

Call Centers in India

Having a call center in India is the norm for several global companies today. In order to meet the growing international demand for cost-effective, customer-oriented call centers, many organizations worldwide are outsourcing these services by setting up call centers in India. But what makes call centers in India such an attractive option? The country has intrinsic strengths which make it a major success as an outsource destination for call center work:

- A booming IT industry, with IT strengths recognized all over the world.
- The largest English-speaking population after the USA.
- A vast workforce of educated, English-speaking, tech-savvy personnel: A boon in a high-growth industry faced with a shortage of skilled workers.
- Cost-effective manpower: In a call center operation, manpower typically accounts for 55 to 60 percent of the total cost. In India, manpower is available at a fraction of the cost overseas. However, some people get deterred by the fact that cost savings are not seen immediately. Initial investment in infrastructure and training can be expensive and make one believe that the promise of cost reduction is false. However, there will be savings and the fact that several global giants continue to set up call centers in India is proof of this.
- The Government of India has recognized the potential of IT-enabled services and has taken positive steps by providing numerous incentives.
- The presence of most international technology vendors and solutions would enable creation of most advanced set-ups in this technology-intensive segment.

One company in India proposes to harness the high-quality technical support available here by hiring 300 Ph.D.'s to provide very high-end consulting through videoconferencing/telephone. Given these advantages, India could build a \$17 billion industry by 2008 according to the NASSCOM McKinsey Report.

How large is the call center industry in India?

India's call center industry accounts for a quarter of all software and services exports from the country, according to industry association Nasscom, and Indian call centers employ 160,000 professionals. Daimler-Chrysler, British Telecom, Barclays Bank, HSBC, Honeywell, Aventis, and several others have come to India while the old timers of GE, British Airways, Citigroup, Amex, and others have been around for a decade.

IT-Enabled services include:

- Helpdesk Services and remote troubleshooting of IT-related queries from customers in the US
- Transaction Processing
- Accounting Services
- Call Centers
- Remote Network Management
- Service Bureau and Entrepreneur Systems
- End-to-end Processing Services with linkage to the parent company. The entire processing would be carried out in the facility in India, with a cost quality and service advantage to the parent organization

Product Specific Solutions Include:

- Risk Modeling
- Data Mining
- Actuarial Services
- Underwriting Variation Analysis Analytic

Business Solutions

GE Capital India Business Solutions focuses on three areas:

1. Global business platforms
2. IT-enabled services
3. Product-specific solutions

GE's state-of-the art Decision Science Center in Bangalore will develop predictive tools and models for all aspects of customer management.

Engineering Services from GE in India

GE Global eXchange Services, a leader in global business-to-business Internet commerce, announced the opening of their Engineering Center in Bangalore, India. The Center will offer a multitude of Internet-based products and services that bring intelligence to the supply chain, enabling businesses worldwide to reduce procurement costs and increase return on investment. The Bangalore Engineering Center will focus on product and service developments incorporating leading technologies such as Java and Object Oriented Design (OOD).

Make a strategic decision to outsource your business processes through call centers in India. GE, British Airways and Yahoo have seen it work to their competitive advantage. *Why not you?*

UK call center jobs to beat India

A study in Glasgow that Desize offers on the call center sector remains healthy and would employ more than a million people by 2007, four times more than in India.

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T
Sumeet Desai

LONDON: Britain's call centers are set to hire 200,000 extra workers over the next three years, a government-sponsored study said, even though firms continue to move many such jobs to countries like India.

Call centers have become big news in Britain in recent months as a string of major companies have announced they are moving customer support operations to low-cost centers in Asia, provoking the anger of unions bemoaning the loss of jobs.

But the study, commissioned by the Department of Trade and Industry, said that despite concern the British call center industry was shrinking, the sector was healthy and would employ more than a million people by 2007, four times more than in India.

"This report shows that we have a vibrant call center industry in the UK," said Trade and Industry

Secretary Patricia Hewitt. "In fact it predicts a growth in call center jobs."

Hewitt launched the study in December in response to concerns about jobs going abroad and the global challenges facing the industry.

Around 30 firms have shifted more than 50,000 jobs to India in over two years as the sub-continent has emerged as the most popular outsourcing destination abroad from Britain, the United States, and Ireland.

Four fifths of the world's 500 largest companies already outsource at least one function to India and the movement of jobs there and other countries like China has even become an issue for the U.S. presidential race.

Democrat candidate John Kerry branded executives who outsource jobs to low-cost countries as "Benedict Arnolds" (traitors) while Republicans rounded on a White House economic adviser for saying moving positions abroad was a plus for the economy in the long run.

UNIONS PREDICT JOB LOSSES

In Britain, trade union Amicus has predicted 200,000 call center jobs will be lost by 2008.

Mike Havard, managing director of CM Insight, the consultancy that led the study, said such fears of widespread job erosion were misplaced.

"For too long the UK call center industry has been dogged by conflicting forecasts about its future. This report at last gives us a clear view and confirms that the UK can not only compete but thrive," he said.

The report made a number of recommendations, however, which it said were vital for continued success. It said the government and industry should work together to improve perceptions of call centers in Britain, in the way that various other countries have done.

It also urged companies to consider all the implications before taking offshoring decisions, consulting customers, employees and trade unions.

British call centers should not compete with offshore locations on low costs but on quality, the report said. Many companies also do not consider other costs such as relocation of senior management, travel and customer dissatisfaction.