

NACC

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CALL CENTERS
The Leading Voice for the Call Center Industry

an outgrowth from



THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
CALL CENTER
RESEARCH LABORATORY

In Queue

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

Volume 4, Issue 18 - September 4, 2009

Our Contact Info:

David Butler
Executive Director
National Association of Call Centers
100 South 22nd Avenue
Hattiesburg MS 39401
Tel: 601.447.8300

David.Butler@nationalcallcenters.org
<http://www.nationalcallcenters.org>

Circulation

In Queue circulation 53,559

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. See the [NACC Advertising Page](#) for more information.

Share the Knowledge

Send this newsletter to colleagues by clicking "Forward this email" at the very bottom and end of this newsletter or sign up for this newsletter by [clicking here](#).

NACC Investment Portfolio

New NACC Report!

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

The NACC just released this week its newest "State of the Industry Report: 4th Quarter 2008 Data." The executive summary from the report, and one of the tables from the report are listed below. Reports such as these are distributed to members of the NACC on a regular basis. New reports on the state of the call center industry will come out regularly including future reports for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd quarter 2009 data for the call center industry in the coming months. You will not find this data anywhere else. If you are employed in a call center, sell to the call center industry, have call centers in your local market or are related to the industry in any way, you cannot afford not to be informed on these industry trends. Keep yourself competitive in these uncertain times, find out more about NACC membership and get your hands on these reports click <http://www.nationalcallcenters.org/membership.php>.

In the fourth quarter of 2008 more call center jobs were lost in the United States than were gained for the first time since the data was collected going back to 2005. This loss of jobs in the call center industry was tied directly to the recession within the United States economy. Even though the country showed a negative growth, not all call center sectors lost jobs and not all states lost jobs. Some sectors, such as Medical Services, continued to show a net positive growth during this quarter, and some states such as South Dakota, Tennessee, and Massachusetts had a positive growth in call center jobs.

Table 3

Industry Classification Number	Opens/Expansions	Closes/Contractions	Net Jobs
Customer Service	1	1	-125
Financial Services/Banking/Insurance	3	2	-25
Fulfillment/Distribution/Reservations	1	9	-1036
Government	1	2	24
Medical Services	3	0	230
Other	0	2	-679
Telecommunications	1	6	-459
Third party outsourcing	6	12	-503

From the Trenches

Stock	Price	Value	Change
NICE	29.75	7.41	-2.59
VRNT	12.07	4.93	-5.07
SYKE	20.39	10.73	0.73
WIT	15.41	10.29	0.29
CVG	10.64	6.02	-3.98
TTEC	16.12	7.01	-2.99
ICTG	10.68	10.25	0.25
APAC	5.18	23.44	13.44
TOTAL		80.07	0.07

Original Value start 11/6/2007 =US\$90.00 or US\$10.00 per stock. 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= \$80.07, just barely keeping our head above water with .07 cents profit. The past two weeks were basically flat for the NACC Investment Portfolio. The market has been bid up fairly rapidly the past few months and investors are taking a breather, looking at data closely, and waiting to see if the data coming out about the economy shows future growth and if growth, at what rate. Once the economy starts to show regular and steady progress forward at predictable intervals, then the portfolio will continue its climb upward.

NACC Composite Index

Assessing Your Center: A Strategic Imperative to Becoming the "Best"

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

Contact center professionals are always wondering what the best centers do – whether metrics, technology, processes, organizational structures, or facilities. It is a rare center that excels in all areas, yet the “best of the best” have high aspirations. An assessment puts your center on the path to improving key areas that benefit your company and your customers.

An assessment takes a careful look at your contact center environment and analyzes its ability to deliver on business and operational goals – whether your focus is service, cost management, or sales. We believe today’s economic environment heightens the need for an assessment to ensure the center achieves its potential and delivers business value.

What are the best practices against which you’ll assess performance? Contact center benchmarking studies are one input, but you need to take them with a grain of salt. They often report on what the masses do rather than what the “best of the best” do. (And who wants to set the bar at “average”?) Further, variations on definitions can cloud their meaning, especially for metrics. The better input to best practices is what top centers do, what the industry offers, what customers expect, and what comprises a successful customer experience while also optimizing the business operations for cost management, service delivery, and revenue protection or generation.

