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Underwriters

All leading call center companies and suppliers should examine the *NACC Underwriting* opportunity in 2009 as evidence of their dedication to the growth of call center industry.

Unified Communications-We're Halfway There

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We recently ran a survey among readers of this newsletter asking for your opinion on a fast-rising and high-profile new communications technology for the contact center that we believe will have a direct and positive impact on customer service. That new technology is unified communications (UC). Since UC is getting so much coverage in trade press and websites we thought it would be a good idea to gauge where NACC members and readers of this newsletter stood in their understanding of UC and what readers' intentions are regarding the use of UC on their contact centers today and in the future.

Response to this survey has been less than we had hoped, but we're not ready to give up on the readers of "In Queue" yet! This survey is still on-line and accessible by following this link:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?
sm=BZGabklY6s_2bmUuqb7Tx3ng_3d_3d

The more responses we get the better our data is and the more useful it is to you. Out of respect for your time we designed this survey so that it can be completed in one minute or less. We are about halfway to having the number of respondents we'd like to have for this survey and we sincerely hope that you will also consider our request and give us one minute of your time to complete the survey. Even if you don't know what unified communications is, we want to hear from you. That is important information as well.

As always, your anonymity is guaranteed. No salesman will call!

We are close to 100 respondents so I thought it might be worthwhile to provide some early results with the caveat that these will most likely change as the number of respondents grows.

Our respondents so far are about evenly split in their current knowledge of unified communications. 51.5 percent of respondents were familiar with UC and how it applies to the contact center. The remainder of respondents was not familiar with UC. 30 percent of respondents were already using a UC solution in their contact center, which we found to be a surprisingly high percentage given the relative newness of UC solutions.

73 percent of respondents have yet to define a UC strategy for their

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NACC Investment Portfolio

Stock	Price	Value	Change
NT	0.27	0.15	-9.85
NICE	22.76	5.67	-4.33
VRNT	8.10	3.31	-6.69
SYKE	17.78	9.36	-0.64
WIT	7.90	5.27	-4.73
CVG	6.41	3.63	-6.37
TTEC	7.68	3.34	-6.66
ICTG	3.60	3.45	-6.55
APAC	1.05	4.75	-5.25
TOTAL		38.93	-51.07

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

Total Portfolio Value Now= $38.93

Even though the financial news is often bleak the value of the NACC Investment Portfolio has now reached $38.93 cents. This is up from two weeks ago showing a positive trend. The general rule of thumb is that the stock market is pricing 6 months in advance. If this is the case, it would appear that investors think the next six months will be better than the last six months.

Sykes continues to lead the pack with a value of $9.36 cents, with NICE and Wipro following at a distant $5.67 and $5.27 respectively. Nortel is still hanging on by a thread at 15 cents, having lost $9.85 of its portfolio value.

NACC Composite Index

contact center so if you're among those who are still learning about UC, you're not alone. 31 percent of respondents indicated that they will be evaluating UC for purchase and implementation in 2009. Only 22 percent of respondents indicated that they would not be interested in looking at UC in 2009. The remainder did not know if UC would be on their agenda next year or not.

66 percent of respondents indicated that they saw Cisco Systems as the leader in unified communications in the contact center. This response is reflective of the effort that Cisco has put into unified communications over the past couple of years.

We will be reporting more results of this survey in future issues of In Queue, hopefully with at least twice the number of responses we have so far. Once again, please take a moment (literally) and provide us your opinion of unified communications in the contact center. Follow the link below and thanks in advance.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=BZGabkIY6s_2bmUuqb7Tx3ng_3d_3d

NACC Reports to be Released in January

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The NACC will be releasing two reports to members and sponsors in January 2009. These reports will provide readers with a review of the contact center industry during 2008 and will look ahead at 2009.

The first of these reports will cover the market and technology trends and issues and is designed for those customer care professionals with responsibility for the strategic direction of their contact center. The report will look specifically at:
• Technology trends, including workforce optimization, unified communications and the impact of Web 2.0 in the contact center;
• Economic trends that will likely affect the contact center in the year ahead; and
• Market trends that will shape the direction the industry takes in 2009.

