



In Queue

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

Volume 2, Number 1 - January 5, 2007

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challenges of labor and location for their
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back-office operations.

Quotes

"Experience is the name so many
people give to their mistakes."
-Oscar Wilde

And They're Off...

The Associated Press reported on December 20, 2006, that a group of Florida investors are opening a call center in Fargo, North Dakota, to take wagers on horse racing. The goal is to attract high-stakes gamblers who currently wager with offshore companies and illegal bookmakers back to the US and above board. The call center will take bets on simulcast video horse racing but will not take walk-in orders.

I am glad to see that call centers can be a road to help illegal operations become legal...and "I will take Keeneland, 2nd Race, \$7 to Win on Number 6."

Understanding Research II

This essay is a follow-on to the essay titled "Understanding Research" in Volume 1, Number 8 - December 22, 2006, issue of In Queue.

This essay focuses on the idea of "sampling" which in simple terms means that you are collecting data from the right people. For a report to be able to claim that the findings are representative of a total industry, like the call center industry, not only does the sample size need to be large enough for statistical analysis but also the people from whom the data was collected need to be representative of the correct group and industry. In other words, if you are seeking data on green monkeys, you cannot examine red monkeys and say "All green monkeys believe this to be true."

To be sure that sampling is conducted correctly, the sample (a.k.a. the people the data is collected from) needs to be random. This means that each and every person who is a call center manager in a population must have had the same opportunity to answer the question as the next manager. This does not mean that each manager must answer, but each must be given the same opportunity to answer the questions. For good research

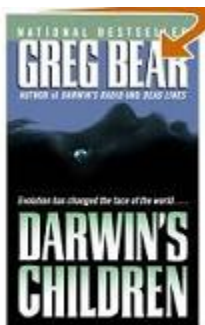
Fun Facts

While stuck in Sante Fe, New Mexico over the break, I called the friendly people at Hilton hotel brands no short of 10x trying to find hotels for the drive back to escape the wrath of winter. The at least 8 reservations and cancellations were made over a three day period through their call center. I wanted to personally thank those people for their diligent help, great customer service, and for putting up with me so many times.

Pictures of the Week



These are two images shot 1 day apart in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where I was recently stranded during the blizzard. By day three, the snow was double that of the second picture.



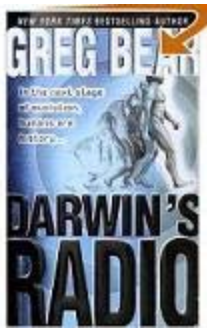
a person cannot just call up their friends and colleagues and say "Hey, can you fill this out for me" and then suggest that the findings from that research represent the total industry. In reality, such research can only be said to represent people that are their friends and colleagues, but not the whole industry.

Many of you may have seen in a history textbook former President Truman holing up a newspaper with the headline "Dewy Defeats Truman." This is a perfect example of bad sampling. What happened was that Dewy was a Republican and Truman was a Democrat. The survey people used a phone poll, a new invention back then, for conducting the survey. The phone survey clearly showed that Dewy was going to win, so the newspaper published those results. The problem occurred in that phones were limited to the wealthy back then. The rich people voted more Republican and thus when they were called, they answered truthfully. However, the pollsters did not sample the people without phones, who made up the majority of the electorate, so the findings were skewed, incorrect, and quite embarrassing for the newspapers.

As a good consumer of call center research, ask for not only the sample size, but if the sample was random for all groups examined. If so, the research is more representative of the industry than research that does not and more likely to have valid information.

What I am Reading

While I was stuck in Sante Fe, New Mexico, over the winter break due to a blizzard I was able to finish off a few books including Greg Bear's *Darwin's Children*. The book is 488 pages, a page turner, and a follow-on to Bear's *Darwin's Radio*. The book chronicles what happens when the human race begins to produce offspring that are an evolutionary leap. This children look different, with various freckled spots, have keen sense of smell, and behave in different social patterns. *Darwin's Children* takes off 12 years after the first set of these children are born (*Darwin's Radio*) in the millions and walks the reader through various scenarios and responses to these children within the United States. Some of the key elements addressed include the impact to civil liberties and the protecting of American citizens (read homeland security) from the "virus children." One response is to put these advanced children in internment camps similar to that of Americans of Japanese descent during immediately after Pearl Harbor. Through the science of DNA, RNA receptors and viruses as part of the genetic game is speculative, the scenarios of how we as



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a species, and particularly how Americans, would respond to such a change is the value of the book. Though the book begins with the dark specter of camps, fear, forceful taking of children from their families, and medical tests by the end of the book, when 3 years have past, the fear has reduced and more rational minds have prevailed, and a dialog and cooperation between the new species and the old human species is touted as the best way forward.

As with most science fiction, most authors are writing about the present but are discussing the events and people by placing them in a different location or time. The parallels to World War II, the current war on terrorism, and the war in Iraq can all be seen in this book at various stages, making it a think pieces and thus worth the read.

If you want to purchase this book, or the original first book, the book covers can be found over there ← for you to click on and it will send you to Amazon.com.

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