Call Center Times

UPCOMING WEBCASTS

6/2 "It's the Law: How to Reduce Your Exposure to Risk while Improving Compliance" - NICE Systems- Following the events that recently led to the turmoil of the global economy, there are signs that the financial industry is on its way to becoming more regulated than ever. Regulators around the world demand more from institutions. They also increasingly require the use of tools that will assist companies to reduce their exposure to risk and to better comply with different regulations. Companies today are required to put greater emphasis on risk and compliance while constantly improving the level of service they provide to customers in order to remain competitive. Voice recording is used by many companies as a means of reducing risk while improving compliance with regulation. Automated solutions take this several steps further by leveraging advanced interaction analytics and workflows for an enhanced risk and compliance capabilities. Learn how you can leverage your existing voice recording implementation for a comprehensive risk and compliance solution.
http://www.crmxchange.com/webcast/nicejune09.asp

6/4 "Going End-to-End: Measuring the True Experience of the Contact Center Agent"- Empirix- Despite the prevalence of web services and self-service applications, agents still serve as the "front line" at most organizations. No matter how good a self-service application n is, some calls must go to an agent. Since a positive a contact center experience is an important part of retaining existing customers and winning new ones, time spent with an agent is critical to an organization's success. In this webinar, we will review an end-to-end testing and monitoring methodology for ensuring a reliable customer experience with a specific focus on the agent.
http://www.crmxchange.com/webcast/empirixmay09.asp

6/9 "Are You Positioned Well or Poorly? Sales Strategies to Strength Your Sweet Spot"- Sales Advisor - All too often, sales people plunge forward using the same tactics and strategy regardless of the circumstances. This would be analogous to a sports team not understanding their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their competition. By not varying their strategy often enough, too many deals are lost. This session will discuss how to define your strengths or your "sweet spot" to determine if you are in a position of strength, weakness or a bit of both. We will also discuss what type of tactics to use to make your strategy work and defeat the competition. Finally, different roles people play and how to leverage them will be outlined.
http://www.crmxchange.com/webcast/salesadvisorjune09.asp

6/11 "Identifying Barriers to Agent Productivity" - Knoa Software - Your agents interact with several applications during each customer interaction. Effectively navigating through the CRM system, soft phone, catalog, order management, knowledge base and other applications directly impacts Average Handle Time, First Call Resolution and customer satisfaction. Each agent uses technology differently. While some are very adept at navigating through systems, others are inconsistent, and some cannot
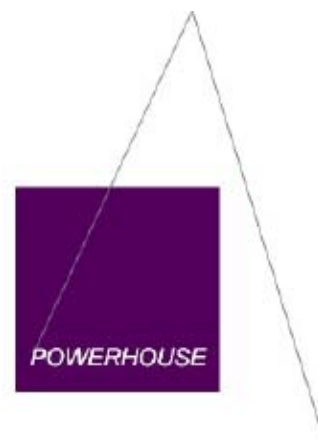
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RANTS & RAVES!
Randomly Timed Musings

Danger in the Comfort Zone: Is Complacency Contaminating Your Customer Experience?

By Kathleen M. Peterson
Chief Vision Officer, PowerHouse Consulting, Inc.

In my dictionary, complacency is defined quite simply as "self-satisfaction." The self-satisfied are often those residing in their very own *comfort zone*, a place where all is well. But is this truly a comfort zone or is it the *gateway to the danger zone*?

I have no issue with self-satisfaction. I believe that we must all give ourselves a pat on the back from time to time. Then we need to move on and figure out what is next and what needs tending. When managers and leaders enter the comfort zone, they pave the way for others to follow. This encourages a kind of "complacent" uniformity of spirit within the operation. When complacency dominates a culture it is insidious, having a gradual and cumulative effect. Change is resisted and innovation and creativity become unknown commodities. Quality deteriorates, collaboration is unproductive, morale is flat, and a variety of other ailments fester beneath the surface. It is here that the comfort zone *morphs* into the danger zone. Truly, this is a subtle transformation and many leaders remain blindly satisfied.

This is not to suggest that leaders do not see the damage that is being done. For example, they may get complaints from customers and try to inform other departments of these issues. They may receive a "lax" response driven by the widespread adoption and acceptance of a complacent attitude. The acceptance may amount to a simple shoulder shrug and the unconscious decision not to conduct a deeper analysis of the situation. Now all parties involved can hunker back down into the comfort zone of complacency.

