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The Leading Voice for the Call Center Industry

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THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
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The fun, informative and unique newsletter for the call center industry.

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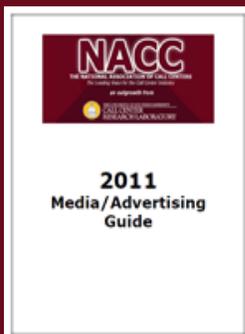100 South 22nd Avenue
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More Research, Events Coming Your Way in May

Paul Stockford, NACC Research Director and Chief Analyst, Saddletree Research, Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org

During the month of May be sure to watch for e-mails from the NACC containing links to new research as well as to events that we will be attending and hope that you will too.

Last month I authored another research paper that essentially does a deeper dive into the Web 2.0 framework in the contact center. The paper draws parallels between the customer service experience and the social media experience, and looks at the mobility aspects of Web 2.0 deployments in the contact center among other things. Watch for our e-mail that will send you to a link to download a complementary copy of this paper and see a demonstration of Web 2.0 applications at work in the contact center. If you'd like to see the demonstration of Web 2.0 applications right away just click on the Calabrio banner at the top of this newsletter.

And speaking of research papers that I authored, if you didn't get a chance to download the paper I wrote on Desktop Analytics, which was described in last month's newsletter, it's not too late. Click on the Enkata banner in this ad to get immediate access to this paper. Desktop Analytics turned out to be the contact center technology solution that will be in highest demand this year according to the results of the survey of NACC members and readers that we conducted last summer. If you want to see what so many contact center professionals are excited about, click on the Enkata banner and download your copy of the paper. Let me know what you think.

We'll also be sending an e-mail to you in a week or so inviting you to attend an intriguing online event that covers the emerging concept of Customer 2.0. The event is on May 19th, 2011 at 7 a.m. PDT / 10 a.m. EDT. You don't have to go any further than your own desktop to attend. No travel or other inconvenience is required. I'll be in attendance and I hope you will be too. The event is sponsored by Aspect so there is no charge to attend. Mark your calendar and watch for our e-mail in the next week with all the details.

Mid-month you will be receiving an e-mail from the NACC containing an offer

E-mail: Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org

Underwriters

All leading call center companies and suppliers should examine the *NACC Underwriting* opportunity in 2011 as evidence of their dedication to the growth of call center industry. See the NACC Advertising Page for more information.

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NACC Investment Portfolio

Stock	Price	Value	Change
NICE	36.50	9.09	-0.91
VRNT	33.89	13.83	3.83
SYKE	21.20	11.16	1.16
WIT	13.70	9.15	-0.85
CVG	14.09	7.97	-2.03
TTEC	20.29	8.82	-1.18
APAC	5.63	25.48	15.48
TOTAL		85.50	15.50

The *NACC Investment Portfolio* was up this month to $85.50, a profit of $15.50 or nearly 18%. Not bad, not good either. Of the seven stocks in the portfolio, four are still in negative territory from the purchase price (NICE, WIT, CVG, TTEC) and three are in the positive territory (VRNT, SYKE, APAC). The portfolio was originally created to balance both call center technology providers and third-part outsource providers. Since inception, the portfolio has lost some technology companies and is now dominated more by third-party providers.

NACC Composite Index

from Syntellect that warrants your attention. This offer concerns the Syntellect Communications Portal, which is an open, standards-based platform that takes the complexity out of deploying Internet protocol (IP) communications solution. We encourage you to take a few minutes to learn more about this open platform development and stay on top of the technological innovations in your industry.

Your NACC Needs You!

Paul Stockford, NACC Research Director and Chief Analyst, Saddletree Research, Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org

We're looking to beef up our corps of volunteers as we get closer to the summer season, when we conduct a major part of our annual research activities. In exchange for volunteering approximately 30 minutes of your time during a 12 month period, you will receive a membership in the NACC at no charge. Like everything, though, there is a catch.

You'll have to fill out a member profile, just like paying members do. That will probably take 2 to 3 minutes so if you're not prepared to set that amount of time aside, please don't volunteer to be an NACC member. This may sound silly, but you'd be surprised at the number of people who responded to my last offer of membership in exchange for being a volunteer, then didn't follow through when I asked them to fill out the membership profile.

