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Service Industry  
Association

THE NETWORK FOR HIGH  
TECHNOLOGY SERVICE  
PROMOTING CUSTOMER  
CHOICES

WWW.SERVICENETWORK.ORG

Service Industry Association is a non-profit organization made up of high technology service companies promoting customer choices.

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October 2006

SERVICE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
619 221 9200

Volume 59

# NETWORK NEWS



## Customer Centric Service: Placing Customers at the Heart of your Business

By Claudia J. Betzner

#### Special points of interest:

- Executive Roundtable review
- Committee Reports
- New Member—OnForce
- 2007 Summit
- Article by Dr. Alexander on Turning Customer Rage into Shock and Awe
- The Buying Group—A buying consortium offered as a benefit

The Mission of SIA is to serve as a forum where every member can enhance their business and to take collective action for the betterment of the industry whenever necessary.

Over the past year we have each read many articles in Business Week or the Wall Street Journal on the **Rage in America** over the erosion of Customer Service and Quality in some environments. Could it be that offshore outsourcing and the onslaught of 12 million immigrants who have come to our country with a different culture of quality are the reason. The Language barrier is also sometimes a deterrent to proper training of these individuals. While this has provided Corporate America with cheaper labor, it has also created a lack of Customer Service attitude our U.S. citizens came to demand in services in America. The 2007 SIA Executive Summit has chosen for its focus "Customer Centric Service: Placing Customers at the Heart of your Business." Quality and Customer Service are critical in the aftermarket service industry and several of our sessions will discuss this issue. Is this a problem in our industry? Is more training and different levels of service with a higher costs to customers an option. What is your service level? How do you survey your customers? What are the demands for real time information? These are the questions and solutions that will be reviewed and discussed. The SIA Summit is The "original" Executive Summit for Service Leaders, directed

to those individuals who head up or lead their service companies. The event will be at the Mirage Resort & Casino in Las Vegas Nevada from March 4 through March 6, 2007.

A complete analysis of Customers will be discussed and reviewed from their wants and needs of "Real Time Information" from web portals and mobile devices to Customer Sat Surveys, Tech Tools and on day one we will end with a two-hour session dedicated to discovering new solutions to old problems. A panel will analyze changes, discuss solutions then breakout groups will be challenged to find new solutions. Day one is more of a strategic approach and day two is dedicated to operational issues and solutions. As usual on Sunday there will be a Golf Tournament to kick off the networking, which our participants tell us is the number one reason they attend the summit. The welcome reception will be Sunday evening. Monday and Tuesday are the Summit Program, which we believe will be the strongest content to date. On Tuesday evening we will close the Summit with a final opportunity for networking at the Grand Finale.

For the latest Program information and speakers who have confirmed you will always find that information on the SIA website at [www.servicenetwork.org](http://www.servicenetwork.org).

#### Results of "our" Customer Survey:

**Improving value on our website:** SIA is currently in a re-design of the website based on the comments of our Members in this survey—watch for the overhaul to be complete in October.

**Link to the SIA website:** Our members have told us they would be willing to link to the SIA site. Currently all Sponsors have their own link page which they pay a premium for. **Vendors at Executive Summit:**

You told us you want more OEM's, more logistics companies, more wireless-technology companies, more services management software, field automation software and testing equipment companies. "Please provide us your list of Companies."

**Most important benefits:** You told us the most important benefit is "Partnerships and Networking" followed by Strategic.

#### Additional topics for Summit:

Concerns over off shoring; Futurist; Sun policy changes **Membership Drive:** The majority of our members tell us they would like a financial incentive for promoting the membership or summit. We are currently working on this incentive.

### New Members

ComputerPlus Sales & Srv  
 NER Data Products  
 Northside Hospital  
 Patton Consultants, Inc.  
 SoftTech Solutions  
 System Design Advantage  
 Terix Computer Service  
 United Service Network  
 Service Strategies  
 The Sales Performance  
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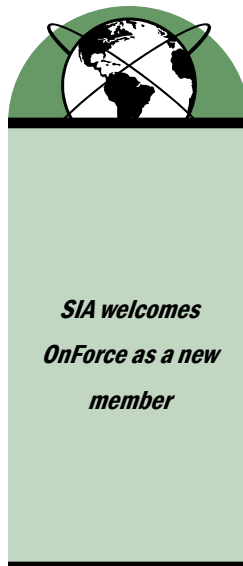
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### Paladin Consulting

#### SIA announces a new Member—OnForce

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**Call for Don Blumberg Innovation Award nominees:** It can be a company or an individual who has made an innovation contribution to the industry – it could also be a lifetime achievement award but must be written up by someone other than the one being nominated. Measurement for Benchmarking or Best Practices may/may not be used to determine the award. The decision will be made at the December SIA Board meeting. All candidates must be presented by December 1. **Send written candidate information to Attention: SIA Board at [Cbetzner@aol.com](mailto:Cbetzner@aol.com)**



SIA welcomes  
 OnForce as a new  
 member

### Open Service Committee Report *Randy Parks, Chairman*

One of the primary directives of the SIA is to promote a level playing field for the support of technology products.

