

Call Center Times

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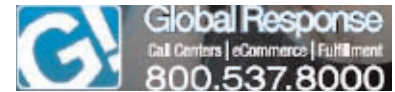
Turning Customer Issues into Trackable Metrics: Using a Trusted Tool to Support Your Customer Experience Initiatives by Susan Saldibar, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Centergistic Solutions

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Good Customer Service: Do you have the choice? By Jessica Zuhlsdorf



HERE ARE THE LOGOS OF THE LEADING PROVIDERS OF CALL CENTER PRODUCTS AND SERVICES...CLICK ON LOGO TO LEARN MORE ABOUT EACH COMPANY!





RANTS & RAVES!

Randomly Timed Musings

First Time Face Time

By Kathleen M. Peterson

Chief Vision Officer, PowerHouse Consulting, Inc.

Last night I looked into the future ... again. At about 10 p.m. on a dreary Saturday night, my first born called us to engage in a "Face Time" chat. He and his fiancé had my niece over for dinner and since it had been a while since I saw her, they decided a "virtual visit" was in order. Just for the record we have recently crossed over to the MAC side of the world for our home computing needs. So Brendan proposed a new "channel" for us to visit, known as "Face Time."

Needless to say ... at 10 p.m. on a Saturday night, after having just watched a movie, I did not feel I looked my best. But I agreed to the proposal anyway. Wow, it just blew me away! There they were ... all three "kids" gathered around Brendan's iPhone face-to-face having a video chat with us. We of course were displayed on their "device" on the other end. I must confess to feeling a bit odd, particularly when initiating our end. David and I were like an ad for "old people can learn this too" while launching the "app." Once connected, we were giddy with the entire experience; two things came to my mind nearly simultaneously. First I couldn't help but think that we will likely visit with our grandchildren this way (that is when and if ...) and second, "What the heck will this technology do to Call Centers?" While we have used SKYPE in the past, this was different. The call came from Brendan's phone ... portable, easily accessible, easy to use, and of very high quality. This stuff is moving fast and we all need to keep

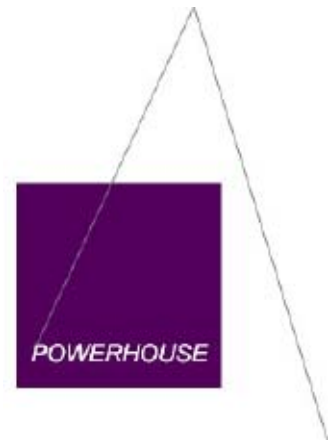
up.

Imagine what this all means to the frontline Call Center agent and those who manage them. These "kids" we were chatting with are all in their late 20's and this is as natural to them as life itself. They are also the next big consumer group and a substantial part of the Call Center workforce. *Are you ready to put your front line on video?* Something tells me we'd best get ready! This is a channel that will impact everything from the neatness of the workspace, to the distractions of side noise, to folks just rambling around the Center. Never mind the unmentionable leadership question, "How will my folks look on a Face Time type of video application?"

Geesh, I've been in many a Call Center where this question will take leaders to a place they may not want to go. Looks will quite possibly be a factor in hiring (and in some places it already is). It may be subliminal, but I feel very strongly that looks will come into play. *If your customers/callers could see your front line agents, would they be inspired or alarmed?*

Face-to-face communication is said to be 55% body language, 7% words, and 13% tonality. The traditional telephone relies only on words and tonality, with the percentage shifting to 13% words and 87% tonality. Needless to say, quality assessment has had a significant focus on tone of voice. Video now throws a new dimension into the mix.

And it's not just people's looks. Video will include a glimpse of the Call Center itself. Consider the condition of the workspace ... paper plastered all over, people parading back and forth, and "rows" of 30 cubes (or worse, just a



RANTS & RAVES!

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random bunch of desks) could make a caller wonder about you and about your brand.

Who will be on the “video” team? Will your selection process give way to the natural prejudice of looks over competency? Will you consider a “uniform” in order to manage the dress code aspects of video? When dealing with phone calls, it matters not in most cases what you wear. Not so with video ... it will matter a lot!

Perhaps I am an alarmist. Video calls are going to happen. Maybe consumers won't care, but I doubt it. One thing I think for sure is that it will be “staging” time in the Call Center. I see the potential for the creation of just the right “view” for those choosing a video contact once offered. *What will we see with the emergence of the video team environment?* Perhaps one where workstations are modern and kept super tidy, the colors inviting, the uniform pressed, the potted plants present, and all the “pretty” people engaged in face-to-face contacts with callers.

