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## When you care enough...



Can you finish the tag line? It's "to send the very best" of course. And, yes, it's from Hallmark, one of the most recognized brands in the world.

The founder of Hallmark, J.C. Hall, built the company's reputation on products that help people nurture relationships. And he took bold steps toward developing the Hallmark brand, advertising his business before it became fashionable to do so and sponsoring a television show against the advice of everyone.

You could think of J.C. Hall as a pioneer of sorts - he helped the world understand the importance of developing relationships. You might say, I understand that at a personal level, but how does it apply to my business? Building relationships is vital to the success of any business. And showing people that you care about them is the essence of any relationship.

Today, companies have put infrastructures in place for CRM (Customer Relationship Management) to help them develop and maintain customer relationships. CRM systems track transactions and interactions with all customers. Companies have invested a tremendous amount of resources into CRM systems. But, these systems are just a tool. And, companies often overlook the most basic principle of all - customers are people too!

The next evolution of CRM - and fast becoming the next competitive battleground - is to go beyond the systems. Solidify customer relationships by showing them that you really care. It's very simple - give your customers your undivided attention, respect them, and listen to them...and you'll deliver an exceptional customer experience. Drop into a Hallmark store or visit their website and you'll feel the difference that caring can make.

And just like Hallmark, CWA is sending our very best to you. We are pleased to announce that Ruth-Anne Boyd is now a regular columnist in PR Canada. Her first article appeared January 20, 2003. Keep your eye on the column, Beyond the Brand, for timely and helpful advice about the customer experience. You can read the articles at [www.prcanada.ca](http://www.prcanada.ca).

In this issue, we'll share our experience with Saint Elizabeth Health Care and their solution to our failing healthcare. We also share a thought-provoking Ipsos-Reid article with you. And, we've invited a colleague, Teresa Donia, to share some thoughts on the value of newsletters and their contribution to the customer experience.

### Free Web Seminar

#### **Customer Experience: The Next Competitive Battleground**

Register  
Now

*Speaker:*

**Carolyn Watt**, Founder and President of  
**CWA | The Customer Experience Company**

**Wednesday, March 26, 2003**

9am Pacific / 10am Mountain /  
 11am Central / Noon Eastern /  
 5pm UK

*Topic:*

Make no mistake...it's NOT about good customer service any more. With markets blurring at lightening speed, customer experience is the only differentiator for companies - in fact, it's a competitive weapon. Join Carolyn as she explores this fascinating yet necessary topic in this exciting PlaceWare web seminar.

## Healthcare in crisis: A web-based solution

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a disease that makes it very difficult for you to breathe in and out. As the fifth most common cause of death in Canada, it results in a frustrating, sometimes desperate journey through to the final days of life.

Being diagnosed with COPD and then having to cope with it is a scary endeavour for anyone. But when you are faced with the possibility of not being able to get the information you need to deal with your condition, panic often strikes. Complicate that fear with progressively longer waits for doctor's appointments, frustrated and overworked staff, and a lack of resources that results from slashed budgets and the situation reaches critical levels.

*Did you know?*

More Canadians have looked online for health information than have sent joke emails, used instant messaging or banked online, according to a recent Ipsos-Reid survey. To get more information about this research, visit [www.ipsos-reid.com](http://www.ipsos-reid.com).

Is there a solution? Saint Elizabeth Health Care thinks so. With almost a century of experience in providing healthcare to Canadians to use as their guide, Saint Elizabeth wants to develop more responsive, client-centred and client-controlled services for Canadians. One of their most exciting solutions is an interactive, web-based product with health information written in plain language.

@YourSide™ is an interactive learning and communication tool. The goal of this innovative product is to provide individuals and families with customized health management information and monitoring tools to track

their overall health and well being. And, they've certainly succeeded.

At a time when services are being cancelled, budgets are being cut, and information can be very difficult to get, @YourSide provides care that's always there. Day or night, clients can access comprehensive information to help them better manage their condition and their overall health. And, if that's not enough, personal assistance is available from a healthcare provider or other expert at the click of a mouse.

CWA | The Customer Experience Company is excited to have worked with Saint Elizabeth Health Care to develop a new module for their @YourSide tool. Working with an in-house team, a COPD subject-matter expert and current evidence-based information, CWA organized the module, researched the topic and developed all of the content.

One of the most impressive features of the tool is the ability to build a customized learning plan. When they first access the tool, clients complete an assessment to find out what they already know. The @YourSide tool then builds an individualized learning plan for each client. As clients make their way through the information, assessment questions test their learning to ensure that the tool has been effective.

