

the **NAPKIN** *the* **MELON**
& *the* **MONKEY** *by* BARBARA BURKE

Welcome to the Napkin, Melon & Monkey Community of Readers!

Here is a list of 15 different ways that call center managers and supervisors use the book to “Make a Difference” in employee engagement, morale and performance.

1. Provide a copy of the book to **new agents**. Prepare new hires to be successful faster and avoid job stress by making the book required reading. Break up the monotony of systems training by facilitating book club discussion sessions.
2. When working with agents on their annual **performance improvement** plans include the book as required reading. Employees who need to reduce stress, for example, can change their perspective by applying the SODA Principle and “unplug” for a 10 minutes a day.
3. Use the book as a **tool for supervisors** to “connect” with the reps. Because the main character in the book was a call center representative who faced the same challenges that their reps do, supervisors say it is easier to discuss those topics with their reps. When supervisors go beyond rating performance to focusing on developing the person, performance improves, as does schedule adherence.
4. If agent attrition is a problem, consider using the book as part of a strategy for reducing **agent turnover**. Vertex Business Systems, one of the largest business process outsourcers in the world, is conducting a one-year project that trained supervisors in retention skills. Engagement scores improved by 10% in the first three months. Attrition and absenteeism have been reduced. Call quality scores showed improvement.
5. Use the book as the theme for **Customer Service Appreciation Week**. Select a different Aha! for each day of the week and create activities and games that illustrate how to apply it both inside and outside work. A Free Planning Guide featuring activities for each day and suggestions for a theme for the week is available.
6. Supervisors who have used the book with their team have gotten a very positive response. After your team reads the book, ask each agent to **select their “Personal Aha!”** Facilitate a discussion with the reps about how they plan to apply their Personal Aha! to situations inside and outside of work. Specially designed “Intention Cards” are available with a quantity purchase. In future meetings, ask one rep to share how they are using their “Aha!” with their customers, co-workers, family and friends.
7. Use the book as part of your call center’s strategy for improving **employee engagement** scores. Engagement surveys frequently reveal the need for supervisors to do more in the areas of “reward, recognition and motivation.” Supervisors use the book to facilitate conversations with reps about issues that matter to them. When reps know their supervisor cares about them, they turn in better performance and stay on the job longer.

8. Create a Napkin Melon Monkey **Book Club** for supervisors, agents and support staff. The book is becoming a top pick for employee book clubs because it is easy to read and relate to. Even people who don't usually read books enjoy participating.
9. Supervisors use the book in **performance coaching** sessions to illustrate what to do (and not do) when handling customer situations. Supervisors use the experiences described in the book as "conversation starters" when addressing agent behaviors such as not listening to customers or avoiding taking personal responsibility for outcomes.
10. Give the book as a "**thank you**" gift for agents who put in extra hours, survive a CIS conversion, or attain a challenging goal. The book makes a great holiday or work anniversary gift.
11. Provide the book to **front-line supervisors**. Packed with valuable lessons that any supervisor can use to be a more effective coach, mentor and leader this book is always well received. Ask your supervisors to select their "Personal Aha!" as a team building exercise. When supervisors apply the SODA Principle they handle their many challenges more easily and experience less job-related stress.
12. Reduce **agent stress** and improve **schedule adherence** by encouraging reps to "unplug" during the day using whatever method works for them. Many call centers have created a special "quiet room" for this purpose.
13. Facilitate a "story circle" as a **teambuilding** exercise. Notice how the telling of personal stories creates an unshakable bond between team members. Consider using stories to illustrate examples of how a sticky problem was resolved or how a team member overcame adversity.
14. Supervisors use the book as a **tool for creating positive relationships** with their agents. One of the benefits of a fable book is that the readers of the book have a shared experience. Supervisors find it much easier to discuss agents' work issues or personal concerns when they can reference similar situations in the book.
15. Introduce employees to the power of the SODA Principle at your next **company meeting**, division meeting or annual get together. Barbara's sessions are guaranteed to be entertaining and educational at the same time. Attendees always leave the session feeling energized and empowered. Include a book signing session after the presentation.

www.barbaraburke.com

Check this site for information about employee engagement surveys and subscribe to Barbara's E-Newsletter: Make a Difference for Service Professionals. Also this is where you will find Barbara's new blog and Monday Aha! feature.

www.napkinmelonmonkey.com

Check this site for resources such as a Book Club Discussion Guide and Customer Service Week slideshow and Free Planning Guide.

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