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

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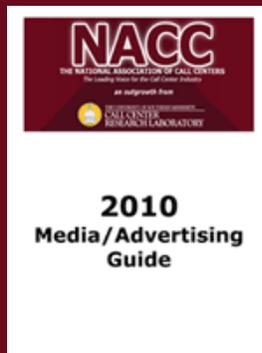
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NACC Investment Portfolio

It's Annual Survey Time Again

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

Since 2008 the NACC has surveyed our members and readers of *In Queue* in order to gauge the attitudes, opinions and intentions of contact center professionals. Once again, it's time for us to ask you, our *In Queue* readers and NACC members, to donate five minutes of your time to the NACC and participate in our brief annual survey that helps us gauge what's important to you today and what you think will be important to you in the future.

Similar to previous years, the results of the survey will be published in future issues of *In Queue* so you can see how your attitudes, opinions and intentions compare to those of your peers in the industry. Also similar to last year – and those of you who participated know this to be true – your responses will be kept confidential. We only ask for demographic information rather than any information related to your identity so your privacy is guaranteed. No salesman will call and neither will we. We only want to know what you're thinking at this point in time.

The survey can be completed in five minutes or less – literally. We know how busy you are and we respect your time. There are no lengthy answers to fill in; just a few check marks in the appropriate boxes. It's as simple as that.

You can find the survey by following this link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/258PTTG>

Thanks in advance for your support of the NACC and your support of our research. We promise the two or three minutes you spend helping us out on this survey will be worthwhile.

From the Trenches

Social Media Wants YOU

Maren Symonds - Consultant and Marketing Director – Strategic Contact, maren@strategiccontact.com

I hardly go a week without an invitation to the "must see" webinar or "must read" article on social media. With nearly 500 million Facebook accounts, 100+ million MySpace users, 65+ million LinkedIn members, 65 million daily Tweets, 60+ million blogs and countless other networks and forums, social media has become a communications tsunami, capturing one out of every four-and-a-half minutes of all time spent on-line. It is force with which most, if not all, corporations must reckon.

Yet for the overburdened, understaffed contact center, a comfortable place on high ground seems preferable to drowning in a sea change that may or may not prove materially beneficial to the organization and its customers. Before you head for the hills, take a moment to learn from others who've established beachheads in the new terrain and delivered value for the corporation and its customers.

Social Media Happens

As happened to the feckless Wizard of Oz, the curtain that hid corporate fallibility and guarded brand image has been pulled aside. With social media, anyone with a good story and engaging presentation can reach a global audience. It's the ultimate power-to-the-people technology. Have a bad experience with baggage claim? Post a catchy tune on YouTube and let millions of viewers hear all about it. Frustrated with your Internet provider's help desk? Find thousands of others in the same boat and start writing about it. Better yet, pool your collective knowledge to help each other. Shut out from your financial institution's on-line banking service? Get a Tweet from

Stock	Price	Value	Change
NICE	25.96	6.46	-3.54
VRNT	22.90	9.35	-0.65
SYKE	13.54	7.13	-2.87
WIT	12.24	8.17	-1.83
CVG	9.52	5.39	-4.61
TTEC	12.43	5.40	-4.60
APAC	5.49	24.84	14.84
TOTAL		66.74	-3.26

Do you hear that high pitch squeal in the distance? That one that keeps going, off in the distance? That is the drop of the NACC Investment Portfolio and NACC Composite Index over the past month. It does not seem to stop and hit the bottom yet. Looking closely at the graphic above you will see that of the 7 stocks that make up the NACC Investment Portfolio all but one, APAC, is in the negative territory. If it were not for the recent appreciation of APAC over the past year, every stock in the index would be below the waterline. Upside, if you can find one, it may be a good time to buy?

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
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
5/31/10	98.29	-1.66	-1.69
7/6/10	60.63	-37.66	-62.12

The NACC Composite Index was down 62.12%! Yes, you read that right, over 50% loss or 37.66 points dropped. So what happened? Well, it looks like the third party call center

the guy who found the "back door" to the company's web server.

Your organization may have the good fortune of flying under the radar of the Internet's most creative or persistent (or nasty) consumer advocates, but it doesn't mean that you've escaped the long arm of social media law. A Nielson global survey revealed that recommendations from personal acquaintances or opinions posted by consumers on-line represent the most trusted form of advertising. Likewise, a Harris Interactive survey showed that negative comments about a vendor's products or services impacted purchase decisions by 75% of on-line adults. Do you know what they're saying about you?

Learn from Some Early Adopters

While most of us experiment with social networks – catching up with friends and family on Facebook, posting resumes on LinkedIn, sharing entertaining YouTube videos, reading the occasional blog – a few intrepid service organizations are trying to re-write the rules of customer engagement.

