

The Galaxy

In This Issue

Featured Snuggly:
RJ and Donna
Chaffee

This is Not a Bill –
Explanation of Benefits
(EOB)

Startel letters

Shock

Startel Flexible Agent
Interface

The Don Berry Award
2017

The Payment Portal

From the
Executive Director

The President's Letter



Startel National Users Group
Startel National Users Group

Featured Snuggies - RJ and Donna Chaffee Ability Answering

Ability Answering – And Caring!

RJ and Donna Chaffee, owners of Ability Answering, are two amazing people who quietly go about making the lives of others better. It is a common trait among the people in our industry, all the behind the scene acts of kindness, support and help that we give comes naturally because this is a “people” industry, one which attracts people who care. The humble nature of this family is an example for us all.

The Chaffee’s story in the answering service industry goes a LONG way back. Ray Chaffee (RJ’s father) had a full career running over 450 services for Western Union. When it was time to retire, Ray wasn’t ready to stop working, so he bought four small answering services on the west coast. RJ’s mother, Shirley, who was born and raised in Montreal, Canada, eventually moved to California and began working in a telephone answering service that Ray Chaffee owned; they fell in love and were married.

“Ray was a hard-working guy with a vision, and a whole lot of contacts from his years at Western Union.” Donna pointed out. As the couple purchased more and more small services, their “empire” grew. Back then services had to be close to the central office because land lines were hard wired between the office and the CO. Theirs was a wonderful story; he was an orphan and she was very poor, and through hard work, they created a thriving business. Ray was active in the industry and was president of ATSI in 1958.

RJ Chaffee, their son, grew up around the services, and did the same sort of



RJ and Donna Chaffee

SNUG newsletter 1

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(Continued from page 1)

jobs that were typical for kids whose parents were in this industry. He filed, cleaned, took care of the trash and other chores, which included keeping an inventory of the company's pagers. It's likely that many second generation answering services remember that task. RJ chose to go to Lehigh in Western Pennsylvania, where he majored in Business. After graduation, he went to Brazil to sell pagers, which was an exciting new industry at the time. He was called home when his dad was diagnosed with cancer. He had about a year to learn the business, which he and his mother, Shirley, ran together for many years.

However, this is a two-part story, and Donna Peltier Chaffee was also a force to be reckoned with. Donna, after working in the banking industry, was handling sales for Time Communications in St. Paul, Minnesota, and attended industry functions. RJ had followed in his Dad's footsteps as president of ATSI in 1991, and he and Donna had met a few times at meetings. "I was a little in awe of him," she said,



Andrew and Matt

"he was the "President" of ATSI and I only knew him to say "hello." About 25 years ago, at the ATSI Convention in Portland, Oregon, RJ and Shirley spent some time with Donna. "We just purchased a service in San Diego," RJ explained, "and we need a good manager; we want you to take the job." Donna had absolutely no intention of moving from Minnesota to San Diego - until she did it. The people in this industry seem to have a pretty strong persuasion skills and San Diego was WARM.

Eventually, RJ and Donna married, and found a sweet, beach front condo in San Diego that they just loved. Soon, baby Matthew joined the family followed two years later by another baby boy, Andrew. Donna always thought she would return to work but being home with the boys was better. RJ was doing just fine without her, and each of the offices had a strong manager. Why not take advantage of the opportunity to be a stay at home Mom?

With two toddlers, the beach front condo was beginning to feel a little cramped; they looked and looked to find the perfect place and felt they were being called by God to move to the central part of the state. They finally settled on a lovely place in Bakersfield, CA. The home had a small guest house on the property. "We thought the guesthouse would be perfect for RJ's mother." Donna went on, "we wanted her to be able to feel independent and yet close so we could see her and make sure she felt cared for; unfortunately, she passed before we moved in. That was so sad. But God has plans we don't know about."

(Continued on page 3)

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“Our company had always felt very close and cohesive,” Donna said, “and when we moved to Bakersfield, many of our employees moved with us. It was a beautiful area, and more economically comfortable than San Diego had been. It was a move that made sense for all of us. Although I don’t really go into the office to work, I have stayed very involved with the business; and of course, RJ and I talk about it all the time and make decisions together. I have always been responsible for the accounts payable, and I take care of the monthly schedule for 49 people. I check the stats and things like that, but it’s RJ who is there every day, and of course we have really good managers who make it all possible.”



Samantha, Emily and Donna

“There we were, in Bakersfield, with all this room and a beautiful home and two great little boys, and because we felt that we had so much more to give, we looked into fostering children. It turned out to be the right thing for us; in the process, we adopted our two daughters! Samantha came to us when she was two-years old and she fit right in. Andrew was seven, and the timing was perfect. Then just one year later we adopted Emily; she melted our hearts.

She was born with an autoimmune condition similar to Lupus, that affects her joints, but she doesn’t let it get her down.”

