

*establish
major
call centres*

in

CANADA

How efficiently a company uses telephone systems for selling makes a difference, and it shows on the bottom line. With that in mind, many firms have established elaborate call centre operations of their own. Others have gone the out-sourcing route, contracting out telemarketing and other phone-based sales activities to companies specializing in that field.

AT&T Canada

Telespectrum Worldwide

Zacson Corporation

Canada, says the company chose Winnipeg because it had

"all the assets we need in order to be competitive — specifically a good labour force, reasonable costs overall, and a favourable exchange rate. Put all those items together and costs are substantially less than they would be in U.S. cities."

In Saskatchewan, Manitoba's neighbouring prairie province, Zacson Corporation, one of America's largest telemarketing companies, opened a call centre in Regina in January 1996. The company workforce increased to 100 by mid-1997 and is expected to reach 200 by the end of the year.

About Zacson's choice of Regina, President Rick Hoefert says: "One factor was SaskTel's internationally-recognized technical leadership, as evidenced by its 100-per-cent digital network, and its track record of partnering. These attributes, along with a highly skilled workforce, make this an attractive location."

Another element in the Canadian call center competitive edge is lower costs relative to the United States, notably in human resources. The June 1997 issue of the U.S. magazine *Area Development* quantified the advantage thus, "American companies with call centers in Canada save more than 25 per cent on pay for agents." ♦

The result has been an explosive growth in the call centre industry. The trend is particularly evident in Canada where an estimated 5,000 centres are now in operation.

Among the most recent new arrivals is AT&T Solutions Customer Care, which announced in July it would open a major new call centre in Halifax, creating 1,000 full-time and part-time jobs over the next two years.

The Province of Nova Scotia plans to invest \$12 million in recruitment and training support over five years. AT&T will make an initial capital investment of \$9 million. Its annual operating costs are expected to be about \$35 million.

The centre will serve clients in Canada and the United States. AT&T Solutions Customer Care is one of the largest professional communication service bureaus in the world and manages 12 centres globally, including a major facility in Winnipeg which has increased its workforce to 1,400 in just three years.

Two other U.S. companies that have recently come to Canada are Telespectrum Worldwide Inc. of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Zacson Corporation of Pleasanton, California. Both companies are in the teleservice bureau business.

Telespectrum Worldwide's Canadian entry is a \$4.3 million call centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba, employing 400 people. In an interview with *Canada Investment News*, Mr. Parry Rosenberg, President of Telespectrum

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