

Setting up a
**WORLD-CLASS
CONTACT CENTRE IN
SOUTH AFRICA**



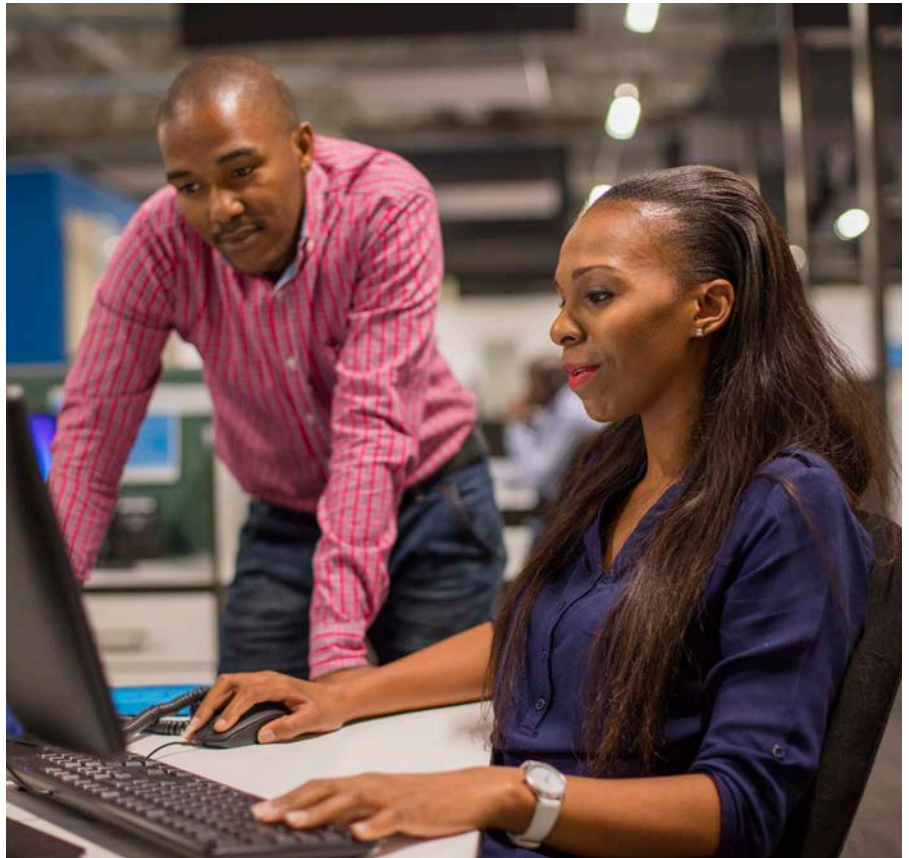


Setting up a world-class contact centre in South Africa

SOUTH AFRICA has established itself as a leading destination for Business Process Outsourcing, more specifically, Contact Centre Services. This is driven by an English accent-neutral talent pool delivering quality customer interactions as well as first-world infrastructure, government incentives and a favourable exchange rate.

Identified as a major growth sector by the Department of Trade and Industry in South Africa, the Business Process Outsourcing industry has the potential to not only attract foreign investment, but also create much-needed jobs locally. However, pivotal to the growth of the industry is fostering a business environment to support it, and proper infrastructure plays a major role to this end. One such factor includes the establishment of quality contact centres around the country.

Although a typical contact centre may simply appear to be a building comprising of desks, computers and many telephones, it is much more complicated. The secret to establishing a winning contact centre goes much further and should focus on the people it will house. In fact, all of the necessary decisions involved in setting up a contact centre should revolve around attracting suitable people and then retaining those people. Once that focus is positioned at the core, many other factors come into play and a step-by-step process to establishing a winning contact centre can begin.



“The secret to establishing a winning contact centre is to focus on the people it will house.”



Did you know?

WNS set up a 383-seat delivery centre from floor to ceiling in

62 days



Standard security requirements include:

- Centralised access control system
- CCTV cameras
- 24-hour control room
- Dedicated security personnel



Identifying a location

Location is critical to the establishment of any contact centre. To identify a suitable location, a number of sources of information are consulted, such as demographics, pool of school graduates, university graduates, unemployment rates in the area, competitors, transport amenities, as well as a myriad of other people and accessibility factors. These statistics are analysed to determine how a particular location will be able to attract and retain the targeted employee base for the operation.

Access to transport hubs is yet another major consideration when identifying a

location for a contact centre. Ultimately, the aim is not to add any additional time to the day of an employee through travelling. If access to the location is limited, a company may need to provide transport, which could incur additional costs.

The prospective site's proximity to universities and colleges would also be advantageous, making it an important consideration. This provides a specialised and skilled talent pool to tap into.

By making use of a complex scoring mechanism and scorecard, the most suitable location can be found by means of elimination.



77 000m
of network cable used in
an average call centre



Did you know?



One of the biggest costs to a contact centre building is the maintenance of lifts and air conditioners.