“The kids are all doing really well; we are truly blessed. Matthew, 18, is in his first year at the University of San Diego, a private Catholic College where he wants to major in either economics or sociology and then go to Law School. Swimming is his sport! Andrew, who is 16, has already begun looking at colleges; he’s brilliant when it comes to math and physics; and thinks he wants to someday work with algorithms for Google, or a company like that. He plays tennis, and is a cross country runner, and loves it.” She added. “Samantha who is 13, loves dance, especially ballet and hip hop, as well as art and sewing. Emily, who is 11, loves animals, and was just judged as the 4th

(Continued on page 4)



RJ and Emily

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best gymnast in the State of California! When you consider her painful joints and the fact that she sees a specialist in LA once a month, and gives herself a shot every week, this is a huge achievement!" It is easy to hear the pride and love that RJ and Donna have for their kids. They care deeply and devoutly about all in their world. "Our church is a big part of our lives," admitted Donna, "and it gives us another family. We even have Grandma Louise from church. With my Mother in Florida, and JR's folks gone, Grandma Louise is a special part of our life."

"This is the perfect industry," Donna said. "We have been able to bring the kids to the office when we need to, and have taken off when we had things that were important to us. The boys have done some odd jobs to help out. They are all learning compassion; they hear us talking about it at the dinner table, how this employee has no vacation left, but needs time off, and we allow it. It's all about caring and helping our employee family. I want the kids to see how hard their dad works and how much our employees mean to us. The wonderful life we are able to lead is because of them. We want our children to appreciate all they have; and they do!" The Chaffee's love the flexibility the industry has given them as a family and travel is high on their list of fun ways to spend their time together. "We've been to Alaska, Jamaica, Hawaii, Turks & Caicos, Germany, France, London, and their favorite of all, Thailand, where we spent two weeks with old friends and had a chance to immerse ourselves in the culture.



Our furry friends

That was beautiful, and I'd go back in a minute," Donna admitted. "When we are home, we all like to play board games and hang out together."

"Everyone also gives me a hand with *The Chaffee Home for Unwed Cats*," she laughed. "We foster cats and kittens that we save from high kill shelters. Did you know they euthanize around 80 cats and kittens every few days at those places?!" She asked indignantly. "Our vet offers a spay and neuter program, and we often foster them until they can go to Rescue Agencies in other parts of the country. It is nothing for us to have 15 cats and kitties. The guest house is the perfect place for them. We have added cages, hammocks, shelves, and plenty of areas for them to snuggle and have space of their own. We also have about 8 of our own; I just love them. Ironically, RJ is not fond of cats but he helps foster them anyway. He has a Golden Retriever named Buddy, and Samantha has a service dog, a Black Lab named Brittany (after her favorite babysitter). Brit used to go to school with Sam because she is a trained seizure dog. But this year Brittany stays home; Sam hasn't had a seizure in a couple of years, and this year, in middle school, she wants to be just like all the other kids, and that is working very well!"

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(Continued from page 4)

The name of the Chaffee's service is Ability. It fits so perfectly! The ability and capabilities of this couple are vast. Ability is 45 years old now, having been started in 1972. It has gone through some trials and tribulations; yet Donna and RJ have stayed positive, and focused and full of faith. As technology has moved forward, they have consolidated their services until now they have three locations. The "home" office is in Bakersfield, and the other offices are in Visalia/Fresno and Merced. RJ works regularly in the Bakersfield office, but he gets to all of them. When he broke his back in 2014 after a fall, Donna took him to the office and he used a wheelchair, but he was there! "RJ is the guy who does the accounts receivable and the marketing, and he loves the "Startel Stuff". He is brilliant," said Donna, "everything that comes out is like a new toy for him. We have a tech guy and together they have a great time."



Happy trails

"We have always been pleased by the support we've received from our friends in the industry." Donna smiled, "It is a giving group of people who come through for you. Whenever SNUG is on the West Coast, we try to send people. We send our managers to Startel to train and to SNUG. They are so excited and charged up when they return! And we are thankful for all the industry people who share and work to make things better for all of us."



Just horsing around

As they look to the future, RJ has no plans to retire, this is his place, and he loves the industry. Donna is about to finish her PhD in Human Services. She also works as a non-profit counselor at the Bakersfield Pregnancy Center every week. But as the kids get older, and need her at home a little less, she thinks she may want to teach at the local college. Whatever they decide to do, you can be sure that they will do it in the spirit of love and benevolence; because that is who they are, people who care deeply about every living thing.

Cont. This is Not a Bill – Explanation of Benefits (EOB)

Something about the way he said it prompted me to say, “I’m sure you have quite a few other claims there; will you be taking care of all of them? His reply was, “No, please send them by mail; one letter for each claim.” I fought back. “Sir, don’t tell me that you don’t have a spread sheet there with every claim that has been send to you and what the current status is.” He admitted that there were 12 claims. I said I expected ALL 12 CLAIMS to be processed immediately and the payments sent to me, since I had now paid the bills. I specifically asked how long that would take, (7 to 14 days) and I got his name. I have detailed notes of our conversation and a big red note on my calendar of when I should receive my payment.