The good news is that callers may resist the urge to be surly; maybe the hostility index will be lowered and fewer explosions and escalations will occur. One can always hope. The flip side of the video chat is that the *caller* will be visible; this allows for any prejudices the agent might feel to impact their view and treatment of the caller. *How do we manage that?*

Well, “let it be” as the Beatles might say. The young are coming and they want to migrate their toys to tools at work. They want to remain in the 21st century after punching the clock and they want to buy from companies as cool as they are. The challenge is here ... it may be time to begin a conversation about this eminent channel as soon as

possible! Let us know what you do, when you launch, and how it goes.

“There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.” Machiavelli (1532)

All the best,

Kathleen

(#47, First Time Face Time, April 2011)

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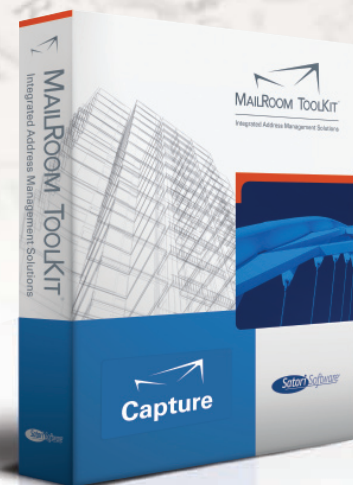
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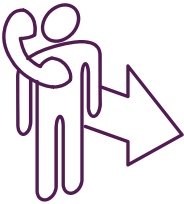


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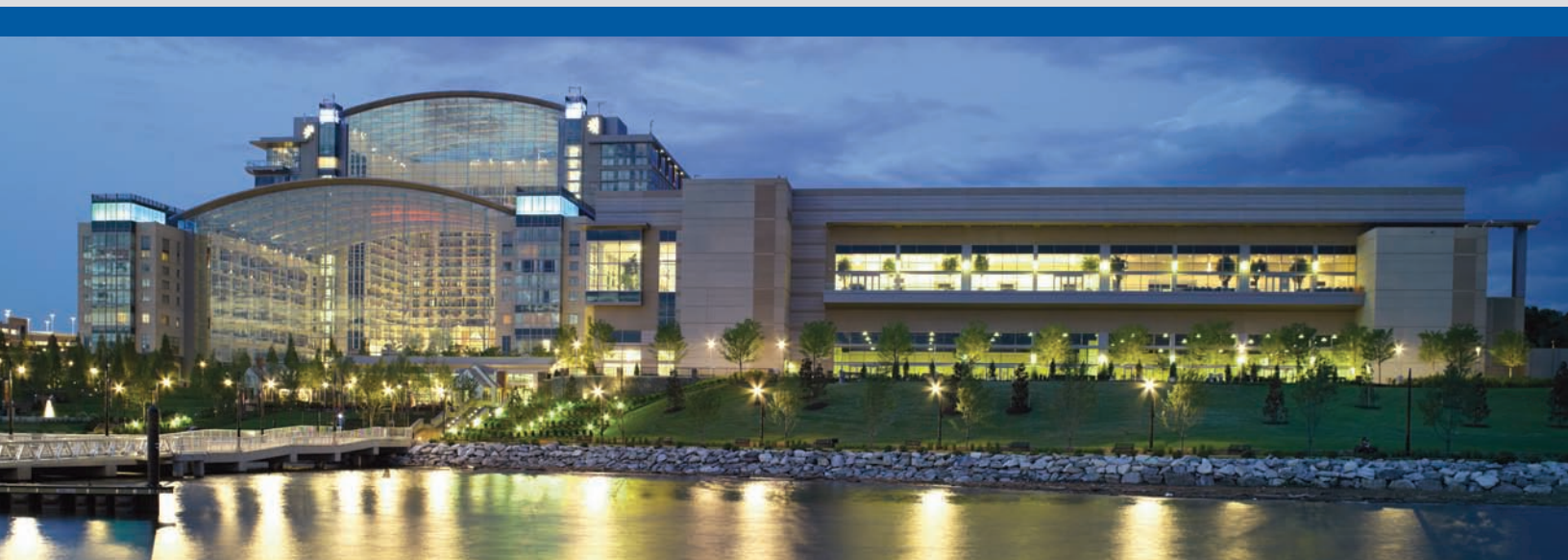
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