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Scoreboard

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NACC members 3,525
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Share the Knowledge

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Pimp Yo Call Center

The advertising image on the left appeared in my email inbox the 15th of May. At first I thought it was a joke, a spoof, just something silly. Then, after clicking on "Push dis 4 info" it took me to a more typical bland looking e-commerce site for the Checkmate company. I want to applaud the Checkmate company for thinking outside the box for their advertising, for drawing my attention, and for making me smile and laugh at an ad. Our industry is only a few decades old but at times it behaves like it has been around for centuries with boring, bland, and worn out phrases, slogans and ideas. We behave as if we are old, established and ready for the rest home when in fact our industry is still very young, youthful, full of verve, pizzazz and energy. Thank goodness Checkmate had the guts to try and tap into this youthfulness of our industry with such a fun advertising message. I hope they sell millions of their products.

In return for them making me smile and exemplifying the youthfulness of our industry, if you click on the ad to the left it will take you to the Checkmate site where they call show you how to Pimp Yo Call Center.

Call Center Regulatory Standards?

The American Teleservices Association (ATA) has released a series of self-regulatory standards for the call center industry in early May 2007. They are seeking support from the industry, including the NACC, for these standards.

Why does the call center industry need a set of overarching standards within the United States? Good question. If this voluntary set of standards is adopted, is it enforceable? Well, no, it's voluntary. So, why adopt them? All good questions.

Here is my take. At any given time there are no short of 10 US states that have legislation pending regarding call centers. Most of this legislation revolves around two main issues, jobs and disclosure. The job issue is related to call center jobs leaving the state and causing problems in local communities that counted on those jobs for local employment. From a public sector side, elected officials do not like the fact that

below.

Quotes

"A government that robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend on the support of Paul."

-George Bernard Shaw



www.iqpc.com/us/callcenterweek/nacc

Call Center Week is the largest case study driven call center event in the marketplace!

Fun Facts

According to *SourceWire* on 14 May 2007, UK contact centre staff contribute 1.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere from commuting to work. A forest nearly the size of Kent would be needed to offset the carbon produced. The article goes on to recommend homeshoring and work from home as a solution. No calculations were given for the vast amount of carbon dioxide produced by actually talking on the phone in a call center or the loud exasperating exhales of supervisors attempting to manage a call center.

Picture of the Week



This is a picture from San Diego

state taxpayer dollars are being spent to hire and operate call centers out of the state, much less nearshore or offshore. So many of the provisions of this pending legislation has keeping call center jobs in the local state as a driver.

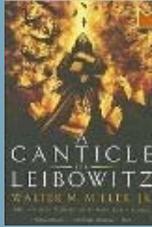
The second issue, disclosure, is one where many can relate. Over ten years ago when call center offshore outsourcing began in India with UK companies (followed by American businesses), there was a fear of backlash by customers. To stop this problem teachers from the UK were hired to help the local Indian agents speak more proper English and sometimes create false identities allowing the call center agents to mask the fact that they were in India. Well, this practice has morphed over time, but suffice it to say that many people desire to know where people are calling and desire to have the choice to choose if they want to speak to someone in their native state, country or region for cultural preference reasons. So state legislators, hearing this cry from their citizens (I hear this cry each day as well) sponsor legislation that requires a call center agent to identify where they are calling from, Boston, Bakersfield, or Bangalore, before the call can begin. Moreover, the customer, if not satisfied with the location of the agent has the right to request an agent in another geographical location.

There is not time or space in this essay to discuss the philosophies of protectionism, free trade, consumer choice and the rest of the issues bundled up together in this debate (we can do that in later essays if you wish). I will put this issue before you as a call center professional. Who wins if call centers are not restricted by state legislation? Who loses if such regulation is adopted? Who would the adoption of such standards by the ATA serve? Who would be hurt? With that in mind, I encourage you to read the proposed standards and offer your feedback to me and the ATA. A copy of the standards can be viewed at www.bryancave.com/ata-sro.

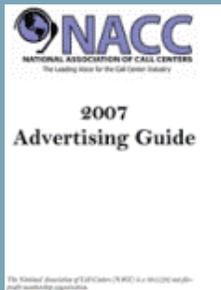
What I am Reading

A Canticle for Leibowitz, by Walter M. Miller, is a book with which I have an interesting history. First, in a undergraduate literature class, this was one of the three books I read even though there were 8 or 10 books assigned for the class. After the class, I sold the book back since as a college undergraduate I needed the money for food. The book stayed with me, in my mind, and I thought of it often. I could not find a copy at a bookstore in 1996 (out of print) so I checked it out of the local library. On the second read, more interesting ideas kept coming back to me. I returned the book to the shelf after reading it and then left it again. A month or so ago I was traveling and stopped into an airport bookstore to pick up another book since I had finished mine on the last flight. There it was, sitting on the shelf, the book, almost 10 years after I had checked it out of the library. This time I read the book in just a few days, 338 pages. I enjoyed it immensely again. This time I am not selling it back.

near the Navy Port. You may recognize this statue of a sailor kissing a woman passerby after the announcement of victory in World War II. If you look closely, you can see how large this statue is compared to the person standing underneath. The actual event of the kiss occurred in Times Square of NYC. Why there is a statue of the event in San Diego and not in NYC is beyond me.



Walter M. Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz*



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The book in essence follows the work of a group of monks in an abbey in Utah after the world has been devastated by a nuclear war. All that is left of cities are rubble, with rural people and mutants trying to survive in a hostile land. The first section is about a young order of monks trying to find, keep, and restore knowledge of a civilization that all but destroyed itself with the nuclear war. Bits and pieces of books, technologies, and insights are found, recorded, and stored for safe-keeping in the hope that one day the population of the world will once again rise from the ashes to be able to understand the information locked within these books and artifacts like math, electricity, and a circuit.

In the next section of the book, the Order of Saint Leibowitz is several hundred years later, with new monks in charge and the rise of city-states with horses, gunpowder, and a thirst for conquest. The once backwater abbey has preserved the information from before the war is attracting interest as leaders are sponsoring their own scientists to unlock the secrets of nature to help them become more powerful militarily.

Skip ahead a few hundred more years and the abbey of Saint Leibowitz has expanded, there are aircraft, automatic cars, spaceships and even some colonization of other worlds. However, there are also arsenals of nuclear weapons and leaders who are none to pleased with one another. Seeing the world come again to the brink of war through the generations of monks at the Leibowitz abbey is moving.

Though the book is not so subtle about the dangers of nuclear war, written in 1959, the overall message is quite interesting. Do we learn from our mistakes or do we continue to destroy ourselves in some vicious cycle until none of us are left?

If you are interested in purchasing this book, I have linked book the image to the left to Amazon.com.

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.

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