



In Queue

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

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All leading call center companies

How We Do Research

David Butler, Executive Director, National Association of Call Centers, David.Butler@nationalcallcenters.org

We conducted a survey of large vendors a few months ago. The purpose was to ask you, the readers of the *In Queue* Newsletter, what you thought about each of the companies listed and rank them based on your experience. We shared the results of those findings in the last issue of the newsletter.

Not surprisingly, the companies that came out on top were thrilled and have used that to their marketing advantage already. Those that did not place as high are understandably concerned. These companies asked about how the survey was conducted and the methods behind it to ensure that the survey was not biased against them which is fully understandable. The question is why do they have to ask that question at all?

The call center industry produces surveys regularly, many of you probably have survey fatigue. I alone received four requests for surveys in just the past two weeks. So how is the NACC different from these others? The National Association of Call Centers is a non-profit organization, and it emerged from the Call Center Research Laboratory at The University of Southern Mississippi. I am both the Executive Director and an active tenured research professor who conducts academic research. We follow strict university scholarship guidelines when conducting all of our research and are generally curious as to the results since they are not pre-known in advance. If you have been in the call center industry long enough you have found that there are many reports, white papers, survey findings out there that appear fishy. The results they tout do not pass the smell test and appear to be biased and skewed toward a particular company or product as if the findings were created and the research behind it made up. I suspect that past run ins with such work was the reason the company above inquired about the methods used in our survey. Those types of reports, white papers, and surveys are bad for you and bad for the industry since it deprives the industry of good, neutral, and unbiased data. It is only in the realm of unbiased and neutral data that a person and organization can make the best choices and improve their operation which collectively

and suppliers should examine the new *NACC Underwriting* opportunity in 2008 as evidence of their dedication to the growth of call center industry. See the [2008 Media/Advertising Guide](#) link below for more information.

Share the Knowledge

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NACC Investment Portfolio

Stock	Price	Value	Change
NT	5.87	3.23	-6.77
NICE	31.04	7.73	-2.27
VRNT	22.00	8.98	-1.02
SYKE	20.10	10.58	0.58
WIT	11.60	7.74	-2.26
CVG	14.75	8.35	-1.65
TTEC	15.48	6.73	-3.27
ICTG	8.19	7.86	-2.14
APAC	2.08	9.41	-0.59
TOTAL		70.61	-19.39

Original Value start 11/6/2007
=US\$90.00 or US\$10.00 per stock.

Total Portfolio Value Now= \$70.61

The *NACC Investment Portfolio* gained almost \$2.00 in value the past two weeks. Sykes is now in the black again, yea!, and we hope that APAC and a few others that are nearly in the black also succeed.

NACC Composite Index

improves the call center industry. So, I wanted to let you know that as an organization the NACC stands for solid, good, unbiased, neutral, academic-quality research, and you can count on us to produce trustworthy research that will not smell of fish.

A Labor Day Thought

David Filwood, Principal Consultant, TeleSoft Systems and NACC Advisory Board Member,
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With Labor Day 2008 upon us, please take a moment to consider the important difference between "Fair Trade" and "Free Trade" - and how it impacts on us in the North American Call Center Industry.

Globalization and Free Trade are here to stay - along with the potential to outsource your Call Center functions to offshore, low-labor cost locations such as India.

But as currently practiced, "Free Trade" means that India-based Business Process Outsourcers (BPOs) pay substantially less in taxes to compete and do business in the U.S. and Canada than North American companies do. It also means that India-based BPOs are free to ignore the most basic aspects of US & CDN Labor Law - as India's labor standards are low or non-existent.

Call Center Agents in India are typically employed in 21st Century Cyber Sweatshops. They work graveyard shifts - under high pressure - in work environments where liberal attitudes to sex and club drugs are encouraged and thriving. "Blacklist" data bases - containing the details of all those employed in the Indian Call Center industry have been set up - so that "negative insider elements" can be detected by employers at the recruitment stage. Workers in their hundreds are fired without so much as one cent in severance pay.

I think it's well past time to bring the principles of "Fair Trade" into any discussion about the North American Contact Center Industry and BPO to India. The principles of "Fair Trade" have been around for a long time, and are primarily based on ideas of human rights and economic justice. "Fair Trade" is about improving the social and ethical well-being of people in both developing and developed nations. It is about the Pursuit of Happiness rather than just the pursuit of wealth. And the Pursuit of Happiness has always been about improving social relationships among people - and about moral and righteous living - not just the pursuit of material well-being.

On Labor Day, we pay tribute to the creator of so much of our strength, freedom, and leadership - the North American worker. Through generations of political debate, elections, strikes, lockouts and other conflicts, the vital force of labor has added materially to the highest standard of living and the

Date	Value	Change	Percent
11/6/07	100.00		na
12/5/07	94.38	-0.56	-0.60
1/15/08	80.89	-17.02	-21.04
2/13/08	75.56	-1.98	-2.63
3/12/08	65.47	-11.25	-17.18
4/9/08	68.98	1.06	1.54
5/7/08	77.31	3.14	4.07
6/4/08	81.51	2.93	3.60
7/2/08	70.28	-10.20	-14.52
8/13/08	65.57	-0.97	-1.48
8/27/08	68.24	2.66	3.91

The *NACC Composite Index* was up 3.91% percent the past two weeks. This is good news and we hope this is an indication of positive results to follow. It has been a few weeks since both the NACC Composite Index and the NACC Investment Portfolio were both up in a strongly positive fashion.

