

Middle East Call Centre Awards 2009

COMMEMORATIVE

Issue



INSIGHTS

middle east

Call Centre
awards

2009





Middle East Call Centre Awards '09

WHAT CAN WE SAY?

Twice As Many Entries As 2008

Over 20 Awards Given Out

What A Gracious & Enthusiastic Set Of Winners

What A Platform To Showcase Excellence In The Region

What A Memorable & Entertaining Awards Night

WHAT A COMPETITION!

The Middle East Call Centre Awards '10 Competition Begins
Nov '09. For Entry Forms Go To www.insights-me.com

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The INSIGHTS Call Centre Awards Process

Designed to be so challenging that only the VERY BEST can succeed.

No-one said that competing for the coveted call centre Awards was easy. In fact, no award worth winning is ever easy to achieve. The Middle East Call Centre Industry Awards process has been designed to be so challenging that only the VERY BEST can succeed. In addition to filling a

with the best numeric results or the best financial results. It is very easy for a call centre to achieve fantastic service levels and great first call resolution but whenever higher standards are sustained, costs increase. The mission, therefore, is to achieve the maximum levels of customer advocacy for the minimum cost.

strategic and organisational values must be congruently projected across all parts of the organisation. A company that claims to maintain exceptional customer relationships but treats its staff or its vendors like 2nd class citizens is not congruent with its own strategy and cannot be considered for an award. Vendors and staff must be treated with the same ethical values as customers for the organisational strategy to be deemed a reality.

The full bases of these evaluations are clearly defined by INSIGHTS's congruency, experience and operations models. In fact, the entire "Contact Centre World 2009" conference was peppered with mini exercises designed to demonstrate to participants how customer interaction definitions, Average Handle Time targets, dimensioning decisions and even training requirements can all be clearly defined on the basis of an organisational strategy.

As a result of INSIGHTS' focus on organisational strategic congruence, the Awards judging process cannot be minimised to a set of spreadsheets and a simple quantitative analysis. Nor, can it be expanded to a subjective democracy. The judging process has been cleverly designed in order to ensure its integrity.

Entry to the Awards competition is free and entrants are required, in the first stage, to register their intent to enter. This registration of intent is completed at the INSIGHTS' web site. Participants, at this stage, are required to provide some basic information about their call centre operation. The judging team evaluate the applications and also carry out some basic research. The research is "public domain" research and seeks to assess if the organisation has a strategy and if there is any evidence of that strategy in their public image. The judging team evaluate web-

The basic premise of the Awards is that every organisation must have a clearly defined strategy and that the customer contact operation must be designed, managed, analysed and valued relative to that strategy.

comprehensive application form participants are encouraged to provide as much supporting information as possible. With ACD reports, customer surveys, training material, employee surveys, recruitment forms, QA forms, call recordings, etc, the average submission this year was over 400 pages long – that's a lot of effort on the part of the participants but also on the part of the judges who have to wade through it all to select the winners. So how does it all work?

The basic premise of the Awards is that every organisation must have a clearly defined strategy and that the customer contact operation must be designed, managed, analysed and valued relative to that strategy. There are no evaluation standards or benchmarks. Everything is measured relative to the organisational strategy.

Titles are not awarded to organisations

Particularly in these tough economic times, focusing on achieving so-called BENCHMARKS is a sure-fire way to overspend on operations, under-deliver on customer expectations and/or to fail to achieve the maximum brand equity.

Strategic congruence is a method of setting internal targets based on organisational strategy. The annual call centre Awards are based on analysing the call centre's strategic congruence across all operational areas from call recruitment to call quality. For example, an organisation with a cost leadership strategy should have a lower service level objective than a quality leader. Therefore, a cost leader call centre with a low service level could win the award over a call centre with a higher service level (if the higher service level is not justified by the organisational strategy).

Furthermore, for an organisation to have a clearly defined strategy, the

sites, advertisements and even the media to understand how the organisation is presented.

If there is any evidence of strategic congruence then the organisation will be invited to make a full submission. In past years, most of the companies who registered their intent to enter the

disqualified. In addition to answering the 20 pages of basic questions most submissions include hundreds of pages of supporting documentation (400 pages is the average but submissions of 1,000 pages are not impossible). The supporting documentation often includes ACD reports, business

3. The call centre is failing significantly to achieve performance standards, congruent with the organisational strategy.

In recent years, the judges have been asked to select a maximum of 3-5 submissions in each category. The first criteria in choosing a nominee is that in addition to strategic operational congruence, the call centre must have demonstrated that they are delivering a superior and unique value to the business. This uniqueness is the key to the nomination. In addition to having at least one unique attribute, the submissions that demonstrate the closest performance match between operations and strategy will be nominated.

