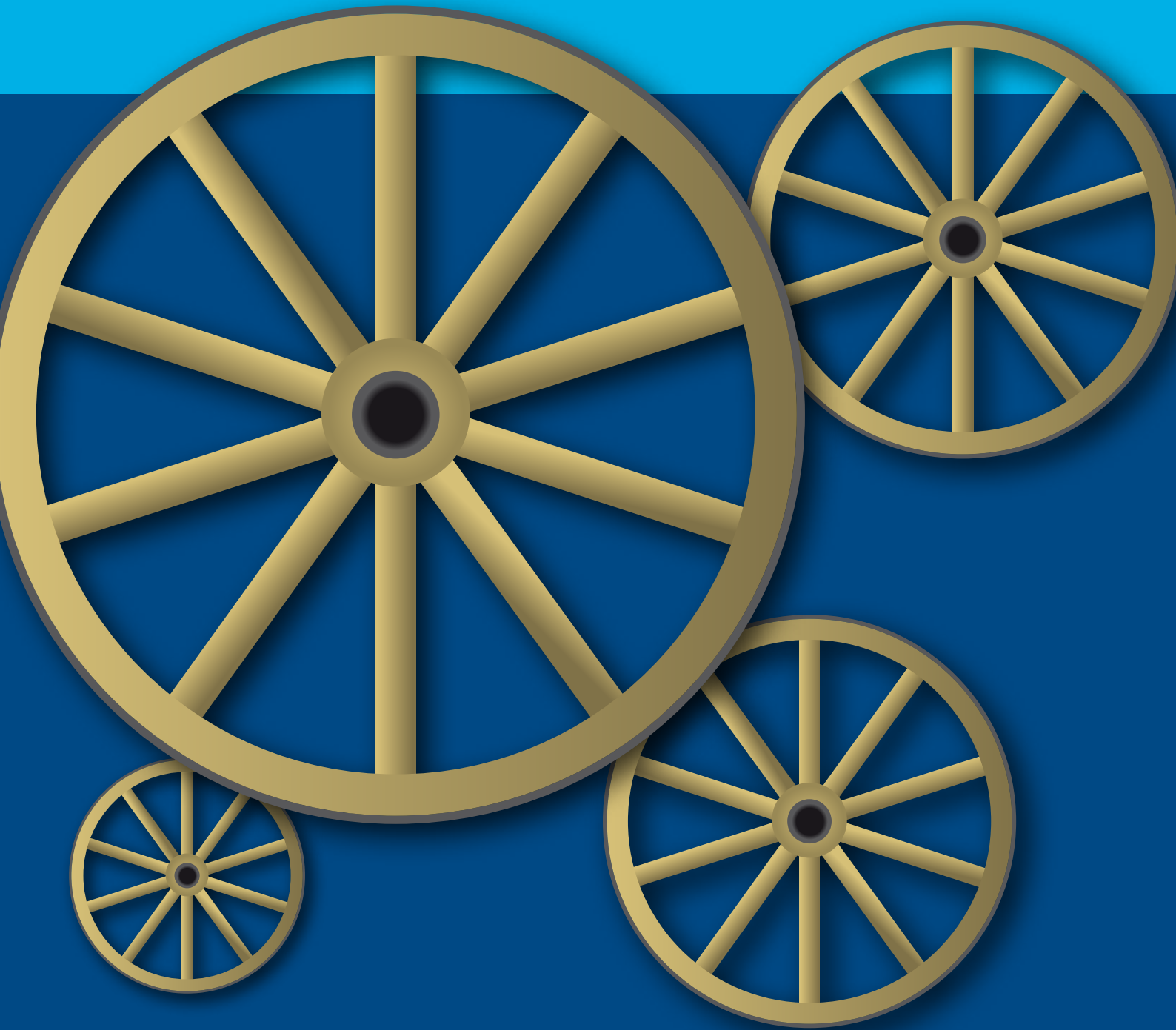


# The UK Contact Centre Outsourcing Report



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A CCMA Research Initiative

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## Foreword from CCMA

Welcome to the UK Contact Centre Outsourcing Report, where we aim to provide you with insights about the UK contact centre outsourcing industry and considerations for outsourcing, including navigating the procurement process.

It's thanks to The Knowledge Group (tkg), a fresh thinking and disruptive sourcing firm with years' of experience in outsourcing procurement, that we are able to bring you this report.

The UK contact centre industry represents organisations that operate in-house and those that provide contact centre outsourced services to other businesses. Here at the CCMA, we are aware of the current trend in outsourcing offshore. However, in the UK there is a strong and growing industry that has an exceptional reputation for providing high quality customer experiences for clients and their customers.

As an industry, contact centre outsourcing partners are adapting fast to macro forces and customer needs. They are onboarding digital capabilities, delivering multi-channel synchronous and asynchronous communication capabilities, providing effective employee engagement and

wellbeing approaches and offering exceptional customer experiences.

Importantly, to maximise value from your outsourcing provider, working in partnership is critical. Not only will you benefit from a higher level of service, but your outsourcing partner will be able to provide greater insights to support your wider business.

This is an interesting time for the UK outsourcing sector. Recruitment challenges have resulted in high demand for services, increased competition is driving up quality and service levels, and we're seeing market consolidation. Finding the right partner for you has never been so important.

**Leigh Hopwood**  
CEO, CCMA



## Trends in Outsourcing: 2023 and Beyond



### Let it never be said that outsourcing CX services in the UK is dull. Hardly!

As someone who started their career in the customer experience management space in Great Britain 20 years ago, it is a market that I follow closely. And with good reason; it is by far one of the most progressive and innovating customer management demand markets in the world. I always say to my clients, if you are interested about what is on the horizon from a CX (customer experience) perspective, watch what companies and their BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) partners are doing in the UK right now.

What is happening among British consumers, enterprise CX departments and outsourcing partners, is truly remarkable. Innovation, quality, and investment: these are the

watchwords in the UK contact centre space. This is across several areas.

### Global horizons

First off, let's consider outsourcing globally. According to the latest research by Ryan Strategic Advisory, about 60% of enterprises across Western Europe, North America, Australia and Japan have some type of partnership with an outsourcer. This is consistent in the UK, where about the same proportion are using third-party service providers to manage some of their CX.

But, where the UK is different is the degree of outsourcing penetration in the customer management equation. Whereas enterprises in other major demand markets allocate less than 15% of their CX workstations to a BPO

partner, British businesses entrust providers with much higher levels of agent positions. This speaks volumes as to how the UK's customer

management decision-makers are willing to trust third-parties to meet their needs when it comes to end-user relationships.

### Digital strength

Then there is the question of technology, specifically, the growth of digital communications. The UK is on par with other major markets when it comes to the different channels that are being used to support customers in their CX needs. But, what is clearly important in this dynamic is how non-voice channels have consumed the customer management equation. In fact, less than half of British enterprise workstations are handling voice-only interactions; most are now focused on some aspect of digital support.

The digital support channels are evolving too. In the UK, social media as a CX medium is roughly equal to voice in enterprise adoption. There is also rapid growth of webchat, instant

messaging and chatbots. A very interesting development is the willingness of UK CX departments to consider using the Metaverse as a channel. In 2023, 11% of British businesses indicate that they are deploying this virtual universe in a customer management capacity.

So, moving forward, what are some of the things to watch out for in the British CX and BPO boardrooms? Probably the biggest trend relates to the demand for AI as part of the customer management equation. The hype around all things Chat GPT is like no other at the moment. What will be fascinating is to see where business and their BPO partners look to apply these technologies in the CX context. Where it sticks versus where it falls short will be very salient.

### Working models

How new working models apply for CX delivery among British firms also bears close monitoring. Remote work appears here to stay, but to what extent? Anecdotal evidence suggests that UK firms want frontline teams back in the office, but the talent wants to stay home for at least part of the week. Reconciling this disconnect will be a challenge, but one that cannot be ignored. Equally, where does gig working sit in the plans of UK outsourcers and their clients? This way of delivering customer management is rapidly gaining more traction than ever, but could regulations or other limits throttle its growth?

Also, there is the issue of offshore delivery. According to the 2023 Front Office CX Omnibus Survey, India and South Africa rate favourably among British customer management leaders.

But, more destinations in the European nearshore and Caribbean are angling for UK work. Given that the options for English-language support have never been better, one might expect a more diverse delivery map when it comes to service delivery to UK consumers.

The bottom line is that for UK outsourcing from a CX angle, the market has never been more opportunistic. It will be an interesting rest of 2023.

#### Peter Ryan

Global BPO Advisor,  
Ryan Strategic Advisory



## The Changing Shape of the UK Market

### Macro challenges

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a large distortion in demand (mainly due to public sector requirements for pandemic support and shifting customer behaviour in the retail market). Post pandemic, during the latter half of 2022 and the first half of 2023, we have seen a 'reset', contributing to two well-known contact centre outsourcing partners recently falling into administration.

Various factors have led to a significant increase in the UK inflation rate rising to circa 10%, but this figure is not necessarily representative of the challenge facing businesses from increasing costs. Contact centre outsourcing partners require buildings to accommodate employees and associated

energy costs have risen steeply - electricity by 67%, gas by 129% and staffing costs by around 15%. This has put increased pressure on client organisations to tighten budgets and has resulted in BPO partners' margins being squeezed.

Inflation also poses a significant risk to existing 'in term' outsourcing contracts, whereby now outdated assumptions made regarding costs over the term of the contract may now lead to a commercially unsustainable operation. The wider economic uncertainty can be beneficial to contact centre outsourcing partners, however, since the sector is countercyclical (ie, trends show that when the economy slows, outsourcing grows). Therefore, demonstrating the uncertainty and instability for many within the sector.

### Market consolidation

A series of announcements across the top BPO partners have confirmed an appetite for mergers (this includes the planned mergers of Concentrix and Webhelp, and Teleperformance and Majorel), These are not likely to be the last and the trend is a result of a number of factors including:

- Consumer businesses are growing through increasing globalisation and suppliers must match this growth.
- Increasing competition in the contact centre industry - as more companies move to outsourced customer service and technical support, the demand for high-quality, cost-effective solutions has led to a crowded market. To maintain a competitive edge, contact centre outsourcing partners have turned to consolidation as a means of expanding their offerings and capabilities.
- The desire to achieve economies of

scale - with larger companies there are opportunities to reduce costs and increase efficiency, particularly in areas such as technology and infrastructure. Additionally, companies are able to deepen their proposition capabilities in areas, such as digital transformation, logistics etc.

