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Ready for tomorrow.

welcome

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The ABC’s of ACD in the PSAP

What is it? *and* Why do I care?

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Where we’re going…

- What is ACD?
  - Definition
  - Brief history of call distribution
    - What ACD is NOT
    - What ACD IS
- Simple ACD example
- Considerations for the 9-1-1 call center
  - Why would I need or want this?
  - What effects will it have?
- Identifying the right ACD system
- Design and implementation

What is ACD?

What is ACD?

Automatic **C**all **D**istribution

- Using the power of the PBX to ***automatically distribute calls*** among call takers in order to optimize service delivery, resource utilization, efficiency, etc.
- Many flavors, many options
- Looks can be deceiving
- Let’s look back…

In the beginning…

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This is NOT ACD!

Detour…

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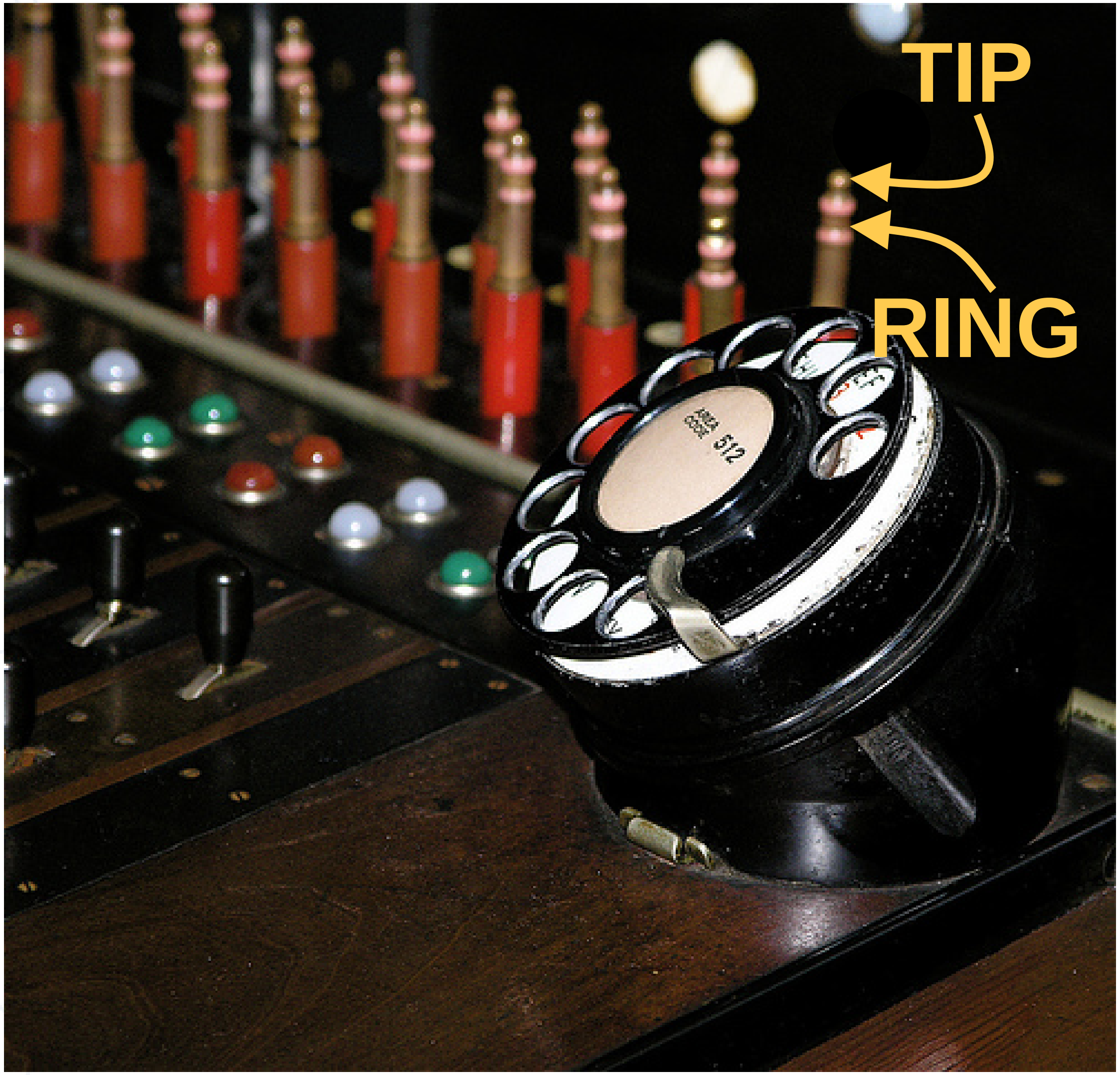
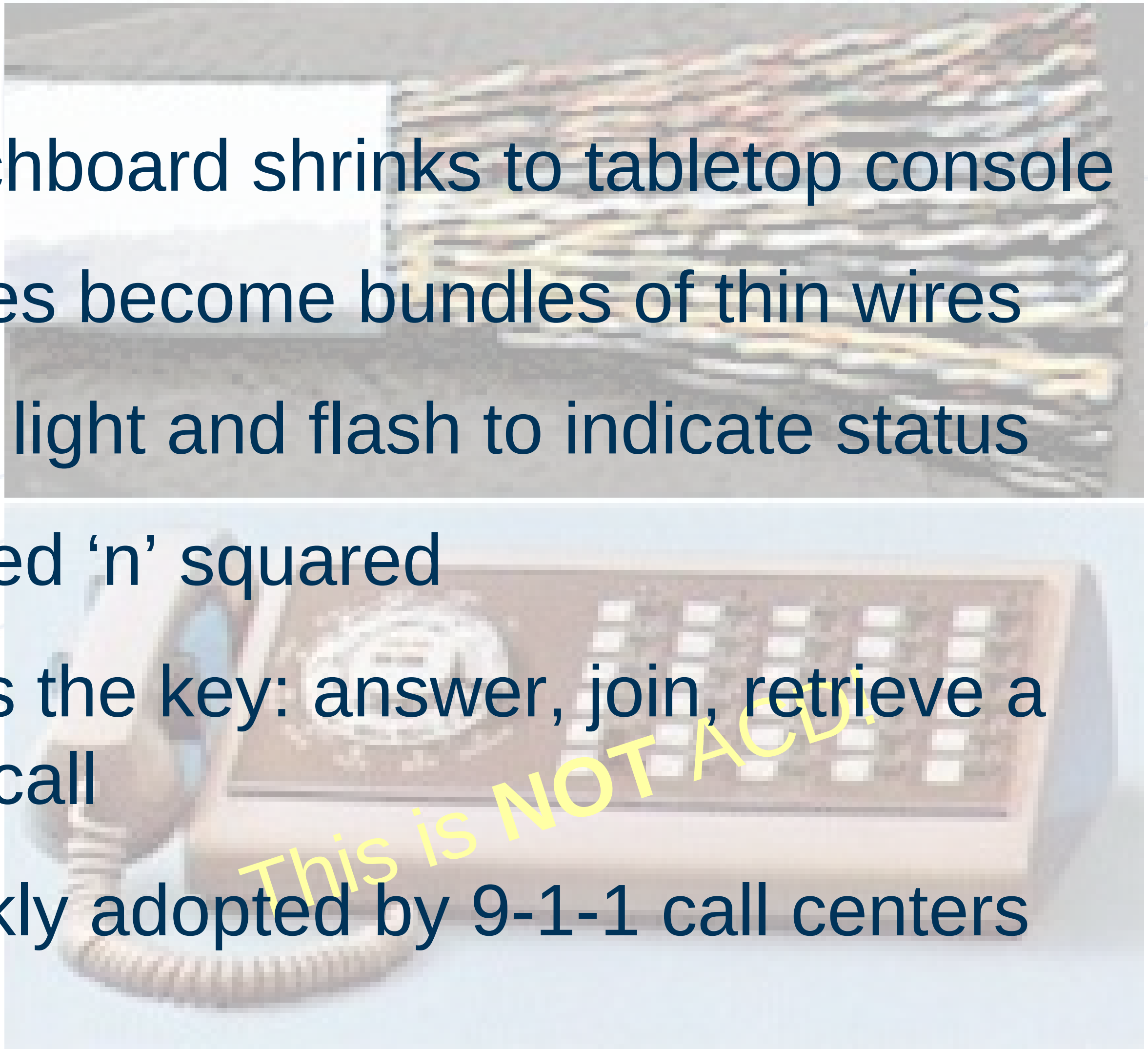

TIP
RING
AREA CODE 512

Key Systems



- Switchboard shrinks to tabletop console
- Cables become bundles of thin wires
- Keys light and flash to indicate status
- Shared ‘n’ squared
- Press the key: answer, join, retrieve a held call
- Quickly adopted by 9-1-1 call centers

This is NOT ACD!