There are therefore, three possible results at this stage:-

1. Disqualified

If an entry is disqualified, a full explanation will be provided.

2. Not Nominated

If an entry is not nominated it simply indicates that there were other operations with higher strategic performance. This is not the same as disqualification and simply indicates that the organisation needs to do more work to bridge the operations/strategy gap.

3. Nominated

If an entry is nominated, the organisation will be informed that they have been nominated.

With the final nominations in place, the judges reach the most difficult phase of the competition; to select a final winner. In accordance with the purpose of the Awards, the final award is given to the organisation whose submission clearly demonstrates the closest relationship between operational performance and strategy across the four areas of congruent alignment (people, processes, technology, relationships).

The nominees are informed of their successful nominations weeks ahead of the Awards night but the final award winner is only revealed on the night of the Awards.

So submitting is not easy, the process is involved and can be distracting on the call centre if the project team is not well established. However, for any organisation to be nominated as a potential winner in such an arduous competition is a real acknowledgement of their capabilities in strategy, planning and operations. If it was easy, after all, it wouldn't have any value.

Participants must invest a lot of time and effort to complete the full submissions. The submissions should be prepared, based on the competition entry forms that are provided when the organisation receives its invitation to submit.

competition were invited to make a full submission. However, there have been a number of companies who were rejected at this stage because they simply did not demonstrate any form of strategic management or strategic congruency.

Participants must invest a lot of time and effort to complete the full submissions. The submissions should be prepared, based on the competition entry forms that are provided when the organisation receives its invitation to submit. There are separate entry forms for each competition with the average entry form running to more than twenty pages. Companies who tender an interest in and are invited to submit in multiple categories will probably have to produce more than one submission. Entrants are not expected to answer each and every question but in past years, a number of companies have been disqualified for a number of key reasons:-

1. If a company fails to adequately and concisely define its organisational strategy it will be considered to be an organisation without strategy and by definition must be disqualified. (Note, many companies confuse MISSION, VISION and STRATEGY).
2. If a company fails to accept the INSIGHTS' Non-disclosure agreement that is presented with each application form (e.g. by using confidentiality as an excuse for not answering a question) then they must be disqualified for not making a full submission, not accepting the integrity of the organisers and for doubting the integrity of the judges, whose decisions must be accepted as full and final.
3. If a company fails to provide supporting documentation they will be

intelligence reports, customer satisfaction reports, employee satisfaction reports, training materials, recruitment documentation, scripts, product information, performance management reports, workforce management reports, coaching procedures, etc, etc.

All the submissions that are accepted at this stage are passed to the judging panel for evaluation. The judging panels vary from competition to competition. INSIGHTS' Dominick Keenaghan chairs the judging panels and Dr. Brownell O'Connor acts as a liaison between the participants and the judging panel. 2-3 judges, chosen from INSIGHTS international consortium of consultants will evaluate each competition. This first round of the judging process merely confirms the companies that have strategies and appear to be attempting to operate a call centre in support of that strategy. The judges may query aspects of the submission and these queries are passed to Dr. O'Connor. If the call centres are not well known to INSIGHTS, Dr. O'Connor will arrange for him or one of the INSIGHTS' team to visit the call centre and clarify any of the judge's concerns. For a first-time entry, these visits take at least a half day as the visiting consultant will wish to see actual ACD reports, listen to calls, see the QA teams in action, understand scheduling, interview agents and supervisors at random, etc.

Entrants may be disqualified at this stage if:-

1. Any of the information submitted in their submission is found to be false or inaccurate
2. There is significant evidence of non-congruency during the site visit



Key Members Of Nawras Stand As Proud Winners

Nawras, Oman

-  **Call Centre Of The Year 2009**
-  **Best Retention & Motivation Program**
-  **Best Career & Skills Path**

STRATEGIC CONGRUENCE is a key phrase in the Middle East Call Centre industry Awards. Whilst congruence, as symbolised by the INSIGHTS' pyramid model is complicated to achieve, the basic premise is simple. In the words of the "Call Centre of the Year 2009", Nawras,

further positive endorsements. He felt there was a distinctive energy within the call centre. There was a culture of innovation and excitement but most importantly of all, he felt that every employee was truly living the customer experience.

Nawras is certainly a world class

positions and some 225 staff. They have developed a 4-stage process that is congruent with their organisational strategy and ensures consistent delivery of a defined customer experience:-

- 1- Pushing more decision authorities to and empowering them "champions" (the agents)
- 2- Increasing knowledge and distributing the right skills to the right areas
- 3- Focus on First Call Resolution.
- 4- Living the customer experience.

