



In Queue

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

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Scoreboard

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Share the Knowledge

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Quotes

"My grandfather once told me that there were two kinds of people: those who do the work and those who take the credit. He told me to try to be in the first group; there was much less competition."

Essays Galore

I have been requesting essays from you, the readers of *In Queue*, for months now and ta- da, they are starting to come in. Even though some of you have responded with your essays please do not stop. Each of you has at least one good essay in you that is worth sharing with our 18,942 readers and the readers want to hear from you. How do I know this? They email the authors and me telling me so. So email me (email address on left), we can chat about what you want to write, and then you can go off and impress us with your knowledge while helping the call center industry professionals in the process. Plus it is kind of neat having your name in print too. Who knows, your boss may be impressed as well.

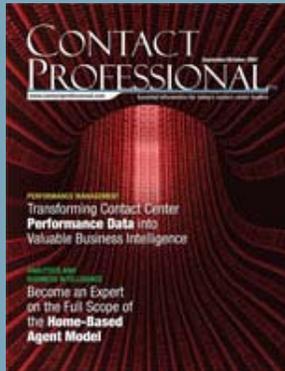
How Satisfied are Your Customers?

Richard Snow, NACC Advisory Board Member and VP and Research Director for Contact Centers Ventana Research
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Recent benchmarking research carried out by Ventana Research showed that of the 395 companies that responded to our survey, 30% believe their customers are completely satisfied with how they are treated by companies' contact centers and 61% believe they are somewhat satisfied, leaving a mere 9% believing their customers are in anyway dissatisfied. This seems to run contrary to a consumer survey of 4,000 consumers across the globe that was carried out by Genesys which found that 52% had stopped doing business with a company because of bad service and 40% had sometime in their past stopped doing business with a company because of a poor call center experience. This last finding seems to confirm a recent survey carried out on behalf of the UK government that found that speaking to a call center was the forth highest experience that irritates UK citizens in their daily life. The question is "why the gap between companies perception and reality?"

One answer has to lay in the way that companies measure customer satisfaction. Many ask agents to rate customer satisfaction as they complete a call, some sent out annual customer satisfaction surveys, others have a customer

-Indira Gandhi (former prime minister of India)



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Fun Facts

The past two weeks have been full of inquiries from readers, executives, managers, consultants, and investment bankers all seeking information about the call center industry. Unfortunately many ask "Where can I find the publication that address X, Y, Z issue." Topics of questions these past two weeks included, but are not limited to (I love that lawyer-like phrase), measuring customer satisfaction correctly, measuring employee satisfaction, empathy by call center agents, what are the risks and benefits of an investment portfolio that has call centers within it, where to find third party provider call center services for both inbound and outbound needs and what the future holds for offshore outsourcing from both a customer and corporate point of view. I wonder with the large slate of calls these past two weeks is reflective of some changing of the "business as usual" concept within the call center environment and maybe a hint at a desire to try something new and better for the future.

satisfaction survey as an option on the web site; the options are many and varied. And there-in lays a challenge for companies. Customers now interact with many different departments and people within a company; from marketing, sales, field service, the contact center, and indeed face-to-face in different locations. Further more they interact through more and more channels; the telephone, email, the Web, interactive voice response (IVR), Instant Messaging (IM), mobile text messaging, kiosks, indeed the list grows on a regular basis. And last but not least a growing number of companies are moving towards increased volumes of pro-active, outbound interactions which aren't necessarily welcomed by all customers. Piecing together how customer react to so many types of interactions, under so many circumstances has frankly become a nightmare and demands a new approach.

The primary requirement is to rate customer satisfaction more objectively at each point and time that a customer interacts with a company e.g. after receiving a marketing email, after a sales call, after a visit to the web site, after a field service engineer has completed a home visit, after an IM session with a contact center agent. One vendor, CustomerSat, has come up with an answer that helps companies execute mini-surveys post each interaction, or at least post all chosen points of interaction. Their product supports very rapid development of surveys which can be easily tailored to the type of interaction, and they can be small or large again depending on the type and significance of the interaction. They can be in different forms; a mailed-out written questionnaire, a pop-survey on the web, an IVR based survey which the customer can either be guided to by an agent or through an outbound e-mail, or a PDA-based survey on a field service engineers hand held. Companies need to recognise that not all customers will complete every survey but there is a much greater chance that companies will collect more views and these will be across all their points of interaction. The results are all consolidated and analysed to show true levels of customer satisfaction, and where and why in the interaction processes customers are least satisfied. This should help companies take appropriate action and begin to close the gap.

Even this might not be enough to get a full picture. Completed surveys are just one type of text based communications; letters, emails, web scripts and IM scripts are other forms and each can contain insights into customer satisfaction. Then there a recorded customer calls; these again contain a wealth of information about customers and their level of satisfaction. Vendors such as Attensity have the capability to analyse all forms of text-based communication and vendors such as Verint can do the same for voice-based communications. At the moment companies would have to integrate these results together as a special project but with the rate of market developments it shouldn't be long before someone brings together a solution that combines transactional system data, special survey data, text and voice based data to create the ultimate, data-based view of customer satisfaction.

