

NACC

National Association of Call Centers

In Queue

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

Volume 10, Issue 10 - October 14, 2015

Our Contact Info:

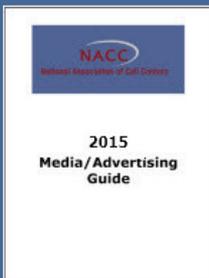
Paul Stockford
Research Director
National Association of Call Centers
100 South 22nd Avenue
Hattiesburg MS 39401
Tel: 480.922.5949
paul.stockford@nationalcallcenters.org
www.nationalcallcenters.org

Circulation

In Queue circulation 15,434

Advertise with Us

Click on the image below to view the NACC Advertising Page where you can view our channels and prices.



To advertise with the NACC, please contact the NACC at:
Tel: 601.447.8300
Fax: 601.266.5087

Email: paul.stockford@nationalcallcenters.org

Underwriters

All leading call center companies and suppliers should examine the NACC Underwriting opportunity in 2015 as evidence of their dedication to the growth of the call center industry. See the [NACC Advertising Page](#) for more information.

Share the Knowledge

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

Quote

"Believe you can and you are halfway there."

~ Theodore

Roosevelt

Reports from the NACC

The NACC has been burning the midnight oil

In This Issue . . .

- [Meet The Members: Michele Rowan, Customer Contact Strategies On Home-Based Agents](#)
- [Interactive Text Response: Challenging The Self-Service Quo](#)
- [Mr. Spock Meets The Call Center: Is Space Really The Final Frontier?](#)
- [Call Center Comics!](#)

Meet The Members: Michele Rowan, Customer Contact Strategies

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



This month we visit with Michele Rowan of Customer Contact Strategies. Michele is a longtime supporter of the NACC and subscribers to this newsletter have undoubtedly seen her mailings supporting her contact center remote working business model seminars and conferences. Since Michele spends the vast majority of her time on-site with her clients in contact centers of all sizes and descriptions, we thought she would bring a different perspective to this feature.

NACC: Let me start by asking you to tell us a little about how your contact center career began.

MR: My first contact center role was with an outsourcer as an HR leader, as my background was in Human Resources. Following, I spent 12 years with Hilton Worldwide

NACC: How did you come to work in the hospitality industry for Hilton Worldwide?

MR: By my very good fortune, really. Hilton had just opened an office/contact center in my target city for residing (Tampa Bay area) so I pursued them in the absence of any sort of job posting, and luckily, my timing was just right! They had an opening in HR that they were just getting ready to post. I had admired the Promus/Hilton Family of brands from afar, and love

to travel, so I was thrilled and delighted to be able to join that team.

NACC: And how did you end up working for Hilton in London?

MR: Again, it got down to great timing. I had moved from HR into the Contact Center Director position in Hilton's Tampa office, and was very happy in my role and living in the Tampa/Clearwater area. I had zero inclination to move, until I learned that there was going to be an opening for a Senior Director based in London. So the opportunity was a promotion, plus the bonus of living abroad for a two-year assignment - was too hard to resist. I got the job and I have to say, it what one of the best decisions I've ever made. Discovering the world, doing work I love to do amongst an amazing team, and staying in really, really nice hotels? It was sweet! Luckily for me (again) my boss in London decided to move on - just as my two years in London was coming to a close. So I was promoted to Vice President and was able to eke out an additional three years living in London. It was great fun and terrific experience for me on the professional side as well.

NACC: So that was where you gained your expertise in establishing programs for home-based workers. How did that translate to the U.S. market?

MR: Yes, I got my first work at home experience while in the UK. We were struggling to meet our staffing requirements for European languages (we had contact centers in Glasgow, Scotland and Tallinn, Estonia), and the hotel brands continued to expand, increasing the demand and pressure on us. Hilton in the US had just completed a pilot on the work at home technology, and it was successful. So after a careful strategic review to solve for our language staffing issues, we chose the work at home model. We basically adopted the US model and socialized it to reflect UK culture and regulatory environment. We were certainly an early adopter, as this was 2007.

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 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.

