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

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## Our Contact Info:

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

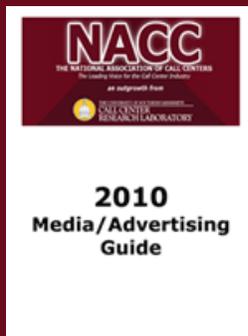
[David.Butler@nationalcallcenters.org](mailto:David.Butler@nationalcallcenters.org)  
<http://www.nationalcallcenters.org>

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## Answering the Customer Call in the Phone-Free Contact Center

Paul Stockford, Research Director, National Association of Call Centers and Chief Analyst, Saddletree Research, [Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org](mailto:Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org)

About a month ago, Aspect announced that it had completed its first full year of using Microsoft Office Communications Server (OCS) in lieu of its traditional telephone network. This news item caught my eye because I know Aspect has a fairly large support organization, including a call center, and I was curious to know how OCS performed in the high pressure world of customer service.

Microsoft's OCS essentially replaces the various components of an in-house telephone network, including the desktop telephone handset. Instead of the familiar desktop phone, all of Aspect's 1,800 employees at 20 sites around the world now just have a headset that plugs directly into their desktop computer. All telephone functionality is performed by individuals using their computer screen and a mouse.

The highly integrated features of OCS provided Aspect's contact center with opportunities for collaboration with virtually anyone in the company via a function that Aspect calls "Ask an Expert." Ask an Expert is essentially Aspect's "presence" feature, which puts an agent in immediate contact with an internal resource with the click of a mouse. Rather than having to rely on escalation or the dreaded callback, which can quickly shatter a contact center's first call resolution (FCR) goals, Ask an Expert allows an agent to immediately bring in subject matter expertise via an instant messaging feature or, if necessary, have the subject matter expert join the call. A simple drag function can connect anyone within Aspect to a customer call.

Not only does Ask an Expert allow an agent to quickly ascertain who might be available to assist with a call, it can also help the agent find the person with the right skills to help resolve a particular customer situation. The Aspect agent simply inputs the skills needed in order to resolve a customer issue and the system automatically finds someone with the necessary skills and provides a list, ranked by skills, of available resources anywhere in Aspect's 20 worldwide locations. Ask an Expert also looks at who has been called in the past and how often they've been called so the same person doesn't always get dragged, literally and figuratively, into customer support calls.

Besides Ask an Expert, all traditional phone functions like conference calls and call transfers are accomplished with a mouse. Aspect saved about \$100,000 per month over the past year just on conference calls. Eliminating their 26 PBXs saves Aspect about \$300,000 in annual maintenance costs.

The question that remained in my mind was how reliable the OCS network was compared to the traditional telephone network. In their first year of using OCS Aspect completed 1.7 million calls with 12 million minutes of talk time. Aspect's CTO told me that their data showed no difference in reliability from their traditional telephone network. While the jury is still out regarding OCS's long-term reliability relative to a traditional telephone network, Aspect's

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

Stock	Price	Value	Change
NICE	29.81	7.42	-2.58
VRNT	25.90	10.57	0.57
SYKE	19.94	10.49	0.49
WIT	21.31	14.23	4.23
CVG	12.49	7.07	-2.93
TTEC	16.18	7.04	-2.96
APAC	5.82	26.33	16.33
TOTAL		83.15	13.15

The PIGS have hurt the global market. What? You did not hear this? Yep, PIGS they say. Well, not the oink, oink, kind, but instead the countries of Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain, the so-called P.I.G.S. If you never believed in globalization before, you should now. The American housing market and associated financial games triggered the global recession. The Greek debt is prolonging it and this uncertainty is threatening to spread to other countries with a less-than-stellar balance sheets. All this to day that the NACC Investment Portfolio is down this week to \$83.15 but still at a profit of over \$13.00 from the initial investment.

## NACC Composite Index

experience provides tangible evidence of OCS reliability in the distributed enterprise. With up to 500 support people on Aspect's worldwide system, it appears that Microsoft OCS is off to a good start in the contact center.