Every day consumers encounter mediocrity in customer service, be it a bank, an insurer, a hospital, a retailer, etc. This situation is rampant and makes those that pay close attention to providing top-notch customer experiences SHINE. I'm a huge fan of the Geek Squad. My experiences with them have been stellar; they are flexible, competent, call you back when they say they will, and show up! Zappos.com prides itself on providing service. The first time I ordered shoes from them, the package showed up the next morning - no charge. I was WOWED! Zappos.com has a multi-faceted approach to service. The company also services its employees, with lots of training, a strong focus on quality in customer service rather than on simplistic metrics, and even provides employees with free food! Zappos.com is #23 on Fortune Magazine's 2009 *"Great Places to Work"* list and understands that

excellence works from the inside out! Consider the Nordstrom shopping experience. They do whatever it takes to take care of customer needs; people are pleasant, well informed, and exceptionally well managed!

Quality organizations work every aspect of the experience, and understand that it is as much operational excellence as anything else that sets companies apart in a competitive market. These operations avoid complacency because they are in motion. Complacent operations are often "stalled." They have serious cases of the "can'ts and the don'ts" (we can't do that, I don't have that, etc.). Examples of this are too frequent to review. We all have seen them as consumers and many of us don't recognize these companies as leaders. Complacency must be eradicated if we are to improve survival rates during today's economic conditions.

Complacency must first be recognized for what it is and evaluated in terms of its depth. Those at the "top of the shop" must be prepared to genuinely challenge themselves when evaluating overall performance. *Has the company entered the comfort zone? How deeply has the condition penetrated?*

Another danger looms in this crisis - complacent organizations will hire and promote those that are also complacent. This prevents the uncomfortable circumstance of
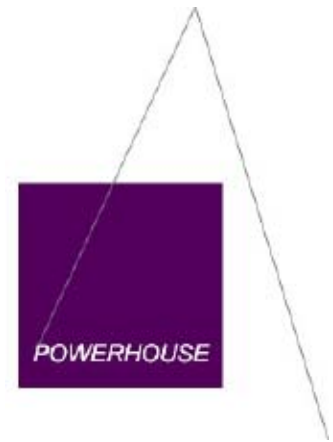
RANTS & RAVES!

Randomly Timed Musings

someone pointing out *real issues* or disagreeing with the norm. Dissention must be welcome, while simultaneously being managed (no one wants the sniper or naysayer to dominate). Unfortunately, within complacent environments, arguments *against* change and the reluctance to challenge the status quo are often embraced rather than rejected. Those suggesting a shift are ousted or shunned. Look at the auto industry and other goliaths. *Is it possible over the decades that they just "parked" themselves in the comfort zone?* They may have allowed creativity in design, but seriously lack such a dynamic in operations.

Operations is where things actually happen in business. All the grandiose ideas, strategies, branding, financial objectives, and marketing campaigns are dependent on the enterprise's ability to launch and manage activities from an operational perspective. When customers encounter experiences that do not match their expectations, their disappointment is rarely in the advertising campaign. It is more likely to be in product performance, price, delivery, support, etc., - all operational elements.

So how do you turn your danger zone into your comfort zone? First, you must fight complacency by challenging yourself and those around you. Assess the spirit, the culture, and the morale of your operation. *Could it use a jolt? Could you use a jolt?*

Spring is a fantastic time to start something new. Even if you encourage more team meetings or "huddles," ask for feedback, get people talking to one another, and interrupt bitch and gossip sessions. And if you are really a leader and genuinely want a long-term career - stop the bitching and gossiping!!

Stop tolerating behaviors that do not deliver on the customer experience. Get rid of those in your environment that prefer the status quo - they are the *foundation* of complacency. Evaluate your hiring. *Who exactly are you hiring?* Zappos.com asks every job candidate to rate themselves on a "weirdness" scale of 1 to 10. (They like weird people.) Tattoos and piercings do not eliminate candidates! The HR leader at Pret A Manger, a FANTASTIC UK-based sandwich shop, is known as "the treasure hunter."

Speaking of HR, many organizations pride themselves on behavior-based interviewing, using questions to elicit specific examples of a person's qualifications. Here's an idea to help you jolt yourself out of complacency. Gather your management team in a room and ask them to answer those same questions, providing examples from their current positions. Have folks talk about how they dealt with resolving a difficult customer issue, what techniques they found effective in assuring a motivated team, and how they have been able to influence

someone with a different point of view. This is truly a great exercise! It can be repeated several times a year and documented; after a couple of years you have a cool book to publish!! What fun! But this activity can't happen if you're too comfortable, complacent, or self-satisfied. Good luck!