“Natural light, high ceilings and open spaces for break-out areas should all be key objectives for your building.”



Did you know?

An average 350-seat contact centre contains a minimum of 70 CCTV cameras.

Finding a suitable building

Once a decision is taken as to which area the contact centre will be located, the next step is to identify which building will be best to occupy. Factors such as Occupational Health and Safety compliance, number of production and non-production seats as well as all other support infrastructure or areas, disability access, building regulation, among other factors, need to be taken into consideration when identifying a site that will fully accommodate the size as well as operational and staffing needs. Finding out what the local council restrictions are and cooperating accordingly is also strongly advised.

A question to ask when identifying a building is whether to opt for multi-level

or single storey. While both have their own merits, it is worthwhile determining the specific needs the building should meet and whether supporting functions will also be accommodated in the facility. Another question to ask is whether to opt for an existing building or a custom-built one. A good starting point would be to locate buildings where contact centres were previously established.

When looking for a building, one of the key objectives is to find one that is aesthetically attractive. This means, lots of natural light, high ceilings, open spaces for potential break-out areas. Managers these days do not sit in their own offices,

but rather sit on the floors with their teams. Thus, it is best to look for a building that is as open-plan as it can possibly be.

As scarce as it may have become now due to restricting legislation in most cities around South Africa, parking still remains an important factor to consider. With an aim to attract and retain employees, including the management and specialist skills of key support roles, parking can influence staff attraction and retention greatly, so it's important that this is not overlooked. Some buildings have more parking bays available than others and the availability of this simple facility can go a very long way.



Standard failover equipment includes:

- Double redundancy for power
- UPS backup
- Generator power backup

Conducting Risk Assessment

Once the most suitable building is found, further assessment is still necessary. As was done to find a building, various primary risk assessments were conducted. Similarly, further assessments to identify additional risk factors need to be carried out. The factors to focus on during this exercise include, age of the building, transport, security, generators, canteen equipment, etc. As part of the assessment, companies would need to gauge whether these would need replacement as this would be another cost factor to consider.

There is also a need to consider flexibility as part of the risk assessment. Contact centres are living organisms and flexibility to rearrange as the contact centre grows and develops is essential. If any degree of inflexibility is detected, it should be



reduced or rectified as quickly as possible.

At WNS, we have a global standard for all of our buildings. This ensures that our buildings have the same IT infrastructure and the same back-up and data security. When establishing multiple buildings, it is essential to have a standard, not only from a compliance and accreditation

perspective, but also for efficiency purposes when conducting audits. In addition, by standardising our buildings, we are able to have the confidence that when issues arise, fault-finding and the subsequent solution identified is completed in the least amount of time possible.

“Business continuity is critical to the optimal functioning of any contact centre. Attention should be given to create an environment with no single point of failure and full redundancy.”



Combined user systems consist of:

- Hundreds of terabytes in storage
- Over 2 terabytes of memory
- Over 2000 GHz of CPU power

Kitting out the soon-to-be contact centre

Once the risk assessment is complete, the focus shifts to aesthetic elements like, ergonomics, the use of light, sound dampening, creating vibrancy through colour and many other factors.

At WNS, we apply uniformity to our look and feel to reinforce our brand as well as incorporate the brand of our clients into the overall aesthetics in dedicated operating areas. We prefer to define our design approach as high-quality and minimalistic. As part of this approach, much thought is given to the layout and design of work areas to minimise potential foot traffic, and optimise space.

Space optimisation is a very important consideration in the day-to-day functioning of a contact centre. One of the pivotal factors on the contact centre floor is the desk configuration as well as the desk space allocated to each agent. There are various styles of desk configuration, from circular pods to y-shaped to banquet style, but selecting a style that is most suited to the environment as well as its ability to optimally utilise the space is the key.

When selecting materials to include in a new contact centre, it is crucial to opt for well-built, hard-wearing and good quality products. If the contrary is chosen,

