



National Association of Call Centers

In Queue

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

Welcome to the May 2017 issue of the NACC In Queue newsletter!



How To Hire The Best Reps For Work At Home

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A 2017 survey of 60 US contact center organizations indicated that 70% of respondents are expanding their work at home programs - many moving to new markets. It is a fact that when we effectively market home-based positions, we see an increase in applicant flow of 200-400%. Here's the challenge: with growing work at home programs, smart hiring workflows and process automation become a requirement, versus a passing interest.

We have worked with hundreds of organizations who have become very successful at work at home, but all too often the applicant funnel becomes so large, it's unmanageable. As a result, the wrong reps get hired. Here are two examples of proven workflows and processes that help companies hire the best reps for work at home:

When Hiring 500+ reps per year or more:

1. Applying for the job - keep it simple, 10 minutes to complete is optimum. Ask applicants to use a device similar to the one they will be using for the job itself (laptop or PC). Mobile phones can make the application process itself cumbersome, and alter results.
2. Opt in/out questionnaire - the second gate (after the physical application itself) should be a questionnaire that includes the minimum requirements such as job scope, hours, shifts, and minimum abilities/aptitudes. When applicants choose undesirable multiple choice answers (i.e. no vs. yes) on more than 30% of the questions, suggest (through auto-return of results) that their choices indicate this specific job may not be the best fit for them. Forecasted fallout rate of applicants at this point in the process: 35%
3. Upload/download speed test - for those that applicants that pass the gate above, invite them to speed test their current ISP, enter the upload/download speeds in a pass/fail section on the application, and upload or screen shot the results to you with a date/time stamp. The hiring company is assessing technical skills and gaining critical information about ISP viability all in one go. Best practice is to make this a separate section on the application module itself. Forecasted fallout rate of applicants at this point in the process: 20%
4. Self-scheduled recorded job simulation - for those applicants who meet the minimum upload/download speed test, send an auto invitation for a recorded job simulation session. Applicants will be asked to respond to questions/simulate real world customer/employee exchanges with the use of recorded audio (minimum) and/or ideally, video. Maximum time for this session is 10 minutes, including practice. Forecasted fallout rate of applicants at this point in the process: 25%
5. Company review of recorded sessions and personal interview - it is only at this point in the process that the hiring company starts to manually touch the application. The application itself, the upload/download speed, the questionnaire and the recorded job simulation are reviewed by a credible hiring function within the organization (usually someone in talent acquisition or HR). For those applicants that meet all minimum requirements, a personal interview is scheduled.
6. Personal interview - conducted virtually using video, and conducted by the person responsible for making the hiring decision.

When Hiring less than 500 reps per year:

If the technology investment described in #4 above is not available, use a manual phone screen for this step. All other steps are identical to above.

To better understand what Fortune 1000 companies are doing to leverage best in class work at home

In This Issue...

- How To Hire The Best At-Home Reps
- Are Your Employees Ready For Robot Co-Workers?
- The Loyalty Factor & Avaya Bankruptcy Filing
- Call Center Comics!

Pearls Of Wisdom

"The most important trip you may take in life is meeting people halfway."
~ Henry Boyle

Reports From 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 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.

[NICE Introduces Nexidig Analytics: Omni-Channel Analytics For The Contact](#)

[Center: January 2017](#)

[- Text Analytics Market Update: April 2016](#)

[- Kodak Alaris Launches AI Foundry To Deliver Artificial Intelligence-Based Solutions For The Contact Center: November 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](#)

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programs for contact centers and support functions, join the [Denver Work at Home Conference, July 19-20, 2017](#).



Are Your Employees Ready For Robot Co-Workers?

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From self-driving cars to services such as Amazon Alexa, great strides are being made to offer technology to help make our day-to-day lives easier. It's not a huge leap to consider how software robots might soon be found in the workplace, helping human employees do their jobs.

[The World Economic Forum Future of Jobs report](#)[1] (January 2016) predicted that developments in artificial intelligence, robotics and other fields would lay the foundation for a "revolution" in how technology could be used to tackle problems. There was great promise, but also a warning issued about the transformation that entire industries would need to make. Some jobs were expected to grow rapidly, others could be threatened by redundancy—and for others—a new set of skills might be required.