The Private Branch eXchange (PBX)

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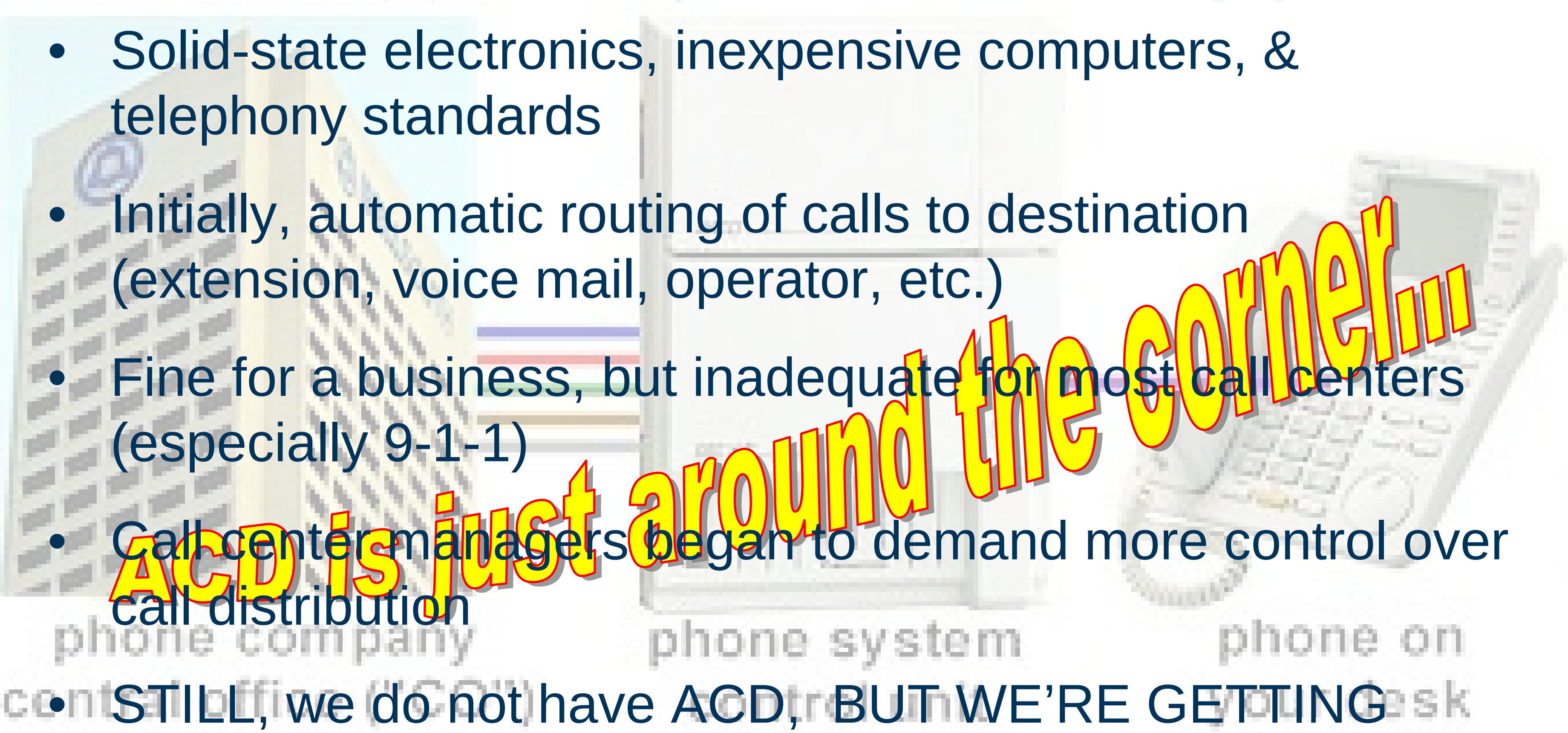
phone company
central office ("CO")
phone system
phone on
your desk

- Solid-state electronics, inexpensive computers, & telephony standards
- Initially, automatic routing of calls to destination (extension, voice mail, operator, etc.)
- Fine for a business, but inadequate for most call centers (especially 9-1-1)
- Call center managers began to demand more control over call distribution
- STILL, we do not have ACD, BUT WE’RE GETTING CLOSE!

