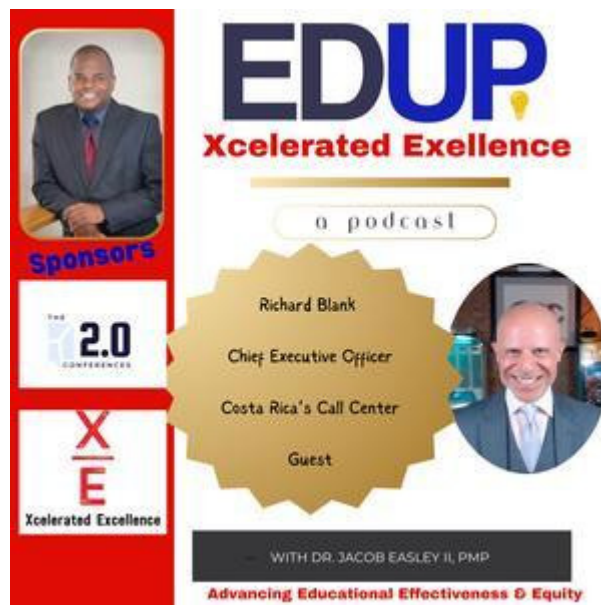




Ed Up Xcelerated Excellence podcast. Educating ESL Call Center agents with teacher Richard Blank

Richard shares the ingredients for supporting and preparing call center representatives for high-impact engagement with clients. He addresses the role of AI in call center productivity and the role of empathy as an effective tool in human interaction.



A podcast for the advancement of educational effectiveness and equity for traditional and non-traditional educational experiences and contexts, higher education and beyond. The podcast seeks to engage educators, scholars, entrepreneurs, advocates, and policy makers at all levels.



Our Guest is Richard Blank. He is a native of Philadelphia, PA and CEO of Costa Rica's Call Center.

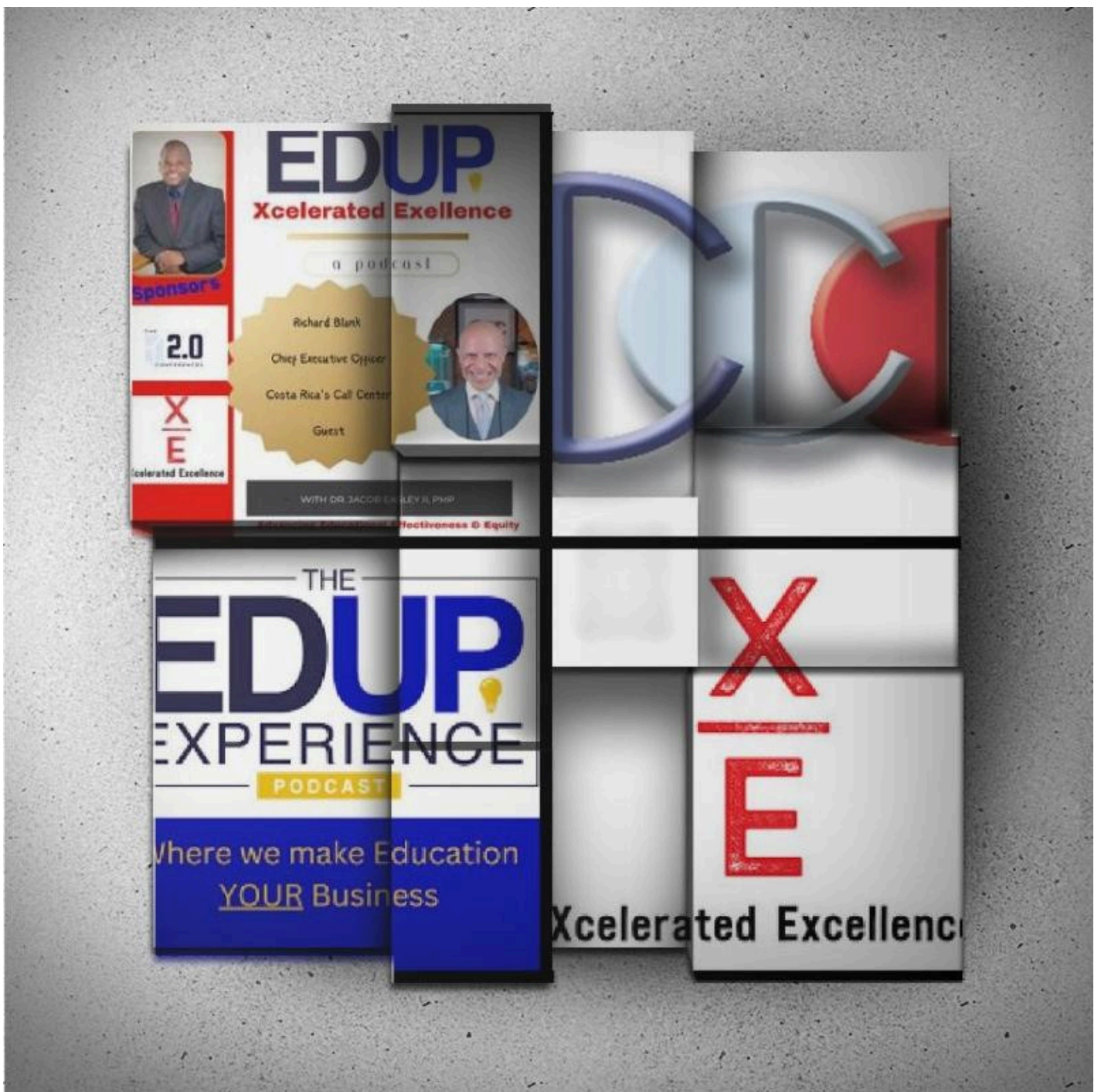
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Xcelerated Excellence