For many, the initial reaction was one of anxiety. Doom and gloom. There was real fear about the possibility of mass unemployment from the inevitable extinction of common jobs. In the months that have passed, however, a calmer response has emerged around the potential for technology and employees to work together in new ways for even better outcomes. Change is happening quite rapidly. It's even estimated that [as many as 65% of children entering elementary school today will end up working completely new jobs that don't even exist yet](#). [2]

What it means for the work

Work can now be done faster and with fewer errors when automated using Robotic Process Automation. Processes can be executed in high volumes—following organizational policies or industry regulations—without variation.

What it means for employees

As routine, repetitive work is offloaded to software robots, employees can focus on work that requires human decision-making, creativity or empathy and continue to build new skills as jobs evolve and organizations transform. Robots can also make the work that employees do easier. It can speed up portions of their tasks or provide guidance within a process to help them learn how to do certain transactions—or notify them of changes in how they need to be done without requiring continuous training.

If positioned correctly, employees won't see software robots or automation as a threat, but simply another tool to help how work gets done.

What it means for managers

Managers will oversee a combined human and robotic workforce, leveraging the strengths of each to get more done in a smarter way. As automation software technology gets even better with machine learning and artificial intelligence, managers will need to coach and train their employees to perform higher-skilled functions in response.

What it means for organizations

When work is completed faster—and by automating the work you eliminate the potential for manually introduced errors—the customer experience is better. Improved customer satisfaction results in better retention rates and future potential for upsell and cross-sell.

As employees offload more monotonous tasks and can continue to build their skills to perform more valuable work, they are more engaged—and attrition likely decreases.

Smart use of technology positions the organization for more growth and the ability to adapt to future changes across industries and customer expectations. This idea is backed by a new study that suggests that robotic process automation and robotic labor is adding more value to the economy and [may even create more jobs](#) as a result. [3]

This article was originally published on Verint's blog at <http://blog.verint.com/customer-engagement/are-your-employees-ready-for-robot-co-workers>

[1] World Economic Forum: *The Future of Jobs Report*, January 2016

[2] World Economic Forum: *The Future of Jobs Report (Executive Summary)*, January 2016

[3] Dishman, Lydia, "Could Robots Actually Create More Jobs?" *Fast Company*, March 16, 2017. Report referenced in article is "[Will post-Brexit Britain hinder a robo-revolution?](#)" from the Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR) and Redwood Software.



The Loyalty Factor & The Avaya Bankruptcy Filing

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

On January 19, 2017, Avaya Inc. of Santa Clara, CA, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in order to attempt to reduce its debt load of about \$6.3 billion. Avaya was facing a deadline of the end of January to address debt agreements with creditors or possibly default. Avaya's debt burden originated with an \$8.2 billion buyout in 2007 by private equity firms Silver Lake Partners and TPG Capital. \$600 million of debt was due for repayment in October 2017 and Avaya had been burdened by interest expense of more than \$400 million per year. In addition, Avaya owes its retirees more than \$1.7 billion.

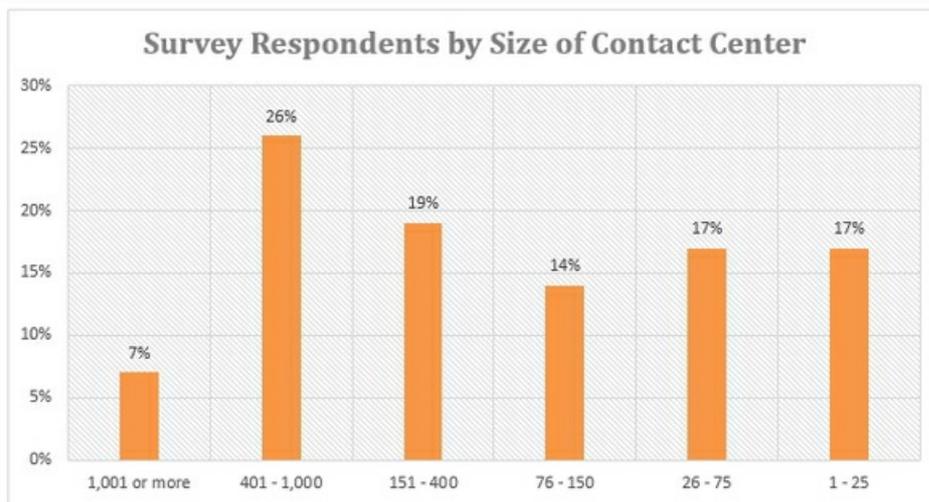
[Contact Center Industry Employment: March 2015](#)
- [Geo-Fencing: Expanding The Contact Center Boundaries?: November 2014](#)
- [Neural Phonetic Speech Analytics: The Brains behind Nexidia Interactions Analytics 11.0: July 2014](#)
- [Nexidia Pushes Speech Analytics Envelope with Nexidia Interaction 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](#)
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- [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](#)