Dow Composite	-0.26%
S&P 500 Composite	-0.32%
NASDAQ Composite	-1.94%
NACC Composite	3.91%

The *NACC Composite Index* outperformed all of the other major indices this past two weeks. In fact, all the major indices were down the past two weeks while the NACC Composite Index was up by almost 4%.

Quotes

I only drink fortified wines during bad weather. Snowstorm, hurricane, tornado--I'm not particular, as long as it's bad. After all, any storm for a Port.
-Paul S. Winalski

Picture of the Week

greatest production the world has ever known. The North American fight for Labor Standards has brought us closer to the realization of our traditional ideals of economic and political democracy.

Globalization & Free Trade - without considering "Fair Trade" - has resulted in tens of thousands of North American factories being moved abroad or closed. Millions of North American workers and the communities where they live have been left to their own devices. We see the results daily in the squeezing of the Middle Class, the rising Trade Deficits, and a bleaker economic outlook for our children.

The majority of North American Consumers speak with their wallets in support of "Fair Trade" - just ask Starbucks. And equally, we've seen how North American Consumers punish companies exposed for exploiting labor in the developing world - just remember Kathie Lee Gifford's clothing line, or the Gap, Inc., and the "Sweatshop Uproars" they had to weather.

The North American Call Center Industry will become ever more entwined with those of other nations. The issue is how this will be done - to what degree - and in whose best interests. What will you say if one of your customers - or shareholders - or children - asks you if you practiced "Fair Trade" when outsourcing your Call Center jobs to India?

Response

David Butler, Executive Director, National Association of Call Centers, David.Butler@nationalcallcenters.org

To respond to David Filwood's essay I need first share with you a brief story.

Two weeks ago I went into Best Buy (I own the stock) to purchase a travel computer for the NACC. I prefer Sony computers because of past hardware and call center support problems I have had with another PC maker. I went in and was able to purchase a Sony VAIO, usually a mid to high range priced computer, for under \$700. I was stunned at the low price. Happy, but stunned. I remembered back to my first PC, an IBM PS-2, that I purchased at a department store for over \$2500. The reason I purchased it at a department store was that I had a credit card at that store and I could make payments on the computer for 2-years until it was paid off. So what has happened since that PS-2 day and today in terms of price of PCs and what does this have to do with fair or free trade?

As consumers we make purchasing decisions everyday. When we choose a product we in turn do not chose the other products available. Whether we chose the product based on price, quality, experience, habit or some mix of those we are making decisions. Though we may not say, "I am buying a \$695 computer and thus I expect to get little or no customer support from American or Canadian call center workers," in



This is the church Sacre Couer (Sacred Heart) in Paris. It sits atop one of the highest hills in Paris and thus from the top is a great vantage point of the rest of the vast city. Ironically, the one item that most people want to see from the top is the Eiffel Tower and that is actually blocked by some trees and buildings.

The outside is beautiful and photogenic but the inside is quite bland for a catholic church and for one with such a striking exterior.

The area around Sacre Couer was known as an artist district after World War II and through the 1960s. Tourism selling the art district has replaced the art district now.

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essence we are making that decision, consciously or not. As companies compete for market share, price, more than any other variable, becomes crucial (for example two surveys ago you even told us that you make call center technology purchase decision mainly on price, followed by reputation of the company second). To have the lowest or lower prices companies need to cut costs. One of those cost cutting measures will no doubt be labor since labor is both expensive and a recurring cost. Internal efficiencies is one way to save money, but often that is not enough in a very price sensitive market. Often companies choose to outsource their high labor cost functions like call centers to domestic providers or even offshore to locations like India and The Philippines. Does this hurt North American jobs? Absolutely. Does this produce less expensive goods and services for us as consumers? Absolutely.

Conversely, the Indian call center worker is doing well economically. Yes there are social tensions that are mounting and producing challenges as David Filwood highlighted in part because of their new found economic success, but the emerging middle class is also liberating some of these people (often female workers) from social constraints.

These are not easy questions or answers, but they are ones we will continue to grapple with over the next decade or two as new opportunities, technologies, options and challenges face us as call center industry professionals and consumers of products and services. Free trade, fair trade, all trade is consumer driven and most consumers purchase products based on price.

Call Center Comics

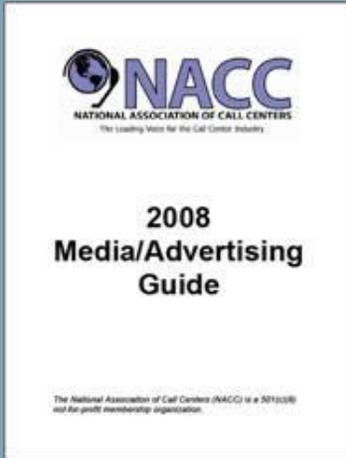
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