Everything about Nawras revolves around teamwork. They operate as one,

A dedicated Nawras team spent two months preparing their Awards submission and it was worth all the effort. From the beginning the judging panel were EXTREMELY impressed with Nawras' submission. All the questions, including the difficult strategy questions were answered in detail, supported with backup data, and accentuated with clear examples.

strategic congruence is - "Living the customer experience". That is exactly what Nawras do and that is why they were awarded the title.

A dedicated Nawras team spent two months preparing their Awards submission and it showed. From the beginning the judging panel were EXTREMELY impressed with Nawras' submission. All the questions, including the difficult strategy questions were answered in detail, supported with backup data, and accentuated with clear examples. When one of the judging liaisons visited Nawras he returned with

example of what call centres can be. It took a knowledgeable executive team, a superb, confident, trustworthy management team and a well recruited, well trained, empowered operations team. Nawras have shown us what can be achieved. They have not lived up to some international benchmark, they SET THE REGIONAL BENCHMARK for strategic congruence.

Nawras is the Omani Qatari Telecommunications Company based in Muscat, Oman. Their call centre, lead by Sultan Salim Al-Mugheiry and managed by Said Ahmed Safar has 160 agent



Lamees Enjoys The Moment.....

cohesive family and they deserve to be very proud of all they have created. On winning the award, Sultan Al-Mugheiry commented:-

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank our champions (agents) for their

tremendous efforts and hard work and our supervisors and managers for their support. I would also like to thank members of the Nawras management team for always believing in us, especially our Contact Center Manager, Said Ahmed Safrar, for all his support.”

Nawras won more than one award. At the Awards ceremony, even before the announcement of the “Call Centre of the year” title, the Nawras team were called to the stage on two occasions. First they were recognised for having the region’s “Best Call Centre Career And Skill Paths”



..... As Does Suleiman Al-Mugheiry

program. This award corroborates Nawras’ congruence and their 4-stage customer experience process. For without a world-class career and skills path model, empowerment (as mandated by the 4-stage process) would be impossible to maximise and knowledge development and skills distribution would be impossible to manage.

On their return visit to the stage, Nawras were awarded for the “Best Retention and Motivation Program”. Once again, this award is excitingly congruent with everything that Nawras say they are. Lamees Aldhabooni (KPI Manager – Call Centre) had this to say – “After winning two Awards (1-Best Career And Skills Path, - 2-Best Retention & Motivation Program) I was a bit scared and my heart was beating faster. I thought it was now very hard to win the biggest award.” Lamees had no reason



The Party Gets Started Back in Muscat

to be anxious because Nawras were invited to the stage for a third time that night and they received the ultimate award.

They didn’t know it at the time but the Awards ceremony in Dubai was merely the beginning of an enormous celebration for Nawras, Sultan Al-Mugheiry commented, “when customers



Sultan Al-Mugheiry
Receives
The Region’s Top
Call Centre Award

heard about the achievement, they joined our champions and met us on arrival [in Muscat] so they could be a part of receiving the Awards with the Nawras team. They joined the impromptu Call Centre party which we held in our car park at the front of the main Nawras building. A local band played and we all danced until past midnight.”

The telecommunications industry across the Middle East Region is not

nearly as competitive as in Europe or US. As a result, many telecommunications companies have a somewhat “relaxed” approach to strategy, experience and congruence. Some companies doubt the benefit of strategic congruence and many accountants refuse to accept the validity of the advocate ROI. It therefore takes the “thought leadership” of an extremely capable, robust and energetic senior management team to invest in the strategic congruence of a regional telecoms company. For their foresight and their clear vision we congratulate Nawras’ senior management team and we truly thank them for “shaking things up” in the region and demonstrating what can be achieved. For those who doubt the ROI..... consider this: How many of your customers queue outside your company’s head office to celebrate with you when you win an award? How many of them come, not because they are invited with free food, gifts and entertainment but because, spontaneously, they WANT to do it?

How many of your customers are so proud of you that they feel they are part of your success? How many of your customers applaud you when they meet you in the street?

We can write this report in only 3 words.....

NAWRAS’ CUSTOMERS DO!

In 4 years Nawras has transformed the telecom landscape in Oman



Nawras is Oman's award-winning mobile communications operator providing great value, pleasingly different service and excellent quality. Using reliable world-class network technology, Nawras professionals combine global expertise and local knowledge to offer the highest levels of customer satisfaction.

Our Vision and Mission

At Nawras, we are committed to enhancing your daily life by making mobile communication easier, more versatile and a rewarding experience.

Our vision is to enrich the lives of people in Oman through better communication services.

Our mission is to be the best communications provider and employer of choice in Oman.

Our Core Values

Our core values are to deliver caring, excellent and pleasingly different services.





www.nawras.om





Humaira Takes Top Spot Again!

