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NACC Investment Portfolio

Stock	Price	Value	Change
NICE	21.89	5.45	-4.55
VRNT	10.25	4.18	-5.82
SYKE	17.53	9.23	-0.77
WIT	11.11	7.42	-2.58
CVG	8.68	4.91	-5.09
TTEC	13.90	6.04	-3.96
ICTG	8.52	8.18	-1.82
APAC	4.54	20.54	10.54
TOTAL		65.95	-14.05

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

Early Survey Results Reveal Optimism, New Interests

Paul Stockford, Research Director, National Association of Call Centers and Chief Analyst, Saddletree Research, Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org

As we get closer to having the population sample size that will provide us with a statistically significant number of respondents for this year's In Queue readership survey of attitudes and intentions in the contact center industry, we thought it was worthwhile to report some of the findings in the early survey results. These results indicate a measure of optimism among survey respondents along with other shifts in attitude toward the overall contact center industry.

Respondents so far weigh heavily on the side of decision makers or decision influencers with 84 percent of respondents holding the title of manager or above. Nearly 52 percent of respondents have the title of director or executive. We believe this response rate gives additional credibility to the answers we have received to the surveys thus far.

We asked survey respondents for their opinions regarding economic conditions for the second half of 2009. 48 percent reported that they believed that the second half of 2009 would be somewhat better or much better economically than the first half of 2009. 44 percent believed that the second half of 2009 would be about the same as the first half of 2008 while only eight percent felt the second half of 2009 would be worse economically than the first half of the year. This indicates an overall sense of optimism for economic conditions, which is also reflected in the respondents' technology evaluation and purchase intentions for the next 12 months.

In terms of beliefs about their own businesses for the rest of this year, as opposed to beliefs about the economy in general, 43 percent believed that their businesses would be somewhat better or much better than business was during the first half of 2009. 47 percent believed that business would be about the same while only ten percent believed that business would be worse. Again this indicates an overall sense of optimism toward the future. Coincidentally, the percentage of those believing that business would be worse for the rest of the year tracks closely with the percentage of respondents from the Travel and Hospitality vertical and the Retail vertical, both of which have been hit particularly hard by the current economic recession.

In last year's survey over 70 percent of respondents indicated no interest in evaluating or acquiring speech analytics. This year's early results show that number to have dropped to 55 percent, indicating a growing interest in this emerging technology solution. 27 percent of respondents indicated an intention to evaluate speech analytics over the next 12 months while six percent of respondents reported that the funding for acquiring speech analytics over the next year has been approved.

As of this writing the technology solution that has been reported as approved for purchase and funded by the greatest number of respondents is agent desktop software. This is followed closely by Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) infrastructure for the contact center. In this survey we also asked specifically about planned network infrastructure changes over the next 12 months and were surprised to find that 40 percent of respondents planned to upgrade their current infrastructure or have planned a complete infrastructure replacement.

Rounding out the top five technology acquisitions approved and funded for the next 12 months were speech analytics, as previously mentioned, e-learning and quality monitoring. More precise percentages will be reported once the survey closes but in the meantime the reader has an idea of how his or her technology interests compare to

Then Nortel went bankrupt so we have adjusted the investment portfolio and now the new start value would be $80.00 or $10.00 per stock.

Total Portfolio Value Now= $65.95 a loss of $5.00 in value the past two weeks. APAC was still up with SYKE on its heals with just a small loss. VRNT, CVG and NICE dropped a considerable distance during the past two weeks. Let's hope the trend turns back around again.

NACC Composite Index

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
9/10/08	66.55	-1.69	-2.54
10/8/08	43.24	-13.67	-31.62
11/5/08	43.26	1.43	3.31
12/3/08	36.19	3.30	9.13
1/7/09	42.75	2.10	4.92
2/4/09	35.68	-0.55	-1.54
3/4/09	30.94	-2.42	-7.82
4/1/09	37.88	1.75	4.63
4/15/09	43.13	5.25	12.18
4/29/09	48.53	5.40	11.12
5/13/09	50.72	2.19	4.31
5/27/09	55.66	4.94	8.88
6/10/09	61.67	6.00	9.74
6/24/09	55.06	-6.61	-12.00

The *NACC Composite Index* was down this week by 12.00% breaking a six newsletter (12 week) positive run. The losses from the past two weeks wipe out only about two weeks were of gains, clearly recoverable in a short period of time.

Dow Composite	-5.03%
S&P 500 Composite	-4.24%
NASDAQ Composite	-3.39%
NACC Composite	-12.00%

The *NACC Composite Index* down as were the other major indices. However, after writing a nice essay in the last issue about how the NACC Composite Index was beating the other market trends, what happens?, it all turns around. The NACC Composite dropped 12

those of his or her colleagues and peers.

Decision factors influencing purchase decisions over the next 12 months should come as no surprise with return on investment (ROI) being the number one response and price coming in a close second. What is surprising is how these influencing factors have changed since last year's survey. In 2008 respondents reported that company reputation was the second most important influencing factor. This year only 14 percent of respondents reported company reputation as being an important influencing factor in their purchase decisions. Also noteworthy is the fact that zero percent; i.e., no respondents, were influenced by information on a company website or information on other websites or blogs.

On a final note of optimism, 63 percent of respondents indicated that they planned to hire new or replacement agents over the next 12 months. On the downside, 55 percent of respondents reported that agent attrition is a very important issue in their contact center. The relatively high percentage of respondents reporting hiring intentions over the next 12 months is likely a mix of contact centers experiencing growth as well as contact centers experiencing high turnover rates.