Insurance companies make money by paying our claims as slowly as possible – they receive interest on the money in their accounts. If they can delay payments even one day, they may get a few cents. If they can hold off paying a lot of claims even more slowly – or not at all, because we don’t question our Explanation of Benefits, they can come out way ahead. READ your EOB and question every single code that you don’t understand – there’s cash in them there bills!

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dan@callconsult.net



Startel National Users Group



Dear Valued Customer,

On Tuesday, June 6, 2017, Brian Stewart, Chairman of Startel and Professional Teledata Corporations, announced that Bill Lane has left the companies. Bill has accepted a new opportunity within the telephone answering service industry with a large Startel/PTD customer and we wish him well in his new endeavor.

In the interim, the strong Senior Management Team of Startel and Professional Teledata will take over leadership responsibilities. This team is made up of Georgia Thompson (Controller), Margaret Lally (Senior Director of Operations & Technical Services), Dianxun Xu (Director of Engineering), Steve Newell (Director of Sales), Rachel Hayes (Director of Marketing), Pat Kalik (Director of Customer Services), Alan Hartmann (Director of Product Development) and Jim Graham (Director of Special Operations). Brian Stewart will continue to oversee the Senior Management Team. For questions or concerns, please contact any member of the Startel Senior Management Team.

We are confident and excited about the future of our companies, and we look forward to communicating that to you in the weeks and months to come!

All the best of success,

Senior Management Team

Dear Valued Customer:

Upon returning from SNUG/PIN 2017, we realized the email we thought had been sent regarding Conference Show Specials (discounts) was still in my Outlook outbox. So - why should you care? Well, the original discount was going to be 15% off on PTD/Startel licenses, but now to make up for the oversight we are offering the following deeper discounts exclusively to conference attendees:

1. 20% off all PTD/Startel Agent Licenses
2. \$579 off the monthly Startel Disaster Recovery fee for a 2-year contract
3. 20% off the setup cost of TBS for new customers

This offer will **expire on June 30, 2017**. Please contact Isaac Thompson at 949.863.8744, or send an email to Isaac.Thompson@startel.com, to take advantage of these Show Specials!

Sincerely,

Isaac Thompson
Business Development Manager
Startel & Professional Teledata Corporations



Take a Look at ThePaymentPortal.com!

We are excited to introduce the latest new feature of Professional Teledata's Total Billing Solution 3 (TBS3) - ThePaymentPortal.com! It is a hosted, online, secure e-commerce site where your accounts can access statements, view invoices and traffic history, and pay bills at their convenience. For a limited time, we are offering **\$100 off** the setup fee for new customers!

My Answering Service (800) 555-1212

Payment Portal Usage Contact Us

Statement for: A1033 Johnson/ Dr. James

Transaction Date	Transaction	Due Date	Invoice#/Check#	Invoice Amount	Payment/Credit	Account Balance
2015-12-31	Invoice	2016-01-20	151200000201	\$11.06		\$1,186.96
2015-10-01	Invoice	2015-10-21	060300000101	\$70.62		\$1,175.90
2015-08-31	Invoice	2015-09-20	060100000101	\$20.31		\$1,105.28
2015-08-01	Invoice	2015-08-21	051000000101	\$20.01		\$1,084.97
2015-07-01	Invoice	2015-07-21	050900000101	\$213.17		\$1,064.96
2015-05-31	Invoice	2015-06-20	050600000101	\$133.77		\$851.79
2015-05-01	Invoice	2015-05-21	050500000101	\$14.34		\$718.02

Pay This Amount \$1,186.96

My Answering Service . 123 N Main Street Weare, NH 03281 . Phone: 800-555-1212 . Fax: . Email: billing@myansweringervice.com

Advantages

- Optimizes user experience
- Decreases payment processing fees
- Reduces likelihood of human error
- 24/7 dedicated support

Learn More

[Download the Solution Brief](#), which contains more information on system requirements, implementation, support and more! Also, [register now](#) for the upcoming June 14th Webinar!

Get Started

Implementation for ThePaymentPortal.com will begin in July, however we are taking pre-orders now. Contact Isaac Thompson at [800.344.9944](tel:800.344.9944) or sales@proteledata.com to place your order. Be sure to ask about the **\$100 initial setup fee discount** too!

Y

our second biggest client just e-mailed to let you know that they will be leaving your service in two months!

Losing a huge client quickly is not uncommon in any industry. Recently, Express Scripts Holding (1) said it expects Anthem, its biggest customer, to defect to another pharmacy benefits manager. Scripts had offered \$1 billion in price concessions, but still felt they would lose their customer. It can happen to anyone and our industry is ripe for this to happen; there are some big players who are about to raise the stakes with offers our smaller businesses will not be able to meet. So, what do you do when your customer says the deal has been done and September 30th will be the last day they will be using your services? What do you do when this customer's bill is approximately 8% of your total billing?


After you pick yourself up off the floor, allow yourself ONE night of staying awake worrying, and then get busy. It's time to go into action, first – can you find a way to keep them? Negotiate? If the answer is no, then you have costs to cut, plans to make and people to calm and encourage. You can do it. You are a leader.