One of the solutions considered to address Avaya's debt was the sale of their contact center business, which they attempted to do in 2016 but could not reach a deal. Buyout firm Clayton, Dubilier and Rice had offered to acquire the business for about \$4 billion. It was announced on March 17, 2017 that Avaya had sold its networking business to Extreme Networks of Santa Clara, CA, for about \$100 million.

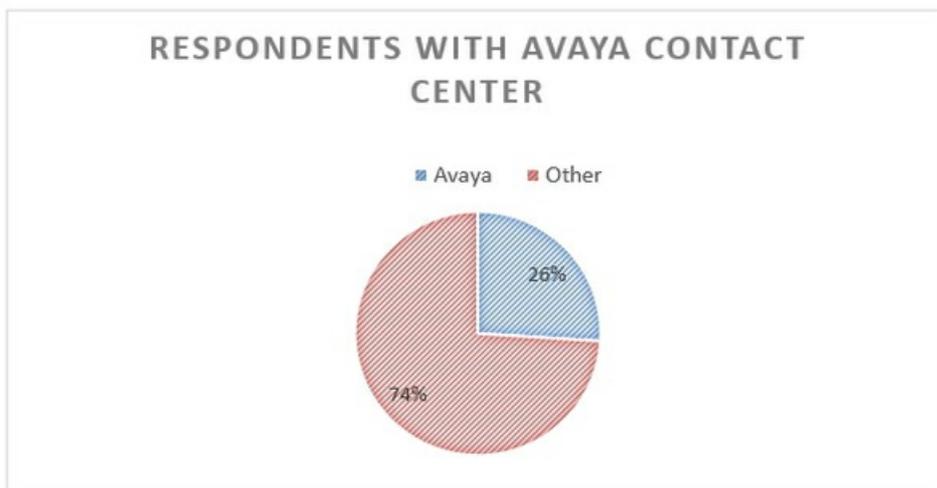
Avaya has secured \$725 million in debtor-in-possession financing from Citibank to finance continuing business operations and the administrative costs of bankruptcy.

Although this isn't the first time a company in the contact center industry has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, this is certainly the highest profile company to file since Nortel filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2009. As a result, Saddletree Research and the NACC wished to better understand how customer service professionals in the U.S. contact center industry viewed not only Avaya, but any contact center supplier that undertook Chapter 11 restructuring. In order to gain this understanding we conducted a brief survey among NACC members.

The 81 survey participants represented contact centers of all sizes, as illustrated in the figure below.



The percentage of respondents who are currently Avaya customers is illustrated in the following graph.



We discovered that there is significant loyalty to Avaya as a vendor with 58 percent of respondents indicating they would stay with Avaya throughout the bankruptcy proceedings. On the other hand, the 42 percent of Avaya customers who indicated that they will now seek another technology vendor cited two overwhelming factors that influenced their decision.

54 percent of those looking for a replacement for Avaya stated concerns regarding risking their own future operations on a vendor with proven financial difficulties. 31 percent of respondents replacing their Avaya

contact center platforms believe that Avaya's focus in the future will likely be on their own business rather than ensuring that their customers are happy with their Avaya Solutions.

For those customers staying with Avaya through their bankruptcy reorganization, the overwhelming majority – 56 percent – indicated that staying with Avaya was better than going through the headache of switching vendors.



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> 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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