

SOUTHWEST EXPRESS



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METROLINK'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE IS VALUABLE DURING L.A. TRAIN DERAILMENT

*by Anne F. Smith
Alta Resources*

On January 27, 2005 at 6:12am, an L.A. Metrolink train struck a car that was parked on the tracks, killing 11 passengers and injuring nearly 200 more. In response, Metrolink launched their established emergency plans, which included increasing their Customer Care Center productivity by more than 200%.

By 6:22, Metrolink's Call Center Director initiated communication with the Derailment Command Center and maintained communication throughout the day.

Within 90 minutes of the accident, Metrolink:

- Established a unique toll free # for friends and loved ones to call. The number was given to the media, news outlets and was published on the Metrolink website.

- Established a team, specially trained to respond to the incident. Incident calls by passed the auto attendant and were routed directly to the Emergency Response Team.
- All team members, many who were not scheduled that day, were logged in and ready to take calls.
- Members from other teams were trained and ready to take calls.
- A second back up team located in Neenah, WI was trained and ready to take calls if needed.

Metrolink markets to the discretionary rider, which means that over 90% of their riders have cars and are not public transit dependent. Recognition of this fact and the significance of emergency circumstances is why the Metrolink management team feels that high quality service is imperative.

Contact Center primary services include information on scheduling, fares and delayed train informa-

tion. In addition, they are able to assist with lost articles and alternative travel arrangements.

By contrast, Metrolink's emergency philosophy means training for the "event you never want to happen".

The call center was given kudos from the media. Many of the stations when giving the toll free number on air mentioned that the people "manning the phones" were knowledgeable and very courteous.

"No one can predict when an emergency will happen, but being prepared to handle it can only enhance your brand in the marketplace and let your customers know you really care," related an anonymous Metrolink Manager.

Metrolink's outsourcing call center partner is Alta Resources in Brea, CA.

DAVID RICH CONNECTS WITH SOCAP SRC

*by Cathy Johnson
Nestlé USA*

On April 27, the Southwest Regional Chapter hosted a motivational workshop featuring "The Most Personable Speaker in America", David Rich. David has been speaking to au-



Author & Guest Speaker, David Rich

diences for the past 17 years, including several SOCAP chapters. His charisma and energy set the stage for a very engaging and interactive program.

David taught techniques to "click" with customers to create positive first impressions with a goal of transforming them from customers to loyal advocates. He inspired the group to be "contagious" leaders and gave tips to manage



Pat Harrison of Sony Electronics, Sam Diliberto of SOCAP NY Metro Chapter and Rita Wood of Network Direct at the SRC's

and motivate people.

If you missed this very informative session, be sure to watch for David at future SOCAP events.



KNOWLEDGE IS MONEY

by Dennis Finnerman
Dejuje

The best way for management to help their agents deliver responsive and attentive service with a good attitude is to arm them with knowledge and train them on how to use it.

Many executives miss the boat when it comes to how they regard their customer service center. They focus on costs and the performance benchmarks attributable to costs (e.g. handle time, wage rates) and not on revenue and its benchmarks (e.g. customer wallet size/longevity, single call resolution, incentives earned).

Customer service centers have huge potential for generating revenues. Even if there is no direct opportunity for selling more products or services, consumers' perceptions of how they are treated can impact their next buying decision. Perceptions are shaped by a number of factors, many of which are subjective. The agent's attitude, responsiveness and attentiveness can create consumer loyalty, even if the problem is

not solved.

The best way for management to help their agents deliver responsive and attentive service with a good attitude is to arm them with knowledge and train them on how to use it. A consumer is more likely to feel "cared for" if the agent knows

- what the last contact regarded and when it was made
- what products/services the consumer has purchased,
- what the consumer's preferences are

In small centers, agents can easily confer with each other to share knowledge on a particular consumer. As centers grow larger and geographically dispersed, direct sharing is impossible so agents need to access knowledge databases. If the Company markets multiple products/services, there may

be multiple databases that need to be networked in order to get the agent the knowledge necessary to deliver the level of service that will create a positive consumer experience.

Embarking on a strategy of arming customer service agents with the knowledge required to impact long-term revenue can be daunting. A Company must examine its mission, objectives, and limitations and determine the financial return of the required investments. The technology is available, the agents and consumers would both be well served and the Company, in the long run, will be richer for it.

And interestingly enough, such a strategy can positively impact call times, agent turnover and other standard benchmarks so even those cost-conscious executives will win.

SOCAP SRC's

Most Important Issues

- 1—Maintaining high quality while lowering costs
- #2—Maximizing each contact for revenue and/or customer service
- #3—Getting reliable, responsive input (from either internal or external sources) on successful processes, best practices, new technology, vendors, out-sourcers
- #4—Finding good people
- #5—Collecting, storing, managing and using the information from each contact

CONSUMER FUN FACTS

56% of us clean just like mom, however 55% of us use different cleaning products.

Generation X spends just as frugally as Depression-era folks because they've experienced the dot-com bust. So, look to find them at discount stores.