CTS, UAE

-  **OSP Longevity Award.**
-  **OSP of the Year (> 70 seats)**
-  **Call Centre Manager Of The Year 2009 (> 70 seats), Humaira Majid**
-  **Best Service To Sales Program**

THEY CAME, THEY SAW, THE CONQUERED!

CTS, the Dubai-based outsource service provider have had yet another year of mind-boggling success. CTS have been operating for some 10 years and as such, qualify as the longest operating OSP in the region. They are also the OSP that has enjoyed the longest contract

year is, in the opinion of the judging panel, the most significant indicator of the fact that CTS rank among the world's most outstanding outsource service providers and are a credit to what can be achieved in Dubai, the Gulf and the Middle East in general.

played with the concept of "service to sales" but what CTS did, above and beyond all others, was they implemented a model to ensure that the sales drive did not have a negative impact on customer retention and thus, their "service to sales" programs achieved maximum sales without any negative impact on customer satisfaction. In the words of the judges, "THAT IS NO MEAN FEAT".

In addition to being a world-class, proactive OSP, CTS also provide additional services. They often provide on-site manpower as part of a total customer contact or sales outsource arrangement and they have been extremely successful in the world of insourcing and cosourcing. Some companies build call centres and then ask CTS to operate the call centre on their behalf, using various mixtures of captive and outsourced labour. A number of CTS' insource clients also won Awards both this year and last year; further proof of CTS's brand excellence in successfully delivering all forms of outsourced service.

Of course, none of this would be possible without great operational leadership. The person at the helm of CTS is Humaira Majid and, in recognition of her outstanding success, Humaira was awarded the title "Call Centre Manager of the Year 2009". Most incredibly Humaira was uniquely awarded the title for two successive years.

**Client advocacy +
Proactive partner +
Excellent leadership =
Trustworthiness & Reliability**

tenures. One of the most telling facts about any OSP is the average contract tenure. New OSP's must take short-term contracts to prove their abilities. Those that do a good job retain their clients and their clients enter into longer-term arrangements. The fact that CTS customers are willing to enter into such long term arrangements and the fact that CTS retain so many of their clients year on year is probably the single best indicator of their reliability. CTS know their business, they know their market, they understand logistics and project management – when they say they will do something – THEY DO! CTS have won other Awards but the "LONGEVITY" award that they won last year and this

This year, in addition to the longevity award, CTS also won the award for "Best Service to Sales" program. CTS are a proactive organisation but when circumstances prohibit them from being proactive their reaction times are incredibly fast. The global recession is one great example of CTS' ability to react quickly and decisively. The recession took most of Dubai by surprise and when some companies were still trying to decide how best to deal with it, CTS had already designed a number of recession minimising programs for their clients and prospects. Their goal was simple – capture maximum revenue whilst also ensuring maximised customer satisfaction. Many call centres have

CUPOLA

Cupola Teleservices does it again...
continues its magnificent stint at
THE MIDDLE EAST CALL CENTRE AWARDS 2009 by INSIGHTS



Humaira Majid, COO - CTS, receiving the OSP of the Year Award from
Dominick J. Keenaghan, President - INSIGHTS

Awards Won

- Call Centre OSP of the Year • Longevity Award
- Best Service to Sales Program
- Call Centre Manager Of The Year

10 YEARS
and still the best in the industry
(1999-2009)

The unprecedented market leader since 1999. CTS continues to grow from strength to strength. After winning 4 Awards in 2008, we have now won 5 Awards at the prestigious Middle East Call Centre Awards, 2009. A further confirmation of our exceptional service excellence.

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cts
contact centre
BPO



The INSIGHTS Call Centre Awards '09 Night

- Whirling Has Never Looked So Good

Awards Night Sponsored By



Introduction

The Middle East Call Centre Industry Awards 2009 brought many surprises both in terms of the competition and the Awards ceremony. The competition, which is free to enter, is organised by INSIGHTS, the region's only dedicated customer interaction "think tank". In addition to the efforts of the judging panel and INSIGHTS'

centre. Regionally, businesses from banks to airlines are struggling to harness the recession-busting power of the call centre because organisational management are failing to embrace the "integrated remote customer services" concept. Therefore, there was a certain expectation that the 2009 Awards would not enjoy any increase in entries over 2008.

The first surprise was that the number of

ways but on a purely macro level, there were fewer disqualifications this year than in previous years. Most of the disqualifications were a result of incomplete entry forms. While the judges accept that some organisations may not be able to provide valid answers to all questions, avoiding questions or failing to provide supporting information is the number one reason for disqualification. The judges were also somewhat disappointed at the number of entrants who still fail to understand, define and/or embrace the most basic concepts of organisational strategy. Many companies treat Mission, Vision and Strategy as synonymous but of course they are all very necessary and very different components of every company's genetic make-up.

