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Australia: The new alternative to India?

Contact 1-2-1 joint managing directors Martin Bill and Joe Tawfik recently visited the US on a trade mission organised by Austrade. The export development government body, Austrade, has been working with Contact 1-2-1 over the past nine months to identify potential partners and customers in the US.

“The timing of the visit couldn’t have been better. We visited a number of call centres across the country, including regions such as Atlanta, Minneapolis, Baltimore, and Denver. There were some common issues identified with all of our visits. All the people we met identified the problems associated with offshore outsourcing purely on cost. Many had stories about some poor experience with an Indian call centre. Almost all of them had not considered Australia as an offshore option. After meeting with our potential partners and explaining the value proposition of Australia they all agreed that we had a strong alternative for offshore outsourcing”, said Joe Tawfik.

Contact 1-2-1 is expanding its reach into the US as part of its business development plans and to address the needs of its International clients that require a US footprint. Alliances have been formed with two key companies: iSky and In-Touch. iSky has similar methodologies and philosophies to Contact 1-2-1. These synergies also extend to the large automotive client base held by both organisations. Sue Wilson, VP North American Sales for iSky said “it is difficult to find a culturally suitable partner and after meeting with both Joe and Martin we felt that we had found our sister company. Follow-the-sun solutions can assist both companies. The similar approach to quality will also ensure an International client can get a seamless service without compromise in quality.”

In-Touch a US based company that delivers ROI-focused (return on investment) lead generation solutions for the complex sale. Brian Carroll, CEO of In-Touch, explains “we have an aggressive growth strategy over the next 5 years and we plan to work with Contact 1-2-1 to help us cover areas we don’t specialize in with their core competencies so we can offer a best of breed solution. Our clients are focused on quality and not getting the cheapest service. Contact 1-2-1 can offer us reduced costs without the compromise in quality.”

Contact 1-2-1’s alliances are based around mutual benefit and benefits to our mutual customers. The key is to work towards common goals and strengthen our joint offerings to International customers. Australia has a lot to offer US call centre partners especially in the wake of some of the negative US experiences from offshore centres.

There is increasing evidence that strongly suggests that companies may not be aware how much damage is been done to the brand and on bottom line profits by outsourcing to low cost bases such as India. A recent analysis conducted by Contact Babel in the UK identified that customer defections because of offshore outsourcing not only negate the up-front cost saving but can reduce the profitability of the company. In the report they identify that "one in seven people who knowingly used an offshore contact centre felt so strongly that they changed their supplier, typically insurers and phone companies."

A typical bank can save £9m a year by replacing 1,000 British staff with Indian workers. However "the bank's revenues would fall by the same amount if only an extra 0.3% of customers defected. Last year 1% of customers are estimated to have changed bank as a result of offshoring". The tide is turning back towards quality and away from purely cost reduction for offshore solutions. Australia has the potential to replace low cost base centres because of quality, language and culture.

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About Contact 1-2-1

Contact 1-2-1's mission is to capitalise on the market opportunity that exists with the increasing global pressure on companies to perform in an intensely competitive environment:

“Harnessing the power of customer contact and wireless solutions to accelerate the growth of our client's business”

The company's goal is to work with companies as a strategic partner with the aim of introducing both contact centre and wireless solutions that will assist in differentiating them in the marketplace. By providing solutions that produce measurable value Contact 1-2-1 aims to become a long-term integral provider to our clients.

Our business philosophy is to provide best-of breed solutions that provide low establishment costs and high ROI for our clients.

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About iSky

iSky is a customer care and marketing services company that specializes in helping clients find, win, keep and grow their best customers.

iSky offers solutions to help companies create “intelligent customer connections” throughout the customer lifecycle.

iSky offers a unique, integrated approach to inbound/outbound communications and back-end analytics within a Customer Relationship Centre environment.

iSky processed over 61.3 million interactions in 2003.

Website: www.isky.com

About InTouch

InTouch specializes in delivering ROI-focused (return on investment) lead generation solutions for the complex sale. InTouch consistently delivers measurable return on investment because they:

- Find opportunities at the executive level
- Deliver highly qualified leads
- Prevent lost opportunities
- Track ROI metrics
- Fill the sales pipeline
- Shorten the sales cycle
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InTouch has experienced 430% growth in the past five years and has been recognized as one of the Inc. 500.

Website: www.startwithalead.com