ACD is just around the corner...

PBX with ACD!!!

- Three crucial features were needed:
  - Call queuing
  - Call/queue prioritization
  - Agent groups based on roles
- Basic ACD or UCD (Uniform Call Distribution) – distribute call load uniformly among call takers
  - UCD schemes include:
    - Ring-all (carry-over from key system shared ‘n’ squared)
    - Circular
    - Linear
    - Longest-idle

UCD makes assumptions…

- All call takers are trained with the same skill sets and toward the same skill levels
- ‘Fairness’ is important (# of calls taken by each call–taker)
- Average call length doesn’t matter; only the number of calls matters
- All callers have the same need

But we all know that this is not only RARELY true, it is almost NEVER true!

Basic ACD/UCD

- One call taker – one call
- Easier to configure and manage
  - Few queues & priorities
  - Priorities are system-wide
- Benefits
  - Improved efficiency
  - Better utilization of limited resources
  - Reduced fatigue
  - Increased sense of fairness and teamwork

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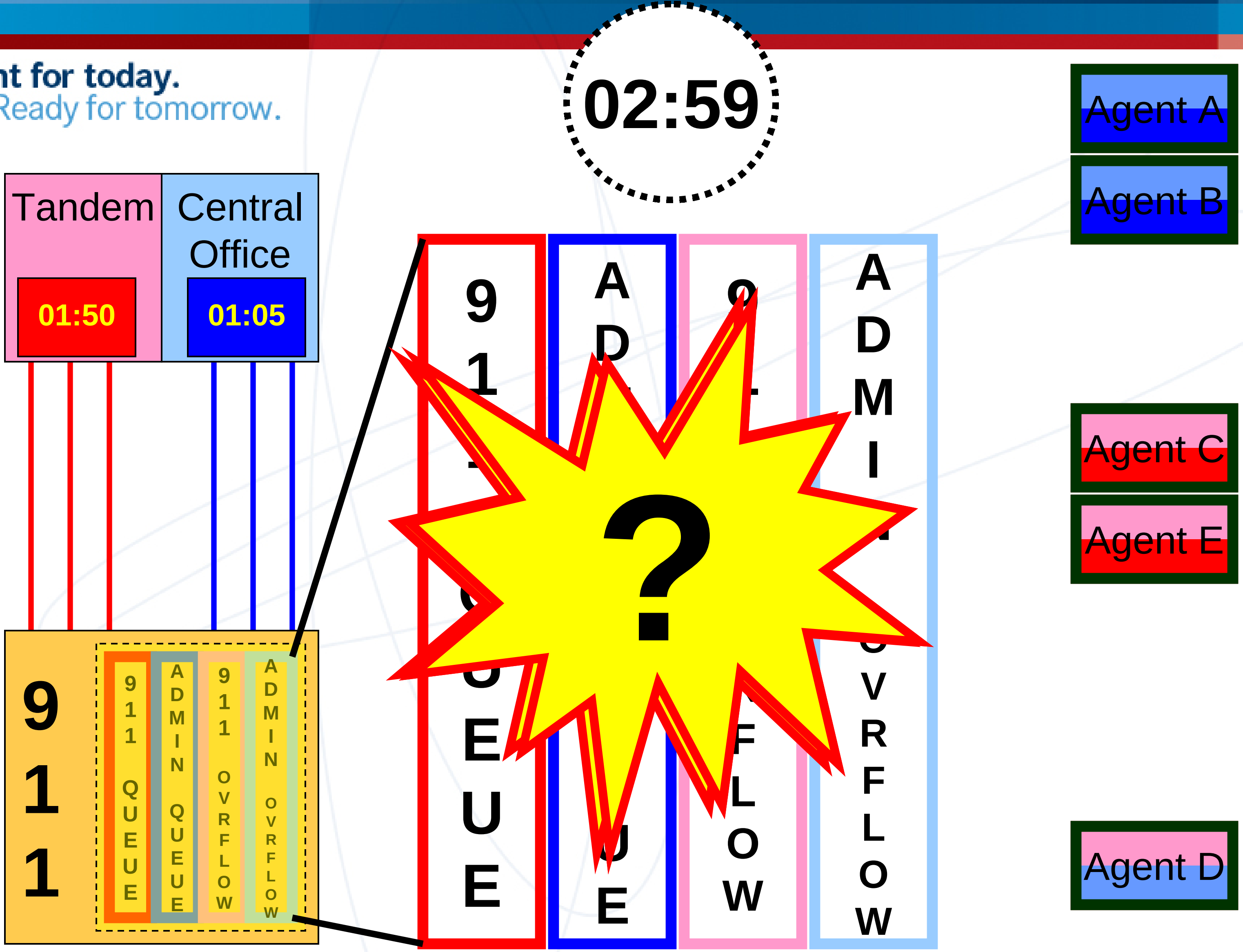
A Simple ACD Example