Congruent with the lower number of disqualifications, the nomination standards for 2009 were very significantly higher than in previous years. There were

The first surprise was that the number of entries for the Awards program doubled in comparison to last year.

team of consultants and experts, INSIGHTS would like to thank, in particular, DNATA and Spanco GKS who sponsored the Awards night and thus made the whole exercise possible.

Even in 2009, as the Middle East Call Centre Awards process gathered momentum, businesses across the region are still slow to embrace the value of the call centre. Regionally, the call centre is still seen and treated by many as a place where telephone calls are answered as opposed to a location for providing fully integrated remote customer services. Historically, the global call centre industry has enjoyed accelerated growth in times of economic hardship as organisations are forced to leverage the value added benefits of the call

entries for the Awards program doubled in comparison to last year. The quality of the entries may be judged in many different



The Cream Of Regional Call Centres Were In Attendance

no easy Awards this year and the judges worked harder than ever to come to their final decisions.

The Awards 2009 Night – A Lot To Live Up To!

The Awards night in 2008 was truly a spectacle to behold. Marvellous food, fantastic entertainment and fever-pitch excitement were the ingredients of a great evening. Many wondered how the 2009 event would “pan out”, given the challenging times we face. Once again however, the evening was a fantastic success. For many attendees, this night marked the culmination of 3-6 months work on their submissions. As they arrived at the ceremony they knew they had been nominated in one or more categories but the winners were still a closely guarded secret. Many of the teams had met before at previous Awards ceremonies or industry events, thus adding to the sense of competitiveness and an overall atmosphere of **EXCITEMENT mixed with NERVOUS ANTICIPATION.**



Dominick Opens The Proceedings

INSIGHTS' Dominick Keenaghan welcomed everybody to the function. In order to bring a bit more challenge to the evening, the organisers had prepared a table quiz. There were two parts to the quiz; the first part being a multi-round quiz hosted by the quiz master and the second part being made up of a number of “challenges”. The scores for the table quiz would be calculated at the end of the evening and the winning table would win a prize. The participants were also invited to



Nicola & Humaira Shared The Top Manager's Prize

complete the “challenges” at any time during the evening and the first team to complete each challenge would win a prize.

As appetisers were served, this room, full of professionals who analyse conundrums and deal with a myriad of complex issues each day were now deep in concentration attempting to solve the challenges that lay before them. Of course, this was a room full of the “best of the best” and there were, as a result, many winners. They won concert tickets, restaurant meals, water park trips, dancing classes and more.

The main table quiz was also designed to be more challenging than a simple set of call centre and general knowledge questions. In one round, each table had to nominate a representative to take part in a “wrong is right” quiz; the competitors were given 1-minute to incorrectly answer as



The Excitement In The Room
Was Palpable!

many call centre questions as possible. Surprisingly, the contestants did very well – they answered a lot of questions incorrectly – a scary thought, given that these are the

BEST in the region?

In another round, each table was asked to create a sculpture from play-dough. The sculpture should be entitled “What you would most like to give your manager!” The artistry and detail of the submissions were mind-boggling. A personal favourite of panel judge and evening emcee Brownell O'Connor was the team who sculpted a pair of glasses – he didn't ask if their manager was myopic or if the sculpture was metaphorical. Another manager got a heart – we guess he/she was present on the night!



Contestants Being Put On The Spot

Before dinner was served, the “BEST in the MIDDLE EAST” (BMI) Awards were announced and the trophies were presented by Dominick.

The stage entertainment this year was provided by Mohammed, the “whirling Dervish”. He enthralled and amazed with 20 minutes of non-stop spinning and then calmly walked from the stage without the slightest hint of dizziness - unlike the audience who were definitely beginning to show some symptoms of vertigo!

It has to be said that the attendees at this year's event were somewhat louder

than last year. One company in particular were particularly vociferous in the run-up to the announcements of the main Awards winners – as well they might be as they had already bagged two of the BMI Awards titles earlier in the evening. That company is Nawras and when they were announced as winning the main Call Centre of the Year title, what seemed like a minor “earthquake” occurred in the Crowne Plaza ballroom. They were most definitely VERY proud of their achievement (and their celebrations continued all the way to Muscat and for some considerable period thereafter).



Mohammed,
The Evening's
Star Turn
(Literally!)