However, there are also concerns that such consolidation could lead to reduced competition and a temporary risk that there may be a shift of focus from servicing clients to internal matters, such as reorganisation or cultural integration etc. It may also mean the resulting large contact centre outsourcing partners aim their services at larger clients, losing focus on the needs of smaller clients.

Overall, the consolidation of the global BPO market represents a fundamental shift in the industry. While there are both pros and cons to this trend, it is clear that it could have a significant impact on companies and their stakeholders for years to come.



## Market developments

There has been an interesting development in the sector around the collaboration of smaller suppliers providing an end-to-end client operation (referred to as an 'eco-system', 'prime contractor' or 'Managed Service Provider' model). This model proves particularly successful where buyers need to act quickly and at scale to establish outsourced contact centres to meet surges in demand.

The approach has a number of advantages for suppliers:

- Collaboration through Managed Service Providers allows access to previously inaccessible opportunities for smaller organisations.
- Smaller suppliers operating in an eco-system gain valuable experience, allowing them to develop their own proposition, so they can compete and win more work in the future.
- Specialist organisations with proven case studies give buyers the confidence to look at alternatives to the larger more traditional suppliers.

This approach also has a number of advantages for buyers:

- More attention is given to smaller clients who make up a greater share of the suppliers' customer base.
- There is often better pricing, as the high internal charges of larger suppliers is not present.
- Faster decision-making as the client is able to form a closer relationship with the key decision-maker within the supplier.

## Offshoring

Global uncertainty is causing many organisations to review their supply chains and some appear to be moving services closer to home. Notably, this is not the case in South Africa, where confidence in service delivery seems to be high. South Africa is a mature location with a strong cultural affinity with the UK and is a preferred destination for English language skills. It has a stable economy and politics and minimal time difference, offering advantages over alternatives like India and the Philippines.

Nearshoring has become more challenging recently, due to similar labour shortages in markets like Germany and western Europe with many costs rising.

### Balancing quality with cost

To succeed, organisations must adapt to the changing demands of consumers and remain competitive in the face of digital disruption. Many opportunities exist for the BPO market, particularly for those who are able to differentiate themselves through personalised interactions and innovative service offerings, whilst also offering buyers the right balance of quality versus cost.

### Dave Rumble

Co-Founder and  
Chair, tkg



## Headwinds in the UK Outsourcing Industry

Contact centre outsourcing in the UK has been steadily increasing over the past decade and the BPO sector now employs around 175,000 people. Faced with significant changes within the sector, organisations looking to outsource have more opportunities than ever, but this does not come without its challenges.

### Services

One of the most significant changes in the sector is the rise of **digital communication channels**. With the proliferation of messaging apps, social media platforms and chatbots, consumers are increasingly turning to digital channels to make inquiries, seek support or make purchases. Many organisations have identified the need to adopt these channels in order to keep up with consumer demands, representing a major opportunity for contact centre outsourcing partners to differentiate themselves by offering technology and expertise that clients may lack.

The market for technologically advanced consumer goods continues to grow. With this, the complexity of corresponding consumer support deepens, leading to greater **call type complexity** and lengthier handling times. Many hoped that digital solutions would deflect many simplistic call types and decrease overall reliance on employees. In reality, however, staffing numbers remain static and the anticipated cost savings borne out of these technological advancements are not realised. This means that organisations with in-house contact centres are led to needing to consider outsourcing to offshore locations in order to realise further benefits.

One of the challenges facing contact centre outsourcing partners in the UK is the growing demand for **personalised interactions**. Many consumers today expect more than just standardised responses and interactions.

Instead, they are looking for their interactions to be tailored to their specific needs and preferences. This puts further pressure on suppliers to be more flexible and to adapt to individual customer requirements.

### People

The post pandemic **growth in hybrid working** (or greater acceptance of home working), is now a normalised and significant aspect of typical service delivery. This has provided access to a broader labour pool for contact centre outsourcing partners. Many people who previously may not have considered (or been able) to work in a contact centre have found the increased flexibility appealing and supportive of their work/life balance. However, a number of difficulties have arisen with this model, such as the practicalities of training, development and most notably, ensuring employees feel engaged, connected and valued. The net effect of this is increasing attrition given the wealth of alternative employment opportunities.

Notably, competition in the UK labour market has grown significantly. There is a general **shortage of workers** (13.3% of organisations surveyed by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), reported that they were experiencing a shortage of workers). The BPO sector is particularly challenged since it competes for the same demographic of staff (i.e., lower salaried and highly mobile) with retail, hospitality and many other sectors where roles are potentially less demanding.

### James Waite

Director of Marketing  
and Partnerships,  
CCMA







### Multi-channel support

Now consumers expect to engage with businesses on their preferred channels, and organisations must be equipped to handle these interactions seamlessly.

The proliferation of communication channels such as social media, chat, email and messaging apps are channels that contact centre outsourcing providers are increasingly providing. According to Ryan Strategic Advisory, nearly all contact centre outsourcing partners now provide voice and social media channels, with 80% or more providing webchat, SMS and email services.

With outsourcing providers now offering multi-channel support it means that advisors must be trained to handle interactions on multiple channels, and organisations must implement robust systems, processes and technologies to manage these interactions effectively.

In a survey conducted in April 2023 by Ryan Strategic Advisory, buyers in the UK ranked frontline social media capabilities as the second most important factor when considering an outsourcing supplier. The survey also highlighted how non-voice channels are becoming more dominant.

### Customer experience focus

Customer experience has become a key differentiator for organisations, and contact centre outsourcing providers are now focusing on delivering exceptional customer experiences. This means that contact centres must be equipped with the right tools, technologies, and processes to deliver personalised and frictionless customer experiences.

Contact centre outsourcing partners are investing in customer journey mapping, speech analytics, sentiment analysis, and other tools to better understand customer



needs and preferences, so that they can match or exceed customers' expectations.

In addition, contact centre outsourcing providers are increasingly looking into their data and analytics to provide greater insights to clients. These insights provide intelligence on the impact of the entire value chain on the customer experience, from product issues to company policies. This is a valuable value-add that clients can tap into.

### Flexibility and scalability

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of flexibility and scalability in contact centre outsourcing. Organisations need to be able to scale their operations up or down quickly in response to changing business needs.

As a buyer, understanding your medium to long terms needs and how a potential outsourcing partner can flex to support your needs may be important. Similarly, understanding the make-up of other clients will determine whether you are a minnow in the client base or the outsourcing partner is highly dependent on your custom.

Contact centre outsourcing providers are thinking creatively about pricing models, contracts and working models. Before the pandemic there were only a handful (or less) of suppliers offering homeworking in the UK, now they all do it! Outsourcing providers have developed varying models and offerings around remote working, from fully remote, hybrid or flexible working.

### People and cultural dynamics

Understanding the level of employee engagement and cultural affinity is critical to assessing whether a BPO partner can deliver your brand's and customer's expectations. Attrition levels are often a better indicator of engagement over other areas, including employee satisfaction, accreditations and awards.

Given the recruitment challenges in recent years, contact centre outsourcers have had to focus on really looking after their colleagues and establishing employee value propositions that are attractive.

In recent years, there has been a shift towards digital and remote recruitment strategies,

as many contact centre outsourcers have moved towards a hybrid or fully remote work environment. This has resulted in increased use of virtual job fairs, online assessments and video interviews.

Additionally, contact centre outsourcers are placing more emphasis on skills and behavioural competencies, such as communication skills, empathy and adaptability, over traditional metrics like previous call centre or similar customer facing experience. With the rise of artificial intelligence and automation, there is a greater focus on technical skills and an ability to work with new technologies.

The increase in difficulty for advisor and team leader roles has also heightened the focus on employee engagement, as well as health and wellbeing. Understanding how frontline colleagues are motivated and incentivised, and the impact this may be on culture and retention, and fundamentally the customer experience provided, are all worth considering.

### Commercials

Commercial models in outsourcing have slowly evolved from simplistic cost per call and hourly rate models to more sophisticated transformational, outcome based, gainshare models.

In the UK, statistically just under 65% of commercial models are still based on FTE or resource related charges, with only 5% being 'transformational', suggesting that the market has yet to drive commercial innovation.

Delivering gainshare models equitably is proving problematic for clients and contact centre outsourcing partners alike. It can be a complex task to demonstrate one or more, for example, process changes leading directly to efficiencies gained, when other factors may have had an influence. Also, most changes of scale require, to a greater or lesser extent, client effort and therefore agreeing what proportion of gain is appropriate can become contentious.

### Onshore, nearshore and offshore models

The big question many organisations are asking is whether to outsource in the UK or overseas. The answer is, it depends on many influencing factors, such as budget, CX requirements, speed to onboard and where your customers are located. What has remained consistently clear is that UK contact centre outsourcing partners are more likely to provide an exceptional customer experience.

Onshore and nearshore models offer several advantages such as cultural and language familiarity, reduced language barriers, and increased quality of service. These models also reduce the risks associated with time zone differences and cultural differences that can negatively impact CX.

### Regulatory needs

Buyers are increasingly conscious of ensuring compliance with regulations and consumers' expectations of fairness. Buyers taking risks with this are likely to suffer from a swift backlash and severe reputational damage. Additionally, in response to regulatory pressures and consumer demand, supply chain transparency has become of major importance, with buyers keen to ensure resilience and demonstrate corporate responsibility.

Fortunately, contact centre outsourcing partners are well versed in delivering services compliant with UK regulations and many can

offer advice on new regulations, for example Consumer Duty, which aims to ensure good outcomes for consumers and offers further protection for 'vulnerable customers'.

### Environmental, social and governance (ESG)

Ethical sourcing is becoming a key aspect of procuring outsourced services. UK central government policy requires that 'social value' should be delivered through the government's commercial activities and should take account of the additional social benefits that can be achieved in the delivery of its contracts.

This is also being seen in the private sector with spend being leveraged to effect societal and environmental changes, to support organisations' own social and environmental commitments. This includes the creation of new jobs and skills, environmental impact, inequality, emission reductions, and recycling.

**Spencer Brooks**  
Co-Founder and  
CEO, tkg



## Buyer Trends

### Who is outsourcing?

Over recent years, outsourcing contact centres has become increasingly popular among UK organisations. Mature sectors such as financial services, telecommunications and media, pharmaceutical, utilities and the public sector continue to outsource with growth coming from digital-first businesses.

Traditionally, the greatest barrier to outsourcing has been the high up-front costs associated with the purchase of systems or integrating legacy client systems. This is now being overcome by employing cloud-based systems to build cost-effective and on- and offshore blended operations.