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it' is the slogan of the complacent, the arrogant, or the scared. It's an excuse for inaction, a call to non-arms." Colin Powell, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (1989-93)

(#27, Danger in the Comfort Zone: Is Complacency Contaminating Your Customer Experience?, May 2009)

navigate through systems at all. Attend this webcast and we will show you how to gain insight how to identify barriers to agent productivity.
http://www.crmxchange.com/webcast/knoajune09.asp

6/18 "Performance Management: Tools that Drive Action, Not Just Reports" -Aspect
- Upheavals in the global economy have shocked businesses around the world. Short-term adjustments are required, but how does your organization keep its long-term strategic goals in play too? This webcast will examine how performance management applications can help convert strategic objectives into actionable data - ensuring employees at all levels of the organization are focused on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that increase sales, improve collections and enhance first contact resolution processes.
http://www.crmxchange.com/webcast/aspectjune09.asp

###

Process Compliance – The Key To Reducing Agent Turnover by 30% by Scott Harding

Understanding and measuring results and key objectives is critical to any organizations success. If your are like most experienced organizational leaders, clearly defined expectations and outcomes drive almost every management decision you make. Shouldn't you apply the same rigor to the decision to add the most valuable asset to your organization, your next contact center agent?

Our studies indicate that the typical contact center business can achieve a reduction in turnover of up to 30% by simply following a well defined, measurable, recruitment, screening and selection processes.

Most businesses attempt to track their selection efforts through an applicant tracking systems (ATS) but these efforts fall short if they do not include a means of measuring and predicting the performance and retention of applicants. Organizations that implement an ATS that includes a predictive measurement and that consistently use a systematic method in their recruitment and selection efforts typically experience a reduction in turnover of up to 30%. This translates to significant savings each year and can make the difference between a contact center that struggles to survive in a down market and one that thrives.

Industry best practices indicate that effective recruitment and selection efforts should include:
- An effective attraction strategy
- A web based screening system to identify basic requirements
- A Contact Center Specific Simulation / Assessment for Hard Skills
- A phone interview
- A Normative Psychometric Assessment to predict performance and retention
- A Behavioral-Based Interview
- A Hiring Manager Fit Interview

The reality is that the hiring process is often split across different departments within the organization. This disjunction makes it difficult for organizations engaged in high volume, de-centralized recruiting to comply to a systematic selection process. The risk is that good candidates end up being missed or poor candidates skip a step in the process and get selected. Both of these selection errors can have serious financial consequences for the organization.

In a recent conversation with a senior contact center manager he agreed that something should be done to measure the process but he went on to explain that the costs associated with hiring were in different budgets and that improvements would not affect his P&L.
This common oversight causes organizations to have a difficult time calculating the true cost of turnover. The information required to make an effective hiring decision is often fragmented and makes tracking of the process difficult. In these tight economic times, the decision is often made to eliminate any spending. However, losing money annually because poorly implemented hiring

procedures is the same as wasteful spending, if not worse.

A realistic look at a return on investment most often indicates that the return will be 10 to 12 times the expense involved in institutionalizing a well-defined talent acquisition process.

Our customized, web-based pre-screening, simulation, assessment and selection system ensures compliance across the hiring continuum.

The candidate's potential is scored at each step in the process and a final hiring score is tallied. This method is effective for comparing candidates to each other and to your existing top performers regardless of how many divisions or departments the candidate's application moved through. The selection process becomes more consistent and you will improve both retention and performance in your new hires.

Don't you think your business deserves the opportunity to run this efficiently?

For detailed information and client case studies

please contact:

Scott Harding
Director Talent Strategy and Programs
Self Management Group
416 746-0444 ext: 251

###

Paid Announcement

Kalissa Communications – Stimulus Package for Call Centers

Maximizing call center profits in the current economic climate requires call center management to be more vigilant than ever in recognizing new revenue sources and managing financial risks. Kalissa Communications is offering call centers the ability to obtain an immediate stimulus package today.