More survey results will be reported in future issues of In Queue, including more accurate percentages once the survey is closed. If you haven't weighed in yet with your opinion, it's not too late to participate and we would appreciate your input. The survey will take no more than two or three minutes of your time and, as you have seen here, results will be shared with all NACC members and readers. Please follow this link to participate in this survey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=26yvz0a7GZ_2b5fJEXRuwF1w_3d_3d

Once again, your confidentiality is guaranteed and no salesman will call. A minimal effort on your part will yield a maximum benefit for your peers, colleagues and fellow In Queue subscribers. Look for more survey results in future issues of this newsletter.

From the Trenches

Technology Optimization Part 7: Computer Telephony Integration

Lori Bocklund, President, Strategic Contact, Lori@strategiccontact.com

Computer Telephony Integration (often equated to "screen pops") has long been on every center's wish list, promising to shave seconds off every call and improve customer service. For many, it has been the elusive technology they could never afford. For others, it's the investment that fell short on benefits and long on costs. If we take a look at why, I think you will learn some things that help you get more out of what you have, or what you are planning for, to drive both savings and improved service.

For those who fall into the "could never have" or "don't have" categories, CTI seems cost-prohibitive, overly complex, and/or too much trouble to find the right solution. In a worst case scenario, some wound up with "shelfware" after a failed implementation. Others suffered a breakdown in the "I" of CTI – perhaps after an upgrade to one component – and the systems stopped talking to each other. If CTI is not delivering high benefits, keeping it running is not a high priority.

For those who fall into the "short on benefits and long on costs" category, CTI is a disappointment. While CTI can pop screens and save time, the value depends on having a good way to identify customers, a high likelihood of matching that identifier in the database, and a good screen to pop. For many, there really is no good identifier, meeting all the criteria from both a customer and company perspective. Or, the identifier has a low "hit rate" in the database. For example, phone numbers are a customer-friendly identifier, but the database may not be up to date. And in a world with home phones, cell phones, and work phones, how can the company keep up? Even for folks who navigate this challenge successfully, the "popped" screen has to be more than a weigh station before heading to 14 other screens in six non-integrated applications, forcing re-entry of customer data after all.

Several years ago, I wrote that I wished the acronym CTI would go away. It's confusing because to many it means only screen pops, but the technology can do so much more. Unfortunately, few do more with it – and therein lies another reason for poor cost-benefit results. If you only pop screens, you miss the opportunity to do sophisticated routing, such as multimedia, multi-site, and data-directed routing based on information stored in your database. Perhaps you have outbound dialing requirements, or should

percent in the past two weeks, about the same as all three of the other major indices combined. So maybe I should have not talked trash against the other indices and just kept my mouth shut about how good the NACC Composite Index was doing.

Picture of the Week

River surfing in Munich, Germany, is the activity above. In Munich, within a large park known as the English Gardens, a river runs. And at this location in the park the river turns into a rapids, creating waves that locals like to ride on surf boards as if they are on the ocean. The surfers hold their boards, drop them to the side, and when the surfer on the wave wipes out, the next in line from the other side pushes off the wall and to the center of the surf. This person continues until they wipe out or get tired, and then the next one from the opposite side follows. So what happens to these people after the fall? Well the float down the river a bit, quite fast, and then swim to the shore, climb out, walk back up a dirt pathway, and then get back in line to start all over again.

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provide coordinated voice/data transfers and conferences. And almost every center could benefit from better reporting, including "cradle to grave" call tracking and information that ties outcomes to contact handling. Maybe a softphone that puts agent controls for login/logout, workstate changes, and performance statistics on the desktop would be a time saver and performance enhancer. All too often, these "CTI" capabilities aren't planned or implemented.

In spite of its challenges, there are ways to optimize CTI technology and its application in the center, whether you have it today or are planning for it tomorrow:
-If you don't have it and can't afford it right now, look at ways you can implement a "poor man's" version. See if you can display information on the phone, or "whisper" it to the agent prior to connecting the call. While these options aren't as sexy as a screen pop, they deliver some savings while improving the customer experience.
-If you do have CTI and it performs poorly, conduct an audit and define actions to improve performance. For example, if you have a low database match on screen pops, see if there are ways you can update your records. Some centers contract with third party services to update phone numbers. Others ask reps to update customer info on every call, investing a little to save a lot. Look at end-to-end integration between your ACD, IVR, CTI, and desktop applications. And make sure your processes don't compromise payback – for example, requiring customers to confirm information they provided and the CSR received. An audit will help you identify and address these (mis) steps.
-If all you are doing with your CTI is popping screens, look into the licensing fees and integration required to support added functionality that may benefit your business, such as outbound calling and data directed routing. Or, look at ways to optimize the desktop to streamline the call process.
-If you don't have CTI yet, start looking at low cost ways to implement CTI; the market offers options today. Talk to vendors about their strategies and solutions to help you achieve your business goals at an affordable price. Consider Session Initiation Protocol (SIP), bundled capabilities, and less complex, lower cost CTI software. High functioning and high value CTI doesn't have to be out of reach for your center and your customers.
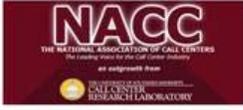
Call Center News

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I ran across an article on June 23, 2009, in ccfonline titled "Robots to replace call centre agents?" This title caught my eye so I read the story. Apparently a company in the UK has launched a new technology that simulates a call center agent's voice including regional accents with the eventual goal of being interactive and being able to speak multiple languages. Here is the kicker, the story quotes the technical director of the company stating, "we expect to bring jobs back to the UK" and "people who have been forced to do outsourcing due to cost issues will be able to bring the call centres back to the UK." I am at a loss on how a computerized technology simulating a person's voice and interacting with customers will bring jobs back to the UK. If it works as expected would it not replace call center agents whether they are offshore or in the UK? How replacing a human agent with a "robot" agent brings jobs back is unclear to me? Any thoughts? Am I missing something?

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