The SIA Open Service Committee was recently contacted by member companies and the ASCDI organization regarding a potentially damaging change in the policies of Sun Microsystems.

The changes involve acceptance of a new licensing agreement when accessing Sun's website for technical support information and patch releases. As we view the policy it restricts the end user's ability to utilize third parties for support of Sun products and creates a barrier to our open service philosophy.

The committee held a conference call and has received authorization to send

a letter to Sun voicing our concerns. If you would like to receive additional information about this or to see a copy of the letter sent to Sun please contact me at [randy.parks@diebold-iss.com](mailto:randy.parks@diebold-iss.com) or by phone at 352-746-5452.

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A high-level Strategic Summit with a look at how positive "profitable" Customer Relationships are created. All sessions will have a Customer perspective. From case studies to a Customer panel to tell their wants and needs. We will look at how Customers demand for real time information has changed, how their wants and needs have changed over the years, we will provide results of studies and surveys of those changing needs and how to create a partnership with your customers. We will explore joint ventures, co-branding, alliances—teaming & tying together to provide a total solution. You will learn how to [increase your bottom line through positive relationships with your customers](#). A golf tournament on 3/4 for \$175pp and a \*grand finale on 3/6 (Guests tickets available for \$100)

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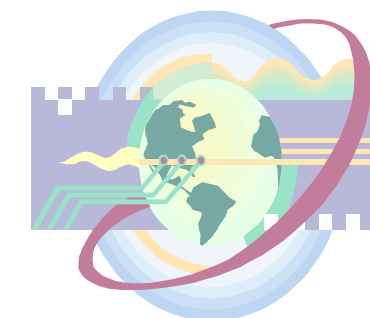
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### Customer Centric Service: Placing customers at the heart of your business

### Executive Summit for Service Leaders sponsored by SIA ...Strategies to meet tomorrow's challenges

March 4–6, 2007 at the Mirage in Las Vegas –Hotel reservations call 800 499 6311 or 702 791 7444 specify Service Industry Association (rate \$195) Cutoff 2/3/07—Hotel deposit and registrations refundable prior to 1/16/07

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## Develop Shock and Awe Through Service Recovery

Don't blow your biggest chance to quickly create customer loyalty!  
*Dr. Jim Alexander, President Alexander Consulting*

One of the most powerful relationship-building tools available to services organizations comes from a situation most of us dread—screw ups—the installation that never worked or the problem fix that never stuck. These very things that result in a hassle for you and a headache for the customer are marvelous opportunities to turn lemons into lemonade. Yes, even services execs with a lifetime of dealing with (and solving) tough customer problems often blow their chance. They (like all of us) are subconsciously attracted to adopting problem-avoidance tactics aimed at “minimizing damage” instead of embracing the relationship-building opportunities to “maximize value” that problems create.

See if these three problem-avoidance approaches sound familiar: (1) Eject: “It doesn’t sound like a big deal to me. You can’t expect something to work 100 percent all the time, can you?” (2) Ignore: “Maybe if we don’t do anything, the problem will go away. Let’s allow this to sit a while and see what happens.” (3) Disagree: “No, it is not our fault. Those darn customers are always trying to blame us when they must have done something wrong.”

These attitudes drive behaviors that have a very similar impact on customers. Whenever customers face screw-ups (during a software installation or systems integration, for example), they feel two things: a sense of loss and a sense of dread. Loss in that they did not get what they paid for (expectations not met) and dread at the thought of having to go through the hassle of attempting to get the supplier to “do what is right.” Past experience has taught them that service problems of any kind are often a major pain to resolve.

Think about your personal history with service problems. Remember how you felt (after leaving three voice mails) trying to get the contractor who “fixed your roof” to come out and fix the roof when it still leaked? How confident were you at getting a timely resolution? Or, recall how you felt on the third visit to the dealership when the car mechanic smugly said, “I don’t hear any clunking noise at 50 mph—you are just hearing the clock.” How did you feel when your viewpoint was dismissed, and it was inferred that you were an imbecile? I’m sure you can come up with many more examples, but the feelings are the same—a sense of loss and a sense of dread as our patterns of experiences prepare us for agony and toll. These are not pleasant feelings! Your customers feel exactly the same way when facing problems caused by or related to your service.

