



In Queue

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

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Scoreboard

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Underwriters

All leading call center companies and suppliers should examine the new NACC Underwriting opportunity in 2008 as evidence of their dedication to the growth of call center industry. See the [New 2008 Media/Advertising Guide](#) link below for more information.

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Share the Knowledge

Send this newsletter to colleagues by clicking "Forward this email" at the very bottom and end of this newsletter.

NACC Investment Portfolio

Data close of market 12/05/2007

Ironic

A British worker of Indian (as in the subcontinent not as in Native-American) descent was sent home from a work trip to India because his boss in India said his accent was "not English enough" according to the *Times*. His boss in India replaced him with someone who spoke better English. The worker, Chetankumar Meshram filed a racial discrimination claim with the Northamptonshire Racial Equality Council in the UK and won his case last week. Telling his story, Chetankumar said "I was called into a meeting with my boss, who told me I was to be replaced with a better English speaker. I know I speak with an [Indian] accent but my job out there is to give technical advice, not to give expertise on how to communicate. It was an embarrassing and humiliating experience."

Ah, globalization. What a wonderful thing. Makes things messy and ironic in all sorts of ways.

60 Ideas in 60 Minutes-Round II

For an introduction to the *60 Ideas in 60 Minutes* essays or to read previously published rounds, please visit our archives and read [Volume 2, Issue 22](#) of *In Queue*.

David L. Butler-Go get an M.B.A. Everyone in the contact center industry needs to be a professional, receive the respect the industry needs and learn how to speak with the executives on their terms (see [Call Center Comic](#) at end of this newsletter below as an example).

William (Bill) Durr-Service level schedule adherence goals-Higher is not better, it is not like profit. There is an acceptable range for the metric, much like tire pressure. Too high or too low is dangerous. Service level is a negotiation of sorts between speed of answer and cost. Don't make the mistake of seeing service level in the same light as profit. Generally, if you over-achieve on service level you have actually incurred higher costs than you were required to incur.

Penny Reynolds-Training-Multi-generational. Have a plan to handle a multigenerational workforce coming through the workforce. Pair individuals of different generations during the training process. Different types of learning styles so focus on learner's needs in your training programs.

Garry Schultz - Nuisance callers. The average consumer has gripes about Telemarketers; the equivalent in the contact center world is the nuisance caller. The caller that refuses to read the instructions, ignores warnings, refuses to use readily available self-service channel, calls for the same set of instructions month-after-month, chronically needs assistance understanding their invoice. Contact center professionals need a method to deal with these consumers. Once you've deployed self-service tools, made your manual available on the internet, simplified your offering as much as possible it may be necessary to take drastic measures. In extreme cases it may, in fact, be necessary to fire the customer. Telco companies have

Stock	Price	Value	Change
NT	16.43	9.03	-0.97%
NICE	31.36	7.81	-2.19%
VRNT.PK	17.34	7.08	-2.92%
SYKE	17.64	9.28	-0.72%
WIT	14.75	9.85	-0.15%
CVG	15.94	9.02	-0.98%
TTEC	20.86	9.07	-0.93%
ICTG	10.25	9.84	-0.16%
APAC	1.35	6.11	-3.89%
TOTAL		\$77.08	-6.80%

Original Value start 11/6/2007
=US\$90.00 or US\$10.00 per stock

Total Portfolio Value Now= \$77.08

The past two weeks was difficult for the *NACC Investment Portfolio* down a total of 6.80%. I suspect with some of the stocks in the index trading lower that there are some bargains to be had.

NACC Composite Index

Date	Value	Change	%
11/6/2007	100.00	na	na
11/8/2007	94.62	-5.38	-5.69%
11/16/2007	94.94	0.32	0.34%
12/05/2007	94.38	-0.56	-0.60%

Other Composites Same Period

Dow Composite	2.40%
S&P 500 Composite	1.48%
NASDAQ Composite	1.00%

The *NACC Composite Index* was down slightly from the previous two weeks with all of the major indices trading up during the same period suggesting that there is some softness in the index which I expect will recover in late 2007 and 2008.

Real Estate

If you are looking for a new call center location you should check out the [NACC Real Estate](#) page by clicking on this link to see some of the available existing sites.

Quotes

"When I was a boy I was told that anybody could become President. Now I'm beginning to believe it."
-Clarence Darrow (1857 - 1938)

Cool Stuff

made progress with these protocols, many other companies are testing the waters. I suggest you consider a similar protocol in your operation - while your agents are busy servicing nuisance contacts other callers are being underserved.