## From the Trenches

### Business Process Optimization: Execute the Plan Successfully

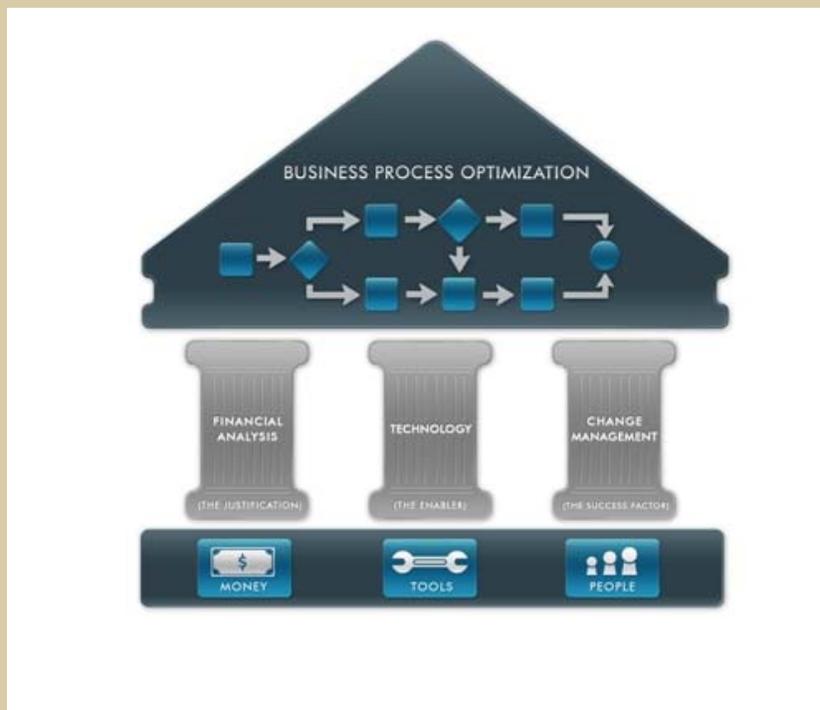
Brian Hinton, Principal Consultant – Strategic Contact, [brian@strategiccontact.com](mailto:brian@strategiccontact.com)

In this article series, we have discussed

- Defining your overall BPO project,
- Preparing the project team,
- Conducting discovery of your environment,
- Defining realistic options,
- Determining tools to achieve your vision,
- Designing your "to-be" processes, and
- Developing the plan to implement the new processes.

Now we'll look at the three pillars of a successful implementation.

- Technology
- Financial analysis
- Change Management



### Technology

In BPO: Assess and Analyze to Identify Your Options (March 12, 2010), we discussed exploring what is possible with different categories of technology that enable process optimization. During the Design and Develop phase, optimizing your processes will probably include eliminating or automating steps, which could require technology. Thus, you may need to purchase and install new technology before your new processes can go into effect. Don't cut corners with this step!

### Procuring New Technology

Follow a best practices approach to technology procurement by using your cross-functional team to define detailed requirements, establish vendor

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
3/12/08	65.47	-11.25	-17.18
6/4/08	81.51	2.93	3.60
9/10/08	66.55	-1.69	-2.54
12/3/08	36.19	3.30	9.13
1/7/09	42.75	2.10	4.92
3/4/09	30.94	-2.42	-7.82
6/10/09	61.67	6.00	9.74
9/16/09	81.26	6.29	7.74
12/16/09	100.81	4.24	4.21
1/13/10	110.48	9.67	8.75
1/27/10	97.93	-12.54	-12.81
2/9/10	94.57	-3.37	-3.56
2/24/10	99.36	4.80	4.83
3/9/10	107.55	8.19	7.62
4/7/10	109.39	1.84	1.68
5/5/10	99.95	-9.45	-9.45

The *NACC Composite Index* was up down 9.45% and down 9.45% points as well, which makes sense since it closed near 100 points. This means that the composite index is just below the starting value in November 2007. I am not sure to be happy it is at this level given where it was in March 2009 or be sad that after two and a half years we are still at the break-even point.

Dow Composite	0.27%
S&P 500 Composite	-1.42%
NASDAQ Composite	-1.20%
NACC Composite	-9.45%

The *NACC Composite Index* was down almost 10.00% while the Dow was just barely positive and the S&P500 and NASDAQ were down between 1% and 1.5%.

### Quote

"The inherent vice of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings; the inherent vice of socialism is the equal sharing of miseries."  
-Winston Churchill

### Picture of the Week

evaluation criteria, prepare and distribute a Request for Proposal (RFP) to two or three vendors that were chosen through a reasonable due diligence process. Evaluate the responses by scoring them against your selection criteria and select the best vendor to meet your requirements.

### Implementing New Technology

Once you've selected the technology you need, you'll progress to implementation. While implementing BPO technology is not that different from other technology, there are a few "hot button" areas of focus. Because the technology can present changes to users – internal or external – the design process and testing become particularly important. Involve the front-line users in both steps. Training and pilots are the next critical steps in the implementation of BPO technology, ensuring the technology is effective for the users in a production environment. Another target area is the reporting and analytics, which often get short-changed. Make sure the project implementation includes steps to ensure these elements are working well and delivering the information analysts need to continue to optimize the processes.

### Financial Analysis

Part of getting buy-in for project approval is building a business case that quantifies the costs and benefits of the process change. The business value of a process change generally translates into measurable changes in a few specific variables, such as average handle time, first call resolution, quality scores and customer satisfaction. You can think of those variables as "success metrics." Before you launch your BPO initiative, establish a baseline value for the variables that you have identified as driving the benefit of your process change. Determine how you'll track changes in these metrics as you execute your optimization plan. Document and report on the improvements. Current stakeholders will want assurance that their investment dollars were well spent. Prospective stakeholders will be more inclined to fund additional projects as they gain confidence in your ROI models and project process.

