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National Association of Call Centers

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

Volume 7, Issue 3 - April 6, 2012



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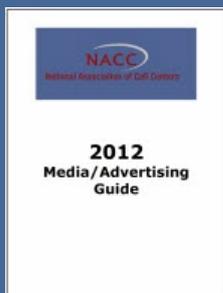
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In Queue circulation 26,155

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U.S. Contact Center Decision-Maker's Guide Now Available

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

The 2012 Contact Babel "U.S. Contact Center Decision-Maker's Guide" is now available at no charge courtesy of Enghouse Interactive. The latest edition of this annual report examines the performance, operations, technology and HR aspects of U.S. contact center operations in 250 pages of statistics, analysis and insight.

Watch your in-box next week for an e-mail from the NACC with details about downloading a copy of this report and getting in on a drawing for a tropical escape, also courtesy of Enghouse Interactive. If the combination of the free report and a chance to win a tropical vacation sounds too good to have to wait for, click on the Enghouse Interactive banner on this newsletter now and go directly to the page where you can obtain the paper and register for the vacation drawing. Good luck!

Age Old Sayings Still Ring True...Metrics Matter

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Recently I visited two contact centers encountering the same challenge. Both centers grew quickly over the past three years and now seek to formalize and improve. One has virtually no metrics or reports; the other is drowning in reports. Both are struggling. Metrics matter. They keep you focused on the success factors for your environment and help you stay the course. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are the *specific* metrics and targets selected for your contact center based on your strategy and goals. They are influenced by the specific industry and products or services provided and should align and support company goals. When determining your KPIs, keep in mind:

- **Typical KPIs:** Most contact centers at least track Service Level (SL) for calls, Response Time (RT) for other media, Abandon Rate, Quality scores, and Customer Satisfaction (cSat). An increasing number now include First Contact Resolution (FCR).
- **Center-specific KPIs:** Some metrics conform to specific center and staff roles and include things such as sales revenue (or conversion or retention) per agent, returns per agent, average sales order, cost per transaction, etc.
- **KPI Balance:** Most centers look at agent efficiency through adherence to schedule, occupancy, and average handle time (AHT) while emphasizing effectiveness through Quality Monitoring (QM) or error rates.
- **KPI Weight:** Some KPIs are more important than others. The ones that tie most directly to business goals and/or individual control tend to be linked to performance evaluations (referred to as measures). Others merit attention to the extent that they reveal important

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Quote

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."

-Anne Dudley Bradstreet

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 links below and download the executive summary of each. If you like what you see, join the NACC so that you can view these reports and others that will be coming out soon on our website. These reports will ensure that you know the latest trends in the industry.

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 2nd Quarter 2011 Data](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 1st Quarter 2011 Data](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 4th Quarter 2010 Data](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 3rd Quarter 2010 Data](#)

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[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 4th Quarter 2009 Data](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 3rd Quarter 2009 Data](#)

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[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 1st Quarter 2009 Data](#)

[North American Contact Center Industry 2008-2009: The Year in Review and a Look Ahead](#)

[State of the Call Center Industry Report: 4th Quarter 2008 Data](#)

[60 Ideas in 60 Minutes: 2008 Session](#)

[60 Ideas in 60 Minutes: 2007 Session](#)

trends or outliers (referred to as monitors). For example, a sales-oriented center might measure revenue per agent but monitor AHT.

- **Keep It Simple:** "The more the merrier" does not hold true with metrics. Focusing on a few measures keeps the message clear within your center and yields better results. Focusing on dozens of metrics may confuse your team or send conflicting messages, thereby inhibiting success.
- **Be Role Specific:** Each role may have two to six or so KPIs for their focus. The KPIs for an agent are a subset of those for a manager or support center staff based on their responsibilities. Agent focus may be on adherence to schedule, cSat, QM, and FCR. Managers focus on those plus SL, RT, and employee satisfaction. Support center staffs focus on KPIs for their specific areas such as Forecast Accuracy for the Workforce Management team.

Once you've got them, do something with them!

Metrics won't do you much good unless you organize your operation to drive activities and behaviors toward your stated goals. This means aligning:

- **Training:** Convey KPIs with new hire training and tie center training back to specific KPI attainment whenever possible.
- **Quality:** Align QM and Voice of Customer (VoC) metrics to ensure that you and your customers agree on what constitutes a good job. Provide timely agent-specific feedback for continuous improvement in contact efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Coaching:** It does no good to train and audit center staff if center management does not investing in consistent coaching for performance management. Recognize and promote successes as well as target opportunities for continuous improvement.
- **Reporting:** Share the numbers. Visibility drives performance. Present the big picture to executives and a more granular view to agents and managers.

