

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CALL CENTERS

## IN QUEUE

### VOLUME 14, ISSUE 6



Welcome to the June 2019 issue of the NACC In Queue newsletter!

#### Five Ideas For Motivating Millennials

Robert Lamb, Senior Contact Center Consultant, CDW, [robertlambcxpro@gmail.com](mailto:robertlambcxpro@gmail.com)

*(Note from the editor: The first article below is a contribution from NACC member Robert Lamb. We welcome and encourage contributions to In Queue from NACC members. For more information on becoming a contributing editor, please contact [paul.stockford@nationalcallcenters.org](mailto:paul.stockford@nationalcallcenters.org))*



I recently counseled with a supervisor who described a challenge he had faced. He inherited a Millennial inside sales agent who had a history of consistently poor sales performance. After trying several motivational tactics that didn't help, the supervisor had to put the agent on a performance plan. When an unexpected increase in absences coincided with a surge of customer service issues, the desperate Generation X supervisor temporarily moved the inside sales agent to customer service. The former sales agent quickly adapted with unrealized creative problem-solving skills combined with a "get it done" attitude. Wanting to see if this was an aberration, the supervisor left the Millennial in Customer Service and watched the metrics. The agent thrived from being measured on satisfaction ratings and first contact resolution rather than close rate and revenue generation. He quickly became a top performer and eventually an influencer in their center.

Was this a tale of poor hiring and a lucky recovery, or more of a hint to a broader insight? First, we see persons in generations in each of these roles, so this single story is only that. Second, it's not necessarily an employee's age that makes them unsuccessful in a particular role (inside sales, for example), but rather the fact that they're not being motivated in a way that's meaningful to them. But allowing for a broader, more generalized view in effort to learn and possibly improve, it may prove valuable to look at the generations involved in this single microcosm. Let's look at the foundational elements of those generations in the United States, with a little help from the Pew Research Center.

Generation X is generally accepted in the United States to be ages 39-54 in 2019 (b. 1965-1980). GenXers experienced unique events during their childhood that added to developing their sense of the world and a manner of working in it. GenXers are more educated than previous generations. During their formative years, they saw things that eroded confidence in the establishment, such as Watergate and the Nixon resignation, the Iran hostage crisis, and John Lennon's murder. Broadly speaking, GenXers aren't immediately trusting and will research independently and diligently. They're typically candid and at times, cynical. GenXers grew up with video game arcades but have adopted technology and social media into their lifestyle.

Millennials make up the largest US generation, ages 23-38 (b. 1981-1996), and now account for a dominant majority in the workplace. They value efficiency and stress-free approaches, having grown up with the angst of Y2K, MonicaGate, and the Desert Storm/Kuwait invasion. Millennials have an affinity for technology; unlike GenXers who became familiar with technology, Millennials grew up with an expectation of a connected internet to their home computer. They also find multitasking a natural skill, as cable TV and adoption of multiple screen windows became commonplace as they were coming of age. More so than prior generations, Millennials are broadly motivated by the greater good and can exhibit an unconventional, can-do spirit when empowered.

Pluralists (ages up to 22) are a whole different consideration which I'll save for a later article.

So how can contact centers tap into that unique blend of personality and capability? Here are five ideas to consider for motivating Millennials:

1. Use that generational creativity in your center's operations service improvement process. Poll your Millennial leaders for ideas. When you find good ones to adopt, publicize not only the plan and its results but the source of the ideas.
2. Tap into the Millennial desire to help others. Schedule community service days or team contributions (e.g., collections for filling back-to-school backpacks for underprivileged). Highlight individual service activities. This prevailing sense of accomplishment will be infectious.
3. Embrace smartphones in the contact center. As a logical extension of the connected internet of their childhood, smartphones are the universal way to maintain that connectedness. For the Millennials, Smartphones are not only a device for connecting to the world, but a part of their persona. For those centers challenged with PCI compliance, provide smartphone breaks during the workday.
4. While many centers rely on gamification techniques to increase agent productivity, it's important to remember that games don't motivate everyone. While GenXers tend to enjoy more competitive games, Millennials value low stress. Look for activities that are more fun than competitive—and still tied to your contact center's KPIs.
5. EMPOWER! Don't stifle Millennials' natural can-do spirit with process limitations. Not only will unnecessary barriers miss the opportunity to capitalize on Millennial capabilities, but perceived arbitrary rules will demotivate your staff. With a record low unemployment rate making the talent pool excessively shallow and the average cost of \$17-45,000 to replace a defecting employee, attrition is a bigger problem than ever for most customer contact operations.

#### Getting Comfy At SNUG19

Paul Stockford, Research Director, NACC & Chief Analyst, SaddleTree Research, [paul.stockford@nationalcallcenters.org](mailto:paul.stockford@nationalcallcenters.org)



This year I received an unexpected invitation to attend the 18th annual Select Noble Users Group, or SNUG, from April 24th through April 26th. The location for Noble Systems' SNUG 2019 was the Sandpearl Resort in Clearwater Beach, Florida. Having never before attended SNUG or, frankly, interacting with anyone from Noble Systems in the past, I was intrigued and curious to learn more about the company and meet some of its customers. I accepted the invitation.