Kalissa Communications, LLC is proud to introduce you to C-NAME^{TM}, the caller-id system that pays you for making calls. Every time a caller-id is displayed from your outbound calls, your call center makes money! Continue to make calls as you do now you don't have to change anything. C-NAME^{TM} allows you to modify the caller-id display in real time as

you are making outbound calls. If you want to increase your call center revenue C-NAME^{TM} is the next employee you need on your staff.

Telecom's Best Kept Secret. This revenue source has been an industry secret for many years. In the telecom industry, it has always been rumored that the Local Exchange Carriers (LEC) and Competitive Local Exchange Carriers (CLEC) have a way of making money on the Caller ID system.

Telecom's Little Secret Is a NOT a secret anymore. Using Kalissa Communications' C-NAME^{TM} Technology, enables you to tap into your own Stimulus package and start generating a new revenue source today! Every time a customer sees your name on their caller-id you get paid!

When you sign up with Kalissa Communications service, you can request a range of telephone numbers to use depending upon the state you are calling. Your C-NAME^{TM} account lets you assign an alpha name and a ring-to number for those lines. For example; let's say you use the telephone

number 712-432-4734 on your C-NAME^{TM} account. You will set the name for that line to the client's name ('COMPANY NAME', so long as it's an alphanumeric tag of 15 characters or less) and the ring-to number for wherever you have designated to take inbound calls, be it your own office number or the client's sales department. Then, in your dialer or PBX, you set the number being out-pulsed for all 'COMPANY NAME' telemarketing calls to 712-432-4734, or other number you choose.

Your C-NAME^{TM} account allows your call center reps to make a call for that client's account, the dialer sends a Branded number instead of yours. When the customer's phone rings, their Caller ID shows ('COMPANY NAME' 712-432-4734) on the display, not the name and number of your marketing department because you out-pulsed the 712 number and the terminating phone company "dipped" the Kalissa Communications database to retrieve the name field information that you specified.

Call center management has 24/7 access to their

Kalissa's C-NAME^{TM} account with a user-friendly web based interface, change Caller ID in real time. Calling campaigns can be changed in seconds, giving greater flexibility to call center management.

C-NAME^{TM} technology also provides a way to handle all callback calls received from customers. Callback calls are automatically forward to a number you specify making the entire experience seamless from the customer's perspective. C-NAME^{TM} has the ability to handle callbacks with a our automated voice mail system that converts messages to a WAV file and forwards them as an attachment in an email sent to the designated call center staff member to handle.

Kalissa Communications' C-NAME^{TM} processes are fully automated to allow our customers to have total control over all the information they wish to present to the party receiving the outbound call. There is no need to buy hardware or software for this product. You can perform calls just like you do today using our

numbers and earn revenue in return. Call centers can earn revenue up to $10,000 to $50,000 a month depending on call volume.

C-NAME^{TM} technology allows the end user to receive a calling party's information, including calling number and a name associated with the number. The Caller ID information gets transmitted during the first and second rings. When you make a call, a number field is sent with the outbound call much like a header on an email. The date, time and name info are added by the end customer's local phone company, which performs a database lookup on that number field to get the value to fill in the name field. A 15-character ASCII value is retrieved from that database and passed on to be displayed in the name field of the customer's Caller ID.

Many telephone companies pay a small fee to Caller-ID database providers each time they retrieve Caller-ID with name information for an end user who has purchased Caller-ID with name from them. Kalissa Communications'

C-NAME^{TM} online system supplies it's Customers with proprietary NPA/NXX numbers that are deposited into our databases. When payments are made to Kalissa Communications as result of a telephone company's Caller-ID retrieval, Kalissa Communications shares that revenue with our C-NAME^{TM} Customers. There is no extra cost to your local or long distance carrier for your use of this service from Kalissa Communications.

C-NAME^{TM} technology can be used by call centers, telemarketing companies, auto dialers, predictive dialers, calling card applications, marketing promotions like vacation destinations along with other businesses making at least 250,000 outbound calls per month. You can maximize your company's revenue without changing anything you are currently doing today. You will not need to change your service and you have no out of pocket expenses. You can check your account and revenues online whenever you choose.

There are a few restrictions on how the

service can be used in order to insure compliance with FCC and FTC regulations. Calls must be placed in accordance with the rules and restrictions governing the National Do Not Call lists and be in compliance with all other applicable federal and state telemarketing rules. The caller-id name used must be of the person or company calling or on behalf of whom the call is being made. The ring-to-number assigned must be an active line terminating at a live operator during business hours or an automatic menu with the option of reaching a live operator. And the customer must be given an option for indicating that they wish to be placed on the caller's Do Not Call list.