This report, along with its companion report covering operational data gathered by the Call Center Lab at the University of Southern Mississippi, is provided as a deliverable to those individuals who have joined the NACC as a member or those organizations that have joined the NACC as a sponsor. For more information on becoming an NACC member or sponsor and receiving these and future reports, please visit www.nationalcallcenters.org.

60 Ideas in 60 Minutes-Round IV

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

David L. Butler- A quick story which gets to the heart of some of the problems that I've seen with some contact centers. Research in Motion, the company that makes these neat little Blackberries, when

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
9/10/08	66.55	-1.69	-2.54
9/24/08	56.91	-9.64	-16.94
10/8/08	43.24	-13.67	-31.62
10/22/08	41.83	-1.41	-3.37
11/5/08	43.26	1.43	3.31
11/19/08	32.89	-10.38	-31.55
12/3/08	36.19	3.30	9.13
12/17/08	40.65	4.46	10.97

The *NACC Composite Index* was up the past two weeks to 40.65. A big pat on the back for everyone. We hope that 2009 is a year when we are able to continue reporting growth in all of our financial sector metrics for the call center industry.

Dow Composite	2.71%
S&P 500 Composite	3.72%
NASDAQ Composite	5.50%
NACC Composite	10.97%

The *NACC Composite Index* outperformed all other indices the past two weeks, again! *The NACC Composite Index* was up almost 11% with the nearest competitor, the NASDAQ, at 5.50%. This indicates that in general, people are investing more in our call center related stocks than in broad based stocks represented in the other indices.

Quotes

"Do give books - religious or otherwise - for Christmas. They're never fattening, seldom sinful, and permanently personal."
-Lenore Hershey

you contact them via phone they ask you on their IVR for an alpha-numeric entry. The problem with that is Blackberry PDAs don't have an alpha-numeric keyboard. Unlike my children who can text like a wizard and know where the letter "C" and "M" are on an alpha-numeric keyboard, I do not. It's a simple process for Research in Motion to ask people to do something that their own PDA's can't accommodate. Most contact centers that I've worked with over time have these little things. They're small, people often get around them, but over time customers begin to start losing their faith in the company if these simple things are not fixed. Examine your own contact centers and find out if there are little things like this that draw a negative light upon it and fix them as soon as you can.

Samantha Kane- I want to talk a little bit about process and about UC- the big cool word UC. We get asked many, many times where to start and like *The Wizard of Oz*, you start at the beginning of the yellow brick road, right? But the fact is you have to take stock. You have to know what you own and how to use it. You have to map out what your processes are. And then you have to define UC as you see fit. Every vendor at this conference has a different definition of unified communications, which is to their benefit. And every vertical has a different need and a different definition, so you have to define what your expectation is going to be if you want to get to unified communication. And then the next big word, CEBP, communication enabled business process, is something that everybody is trying to get to. Well ,you can't get to it unless you've done the right steps. So, if nothing else, go back to the beginning and check that you've done the steps.

Barb Bleiler-One thing we've added, it's a fun kind of thing, you can use it as a positive or an negative, we call it the "word of the day" jar. We were running into those issues in the call center where there were a lot of "um's, ah's and ya's." Gosh, I don't want to hear those. We put together a list of those words and put them in a jar and let someone randomly pull the word out of the jar. The idea is to not say that word for each day, and if someone gets caught saying it, it costs them a dime with a one dollar limit per day. For fun, they put my name in there one day, and each time someone called me I said "Hello this is Barb" they immediately said "dime! " The idea is 1) it gets them tuned into them saying that word, and 2) the fellow team members hear it and you hear "dime." It modifies behavior and makes it fun. What we do is we use that money to turn around and have a little party for the area, you know buy cupcakes, pizza, or some little gift. So it kind of makes it fun. You can also do it for the buzz words if you've got a new product out there and you're trying to pitch that every time they say that product BOOM you got it, something fun to add to your call center.