Met Life Market Institute's research suggests that nearly half of all Baby Boomers seek to work beyond retirement, pushing them into the higher end of the wealth spectrum. By 2030, this generation will control nearly 40% of the U.S.'s disposable income.

CAPTURING ECO-FRIENDLY CONSUMERS

by Carmen Gonzalez
Marric Software, Inc.

Exploring your product's environmental sustainability can serve as a means to bolster consumer loyalty for the environmentally conscious. But are all consumers green friendly? And do all green-friendly folk shop in like manner? Alas, the answer is no, but the strategies in making your appeal effective to each niche is at hand.

If your business hasn't caught the buzz of managing your customer relationships with green-thinking in mind, you might want to consider the following. The most receptive audience to green advertising is educated women, aged 30-44, who earn \$30,000+. Green-biz whiz Jacqueline Ottman contends that women seek "to keep their loved ones free from harm and to make sure their children's future is secure". Combine this finding with the fact that women tend to make most of the household purchasing decisions and you've got a buying component that can't be ignored.

Green-thinking isn't always driven by universal concerns for one's family either. Take for example what happened recently when the price of gas shot up, spurring consumers to shop for more fuel-efficient vehicles. In March 2005, internet searches rose 112% from February for such terms as "gas mileage", "gas prices", "hybrid cars", and "Toyota Prius". In real numbers, over 300,000 consumers submitted searches in March for hybrid terms. This niche market presents an equally attractive demographic. They are 18% more likely to be in the 45-54 age category, are 50% more likely to have household incomes above \$75,000, and are more likely to live in the Pacific

region of the U.S. If this isn't a group screaming for attention from our Southwest SOCAP Chapter members, who is?

Even before the gas crisis hit, there was a growing critical mass of eco-wise consumers. Pressures from the market and from government have both served to inspire environmentally-savvy strategies. Take Northrop Gruman Corp., a defense contractor, as a prime example of opting to design environmentally safe products in order to conduct business with the federal government. "It's written right into our contracts," confirmed Kip Keenan, manager of environmental resources for Northrop Gruman's Electronic Sensors and Systems Division. This isn't a one-off idea either, as government now often requires pollution prevention plans.



Still, the private sector has mostly led the way. Take a look at wine-making. "There's a lot of pressure from growers and also from the public. There's a lot of concern about the environment,"

says David Lucas of The Lucas Winery in Lodi, CA. The Wine Institute came up with a Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Practices in response to such pressure, involving everything from soil management to habitat and pest management. The best incentive has been that such practices produce more profits because eco-friendly tools produce better wine.

Not All Green Consumers Are Alike. Interestingly, in 1995, more than one quarter of U.S. voters (27%) voted for candidates based entirely or in part on their environmental record. But are all green-motivated consumers similarly driven? Nope. The degree of concern and willingness to employ green-buying habits varies. What directs one type of green is different from another. In Jacquelyn Ottman's "Green

Marketing: Opportunity for Innovation", she identifies each set of motivators for each type of green-buyer. Ottman derives her analysis from the pioneering work of Roper Starch Worldwide performed back in 1996. A synopsis of each of the categories is listed in the graphic to the right.

Given that there are discrete types of green-buyers, it is important to note what it is they are after in appealing to their instincts. Ottman discovered in her research that there are several basic tenets that motivate their purchases:

- They Want Control—the need to understand a product's life cycle from its creation to ultimate destruction, and to choose those that have the least impact on the environment. As an addendum, green-purchasers rely on respected retailers to select only reputable companies from which to buy.
- They Want to Make a Difference—the need to influence the world around them by their own actions; they recognize their own impact on the environment while assuaging their guilt by taking direct action.
- They Need Information—differentiating between green and non-green products demands more precise and useful information.
- They Seek Comfort over Greenness—when push comes to shove, sometimes performance, quality, convenience, and affordability prevail. Consequently, for a green product to succeed, it must still be competitive.

Armed with such knowledge, take the time to craft your consumer affairs message that targets those green-buying consumers that maximizes your product and sustainable business practices. With dedication, you can find your way to greener pastures; Now go forth, green, and prosper!

TRUE BLUES

Politically, socially active; most ardent environmentalists

GREENBACKS represent 5% of the U.S. population; willing to pay extra for environmentally responsible products, up to 22% more; worry about environment, but won't change lifestyle

SPROUTS

1/3 of the U.S. are sprouts; will join in environmental activities if it requires little effort; recycling is their main activity

GROUSERS

15% of the population are grouzers; they feel that government and corporations have the main role in protecting the environment

BASIC BROWNS

represent 37% of the population; not at all persuaded to consider environmental concerns when making purchases; less likely to recycle or to join in boycotts; of all five groups, they have the lowest median income, lowest level of education





SOCAP

is proud to celebrate its 32nd anniversary.

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The Global Authority on Customer Care



CHAPTER CALENDAR THROUGH 2005

CHAPTER MIXER AT THE NATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

October 9, 2005
Evening
San Francisco, CA

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON & CHAPTER RECOGNITION AWARDS

December 14, 2005
11:30-2:30pm
Queen Mary
Long Beach, CA

We're On the Web!!!
www.socapsrcchapter.org

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