Software house Intuit – maker of QuickBooks accounting software – has created space for peer-to-peer communication on a hosted forum. Customers from all over the world share hints and tips on tailoring the popular accounting software to their environments while responding to specific inquiries. Intuit staffers provide oversight on quality, giving prominence to the best responses and filtering out inaccurate or harmful discussion. The forum has reduced customer cycle time and delivered a 10% year-over-year reduction in inbound call volume. Agents welcome relief from mundane inquiries and the opportunity to engage in creative problem solving.

Best Buy tapped the spirit of helpfulness among employees by creating a Twitter site for customer inquiries. Dubbed the "Twelpforce," the collective monitors customer tweets and provides expert advice on Best Buy products. Policy guidelines and training videos prepare the 2,400 volunteers to serve customers and the company well. Reports track the number of responses to specific inquiries, average response time, the number of questions answered daily and the frequency with which volunteers participate. Top volunteers get public kudos.

Home Goods enlisted the support of consumer enthusiasts to create a multi-user blog chock full of creative ideas for using its products. Six writers were selected from among 20,000 volunteers. Each creates quality content that enhances sales, customer satisfaction and loyalty at no direct charge to the company.

Admittedly, the jury is out on whether social media investments pay tangible dividends above and beyond goodwill. Nonetheless, the social networking pioneers have learned a few things along the way:

- Social media is all about the users – their interests, their voice, their desire to connect. Lots of companies salivate at the thought of transforming social networking into a money-making enterprise. But the readers want information, interaction and (dare I say?) entertainment on their terms before they'll listen to a corporate pitch.
- Users want to contribute. They're ready, able and willing to "crowd source" answers to tough questions – perhaps better than your staffers' responses! They can provide constructive feedback and advice. And this labor force is virtually free, willing to work for recognition and the satisfaction of helping others.
- Users expect a personal connection. They want to interact with "Bob," not a nameless, faceless service agent. Check out Rubbermaid's Adventures in Organization blog to see photos and profiles of employee-bloggers.
- Users expect transparency. If you've got bad news, better to break the news yourself – with an appropriate action plan – than suffer the wrath of the public forum.
- Likewise... active listening on social media alerts centers to potential problems and provides an avenue for response. Well-placed posts reduce calls

providers were sold off this past month. Everyone was down, and down pretty far, except for Wipro, which was flat. The technology companies did not do as bad, and Verint has not been delisted on the NASDAQ as of 6 July, which is a good sign for the company.

Dow Composite	-3.88%
S&P 500 Composite	-5.97%
NASDAQ Composite	-7.79%
NACC Composite	-62.12%

The *NACC Composite Index* was down 62.12% while the Dow, NASDAQ and S&P500 were down all between 6% and 8%. If there is a lesson to be re-learned this past month it is diversify, diversify, diversify. If you had all of your net worth in call center stock, you would have lost over half of your book value in the past few weeks. If however, you were more diversified, then you would have lost less than 10%. Though both are losses, one is infinitely easier to rebound from than the other. Remember, multiple eggs, multiple baskets.

Quote

"I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that."

- Thomas Edison (1931)

Picture of the Week



This is the first direct image of an extrasolar planet orbiting a star similar to our Sun that has been confirmed. The star and planet are a mere 500 light-years away. The planet in the upper left hand side is estimated to have a mass about 8 times the mass of Jupiter, which is itself 300 times larger than the Earth. I wonder if their stock market and

to the center, and agents are equipped to handle the ones that come through. -Users expect immediate response. Make sure your internal communications mechanisms cross organizational lines (as needed) to address customer posts and inquiries quickly.

What YOU Should Do

Any form of customer engagement should have a clear link to business requirements and goals. Social media is too big to ignore. It's also too big to enter willy-nilly. You don't have to be everywhere, and you certainly don't need a presence in channels for which there is no inherent customer need or interest. [If a Tweet falls in an empty forest, does it make a sound?] Moreover, quality trumps quantity if you're trying to build a successful community.

When you decide to enter the fray, get your house in order first. Think about how your social media strategy fits with your other service channels – your agents, your self-service applications, your corporate web site. Decide whether or not your current technology infrastructure is adequate to the task. [Do you need a knowledge management system to support your forum?] Establish usage and empowerment guidelines to meet corporate objectives while giving your employees an appropriately creative outlet for their skills and expertise. Think about how you'll monitor and measure activity to ensure operational success while quantifying business benefits.

Finally, practice what you preach. If you want customers to boost their interactions with you, be prepared to enter the conversation with enthusiasm, useful commentary and a bit of good humor.

Web 2.0 = Social Media. NOT

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

If your e-mail inbox is anything like mine it is deluged daily with various news releases, articles, white papers, press releases, webinar invitations, briefings, etc. all extolling the virtues social media and the impact it will have on the contact center industry. At this point, I think it's safe to say that we all "get it" but I see too many of these various news and PR pieces that equate Web 2.0 with social media. At the NACC we're doing our best to make sure the value of Web 2.0 isn't lost in the avalanche of hype about social media.