Chris Crosby-My idea is more of a statement-green is the new black. What that means is that you can see a new generation of technology or processes around optimizing the efficiency of how your servers and data centers work. It not just about running a green server or data center it is really about how you optimize your data and contact centers. There are already great new technologies out there to make them more efficient and we are now moving beyond just making your employees efficient to actually making your routers, switches and all of that efficient. That is on the horizon if you have not started that yet.

Kevin Hegebarth-Encourage your agents to surf the web. Actually make time in the day for your agents to go and check out your website as well as your competitor's website. Using Roxio as an example, if I have an issue the first thing I do is pull up Roxio's website to see if someone else has complained about the thing I am about to complain about. Chances are people have. I have done my homework before I call into Roxio's call center. So the agents don't need me to take me down the basic Idiot 101 path if I have told you that I have been on the website and gone through steps A-Q don't walk me through steps A-Q again or ask me if I have been on the website or know what is one the website. Chances are I do. Knowledgeable agents, agents who have spent time knowing what is on the website and how it is organized and the questions and answers out there are much more useful to me as a customer than someone who only knows how to run through issues A-Q

What the Call Center Industry Can Learn from Manufacturing: Part III

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In Part I of this essay in [Volume 2, Issue 21](#) of *In Queue*, I introduced the notion that the call center industry can learn a lot from manufacturing, that manufacturing's enviable track record of year over year (YOY) improvement in quality, productivity and customer satisfaction was worthy of study. I also covered the first key leverage point: establish a single process to improve.

Part II of this essay, in [Volume 2, Issue 22](#) of *In Queue*, I covered the point that the bulk of call center improvement efforts should focus on improving the process not the agents. This final segment will discuss how to better leverage outsourcers.

A quarter century ago, manufacturing in the United States (US) had a brass-knuckles, survival-of-the fittest approach to negotiating with vendors. They would give pieces of the business to multiple vendors, five, six and even more, pit them against each other to get the lowest possible price and have contracts that spelled out every detail of the relationship. Then when they were punch-drunk, they sent procurement in to squeeze out the last drops of margin. Quality and other performance variables often suffered. There was no accommodation. It was "Us & Them" in all its glory.

Then Toyota and other leading manufacturers started changing the game. They didn't spread their business out; they concentrated it and gave it all to one or two vendors at the most. This was a huge windfall of revenue for these suppliers to spread their fixed cost over and to guarantee them a revenue stream they could invest against. Second, they didn't squeeze the

Retraction...sort of. Last issue ([Vol. 2, Issue 22](#)) I talked about the stock investment company I use and have been with for over a decade-Sharebuilder. No sooner had the ink dried when I received an email notification that this company had been purchased by ING Direct. What does this mean for Sharebuilder? I do not know, so I really cannot recommend the company yet until I see if they continue being the cool company they always have been or if ING Direct is going to change the old corporate culture and business model making it boring, plain, and uninteresting as a company. I will let you know as events transpire. Stay tuned.

The cool item this week is kind of odd for a "cool stuff" item but it is in the spirit of the season. I like wrapping Christmas presents, but I hate cheap, shoddy, and light weight wrapping paper that tears easily, looks loony, and the tape holding the folds together is stronger than the paper itself. Over time I have purchased many a role of wrapping paper from different stores with varying level of quality. Well, for the past several years I have found the paper I like. It is nice to look at, it is thick, it does not tear easily, it folds well and holds the folds. It is just perfect. Where do I find this wrapping paper you may ask? Well, at Pier 1. Yep that company that is known for selling the leather elephant made in Thailand that goes well on your walnut coffee table next to the Aztec designed coasters that you bought at Pier 1 as well. Pier 1 wrapping paper is ideal for my wrapping needs. Though it may cost a bit more than the value-saving 8000 yards of paper that was purchased in 1989 from Sam's Club that you are still using, it is worth the price to have nicely wrapped presents under the tree. After all, you spent good money on those presents, why not wrap them nicely too?

Picture of the Week

last drops of profitability out of the vendors. They asked them to open their books because they wanted to ensure they were allowing them to make a fair profit. In some cases, they paid them more than they had in the past.

