

In Queue

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

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Quotes

"A sense of humor is part of the art
of leadership, of getting along with
people, of getting things
done."

-Dwight D. Eisenhower

Name Calling Costs \$5 Million Bucks

Internet Financial News (www.internetfinancialnews.com) reported on October 24th that the Australian newspaper Telegraph (owned by News Corp) reported that the Australian and New Zealand Banking Group Limited outsourced (offshored) its call centers to India. The banking group apparently replied to the news article stating that in fact the call center was still in Australia but that the software development part of the organization had been moved to India. The newspaper editors stood by their initial story. In response the banking group has pulled AUS\$5 million in advertising from the newspaper.

Whether the banking group did not did not move its call center and associated jobs to India is an irrelevant point that can be found out by driving to the building and looking in the windows or just calling. The important issue here is that the charge of "moving call centers to India" has enough negative publicity associated with its that the banking group was willing to pull AUS\$5 million in advertising.

Funny Statement

This is a statement that was shared with me by someone who did not quite fit the profile of the ideal call center customer service representative. He said that he was informed by his management at the call center that he was being "promoted to customer" (instead of calling it firing). I had never heard this phrase before, but it made me roll with laughter since it conveys a double meaning in one simple statement.

Neutral Network Broker

HOW TO HIRE BETTER CALL CENTER AGENTS EVERY TIME!

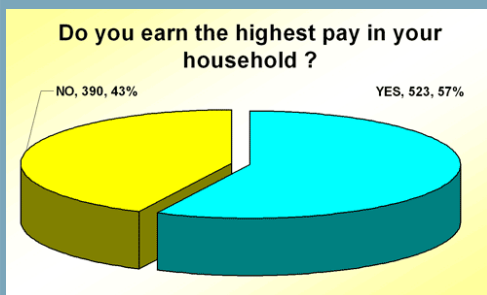
Reduce Turnover
Raise Productivity
Lower Absenteeism



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Fun Facts



This graphic is from a national survey of customer service representatives in the call center industry. The question asked if a rep was the highest wage earner in the family. The majority, 57%, responded "yes" to the question. *Source: NACC State of the Industry Report #3 2005: A Labor Survey of the Industry, p. 25*

Picture of the Week

If you don't know by know, I am a university professor by training and trade. A few weeks ago I was participating in a dissertation defense committee at the university. This is where a student earning their doctoral degree (aka Ph.D.) must defend their dissertation, which is basically a 100-200 page book of research. During the dissertation defense, one of the committee members mentioned that the student was acting as a "neutral network broker" for some of the data and information she was sharing. In short, the student could succeed in using some of the data from a data set where others, related to one industry or another, could not because the others would be perceived as being biased or "in it for themselves."

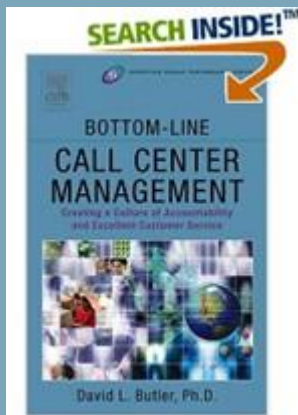
This term "neutral network broker" caught my attention and I immediately wrote it down to share with you. Why? Because I believe that in all industries there needs to be a safe haven, a neutral ground, someone and some place you can trust. This is true for research, industry data and in people's personal life. Having a regular and reliable source of information to share good information with you is something that we all need. Sometimes on a personal level people turn to friends, religions persons, or counselors. Professionally, people turn to trade groups and organizations. Ask yourself how many times per day, week or month that you have had to ask about the reliability of the information you were receiving or what the agenda was behind the information?. Wouldn't it be nice if you received information from a source and you did not have to ask yourself if it is good information or not?

Due to the rapid changing nature of the call center industry, and volumes of misinformation on the industry that exists, the call center industry needs a safe haven, a neutral network broker, which it can trust. This is what the National Association of Call Centers was formed to accomplish and one of the key reasons we chose to form as a non profit, to show the industry that we are here for you first! Additionally the NACC has formed a key strategic relationship with the Call Center Research Laboratory (CCRL) at the University of Southern Mississippi. Universities, which are mostly public entities, act on behalf of the public and therefore are not subjected to the usual pulls and pushed of market forces that can lead people to skew data for financial gain. The relationship between the NACC and CCRL allows the NACC to access and acquire this university-based neutral and unbiased data and then share it without the call center community and the NACC membership. Good data, no matter the findings come first, then sponsorships. Advertising does not come at the expense of the data being reported. Truth first, revenue second.



This is an image from a bank near my home. Yes, the thermostat on the marquee reads negative 198F degrees. The real temperature that day was about 66F degrees. So many puns about "cold hard cash" and the like come to mind.

Note: finding cool pictures to share with you is one of the most difficult tasks in putting together In Queue. If you have a neat image you want to share, send it along. DB



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What I am reading

I have just read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. This book is very short at just 139 pages. I don't know how or why I missed this book in high school or college, but somehow I did, just fell through the cracks I guess. I am making up for missing some classics in my youth and am now reading them. Now, onto the book.

Animal Farm, as most of you know, is a political narrative that criticizes communism, especially Soviet Communism. This critical view of communism is told through the lens of a simple farm with a whole set of animals. One day, under the leadership of the pigs, the animals revolt against the farmer. The pigs explain that they are smarter than most of the other animals on the farm and thus are natural leaders.

The reason why this book has achieved classic status, and why it is such a blistering critique of communism, is that the story does not directly criticize the socialist farm. Instead it weaves a picture of events in the life of the newly liberated farm, renamed "Animal Farm by the leading pigs. The story is compelling in the events that unfold over a period of several years as the pigs, through coercion, lies, re-education, intimidation, and other traditional tactics used by totalitarian regimes take control over not only the farm itself, but also the labor (other animals) on the farm. Instead of being "liberated" in reality the farm falls deeper into despair, even below the level when the humans owned it. However, due to the idea of liberation and collective ownership, the animals keep working, literally working themselves to death.

There are two poignant moments in the book. Moment one is when the 7 ideal principles of *Animal Farm* are erased from the barn wall by the pigs and replaces with a single phrase, "All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others." This quote is often used as the underlying motif of the book. A second, and more interesting point to me, is near the end of the book, when the pigs are at a dinner party with local humans, the human toast the pigs for being able to extract more work with less food on *Animal Farm* than other farmers can do at their own farms. Then, as other animals are watching this unfold from the window outside looking in, the distinction between the humans and the pigs at the table disappears, in essence suggesting that the pigs have become more human in their actions and thus their appearance. I suspect that the term "capitalist pig" must have emerged from this scene in the book. This last scene makes the book not only a political criticism of communism, but a strong critique of

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capitalism as well.

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