Step One – Let your customer know you are sorry to see them go; you have valued your relationship through the years and wish them well! Offer to do whatever you can to make their transition go smoothly; remind them you are still partners and you need them to keep you informed so that you can continue to help their callers until the last line has been transitioned. Tell them you will keep their account profile – deactivated, but in your programming files, so that if they need you, you will be able to assist them. Write personal notes to people you have worked closely with, and let them know you value the relationship you have had with them.

Step Two – Tell your employees. Let them know that this is a blow, but you are going to overcome it. Let them know there will be sacrifices and they will start at the top. Keep telling them what is happening as things move along. Ask for their assistance and their ideas; you will be amazed at their creativity. Don't let them feel they are out of the loop; their imaginations will come up with worse scenarios than the truth. Let them know how important they are to you.

Step Three - Make a list of every employee and what they do – and how much they are paid. You are undoubtedly going to have to not only cut hours, but possibly cut positions. You should already know who your most productive and needed employees are; but in case you don't, give yourself a week to talk to key people about your employees. Think about who you might have to run your company without. Who else has the time, experience and work ethic to take on additional responsibilities? This isn't easy, but again, it's not unusual. Walt Disney (2) recently laid off roughly 100 journalists as the result of ESPN losing more than 10 million subscribers.

Step Four - Make a list of the hours that your agents work, determine what your service level has been, and consider lowering it. If you have been answering each call by the fourth ring 90% of the time, you can probably lower that to 75% of the time or answer by the 6th ring 90% of the time. It will take months before anyone even notices what you've done and, if your people are wonderful when they answer, it may take even longer. Read your stats reports to determine when you could lower the number of agents taking calls; cutting your total agent hours by 20% will probably not hurt your service with this large customer gone. You may be able to cut agent time even more.



Step Five – Talk honestly with your senior staff people, tell them they are going to have to all work for less money for a while; cut all pay by an equal percentage and no playing favorites. What perks do you pay for? Health insurance, phones, retirement? You may not be able to pay for these things for a while. Give them the option of paying for things themselves, or a part of the cost, or doing without for the year (or two); perhaps you cut back on paid vacation. Nothing should be sacred. You need to cut your expenses by the amount of billing you have lost. Even if you have a slush fund set aside for emergencies, this is NOT a short-term emergency; that slush fund will go quickly.

Step Six – Immediately ask your clients for referrals. Make it a campaign, buy something neat to use as an incentive prize and have a contest. By honestly calling and asking “Would you do me a favor? Would you think about the people you do business with and let me know the names and numbers of a few that might benefit by using our services?” Most people LOVE to help others; give them a chance to help you.

Step Seven – Take a hard look at the customers who owe you money. This is not a time when you can afford to work for free! Offer incentives for early payments and add penalties to late payments. Let customers know you’re serious about being paid on time. Create payment plans for clients whose payments are overdue.

Step Eight – Talk to your vendors. Every single one, from your landlord, to your equipment and telephony suppliers, and every other person your send money to each month. See if you can postpone a payment or two. Ask your landlord if you can pay half the rent payment for 4 months, then the full rent for 4 months and then the full rent plus one each of the four half payments you missed (one and a half rent payments) for 4 months. If you have been a good tenant, this request is not likely to be turned down.

In addition, remember the IRS. Adhere to all filing deadlines even if you lack the cash to pay when it’s due; it’s better to apply for installment payments than to face penalties.

Step Nine – make a new budget showing your new expected income and fill in the things you can’t lower and just have to live with. Then fill in the things that you have renegotiated. Don’t forget with fewer agent hours, you will also pay less payroll tax and unemployment insurance. When you cut your own pay and that of your senior employees – again – less taxes to pay. Perhaps you can offer delayed payments, or company stock, or call their lost pay a loan and offer interest, but the best plan is probably to let them know there will be a bonus when you are out of the woods and not put any future payments or interest on your books.

Step Ten – When you have your budget down on paper, and you are satisfied that you can do this – find a way to cut more from the budget. You don’t know what other accounts you might lose or what other accounts may lower their usage. If you have a knife edge budget, and have another hiccup, it will completely demoralize your staff to have additional cuts. If you cut more than necessary, you can always add it back, but if you don’t cut enough, you may not recover from that miscalculation, and your staff will lose confidence in your word and your leadership.