But in exchange for this windfall of revenue and profitability, the bar went way up on expected performance. Smaller, more frequent deliveries, billing changes, higher quality standards were expected. Not only did the bar go up on current period performance, but the expectation was set that quality and productivity would continue to improve: the vendors were expected to experiment and continuously improve and the gains they made were shared between the vendor and the manufacturer.

Finally, the manufacturer sent people in to the suppliers to work with them, to teach them new quality and process improvement techniques, to learn together and bring the relationship closer than ever. It was the end of arms-length, "Us & Them" and the effect on quality and inventories and every other measure of performance began its inexorable march upward.

The typical call center relationship with their outsourcers may not be as extreme, but it is closer to the old US model than it is to the new manufacturing model. They typically don't concentrate the business to one outsourcer; they don't ask them to open their books; they don't ensure they are making a fair profit; they don't put people permanently on site, teaching them better ways to improve results; they don't hold them accountable to hit and continuously improve performance measures.

In fact, on that last point they often tie their hands. We have worked with many outsourcers who have told us that they are not allowed to change anything about the call process and not allowed to introduce any technology or software without their customer's approval.

Why is that? Why not allow the outsourcer to experiment? Every agent you or they put on the phone is an experiment. Not only that, why not expect the outsourcer to experiment and come up with a better way to handle your calls, a way that increases compliance, quality, customer satisfaction and handle time?

Your company sells software or telephones or some other product or service. It is not in the call center business. They are in the call center business. There is a good chance they have some ideas on how to make your process, which you probably never engineered and continuously improved in the first place, better. Let them. Not only that, expect them to. And finally pay them for the results and gains they achieve. Manufacturers have been this way with their vendors for three decades and the results are breathtaking.

In 1986, Ed Deming published *Out of the Crisis* a book which showed how America's deep quality and competitiveness problems could be solved systematically. Deming laid the blame for America's quality problems right at the feet of management, but then showed them how to fix it and hence the title. It took courage on the part of America's manufacturing leaders to realize they had a problem that could not be fixed with the approaches they had been using.

The situation is the same in the call center industry today. Call centers, unless they are starting from a really terrible place, are not showing dramatic YOY improvements in quality, productivity and customer satisfaction. Until they are, all the methods being deployed in call centers must be called into question. Today's call center management practices have not only not fixed, they have, in some cases, created the stagnant performance we see.

The question is not "can the situation be improved?" We know it can. It is done everyday in manufacturing. The question really comes down to whether call center leaders have the courage to adapt proven practices

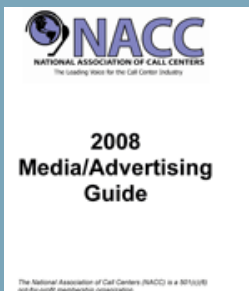


A slight departure from European pictures for this issue. A couple of weeks ago I was working with a client searching out buildings suitable for their second call center. One build we visited was gutted throughout except for some plumbing and...well toilets. Right smack dab in the center of this large and spacious area were these rows of toilets and urinals. It was bizarre and funny at the same time since it was unexpected and out of place. Some of the folks with me laughed at this juxtaposition suggesting that this was the future site of the conference room. Another person in the group specifically recommended that I take this picture and show it in the newsletter as some of the things we see when seeking out ideal call center locations for clients. This picture is for you Ben Teague!

And if you are wondering, no, we did not choose this location for the future call center. The site chosen can be viewed on our [Real Estate](#) page though.

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from outside the industry and the mental toughness to continuously study, experiment, continuously improve until we can hold up our own dramatic YOY improvements in quality, customer satisfaction and productivity.

Call Center Comics

CONTEST UNDER WAY! Ozzie, the artist behind call center comics, and me, want to hear your original ideas for call center comics (no drawing required, just creative ideas). The best entrees will be selected, drawn, and will appear in this newsletter. Forward this to your call center coaches and supervisors and tell them to form teams to come up with the best idea for a comic. It will be a great release and motivation builder for the end of 2007. Winning entries will be not only be recognized in this newsletter but I will also send that person (or team) a bag of goodies. Just submit your entries to David.Butler@nationalcallcenters.org. Below is an original idea from me that Ozzie was kind enough to draw for me. Can you be more creative than I was?

Comic Idea by David Butler, Executive Director, National Association of Call Centers

Comic Drawn by, and copyright held by, Ozzie at 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.

To view past issues of *In Queue*, please [click here](#).

If you would like to contribute to *In Queue*, please reply to this email with "Contribute" in the subject line.

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