As we all know, customer loyalty is the number one driver of profitable growth, “And doing an outstanding job of service recovery is the fastest way to make loyal customers.” People are so used to being rejected out of hand, ignored when they complain and disagreed with when they offer ideas—that they are absolutely amazed when they are met with understanding, accountability and action. Furthermore, if your empowered team handles a problem with a service recovery approach, the clients will be impressed and delighted with not only your actions, but with you and your service organization as well. They will become loyal. They will tell others. They will become very valuable assets. So pay attention, as this can directly impact your success. Here is what you need to do:

### Develop a Service Recovery Approach

Rethink your whole approach toward dealing with customer problems. Don’t hide behind old rules—throw them out and start over.

1. Change your mindset from “Oh, cripes, another problem to deal with,” to “Sorry it happened, but what a great opportunity!”
2. Change your problem resolution strategy from “What is the minimum we can do to get by?” to a service recovery strategy of “What is the best way to fix the problem so it stays fixed and creates a loyal customer?”
3. Change your traditional metrics from ones such as “mean time to resolution” to “number of Champions (very loyal customers) created.”

Like most important things, you’ll improve both quality and buy—in if you involve your team in crafting your service recovery approach.

### Create a Service Recovery Process

- Assume immediate accountability
- Make no excuses
- Have a need for speed
- Pass out the capes and unload the bus
- Send champagne with the roses

**Excite and Empower your Team**—Explain your service recovery strategy to everyone who touches the customer. Communicate that it is everyone’s responsibility to launch service recovery. Train them on the skills, coach them on the process and explain the value. Provide real-world examples of customer problems, ranging from customer irritants to full-blown train wrecks, in order to link concepts to reality. Have people play themselves in role-plays of how they would handle service recovery. Have managers coach them to think “extreme” in considering how to turn a hassle into an awesome customer experience. You team will love it. If you can discipline yourself and your organization to get past old thinking and procedures regarding customer problems, you can use service recovery to gain a unique position in your marketplace, create customer loyalty and have a bunch of fun doing it. Why not start today.



**Customer Centric Service—Where do your customers fit in your business; are they at the heart or the feet?**

## SIA Quarterly Roundtable Review 9/14/PHL

### A. Customer Wants & Needs – Session One – Michael Blumberg, Facilitator & President, D. F. Blumberg & Associates

Value-Added Services for Break-Fix maintenance are not the same as professional services. This is a different business entirely requiring different skill sets, infrastructure, administration, pricing mechanisms, etc.

Key characteristics of value-added services

- Time Sensitive
- Quality enhancing

Value added services need to be expressed in terms of tangible deliverables. Although infrastructure and organizational elements of service provider may appear to add value or enhance quality they do not constitute value-added services per se.

#### Discussion:

- Value adds services related to break/fix
- Added Value feature different
- Depot Repair 8 – 9 years ago info was static – now real time is big value add
- Real time – know the difference in wants and needs with price or costs of that value
- Drop & Run – Scheduled preventive maintenance - value add service different in Medical environment since patients could die if equipment not maintained
- Perceived & actual value is different
- Sales sometimes gives away a good value-add to get the business
- Value adds – relationship value of intimacy is a added value – your niche should be different from competition
- Preventive Maintenance is sometimes not perceived as a value add because the system never went down so customer has nothing to measure against. An example is – preventive medicine not reimbursed by insurance companies.
- Be sure in your portfolio of value added services you know the needs of your customer; don't sell someone who only needs a GM car a Cadillac.
- Value add usually means more you can charge for service
- An example of directives of RFP's depends on whether dealing with cost-conscious buyer or quality seller. Market Segmentation plays major part.
- By Firm graphic orientation – is there a pattern as to how people buy
- Look at horizontal when adding value adds
- Value adds create higher profit margins
- Customers are now more knowledgeable and sophisticated – especially technology value adds
- Must establish threshold for pricing of value adds; branding must be for entire organization not just one customer
- Customers more interested in solutions
- Must know profitability in solutions
- Must know profitability by customer
- OEMs sometimes give services as a byproduct of selling hardware
- Break-Fix commoditized – value adds is a way to increase profitability
- Sometimes service is so good and in your zealous desire to add so much value you get in trouble with your bottom line
- Know Profitability by customer – look at workflow process
- How should you pay commissions and incentives: Revenue vs. gross profit margin
- Build your failure rate into your pricing model – look at random vs. consistent pattern – look at all components