For additional information about Kalissa Communications, LLC and the C-NAME^{TM} service contact; Stevin Dahl, Senior Business Development Director at Phone: (712) 432-4734 and Email: Stevin@KalissaCommunications.com

###

Analyze Customer Satisfaction With Standard Call Center Tools

Ric Kosiba
President, Bay Bridge
Decision Technologies

For many contact center executives, answering this question is the call center equivalent to finding the Holy Grail: What is the real relationship between customer satisfaction and service level?

We manage very expensive operations and measure our operation's throughput with metrics that are akin to manufacturing metrics: Service Level or Average Speed of Answer is similar to Manufacturing Queue Time, Agent Handle Time is similar to Manufacturing Cycle Time, and finally, Abandon Rate, which is similar to Manufacturing Defect Rate.

But, because we know that managing a contact center is, at its core, a process of managing a series of human interactions, we know that we are missing, by focusing on production metrics, the measure of how well we are doing on a touchy-feely score.

This is a recurrent theme, and there are many (expensive) ways that we have seen companies try to get in touch with their softer side.

All of us monitor our agents and provide quality scores. Many of us enlist third party customer polling firms that will gage customer satisfaction by conducting a survey. Some of us will take that information and try to correlate the individual customer wait time with the overall satisfaction using mathematical techniques like regression modeling.

What we inevitably find is that the primary driver of satisfaction is agent demeanor and call resolution.

When I was a kid, I worked as a cook in a restaurant. It was a hot, hurried job. One day, after working up my courage, I asked the owner if I could move to a position waiting on tables (we only had waitresses) in order to make more money. The owner kindly stated that his policy was to use only women as wait-staff, because in a food service breakdown, with a smile, a woman could make

everything better for the customer. I didn't feel great about my smile, but took the words of wisdom back to the kitchen. In essence, all can be made better by a good interaction (and a smile).

But even that doesn't mean people are happy with their wait. I might like the waitress and seem satisfied with the overall experience, but I can still be irritated at the wait. Similarly, our customers can be satisfied with the call resolution but be unhappy with the wait time. And the next time I call, as I am dialing, I will be irritated at my expected wait. As contact center managers, we know this too. We know we need both well-trained agents and decent production.

But there is one production metric that most of us already report, that is a direct measure of customer satisfaction. Rather, it is a direct measure of customer *dissatisfaction*. That measure is, of course, abandonment rate.

Service level and ASA are interesting because they give us good operational productivity measures. But those of us who have taken care to research the correlation between service level and customer satisfaction, usually find that there is only a very weak correlation between the two. Some of us have concluded that service level doesn't matter nearly as much as we had anticipated (although we continue to set our company goals using service level).

Abandon rate is the only true metric that can judge, directly, some form of actual satisfaction; every hang up (after some minimal threshold time to abandon) is a somewhat unhappy customer. These customers actually voted with their feet.

You can argue that customer satisfaction surveys, that do not include abandons (again, past a minimal threshold), are truly underreporting the customer dissatisfaction. You cannot charm a customer who has hung up the phone.

So how do you use the bits of customer

satisfaction information we have?

Our task is to determine the operational goals of our contact centers and to develop the long and short term plans that achieve these goals. Our job is to develop in our agents the skills required to turn out satisfied customers (as well as provide the resources and flexibility to allow them to do their jobs).

The former issue will be the focus of the rest of our discussion; if only because it is an area that I believe is less understood and is also in line with our expertise.

So the problem to work through is this: for a customer service department, what production goal should we staff to, keeping in mind that we must maintain customer satisfaction?

There are at least two ways to work through this: we can build a regression model that relates service level to customer service, and/or we can build an accurate model of abandons and use the model to analyze our service at varying staffing levels.

Like previously mentioned, regression models usually show a weak correlation between satisfaction and service levels. We believe that the better metric to focus on is abandons, and some very neat analysis can be done now, without having to hire a polling/survey company.

Many companies are now investing in simulation technologies to help with their long-term planning. Assuming that you have such a tool, and you have validated your simulation model against actual ACD

performance data, you can create the following graph:

Graph 1: Service Level Versus Abandonment Rate

This graph demonstrates the relationship between service level and your abandonment rate, in effect drawing out the patience of your customer base. So which service level goal should we choose?