Over the last decade, a trend emerged with organisations consolidating their common processes into shared service centres, often located offshore. This provided initial financial benefits through staffing reductions and salary arbitrage, however, in the absence of further initiatives, those benefits have now stagnated. This has since been recognised by many organisations which have turned to contact centre outsourcing partners to deliver further benefits through outsourcing, including new technology, processes re-engineering and operational transformation.

### Five reasons to outsource

Organisations in the UK have a variety of reasons for outsourcing their contact centre services. From cost savings and access to expert knowledge, to flexibility and improved business performance, outsourcing provides a whole host of benefits for those looking to enhance their customer engagement initiatives.

Currently, the top five reasons in the UK market for outsourcing customer management are:

#### 1. Cost and economics

Outsourcing contact centres saves organisations money. Contact centres require significant investment in technology, infrastructure, and human resources. By outsourcing, organisations can save on capital expenditures and reduce costs associated with the maintenance, repair and restoration of facilities.

Moreover, outsourcing allows organisations to benefit from the economies of scale that contact centre outsourcing partners offer. These partners have a wider customer base and, therefore, can spread their fixed costs over more customers, resulting in lower prices for client organisations. Typically, moving from

an internal model to an outsourced model can save organisations between 5 and 20%. Additionally, overall business performance can be improved by using specialist suppliers. Internal teams can be freed up to focus on core business activities, improving productivity and efficiency. External suppliers can also deliver data and analytics on customer interactions that organisations can use to enhance their existing products, services, and customer experiences. Outsourcing also allows organisations to quickly expand their customer service offerings in new geographical locations, without the need for significant investment in infrastructure or hiring additional staff.



## 2. Plugging gaps in internal capabilities

Outsourcing provides opportunities to gain specific expert knowledge and experience. Many contact centre outsourcing partners have a wealth of industry insights, strategies, and techniques, including best practices for customer engagement, sales techniques, and customer retention strategies.

External suppliers also use advanced technology and data analytics to optimise customer interactions and improve customer experiences. By outsourcing, buyers can benefit from this knowledge and experience to enhance their own customer engagement initiatives.

## 3. Flexibility and transferring risk around business continuity and demand volatility

Outsourcing contact centre services provides greater flexibility. External suppliers can tailor their services to fit the unique needs and operations of each client. They can offer flexible pricing and resource planning models that allow for the ability to scale their services up or down depending on business cycles or fluctuations in customer demand and are less restricted by the unionisation prevalent in many client organisations.

Outsourcing also offers greater business continuity, through access to multiple sites, hybrid resource models and more people, often with a lower risk of industrial action.

## 4. Right-shoring

Clearly, buyers are seeking the commercial advantages of offshoring, but organisations are encouraged to remember the advantages of choosing a UK supplier in

terms of linguistics and language capabilities, the availability of a desired skillset, the quality of customer experience outcomes, business continuity, information security, end customer preferences and political stability.

## 5. Infrastructure and interaction technology

Rather than re-invest in in-house contact centre infrastructure, it may be more cost effective to outsource and re-purpose or dispose of outdated offices. Given their scale and volume of clients, BPO contact centres are likely to offer more advanced, on-site or cloud contact centres, better interactive voice responses (IVRs) and call distributors.

Consumers expect their preferred method of communication to be supported, and a customer experience supplier is likely to have access to a range of traditional and digital communication channels such as messaging, social media and video. Buyers can also expect self-service solutions through chatbots and virtual agents, artificial intelligence to route contacts efficiently to track the customer experience, and detailed analysis and insight, driving a better customer experience.

### Joel Walker

Co-Founder and  
Chief Operating  
Officer, tkg



## How to Procure an Outsourcing Partner

A customer contact centre is an incredibly important aspect of a business and having faith that your customers will receive the best experience is vital. The task of finding the right contact centre outsourcing partner is time-consuming and complex, and with more than seventy of these suppliers in the UK, merely identifying all potential partners is a significant task.

In the past, organisations tended to conduct the procurement exercise in-house. This remains popular, especially for organisations that have strong procurement functions and processes in place to support the procurement endeavour.

However, perhaps due to the specific knowledge required, more recently, many have decided to turn to third party experts in the field to manage the process, such as tkg. These third parties help build an organisation's requirements, create a 'long-list' using datasets detailing all UK Business BPOa suppliers, including their capabilities, performance, financial stability and limitations, and then conduct the procurement exercise on the client's behalf.

In this section of the report, tkg provide advice on how to procure an outsourcing partner.



The success of a typical contact centre procurement journey is dependent on three principal elements, including clear requirements, accurate data and a thorough process.

### 1. Clear requirements

Organisations often make the mistake of not investing the time in properly determining their requirements and how they may change over time. Very often, buyers of contact centre services approach the market by looking for their current solution but for a lower price. If they haven't outsourced before, they are often looking at how to externalise what they have now but still save money.

This approach risks failing to take into consideration future demand requirements and the potential for new transformative capabilities in the market. This often drives dissatisfaction with the outcomes and frustration in the relationship with their contact centre outsourcing partner.

Investing the time at the start of the process to think through future demands and available alternatives is always time well spent. A transformative outcome doesn't have to be bold new technology choices but sometimes may even be a partner who would not otherwise have been considered, however through a thorough procurement process, emerges as the ideal solution.

### 2. Accurate data

A significant contributor to better outcomes in procurement exercises is accurate data. This works in two ways; firstly, when entering a sourcing process, it's important to ensure that your own business data is up to date, accurate and well-described. This gives potential partners the very best chance of building you, the client, a great solution. Secondly, to achieve great outcomes, having detailed data about the supply market, a full range of options available and detailed insight into those available options is crucial. All too often, the view of available supplier options is limited at the start, partners are poorly understood during the process, and the outcomes are sub-optimal as a consequence.

### 3. Thorough process

Contact centre sourcing can be a complex exercise, that is perhaps only undertaken every three or four years. Given the costs and risks involved and the need to ensure the anticipated benefits are realised, a thorough and well-established process is crucial. This will support the buying company through the necessary steps to deliver a robust outcome.



## The Procurement Process

### Internal alignment

Recognising the need for change and aligning on an approach.

### Research phase

Often neglected, failing to consider this phase may result in a limited number of potential partners or available solutions being considered.

### RFI

Going to market for a Request for Information (RFI) in response to a high-level broad description of your needs, so you can better understand what is available. Again, this stage is often rushed or ignored, resulting in failures to achieving actionable outcomes and sub-standard RFPs.

### Alignment

Having understood the available options, buyers need to align internally on what they really want to achieve, including what is desired the outcome, what are the conditions of success for the sourcing event and what are the requirements. They will also need to consider whether they can run the process themselves internally or need to bring in experts with systems and deep domain knowledge to support.

### RFP

A detailed Request for Proposal (RFP) creates the environment for potential partners to properly understand what you are seeking to achieve. The detailed set of requirements reflect what you want and will allow for a suitable comparison once proposals are received.

### Strategy session

This is normally hosted in the buyer organisation's facility and creates the opportunity to bring the RFP to life and add colour to the RFP documentation. It can be used to show other prospective buyers who else is involved and create some competitive tension, or it can be done individually to aid partners in their understanding of the buyer's ambitions.

### Q&A

Questions are a sign of a healthy process, as they show the prospective partners are engaged and thinking through their solution and want to understand a topic further. They are not a sign that the RFP has not been articulated clearly, but instead, show that partners seek certainty. As a buyer, you will need to think through what is and is not shared with all potential partners. Generally speaking, only those questions about commercial models are sensitive and most questions should be shared with all parties to ensure a consistent understanding.

### Evaluation criteria

Prior to receiving any responses, it's important to determine how the proposals are going to be assessed. This should always be done in an objective manner, including considering what weighting each section gets. Clearly, what's important is weighted higher but taking the time to determine what questions are being used to assess the responses, is crucial. A blend of questions revolving around operational, commercial, technical factors and case studies may be considered, but teams need to think through how they will assess the bids and lock in the criteria before proposals are scored.

### Response review

Scoring RFPs isn't a straightforward process. The most effective ways of scoring responses is to treat it as a collaborative exercise involving a number of stakeholders from across the organisation. Consider who is allowed to score, what their motivations and interests are, and how the scores are being calibrated. It is important to ensure you have someone who is qualified to score certain technical elements and consider whether certain team members' scores are worth more than others.

### Presentations

Whilst time consuming, presentations allow potential partners the chance to bring their solution to life. Typically giving everybody an hour to highlight why they should be chosen and to create the chance for them to ask questions is invaluable.

### Shortlisting

A typical sourcing event will have identified around fifteen to twenty potential partners, some of whom may not be suitable or have been ruled out at the RFI stage. The RFP stage really should go to around ten to twelve partners. The shortlisting stage of the process cuts down the number of potential partners in advanced rounds to around four or five.



**Site visits**

Visiting the sites of prospective partners is crucial to understand their culture and how their operating model looks in real life. You should also have the chance to talk to some of their other customers about what works and what to watch out for.

**Contract**

Your contract should have gone out with the RFP so everybody is clear on the conditions they will be expected to observe. Before the Best and Final Offer (BAFO) stage and whilst you have more leverage, you need to ensure any contractual clarifications are confirmed and that there won't be any surprises should a partner advance to the award stage.

**BAFO**

The Best and Final Offer stage is where you have perhaps refined what you need and is an opportunity for you to understand the very best offer from the potential partners.

**Contract award**

The contract award should be fairly straightforward if the above steps have been properly followed.

**Feedback**

Giving feedback to unsuccessful parties is an important part of a great procurement process. Suppliers will have invested time, effort and money into responding, so it's important to provide them with a proper understanding of why they were unsuccessful.

**Implementation**

Handing over successfully to the project implementation and operations teams is crucial. A solid understanding of what has been agreed by all parties should ensure a successful start to commencing operations and realising benefits early.

**Supplier management**

As the operations evolve, performance will move, targets will change and events will change the demands on contact centres. Therefore, proper supplier management is the penultimate step in a great sourcing process.

**Lessons learned**

Once everything is concluded and the operations have moved into a 'business as usual' state, it's important to reflect on what went well and what could have been done better.

