



In Queue

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

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Calendar of Events Listings 24
Job Board Listings 34

In This Issue

[What Do You Want?](#)
[The Writing on the Wall](#)
[What I am Watching](#)

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Quotes

"A lot of companies have chosen to
downsize, and maybe that was the
right thing for them. We chose a
different path. Our belief was that if
we kept putting great products in
front of customers, they would
continue to open their wallets."
-Steve Jobs

What Do You Want?

Changes in an industry are a constant. However, some major changes in the call center industry seem to be coalescing and thus attracting people's attention, including mine. I have been chatting with colleagues about these changes and many are puzzled and worried about the industry and its path (see Paul Stockford's essay below). What I would like to know is what do you want? As a professional in the call center industry, what needs do you have that are not being met? Do you seek more, fewer, or better trade publications? Do you desire to attend conferences? If so, how many and what type? Do you really want to receive newsletters like this one or join a professional association? Does certification or an advanced degree with a focus on call centers interest you at all? Do you want all of the above but have zero budget? Email me and tell me what your needs are as a professional in the industry and how these needs are being met or not being met. Do not email me and tell me about the industry at large, I see and hear ample at that scale, I want to know about you and your needs on a daily basis.

The Writing on the Wall (or alternatively, The Dumbing-Down of an Industry)

Paul Stockford, Saddletree Research
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I've just learned of the near demise of yet another industry publication. I can remember a time when industry magazines were book-bound, full of insightful articles and found in the corporate libraries of almost any company I visited in my travels as an analyst. Today, almost all of those magazines have disappeared. The only magazines left to serve the contact center industry today are getting so thin that you can fold them into quarters and put them in your shirt pocket.

Attending call center trade shows used to be the highlight of the year. I looked forward to reconnecting with many of the people that I spoke with throughout the year, seeing the latest technological innovations, meeting the best and brightest industry people and catching up on the latest industry news. Now trade shows are usually sparsely attended events with few exhibitors and repetitive conference content presented by



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Fun Facts

Did you know that the US Census Bureau's NAICS code for Call Centers, 56142, is limited to primarily telephone answering services and pure outbound telemarketing centers only missing the largest portion of the industry, inbound centers? Remember this when your VP quotes from the *Wall Street Journal* about trends in the industry since most journalists use this flawed data set.

Picture of the Week



The Roman Forum, where Julius Cesar was cremated after his assassination, was one of the political, cultural and economic gathering place of the Roman Republic. This area dates to around 500 BC and was covered in mud and dirt and used as a cow pasture until just a hundred or so years ago. Research is still active in this site, which is in the heart of the city of Rome.

the same people.

What has happened to our industry? Neither the vendors nor the users of contact center equipment seem interested in supporting the media that supports our industry. When I ask solutions vendors who used to support trade shows and magazines why they don't anymore, the answer always has to do something with putting marketing budget into the web. When I ask users why they don't attend trade shows anymore, the answer always has to do something with budget and the fact that one can go to the web and get information from websites or webinars for free.

In my opinion, webinars are to live presentations as Paris Hilton is to Margaret Thatcher. One uses flash and fluff to get attention, the other offers intellect and substance. The impact of one is momentary, the other is unforgettable. I also prefer to look someone in the eye when they talk to me or I talk to them, but that's just me.

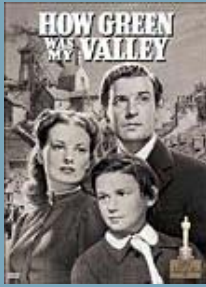
I would estimate that I get literally dozens of web newsletters, including this one, on my computer every month. If they're longer than a page or two, or if I can't see any value after a cursory glance, they get deleted. I don't want them clogging up my mailbox. Print magazines, of which I now get two or three a month, sit on my desk and eventually get read. I work at a computer all day long. A magazine or newspaper is welcome relief.

So why don't we support the publications and trade shows that support us? Has the instant information age stripped us of intellectual curiosity and the desire to connect with others with which we have something in common? Do we no longer have the mental capacity to absorb information that is more complex and detailed than the typical web-based "lite" news item? Are we becoming an industry doomed to getting information by blankly staring at PowerPoint slide after PowerPoint slide in a webinar that is no more than a thinly-veiled sales pitch? Is this the first step toward the "dumbing down" of the customer care industry?

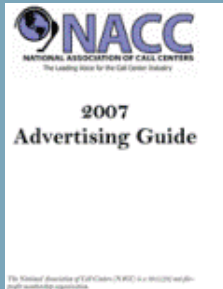
What I am Watching

How Green Was My Valley won the Academy Award in 1942. It is a horribly depressing movie.

The movie examines the life of one family, the Morgans, in Wales at the turn of the century. The Morgans live in the mining town where the older sons and father go down into the coal mines each day, return to bathe and get cleaned up before being served dinner by the wife and sister who stay at home. A younger brother, Huw (pronounced Hugh) tells the story in flashback recounting the many tragedies his family faced during his childhood. The tragedies are too numerous to list here, but suffice it to say that any happy event was sure to end in a horrible way.



John Ford's *How Green Was My Valley*



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The context of this movie is important. It won the Oscar in 1942, but was released in 1941 US, just as the US was exiting The Great Depression, World War II was going on in Europe, but the US has not yet entered the war since Pearl Harbor does not occur until December. I suspect that the confluence of all of the changes in the world at that time would allow an American viewer to relate to this movie more at that time than presently.

On an interesting note, the child Huw was played by Roddy McDowall, who I know mostly from *The Planet of the Apes* movies. Because it was such a depressing movie, I would not encourage anyone to watch it. However, if you still want to, you can rent it from Netflix by clicking on the image on the left.

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