

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2013 HDI INDUSTRY AWARD WINNERS! By Leslie Cook

As it is every year, the presentation of HDI's industry awards was a highlight of the HDI Annual Conference & Expo. These awards honor those who are the best of the best in our community and stand out in the industry. This year, at the HDI 2013 Conference & Expo in Las Vegas, we honored the finalists and recognized the winners of the following awards:

- **Ron Muns Lifetime Achievement Award**

Named in honor of HDI's founder and the father of the service and support industry, the Ron Muns Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes a leader who has made lasting contributions to the technical service and support industry.

- **Rock of Our Foundation Award**

- **HDI Manager of the Year Award**

The HDI Manager of the Year Award honors a great leader, a technical service and support manager whose team supports any (or all) services or products for their customers, whether they're internal or external, and who clearly demonstrates the ability to serve and advance the industry.

- **HDI Analyst of the Year and HDI Desktop Support Technician of the Year Awards**

The HDI Analyst of the Year and HDI Desktop Support Technician of the Year Awards recognize great technical service and support professionals, the ones who support their customers so well and build such exceptional relationships that their companies excel and thrive. They go above and beyond every day to provide exceptional customer experiences.

- **HDI Team Excellence Awards**

The HDI Team Excellence Awards honor the support teams that have most enhanced the image of the technical service and support profession by setting and achieving the highest standards of excellence in three categories: internal customer support, external customer support, and outsourced support. The winning team in each category must have leading-edge technology, highly developed processes, well-organized and well-trained staff, and satisfied customers.

- **HDI CSAT Elite 50**

The HDI CSAT Elite 50 recognizes fifty organizations for excellence in customer service. These fifty organizations are all subscribers to the HDI Customer Satisfaction Index Service, which collects data throughout the year on their support centers' successes and areas for improvement. These organizations then use that data to continually improve their operations.

I am thrilled to introduce you to this year's winners, whom I had the opportunity to interview live after they received their awards.

Ron Muns Lifetime Achievement Award: Greg Oxtan Executive Director, Consortium for Service Innovation

Greg Oxtan is the executive director of the Consortium for Service Innovation, a nonprofit alliance of customer support organizations that develops innovative ways to address the challenges of customer service and support, like the Knowledge-Centered Support methodology. As executive director of the Consortium for Service Innovation, Greg has fostered a deeply collaborative environment, encouraging member firms to think outside the box to innovate and improve the customer service experience. Before joining the Consortium, Greg held management positions in customer service, operations, planning, support strategy, and development at IBM, N.E.T., and Tandem Computers.



Thank you to our industry award sponsor, **Robert Half Technology.**

Greg has served on the HDI Strategic Advisory Board, spoken at many industry events, taught hundreds of KCS practitioners, coached many corporate executives, and fostered lasting relationships that cross many organizational, industrial, and geographical boundaries.

Leslie: To what do you attribute your success?

Greg: The whole consortium collaborates, so being the facilitator and evangelist for that work and collaboration has brought me to where I am today. We're a very small group of forty-five member companies, and we pride ourselves on doing very edgy things. My success is truly based on our members' courage when it comes to doing those edgy things, and being able to facilitate and evangelize around that process.

Leslie: How did it feel when you heard your name?

Greg: It was thrilling! It's not our intent to be recognized, nor is it the nature of the work, but it's great to know that our work has a positive impact. For example, KCS has evolved over time and lots of people are interested in it, so it's fun to do what we do and it's very rewarding to have it be recognized by HDI.

Leslie: What does this award mean to you personally and professionally?

Greg: It is great validation. I really see myself as a steward of KCS, which is the result of our members' collective work, and I love what I do. It's so great for that to be acknowledged.



Rock of Our Foundation Award: Sophie Klossner

The Rock of Our Foundation Award is a new addition to HDI's family of awards. It recognizes former HDI employees who've demonstrated passion for our community and commitment to our industry. The inaugural award was presented to an incredible individual, Sophie Klossner, a long-time HDI employee now happily retired. There are very few special people out there who make a difference, and we were privileged to have Sophie on our staff for more than twenty years. She's truly one of a kind!



(L-R) Leslie Cook, Sophie Klossner, Hans Klossner, Michelle Frilow, and Craig Baxter



Can't view the video? Visit youtu.be/xTMwJTUXE9U.

HDI Manager of the Year: Linda Toro
Manager of IT Support Services, Fish & Richardson P.C.