## The Right Partner

Clearly, a contact centre outsourcing partner must be able to demonstrate that they can deliver a quality service at an acceptable price, but buyers will have many other varied requirements, including:

- Financial stability
- Resource scalability
- Customer experience
- Omni-channel capabilities
- Use of tools, data and insight to drive value and reduce demand
- Employee welfare and retention
- Cultural affinity
- Environmental, social and governance criteria
- Governance and compliance

The following is taken from the **tkg Supplier Membership Database** and illustrates, at a

macro level, the current UK BPO landscape and the capabilities it has to offer:

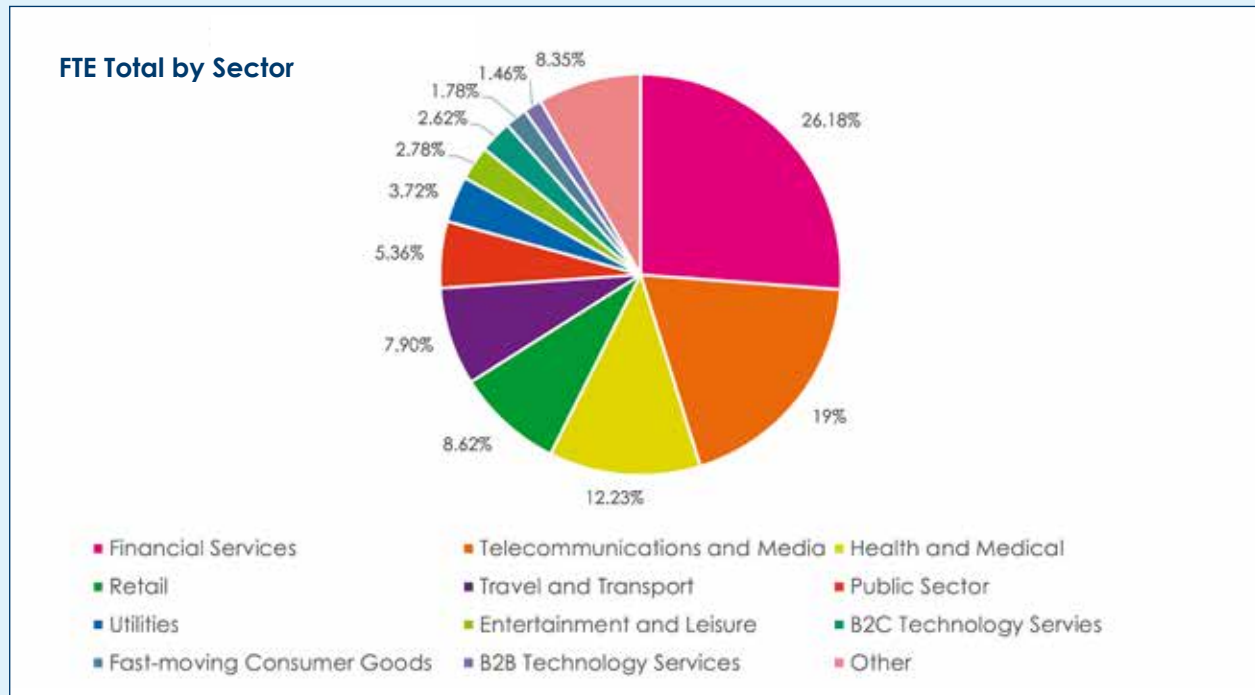
### Scale

There are over seventy contact centre outsourcing partners in the UK and the top 10 of them account for over 50% of the total number of employees in the sector.

### Agents

UK contact centre outsourcing partners employ approximately 155,000 agents, with more than half the population supporting the largest three sectors, including finance, telecommunications and media, and health and medical. The outsourcing sector is the largest employer of contact centre staff in the UK and is growing at the fastest rate, as in-house operations move work to BPO suppliers.

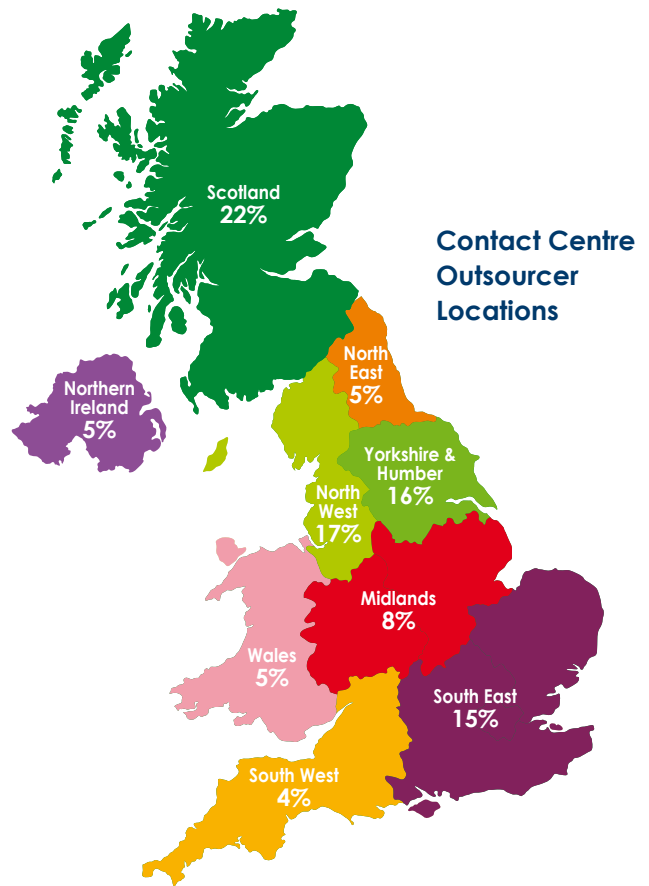
Below is an outline of the breakdown of FTE by sectors:



**Sites**

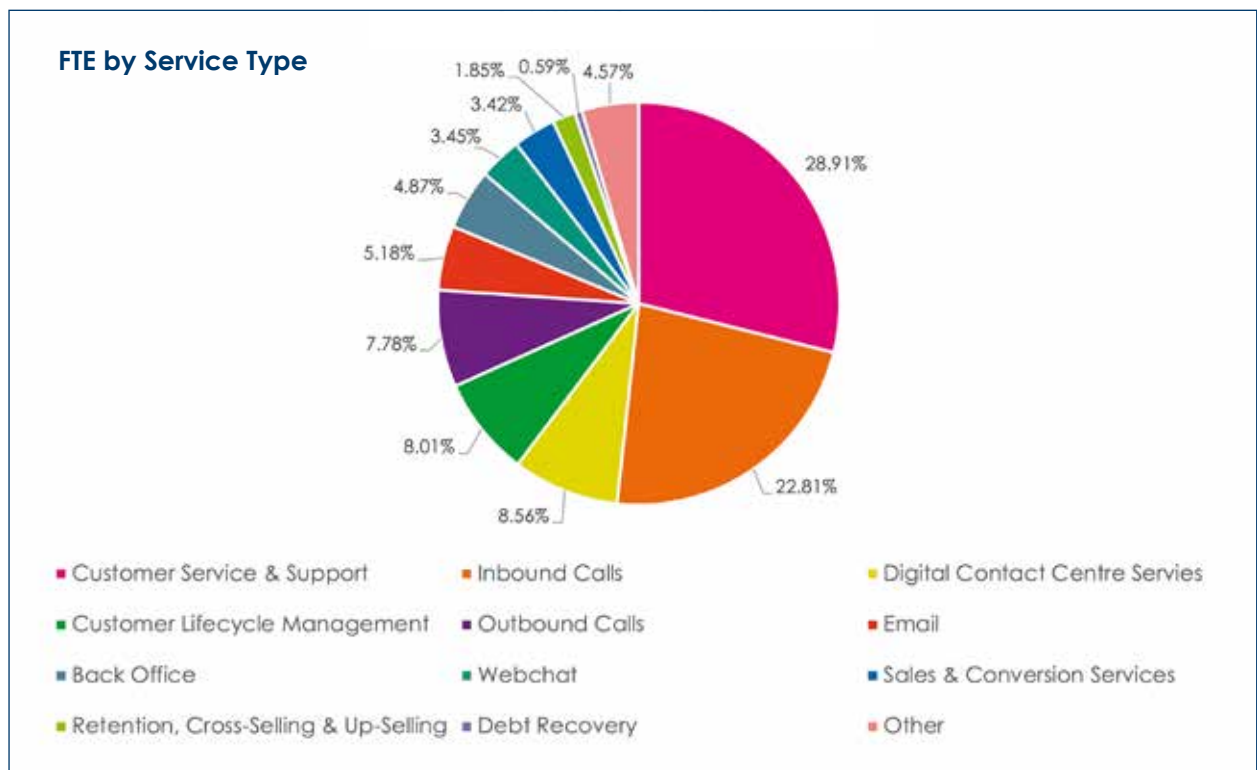
Linked to higher unemployment and lower salaries, the outsourcing sector dominates the North West, North East, Yorkshire and Scotland in terms of delivery locations.

Specialist operations and/or suppliers have set up locations near university clusters and other regional areas linked to either skillset requirements or the origination of staff that have transferred as part of a new client win or acquisition. The South East bias is linked to the majority of suppliers having a London presence for sales and marketing functions.