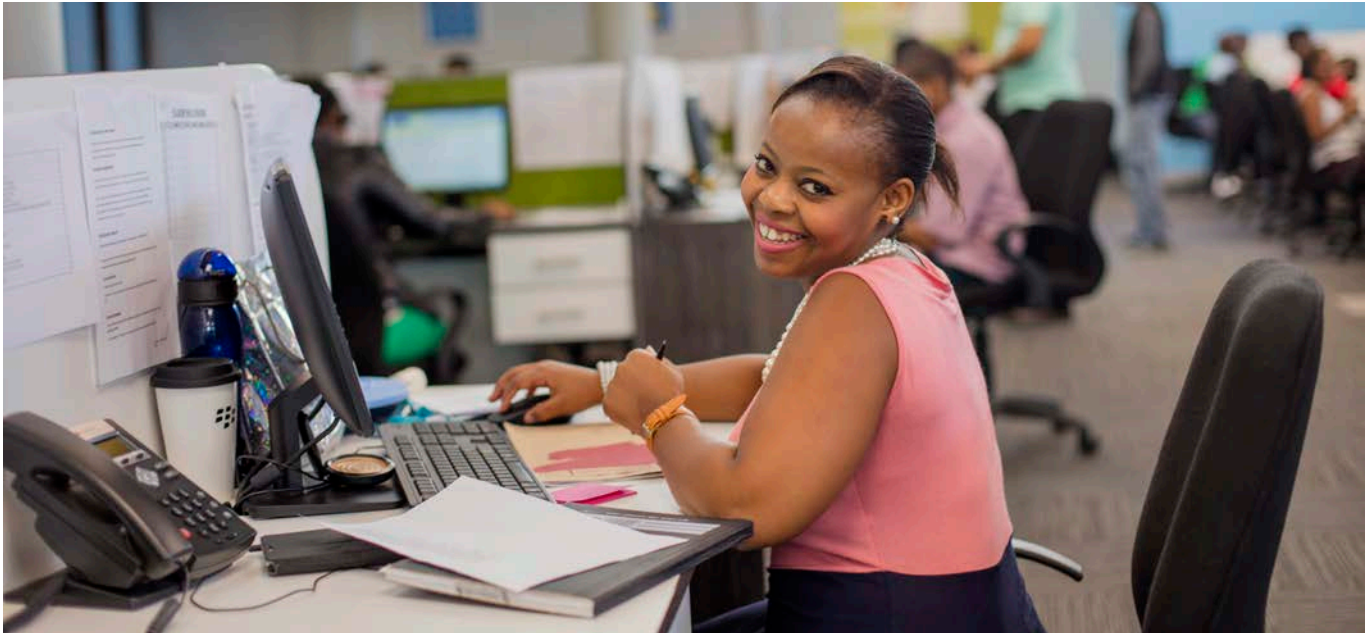
it unfortunately presents a great cost risk as these would need to be replaced more frequently due to the pace at which a contact centre operates.

Each employer has a duty of care to each employee and simply cannot put them at risk of injury or harm, regardless of where they might find themselves in the building. Thus, health and safety is a key consideration that cannot be overlooked in the set-up phase of a contact centre. Once the necessary standards have been met, it is important to obtain the related external accreditations as failing to do this can invalidate insurance policies, among other risks it presents.

As part of adequately equipping the building with the necessary technology, business continuity should be kept in mind at all times. Business continuity is critical to the optimal functioning of any contact centre and thus attention should be given to create an environment with no single point of failure and full redundancy.

Due to the fact that important client information is dealt with on a daily basis, it is critical to ensure that security is as tight as it could possibly be. This would require state-of-the-art access control and CCTV cameras, which ultimately reduce the risks to client data.





Make it a great place to work

As staff attrition is the biggest cost to any contact centre, it is important to restrict the drivers thereof and continuously aim to make the contact centre a place where people would want to work.

There is little doubt that aesthetics and facilities present an immense amount of value to current and prospective employees. It is with this in mind that great attention should be given to the available facilities so that people would want to spend time at work.

The aesthetics can be considered to be a large expense, but serves as a valuable attractor. A key element to building aesthetics is exterior branding, and whether it looks impressive enough to attract both

agents and clients. Exterior branding needs to be visible and strategically placed. Equally important is the accessibility of the building for visitors who would need to be able to find and enter the building as effortlessly as possible.

A very important consideration, especially when trying to combat attrition, is being attuned to the changing needs of the agent population inhabiting the building. As today's contact centre population is largely made up of Millennials, it is crucial to equip the building with the technologies and facilities this particular generation would be familiar with. Think Wi-Fi, gym equipment, gaming consoles and device charging pods.

“Today’s contact centre population is largely made up of Millennials. It is therefore crucial to equip the building with technologies and facilities this generation is familiar with.”



Conclusion

When setting up a contact centre, a large portion of the work takes place before the building is even found and occupied. There are a myriad of factors to consider in selecting the most suitable building. Once this building is found, the last step would be to customise and optimise the space to suit the type of operation it will house. Overall, this process takes time and a generous amount of lead time is required to make sure that

the building will service the operation best, and not result in endless problems. It is important to realise that in order to set up a well-functioning contact centre it certainly won't be a quick process. A minimum of six months is recommended to set up a quality environment, but a long-term commitment is required to maintain the building and constantly seek ways to make it a great place to work. ▲



WNS (Holdings) Limited (NYSE: WNS) is a leading global Business Process Management (BPM) company. WNS offers business value to 200+ global clients by combining operational excellence with deep domain expertise in key industry verticals, including banking and financial services, healthcare, insurance, manufacturing, media and entertainment, consulting and professional services, retail & consumer packaged goods, telecom and diversified businesses, shipping and logistics, travel and leisure, and utilities. WNS delivers an entire spectrum of business process management services such as customer care, finance and accounting, human resource solutions, research and analytics, technology solutions, and industry-specific back-office and front-office processes. WNS has delivery centers world-wide, including China, Costa Rica, India, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Sri Lanka, UK and US.



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