As the manager of IT support services at Fish & Richardson P.C., Linda Toro's current responsibilities include hiring and training new staff, developing and maintaining the policy and procedures manual, promoting and maintaining a teamwork attitude, and monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the effectiveness of the training program. Loretta Auer, CIO at Fish & Richardson, says, "Our firm's management is going to be thrilled with Linda's achievement, but what makes it even more amazing is that HDI serves a broader constituency than law firms and so many companies have much larger help desk initiatives than we do. She's made us all very proud!"



(L-R) Craig Baxter, Leslie Cook, Linda Toro, and John Reed



(L-R) Craig Baxter, Leslie Cook, James Edmiston, and John Reed

HDI Analyst of the Year: James Edmiston
IT Support Analyst, Qualcomm, Inc.
San Diego Local Chapter, Western Region

In the two years James Edmiston has been with Qualcomm's IT Customer Service team, he's received more than 150 positive customer service surveys and earned one of the company's highest awards for excellent service. James sets a high bar for himself: In addition to maintaining high professional standards, he has earned a dual Bachelor's degree in computer networks and network security and is a member of the Wounded Warriors program, having been drawn to the program by his own military service and a personal understanding of the struggle to return to civilian life.

HDI Desktop Support Technician of the Year: Scott Robinson
Desktop Support Technician, NASCO
Atlanta Local Chapter, Southeast Region

Scott Robinson has been with NASCO for almost two years. The moment he joined the team, customers started sending his manager positive messages about his great attitude, exceptional customer service, and technical savvy. Aiyya Barksdale, his supervisor at NASCO, says, "Scott consistently gives 100%. He contributes more than his fair share of the work, stays late when necessary, and covers his teammates. He's a joy to work with and we believe he is what desktop support professionals should strive to be."



(L-R) Craig Baxter, Leslie Cook, Scott Robinson, and John Reed

Leslie: How did it feel when you heard your name?

Linda: I was thrilled and amazed. I felt great. I felt validated. My team was here and my husband was right beside me to congratulate me. He was rooting for me and it was so amazing to have him here to witness this moment.

Leslie: To what do you attribute your success?

James: I attribute my success to my commitment to hard work, the support of my team, and my military training. I went through a really rough time about two years ago and my team and company were with me every step of the way. I give back that same level of commitment. My military training also helped me cultivate a sense of situational awareness. We were trained to know what we needed to do and execute. A lot of this training followed me to the corporate environment.

Scott: Patience and dedication. I stick with a job until it is finished. If you just slap a bow on a workaround to get people back to work, they'll be back tomorrow with the same problem. You have to be patient and fix the problem the first time.

Leslie: What does winning this award mean to you personally and professionally?

Linda: Some years ago, I lost my sister suddenly and had to adopt her children, whom I love. At that point in my life, my focus was on the children and I thought that my career wasn't going to be a success. This award is a testament to the strength and perseverance that got me here.

Professionally, being recognized as the HDI Manager of the Year tells me that it's not about how big or small your support center is, it's about how you run your operations and your team. It's about the kind of leader you are. I was so incredibly honored to be a finalist for this award, and the win just adds to the incredible place I'm at in my life right now. It's such a positive thing.

James: This award is the culmination of all of my hard work and everything I've gone through both personally and professionally, so it really means the world to me. I've always told people that success is waiting for them just behind the door; sometimes that door isn't open, so you have to kick it in and introduce yourself. I hope this win will inspire others on my team to reach for success.

Scott: A little validation is always nice, and while it's a great thing to add to the resume, it's really great for NASCO's IT help desk. I think this kind of recognition gives the company a lot more confidence in my group's ability to solve problems and fix things properly.

Leslie: What impact do you think winning this award will have on your career choices over the next five years?

Linda: I think it will drive me to continue striving for higher goals. I know I'm capable of doing more, of being better. I plan to advance more ideas, keep learning, and eventually reach a different or higher level of management.

James: The win has already reinforced what my company already knows about me, which is that I am very loyal and very service-oriented. In fact, I've already accepted a job offer with Qualcomm's IT Security division, where I'll be working on the security architecture team. I'm proud to say I'll still be in a customer-facing role.

Scott: I'm hoping to transition into a server/networking role, and I think this award will definitely help me get to where I want to be.

HDI TEAM EXCELLENCE AWARDS



HDI Team Excellence Award - Internal: Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System

The Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System (FMOLHS) is the largest nonprofit health system in Louisiana, with a combined service area that covers more than 1.8 million individuals. The FMOLHS support center's thirty-one employees are located in Baton Rouge and Monroe, and they serve a customer base of clinical and administrative staff, vendors, and contractors. In the past year, FMOLHS processed 97,500 calls, 8,725 of which were from physicians, and its satisfaction scores put FMOLHS in the top tier of hospitals nationwide.