Finally – Believe! You will survive a huge loss, if you don’t panic and go to work on the budget immediately

- Bloomberg Businessweek, May 1, 2017
- Bloomberg Businessweek May 1, 2017

StarTel Flexible Agent Interface

Same Proven Technology with a New Look & Feel that Delivers Continued Results

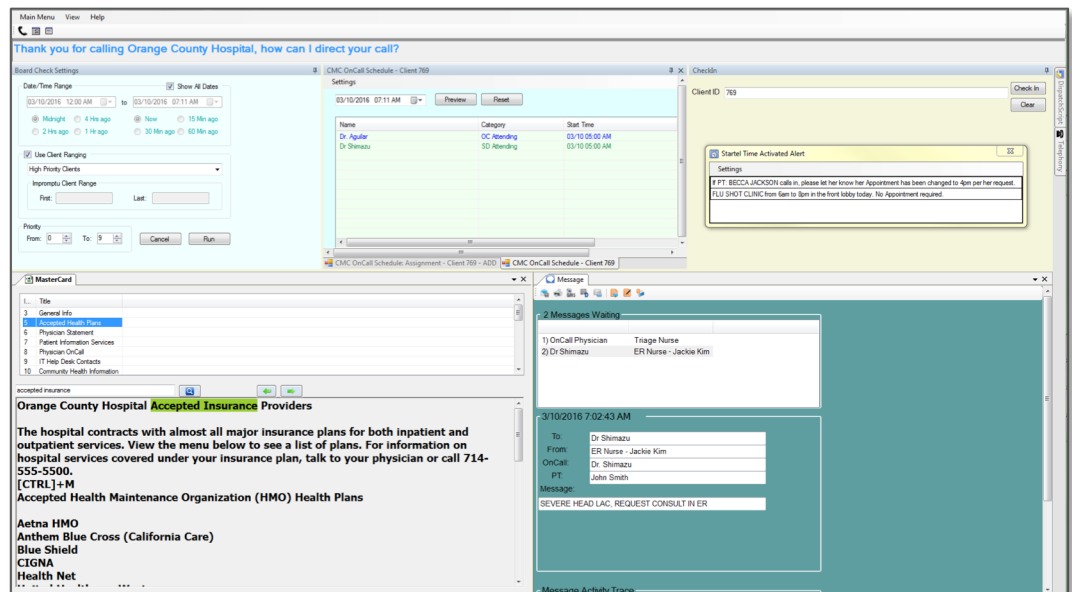
Key Features

- Active Search of Menu Selection and Directories
- Option to Save Multiple Layout Designs
- Ability to Search Contents of MasterCards, Messages and IntelliForms
- Adjustable Window Design
- Ability to View Dispatch Scripts from Agent Screen
- Supports Multi-monitors

Key Benefits

- Increased Operational Efficiency
- Reduced Training Time
- Increased Functionality
- More Satisfied Employees

StarTel's Flexible Agent Interface replicates the features and functionality of StarTel's Current Classic Agent Interface, while adding new features and enhanced functionality designed to deliver greater flexibility and efficiency! From the Flexible Agent Interface, agents have all the tools and information they need to greet callers, route and dispatch calls, schedule appointments, maintain On-Call schedules and more.