Clearly, this is a qualitative question. If I am managing a customer service function, I will want to balance many things:

• My costs
• Customer expectations
• Corporate mission/brand identity
• Availability of alternatives/competition
• Availability of alternative channels
• *Profitability*

Center executives have told me that, almost by definition, customer service functions have no profit component to their economics. They are cost centers only.

Our answer to this is that *there is always an implied profit structure associated with your customer service function.* You may not know what it is, but it is there

nonetheless.

Let me explain. Associated with every service goal is a required staffing level, a required infrastructure cost, and an overall contact center cost required to hit that service goal. Once we set a goal, we really set a cost.

Every service goal also has an implied profit. That is, in a theoretical sense, we would like to manage our contact center as effectively and efficiently as possible, and hence we would like to manage to an optimal value.

Let me introduce the concept of POF.   In contact centers, your POF is the implied cost associated with abandoning a call. It represents how much money it costs you to have an unhappy customer, and you can assign every abandon (past some short threshold) a POF value. You set your POF to compensate for the anger or dissatisfaction of a customer who abandoned.

Very few of us have ever tried to actually determine this cost. But by assigning, for example, a POF of $25 per abandoned call, I can plug that value into my simulation-based long term planning tool to draw this graph:

Graph 2: Service Level Versus Profit at a POF of $25 per Call

In this example, if I were managing my contact center like a business, and every abandoned call cost me $25, my profit would lead me to manage, optimally, to a 90% within 20 second service level standard (the star represents the profit maximizing point). This is the goal that optimizes my business.

A corollary to this logic is that, if I were managing my center with a service level goal of 90% within 20 seconds, my implied call value is $25. We are staffing our contact center as if each abandoned call costs us $25 in goodwill.

Let's try another one.

Let's say, instead, that I value each abandoned call at only $2 per call, keeping everything else about the contact center the same. Given the economics of my center and the patience of my customers, I can plot profit versus service level, and determine the profit maximizing service goal:
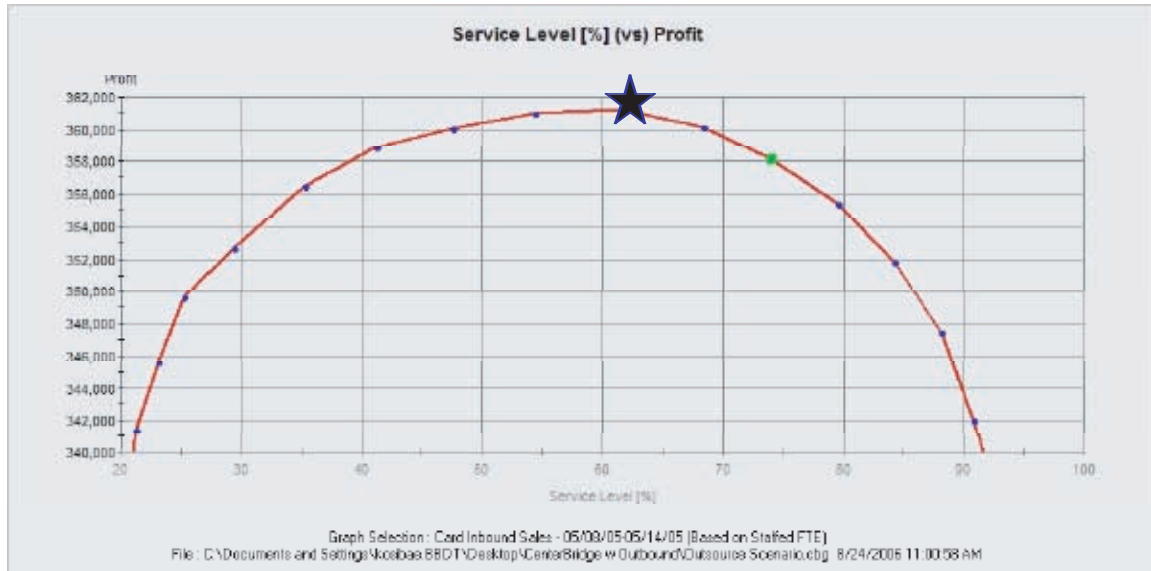
Graph 3: Service Level Versus Profit at a POF of $2 per Call

In this example, the profit maximizing service level is 62% within 20 seconds. If our service level goal was 62%, then your implied POF is $2. We are staffing our contact center as if each abandoned call costs us $2 in goodwill.

