



## **Career planning gives call centers a lift**

**14 March 2008**

<http://www.zdnetasia.com/news/business/0,39044229,62038964,00.htm>

**Plan a proper strategy for both your contact center and its staff career paths in order to turnaround lagging call centers, a contact center research firm has advised.**

CallCentres.net released a report recently which found Asian contact centers are moving from traditional service and support functions to being more instrumental in sales and revenue generation.

However, the survey of 2,488 contact centers across Asia highlighted Singapore as lagging in that respect, behind its peers.

CallCentres.net's report said Singapore's contact center industry has grown in seat size by 8 percent from last year, but only a third of Singapore's contact centers are measured as profit centers, which is causing Singapore to fall behind the rest of its Asian counterparts.

Catriona Wallace, managing director of CallCentres.net said in an interview with ZDNet Asia that Singapore is in danger of slipping from its lead in the market for innovation and use of technology, if its industry "remains a traditional reactive service provider, measured as a cost to organizations".

She said a second problem facing the Singaporean contact center is its "recruitment crisis" with high staff attrition and "extreme difficulty in recruitment" leading to increased costs of replacing staff, and a reduction in service as a result of having to retrain replacements.

Client: callcentres.net  
Subject: Career planning gives call centers a lift  
Publication: ZDNet Asia  
Circulation: 850,000  
Date: 14 March 2008  
Source: Media Release

Wallace said: "The primary reasons contact center employees leave their jobs is a lack of career path, lack of remuneration and a lack of variety or interesting work."

Wallace suggested a combination of long- and short-term measures that may turn this around eventually. In the short term, contact center managers can build career paths for contact center agents and raise the profile of their work by adding variety in the form of projects to develop extra skill sets.

In the long term, investing in automation of basic, routine tasks through technologies such as speech recognition, encouraging self-help for the caller, may push the job of the contact center agent to one that handles more complicated or relationship-based work. This would be more stimulating and also offer better remuneration for the staff, said Wallace.

Genesys, which sponsored the report together with Autonomy etalk, gave ZDNet Asia additional figures from a separate agent survey conducted in 2006.

Pete Wermter, Genesys Asia-Pacific marketing director, said the survey found some 50 percent of agents surveyed said their jobs would be "more satisfying" if they could conduct proactive courtesy calls to customers, providing a break from "handling inbound service calls and upset customers".

"Variety drives satisfaction--only 41 percent of agents stated they had sufficient job variety," added Wermter.

Aspect Software, which provides contact center technology, said that the advantage Singapore's stronger infrastructure affords it is its ability to support higher adoption of new technology.

Aspect offered enterprise unified communications as an example of new technology that would raise the profile of contact centers.

Steven Tan, regional director for marketing, Asia-Pacific and the Middle East, Aspect Software, said such technology would bridge the gap between contact center workers and knowledge workers who are typically away from the front lines.

"This enables businesses to seamlessly extend customer-facing business processes beyond the traditional boundaries of the contact center to reach knowledge workers or subject matter experts in the enterprise in order to enhance collaboration," said Tan.