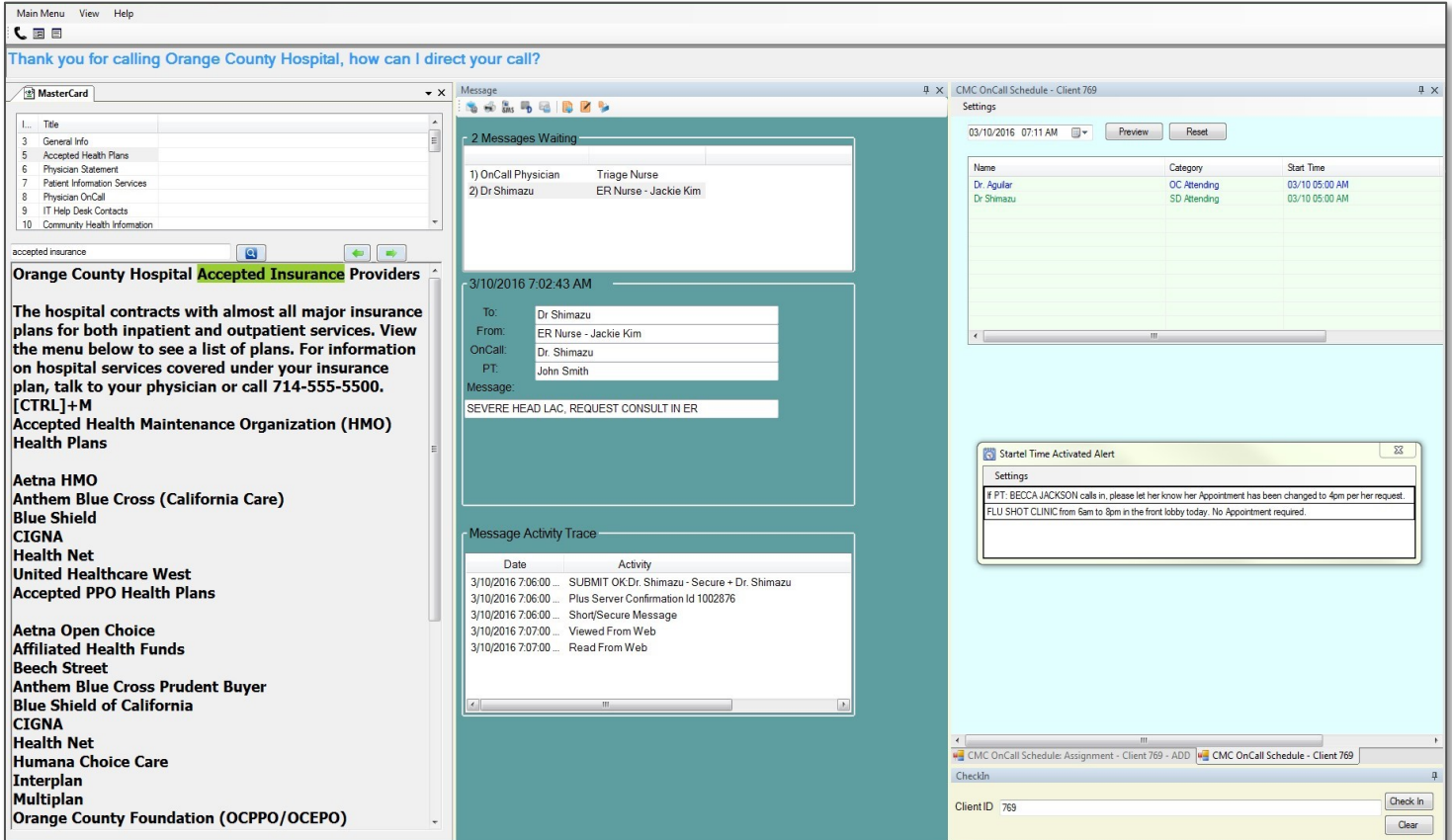
Adjustable Window Design

The new adjustable window design, as shown in the above screenshot, includes segmented panes that allow windows to be docked and pinned in a variety of configurations to maximize screen real estate. When hovering over unpinned windows, or tabs, agents can easily view and manage content. These configurations can be saved as layouts, and contact centers can opt to have as many or few layouts as they'd like.

The length of the Answer Phrase has also been extended to accommodate lengthy greetings, and all windows now have auto wrapping text!

Startel Flexible Agent Interface

Startel Flexible Agent Interface



The screenshot displays the Startel Flexible Agent Interface with three pinned tabs: MasterCard, Message, and CMC OnCall Schedule - Client 769.

MasterCard Tab: Shows a list of insurance providers under the heading "Orange County Hospital Accepted Insurance Providers". The text states: "The hospital contracts with almost all major insurance plans for both inpatient and outpatient services. View the menu below to see a list of plans. For information on hospital services covered under your insurance plan, talk to your physician or call 714-555-5500. [CTRL]+M Accepted Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) Health Plans". The list includes: Aetna HMO, Anthem Blue Cross (California Care), Blue Shield, CIGNA, Health Net, United Healthcare West, Accepted PPO Health Plans, Aetna Open Choice, Affiliated Health Funds, Beech Street, Anthem Blue Cross Prudent Buyer, Blue Shield of California, CIGNA, Health Net, Humana Choice Care, Interplan, Multiplan, and Orange County Foundation (OCPPO/OCEPO).

Message Tab: Shows a message from "ER Nurse - Jackie Kim" to "Dr. Shimazu" with the subject "SEVERE HEAD LAC, REQUEST CONSULT IN ER". A "Message Activity Trace" table is visible below:

Date	Activity
3/10/2016 7:06:00 ...	SUBMIT OK Dr. Shimazu - Secure + Dr. Shimazu
3/10/2016 7:06:00 ...	Plus Server Confirmation Id 1002876
3/10/2016 7:06:00 ...	Short/Secure Message
3/10/2016 7:07:00 ...	Viewed From Web
3/10/2016 7:07:00 ...	Read From Web

CMC OnCall Schedule - Client 769 Tab: Shows a "Settings" window for "03/10/2016 07:11 AM" with "Preview" and "Reset" buttons. A table lists on-call providers:

Name	Category	Start Time
Dr. Agular	OC Attending	03/10 05:00 AM
Dr. Shimazu	SD Attending	03/10 05:00 AM

Below the table is a "Startel Time Activated Alert" box with the following text: "If PT: BECCA JACKSON calls in, please let her know her Appointment has been changed to 4pm per her request. FLU SHOT CLINIC from 6am to 9pm in the front lobby today. No Appointment required."

At the bottom, a "Checkin" window shows "Client ID 769" with "Check In" and "Clear" buttons.

When you check in to an account that has an active OnCall, the OnCall window will automatically pop up on the agent's screen. Looking at the above screen shot, the MasterCard, Message and CMC OnCall Schedule tabs are currently pinned, providing agents quick and simple access to the information they need when they need it.

To find out how Startel's Flexible Agent Interface can benefit your organization, contact us today at sales@startel.com or 1800-782-7835.



The Don Berry Award 2017 - John Carey – Startel Corporation

“
I Love You Guys”

You could have heard a pin drop – as always, when one of last year’s Don Berry Award winners, Victoria Nelles, began to speak.