With my accurate center simulation model, with my costs, my customer patience, my contact center efficiencies, my economies of scale, etc… I can produce, in just a few minutes, the following graph:
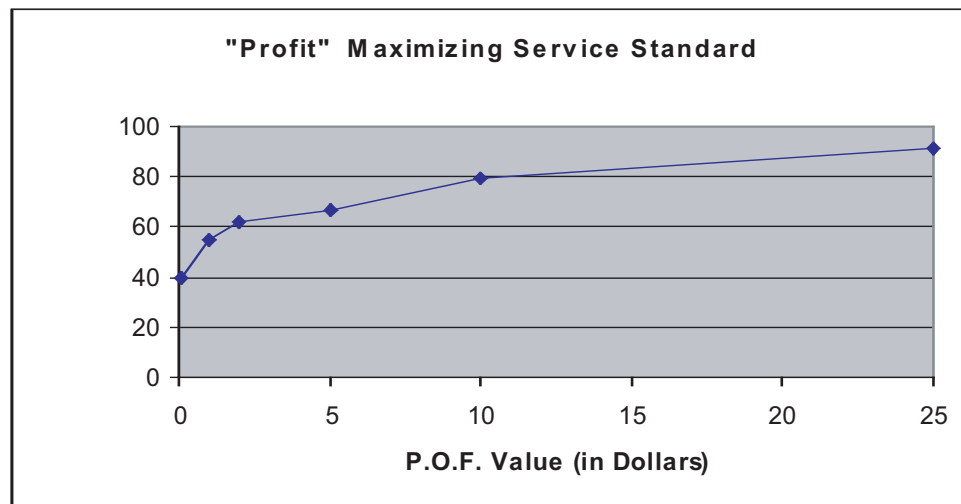
Graph 4: POF Value Versus Optimal Service Level

This simple graph gives my decision makers a real intuitive view into their goal setting. They can choose whatever service standard they like, and this graph will describe the value per call they are implying. It works great to clarify service discussions.

By choosing a service goal, we truly are assuming a value per call and a cost of not satisfying our customers. And we all know what they say about the word "assume".

To really understand customer satisfaction, it's better to lay bare the assumptions we make and sic our simulation models on the analysis. As always, when we turn on the analytics, we make better decisions.

###

Cultural Affinity and Multilingualism
By Ossama Nazmi, Vice President Marketing & Business Development

Cultural affinity coupled with multilingualism in the outsourcing world became key aspects, especially if dealing with an offshore call center project. When all other factors check during the most rigorous due diligence a client would carry for an outsourcing provider; culture and multilingual capability are often underestimated and in most cases undervalued.
Many of the outsourced programs awarded to different offshore destinations have fallen short in satisfying the cultural compatibility and multilingual capability elements needed to gain the targeted customer satisfaction scores. In many other cases the service had to reach a complete halt after serious glitches caused by cultural unawareness and linguistic issues.

The destination chosen should show an inclination towards the client culture and rather

more to the type of offered service, like directory assistance for instance. The directory assistance requires deep knowledge of places inside the served country, in the exact same way locals are used to call those places. Often, customer service requires a close conversation where an offshore agent commonly gets hit by very colloquial terms. An efficient call center provider would have armed his agents with the adequate culture knowledge and training to overcome these kind of situations.

Multilingualism is also a key factor, many leading outsourcing destinations, their value proposition abates when multilingual capabilities are demanded. For that reason the North African region emerged with a unique value proposition among key global tenants. It is a location that is able to provide multilingual services across verticals with a very high degree of cultural awareness. Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt have all established contact center sector for years . Tunisia and Morocco, are still exclusively serving the French markets. As for Morocco, the existence of another European language is also valid. Spanish is served from Tangier north of Morocco at limited numbers. Egypt on the other hand is still perceived as an Anglophone destination, although, on the contrary it has a proven track record of serving most of the European languages to fortune 500 companies, at a very adequate level.

According to Ossama Nazmi, Vice President Marketing & Business Development at Xceed, "the two strong evidences that any outsourcer should examine before committing to an outsourcing tenure are: multilingual capabilities and cultural affinity". He further adds that "these factors establish the base for an ultimate experience for customers that are not only enjoying a "local-sound" but rather a high quality phone experience".

###

Around and About The Call Center Industry......

