they need to: perfect quality, optimal handle time, an improved customer experience and a fraction of the within and between agent variability. It is almost heaven right there.

It gets better. Because once you have all agents executing a single process you can continue to systematically improve that process: reducing pauses and word counts during the call, instantly changing the process across all seats to eliminate steps the customers don’t value, automatically updating agents systems so the customer does not have to wait while the agent does it, automatically reading back numbers and information to the customers to get confirmation before passing it to CRM systems to minimize errors and rework, quickly designing a new version of the process to test on a group of agents to see if it drives further improvement. If you had this you would be living in the kind of scientific, systematic, continuous improvement environment that manufacturing leaders live in.

Even if you do not employ the kind of technical solution described here, you should still spend the bulk of your efforts improving the process and spend dramatically less time trying to improve the agents working on the process. To do this, a new role is needed in call centers.

Call centers leaders have someone to help with all the technology, someone in charge of all the training, someone in charge of monitoring, someone in charge of call and workforce planning, and someone in charge of the agents.

But who owns the call types? Who owns mapping out how each call

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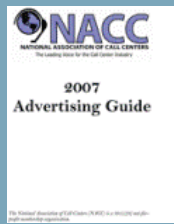

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should go? Who owns the results...C-Sat, Quality, and Productivity...for each call type? Who owns running tests and experiments to try to improve those results? In manufacturing it would be a process engineer. The process engineer(s) are responsible for defining, measuring, and improving the process they are responsible for.

Call center leaders typically do not have this role and that is a key reason the call center industry does not enjoy the track record of results that manufacturing does. You can argue that Quality Monitoring is responsible for all that. Well, are all your call output measures systematically improving? If they are, congratulations. If not, your Quality Monitoring organization needs a new game and I suggest it is spending less time listening to individual agents and more time experimenting with more effective ways to execute the call process.

In the next issue of *In Queue* (Vol 2, Number 23) Part III of "What the Call Center Industry Can Learn from Manufacturing" will cover the final key leverage point: give more to and expect more from your outsourcers.

Call Center Comics (NEW...ish)

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.

To view past issues of *In Queue*, please click here.

If you would like to contribute to *In Queue*, please reply to this email with "Contribute" in the subject line.