The other catch is that you must participate in the surveys that we conduct over the period of your volunteer membership. We have done one survey so far this year, which took approximately 4 minutes to complete. We'll do another survey this summer which will likely take the better part of 5 or 6 minutes to complete. Depending on the survey results we may do one or two more 4 minute follow-up surveys before the year is over. Participating in our surveys in exchange for a free membership is non-negotiable. You must participate in order to maintain your free membership. Again, if you're not prepared to give up a maximum of 30 minutes during the year in order to participate in our surveys, please don't respond to this membership offer.

To see what you'll get with your NACC membership take a quick look at http://www.nationalcallcenters.org/membership.php. If this is of interest to you and you can find 30 minutes during the year to participate in a few short surveys, consider becoming an NACC volunteer. If you'd like to join us, send me an e-mail with "Volunteer" in the subject line and I'll send you back the membership profile and get you set up as a full NACC member. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Not Dead Yet - IVR Lives On

Lori Buckland, President - Strategic Contact
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I know people who love the surfing the web, playing with their smartphones, texting anyone in their circle, or camping out on Facebook. I know people who just want to talk to someone – whether for any interaction (like dear old Mom), or when they need the back and forth of a conversation. But I don't know anyone who *prefers* IVRs. Do you? This situation begs the question: What will become of IVR as multi-channel customer interaction proliferates and companies expand and improve the "preferred" options? Well, it's not dead yet, and I don't think it will be any time soon. It's evolving to keep pace with the new market landscape.

Here is a quick survey of some interesting IVR activity:

- Vendors include IVR in their architecture as a built-in "front end." As a robust holding point for call treatment, it provides useful information, offers the option of callback rather than wait in queue (along with queue status and target call back time), and, yes, even offers self service if desired.

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
8/4/10	68.28	7.66	11.21
9/8/10	64.78	-3.50	-5.40
9/29/10	71.85	7.06	9.83
11/2/10	73.72	1.88	2.55
12/1/10	110.90	37.17	33.52
2/1/11	108.73	-2.17	-2.00
3/1/11	107.51	-1.22	-1.13
3/23/11	113.35	5.84	5.15
5/3/11	112.42	-0.93	-0.83

The *NACC Composite Index* was down month to 112.42. This was a bit surprising since the other major indices were all up over or near 5%. Last month the composite was up and the rest of the indices were flat or down possibly suggesting a leading or lagging effect for this index compared to the others. More investigation is needed to find out.

Dow Composite	5.97%
S&P 500 Composite	4.53%
NASDAQ Composite	5.04%
NACC Composite	-0.83%

The NACC Composite Index was down month to 112.42, a drop of less than 1%. This is compared to the Dow, S&P 500 and NASDAQ which were up all near 5%.

Quote

"Flaming enthusiasm, backed up by horse sense and persistence, is the quality that most often makes for success."

- A key part of this front end is what some would call "call steering" or "front door" activity. The IVR gathers information to use to better serve customers: who they are and why they are calling. This is nothing new, but with better integration, companies can use that information to optimize routing and deliver the information gathered to the agent ultimately receiving the call.

- If the customer chooses self service, the company can make that interaction more personalized based on the knowledge of the customer and their need. Mass customization has arrived.

- IVR plays a big role in multi-channel outbound proactive alerting and notification. Do you want your outbound messages delivered via the phone, or do you prefer text, email, or fax? The IVR can work in parallel (notify me *and* my husband) or in series (send me an email or text message as a follow up to that call).

- The IVR is a dialer for outbound voice communications, delivering automated messages in some cases and connecting with agents in others. It can ask for validation or other input before connecting the caller to an agent. *[Perhaps it's the dialer as we knew it that's dead. Long live the reincarnated IVR?!]*

- The promise of speech recognition is being realized, along with improved text to speech. If you've interacted with a well designed, implemented and managed IVR of late, you may have noticed the more natural interface and the *option* to move to touch tone (not just because it can't figure out what the heck you're saying). Text to speech is used smartly for dynamic information and sounds more natural, avoiding user "turn off."

- Some players are being so bold as to put a person behind the façade of an IVR interface. Call 1-800-MY APPLE and you'll be interacting with an IVR interface with a "driver" behind the scenes that is pitching in to make sure your interaction is optimized. Picture your favorite "gamer" or multi-tasker taking care of a number of customer interactions at once.

- Companies increasingly recognize the "level of effort" for the user and the IT department must be in line with the benefits that can be achieved. As a result, they involve users in design through focus groups. They apply improved tools and techniques for developing applications and ensuring effective design through usability testing. Enhanced analytics tools that tie IVR data to cross-channel activity further the cause of optimizing the customer experience and success rates. Tuning becomes a standard part of managing IVR interfaces.