Having a customer conference at a world-class beach resort such as Clearwater Beach can be a risky business in terms of session attendance, given the draw of the crystal-white sand and warm water of Florida's Gulf Coast. It quickly became clear, however, that Noble planners already had a strategy in place to minimize the chance of losing attendees to the beach. They set up an exclusive, open-sided tent beachside, where most meals were served and networking activities took place. I found myself more than enthused about the events of the day ahead after breakfast each morning cooled by ocean breezes and entertained by Laughing Gulls flying gracefully overhead while

#### In This Issue...

- 5 Ideas For Motivating Millennials
- Getting Comfy At SNUG19
- Call Center Comics

#### Pearls Of Wisdom

"To be successful, keep your promises to others. To be successful, keep your promises to yourself."

~ Marie Forleo

#### Reports From NACC

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: Aspect Software Enters Merger Agreement with Vector Capital: January 2019](#)
- [U.S. Contact Center 2019 Four Important Trends To Watch: December 2018](#)
- [Research Note: Verint Announces Intelligent Virtual Assistant and Chatbot-Driven Self-Service Capabilities: March 2018](#)
- [Research Note: The Return of Industry Employment Data Third Quarter 2017 Reveals Strong Industry Growth: February 2018](#)
- [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 Analytics For The Contact Center: January 2017](#)
- [Text Analytics Market Update: April 2016](#)
- [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: 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](#)

Sanderlings worked diligently to find their own breakfast along the shoreline.

Given Noble Systems' history, I was expecting to find the majority of conference sessions focused on outbound contact center and collections topics. This wasn't the case at all as I discovered that equal attention was given to inbound customer service, sales and marketing, along with outbound contact center topics. In fact, product roadmap sessions featured discussions around such topics as omnichannel engagement, analytics, reporting, workforce management, and compliance in both inbound and outbound scenarios.

A highlight of SNUG 2019 for me was the amount of attention given to gamification in the contact center. Having written about gamification extensively in Saddletree Research and general industry publications, it is a favorite topic of mine and one of growing importance to the contact center industry. Gamification's bright future was underscored by the results of Saddletree Research's 2019 survey of end-users, undertaken in conjunction with the not-for-profit National Association of Call Centers (NACC) at Middle Tennessee State University.

As the figure below illustrates, gamification has already gained a foothold in the North American contact center market with nearly ten percent of the market already implementing gamification. More importantly, over 30 percent of all North American contact centers will evaluate gamification for purchase in 2019 while an additional two percent have already funded gamification for purchase in 2019. In real numbers, the two percent that have funded purchase translates to approximately 1,500 contact centers that will implement gamification in 2019.



Source: Saddletree Research

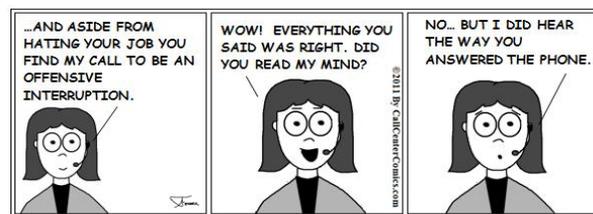
The Keynote and Lock Note sessions at SNUG 2019 were particularly memorable, including an entertaining hour of professional football reminiscences and anecdotes from three-time Super Bowl Champion and two-time Pro Bowler Mark Schlereth, who is currently an NFL analyst on ESPN. As entertaining as his stories were, they also included important and relevant lessons about teamwork, friendship, and perseverance.

The presenter at Friday's lock note session was my old friend Tom Rocca of the KPI group. Tom has been an important figure in the outbound contact center market for decades and is still on top of the important trends in that industry. Tom's remarks included an overview of SHAKEN/STIR, which is a new government program aimed at combatting robocalls and caller ID spoofing. For more information on this important program, visit <https://www.fcc.gov/call-authentication>.

Many of the Noble customers I met at SNUG 2019 worked in outbound contact centers. These are the contact center professionals who often get a bad rap by the general public because they're in the collections or outbound marketing business, but in my experience these customer service professionals are no different than their counterparts on the inbound side of the contact center market. I was impressed by their dedication to their profession, and by their loyalty to their Noble Systems platforms whether inbound, outbound or both.

I left SNUG 2019 at the end of the week much better informed about Noble Systems and their customers. I also left with the distinct impression that Noble Systems is a company with its own clear vision and its own way of getting things done. They are a company that, like my own company, marches to the beat of a different drummer and I admire that. If you were at SNUG 2019 with me, you know what I mean. If you weren't there, make plans now to attend SNUG 2020 and see if I'm not right.

- [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 2008-2009: The Year in Review and a Look Ahead](#)
- [State of the Call Center Industry Report: 4th Quarter 2008 Data](#)



If you like this comic and would like to see more, write Ozzie at [callcentercomics@yahoo.com](mailto:callcentercomics@yahoo.com). The NACC appreciates Ozzie letting us use some of his comics in our newsletter.

### Did You Know That NACC ...

Offers several types of membership opportunities? [Click here to find out more...](#)

Offers the ability to [advertise with NACC](#). [Click here to view the NACC Advertising Guide](#) where you can view our channels and prices.

To advertise with the NACC, please contact the NACC at:

Tel: 480.922.5949 | Email: [Click Here](#)

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.

© 2019 National Association of Call Centers

Share

Share

Share