(A-Z) Amy Holmes, Chris Jones, Randy McMaster, and Scott Pence

HDI Team Excellence Award - External: Infinite Campus

Infinite Campus is a comprehensive, web-based K-12 student information system that provides clients of all sizes with real-time access to special education, instruction, curriculum, assessment, and state reporting data for more than five million students in forty-three states. The Campus Support team's thirty-five highly skilled, full-time employees are located at the national headquarters in Blaine, MN, and they are passionate about support and committed to providing their customers with stellar service.



(A-Z) Aaron Carlson, Beth Jacobson, Rick Laszewski, Zach Manners, Gina Montague, Dave Noles, and Mike Rhodes

HDI Team Excellence Award - Outsourcer: CDI

With an annual support request volume of 350,000, the CDI Center of Excellence's mission is to provide the CDI user community with high-quality technical support. Through technical expertise and teamwork, CDI strives to minimize the impact of downtime and maximize user productivity, all while maintaining a world-class level of customer service. Michael Kubit, representing Case Western Reserve University, a CDI client, says, "CDI is terrifically collaborative, and the CoE shares our commitment to outstanding customer service and to the continual improvement of what already is a best-in-class service desk offering. I'm thrilled that the industry has recognized them for this effort."



(A-Z) Billy Bartram, Kristen Carvaines, Robert Dean, Nick Kelly, Michael Morris, Billy Porter, David Uhrin, Jr., Sara Weitzel, and Sandy Wightman

Leslie: To what do you attribute your success?

FMOLHS: We've really focused on some key areas this year, making an effort to address specific issues. As we went through this process, we realized that what we'd learned from HDI was truly helpful in improving our processes and procedures, and we've seen real improvements in customer service overall.

IC: Culture is a big deal at Infinite Campus. We're not just a collection of individuals doing their jobs, we're a family. More importantly, we feel involved in the company as a team, and it's because of this feeling that we want to succeed for the team. We're also fortunate to have the right people on the job, working together as a solid team. Our team continues to grow and work together to face different challenges. We know that change is inevitable, and we know that we have to be constantly on the lookout for new ideas, new ways to innovate and move forward. This mentality keeps us moving in the right direction, toward a successful future.

CDI: We've been members of HDI for a long time, and this has helped us focus on quality processes and frameworks. Other key factors in our success include how we operate on a daily basis and our partnerships with our clients. These factors keep us focused on continually raising the bar. We're always looking for opportunities for improvement.

Leslie: How did you feel when you heard your organization's name?

FMOLHS: My heart felt like it stopped and then I laughed. Others on the team said they literally went from being very calm to shaking with shock. We all felt like we could hardly make it up the steps to accept the award. It is an exciting and fun time for us, and it's so humbling to be recognized!

Leslie: Have you told your team you won?

IC: We actually had the whole team on Skype during the awards ceremony, so they heard it when we were announced as the winner. We got to see the team at home running and jumping up and down with excitement. It felt so good to be able to share this moment with them live.

Leslie: What does this award mean to your team?

CDI: This award really recognizes our collective hard work—not just the leadership and client team, but all the people in the support centers that go above and beyond every day.

Leslie: How are you planning to celebrate?

IC: We're hoping the CEO will throw us a party! Our CEO is actually a big part of our win—he allows us to do things other CEOs wouldn't even dream of. We're extremely fortunate to be part of a culturally sound organization, one that drives innovation.

HDI CSAT ELITE 50: AMERITAS IT, GTS

This year, the top-ranked organization in the HDI CSAT Elite 50 was Ameritas IT's Group Technical Support (GTS).

Leslie: With regard to customer satisfaction, what's the secret to your team's success?

Ameritas: Our success is tied to the attitude we have towards customer service: our customers come first, second, third, and always. We work hard to earn their trust. We're here to take care of their needs, and we deliver on this promise. Our metrics and goals are tied to our customers' success, and we're devoted to our field associates, who are closely connected to our customers. Our entire company is driven by this mission—GTS may have topped the list, but our internal support units weren't far behind (#2 and #6).

Leslie: What does this recognition mean to your team?

Ameritas: We are very proud and humbled. It means we're fulfilling our mission to help make the lives of our customers better, and we're doing it better than anyone else.