The daily record feature, which displays graphs, is an easy way for clients to see how well they are doing over time. And, a calendar helps the client keep track of medical appointments.

To ensure that the tool is client-centred, Saint Elizabeth Health Care made sure that people with COPD were involved with developing the new module.

Saint Elizabeth enables you to take charge of how and when you learn about your health! "What a great example to the healthcare community on how to deliver an exceptional customer experience," says Ruth-Anne Boyd, Business Development Director at CWA. To learn more about the exciting things that Saint Elizabeth is doing, please visit [www.saintelizabeth.com](http://www.saintelizabeth.com)

*Our customers tell us*

"You made me feel like I was your only client. Thank you for being so incredibly pleasant to work with," says Dale Stedman from Saint Elizabeth Health Care.

"The writing was so clear that our editors got a rest," says Monica Simpson from Saint Elizabeth Health Care.

## Is there really a healthcare crisis?

For years, healthcare has remained at the top of the issues agenda for both provincial and federal leaders according to our polls. This reflects a growing concern and a public perception that the Canadian healthcare system is in crisis. But is this based on fact, on personal knowledge, or is it just from hearing that the system is in crisis through the media? Have the media, medical professionals and politicians convinced us of this or is the system really in crisis? In this brief analysis, we look at these issues and what Ontarians suggest they would do to "fix" healthcare in Ontario.

### The details

While eight in ten (82%) Ontarians agree to the proposition that the Ontario healthcare system is in crisis, six in ten (62%) say that "there is enough funding in the system, it is just that it is not getting to where it needs to be". One-third (36%) disagree with this view.

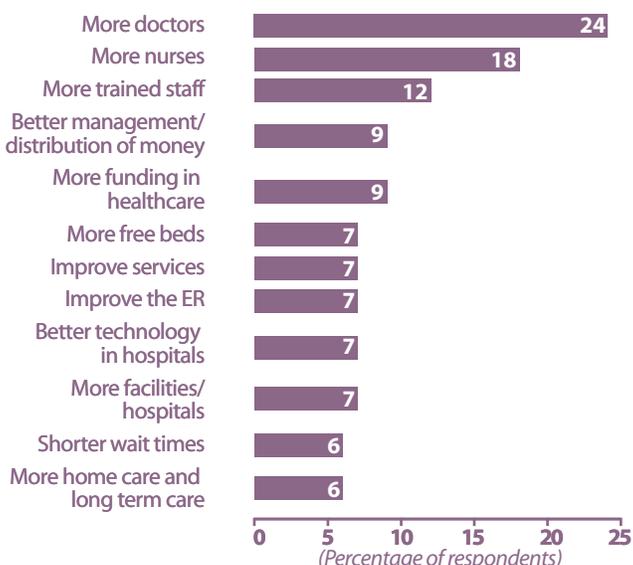
While results are close in each region, residents in Eastern Ontario (87%) and Hamilton/ Niagara (86%) top the list in terms of agreement with the view that the system is in crisis, while those in the City of Toronto (78%) are at the bottom. Demographically, women (86%) are more likely than men (78%) to express this view. This is also true of those in middle income households (85%) compared to their counterparts in upper (81%) and lower (80%) income households. There is no statistical difference between age groups. Decided Liberal (87%) and NDP (86%) voters are more likely to believe that the system is in crisis than are decided Conservative (76%) supporters.

Residents of Northern Ontario (77%) are the most likely to agree with the view that there is enough funding, but that it is just not getting to where it needs to be. This is in direct contrast to the views of residents of the City of Toronto, where only 54% express this view. This view is also shared by a higher proportion of Ontarians from lower income households (72%) than those from upper income households (54%). Older (67%) residents are slightly more likely to believe that there is sufficient money in the system, but that it just doesn't get to the right areas, than are their middle aged (60%) or younger (59%) counterparts. There is no statistical difference on this proposal between supporters of the Conservatives (65%), NDP (64%) or Liberals (59%).

Among the 82% of residents who agree that Ontario healthcare is in crisis, 61% say that this opinion is based on personal experience, while 38% indicate that it is based on what they have seen, heard or read. While residents of Northern Ontario

### Suggestions For The Health Minister

*If you were the Health Minister, what are the two most important things you would do to fix the crisis in healthcare?*



*The highlights*  
Eight in ten (82%) Ontarians agree that the Ontario healthcare system is in a crisis, and of this group 61% base their opinion on personal experience, not just hearsay (38%).