“This year’s recipient of the Don Berry Award has demonstrated their dedication and willingness to go above and beyond for the Startel user’s group. Many in this room have this person on speed dial, just in case... Whether it be to get their opinion and knowledge in time of need or success, or just to invite this individual to a company Christmas party. This person’s advice and assistance has had a profoundly positive effect on our lives and businesses.

He has been a huge advocate for SNUG since its inception. He is passionate about this group and takes our collective successes personally. It’s been said that he puts his whole heart and soul into work, family and friends.

Wherever there is an obstacle that seems too great to hurdle, you will find this person, searching for a solution. Because if it’s not working, he’s not done yet!



I am happy to announce John Carey as this year’s recipient of the Don Berry Award!”

As he accepted the award, there was a choke in John’s voice as he shared how he came to Startel. After interviewing with Socrates Karageorge, he didn’t feel good about the meeting. Western Electric had just had a large layoff and there were a lot of applicants for the job John had applied for. He called and asked to speak with the president, and had a five-minute conversation with Don Berry. I told him, “You need me; I’m the one for you.” They hung up and Socrates called him three minutes later. “I don’t know what the hell you said,” Soc told him, “but you’re starting Monday.”

“That was 34 years ago,” John continued, “and I’ve dedicated myself to Startel and you guys since that day, and this is really...”, he said, looking down at the plaque he held. “I love you guys!” And we love you, John Carey!

When John Carey accepted the Don Berry Award this past week, he was overcome with emotion and unable to finish his story...

From John Carey -

Now that I've been able to reflect upon what happened last Monday, hopefully I'm able to convey my thoughts.

Wow, that was wonderful. I swear.... It was like my life flashed it front of me. All your kind words and gestures were overwhelming. Then the rest of the week is hard to put into words; it kind of felt like was like I was riding on a beautiful wave of emotion and energy. If you've ever surfed or boogied you know what I mean... that moment you're in the heart of the wave... it's an indescribable sensation. I feel truly blessed.

I was trying hard but I couldn't keep it together enough to finish my story. And I think it important to do so.... Remember where I left off, after my initial interview with Socrates. I wasn't feeling very confident that I had won the job. So, I took a chance and decided to call the president of Startel directly and plead my case directly to him. Luckily, he took the call and we had a fruitful conversation. A few minutes later my phone rang, it was Soc, he was a bit gruff. He said to me, "I don't know what the hell you said to Don but I guess you're starting on Monday; don't be late."

Fast forward a couple of years, life at Startel was in full speed, hyper speed we were growing fast, developing, producing and deploying our products and software. There were long hours, lots of work and plenty of stress on everyone. But the fact of the matter is... Don Berry was working right along with us, shoulder to shoulder, working as hard as any of us, even more so I think. He was a true leader and an inspiration.

Back then there was no budget for bonuses or rewards but Don would reward us the best he could at the time. One such reward was an annual Kentucky Derby Eve party that Don and Mickey would host at their home. The entire staff would get together for a night of food, music and merriment. Socrates was the BBQ pit master (Whole lamb on the spit), everyone would bring a little something, a few of the employees including yours truly formed a band that would play, and we would forget our stresses for one day.

It was after of these soirée's that I had a quiet moment with Don. I had just finished packing up the drums and gear and I went out on the deck to say goodnight to Don who was out there having a smoke and reminiscing. We sat down and laughed about some of the evenings events, one thing led to another, and he thanked me for simply being me. It was then I decided to ask him; what was it that convinced you to take a chance on me? He looked at me with that little squint he had, and explained, during that initial call we spoke of many things, most importantly I asked you, "I need someone to take care of our customers; will you take care of our customers?", and you said, "I Promise". I should have known. From day one, every single time I passed Don in the halls of Startel or in the field, the first thing he would ask me was, "how are our customers doing today?" Every time!

With this award, I am reminded of a truly great man, his mentorship and his genuinely kind regard for all his customers and employees. His eternal wish was for success to come to each of us.

I thank you all for this great honor. And know this; I intend to continue keeping my promise.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear SNUG nation,

Gosh, it seems like our conference was just yesterday, but summer is approaching and your Board of Directors is hard at work with a robust agenda under the leadership of Aaron Boatman, SNUG's 1st – Repeat President. Aaron was one of the 'kids' the first time he served on the board from 1999 to 2002 and again 2005 to 2008 serving as President in 2007.

Now, back in the saddle again as President 2017, Aaron is promising to bring fresh ideas and drive to the betterment of SNUG along with a great supporting cast on the Board.

One item that has been requested of SNUG is the integration of two conferences into one conference with the PINetwork. Startel purchased the Professional TeleData (PINNACLE system & TBS billing system) in 2015 and our first 'joint' conference was in Miami this past spring. Aaron invited representatives from the PIN board to join the SNUG board at the recent planning meeting to foster better communication and cooperation to bring a better conference for all in the future. The challenge lies in the fact that the PINNACLE system and the STARTEL CMC are quite different platforms as are the PINetwork and TeamSNUG groups, but after our adventure in Miami, we hope to continue to find ways the two groups can work together and learn from each other. While there are vast platform differences, there also is a lot of operational common ground to share as Startel works to 'bring the best features of both platforms together'.

