



PRESS RELEASE

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS WHY PEOPLE ARE CHOOSING A CAREER IN UK CALL CENTRES

London, UK – 21st September 2010 - A survey of call centre professionals has dispelled the myth that working in a call centre is a low paid, stop gap employment option for the unqualified. According to new research by recruiting expert Hays Contact Centres, in conjunction with the Top 50 Call Centres for Customer Service, attractive pay and benefits are the main reason they chose to work in a call centre. The industry is also attracting more graduates and is offering a clearer career path for progression.

The survey of 286 call centre professionals revealed that 54% of agents believe there is a clear opportunity for them to progress beyond call centre agent and 58% would like to develop a long-term career in the call centre industry. The research shows there are clearly opportunities to move up the ranks, with 55% of call centre managers confirming that they initially started out as agents. Call centre workers are also receiving excellent training and development opportunities, with 65% of managers spending more than 20% of their time coaching or training team members.

“Call centres are becoming more demanding of their staff so it isn’t surprising that the profession is attracting more people with degrees, particularly when we are still faced with a challenging economy and high unemployment levels,” commented Geoff Sims, Managing Director of Hays Contact Centres. “A clear career path is always a strong draw for candidates and it is increasingly being recognised that call centres offer good benefits and opportunities to progress beyond agent,” he continued.

The report provides employers across the UK with valuable insight into the key benefits and incentives that employees are looking for in order to establish a long-term career. These include non-financial incentives, such as flexible working (38%) and being given greater responsibility (35%). Respondents cited that they deem patience and customer empathy key skills to be a good call centre agent.

Simon Thorpe, Programme Director at Top 50 Call Centres for Customer Service, said: “The research highlights that people can see the real benefit to working in call centres, dispelling the myth that it is simply a stop-gap job solution. The study also highlights the benefits that are encouraging people to stay with their employer long-term. Organisations across the UK would be wise to follow the example of UK call centres and offer the pay packages, training opportunities and clear career paths their employees are looking for in order to keep their best people.”

- Ends -

NOTES TO EDITOR

Survey methodology

Hays Contact Centres surveyed 286 call centre workers across the UK in August 2010.

About Top 50 Call Centres

The Top 50 Call Centres for Customer Service initiative is a benchmarking programme, in partnership with GfK Mystery Shopping, one of the UK's leading independent market research organisations. Its goal is to help call centres to measure themselves on what the general public thinks a good calling experience should be. It is based on over 18,500 mystery shopping enquiries.

The Institute of Work Psychology at Sheffield University and the Manchester Business School support the Top 50 Call Centres for Customer Service programme by providing an independent analysis of the results.

Now in its third successful year, The Top 50 Call Centres for Customer Service is an exciting initiative designed to create one benchmark for customer service excellence and transform the public perception of the contact centre industry. For further information visit www.callcentre.co.uk/top50

The Top 50 Call Centres for Customer Service is a benchmarking initiative, created to improve the performance of call centres and instil best practice across the industry. The initiative is supported by Jabra, the leading headset provider, and Genesys, a provider of customer service software for call centres.

About Hays:

Hays plc (the "Group") is the leading global professional recruiting group. The Group is the expert at recruiting qualified, professional and skilled people worldwide, being the market leader in the UK and Australia and one of the market leaders in Continental Europe. The Group operates across the private and public sectors, dealing in permanent positions, contract roles and temporary assignments.

As at 30 June 2010, the Group employed 6,845 staff operating from 270 offices in 28 countries across 17 specialisms.

For the year ended 30 June 2010:

- the Group reported net fees of £557.7 million and operating profit of £80.5 million;
- the Group placed around 50,000 candidates into permanent jobs and around 180,000 people into temporary assignments;
- 26% of Group net fees were generated in Asia Pacific, 30% in Continental Europe & RoW and 44% in the United Kingdom & Ireland
- the temporary placement business represented 58% of net fees and the permanent placement business represented 42% of net fees;
- Hays operates in the following countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UAE and the United Kingdom.

For further press information, please contact:

Claire Barber

Wildfire PR

T. 020 8339 4420

E: aliziaw@wildfirepr.co.uk

Claire Fowler

Hays

T. 020 7259 8821

E: Claire.s.fowler@hays.com