Your assessment must also consider the unique characteristics of your business and CC environment, as well as your strategic goals. Centers are not equal in size, vertical industry, customer base, budget, resources, or support functions. They aren’t driven by the same factors nor are they trying to achieve the same business goals. So an assessment must consider the unique practices that influence this center. The result is that the outcome ensures alignment of your center’s technology, operations, organization, and metrics with the business strategy, goals, and drivers.

Valuable assessments have a number of other characteristics. They are penetrating and objective. They address the following six categories: strategy, operations/processes, organization, technology, metrics, and facilities. They consider front-line and support functions. And, they drive out an action plan or “roadmap,” not just a scorecard of where you are good or bad.

The assessment process has several critical steps:

-Discovery: Discovery starts with understanding your world today through current state observations. Part of that discovery includes clearly defining the business and operational drivers – strategy, directions, and goals. You must also explore the underlying strategies, such as technology strategy for the enterprise or the contact center. As a result of exploring these various elements, you will understand how the strategies align or don’t align, pointing to an opportunity. Finally, discovery includes unearthing those best practices and what is possible so that you understand what other organizations do, what technology can do, and what can help enable your center to achieve its goals for delivering good service, managing costs, and/or driving revenue.

-Assessment and analysis: Assessment provides the context for assessing and analyzing the center. Then you must review the current state, identify the vision based on business and operational goals and requirements, and identify gaps between the current state and vision.

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
4/15/09	43.13	5.25	12.18
5/13/09	50.72	2.19	4.31
6/10/09	61.67	6.00	9.74
7/8/09	54.48	-0.59	-1.08
8/5/09	73.97	7.50	10.13
8/19/09	72.54	-1.43	-1.98
9/2/09	74.97	2.44	3.25

The *NACC Composite Index* was up this week by 3.25%. Though not as spectacular as recent weeks, it was a solid gain and much better than the NACC Investment Portfolio. It is now higher than it has been in 16 months.

Dow Composite	0.02%
S&P 500 Composite	-0.17%
NASDAQ Composite	-0.11%
NACC Composite	3.25%

The *NACC Composite Index* was up 3.25% this past two weeks with the other indices also trading flat (Dow) or just negative (S&P500 and NASDAQ). This suggests that there is more confidence in the call center stocks overall than in a broader market portfolio, suggesting that there is still room for growth in the call center industry.

Quote

"If you can't sleep, then get up and do something instead of lying there and worrying. It's the worry that

This preliminary analysis defines opportunities to improve. From there, an assessment drives out recommendations to close the gaps, considering the realities of your business. Often recommendations pose options with tradeoffs, because there is no "perfect" solution. The next step tackles those tradeoffs to finalize the plan.

-Develop and document the action plan or roadmap: In this step, those conducting an assessment sort through the options and tradeoffs to finalize recommendations and develop the full plan. They will also consider the timing and phasing of the various initiatives, considering factors such as: budget, resources, timelines, pain points, return on investment, other initiatives and the associated resource demands and change implications, dependencies, etc. This step solidifies the recommendations into the plan, with actions and timing in various categories. Once documented, the team can seek approval and hopefully pursue execution soon.

Over the next few months, we will provide a series of articles that talk about the six assessment areas and address:

- What does the scope of this area entail?
- Why assess this area?
- What should you look for?
- Common things we find in assessing this area
- Some best practices to consider

We hope that this series triggers assessments that drive actionable plans for improvement. Then we will all experience more of the "best" of what customer interaction has to offer.