Technology is your Friend

Whether technology is abundant or you're running your center on a shoe-string budget, there are tools available to help you keep your targets in mind and drive desired outcomes. Low technology options include posting information and status towards goals on bulletin boards within your center, in break/lunch areas, in hallways or elevators. Keep it fresh, informative, and even fun when you have good news to share.

Electronic displays show calls in queue, team metrics, or specific messages based on current events. Centers are increasingly moving to desktop displays which provide information on KPI targets and results at an agent, manager's, or executives fingertips. The greater the visibility and timeliness with metrics, the greater the results in individual performance management and goal achievement.

States Take The Lead In Contact Center Industry Legislation

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

As news of T-Mobile's reduction of 1,900 call center jobs in the U.S. hit the wires on March 22, interest in legislation affecting the U.S. contact center industry increased dramatically. While news about federal legislation, like House Resolution 3596, gets the lion's share of media attention, individual states are also introducing legislation that will directly impact the contact center industry in each particular state.

HR 3596, the United States Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act, was introduced in December of 2011 and has progressed through the first of six steps that are necessary for a bill to become law. HR 3596 calls for the creation of a public list of all employers that relocate a call center overseas and to make those companies ineligible for Federal grants or guaranteed loans. It also requires companies to disclose the physical location of business agents engaging in customer service communications.

HR 3596 is the fourth federal legislative bill to address the contact center industry since 2006. The prior three bills, Senate Bill S.2553, House Resolution 1776 and the much ballyhooed but never introduced bill of May, 2010 from Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY), never made it through all six steps of the legislative review process. As a result, these bills essentially died at the end of the legislative year that they were introduced.

Now state legislators are getting into the act, presumably to protect the contact center industry in their respective states rather than having to rely on federal legislation. In my home state of Arizona, the recently introduced House Bill 2733 requires the Director of the Department of Economic Security to compile a list of call centers that have relocated out of Arizona to a foreign country. Call centers that do so will no longer be eligible for state grants and loans. The bill also requires call centers that work on state business to be located in, or relocate to, Arizona and remain in the state.

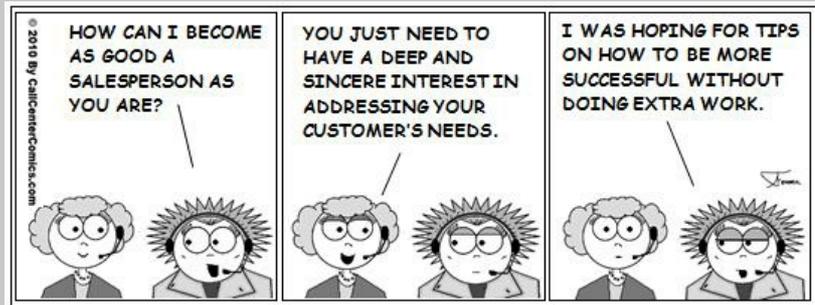
In Florida, Senate Bill 678 requires that companies with state contracts have their contact centers located in the U.S. SB678 has passed the Florida state senate but is now held up in the state House of Representatives.

In New Jersey, disappointment in companies like Verizon has led to the introduction of the Save New Jersey Call Center Jobs Act A-2651. Verizon, which has made \$33.4 billion in profits over the past three years, has received \$113 million from New Jersey in subsidies since 1998. Rather than creating jobs with the subsidies, Verizon has cut the number of New Jersey contact center jobs in half over the past ten years and recently announced plans to lay off another 336 contact center workers. The jobs are being sent to offshore contact centers.

New Jersey A-2651 bars companies from state tax breaks and subsidies if it sends contact center jobs overseas. The bill passed the New Jersey State Assembly by a vote of 56 to 23. It has yet to go through the state Senate.

It is clear that in the absence of action on the federal level, state governments intend to step up to save local jobs. This is not the last of state-level contact center legislation we'll see this year as call center industry bills have also been introduced by legislators in Maryland and West Virginia. With this kind of effort at the local level, combined with popular sentiment regarding jobs at home, it is likely that organizations will start to think beyond profits when they consider moving American contact center jobs to offshore outsourcers.

Call Center Comics!



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