#### B. Customer Demand for Real Time Information

- Point of Sale big difference from other service models
- Need to capture real time data
- Today we provide sales personnel actual reports for marketing tools
- Manipulate data to provide added benefit to marketing
- Is real time info a need or value add you price for
- Fake it until you make it when dealing with real time information
- Now close call on-site – customers not willing to wait until tech gets back to office to close call
- Statistical information does not need to be real time
- Trend – everything web-based, web portal AND SELF SERVICE; plug and play
- Customer runs their own on-demand for reports, etc.
- Technology creates Opportunity – this needs to be addressed at summit



SIA's next  
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December 7 In  
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## Continue Roundtable Review

### Session Two: Medical IT Convergence Facilitator: Dr. Elliot B. Sloane, Professor Villanova

Emerging opportunities for collaboration between manufacturers and among ISOs; Gauging the market demand; Risk and quality management; Winning strategic plans;

Some related research and background material is available at: [www.homepage.villanova.edu/elliott.sloane](http://www.homepage.villanova.edu/elliott.sloane) [www.ACCEnet.org/IHE](http://www.ACCEnet.org/IHE); [www.HIMSS.org](http://www.HIMSS.org) and [www.HIMSS.org/IHE](http://www.HIMSS.org/IHE); [www.ACC.org/IHE](http://www.ACC.org/IHE) [www.IHE.net](http://www.IHE.net)

#### Discussions:

- 2014 is the milestone in getting healthcare records up to date
- Infra structure undergoing major overhaul – creates electronic records
- Errors from healthcare create more deaths than a 757 crashing hourly – 100,000 deaths per year due to errors
- Technical framework for healthcare interoperability – Zambuto and Sloane are on the Standards committee
- 20% of U.S. GNP is Healthcare
- H.R. 4641 bill reviewed – the ADOPT HIT Act includes:
  1. Amend Internal Rev Code to increase deductible
  2. More than double the first year deduction of rapid depreciation on eqpt. \$100K to \$250K
  3. Increase Max purchase costs for eqpt. From \$400 - \$600K
- Stark amendment reviewed – CMS created two new exceptions under the Stark Rule: e-prescribing exception and electronic health records exception – related to donations
- Intel now developing software to measure your own blood pressure, vital functions – healthcare going self service when possible or surgery not required
- Players in Healthcare: GE; Siemens; Philips; Turner; Eclipse; Lab Info systems; Clinical Info Systems; Nuclear Information systems
- 8/06 HHS est. rules to support adoption of electronic prescriptions and health records



Roundtables are an important part of the association. Wireless World—Web Portals and Customer Centric Service Delivery will be the focus of the next.

### SIA and the Roundtable participants were also given a Federal Legislative Update by Lamar Whitman, Public Policy Manager CompTIA – The Computing Technology Industry Association

In a continuing effort to collaborate with other associations, SIA will continue to invite affiliated associations to participant within SIA. Much of the information is available at [www.comptia.org](http://www.comptia.org).

#### Roundtable SUMMARY – (Participants final comments)

- Most participants appreciate the opportunity to sit around the table with their peers discussing industry issues without the threat of competition.
- What does value add bring to us? What does it mean to make sales people more effective? That is what one person got out of it. Medical portion was new information and one appreciated opportunity for new industry overview.
- Various aspects of industry most helpful; Another level of information – collaboration between associations helpful to get another perspective
- Info on last two great – first session on value add customer services very helpful in business
- Very Valuable to hear insights into other industry and association. Medical portion broadened knowledge base.
- Value added services – Many on one participants list - validation very important that you are on the right track.
- 1<sup>st</sup> time attendee – important to learn size of company doesn't matter, we all have the same problems.
- Industry issues discussed created momentum – should continue and not be status quo. Would be willing to participate in further discussions or panel to move industry issues along.
- Cross exchange of idea's great – was very interested in the medical RHIO; CompTia – tax credit info most helpful and can use in business



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## BUSINESS WEEKLY

## Web site offers businesses big buying power

Mark Schiavone is bringing big company buying power to small business owners

By MICHAEL POLLICK (michael.pollick@heraldtribune.com)

Slaving away for the past four years, Mark Schiavone has perfected a system that theoretically empowers every TV repair shop, and almost any other small business in the country, to save money.

If he can just get more of them to see the world his way, his Web-based enterprise called TheBuyingGroup.com is quite capable of morphing into a cash flow monster.

Schiavone will have accomplished this herculean feat mostly from his home on one of the so-called flower streets just south of downtown Sarasota, where he can sometimes be found at 11 p.m. smoking a cigar and tapping away on his wirelessly connected laptop from a pool-side patio.

Scores of small business people already are taking advantage of Schiavone's nearly free offer. They usually pay him a couple of hundred dollars a year when they sign up with TheBuyingGroup.com.