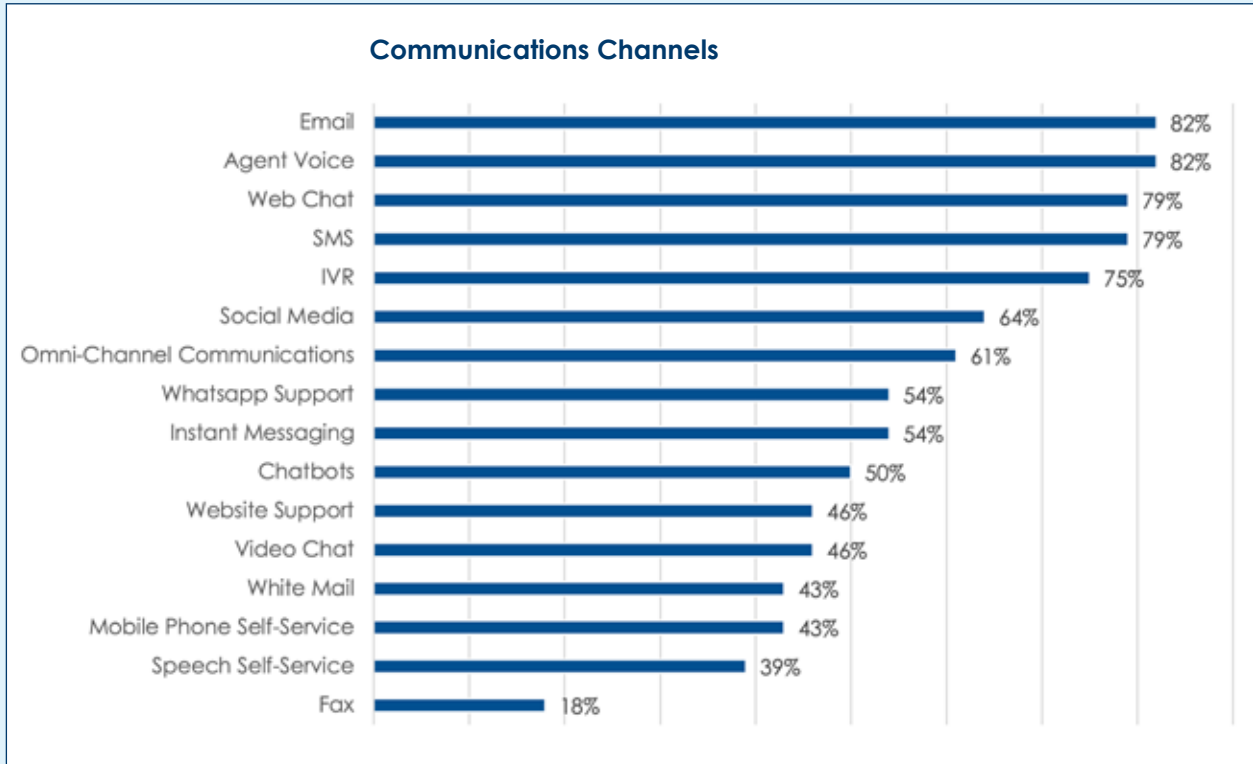
**Services provided**

The largest service type supported is customer services, which covers a multitude of channels and is seen as the 'simpler' engagement model for contact centre outsourcing partners to manage and has the largest degree of volatility.



### Channels supported

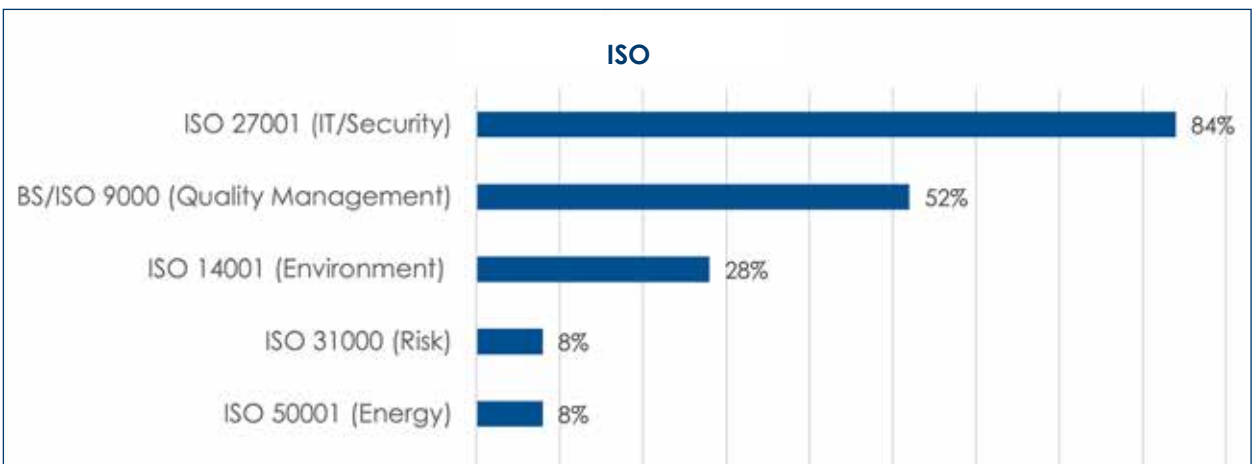
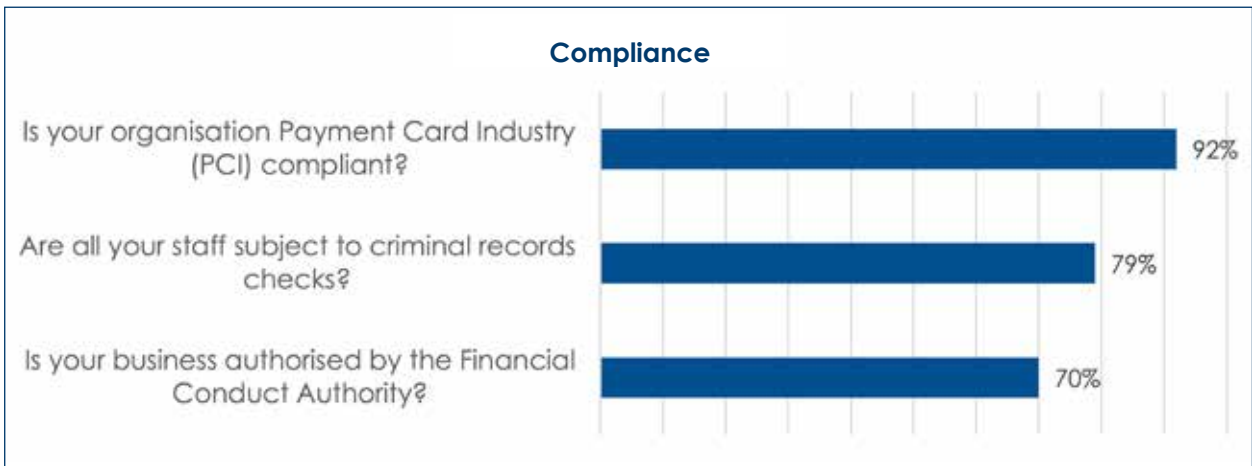
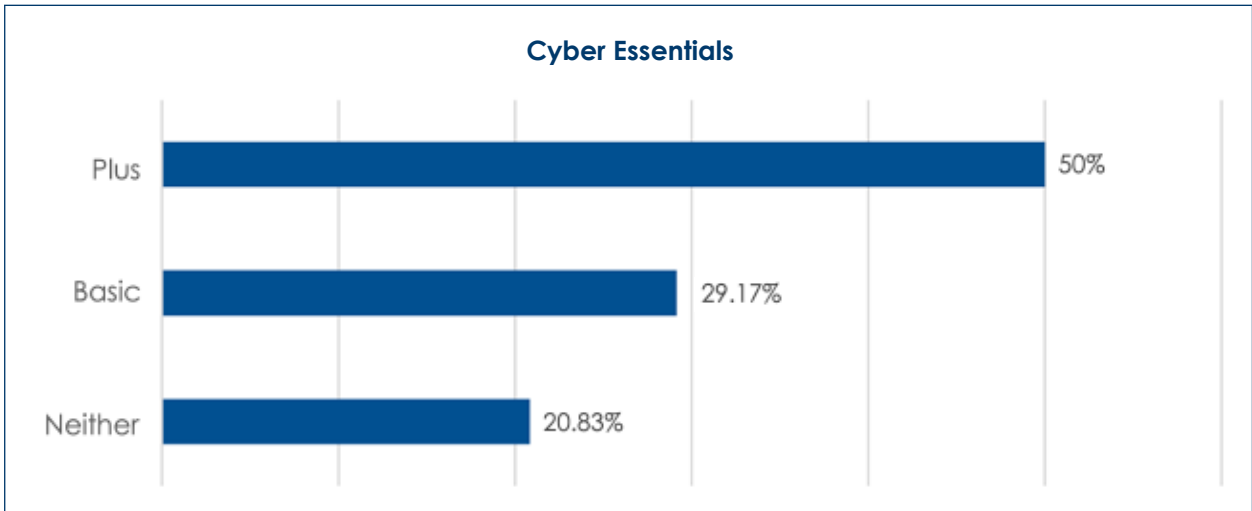
Many BPO suppliers are likely to be able to deliver customer experience via any channel their clients require. The channels currently being utilised across all UK contact centre outsourcing partners are as follows:



Voice services are the most prominent channel type managed in the outsourcing sector, but digital channels, such as webchat and social media, have risen through the ranks as more and more confidence grows in the sector to handle this kind of contact type.

### Security and compliance

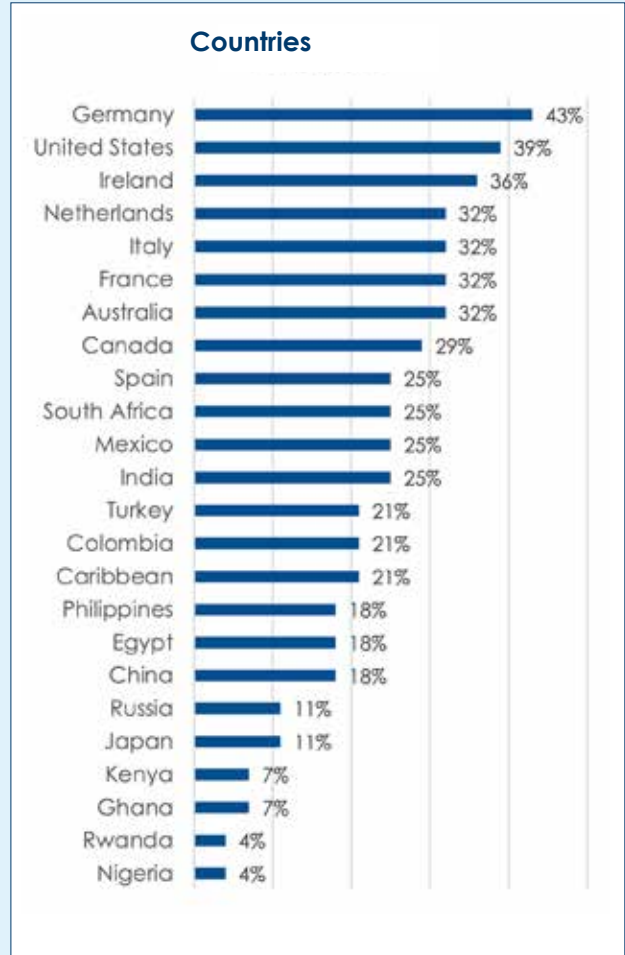
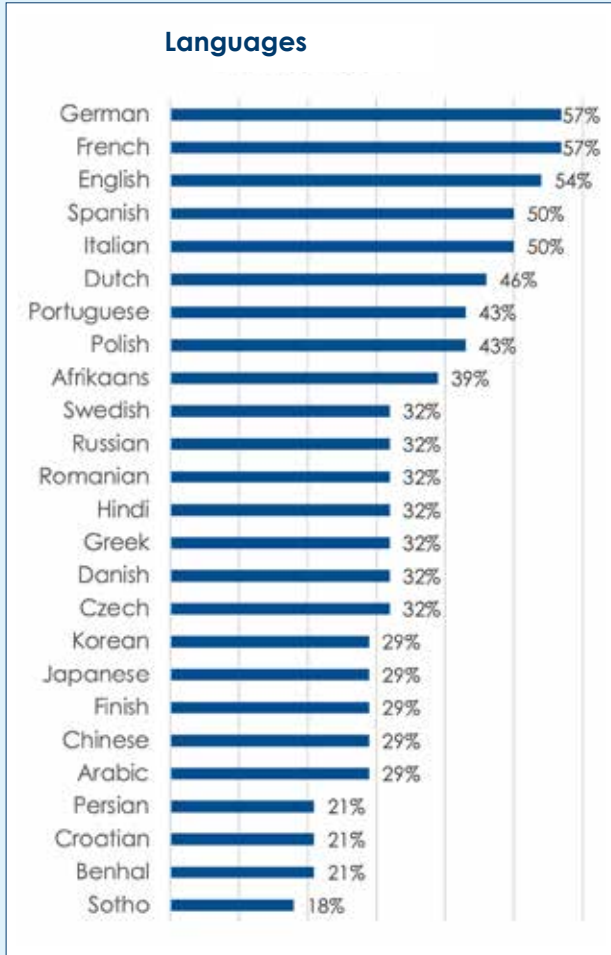
A healthy 92% of all UK contact centre outsourcing partners are PCI compliant (the remaining 8% are likely not so because they are not processing payments), with 79% having either Cyber Essentials 'Basic' or 'Plus' and 84% certified to ISO27001. Thus, providing buyers with a degree of certainty and assurance when it comes to choosing the right partner.