While the conference is certainly a focal point for the board, (**PLEASE SAVE THE DATES** April 22-24, 2018 – we'll be at the Historic [Brown Place](#) in Denver, CO. Hotel Reservations will be ready to book by the end of June 2017) there are many other items the board will be working on (see Aaron's letter to SNUG, elsewhere in this publication). The 2018 Conference location cannot be better situated in the heart of downtown just steps away from the famous [16th Street pedestrian](#) Mall which is loaded with Restaurants, shops, Bars and many opportunities for entertainment.

We are excited to see the soon to be released New Agent Interface by Startel and as soon as it is in final form, the education committee will begin work on updating wBIT to include the changes to the HyperTRACK training system.

Welcome to several new members so far this year: Mountain Messages – Grand Junction, CO, Calls Plus – Lafayette, LA, Your Local Answer – Plano, TX and First Physicians – Staten Island, NY. All have come to Startel from different platforms which is a major commitment and I know SNUG members will do everything you can to help them in their transition.

Wishing you the best in business,



Dan L'Heureux – Executive Director

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings SNUG family,

It is an honor to serve once again as your President. Our goal as a SNUG board is to find ways to continually add value to you as a SNUG member. Based on our planning meeting, I am confident we will achieve this for you. The planning meeting was very successful. Each of our committee chairs have a clear direction and some great things in store for you.

Planning Meeting

For those that may not know what happens at the planning meeting, I thought I would offer some explanation. The planning meeting is held shortly after the annual conference concludes. The purpose of this meeting is to set the goals and objectives for the coming year.

The meeting is held at the site of the next annual conference. In this case at the historic and stunning [Brown Palace Hotel](#). This year's meeting was extra special as we welcomed a special guest to join us. Professional Teledata's user group President Rob Ward.

Some of the topics covered:

- 2017 Conference review - review member feedback, board impressions.
- 2018 Conference planning - how do we deliver more value to make sure you come back to the office with "the one thing that paid for your conference".
- Assigning Committee Chair roles
- New Galaxy mobile friendly format

The meeting was highly productive and we have hit the ground running to make sure you get the most out of SNUG.

If there is a way that SNUG can provide extra value to you, please don't hesitate to contact me. At the end of August, we hold our liaison meeting with Startel. If there is anything you would like discussed on the agenda be sure to communicate that to me.

Conference Changes

Having some time to look back on the SNUG conference, I feel the conference was a success. It was wonderful to see old friends and meet new ones from PIN. Having fresh ideas and new perspectives is always a good thing.

Moving forward, SNUG Conferences will focus on maximizing our investments in Startel products. In other words, how to become even more successful using Startel.

The new rules for SNUG conference presentation are as follows:

Sales: Does the session teach users how to **make more money** using Startel software?

Operations, Technical: Does the session teach users how to **reduce costs** using Startel software?

Quality, Technical: Does the session teach users how to **reduce errors** and **improve quality** using Startel software?

If a proposed session doesn't check the box on at least one of these three items, you won't see it appear on the agenda. Period. This is all about bringing added value to you and your staff.

Continued

From the President



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**We Welcome Your
Contributions!**

Send your:

- ⇒ Articles
- ⇒ Letters
- ⇒ News Releases
- ⇒ Comments

To
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SNUG will update you

Cont.

We are holding Startel to the same standard for training day.

This will translate into conferences that will give you an excellent ROI. I am confident that you will come away from next year's conference with great new ideas. Ideas that you can't wait to get back to your call center and deploy.

New Members

I am excited to welcome the newest SNUG members. I encourage all of us to extend ourselves to them and give them a warm welcome.

Mountain Messages
Calls Plus
Your Local Answer
First Physicians.

We're glad to have you as part of the SNUG family. We look forward to getting to know each of you.

Leadership Change

By now you have likely heard that Bill Lane has resigned his position as President of Startel. He will become a fellow Startel user, leading a well-established SNUG member company.

Brian Stewart, Startel's owner and chairman, contacted SNUG and PIN Presidents before the public announcement. During my conversation with Brian, it became clear that, while this is a setback, it was always planned for. Great companies know that it's about the team as opposed to any one person. Startel is no different.

I wish to publicly thank Bill Lane for his phenomenal efforts and leadership skills. He took over the helm at Startel during a time of great uncertainty. Under his guidance it has become the industry's leader in call center solutions.

Bill, on behalf of SNUG, we thank you for leading Startel and wish you success and happiness in your new role.

The next leader of Startel has an enviable position. They will begin their tenure with a great foundation of talent and momentum. They will be able to continue to leapfrog the competition with innovation as opposed to rebuilding. I'm confident they will continue their recruitment top developers to join the team. Something that is necessary for great technology companies to succeed.

I am excited to see where this takes Startel and SNUG. It can mean only great things.

Yours in service,

Aaron Boatin - SNUG President



Brown Palace Hotel