It's important to remember that Web 2.0 is not a technological innovation but rather a new way of using Internet attributes that have been in existence for as long as the Internet has. Web 2.0 allows the use of the web as a participatory platform, and that has greater implications for the contact center than just monitoring social networking sites.

There are just a handful of companies out there now that have demonstrated an understanding of the value of Web 2.0 beyond social networking. Next week we will be sending you an e-mail that contains a link to in-depth information about how one of these companies, Calabrio, is leading the industry in the implementation of Web 2.0 for more than social networking (see banner ads this issue). I am the author of the paper that provides this information and I hope you will take the time to download and read it. It will help clarify why Web 2.0 doesn't begin and end with social networking applications. I'd also be interested in hearing from you about how you expect Web 2.0 will impact your contact center. You can always reach me at paul.stockford@nationalcallcenters.org.

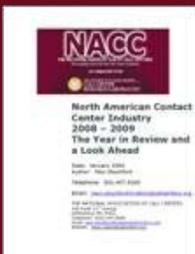
Cisco Renews Focus, Energy on the Contact Center Market

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

portfolio are doing any better than mine?

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.



As we emerge of the darkest days of the recession and direct our collective energy toward economic recovery, it is becoming apparent that many companies are taking notice of the fact that the contact center industry not only survived, but actually grew in terms of the number of agent seats in North America while the growth experienced by most other industries was only in the number of unemployed. One of those companies with renewed enthusiasm for the contact center industry is Cisco, a company familiar to all of us but familiar mostly for its dominance in the networking and infrastructure business. I recently had the opportunity to spend a day with the Cisco executives responsible for that company's contact center market strategy and came away with the impression that this was a company that is clearly interested in being an integral member of the international customer contact center community.

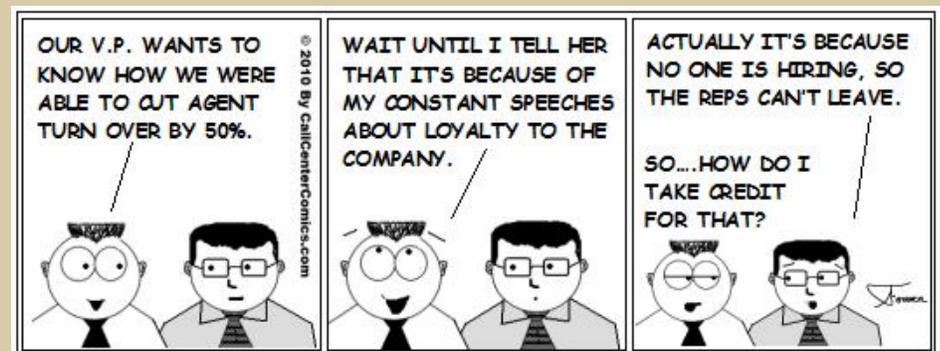
In the past, Cisco relied on their network and infrastructure business to get them into the contact center and for most customers it was all-Cisco or nothing. Cisco contact center products were often selected because the IT department insisted on Cisco in order to simplify installation and maintenance. As a result, Cisco's contact center business unit played second fiddle to Cisco's larger and more dominant business units. Not any more.

The new generation of Cisco's contact center solutions stands on its own merit and, as part of Cisco's Collaboration Suite, the contact center business unit now has access to internal product and development resources that were previously dedicated to unrelated business units. Being part of the Collaboration Suite also means that contact center has been mainstreamed in to Cisco's primary business mission rather than being a side business. Customer success is being measured at the solution level rather than at the product level. The complete Cisco solution still exists as it always has but the company is also focused on open integration standards so they can be part of a best-of-breed solution if that opportunity comes up.

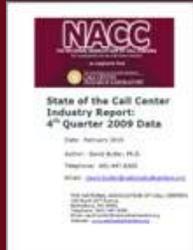
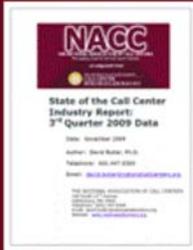
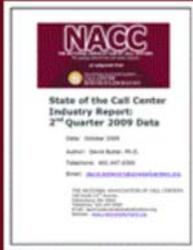
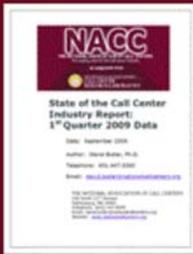
On the management side, decision making has been restructured to align through boards and councils with access to company resources. While management personnel remains stable it has been consolidated to enable rapid decision-making and equally rapid response to customer needs. For a big company, Cisco is acting a lot like a nimble start-up and for the contact center market, that's a good thing.

If you haven't taken a look at Cisco lately perhaps it's time to revisit what's been happening there lately. I did and I liked what I saw.

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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