### Languages and countries supported

Many contact centre outsourcing partners can offer support in a broad range of languages. Those being provided currently are shown below:



International suppliers have a large footprint in the UK market, which reflects the number of language and countries they have to offer buyers outside of the UK. This flexibility means they offer a rich source of English-speaking labour force in lower cost destinations.

### Attrition

- Average attrition across UK contact centre outsourcing partners is 44% annually.
- Average training drop-out of employees across UK contact centre outsourcing partners is 22% annually.
- Average sickness across UK BPO suppliers is 9% annually.



## Showcases

We invited UK contact centre outsourcing partners to showcase their capability in this report. In the pages that follow you'll discover a series of case studies and information about several partners in the UK.

## Showcase

# ECO.

EC Outsourcing is a leading outsourced contact centre founded in 2013 by Managing Director Phil Westoby and a core senior management team. Starting with around 40 staff, we have grown to employ over 1000 customer experience and acquisition specialists in the UK.

We are a trusted partner for several large brands in various industries such as energy, telco, and retail.

Recently, we have expanded our services to

include the leisure and travel industry, and we continue to work hard to deliver outstanding customer experiences to our partners.

What sets us apart is our collaborative approach to partner relationships. We work hard to deliver the best outcomes for our clients & create loyal customers.

Our unique blend of expertise, innovation, and focus on delivering outstanding cx make us the go-to outsourcing partner for companies looking to optimise their customer management and acquisition strategies.

## Case Study

We were chosen as the strategic UK partner by OVO to accommodate the growth of customer service and secondline support following their acquisition of SSE Energy Services.

Supporting a three-phase, 12-week ramp plan that would increase the FTE by 500 across all sites and home-working.

The aggressive ramp plan required daily transition planning sessions that involved all key stakeholders from across the business to identify and mitigate any risks.

During these meetings, all aspects of onboarding, training, academy, and operational BAU were defined, reviewed, and evaluated.

Through training evaluations and feedback, we were able to work with OVO to redefine phases 2 and 3 of the ramp planning.

The recruitment process was refined in relation to the number of new starters onboarded at a similar time across the business. This approach allowed

for more effective recruitment, which continued to drive high-quality customer service. In turn we saw OVO also change their own internal processes from the learnings that we shared.

Our solution to the challenge faced by OVO was to source, train, and nurture advisors at scale without attrition levels rising. We achieved this by engaging with all new colleagues early, implementing more in-depth reward and recognition programs, and more in-depth coaching and wellbeing initiatives.

Overall, our partnership with OVO was a huge success, delivering in just 9 weeks, and with a high level of customer service quality delivered.

Through the growth we maintained sickness levels at under 5.3% and attrition at 8.2%. The attrition figure quickly dropped to under 6% after the ramp was completed. OVO had budgeted 15% due to the speed and size of the ramp.

“The whole team has continued to excel in meeting our demanding standards for Customer Service and Sales excellence, by continuing to deliver market leading CSAT and NPS scores. They have grown into a key strategic partner, and a natural extension to our Customer Care team.”

Sarah Ball, Head of Customer Experience, OVO.

For more information, contact Nathan Cumiskey: [nathan.cumiskey@ecoutsourcing.co.uk](mailto:nathan.cumiskey@ecoutsourcing.co.uk)

T: 07738 983 472 | [www.ecoutsourcing.co.uk](http://www.ecoutsourcing.co.uk) | [www.linkedin.com/company/weareteameco](https://www.linkedin.com/company/weareteameco)

## Showcase



- 11,000 customer service colleagues serving UK clients from the UK, South Africa, India, and the Philippines.
- Leader in analyst firm ISG's Provider Lens™ report Contact Centre – Customer Experience Services for Europe & UK 2022.
- Full customer lifecycle from acquisition and onboarding to customer service, retention, win-back and collections.
- All channels, all contact centre technologies including digital transformation, automation, and platforms.

### Differentiators

- Deep domain knowledge in retail banking, insurance, media, telecoms, and utilities.
- Trusted partnership approach – we've many clients who've been with us for 15, 20 years.
- We're willing to share risk and put skin in the game, on those measures most important to you – Customer Experience, Agent Experience, cost reduction and revenue generation to name a few
- We are proud of our people-centric culture - Investors in People Gold since 2017.
- We bring agility, flexibility and innovation to our engagements.

## Case Study

Turn your customer service cost centre into a value centre

Our client, a subscription media company, sought to provide industry-leading digital customer service, while improving customer acquisition, cross-selling, and subscriber retention. Operational goals included promoting self-service and digital channels as well as improving associate performance.

From a customer service *cost centre* to a *value centre*

The client shifted from a cost centre to a value centre mindset for managing customer service operations.

This involved:

1. Clearly defining what value means, and aligning all KPIs to this. Here, business value meant customer loyalty, spend, and multi-product spend. We evolved KPIs to focus on relevant customer outcomes and financial value through digital deflection, first call resolution (FCR), customer satisfaction and cross-sell/upsell. We still measure things like average handling

time, but there's rarely a conversation about them.

2. Right-shore operations for immediate cost savings to fund investment in digital. Simpler queues were moved offshore, and more complex queues are handled onshore. This right-shore approach delivered immediate cost savings, freeing up funds for investment in self-service, digital deflection, automation, and analytics.

3. Right-channel approach to nudge low-value interactions to self-serve and digital. One of many initiatives such was to offer customers the option to switch SMS to Facebook messenger.

4. 'Sales through service' means taking advantage of non-sales interactions such as service calls to cross-sell and upsell to the customer.

### Outcomes

- £40m incremental revenue generated over three years.
- £37m cost savings over three years.
- 30% IVR-to-digital conversion.
- 24% increase in sales conversions.

“Firstsource has for years provided agents who buy into our culture and way of working to give quality help when needed. With a flexible and knowledgeable team, many of whom work from home, they consistently deliver industry-leading performance that any brand would be proud of.”

Ashley Schofield, CEO, giffgaff

For more information, contact Ashish Bhatla: [ashish.bhatla@firstsource.com](mailto:ashish.bhatla@firstsource.com)

## Showcase

# impact

Impact Call Centre helps businesses successfully outsource their call centre multi-channel requirements with confidence. Our team of over 250 specialists deliver world-class customer service and sales solutions to some of the UK's leading brands, charitable organisations and independent businesses. The combination of our great people, training, proven processes and stringent security standards help our clients grow their businesses in size, profitability, and reputation.

We stand out among UK call centres due to our

commitment to exceptional quality and security standards. Our commitment to quality is evident in everything that we do, from our caring culture, through to our successful processes and in-house technology team and solutions.

As one of only a handful of UK call centres that has achieved PCI DSS level 1 compliance, we can securely, seamlessly and quickly process card payments directly over the phone, resulting in an excellent customer experience.

We are focused on delighting our clients' customers and building successful long-term partnerships that deliver exceptional business results.

## Case Study

Cox & Cox is an established homeware mail order company that was looking for an outsourced UK call centre that could deliver world-class customer service. They were looking to protect their long-standing excellent reputation for the quality of their products and customer service. Their previous outsourced call centre was consistently missing SLA's with high call abandon rates and limited visibility of call centre agent activity. We also faced the challenge of reviewing a year's worth of call centre activity data where a limited amount of agent activity was accounted for.

Our customer service team worked collaboratively with Cox & Cox to create a customer charter, which detailed the responsibilities that we could perform without escalation to them. This included a maximum value for refunds of returned items.

Initially the cost to Cox & Cox increased but due to a combination of our constructive agent approach, world-class service and continuous improvement programme, we were able to drive a significant improvement in their TrustPilot reviews. This resulted in increased customer trust and new sales. We were able to advise Cox & Cox of suitable systems and process improvements that would enhance their customer experience further. As a result of this, they benefit from more efficient processes and lower customer service costs.

Cox & Cox consider us as a key part of their business and an integral partner. To reflect this, they have set an unlimited customer charter refund limit which is entrusted to our skilled customer service team.

“Impact is very able to manage significant peaks in traffic and deal with complex enquiries of high value and have become a trusted partner. I have no hesitation in recommending Impact Call Centre as an integral addition to your business and trusted partner.”

Head of Customer Experience, Cox & Cox

For more information, contact Tony Cooke: [sales@impactcallcentre.co.uk](mailto:sales@impactcallcentre.co.uk)



## Showcase



Interact is a leading customer experience outsourcer. Partnering with many of the world's leading brands to deliver multi award-winning sales and retentions, digital messaging & chat, customer service, and loyalty programmes.

Our focus is on building long-term partnerships with clients that delight their customers and minimise customer effort.

At Interact, we use the latest technology and

adhere to the highest quality standards, including FCA Accreditation and ISO 27001.

