



National Association of Call Centers

In Queue

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

Welcome to the June 2018 issue of the NACC In Queue newsletter!



Workforce Engagement Trends: Employee Comfort With Automation In The Workplace On The Rise According To 2018 Research Findings

Global consumer study reveals the rise of automation technology—such as AI and robots—in the workplace, changing customer service roles and heightening engagement

Anne Patton, Vice President, Communications, Verint, Info@verint.com

In recent years, companies have developed digital tools and mobile apps for scheduling and other tasks to keep their employees engaged and empowered with the same technologies they're accustomed to using in their personal lives. While uptake of these technologies is on the rise, what about the recent growth of automation tools that perform many tasks employees once handled themselves? Are automation technologies—such as artificial intelligence (AI) and intelligent virtual assistants (IVAs)—actually increasing employee engagement in the workplace or throwing cold water on it?

It's a good question, especially since change can bring discord to the workplace. The answer is good news! The results of a large-scale 2018 global study of more than 36,000 consumers across 18 countries reveals growing use and widespread acceptance of automation in their workplaces.

This study by Verint, and carried out in partnership with Opinium Research LLC, reveals that more than 70% of consumers stated there has been an increased use of automation technology in their workplaces. More importantly, the study showed that those workers, on the whole, are becoming more comfortable with the changes taking place.

Performing Their Jobs More Effectively

Approximately half of respondents (49%) said technology, such as AI and robots, helps them do their job more effectively. Those in countries with the highest adoption of technology were more disposed to view automation in a positive light, with 76% of surveyed consumers in India, 70% of Brazilians and 65% of Mexicans believing it helps them do their jobs more effectively. Brits (25%), Swedes (29%), Belgians (32%) and Canadians (36%) had the lowest response to the role of technology in the workplace. In the United States, 69% of consumers said processes are being automated by technology, and 43% of respondents said technology helps them perform their jobs more effectively.

This fresh research raises questions about what the workplace of the future may look like and suggests the line between the workplace and home will continue to blur. More than two-thirds (67%) of respondents said they expect workplaces to be more flexible to suit employee preferences as technology improves, and 62% said technology is already making it easier for them to work from home or have more flexible work hours. That's

good news in an era when many employees prize flexibility and independence in the workplace.

Doing What Machines Can't

Technology continues to shape the way many engage with organizations, both as consumers and as employees. However, companies must strike the right balance between technology and automation on the one hand, and human interactions on the other.

Automation opens new possibilities for how people work and how they meet service levels. In fact, it can be seen as a benefit in its ability to handle mundane, repetitive tasks and processes—managing them in a timely, compliant way. And automation can free employees for more meaningful activities and work in more flexible ways, while empowering consumers to self-serve through the channel, place and time of their choosing.

By engaging employees throughout the introduction and implementation of automation and robotics initiatives, comfort levels can rise as stakeholders understand the value of technology alongside human intelligence and emotion. Equipping the workforce with automation and other enabling tools can introduce smarter, seamless service delivery in an era of increasingly complex interactions, and that can make a real difference to the customer experience.

In This Issue...

- Workforce Engagement Trends
- Inbound Call Center Outsourcing
- Knowledge Management
- Call Center Comics!

Pearls Of Wisdom

"Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance."
~ Eckhart Tolle

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.

- [Research Note: NICE Introduces CXone - Fully Integrated Open Cloud](#)

- [Contact Center Platform: August 2017](#)

- [Research Note: Verint Introduces Knowledge Management Professional Knowledge Management for the Masses: July 2017](#)

- [NICE Introduces Nexidia](#)

- [Analytics: Omni-Channel](#)

- [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: Review](#)

Technology Will Never Do It All

Uptake in automation, however, by no means signals an end to human interaction in customer service. Trends expert James Woudhuysen, visiting professor of forecasting and innovation at London South Bank University, states, "Though organizations will automate many of today's customer service tasks, there will be plenty of new jobs in this sector. These jobs will just be different. They'll be more about what machines can't do ... For example, direct human interaction in customer service will need to combine wisdom with the latest soundings of the public mood. In this way, companies can make the right call—a feat that technology, automation and systems won't, by themselves, ever be able to achieve."