He shares how developing community and engagement lead to retention of employees. Richard gives back to the community by offering scholarships for students.



Your Host: Jacob Easley II, PhD, PMP

Internationally accomplished and award-winning educational leader and entrepreneur. Expert in educational policy and politics with a focus on educational accountability, effectiveness, improvement, and equity.



Xcelerated Excellence Consulting, LLC is dedicated to offering support to education leaders and their organizations to meet their full potential for excellence. A core focus of our work is to support the education profession in fostering greater equity for historically underrepresented, marginalized, and under-resourced student communities. We do so by upholding the value of design thinking for solutions, integrity of practice, continuous quality improvement, and innovation for unlocking potential. Take a look around and see how we can help you to design your excellence today.

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Xcelerated Excellence

Richard Blank
Chief Executive Officer
Costa Rica's Call Center
Guest

WITH DR. JACOB EASLEY II, PMP
Advancing Educational Effectiveness & Equity

THE
EDUP
EXPERIENCE

EDUP Xcelerated Excellence podcast guest Richard Blank Costa Rica's Call Center

Excellence Planning and Implementation

Expert Guidance

Based on our clients' needs, X|E offers short- and long-term consultancies that specialize in planning for excellence , as well as targeted assistance to aid clients in the implementation of plans to meet their goals. We know that things do not always go as planned. Our areas of expertise are: strategic planning; program development; risk management; change management; and project management services.

Continuous Quality Improvement

EDUP
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Richard Blank
Chief Executive Officer
Costa Rica's #1 Center

WITH DR. JACOB EASLEY II, PHD
Advancing Educational Effectiveness & Equity

THE EDUP EXPERIENCE
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Accelerate