In this new world, the IVR truly becomes a "portal" for customer experience over the phone. So it's not dead, but pure self service on an IVR, by choice, may be in decline as customers decreasingly and reluctantly go to the phone, and if they do, they just want to talk to somebody. But rather than go the way of the dinosaur, the IVR is evolving to have an important place in the multi-channel world.

State of the Industry Report 3rd Quarter 2010

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

The NACC is on the cutting edge of what happens in macroeconomic terms within the contact center industry. For over a decade our research team has tracked call centers as they open, close, expand, contract, add employees, layoff employees, move centers overseas, and much more. As we do each quarter, we report the most recent data in 11 contact center verticals within each US state to allow professionals in the contact center industry to be aware of the trends to make the best, and most informed, decisions possible for their business. In the new era of getting back to business basics and growing market

-Dale Carnegie

Picture of the Month

Look at this photo closely. Now look at it again. Notice anything? I did not either and I was standing right next to it. This tree is aluminum. Yep, metal, dead, as in not real. This is one of the many sculptures you can see at Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, Washington. I was in Seattle recently and made a stop to view the sculptures many of which are on loan or donated by various people associated with the Microsoft Corporation. Stop by if you are ever in the area.

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.

share, it make sense to have this data at your fingertips before spending capital in your business. So, how do you receive these quarterly reports? Simple. Become a member of the NACC. Below is the executive summary from the 3rd Quarter 2010 report. Next month's issue will cover the 4th Quarter 2010 data.
Executive Summary

In the 3rd quarter of 2011 more call center jobs were gained in the United States than were lost creating a six quarter long job recovery from the recession low of 4th quarter 2008. The number of call centers opening versus closing was also positive indicating that the call center industry is on its way to an economic recovery and probable stability. The call center job losses were most pronounced in the Fulfillment/Distribution/Reservations vertical while the largest growth came from the Financial Services/Banking/Insurance vertical. It should be noted that the verticals with job growth and the verticals with job losses are reflective of pre-recession trends. Some states, such as Georgia, had a strong growth in call center jobs while states such as Texas and Alabama showed a loss of call center jobs.

For details, including charts and graphics of this and more data, join the NACC at http://www.nationalcallcenters.org/membership.php.

The Evolution of Enterprise Workforce Management

Paul Stockford, NACC Research Director and Chief Analyst, Saddletree Research, Paul.Stockford@nationalcallcenters.org

I started writing about enterprise workforce management, specifically workforce management software for the back office, in 2007. Since that time there have been a number of developments in scheduling software for the back office and I thought it would be interesting to see where the industry stood four years later relative to the acceptance of contact center workforce management scheduling in the back office. We thought the best way to do that would be to ask you, the user, for a reality check. We found the results to be interesting enough to write about in this month's newsletter.

We were somewhat surprised to learn that only 18 percent of our survey respondents were using front office; i.e., contact center, scheduling software to schedule back office personnel, which we defined as those personnel who are doing work in a non-ACD environment such as those who process paperwork, claims, billing, etc. I thought that number would have been higher after four years. It is apparent that the industry is moving somewhat cautiously toward using contact center workforce management for the back office.

28 percent of respondents indicated their intention to use workforce management software to schedule back office personnel in the next year and 6 percent thought they would make the change in two years. 34 percent of respondents thought they would never make the change and 32 percent were unsure.

Interestingly, 65 percent of respondents said that in their company, the contact center and the back office reports to the same internal organization. This indicates that there would likely be economies of scale to be found in combined scheduling, yet only a small percentage of respondents are taking advantage of this.

Along that same line, we also found it interesting that 23 percent of respondents combine the scheduling of back office and contact center personnel, yet only 18 percent are using contact center scheduling software. Once again, savings opportunities appear to be eluding some of the organizations that combine scheduling of the front office and the back office.

If this is a topic of interest to you, I recorded a podcast on this subject last week with a longtime industry colleague from Verint. If you would like to listen to this podcast you can find it at http://verint.com/contact_center/misc/WFM_Recording-04.27.11.wmv. It is only about 10 minutes long and can be listened to at your desktop or on a portable player such as iPod. The podcast goes into more detail regarding the differences between front office and back office scheduling and discusses the