To learn more about these and related research findings, visit www.verint.com/defining-the-human-age/us.



Ensure A 5-Star Inbound Call Center Outsourcing Experience

Melissa Werth, Customer Service Supervisor, Quality Contact Solutions
melissa.werth@qualitycontactsolutions.com

(Author note: When I use the term inbound calls, I am also referring to other customer contacts like text, chat, and email. In today's inbound customer service model, all of these customer contact types are viewed interchangeably.)



You've made the decision to employ [inbound call center outsourcing](#) to save money, improve service or both. Inbound call center selection is not easy. There are lots of call center options. And after you've made the decision, you need to be prepared to make a heavy investment of time with the new team to ensure they are successful. Many executives and managers overlook the importance of the time investment when they are developing the plan.

To ensure your outsource initiative is successful, here are some keys to ensure success.

Inbound Call Center Outsourcing Requires Excellent Training

Training is the key to successful inbound call center outsourcing initiative. You want to instill in your team what you expect out of them as well as what the client is expecting. You want to make sure that your team provides the best customer experience with each interaction. Put the customer first. Make sure the experience is so positive that customers promote your brand. I recommend training on every possible common scenario and then layer the training with common sense policies with some built in flexibility. Let the team help the customer and fix their issue.

Monitoring Calls with Your Inbound Call Center Outsourcing Partner is Key

[Call monitoring](#) is key to ensuring consistency across the different customer contacts. Call monitoring and call calibration will help guide you in making sure your team is providing the best customer service to your customers. I recommend listening to a mixture of live calls and recorded calls. It is also critical to coach the team in near real-time to ensure the team gets meaningful and timely feedback.

Invest in Meeting Your Team

When you're onboarding a new inbound call center partner, it is very helpful to everyone for you to travel to the call center and spend some time on site. By investing in meeting the team, you will build a relationship that will enable better communication. You can share your vision with the team, set expectations and provide the all-important motivation for the team on why their role is important in the grand scheme of things.

With the right inbound call center outsourcing relationship, and the proper investment of time spent training, monitoring calls and meeting the team, you will be creating a 5-star experience for your customers for years to come.

Melissa Werth is a Customer Service Supervisor for Quality Contact Solutions. Melissa is responsible for the day to day operations for the work-from-home Inbound Customer Support and Technical Support team for multiple clients. Prior to joining QCS, Melissa was a sought-after 10-year call center veteran with demonstrated experience in handling highly technical customer service calls with ease.



Knowledge Management Knowledge

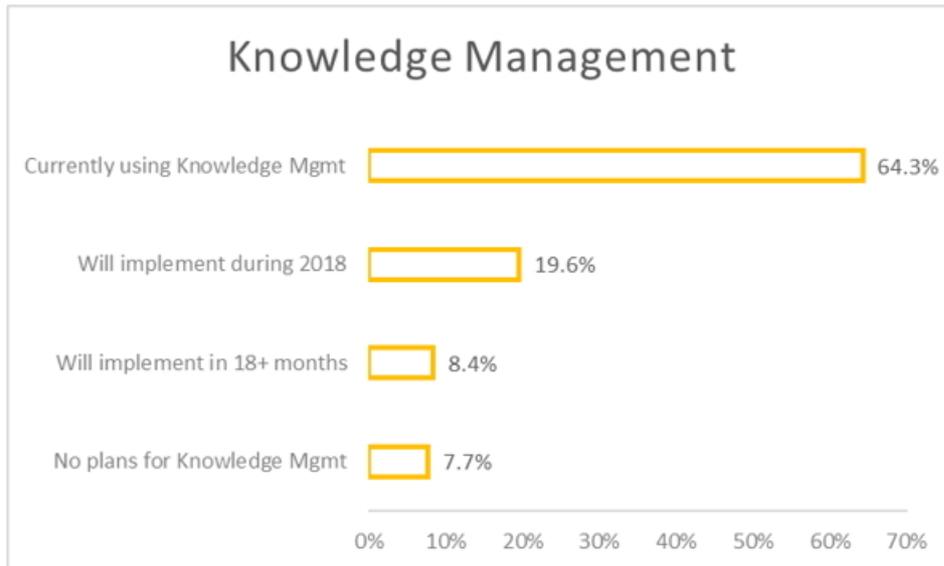
Paul Stockford, Research Director, NACC and Chief Analyst, Saddletree Research
Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org