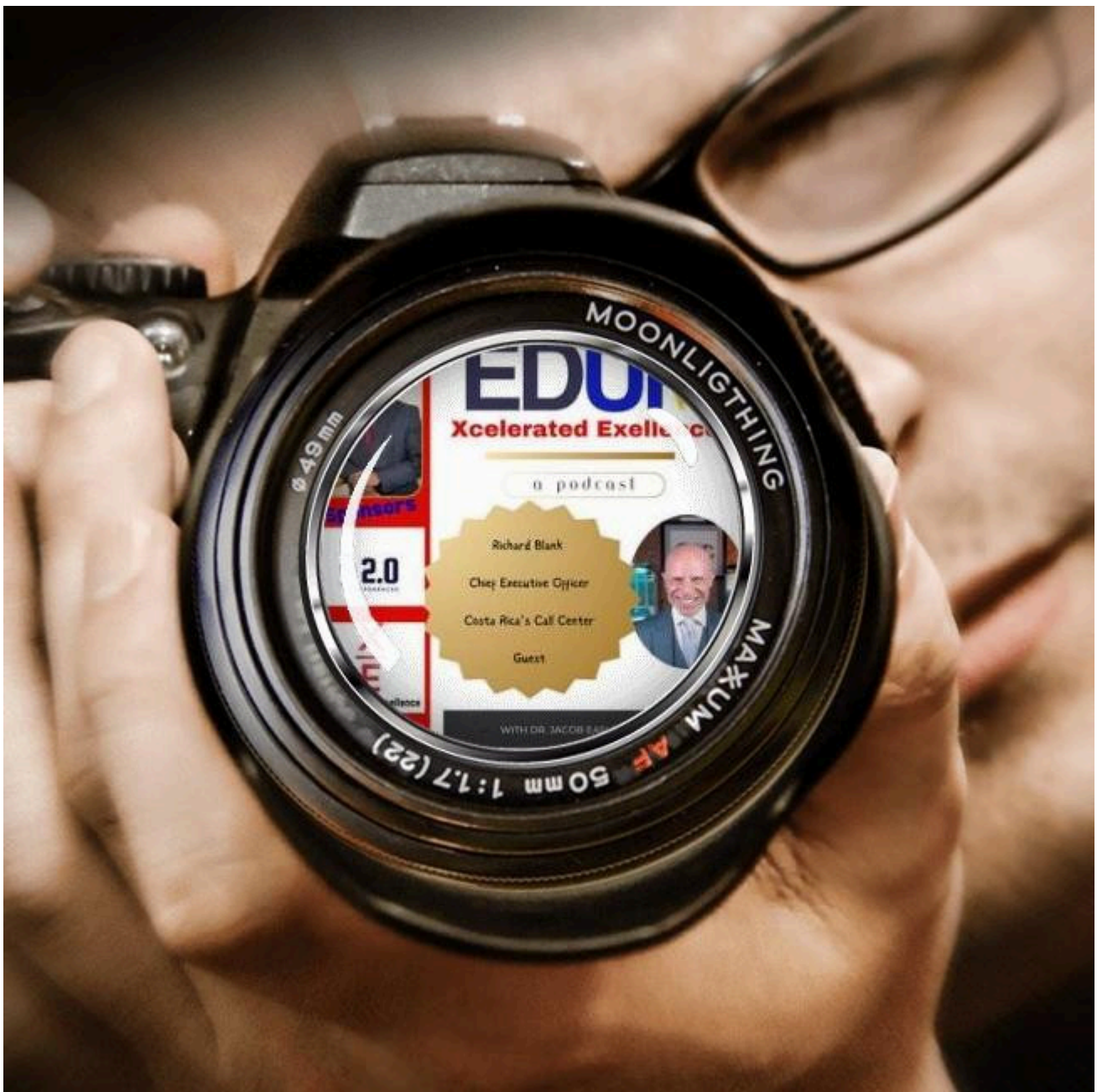
The Path to Success

Ensuring academic and operational quality is an ongoing task. X|E provides technical assistance to help education leaders and organization monitor and improve quality through the sound use of data and improvement sciences. X|E provides expert services in the areas of assessment, quality assurance, program evaluation, accreditation, and continuous improvement modeling.