We have been doing this successfully for over a decade, transforming communication through digital interactions and delivering highly flexible and scalable customer service and sales solutions.

Our empowered team are experts at connecting with customers across multiple communication channels and providing invaluable buyer insights and analytics. We adopt a 'people-first' approach, creating a fun, motivating, and inclusive business that fosters a team that delivers positive customer experiences every day.

## Case Study

The Times, a leading UK newspaper, sought proposals on making their acquisition and retentions teams more efficient whilst maintaining service levels and a strong focus on high quality, building upon their brand and award-winning journalism.

The Times recognised that Interact was a great fit. We help bring The Times brand to life with customers and build interest and excitement in their product while embracing technology to deliver exceptional results.

Interact identified, designed and implemented a streamlined process. Using technology to develop a new process of blending, using intelligent systems and skills-based scheduling efficiencies to provide an agile team that can flex as required. Increasing productivity allowed Interact to significantly reduce costs whilst at the same time

maintain service levels and quality.

Thanks to our extensive expertise in webchat platform providers, we were able to effectively leverage this channel to enhance efficiencies and drive digital sales, seamlessly integrating it with our voice services.

Through meticulous work on website tagging, entrance and exit surveys, and other optimisation techniques, we delivered a 10% increase in conversion rates. Our unwavering focus on customer satisfaction resulted in a consistently high CSAT score of 90%.

Interact is committed to innovation and transformation in partnership with The Times, providing support channels across all their successful titles, catering to customers' preferred channel of choice.

“*Interact is highly adaptable, innovative and exceeded all expectations. Their performance has seen record-breaking Save Rates, whilst providing a deep understanding of performance and trends. Interact has truly invested in the partnership, which has resulted in its overall success.*”

Head of CX and Operations, The Times & Sunday Times

For more information, contact Simma Kularatna: [simma.kularatna@interactcc.com](mailto:simma.kularatna@interactcc.com)

T: +44 7526 571831 | [www.interactcc.com](http://www.interactcc.com) | [www.linkedin.com/company/interact-cc/](http://www.linkedin.com/company/interact-cc/)

## Showcase



Marston Holdings provides high-quality, innovative and cost-effective outsourcing solutions to the public and private sectors. A range of highly scalable inbound and outbound services including complaint handling, customer support, Right to Work checking (including DBS), and collection and answering services, are available to deliver excellent customer experiences.

We work as trusted partners to manage and develop your customer experiences.

We operate a single contact centre via multiple UK-based sites staffed by more than 350 agents. With the scale and infrastructure to meet the needs of any business, we can mobilise and implement support services in short timescales. Our resilience service supports your business during unanticipated peak demand - we are a safe pair of hands for you to depend upon when resources are scarce.

We currently handle over one million telephone calls, process 730,000 items of correspondence and manage over 170,000 processing transactions annually.

### Case Study

To enhance the airport's safety, the Stansted Airport Operations team started to explore and implement policies that would maintain the free flow of the road network, to guarantee emergency vehicle access across the estate. Maintaining clear roads was essential for public and staff safety. Members of the public, taxis and private hire organisations had entered into the bad habits of dropping passengers on the road verge and leaving passengers to make their way to the terminal on foot where no pedestrian infrastructure was present and to crossroads under dangerous circumstances. The habit was seen as a considerable safety concern to the airport.

In addition to supplying the technology to enforce contraventions, Marston also provides back-office support to handle the payment and formal appeals process for drivers. This professional support service

provides drivers a dedicated email and phone line to query any Parking Charge Notice (PCN) received. The Marston Single Contact Centre team manage this service and provide comprehensive evidence packs to support appeals from drivers at POPLA. Their professional service includes conducting monthly review meetings to monitor the operation, regular reporting systems to senior Stansted Managers and proactive advice for continuous improvement of the service.

This service is a full-scale partnership between Marston and Stansted Airport; it is jointly branded, and the decision on who, when and how to enforce is always with Stansted Management to direct.

Road safety and air pollution around the airport have improved as drivers change behaviour.

“ They have provided us with a cost-effective enforcement solution that will enable us to rapidly achieve high levels of compliance, particularly in respect of the repeat offenders that try to avoid paying their parking charges. ”  
Steve Mills, Surface Access Manager, Stansted Airport

## Showcase

# Quantanite

Quantanite is a Customer Experience (CX) and Digital Outsourcing solutions provider for the world's fastest-growing companies. The company delivers customer experience management services, back-office services, digital content services, and sales enablement and lead generation.

Founded in 2014 and headquartered in the UK, the company's nearly 2,000 super-charged employees operate on four continents. The company manages a customer-facing contact centre in Johannesburg, South Africa, where its

highly trained associates provide superior support across a range of sectors, including technology, food delivery, finance, retail, hospitality, and other vertical markets.

Quantanite leverages state-of-the-art technology to ensure that customers are serviced using the medium they prefer - including automated self-service and other AI-driven tools.

In addition, the company operates a facility in Dhaka, Bangladesh, which performs complex, rigorous back-office tasks, including digital content services such as content moderation, data labelling and annotation, and transcription services for customers.

## Case Study

**Customer Experience & Transcription Services for an on-demand Retail Technology Brand.**

Our client is a technology company that enables local businesses to meet consumers' needs of ease and convenience with on-demand deliveries. By building the last-mile logistics infrastructure for local commerce, thousands of restaurants, convenience stores, pet stores, grocery stores, and more are at your fingertips, delivering the best of your neighbourhood on-demand.

### THE CHALLENGE

- Initial pilot scheme required for customer experience support with Menu Creation, Menu Activation, Menu Updates and Max OutReach to establishments
- Q1 2022 ramp-up of client campaign, adding two further projects and an urgent need for 200+ associates to be hired ASAP
- English and German language support required.

### THE SOLUTION

- Onboarding and training plan delivered within three weeks

- Urgent volume hiring strategy (HR)
- Recruiter pool, Core Recruitment Team and Pool of Interviewers built as part of the strategy
- Resulting in 200 associates hired within two weeks
- FTE now standing at 500+ associates, across two service delivery centres.

### SERVICES IMPLEMENTED

- Customer experience and Transcription services including:
  - Phone
  - Online Chat
  - Sales Support
  - After Sales Care
  - Enquiry Handling
  - Transcription - Text, Video, Audio, Image.

### THE RESULTS

- From inception in March 2018 with a pilot of 3 associates, the account has exploded to a total of 500+ people (16,666.66% increase)
- Menu updates TAT (turn-around time) high of 522% (2022)
- New menu TAT high - 179% (2021-2022)
- 5/5 Maximum CSAT scores achieved.

“ We experienced an excellent quality of service, and perfect execution of the work required. Quantanite has been very flexible with new lines of business and projects. Their ability to scale is very impressive, under tight deadlines while maintaining solid quality. ”

Chantel Koch, Vendor Manager - Merchant Operations, Doordash

For more information, contact Neil Russell-Smith: [neil.russell-smith@quantanite.com](mailto:neil.russell-smith@quantanite.com)

T: +44 7548 272050 | [www.quantanite.com](http://www.quantanite.com) | [www.linkedin.com/company/quantanite](https://www.linkedin.com/company/quantanite)

## Showcase



Sensée is the UK's only specialist provider of flexible homeworking services using fully-employed advisers and managers. Our services include: HomeAgent-based contact centre outsourcing: We help well-known organisations (including Allianz and BUPA) improve business performance, cut costs and provide brilliant customer service.

Our award-winning team of 1400 service advisers and support/management delivers service, sales, retention, disaster recovery & tech support services by phone, email, webchat, text & social media.

Sensée is ISO27001 accredited and has achieved PCI-DSS and GDPR compliance.

Consulting and Best Practice: Sensée's experienced consultants deliver a broad portfolio of Benchmarking, Consulting, Discovery and Workshop services.

CloudWorks™ Ecosystem: Our tech platforms support your homeworkers' entire Employee Lifecycle - from recruitment and on-boarding to scheduling, training, communication and management - whilst ensuring the most rigorous Infosec compliance. Sensée's UK-wide recruitment reach and remote employee-centric ecosystem creates accessible careers for people anywhere and sustainability for our planet and communities.

## Case Study

Sensée manages Motor and Home Insurance service and retention calls for customers under the Rias, AgeCo and Ageas brands via standard hours delivery and additional projects (regulatory requirements, surveys, meeting unexpected demand surges etc.). Sensée taps into Ageas' expertise whenever possible and respective Team Leaders communicate continuously to ensure KPIs are achieved and efficiency maximised. In addition, Sensée assists Ageas in better understanding how to optimise WFH for its own people.

The close relationship has delivered:

- **More efficient scheduling:** Sensée's annualised hours model ensures Ageas can rapidly ramp-up for peak (e.g. Summer months) and down for quiet periods to ensure resource optimisation. A unique micro-scheduling model of delivering hours in 30 min slots means Sensée can provide targeted resources at 'pinch points' (such as predicted/unexpected demand spikes)
- **Managing 'unsociable hours':** WFH Sensée advisors

regularly fill shifts unpopular with Ageas' B&M Consultants (including evening/weekend shifts) delivering a better work-life-balance with a positive impact on EX while improving retention and lowering recruitment expense

- **Lower office costs:** Reducing office overheads for Ageas by 20%
- **Business continuity:** Sensée provides extra WFH resource far quicker than possible in B&M environments, ensuring service quality is maintained
- **Greater efficiency:** By adopting Sensée's LiveDesk Digital Workplace within its centres, Ageas has given its WFH Consultants greater colleague visibility and easier support access while promoting shared learning
- **Additional recruitment opportunities:** Sensée's WFH model gives Ageas access to a nationwide recruitment talent pool - especially amongst people who can't access the office - in a challenging recruitment environment.

“ Sensée's LiveDesk™ Digital Workplace service for @home and hybrid working “delivers highly effective team collaboration. We're very pleased with its impact, and are not aware of any other products with the same features and functionality. ”

Head of Sales and Service, Utility Warehouse

For more information, contact Simon Hunter: [simon.hunter@sensee.co.uk](mailto:simon.hunter@sensee.co.uk)

T: 07495 486113 | [www.sensee.co.uk](http://www.sensee.co.uk) | [www.linkedin.com/company/sensee-homeworking](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sensee-homeworking)

## Showcase



# SUTHERLAND®

Sutherland is an experience led digital transformation company. Our mission is to deliver exceptionally designed and engineered experiences for customers and employees.

For over 37 years, we have cared for our clients' customers, delivering measurable results and accelerating growth.