### Change Management

Process change alters the way people in your organization work. Many people – if not most – will resist adjustments to work habits and routines to which they've become accustomed. You'll need to institute a formal Change Management program to help people adapt to the changes and ensure project success. A formal change management methodology (see note below) should include:

- A communication plan that informs employees of the who-what-when-where-why-how of your project and gets them excited about the change
- A sponsorship roadmap that details responsibilities for communication and other roles the primary advocates play in supporting the project
- Training those whose work processes will change
- Coaching through the change to ensure your staff feel supported during what could be a difficult time
- Reinforcement through additional training when required and celebrating successes

### Success Requires a Comprehensive Approach

Process change can be difficult so it will be worthwhile to pilot the change in stages before rolling out to full production. Fine tune your processes, technology application and plans based on the pilot results. Keep your cross-functional project team in place throughout the pilot and rollout. As you measure the results of your optimization effort, your team can advertise the results to support your change management effort and ensure continued buy-in at all levels.

note: Strategic Contact uses Prosci's methodology for Change Management; see [www.change-management.com](http://www.change-management.com) for more information.

## The State of the Market Annual Report

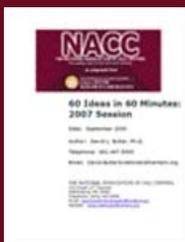
Paul Stockford, Research Director, National Association of Call Centers and Chief Analyst, Saddletree Research, [Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org](mailto:Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org)



Shanghai, currently the largest city in the world with 20 million people, and its Pudong skyline, a skyline which scarcely existed 20 years ago. This picture is taken from the famous Bund walking and shopping area, across the Huangpu River. Shanghai began to grow during the Song Dynasty (960 to 1279 A.D.), when it became an important market town. Shanghai is the banking and business center of China and if you haven't been yet, it's time to go. Yes, it is smoggy, but the journey is worth the effort.

## Reports from the NACC

The NACC has been burning the midnight oil and typing until our fingers are sore to bring out reports to our members. Each is listed below. If you are interested to see what we are writing about, click on the images below and download the executive summary of each. If you like what you see, join the NACC so that we can send you these reports and others that will be coming out soon to ensure you know the latest trends in the industry.



In last month's edition of In Queue we published the Executive Summary of the recently released NACC report entitled "North American Contact Center Industry 2009 - 2010: The Year in Review and a Look Ahead." This report is one of several published by the NACC over the course of the year and is provided to all NACC members in good standing.

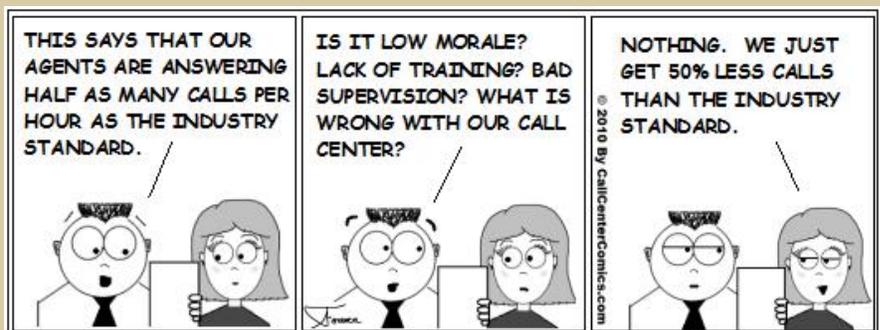
After publishing the Executive Summary we received several inquiries about the content of the report and, in one case, received a call from a customer service executive wanting to know if we had any recent market trend information available. Due to these inquiries we thought it would make sense to publish the report's Table of Contents for the benefit of those of you whom we didn't hear from but who may still be interested in the report.

The NACC publishes reports such as this one to provide our members with a snapshot of what we believe are the important trends that helped shape the industry in the previous year and what we believe will shape the industry in the year ahead. In addition, we strive to provide you with information about technologies we believe are worth your time to learn about without having to sit through endless sales presentations or read through over-hyped articles by over-zealous publishers. We try to bring a touch of reality to an industry that often seems to get carried away with itself.

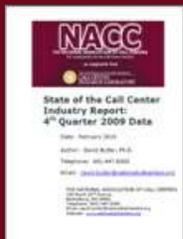
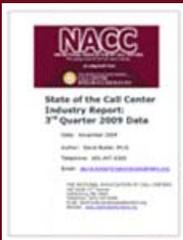
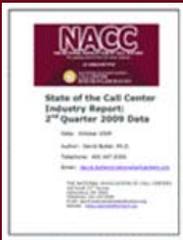
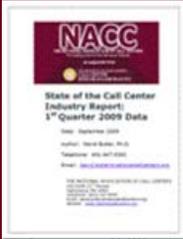
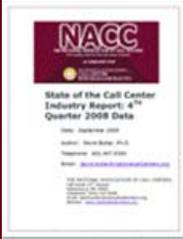
If, after reviewing last month's Executive Summary and this month's Table of Contents, you are interested in obtaining a copy of this and future NACC reports, drop David or me an e-mail and let us know. We'd love to have you as an NACC member.

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Telephone: 601.447.8300  
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