Professional Development
Excellence by Design

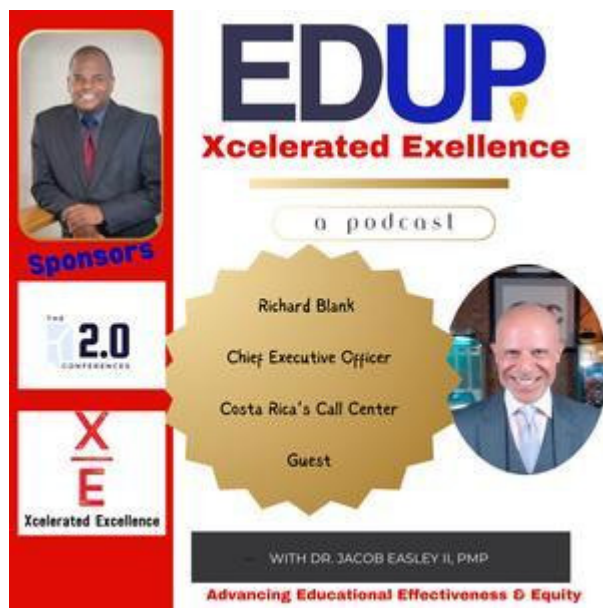


Leading innovation can be a daunting task and requires not only technical skills, but also a mindset for change. X|E aids leaders and their teams to build the concept, capacity, and culture for innovation needed to ensure continuous improvement. For leaders and organizations interested in applying the principles of design thinking to unlock the potential for excellence within their organization, we are available to address your unique needs.



The Power of Storytelling and Vision

For me, the greatest thing in the world are storytellers. If you get it behind a fire, then that's even better. It's even more old school. But someone that can tell a good, good story and paint a really nice picture. So that's why I recommend that when you really need to think or put in your oomph, close your eyes, you'll get a splash of vision with no distraction. And it's very easy for you authentically to describe what you see. And the majority of the time it's within you that's coming out of you and you're relying on your intuition and your vision. I mean, I'm not spacing it out there, but come on, Jacob. I could only imagine you with a full classroom conference hall look. I've seen you in your suits looking super sharp and good smiles all around you. Hugs aplenty, people sharing only the greatest moments and what's to come, exchanging phone numbers, slaps on the back, buying each other rounds of drinks, making plans. Come on I can picture it I can taste it I'm sure you do surf and turf, so everyone gets happy at dinner. I know you. Why can't you tell people what you see? Why can't you get excited for their growth and for their projections?



Using Professional Skills Beyond Work

Ah, Jacob, do you know what happens with me? I smile because they have no bad habits. It's true. They didn't come from another center. They don't have a supervisor named Billy yelling at you. Make more calls. Come on, Jacob. Tell me about that time you're at the center. There's always a coffee breath supervisor screaming at you that you should be hanging up on Mrs. Jones and making another call. It's like a squire to a knight. And here's the beauty of it. And just like the school and the other professors that you have that share ideas, these are the sort of things you can use outside of the office to save a marriage, a Thanksgiving dinner, a friendship.

