



## U.S., Philippines Lead in Contact Center Voice Work

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*U.S. consumers prefer domestic contact center workers and the "Americanized" voices of Philippine agents, a new study reports.*

The United States and Philippines led in the creation of new contact center jobs worldwide last year, as a total of 125,509 of the jobs were created, according to Site Selection Group, a consulting firm that follows the industry.

There were 166,749 contact center jobs created and 41,240 jobs lost, Dallas-based Site Selection reported in its "Call Center Absorption Report" for 2007.

The U.S. saw nearly 65,000 new contact center jobs, due to consumer desire for domestic call centers and a weak currency, according to Site Selection. Wage rates for call center agents range from \$8 to \$12 per hour.

The U.S. in the last few years has experienced a high number of call center closings in major metropolitan areas, countered with new centers opening in "tertiary labor markets outside" the big cities, according to Site Selection report.

Meanwhile, the Philippines are becoming the "dominant, offshore location for English speaking call center services," with 46,000 call center jobs created in 2006, Site Selection reported. Wage rates range from \$2.50 to \$3.50 an hour.

"It offers an Americanized culture. That's why it such a success for voice-related activities," King R. White, founder and president of Site Selection, told insideARM.

APAC Customer Service, TeleTech and eTelecare have all grown in the Philippines, according to Site Selection.

The growth in the Philippines is often compared to India where contact centers have become an important part of the economy in the last 10 years. However, Indian centers are losing market share for serving U.S. customers because of accents, rising wages and employee attrition. Indian call center agent wage rates range from \$2 to \$3 an hour.

"Indians are more linked to the United Kingdom. It's just a different culture," said King.

Latin America has become the area for call centers serving Spanish-speaking consumers. But wage rates and attrition rates are holding back growth. Wages range from \$3.50 to \$4.50 per hour.

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