



## People Processes

# ClientLogic's Motto "Think like a Customer" Resounds throughout its Operations

ClientLogic excels at managing people processes. Starting with excellent training, competitive salaries, great benefits and countless opportunities for internal advancement and personal development, ClientLogic has developed a highly successful recipe for retaining agents in what is typically a high-turnover environment. ClientLogic provides customer care for industry-leading clients through its 36 contact centers located in 11 countries worldwide.

ClientLogic is one of the world's largest providers of integrated customer management and has been delivering multi-channel outsourcing solutions for more than 30 years. Headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee, ClientLogic operates a total of 55 locations throughout North America, Europe and Australia.

ClientLogic's people processes are vital to its business success—ClientLogic employs

some 10,000 contact center associates and 2,500 other associates to deliver customer care, fulfillment and marketing services for more than 250 clients. In 2000, ClientLogic handled 36.7 million calls, shipped 5.4 million orders and answered 6.6 million e-mails on behalf of client companies like Microsoft, TiVo, EarthLink, Zales.com, Logitech, Citizens Bank and MicronPC.

ClientLogic's contact centers specialize in high-volume, multi-channel customer support. ClientLogic handles all types of customer contacts, including phone calls, e-mails, online chat, fax, mail and automated Web self-help solutions. One of ClientLogic's strengths is that it manages multi-channel relationships using a single, enterprise-wide customer data repository and product knowledgebase. This ensures that customers receive positive, consistent experiences across channels, media and countries.

We spoke with Channing Rollo, manager of solution planning, about how ClientLogic approaches the people processes for its 10,000 contact center associates. In an industry renowned for high turnover, ClientLogic has managed to create a contact center environment that nurtures its associates. One clear indication of this success is that hundreds of associates have been promoted into higher positions within the company after demonstrating success as a contact center agent. ClientLogic is proud that approximately 77 percent of its position openings are filled through internal promotions. This "seeking talent from within" approach is unusual for an





outsourcing firm, but ClientLogic firmly believes in creating career paths and developmental opportunities for its employees. In fact, many contact center associates have moved up the career ladder into executive management positions in its corporate offices.

Serving 250+ clients through 55 locations around the world creates ample opportunities for employee advancement and geographical movement. For a change of pace or scenery, some associates move “laterally” to other locations or new client accounts when openings are announced. ClientLogic tries to accommodate most of such associate requests. “We work hard to hire and retain the best associates for our clients. Our turnover is significantly lower than average for our industry,” states Rollo. “Excellent training, great opportunities for advancement and hundreds of exciting client accounts make it very rewarding for associates to stay with ClientLogic.”

ClientLogic not only seeks talent from within when hiring and filling positions, it also networks through its employees to find other qualified candidates. ClientLogic encourages and rewards associates with cash bonuses for referring friends and family members to the ClientLogic team. “We really push to staff positions internally before hitting the street,” says Rollo. “We’ve been very pleased with the quality of associate referrals and have found that this type of recruiting also builds strong bonds between employees.”

Of these recruited associates, most new hires are college graduates or are working on college degrees. This is especially true of associates hired to staff technical support client accounts, such as Microsoft, TiVo and MicronPC. In addition to college experience, many associates boast technical or



customer support certifications, including certifications for particular software packages and systems.

Of course, retaining great agents doesn’t come cheap. “ClientLogic recognizes that talented associates deserve competitive pay. We offer salaries that are competitive in each geographic market. We also review pay scales on an annual basis,” states Rollo. For many associate positions, ClientLogic offers a base salary enhanced by additional pay commensurate with performance and commission. ClientLogic offers employees a comprehensive set of benefits, including tuition reimbursement, 401k, flexible spending plan, vision care and health insurance, to name a few. It even offers many local benefits, such as discounts for nearby gyms, sporting events and cinemas. Frequently, clients will also offer associate discounts on their products or services.

To build bonds between ClientLogic and its associates, ClientLogic believes in ongoing communication, such as letters from the CEO and anniversary cards that celebrate each year of service with the company. The Associate Announcement team publishes weekly newsletters featuring customer



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satisfaction stories and kudos to showcase agent successes. ClientLogic also produces and distributes an "InFocus" TV show to keep employees informed of company events at the corporate level and at other facilities around the world. This helps employees understand their place in the "big picture" of the overall international organization. Such simple gestures go a long way in creating a connection, thereby earning associate loyalty and retention.

To encourage ongoing associate motivation and feedback, ClientLogic employs performance competitions, contests, parties, surveys, dress-down days, cyber cafes, charity events, team meetings and more. Most locations host monthly or quarterly "town hall" meetings to bring together the entire center to enjoy food, music, discussions and speeches. ClientLogic has also instituted a "Speak Up" award to encourage constructive feedback from associates. Employees can earn cash for submitting ideas to change the way ClientLogic handles issues and processes.

In addition to communicating through regular events and surveys, ClientLogic also encourages its clients to visit centers to meet and visit with the associates handling their calls. This not only helps clients feel comfortable with the outsourcing arrangement, but also helps associates better understand the client. "These visits give our associates a chance to absorb a little of the client's corporate culture and philosophy. It also enables the associate to gain a sense of how they're contributing to the success and welfare of that client," states Rollo.

To ensure high-quality support for its clients, ClientLogic routinely monitors calls, both through supervisory staff and a quality assurance team. A combination of live and recorded calls is reviewed to determine performance. Says Dave Witherel of

MicronPC, "ClientLogic puts much greater effort into monitoring agents than we ever asked for. They do a far greater volume of quality checking than we've seen in other service bureaus." ClientLogic has also instituted a buddy and mentor system in which more experienced agents help newer agents learn how to handle calls. This has been very successful in getting new agents up-to-speed quickly, as well as creating bonds between employees.

ClientLogic's motto, "Think like a customer," is obviously paying off. "We ask associates to always 'think like a customer' and provide the service that they would want to receive if they were on the other end of the line," explains Rollo. During the December holiday rush, for instance, 89.5 percent of customers served by ClientLogic reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the service that ClientLogic delivered. These results far surpass the industry standard established by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (72.6 percent for Q4 2000) by a whopping 16 percent. Thus even during its clients' busiest season, ClientLogic's company-wide commitment to superior customer service and people processes enable associates to deliver stellar results.

Rollo concludes: "Hundreds of companies entrust us with their most valuable asset: their customers. We take that responsibility very seriously. That's why we think it's so important to hire, develop and retain talented and hard-working associates. They are the "human touch" of our business, the vital link between our clients and their customers. And because we believe in the importance of *each and every* customer touch, we believe in the importance of *each and every* associate." ♦