Picture of the Week



Do you recognize this place? Ever seen it in a movie? How about *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*? Yep, that is it on the cover of the VHS and DVD. Other movies as well. So what is this place? It is called Neuschwanstein (New Swan Stone) former home of Ludwig Friedrich Wilhelm II, King of Bavaria also known as "Mad King Ludwig." Why the negative title for this guy? Because he spent the Bavarian national coffers on this type of fairytale castle in the late 1800s for art sake only since the age of castles was long over.

As the name of the castle suggests it is all about swans. Tens of thousands of them all over the uncompleted castle in small wood carvings, on paintings, door handles, chandeliers, fabric and much more. During the tour it was almost ridiculously funny how many swans there were. The king had this castle designed and built as a tribute to Wagner's opera about a Swan Knight. Yes, you heard it right, this castle was built from the inspiration of a song and play. So you can see that the folks of Bavaria, knowing that the king already had a few other good castles already, were not so pleased to have their taxes spent on this playground castle for the king thus the term "Mad King."

Do you notice the resemblance to the Walt Disney castles? The story goes that Walt Disney visited the site after it opened for tourism and used it as a template for the Disney castles in the movies and theme parks.

Who's on First Part II: A Perspective on Employee Focus

Russ Reynolds, NACC Advisory Board Member and President, RB Reynolds Consulting LLC mrruss2227@hotmail.com

In a previous issue ([Volume 2, Number 17](#)) we initiated the discussion on the various conflicting industry trends and influences. You will recall the topics as listed below.

- The importance of the customer to the success of any business, and whether the customer is "always right"; conversely we have also discussed the "offloading" of the customer by some companies on the basis of cost or behavior.
- The pro's and con's of outsourcing and off shoring; conversely the developing trend to return some customer contact operations to the US.
- The importance of employees to the customer experience, how properly training, equipping, and empowering employees makes a difference to our customers' experience. Conversely we have discussed how turnover, process discipline, and some automation affects the customers' experience.
- The relevance of having so many industry conferences and publications to choose from and the associated suppliers and vendors who support and sponsor them.

Let's start with the third item, the effect of the employee on the customer experience.

I read the [June 8 In Queue](#) with special interest, because for me it gets to a "Chicken and Egg" type question. David Butler hit on the "Customer is always right" perspective and the "Employee First" perspectives in that essay. I have thought about this in the past and David's article sparked my thinking again. What bedrocks or principles are we building our strategies, tactics, and operations on? People, Profit, or Customer – in what order? Or is it a tie? Or is it Customer first? People First? Profits first?

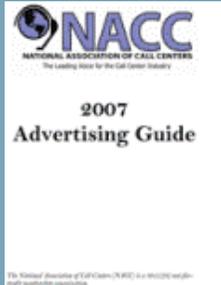
I argue that our people are the road to loyal customers; and loyal customers are the road to increased profits; and increased profits are the road to improving our peoples' skills and quality; and that is the road to loyal customers; and well, you get the picture.

The best way to get "top box" very satisfied and loyal customers is through enthusiastic and motivated employees. But, assuming we buy that concept, how do we make it so?

We will start with the understanding that even if customers rate the call center experience as "Satisfied" they are still likely to defect (see Richard Snow's essay above). Here are some points to consider:

- Delighted, completely satisfied customers are six times more likely to repurchase.
- Customers with choices, make choices.
- Intensity of competition drives the relationship between

Ludwig probably has the last laugh. This site in southern Germany far from any major city is the largest tourist attraction in Germany which means that it brings in much more money over time than any amount of money originally spent on building the castle.



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complete satisfaction and loyalty.

- Markets with intense competition have a very strong relationship between top box and loyalty, because the customers have more choices.
- So we have to be very good, especially in highly competitive environments.

To quote H. Schulze of Ritz-Carlton, "Unless you have 100% satisfaction .. and I do not mean they are just satisfied, I mean they are very excited about what you are doing, you must improve."

Let's say we have a 88% "Satisfied" customer satisfaction result, and a 55% "Top Box" result. What is the common reaction to such results? Typically it is to improve the 88% "Satisfied" to near or over 90%. The problem with such an approach is that in reality 45% of our customers are up for grabs by the competition (100%-55% Top Box) and only the 55% are likely to be loyal to the brand and company. This is a difficult doctrine to accept that nearly half our customers might be "up for grabs" by the competition. It is in our best interest to confront this fact face on and then solve the problem.

I believe that the path to "Top Box" and associated loyalty to the brand and company is through the customer experience. In the next essay I will explore that issue more closely.

Call Center Comics (NEW!)

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PETE HAD FINALLY ASSEMBLED THE COMPLETE LIST OF PROMPTS TO REACH A LIVE PERSON AND THEN DISASTER STRUCK.

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/cartoon_categories.htm 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

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