That makes them members.

Then, whenever they feel like it, if they feel like it, they can try one of his deals, reaping the rewards of the collective bargaining he has already done on their behalf with big national outfits.

He has negotiated special rates and terms for goods and services that just about every small business needs -- shipping, office supplies, payroll and sales tax accounting, and credit card processing.

Those who have tried it out seem quite pleased with themselves.

"Going back to that movie 'Godfather,' this is truly a deal you can't refuse," said Gideon Freud, who runs Atlantic TV, an electronics repair service with walk-in customers in the coastal New Jersey town of Keyport.

Most of the time the benefit we can bring is to the small and midsized companies," Schiavone said.

His next brainstorm: Why limit his prospects to business-to-business deals? He believes that he can take the same cookie-cutter approach he already has developed and apply it to consumer discounts, then offer those deals both to the 45,000 employees of the business members, and directly to the public as well. He has decided on 100-plus metropolitan areas as his markets.

To give consumers nationwide a menu of the cities available, he created USABuyingGroup.com. Within that, the consumer clicks on an available city site.

The first one, which is still a work in progress, is TheSarasotaBuyingGroup.com.

This Buying consortium is available to SIA members but you must specify you are an SIA member company, Contact Mark at Phone: 941-330-8050

Email: mark@thebuyinggroup.com

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**SIA call for candidates for the SIA Board** Every other year the SIA members get to vote on their new choices for the SIA Board at the annual Business Meeting held with the SIA Executive Summit. Spring of 2007 is the year we elect new Board members. We currently have openings on both IT and the Medical Board. If you would like to nominate someone to the Board please contact John Walker, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, or one of the Board members or the Executive Director. The entire list is on the back of the newsletter.

## SIA 2007 Executive Summit March 4 – 6, 2007 Mirage Las Vegas Customer Centric Service: Placing Customers at the heart of your Business

### Sunday, March 4

**SIA Annual Golf Tournament** - Bill McCubbins & Doug Reese, Co-Chairmen  
**Welcome and Networking Reception** with Exhibitors

### Monday, March 5

- **State of the Industry** *Gartner, Aberdeen, Medical Imaging*

- **Keynote Address – Customer Centric Service** *Dell & HP*

- **Customer Analysis Panel**

(A panel made up of Service Industry Leaders will discuss Changes they are seeing from their customers, selection process, what their wants and needs are including case studies and actual experience)

- **Customer Needs for Real Time Info – Is Real Time Info a Value Add or real need of customer** *Michael Blumberg, President D F Blumberg & Associates*

- **Roundtable – Depot & Onsite Service Companies**

In the depot world many companies have added web front ends to their enterprise systems and are developing custom web pages for their customers that put real time data out to the web sites as events take place. In the on-site world the use of lap top PC's and mobile terminals has significantly changed how data is transferred from the field back to corporate or even to the customer (A discussion on what these companies have done to provide real time data to their clients) *Service Companies - NGC, Diebold, Halifax; Depot - POSDATA, AMCOR and LMS*

- **Panel Discussions followed by Breakout Brainstorming Session on Various Customer Centric Solutions** *Dr. Jim Alexander Panel: Kevin Gilroy, CEO OnForce; IBM; two additional tbd*

**The audience will Break into groups for problem solving session :** Customer Satisfaction Surveys and other available tools for Benchmarking Customer Sat; Technology Tools; Customer Service – Many articles have discussed Customer Rage over the lack of Quality and the erosion of Customer Service in America. Is it Real? Ways to solve the problem. The Tsunami of cheap labor & offshore outsourcing—short term gain vs. long term pain.

### Reception

### Tuesday, March 6

- **State of the Association** –*John Rinas, President SIA* **New Board introduced from Balloting by members**

- **Services as a Science – Changing the Shape of the Service Industry** *Doug Morse, V.P. Oracle*

- **Keynote: Medical IT Convergence** - *Dr. Elliot Sloane Professor, Villanova University*

- **Briefing – Healthcare IT Services Panel Council** – *A high ranking Gov. Official will brief the group on what is happening*

- **Web Portals & Wireless Connectivity** What Technologies are available; How they are impacting the Customer; How they are impacting how we do business *(A panel of various technology providers)*

- **Implementing a System for Tracking Profitability “by Customer”** This session will discuss how you implement a system for tracking profitability by customer. A case study will be reviewed.

- **Compensation Issues – Do you pay Incentives or Bonuses on Revenue or Gross Profit?** This session will discuss the advantages of each and which is better for your company

**Grand Finale will end the event at 6:30 P.M.**