We believe that every contact is an opportunity to improve customer experience. We focus on the End-to-End customer journey to understand what

generates contacts and leverage technology and intelligent automation to reduce them wherever possible.

We maximise loyalty by giving customers what they want, when they want it, where they want it and how they want it via a frictionless experience. We're a leader in omnichannel interaction including self-service, conversational AI, social media insights, Finance & Accounting and Human Capital Management, to help customers interact with you and own the experience.

We are a team of global professionals, committed to our clients and to one another.

We call it One Sutherland.

## Case Study

Sutherland is proud to be the only BPO company to have a joint Innovation Lab with Google. Our unique partnership gives Sutherland access to work directly with Google's Contact Centre AI product and engineering teams to deliver solutions and platform enhancements in Natural Language Processing, sentiment analysis, context handling and deep learning based on knowledge repositories. By combining our leadership in technology, our user centred design studios in Covent Garden and San Francisco and 37 years of customer experience, we are at the forefront of conversational AI solutions.

We brought together all of this experience to help ESPN provide a better service to their customers. The start of Football season also kicks off Fantasy

Football, where traffic and contacts for ESPN can increase to 30 times the average levels. The leader in live sports needed a scalable CX solution to help them intelligently manage the surge in volume without breaking the bank or compromising fan experience.

We analysed ESPN call and chat data to unearth the topics best suited for deflection using conversational AI. We built an end-to-end solution including a branded UI, CRM integrations, and knowledge base maintenance to deliver the precision of an agent when diagnosing issues.

The conversational AI agent now handles over 3,000 contacts per day, resulting in a 10% reduction in operating costs for ESPN.

“It cannot be stated enough. Sutherland has become a tremendous partner of ESPN. Your team is world class and the results show!”

Douglas Kramon, Sr. Director of Customer Operations & Fan Support, ESPN

## Showcase



For over 40 years, TTEC has combined service design, strategic consulting, technology platforms and operations excellence to deliver experiences in and out of the contact centre that captivate customers and dramatically improve the bottom line. We help companies build engaged, happy, profitable

customer experiences powered by a combination of humanity and technology that continuously optimise business outcomes through digital CX transformation, improving CSAT and lowering total cost to serve.

TTEC is one of the largest pure-play customer experience (CX) technology and services partners in the world, with nearly 70K employees serving clients from 21 countries in 50 languages.

### Case Study

What began as a partnership with Group UK (VWG) focused primarily on aggressive contact containment and deflection has evolved into one where customer centricity and digital transformation take priority to improve customer loyalty and improve total cost of ownership.

We support VWG in owning and elevating the customer journey with CX technology investments, highly skilled onshore and nearshore human support and digital interaction channels, through customer care operations focused on customer outcomes and high-value service. Working together to redefine how the digital transformation is delivered, we have been able to review where there is friction in the customer journey shifting to a less aggressive containment and deflection strategy without increasing operating costs. We have successfully implemented:

- A Speech-To-Text Platform to enable direct Voice of the Customer insights rather than just CSAT results
- Analysis of interactions between customers and agents to understand automation potentials and coaching topics
- Introduction of intent-based routing via voice IVR
- Design, implementation and development of web-based Bot to handle simple queries leaving agents to handle more complex and high value interactions

Results so far include in excess of 40% of digital traffic deflected away from agents via web-based bot and 10-15% customer calls contained for premium brands via Voice IVR Bot.

“ We learned early on that aggressive cost reduction adds friction to the customer experience, which ultimately costs money. We've worked in a flexible and agile way with TTEC, to make the campaign more customer centric and own the customer journey, rather than solely focus on costs. ”

Adam Axelrod-Harash, Head of Customer Management, Volkswagen Group UK



## Showcase



Webhelp designs, delivers, and optimises unforgettable human experiences for today's digital world – creating and delivering game-changing customer journeys. From sales to service, content moderation to credit management, Webhelp is an end-to-end partner across all B2C and B2B customer journeys.

It has over 120,000 passionate employees across more than 60 countries who thrive on making a difference for the world's most exciting brands -

working with over 1300 clients across multiple sectors to deliver game-changing customer journeys.

Through a consultancy led approach to customer experience management Webhelp is able to deliver innovative, bespoke solutions for its clients businesses, creating outstanding experiences for customers.

Whilst working with clients to deliver three significant competitive advantages:

- (1) driving lower cost – both run rate and investment
- (2) offering flexibility to support clients to respond quickly to external market change; and
- (3) providing expertise to bring innovative thinking and CX transformation delivery

## Case Study

### THE CHALLENGE

Webhelp's journey with Halfords first began in July 2019. As the UK's leading retailer of automotive and cycling products, Halfords had identified a need to enhance customer experience and increase sales through support services.

Like many businesses Halfords were heading into an unprecedented marketplace due to Covid-19. Whilst a decentralised customer support team with inconsistent processes, was leading to a varied customer experience and missed opportunities to make the customer journey better and more profitable.

### THE SOLUTION

Working alongside Webhelp and Gobeyond Partners (part of the Webhelp group), customer pain points and business inefficiencies were analysed. A new improvement strategy was designed and a Webhelp Customer Experience Management team was created, initially of 400 people, with expertise in sales

through service, handling all voice and live chat queries.

In centralising the customer support model, the aim was to ensure that all customers received the same CX regardless of who they came into contact with and to create capacity for stores colleagues to spend more time on the in-store personalised experience.

A purpose built Next Best Action (NBA) tool would drive strong performance in cross-selling and upselling.

### THE RESULTS

The significant increases seen in both NPS and customer satisfaction, coupled with cost saving delivery and revenue growth, have demonstrated the success of the partnership.

The next exciting phase of the Halfords transformation journey is the creation of a new digital centre of excellence, ensuring that Halfords customers receive a best in class service through the channel of their choice.

“Our partnership with Webhelp underpins our current continuous improvement culture, allowing access to a wealth of knowledge and skill in the transformation arena. This has enabled and empowered our capability and capacity to best serve the needs of our customer through their channel of choice.”

Katie Smith, Head of Contact Centre, Halfords

For more information, contact Ewan McKay: [ewan.mckay@webhelp.com](mailto:ewan.mckay@webhelp.com)

T: 07980 411 230 | <https://webhelp.com> | [www.linkedin.com/company/webhelp](https://www.linkedin.com/company/webhelp)

## Showcase



Whistl provides contact centre services to help create excellent customer experiences across a range of industry sectors.

Working as an extension to your team, our experienced agents' act as brand ambassadors for your business. With a tailored approach, we take the time to understand your customer service

objectives, with the ability to manage multi-channel customer service channels or a complete omnichannel solution including outbound call centre support.

With average agent tenure of 10 years, our team provide a reliable and emotive experience for your customers. With Whistl, your business goals and ethos are priority number one.

Proud to be award-winning, Whistl operate across three national locations, with a capacity of 500 seats.

## Case Study

TOCA chose Whistl as a partner back in early 2021 due to our experience in dealing with customers, the culture and values alignment between the two organisations and the processes that Whistl use to scope businesses requirements, proactive recommendations, and partnership approach.

TOCA refer to customers as guests and work colleagues as teammates, and Whistl adopted this language when talking to TOCA guests and teammates. To ensure that the right support was given KPI's were set to focus on TOCA Social business objectives and philosophy as a priority. As a new business venture, this was especially important to TOCA Social.

The TOCA Social team philosophy goals were:

- Turn all guests into fans

- Turn teammates into fans
- Teammates to act as owners
- Teammates to have a growth mindset

Whistl began handling calls and emails for TOCA guests and more recently launched Live Chat to provide a new channel of choice for TOCA customers.

Whistl and TOCA Social work in partnership together as one team. With Whistl providing weekly reporting on contact channel and volume, Whistl and TOCA can proactively look for ways to improve the customer journey.

Whistl currently manages more than 850 interactions per week, to provide a seamless service to TOCA Guests.

“ Whistl gives great advice and help us build a smooth contact experience. The Whistl team feels like an extension of our team, and our Guests have no idea they are dealing with a third-party provider, which says everything about how great a job they do! ”

Scott Moren-Brown, Director of Operations TOCA Social

For more information, contact Grant Thompson – Business Development Manager (Contact Centres):

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## About the CCMA

For nearly 30 years, the CCMA (Call Centre Management Association), as the longest established contact centre industry body, has been dedicated to supporting contact centre leaders across the UK. Founded on the principles of sharing best practice and networking to improve skills and knowledge, the CCMA is a thriving community that represents leaders from a huge cross-section of the industry.

Membership of the largest community in the industry offers unique opportunities, such as free annual benchmarking of 20+ KPIs, free entry into the UK National Contact Centre Awards and free tickets to the UK National Contact Centre Conference, invites to Executive Networking Dinners and exclusive events for members-only. Members also benefit from discounted training through the UK National Contact Centre Academy, the industry's training partner.

To support the industry further, the CCMA conducts regular original research for download, including the annual Salary and Skills Guide and the Voice of the Contact Centre Consumer research, the Evolution of the Contact Centre tracking the industry's progress and Good Practice Guides on a variety of topics.

[www.ccma.org.uk](http://www.ccma.org.uk)

## About The Knowledge Group (tkg)

We are a fresh thinking and disruptive sourcing firm, who deliver next generation outsourcing services. We ensure organisations can source and manage their business services quickly, without compromising on quality, with a combination of digital tools, a global marketplace and industry-leading business process outsourcing services.

We buy. We shortlist skilled vendors that suit your needs from an approved supply chain of innovative suppliers.

We build. From creation to design and implementation, we empower teams with the tools and suppliers they need to get the job done.

We operate. From supplier management to operational performance and beyond, we can take care of your projects and suppliers in a way that works for you.

[welovetoknow.com](http://welovetoknow.com)

# We empower organisations to outsource better.

We're The Knowledge Group (tkg).  
We're a fresh thinking and disruptive sourcing firm,  
who deliver next generation sourcing services.



**We buy.**



**We build.**



**We operate.**

## We believe in smart technology.

Using our end-to-end digital platform and data visualisation capabilities, we can give buyers a view of the whole outsourcing market. Whether that's comparing suppliers' key performance metrics, capabilities or compliance standards, we've got you covered.



Lower cost, lower risk, greater return.

**Let's source and outsource better together.**

**Join  
us!**

## **Not a member?**

There is no better time to join us. The industry is changing and we are giving our members more opportunities to learn, to network and to support each other.

**[www.ccma.org.uk/membership](http://www.ccma.org.uk/membership)**



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