[Nexidia Joins Cicero To Create The Contact Center Compliance & Customer Experience Dream Team: August 2015](#)

[Verint Extends Customer Engagement Optimization Portfolio To Include Communities With Acquisition Of Telligent: August 2015](#)

[HireIQ Candidate Optimizer Disrupts The Status Quo. Powers Revolution In Customer Service Human Capital Management: May 2015](#)

[Verint Jumps Into The Gamification Game: April 2015](#)

[Research Update - Strong 4th Quarter Tops Year of Growth for the 2014 U.S. Contact Center Industry Employment](#)

[Geo-Fencing: Expanding The Contact Center Boundaries?: November 2014](#)

[Neural Phonetic Speech Analytics: The Brains behind Nexidia Interactions Analytics 11.0: July 2014](#)

[Nexidia Pushes Speech Analytics Envelope with Nexidia Interaction Analytics 11.0: July 2014](#)

[The Time is Now: Workforce Optimization Becomes Reality for the Small-to-Medium-Sized Contact Center: July 2013](#)

[Finding the Silver Lining in the Contact Center Cloud: May 2013](#)

[The At-Home Agent Movement - A Benchmark Quantitative Analysis: January 2013](#)

[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](#)

We were certainly an early adopter, as this was 2007.

Soon after, Hilton in the US decided to materially scale the work at home model - to broaden talent pools without adding real estate. So I moved from London to Dallas to lead that strategy design and expansion in the US. In a period of 18 months, we transitioned more than 1000 positions from in house to home base.

NACC: What was your motivation to start Customer Contact Strategies in 2009? What was missing in the industry that you wanted to address?

MR: I fell in love with the work at home model after going through the big expansion with Hilton. I was inspired by the fact that while we could improve quality of life for many employees by eliminating the commute, we could also save money on the company side. That's not an equation you see often. I became convinced that remote working would fundamentally change the landscape of the contact center environment (and beyond) and saw the need for thought leadership, benchmarking, training and general expertise in the marketplace.

NACC: How does a contact center know if and when it is a good candidate for an at-home agent workforce?

MR: If you have confidence in your contact center operational ability within an office environment, then you are a good candidate to deploy the work at home model. If you're not very good at running your own contact center and don't have much interest in it, you may be better served to work with an outsourcing partner who utilizes work at home employees. Either way, you will have access to broader and more experienced talent pools.

NACC: And what is your business model? How do you work with clients to help them reach their at-home workforce goals?

MR: We offer public two-day workshops and conferences on work at home. We bring stakeholders together to share best practices, benchmark, and do some visioning on next generation work at home. We also do a good deal of customized on site consulting, bringing workshops and training programs to individual clients. We also conduct gap analysis to help companies

clarify their readiness to implement or expand their work at home program. The gap analysis identifies the potential pain points and risks - before our customers experience them.

NACC: When and where are your seminars and conferences and how does one keep track of upcoming events?

MR: The next two day [Advanced At Home Strategies Workshop is Nov 11-12 in Laguna Beach, California](#). There are about 10 seats left as of this writing.

On February 16-18, we'll hold the 2016 Remote Working Summit in Dallas at the Westin Galleria. There will be about 200 attendees there, with six case studies and seven breakout sessions over the course of two days on all things remote-working.

[Use this link to sign up for our mailing list and blog:](#) and we'll be sure to invite you to our upcoming remote work conferences!

NACC: Readers interested in learning more about establishing an at-home agent workforce are encouraged to visit www.customercontactstrategies.com and to contact Michele at mrowan@customercontactstrategies.com.

Interactive Text Response - IVR Your Customers Will Love!

Tobias Goebel, Director of Emerging Technologies, Aspect, Tobias.Goebel@aspect.com

(Last month we recorded a podcast with Tobias entitled "Tapping into Twitter for Customer Self-Service." The podcast is available for download at <http://www.nationalcallcenters.org/Podcasts/tapping-into-twitter-for-customer-self-service.html> and we encourage you to give it a listen for more discussion on this cutting-edge idea. Additional thoughts on social media self-service are available in Tobias' video blogs at <http://blogs.aspect.com/2015/06/02/dominos-tweet-a-pizza-tobias-goebel-analyzes-the-opportunities/> and <http://blogs.aspect.com/2015/05/22/tobias-on-dominos-self-service-offering/>)

It's no secret that IVR systems aren't the consumer's best friend. Increasingly, customers are picking the phone channel as a last resort, after having attempted self-service or peer advice on all other channels first. Hearing "press or say 1", or worse: "did you know you can check your claim online at doubleyoudoubleyoudoubleyou..." is clearly not helping the experience.