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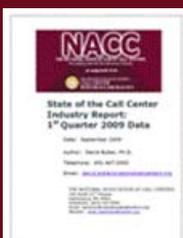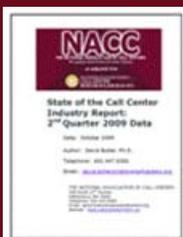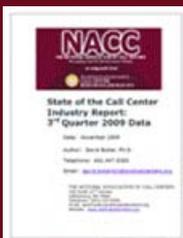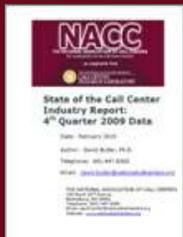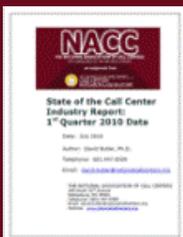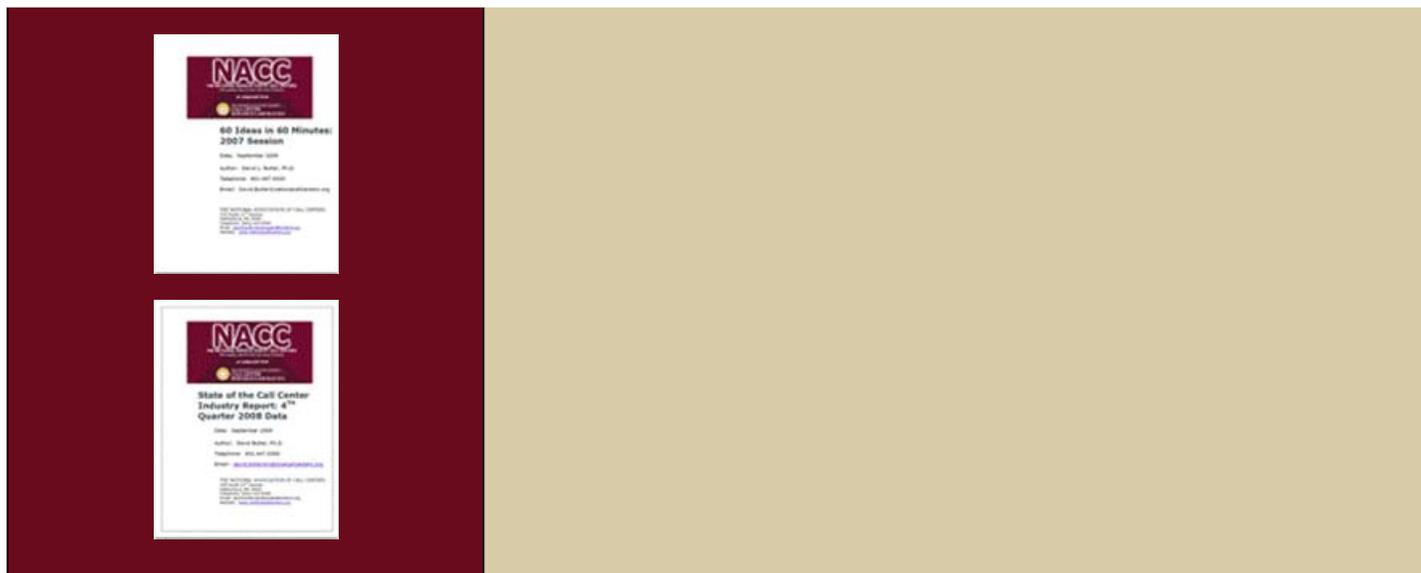
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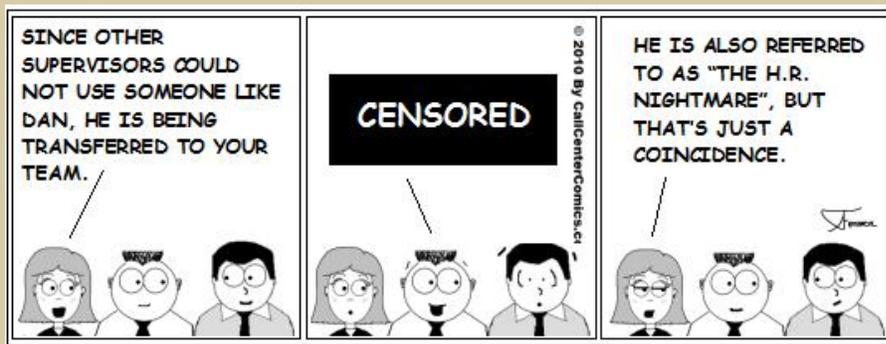
If you like this comic and would like to see more write Ozzie at callcentercomics@yahoo.com and visit his website at http://callcentercomics.com/cartoon_categories.htm or just click on the comic to take you to his page. The NACC appreciates Ozzie letting us use some of his comics in our newsletter.

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