Socio-Cultural Impacts of Remote Work

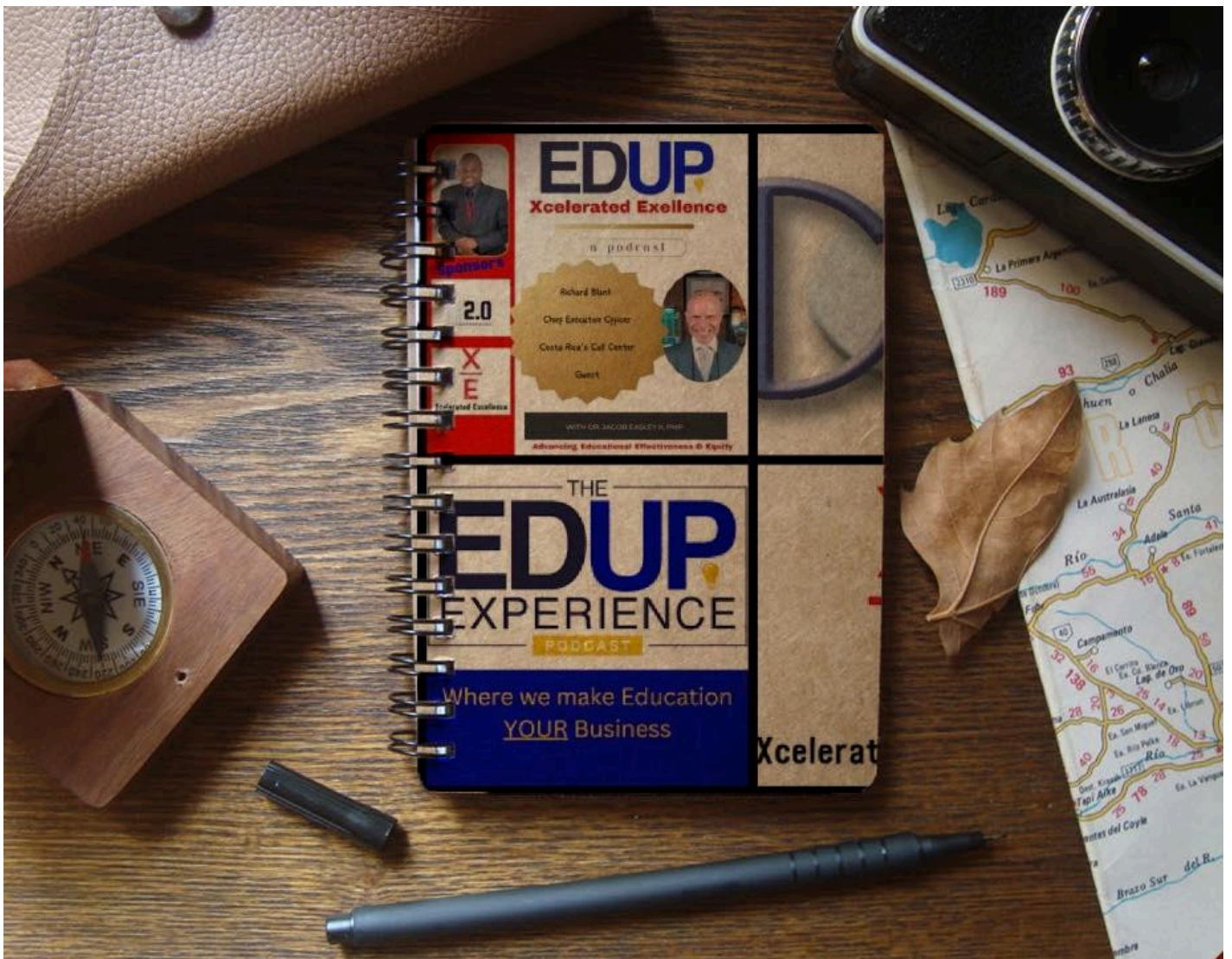


I think that might have increased things by about five percent in regards to production. Okay, so we're at 85%. Why aren't we in the 90s? You lost a complete 15% in regards to the on-site training, the camaraderie, the IT support, you know, the arcade game room. How about just getting out, shaving, putting on clothes and looking smooth? You know, you got to keep your game going. How about this? I've had a lot of people through the 17 years that have met here, gotten married, and have had children. I've had some call center babies that have been here the whole nine months, and I say hi to them every day, talk to the tummy. What's my point? That's not going to happen anymore. Those two people through Destiny might never meet now. We've hired a bunch of people post-COVID, but those A and Bs are never going to make C anymore.

Strategic Language Use in Call Centers

That's a wonderful question. First, let me address the fact that I won't bring any languages in here that I can't personally understand. I can't have Tommy on the phone, Carson. So I got to know. So it's going to be English, Spanish, and I'll even do Portuguese. We have enough Portuguese speakers here and I understand enough. Of course, it could go into two languages. It depends on the client. If you need to turn in a recording to them or you need to set up an appointment and no one in the office in corporate speak Spanish, you got to ensure that the person you're speaking with has a translator or can speak English.

The Importance of Creativity in Communication



It's better to be a rudder than the ship. And it's a nice thing to do. And so I've seen that we've been able to prolong conversations in the metrics that you have working at a center. And our conversion ratios have increased. Our contact ratios have increased. And even if we need to make a custom-made voicemail or email because of COVID or the way people are communicating, if you just do a little due diligence like you and I did prior to this podcast, people put a little of that magic dust on top and get their attention. And so be clever. Actually try. Just don't make it a print. Come on, Jacob, make it a painting. Make it something that people are going to remember. So at least through merit, you're getting their attention and having the chance to make your case.



The Romantic Side of Call Center Work

so tell us, what does it mean and what does it feel like to work at a call center? You sold your soul. Man, some people would rather do public speaking than this, and they feel that more than death. I'm only kidding. It's not for the faint of heart. You need to build up endurance for it. In my mind, I saw the romantic side of it. It's really beautiful rhetoric and semantics and a phonetic delivery. As good looking as you and I are, Jacob, the majority of our clients can see us over the phone. So you're losing that sort of suit wearing smile. But what I've seen and I've cracked a few codes is that when you speak to somebody, I believe that the phonetic tell signs are even stronger than if someone, if your micro expression reading them in person, they could just have twitches, just be nervous and sure, congruence is there. But the purest of pure is you're focused on the way somebody speaks.