It's not that customers don't want to self-serve; research actually shows us they prefer it, especially the Millennials, or those with the "millennial mindset". We also now know that customers would actually prefer text/messaging channels, if they had the choice. So what can we do?

Enter Interactive Text Response (ITR). ITR means having a dialog with an automated system, yet over text messages, not voice prompts. Such dialogs can take place on carrier channels (SMS, USSD) and non-carrier channels (WeChat, Twitter, Line, Viber, ...) alike. ITR combines the 24/7 accessibility and cost reduction value proposition of IVR, but without the headache. Natural Language Understanding (NLU) technology helps discern meaning and intent. The same business logic ("script") of the IVR drives the dialog flow. No speech recognition challenges, no dropped calls, no hold time, no wading through long menus.

A simple SMS "I need a hotel room in downtown Orlando tomorrow for 2 nights" to your hotel chain, or "what's the status of my order?" to your retailer, or "what's my savings balance" to your bank, and the answer comes instantly. Need to speak to

someone? Hand the text chat transcript over to an agent and let them take over the dialog, either staying on the same channel, or escalating over to voice.

It's a win-win for the customer and the contact center. This is definitely an IVR-type experience that your customers will love. Customer care doesn't get any more innovative than this!

Mr. Spock Meets The Contact Center

Zack Taylor, Global Business Development Manager, Cisco Business Transformation Architecture Group, Cisco, zactaylo@cisco.com

(The following article was originally published as a blog post at blogs.cisco.com and is reprinted here with permission. For further discussion on this intriguing topic be sure to download the podcast we did with Zack from the NACC website: <http://www.nationalcallcenters.org/Podcasts/mr-spock-and-the-new-customer-engagement-outcomes-from-carbon-to-silicon.html>)

One of the most enduring characters introduced in 1960' television was the venerable "Mr. Spock" of [Star Trek](#) fame. [Leonard Nimoy](#) played Spock after having only modest acting success before being cast as the half-human, half-Vulcan in 1964.

Among many attributes, Spock had, two relate to the modern contact center and customer experience paradigm.

Spock Logic

First, Spock's primary attribute was an extreme affinity for logic. No matter how far off the handle Captain Kirk had gone, he could always be counted on a logical response to any situation. His almost robotic responses were cold, even if they were effective.

The tides are shifting in the contact center world in this regard. Companies are revisiting the notion of scripted and tightly controlled customer conversations with contact center agents. Since most of the calls, chats, and texts come into contact centers as exceptions after customers have attempted other business processes, it is imperative agents use positive language and more conversational approaches. This is critical with customers who may be as "off the handle" as Captain Kirk could become!

The Human Focus

Second, Spock had an affinity for calling humans "carbon based units" based due to our chemical makeup. Fact: "Carbon based units" make up a majority of the cost of running a contact center – and are "inflationary" by definition. Hence, entire industries have evolved around optimizing the human element. These include staffing and workforce optimization technologies that ensure you have the right amount of "carbon" are in the seats.

Cost optimization is only part of the story. Many companies are looking to self-service and automation as the fastest path to lowering costs of customer engagement costs. What's left after automation are those exceptions that humans still handle best. (See <http://blogs.cisco.com/collaboration/the-best-service-humanly-possible>)

The Starship Enterprise developed a nice balance between the engaging and emotional Kirk and the logical and bucolic Spock – and so should your contact center.

The Call to Action

Leading companies' winning combination is to first bring more natural methods to engage with non-human elements of their service capabilities. First, inspect your self-service processes to see if they suffer from "Spock-like" coldness and rigidity. Then, in turning to live support, empower your resources by training them in positive language and empathy. Your contact center will hit warp speed!

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.

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.

Copyright 2015 National Association of Call Centers

[Click to view this email in a browser](#)

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

NACC
100 South 22nd Avenue
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
US

[Read the VerticalResponse marketing policy.](#)

vertical
response
A DELUXE COMPANY
Free Email Marketing >>