ACD Example – Setup

- **4 Queues**
  - **9-1-1**
  - **Admin**
  - **9-1-1 Overflow** (calls in 9-1-1 queue for >30 seconds)
  - **Admin Overflow** (calls in Admin queue for >2:00 minutes)
- **3 Agent groups**
  - 9-1-1 (take 9-1-1 Overflow calls 1st; 9-1-1 calls 2nd) = 🟪🟥 Why?
  - Admin (take Admin overflow calls 1st; Admin calls 2nd) = 🟦🟦
  - Dispatch (take 9-1-1 overflow calls 1st; Admin overflow 2nd) = 🟪🟦
- **2 Priorities**
  - High (9-1-1/Emergency) & Low (Admin/non-emergency)

ACD Example – Call Flow



02:59

Tandem

01:50

Central Office

01:05

911

911 QUEUE

ADMIN QUEUE

911 OVERFLOW

ADMIN OVERFLOW

?

Agent A

Agent B

Agent C

Agent E

Agent D

Skills-based ACD

- Outwardly- vs. internally-focused
- Route calls based on caller, not just trunk/line info or ANI/CLID
- Transfer calls to a ‘skill set’, not an individual or group
- Requires either
  - Triage call takers/screeners (emergency calls)
  - Auto-attendant (non-emergency calls)

Myth: ACD *requires* the use of auto-attendant

Skills-based ACD (cont'd)

- Call takers belong to Skillsets
- Skillset = Queue
- Delivery based on callers' needs
- Bells & whistles
  - Observe
  - Whisper/Coaching
  - Barge-in
  - Supervisor/assistance request
  - Forced answer
  - Pre-recorded greetings by skillset

Myth: ACD *requires* the use of forced answer

Network-based ACD (*Extreme* ACD)

- Combine resources across multiple PSAPs into larger ‘virtual’ skill sets
- Adds resiliency
- Share resources and skills from anywhere
- Leverage expen$ive training and expertise

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PSAP Considerations
(Why do I care?)

Operational Considerations

- Call takers know a call ringing is a call meant for ***them***
- Pre-recorded greetings
- Granular reporting
- Accurate needs analysis
- Hybrid solutions offer the best of both

Benefits

- Improved public safety
  - More efficient service delivery
- Reduces stresses
  - Call takers receive a single call at a time
  - Calls are only sent to appropriate resources
- Better utilization of valuable resources
- System selects ‘best’ call taker faster than is humanly possible

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Identifying the right ACD system

Get Educated

- Is ACD right for you?
  - If it ain’t broke…
- Learn the terminology
- Understand the implications
  - Operational
  - Maintenance
  - Administrative
- How does YOUR call center operate?
  - Engage the call takers
  - Engage supervisors

Ask the Experts

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A good technology partner will:

- Help you understand the features and functionality available to you
- Take the time to understand your specific needs
- Help you clearly identify your business goals

All before they ever present
a product solution

How do I design and implement a good ACD scheme?

K.I.S.S.

- Keep It Seriously Simple (OAM)
- Always provide a none-of-the-above option (voice mail or ?) when no resources are available
  - Avoid *'voice mail jail'* (ACD ≠ auto-attendant)
  - Provide shortcut to live operator ('press zero for an operator')
- Put your partner's expertise to work for you
- Understand your call takers *and* callers
- Be mindful of local cultural issues

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questions

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thank you