Six in ten (62%) indicate that there is enough funding in the system, it is just not getting

are the most likely to agree that the healthcare system is in crisis, among those who express this view, Northern Ontario residents are among the least likely to say that it is based on personal experience (54%). Residents of Eastern Ontario (65%) and Hamilton/Niagara (64%) are more likely to base their view that the healthcare system is in crisis on personal experience. Interestingly, among Ontarians who say the system is in crisis, middle aged (66%) and younger (63%) Ontarians are more likely than their older (53%) counterparts to say their view is based on personal experience, while older (47%) Ontarians are more likely to indicate their view is based on what they have heard than are younger (37%) or middle age (34%) Ontarians in this subgroup.

Among those who believe that the system is in crisis, when asked to indicate the most important things they would do to immediately fix the crisis, the most cited responses are more staff - doctors (24%), nurses (18%), trained staff (12%). Other mentions include better management or distribution of money (9%), more funding in healthcare (9%), more free beds (7%), improved service or care (7%), improved emergency room service (7%), better or more equipment or technology in hospitals (7%), more facilities or hospitals (7%), shorter wait times (6%) and more home care and long term care (6%).

## Newsletters are a good read for clients

Life in today's world of instant information can sometimes seem as if we inhabit a large fish bowl. It doesn't take long for news to travel the globe - and that means anyone labelled a shark had better search for cover, while those of you enjoying angel fish status can shine in the spot light.

While company executives may sometimes combine both these qualities, it's usually done in their clients' best interests. Why not let them know? If your tough-as-nails approach has garnered a 10 per cent savings from a supplier or your soft touch has resulted in service add-ons, your clients should 'read all about it' in your corporate newsletter.

One of the best methods of communicating with your clients is still the newsletter. The only question to be answered is what format is best suited to your client base. For some, the traditional, printed version still offers great appeal. Other organizations choose the newer, high-impact, quick delivery e-newsletter.

Either way, a newsletter allows executives to harness the power of information. In fact, companies looking for a new marketing 'hook' soon realize a professionally produced newsletter is both cost effective and impactful. It can aid sales, add astonishing benefits to client retention, raise your company's profile and positively impact the bottom line.

Next to personal contact, a newsletter is a top way to provide a friendly reminder of your services. It can provide clients with information that is relevant and useful, while keeping them informed of current issues on a regular basis in a style that's easy to read and professional.

Newsletters create a sense of community among clients. Appreciation is extended to long-time, new and prospective clients. From virtually any location, clients can read about the many issues and concerns they share.

For extra impact, a newsletter can include a testimonial of your services. Ask one of your clients for a written recommendation and highlight it in your newsletter. You've now added extra credibility to your company as well as proof of your effectiveness within your industry while simultaneously highlighting your client's business.

Every company has news to share - so send it out. It just might pull in a prize for you - maybe a really big prize!

*Article compliments of Teresa Donia, iambic communications.  
For more information about iambic, please call 416-737-9811 or visit [www.iambic.ca](http://www.iambic.ca).*

Share your experiences

We all have experiences...good and bad. And, we'd love to hear about yours. Send us an email or a fax along with your contact information. As a courtesy, we always contact the company that we write about before we send out our newsletter.

"Sears billed me for 3 refrigerators instead of one," says Paul Isaac of Mount Albert, Ontario. For a busy family of 5, receiving a refrigerator 3 times because the wrong model was shipped twice was certainly an inconvenience. The family was patient and understanding, however, because they know that mistakes do happen. But when their bill arrived wrong and they were charged interest on all 3 refrigerators, they called Sears to straighten out their account. After no response, Paul went to the Sears warehouse in Don Mills. "Sears made it right," says Paul. "The sales associate apologized for the error and corrected the account...on the spot. Now that's the service we were looking for," says Paul.



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January 2003 - Issue No. 6  
Just to be clear is a bi-monthly  
publication for clients and  
colleagues of:

CWA | The Customer Experience Company  
7181 Woodbine Avenue, Suite 234  
Markham, Ontario, Canada L3R 1A3  
phone: 905-470-0139 fax: 905-470-2619  
[www.carolynwatt.com](http://www.carolynwatt.com)

Questions or comments?  
Contact Ruth-Anne Boyd at  
ext. 221  
or by e-mail at  
[raboyd@carolynwatt.com](mailto:raboyd@carolynwatt.com)