Follow this link to a list of "best practices" we have developed from working with many centers:

http://www.strategiccontact.com/pdf/bestpractices_v6_1006.pdf

More Discussion about Discussions

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

In our last newsletter (http://www.nationalcallcenters.org/pubs/In_Queue/vol4no17.html) we discussed the possibility of creating telephone-based discussion groups among NACC members in order to problem solve and discuss best practices in customer service operations. We asked readers to let us know if they would be interested in participating in these types of forums and, if so, what topics would be of interest to them to start off the discussion series. Some of the suggested topics included:

- Low and no-cost incentive ideas
- Performance measurement tools for multi-channel contact centers
- Ideal span of control ratios (Supervisor to agent, manager to supervisor, etc.)
- Coaching and motivating staff
- Hiring, training and retention
- Turnover issues
- Unified Communications in the contact center
- Hosted solutions
- Social media and "rules" for social media outside of work; e.g., Facebook
- How to make a small call center profitable

gets you, not the loss of sleep."
-Dale Carnegie

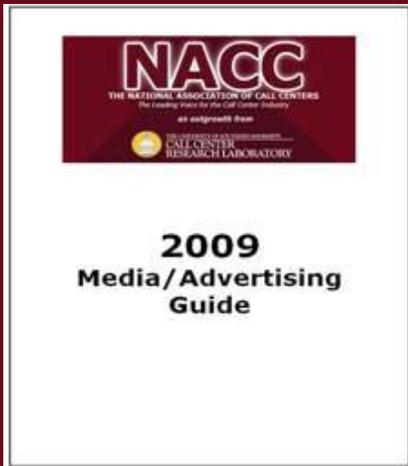
Picture of the Week



The plane crash above was just outside of San Marcos, Texas. The sign under the plane reads "There is no such thing as a perfectly good airplane. Learn to Skydive!" Yes, this plane was just outside a local airport where they teach skydiving.

Advertise with Us

Click on the image below to view the NACC Advertising Page where you can view our channels and prices.



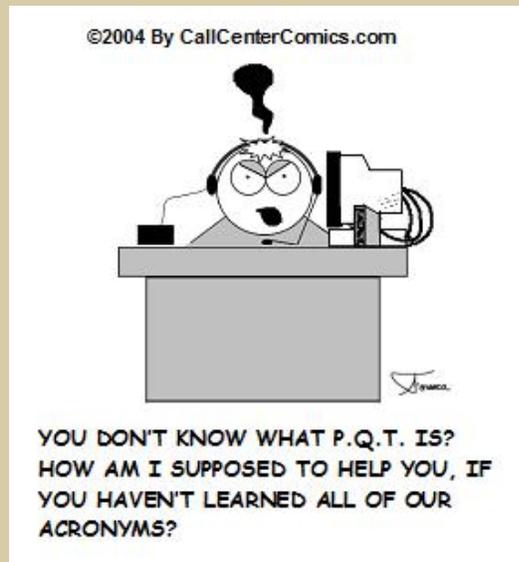
To advertise with the NACC, please contact the NACC at:
Tel: 601.447.8300
Fax: 601.266.5087
E-mail:
David.Butler@nationalcallcenters.org

One respondent also included a subject near and dear to our hearts. Specifically the suggested topic was "Professional organizations such as CCNG and SWPP – why don't more people join." That is always a topic of discussion between David Butler and me -- how do we motivate contact center professionals to join the NACC? Although we have seen a significant uptake in NACC membership this year, we would like to do more to ensure that 2010 is an even better year as we emerge from the economic recession. Thus the reason for coming up with ideas such as the discussion forums and asking you, the reader and member, if these would be of value to you.

If you have a topic idea that you didn't see on the list above, or saw a topic that would motivate you to want to participate in the discussion, please take 30 seconds (literally!) and respond to our three-question survey regarding the forum discussion idea. You can find the survey here: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=XJKg3zq10PLzPGuPKzWTYw_3d_3d

As always, your input is of great value in helping us shape an industry membership organization that is relevant to the industry and useful for its members in their customer service careers.

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.

Sponsors

Your company logo here. To find out more, contact David Butler at David.Butler@nationalcallcenters.org.

To view past issues of *In Queue*, please [click here](#).

If you would like to contribute to *In Queue*, please reply to this email with "Contribute" in the subject line.

Copyright 2009 National Association of Call Centers

Subscription Center: [Unsubscribe](#) | [Forward this Email](#) | [Edit Profile](#)