



## U.S. Posed as Strongest Contact Center Location: Report

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Numbers can be deceiving, including in contact center site selection. On the surface, offshore locations appear to remain popular. Site selection consultancy Site Selection Group (SSG) reported that the vast majority of new staff employment: over 10,000 of 17,225 positions that were created worldwide in May, 2008 took place in The Philippines, Romania, and Nicaragua.

Yet SSG president King White believes that the U.S. is the strongest location, with room to grow, even though it saw 5,880 new job openings in that month as compared with nearly 10,000 in The Philippines.

He points to the AAA, which opened the largest, newest American center, in Oklahoma City, OK, employing 1,200 agents while Level One has hired 1,000 more staff at its Greenville, SC facility. Also, Alorica will have 600 agents at a new site in Terre Haute, IN.

Not all of these new U.S. jobs are in actual contact centers. Alpine Access, which specializes in handling contacts for clients with home-based agents, has hired 200 new staff in Kentucky and Virginia.

"The biggest trend that we've seen is the growth of the U.S. as the most stable contact center market," says White. "Some of the demand is coming from contact center employment that had been nearshored to Canada, but is returning because of the strong Canadian dollar and economy."

Specialized offshoring is experiencing growth. CGS grew its Bucharest and Brasov, Romania operations by 1,000 staff; they will serve offshore, regional European, and domestic Romanian clients. Sitel opened a new center in Managua, Nicaragua, hiring 295 people that will supply bilingual nearshore Spanish-English-speaking support. White identified Nicaragua as an emerging location market.

Canada has had contact center expansions to serve the country's still-strong domestic market. Nucomm opened two centers, each employing 75 agents, in London, Ontario and in Montreal, Quebec.

In contrast White believes that The Philippines is approaching labor market saturation, at which point wage and compensation costs and turnover will start climbing. Convergys ([News - Alert](#)) is adding three new sites in the Manila area plus in Cebu City, Laguna, and Santa Rosa while The Sutherland Group is opening a new center in Camarines Sur.

"We wonder how much more The Philippines labor market can take with all the recent expansion," says White. "It is a matter of time before we see work repatriated from there. For that reason we urge caution in locating to The Philippines."

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