Diverse Recruitment Approach with Storytelling and Public Speaking



It's all shapes and sizes, my friend. You could have the soft-spoken female to be at the right place at the right time or the assertive Philadelphia kid like me, which might be a different taste. But I tell you what, I mean, there's certain checkpoints prior to someone being sitting in a class. They'll, of course, be making some recordings for me, for us to consider. Looking at their resume, who cares? Turn it over and write me a couple of paragraphs of a coming of age moment. So you can tell Jacob and I when you beat up a bully. That's what I want to hear from you. So at least I can hear a really good story. But then when we're in class, you stand up. So you're practicing public speaking in front of a dozen people. You hold the script in your left. You use your right hand for illustrators. I will assist you in your balance and your pausing and your breathing.

Embracing Human Element in Customer Interactions over AI



So what has been the approach of your organization to either integrate or counter the recent developments in AI within your field? I'll be completely honest with you. Sometimes these kiosks make your burger more consistent than the kid behind the counter. And so if people are able to and I'm going to say it again, gathering if they're capable of gathering for me information. So human error, fatigue, misstepping gets completely taken out. That reduces that sort of time on a phone call and frustration. But as I'm going to say it again, if somebody has a bad experience with a company, they are definitely going to want to speak with somebody to maybe receive some credit or to make a suggestion or just to get it out. And I've also learned as well that if people are using profanity, as long as it's not at me, you get a warning, second time's call's dead. But if it goes in this direction, I get it. Come on. It's not 1950s Cleavers. I

mean, sometimes people curse. It's real life. I've cursed before. Haven't you? You got a flat tire and it's raining? Come on. You're supposed to curse. But my point being is that you almost bond that way because then they apologize. And I say, hey, Jacob, do you want to get any more out? And you're like, no, Richard, let's continue. And then instead of giving rebuttals, there's no rebuttals. You're converting a call at that stage. Hi, AI. They can't tell you they know how you feel if you broke an arm or your puppy ran away or changing that tire in the rain. That's almost like an insult.



Richard's journey in the call center space is filled with twists and turns. When he was 27 years old, he relocated to Costa Rica to train employees for one of the larger call centers in San

Jose. With a mix of motivational public speaking style backed by tactful and appropriate rhetoric, Richard shared his knowledge and trained over 10 000 bilingual telemarketers. Mr. Richard Blank holds a bachelors degree in Communication and Spanish from the University of Arizona and a certificate of language proficiency from the University of Sevilla, Spain. A Keynote speaker for Philadelphia's Abington High School 68th National Honors Society induction ceremony. In addition, inducted into the 2023 Hall of Fame for Business. Giving back to Abington Senior High School is very important to Mr. Blank. As such, he endows a scholarship each year for students that plan on majoring in a world language at the university level.

Costa Rica's Call Center (CCC) is a state of the art BPO telemarketing outsource company located in the capital city of San Jose, Costa Rica. Our main focus has been, and will always be to personally train each and every Central America call center agent so that we may offer the highest quality of outbound and inbound telemarketing solutions and bilingual customer service to small and medium sized international companies, entrepreneurs as well as fortune 500 companies.



We encourage you to visit one of our call centers on your next personal vacation or business trip to Central America's paradise, Costa Rica. While you are here, we would recommend taking an extra day of your trip to visit breathtaking virgin beaches, play golf next to the ocean, try your luck at deep sea fishing, explore tropical jungles, climb volcanos or just relax in natural hot springs. Come and see for yourself why call center outsourcing in Costa Rica is a perfect solution for your growing company and a powerhouse in the BPO industry.

<https://costaricascallcenter.com/en/outbound-bpo-campaigns/>

#JacobEasleyII #EdUpXceleratedExcellencepodcast #RichardBlank #CostaRica #CallCenter #Outsourcing #Telemarketing #BPO #Sales #Entrepreneur #B2B #Business #Podcast

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