Knowledge management (KM) has emerged as an important contact center solution in 2018, not only for its ability to accelerate the customer service process and optimize the customer experience, but also for the positive impact it is having on job satisfaction in its ability to improve the employee experience in the contact center. As next-generation contact center workers make their preferences known, including workplace expectations, employee engagement is becoming of paramount importance in the contact center. As a NACC member once said to me on the phone, "Technology isn't hard, people are the hard part!"

[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: 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](#)
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[- 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](#)

Figure 1 below illustrates the status on KM in the in the North American contact center market in 2018.

Figure 1: Knowledge Management in the North American Contact Center Market



As the chart indicates, nearly 20 percent of the North American industry will implement KM in their contact center this year, with an additional 8 percent implementing KM before the end of the decade. 64 percent of the market currently uses KM in their contact center.

I recently had an inquiry about KM from a NACC member who was actively shopping for a solution. In response, I offered the following points regarding KM to NACC members in an e-mail and thought it might be worth sharing with our wider readership.

First of all, be clear as to what contact center KM is. It isn't an enterprise repository for documents. It is focused and targeted toward customer service applications. Your KM solution should provide you with the right answers in the moment. Your agents shouldn't have to sift through lengthy documents to get to the information they need.

Before you get started with your KM initiative, keep in mind that you can fail with any KM product. Software isn't the complete answer. You need to understand what content your associates will want, how it is structured, and how it will be organized. Your information will have to be organized first, which can be done before you even start the KM acquisition process. If you just dump your content into your KM system, chances are it will fail.

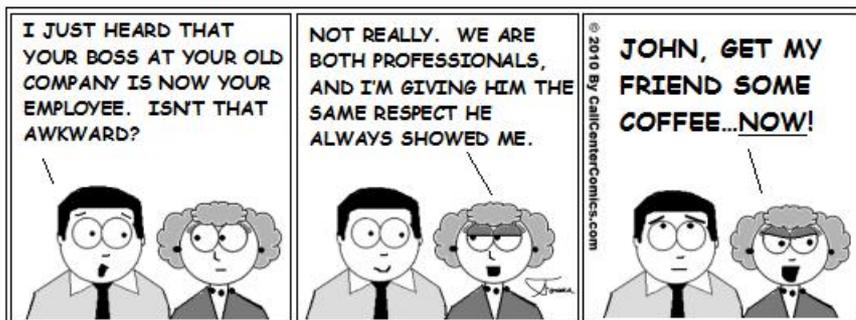
Your KM solution should learn over time via user feedback, ratings, etc. Your KM should have an authoring tool so you don't have to add content like Word documents and large PDFs.

Your KM solution should be able to hook into whichever CRM platform you're using. Some solutions will be restrictive and may require that you use their CRM platform in order to use their KM solution. Your KM solution should be standalone.

We assisted the NACC member who initiated the KM inquiry in coming up with a short list of potential vendors to review. We also tapped into the collective knowledge of the NACC membership to come up with potential solutions. NACC members should remember that this is a service available to all.



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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Our Contact Information: Paul Stockford, NACC, 2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd, Sam H Ingram Bldg, 1st Floor, Murfreesboro, TN 37132
Tel: 480.922.5949, paul.stockford@nationalcallcenter.org, www.nationalcallcenters.org

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