Eager To Get Their
Results Validated

The toughest decision the judges had to make was deciding between Nicola Lott (DNATA) and Humaira Majid (CTS) for the “Call Centre Manager of the Year” title for large call centres. No matter how they analysed the performance of both ladies, the results always came out in a “tie”. At the Awards evening, Brownell O’Connor was not joking when he said that the judges endured hours of arguments in order to arrive at a decision AND finally, the only decision they could agree on was to award JOINT titles. Both competitors were very deserving of the award but they had each achieved remarkable success in different ways. They were not the same but they were equal and as the judges pointed out, the ability to harness difference is a key differentiator of the INSIGHTS’ Awards. “We are not in the business of rewarding the highest service level or the lowest average handle time because anyone can achieve numbers. Numbers do not make a successful business. Business strategy breeds success and in the case of Humaira



Mohammed “Circulates”
Amongst The Guests

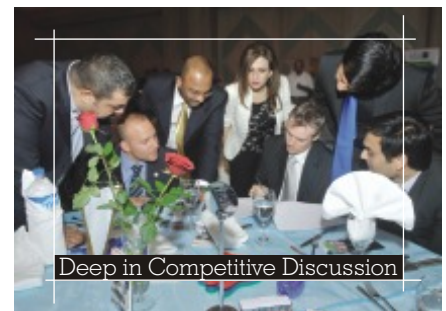
and Nicola, they both achieved remarkable levels of success relative to their own organisational strategy”. Dominick Keenaghan, later commented, “it is reassuring to see that major regional organisations are entrusting their call centre operations to true professionals such as Humaira and Nicola.”

Get Your Entries For 2010 In Soon

No-one knows what next year will hold. What we do know is that call centres are still the most cost effective business tool for providing effective, integrated customer fulfilment along with a branded, advocacy-driving customer experience. We therefore expect that those organisations that invest in call centre – driven customer advocacy will enjoy the easiest journey through the

current financial crisis. The current business climate therefore, will not HURT the call centre industry it will just DRIVE it harder. As a result, we expect the quality of entries to continue to improve both next year and beyond.

Many good call centres failed to be nominated this year. One of the primary reasons for nomination failures was trans-organisational mis-understanding of



Deep in Competitive Discussion

STRATEGY. BENCHMARKS and BEST PRACTICE are not recession survival tools because, by definition, BENCHMARKS and BEST PRACTICE are “average”. Businesses are being driven harder so recession survival tools are built out of uniqueness. Survivability requires an organisation to possess one or more characteristics that set it aside from the competition (in the eyes of the ideal customer). Strategy is the art and science of leveraging that uniqueness. When an organisation is strategically aligned the unique characteristics become more prevalent and important in the eyes of the customers and thus BRANDS are born.

Our key advice to call centres for this coming year is to help your organisation to leverage its unique strengths using the business intelligence that is inherent in every call centre but denied in most. Interestingly, while companies are running around trying to cut costs they are failing to leverage the key, proven, advocacy-driving INTELLIGENCE and the resultant business development opportunities that are all available, FREE OF CHARGE in every call centre.

**LEVERAGE that and be a
contender for the Call Centre /
Manager of the Year 2010!**



Other Middle East Call Centre Awards '09 Winners

Congratulated by INSIGHTS' President Dominick Keenaghan



Best Small Call Centre (<31 Seats)
Sharjah Islamic Bank



Best New Call Centre
RTA



Call Centre Manager Of The Year (<71 Seats)
Nafisa Salah Taha, ADDC
(Musabeh Al Mazroui Receiving On Her Behalf)



Best New OSP
Extensya



Best Reporting Systems & Processes
Sybrid



Best Recession-Busting Program
Aramex Dubai



Best Quality Assurance Program
Sharjah Islamic Bank



Best Medium OSP (71-300 Seats)
Infoline



Best Medium Call Centre (31-70 Seats)
Emirates Group IT



Best Call Centre Technology Platform
Alinma Bank



Dnata Contact Centre

**Best Large Call Centre
(> 70 Seats)**

**Call Centre Manager Of The Year 2009
(> 70 seats), Nicola Jane Lott**

Long before there were call centres, airlines and travel agents had vast telephone reservations centres. Airlines and travel agents were even offering integrated telephone services long before the banks. In fact, there is an element of travel-industry DNA in every call centre to this day. Adding further to their proud heritage, the travel industry has endured more hardship over the last ten years than virtually any other industry. They have faced every conceivable threat from disease to finance and beyond. Only the best survive in the travel industry and in this case, the best are defined by their ability to re-design themselves in the face of adversity.

In the UAE, DNATA are the very corner-stone of the travel industry and DNATA's call centre stands out as a superior performer, year on year. Because of their superb performance, DNATA's call centre won the Call Centre of the Year award last year. Some call centres would have enjoyed that accolade, celebrated and continued about their business but DNATA couldn't do that because they knew that their industry would be bombarded by increasing challenges; so they continued to strive for better performance.

