



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

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### Share the Knowledge

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### Quotes

"I still believe in stories. I still forget  
myself when I am in the middle of a  
good book."  
-A character in the book *The  
Thirteenth Tale* by Diane Setterfield.



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marketplace!

### Middle East Peace Plan-Call Centers

The BBC News reported on February 25, 2007, that a UK based charity, Transformational Business Network (TBN), wants to establish call centers in Gaza and the West Bank. TBN expected to create 900 jobs over five years offering IT support across the Middle East.

The expected cost is \$1.1 million dollars which is currently being sought from international donors. Nearly half of the Palestinians live on less than \$2 per day, the report said. Initially TBN plans on offering an IT support help desk and move into hotel bookings and other administrative services. Jerry Marshall, the project director said, "We have nearly everything in place, I see no reason why this shouldn't be successful."

### Analyst's Perspective

#### Contact Centers Less than a 360 Degree View

By Richard Snow - [Richard.Snow@ventanaresearch.com](mailto:Richard.Snow@ventanaresearch.com)

When Tom Siebel founded Siebel 14 years ago, he started the world on a journey towards customer relationship management with the promise of a pot of gold at the end of the journey - the 360° view of the customer. Although he created a very successful company, many would say the journey still has a long way to run and the pot of gold seems as far away as ever. Why is this? At the core of the issue is accessing the base data on which to derive the information necessary to produce a 360° view. For many companies the majority of their inter-actions with customers are through the contact center - the modern day equivalent of the call center but supporting many new channels of communication. To create such a center requires the deployment of many different types of hardware and software; from the grey boxes that control the communication channels through to computer systems and applications required to manage the many thousands of transactions that occur each day in the center. The diversity and complexity of these makes it

## Fun Facts

According to a July 2006 AVAYA white paper, only 14 percent of companies had a flu pandemic plan. Moreover the paper cites the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) statistic that approximately 67 million infections and 540,000 deaths in the US alone if a flu pandemic were to strike. More on the issue of a flu pandemic and call centers in a future issue of *In Queue*.

## Picture of the Week



Attention to details. Sometimes the smallest images make the largest impression. In a cathedral in Santa Fe, New Mexico surrounded by stained glass windows, arches and ornate statues, this small carving on the side of a pew caught my attention. I often think of the crafts person who created this art.



Read the newest issue of *Contact Professional Magazine*, Jan/Feb 2007, and in particular the article by Richard Snow (see essay on the right by same author) of Ventana Research starting on page 32. It is great stuff.

so difficult to get at the base data that my research indicates that only about a third of companies can produce a balanced contact center scorecard that includes vital information about customers. And what you can't measure, you can't manage.

There is no reason for this situation to prevail today. The last few years has seen an explosion in the number of product vendors that have come to the market with purpose-built products that address many of these issues, and this has accelerated in the last six months. Each of the vendors has a slightly different focus: AIM technology focuses on the customer, HardMetrics focuses on business operations, Inova focuses on operational performance, Merced Systems focuses more on agent performance, and companies like Latigent and Symmetrics have products that focus on centers running specific call switching technologies. At the heart of each are purpose built tools that can extract data from the grey boxes and from many of the different databases stored in applications. Between them the vendors probably have extractors from most of the technology commonly found in contact centers, and all of them have more than enough capability to build new extractors for company-specific legacy applications. The extracted data is then processed and presented through any number of visualization techniques, to suit users in all types of roles. The next generation of products will take another step towards the pot of gold by including un-structured data. In fact the highest volume of transactions in a center is unstructured – recorded calls. The technology exists to store all of these, turn them into structured data and include that in the analysis.

So what barriers remain? Money- with most centers starved of investment where it doesn't directly lead to cost savings. Resources – with most IT departments stretched to maintain what exists to day. Technology – clearly not. No - we believe the answer is the will. Competition for customers is getting harder and harder. I think it is time companies that are serious about managing customer relationships take another giant step along the journey. The technology is certainly there now and the costs are not prohibitive- in fact weighed against the cost of losing customers they pale into insignificance. Companies should take a serious look at what they measure, how they measure it, and go out and evaluate how the new breed of contact-center focused BI tools can help improve their performance from everyone's perspective – but most all the customer.

Richard Snow is Vice President & Research Director for Contact Centers at Ventana Research.  
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## What I am Reading



*This Side of Paradise* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

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Most of you have probably heard of the book *The Great Gatsby* (1925), but fewer of you may have heard of *This Side of Paradise* (1920) by the same author F. Scott Fitzgerald. This book was the author's first and was published when he was just 23 years old. His age is critical here since this book is the first person account of the narrator Amory Blain, a person the same age as the author. It chronicles the period during the American movements into World War I, jazz, drinking, female sexual liberation and eventual prohibition.

Amory's family emerged with enough money to put him into the wealthy class in the early 1900s, but not enough for them to stay wealthy for many generations. Therefore, the author is wealthy enough to go to Princeton university, which was a relatively newcomer then, and spend his development years engaging in various social activities, dabbling in philosophy, and critiquing the world around him. Eventually Amory goes to war, falls in love twice, and eventually loses most of his monetary support when the family wealth disappears. All of this development time the reader spends in the narrator's head, hearing what the narrator is thinking and seeing how he acts according to those feelings. The book leaves you with Amory walking down the road back to Princeton as his money is dwindling but his philosophical outlook is at an all time high.

This book is interesting to me from the fact that so much of what Fitzgerald chronicled through the eyes of Amory are present still today. Two quotes in particular are worth noting.

"People try so hard to believe in leaders now, pitifully hard. But we no sooner get a popular reformer or politician or soldier or writer or philosopher...than the cross-currents of criticism wash him away. It is the surest path to obscurity. People get sick of hearing the same name over and over."

"Life was a damn muddle...a football game with every one off-side and the referee gotten rid of-every one claiming the referee would have been on his side..."

Both of these quotes, along with many others, make the book both a chronicle of the early 1900s and 19-teens through the eyes of a teenager and 20-something as well as being relevant still today.

Though *This Side of Paradise* is longer and not nearly as good as *The Great Gatsby* (which is a book I love) it is still a good read.

*If you are interested in purchasing this book from Amazon.com there is link to it on the left.*

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