Beel Yaqub- There is a very simple and effective way to minimize your attrition and operating cost. Many organizations typically experience a spike in attrition during the new hire transition phase. What I mean by transition is the critical point of training where the new employee exits the training class and is expected to start handling your client calls. In many cases the new employee doesn't know what to expect, especially if they have no previous contact centre experience and all of the sudden they are expected to handle live calls. Due to the shock this experience creates, they don't feel very effective at their job and they may decide "this is not the job for me." To deal with this challenge, you can segment your call types and training curriculum to provide a smoother transition. Start with the most basic call types to give them hands on experience very early in the training process while simplifying the progression in which they can learn, easing the learning curve while building their confidence. If you introduce some simple call types two weeks into training have the employees spend about a week handling
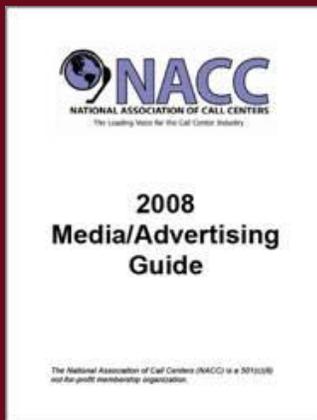
these calls and progress to more complex calls shortly after. Implementing this simple strategy will improve employee retention and reduce your operating cost.

Vicki Herrell- SWPP â€" vicki.herrell@swpp.org â€"We regularly get upgrades to our software and other technologies. We go to vendor training and learn about the upgrades, and then we get back to our center and do things exactly the way we used to without taking advantage of new features. It's important to have your whole operations team learn about the new things your software can do. One of our members did something interesting to facilitate this. They gave each of their analysts the task to find six new things in the software that they were not using before. Then they had them put together a written report on the new features that they found and then present one of those at each weekly team meeting. This helped with continued learning throughout the year and certainly helped everyone on the team learn about the software's capabilities and features that they were not using.

William (Bill) Durr-I am going to continue riffing here on process. Every organization has an internal quality monitoring team, but something I don't understand is why we call it quality. I think a better term for it might be â€œbrand protection.â€ The internal quality monitoring team has an idea of how they want the call to go and the agentâ€™s ability to do that is deemed quality. Last year Bain, a global consultancy, surveyed 362 companies and asked them if they believed they delivered a great experience to their customers. Fully 80% said that, yes, they did. Then Bain asked the customers of those companies if they received a great experience. Only 8% agreed that they did. Letâ€™s call quality monitoring what it is â€" brand protection and if we want to know anything about quality letâ€™s ask the customers themselves.

Call Center Comics
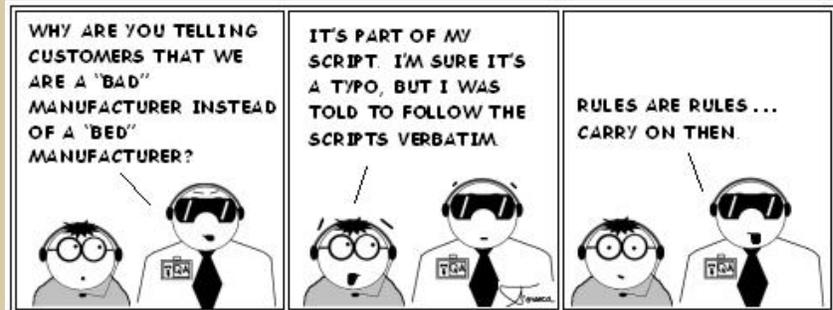
If you like this comic and would like to see more write Ozzie at callcentercomics@yahoo.com and visit his website at http://callcentercomics.com/cartoon_categories.htm or just click on the comic to take you to his page. The NACC appreciates Ozzie letting us use some of his comics in our newsletter.

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See Ya Next Year

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This is our last issue of "In Queue" in 2008. We wish all of our readers a great end to 2008 and a very successful start to 2009. Our next issue is out January 9, 2009, and we look forward to seeing you then.

To view past issues of *In Queue*, please click here.

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