This year, they focused very heavily, although not exclusively on people performance. Steve Davis commented, "The Award created a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Vindication that the strategy is a right one and that key milestones and achievements have been recognised externally. The frustrations of the previous year and the challenges faced

at present and perceived in the future have been worthwhile and provide additional strength and determination in overcoming future hurdles and continuing the pursuit of service and Contact Centre excellence".

An integral component of the INSIGHTS call centre strategy and operations models is that the call centre should maximise the value it creates for other business units and Steve also commented on this, "The award contributed to the profile and recognition of the business unit amongst other business units. The teams could see progress and recognition for a second successive win for a business unit that previously had gone unnoticed and forgotten!! It created a strong sense of individualism and elitist pride in being recognised as a top performing business".

DNATA's call centre and the continuous improvement plans are managed by Nicola Jane Lott. The judges awarded Nicola the title "Call Centre Manager of the Year 2009" – for her outstanding ability to design and implement strategically aligned operational development plans. The judges commented, "In a relatively short period of time Nicola has built an incredible relationship with her staff; a relationship that is clearly aligned with the organisational strategy and is clearly robust enough to ensure that Nicola enjoys the support of her team as she does daily-battle with the challenges affecting their business".

Nicola is not new to the airline industry or the call centre industry. Her vast experience is no doubt, a tremendous asset for her and the DNATA

organisation. The DNATA call centre currently boasts some 140 agent positions and in recent years they have transformed themselves from a local travel call centre to a Global Outsource Service Provider. DNATA's call centre primarily serves the GCC market but their operation is very much global. DNATA acquired a stake in the global travel industry OSP "Mindpearl" allowing them to offer global services to their clients and to take advantage of the economies of a global operation.

With the undeniable tenacity of travel industry DNA, the power and capability of their MINDPEARL acquisition, the vision and strength of Steve Davis and the senior management team, and Nicola's proven experience and ability to rise up to the daily challenges of our times, DNATA's call centre seems well equipped to continue to power to global success.

The Awards provided Dnata Contact Centre with an external recognition that offers a local pedigree of service excellence in an emerging sector that is set to grow in the UAE over the next 5 years. The two successive years of winning the Best Contact Centre Middle-East award have set the course and benchmarked the Dnata Contact Centre for future years. It continues to serve a diverse customer base and will see its role becoming increasingly key to growth during the economic slowdown and recovery stages. The Dnata Contact Centre and its outsourcing service offerings are primed to change traditional business thinking and provide much needed convenience and commercial benefits to retail and corporate businesses in the GCC region.



Tejinder Is Making Lots Of Waves In Outsourcing

Spanco GKS

 **Best Large OSP (> 300 Seats)**

Some correctly describe Spanco as the region's most pervasive OSP. While headquartered in Qatar, they have customers and operations across the region. They have enjoyed rapid, pervasive growth. In May 2007 Spanco had a team of 40 people. Today, they are over 600-strong. In

business and is not an "easy way to make a quick buck". As a result, these "fly by night" operations fail to achieve results and summarily disappear. But the shockwaves of failed outsourcing affect the already sceptical and in-experienced market.

Marred, therefore by a lack of

the benefits of understanding your customers, delivering good service and living the customer experience. However, too many OSP's are found sadly-wanting when it comes to applying their own rules to their own business. They say one thing and do another. Spanco have grown faster than virtually any other regional OSP. They have won significant contracts with world-class outsource clients and they have achieved all of that by simply applying their own business advice to themselves. They don't just lecture ideologies. They put the ideologies into practice and prove that they work".

Spanco are headquartered in Qatar and their continuous advance into the market is orchestrated by their Director and CEO, Mr. Tejinder Singh Bhatia. The company does not limit itself to the provision of customer contact services. They are also a significant "player" in Manpower and IT outsourcing. And, as one might expect from a company that has grown so fast, Spanco are experts in customer acquisition. While many small and new call centre operators are eager to attract acquisition business, very few actually succeed in achieving the promised results. Spanco, on the other hand, have a track record of achieving acquisition success and the proof of their ability lies clearly in their own business growth.

Spanco are the best large OSP in the region; They are the most pervasive OSP in the region and when it comes to acquisition and growth Spanco are hard to beat.

In May 2007 Spanco had a team of 40 people. Today, they are over 600-strong. In recognition of their unprecedented growth, their impressive market penetration and their solid, reliable operations management, spanco have been recognised by the INISGHTS' judges as the Best (Large) Call Centre OSP in the region.

recognition of their unprecedented growth, their impressive market penetration and their solid, reliable operations management, Spanco have been recognised by the INSIGHTS' judges as the "Best (Large) Call Centre OSP" in the region.