OKS-Ameridial Singled Out For Helping Clients Improve CRM & Sales Performance

OKS-Ameridial announced that

Technology Marketing Corporation (TMC)'s Customer Interaction Solutions® magazine has named OKS-Ameridial as a recipient of a 2009 CRM Excellence Award. Customer Interaction Solutions has been the premier publication in the CRM, call center and teleservices industries since 1982.

"The CRM Excellence Award marks a significant achievement for OKS-Ameridial and our Customers. It represents a milestone accomplishment specifically in the area of our Blended Inbound and Outbound Service and Sales Solutions. We would like to thank our customers and staff for their commitment and effort which has led to this kind of recognition" said Steve Trifelos, Vice President, OKS-Ameridial.

"OKS-Ameridial has demonstrated to the editors of Customer Interaction Solutions that their products and services have substantially improved the processes of their clients' businesses by streamlining and facilitating the flow of information needed for companies to retain their most precious asset...their customers," said Nadji Tehrani, founder and chairman of TMC, publishers of Customer Interaction Solutions.

Based on hard data, The CRM Excellence Award relies on facts and numbers demonstrating the improvements that the

winner's product has made in a client's business. The Tenth Annual CRM Excellence Award winners have been chosen on the basis of their product or service's ability to help extend and expand the customer relationship to become all encompassing, covering the entire enterprise and the entire lifetime of the customer.

OKS-Ameridial is a leading global provider of contact center services, direct mail, and business processing outsourcing services. OKS-Ameridial employs over 1,500 agents.

For more information, call 1-800-445-7128 or visit www.oksameridial.net.

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THE CONNECTION RECOGNIZED IN TOP 50 U.S. CALL CENTERS & MVP AWARD RECIPIENT

BURNSVILLE, Minn. – The Connection®, an outsourced contact center company, was recently named as a 2008 MVP Quality Award winner by *Customer Inter@ction Solutions*® magazine, the leading publication in CRM, call

centers and teleservices industries. In addition, Technology Marketing Corporation (TMC®), has ranked **The Connection** 11th on its Annual Top 50 Teleservices Agencies.

Customer Inter@ction Solutions magazine has honored companies that have exemplified the highest commitment to quality, excellence and customer service with an MVP Quality Award. Again this year, a select group of contact center industry standouts have been honored with MVP Quality Awards in various categories.

"**The Connection** has proven excellence in taking and improving quality measures. They have impressed our editors at *Customer Inter@ction Solutions* with their ability to build a feeling of community within their company, while providing the best service they can give to their clients," said Nadji Tehrani, Executive Group Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of *Customer Inter@ction Solutions.* "**The Connection** has demonstrated a true commitment to high ethical standards, stringent policies and challenging goals."

The Connection® is an award-winning, US-based live operator call center and service agency. Since its inception in 1981, The Connection has evolved into one of the largest outsource call center service agencies in the country, as well as one of the leaders in quality and performance. The Connection provides sales and customer service and has five call center facilities, located in Minnesota, New York, New Mexico and Nebraska. www.the-connection.com

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Call Center Times

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Dear Vice-President of Sales/Marketing:

Here Is How We Can Help Increase Your Bottom Line!

_____ *'2009 Call Center Book of Lists Directory':*
- ◆ *Over 2,000 Call Centers Listed*
- ◆ *Each Call Center has at least One Decision Maker Listed*
- ◆ *900 E-mail Addresses*
- ◆ *Includes bonus technology leads - (Speech Technology, Recording Solutions and ACD information)*
- ◆ *The Directory is in CD-ROM (Excel Spreadsheet)*
- ◆ *FREE Quarterly Updates*   Cost: $425

_____ **Resource Directory/Call Center's Buyer's Guide**: This section of our website is the most elaborate advertising program that we provide: Your company will be profiled on our website, www.callcentertimes.com, for 12 consecutive months You will be listed in the Rolling Banner for 12 consecutive months   Cost: $517

_____ *Monthly Newsletter Advertisement:*   Cost: $275

_____ **Corporate Logo Promotion (Website & Monthly Newsletter)**:   Cost $500

Simply check the applicable column(s) and return by fax to (972) 395-9205. Please note that all transactions are final. There will be no refunds.

COMPANY NAME/ Contact/Address/Telephone/Fax/E-mail: _____

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o   MasterCard   o   Visa   o   American Express

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Credit Card Number   Expiration Date

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Name As Appears On Credit Card (Print Please)   &   Signature

Regards,
Nosa Eke, Publisher