To truly understand the Spanco achievement, one must first look at the regional call centre outsourcing industry. The industry is still in its infancy with many companies still failing to understand the true nature of the concept. To further complicate matters, many less enlightened business individuals saw outsourcing as an "easy way to make a quick buck". Numerous "fly by night" OSP's appeared (and continue to appear) across the region. But outsourcing is a complicated

understanding, uncertainty and even a certain amount of mistrust, new OSP's have to fight a long, hard, expensive and painful battle to become accepted by industry at large.

Spanco are not in existence to "make a quick buck". They are here for the long term and they understand the true nature of outsourcing. So much so, in fact, that one of Europe's most experienced outsource clients, "Vodafone", chose Spanco as their Outsource partner in Qatar. Spanco have also done extremely well in client retention. Fuelled by success, great referrals and client retention, Spanco have enjoyed accelerated growth.

The judges made one very specific comment about Spanco:- "The Call Centre industry is great for advocating



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Ibrahim A. Al-Kraida of SCTA and Mohammed Al-Khatib of Smarlink Made A Great Team

Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA)

Best Internally Developed Call Centre Application

The Call Centre of the “Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities” (SCTA) operates in an environment that presents numerous operational, strategic and organisational challenges. However, due to the expert direction of Mr. Fahad Al-Maghrabi and the operations management expertise of Mr. Eyad Alrai, the daily challenges appear easy to handle and SCTA’s call centre has, as a result, enjoyed great success.

Some public services call centres find it difficult to compete in the annual Awards process because many are bereft of strategy. Many public services do not have any competition and there is often little value placed upon “customer satisfaction”. SCTA cannot enjoy such luxuries. They are a very strategic component of the Saudi government’s drive to develop the Kingdom’s tourism sector and, as such, they need to be at the very centre of the National Tourism Strategy; they face real competition both nationally and internationally.

To add further to the challenges, SCTA’s customers are wide and varied. They include individual tourists (from within and outside the Kingdom), hotel and facilities operators, tour operators, etc. The complexities of strategy, competition and customer profiles make the SCTA call centre not merely a challenge for senior and operations management, but also a challenge for the call centre agents.

To say that SCTA’s agents need to be knowledgeable is an understatement. It might be more correct to say that they need to be “all-knowing” about every aspect of tourism in the Kingdom. They

need to be able to deal with the requirements of so many different customers in both a “B2C” role and a “B2B” role. In fact, the call centre agent role at SCTA is probably one of the most challenging and complicated agent roles in the region.

To their credit, SCTA “GET ON WITH IT”. They don’t waste time worrying about the challenges, they deal with them and when we asked them about the specific challenges they faced, they replied that they were concerned about service level, shrinkage and retention – just like everyone else.

So what is it that allows SCTA’s management to focus on the typical call centre challenges, assured that their unique challenges are taken care of? The judges found two very specific reasons (and there are probably more). First and foremost, the judges found that SCTA’s operations management team worked EXTREMELY well with SCTA’s strategic management layer. The result of such a professionally competent relationship is that operations and strategic layers work seamlessly together in pursuit of a unified vision. Secondly, SCTA have developed a MOST incredible CRM system that provides the agents with an intuitive desktop, backed with extensive knowledge management and supported by a management reporting tool that delivers a unique set of reports, custom-designed for SCTA’s environment.

With clear recognition of the competence, foresight and ability of the SCTA call centre management team, the judges add that their job and the jobs of the call centre agents would be

incredibly more difficult (perhaps bordering on impossible) were it not for the internally developed CRM system they have deployed.

CRM systems are not easy to develop. From a purely technical standpoint, CRM is not very complex but from a logic, operational, and implementation perspective, there probably isn’t a more complex piece of technology. Just like their call centre operation, SCTA took the CRM challenge seriously and they produced an application “to be proud of”. The application was grown “from the ground, up” to ensure that the key user interface (for agents) was easy to use, intuitive and contained ALL the information an agent might need to access. Developing methodologies to compartmentalise such volumes of knowledge is, in itself, a unique accomplishment. The success of the agent interface gives birth to the informative management information that can be produced by the system and in the words of the judges; “The major CRM vendors could learn a lot from what SCTA have achieved”.

2009 was SCTA’s first time to enter the annual Awards process and they took home the award for the “Best Internally Developed Application”. Upon the announcement of the award Mr. Fahad Al-Maghrabi and Mr. Eyad Alrai made the following comment to their dedicated team of call centre professionals: “We would like to thank you all very much for your hard work and efforts without whom we could not have obtained the award”.



Tourism Call Center (TCC) is an innovative service provided by SCTA to the tourist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The center responds to inquiries of accommodation, trips schedules, events and festivals, cultural and historical landmark location, promotional offers and packages.

Since its inception, the Center received more than 1,000,000 calls, sent 1,000,000 SMSs and attracted 14,000 registered service providers from various regions within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



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Tourism Contact Center

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