

HOW TO START AND OPERATE A SUCCESSFUL CALL CENTER IN PAKISTAN

("A ship in port is safe, but that is not what ships are for. Sail out to sea and do new things." --Grace Hopper, Computer Pioneer)

Table of Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1: What is a call center?

Chapter 2: Hardware and software needed

Chapter 3: Permissions

Chapter 4: What can you sell?

Chapter 5: Who can you sell to?

Chapter 6: Anyone can start now with CJ.COM

Chapter 7: Successful selling practices

Chapter 8: Selling to American culture for maximum ROI

Chapter 9: What kind of call center representative are USA companies looking for?

Chapter 10: What are the advantages for Pakistan?

Chapter 11: Important web links

Chapter 12: About the author

Chapter 1: What is a call center? A successful one?

A call center in the year 2003 is different from the call centers of the past. Because of Voice over IP, it is now any location in any time zone where Internet is available. It is located physically at any place where incoming and outgoing phone calls are made between call center representatives and customers. Just during the month of Ramadan, over 3 million seconds passed and billions of customers were served by these global call centers.

(Two popular terms are used to refer to the call centers that are opened in locations that are geographically away from the parent company's location, "back office" and "outsourced center." We will refer to them often.)

A customer does not care what a call center is nor where a call center is located. What truly matters is how well the call center representative treats the customer. The call center can be manned by one to an infinite number of representatives, depending upon the situation. It can be located in a corner of a residence, in the back room of a restaurant or other business, in the library of a school or university or again, on the top floor of the spice market, or anywhere that Internet is available. The call center of today and the future has no limits to the imagination. The limits are only those imposed by bureaucracy's "red tape."

It is clear now what a call center is. A huge number of those 3 million seconds of incoming and outgoing calls during Ramadan could have been placed to and from call centers in Pakistan. Why wait? **What makes a successful call center in Pakistan? Certain types of manpower, Internet, VoIP long distance calling solution, and encouragement by the government are essential.**

A successful call center will employ persons with a minimum of good English speaking ability and good English listening comprehension; basic skills in computers and Internet such as e-mail, chat programs, and web browsing; and a polite and confident attitude toward customers. The ideal back office representative will have all of the above capabilities, but he is also motivated by something inside of himself to succeed. Other terms for this concept are motivation or self-initiative. He will pursue a good command of English written and reading comprehension, an understanding of English idioms and different types of American slang, and have a will to be persistent, caring, flexible, observant, and assumptive with each unique customer he deals with. He will know that he is serving often well-informed customers who expect respect. He will be able to adjust to changes in technology as well as the products and services he will offer.

Next, reasonably priced Internet service is vital to take advantage of low-cost VoIP services. Government and private industry should work together to encourage DSL and other fast Internet access to be a common standard; this allows the representative to use a computer on the Internet and still make outgoing and receive incoming phone calls at the same time. At the least, a mere minimum bandwidth of 30 kbps per phone line is required. The people of Pakistan must be empowered with the same tools of success as citizens of other countries.

What advantages does Pakistan have over other countries to be the successful call center choice of the world? Will it be possible that in less than one year's time, someone asks, "What is a call center?" Can we hope for the following reply to that question? "Let's answer that by showcasing the thousands of such prosperous call centers in Pakistan."

Why not? It is a land of citizens who are proactive, future-thinking, entrepreneurial, self-starting, creative, tough people. It is a people who have undergone many challenges in life, who have learned how to meet their basic needs in innovative ways.

I can remember meeting a gentleman on Super Highway at a truck stop who made me realize some of the innate qualities of Pakistanis. He was sitting in a small cubicle carved into the side of a store, not even big enough to stand up in. He had one light bulb above his head. It was midnight, and he was mending work jeans for truckers on a manually operated sewing machine. On top of this, he was smiling. This may not seem incredible to other Pakistanis, but this is exactly the incredible resourcefulness and attitude for success in this world. It is also what is needed by USA companies from Pakistani call center representatives.

A large number of Pakistanis comprehend and speak English as their second or third language, and not just from local English lessons. It is because of the Internet, where English is the main language used. The same Pakistani citizens who cannot afford many luxuries of life have found ways to use the Internet. It may clearly surprise many to know the number of Pakistanis whose second language English is quite fluent, in fact. This Internet we are speaking of has allowed the sharing of Pakistani culture and English language among people all over the world. It has provided good opportunities for Pakistanis that were, before the Internet, unheard of. It is the same Internet that can empower the country to be among the top call center choices of the world. We are referring, again, here to VoIP (voice over Internet protocol), not a mystery but a standard around the world. The future of long distance calling is here now, and it is through the Internet. Why block that? Why block the tool that will help make Pakistan be the call center choice of the world and improve standards of living?

While Pakistan offers a substantial savings in labor costs of different types of call center service representation for USA companies, it also offers more and better jobs to Pakistani citizens. It offers the same citizens a chance to build their employment resumes with excellent experience and references. The potential results even include some surprise advantages to both countries. The USA company who reduces its labor costs will be able to pass on some of that savings to its customer base. The Pakistani citizen improves his standard of living that improves the local economy and even decreases crime.

Straight from an entry at <http://www.callcentrevoice.com>, Faisal Javed says, "For a country of its size, Pakistan is unique in that a significant percentage of its educated workforce is technology-savvy, English-speaking and highly motivated. When you look at that combination, you realize that Pakistan presents a great opportunity for worldwide companies to service their clients with highly skilled people, while offering a cost-effective solution."

What will make Pakistan the call center choice or even one of the typical call center choice locations of the world? It is the fantastic potential of well-educated, English-speaking, people-friendly citizens of Pakistan, the huge pool of those who have taken advantage of the opportunities of the Internet against many odds. The people, the Internet, VoIP long distance calling solution, and encouragement by the government can make Pakistan the call center choice, a reality.

Chapter 2: Hardware and software needed

With LAN-based switches, internet-based transaction processing, client/server software systems, and open phone systems, any call center or back office can have a highly sophisticated call handling and customer management system, even down to ten agents or less. Even so, **an acceptable setup for as little as one call center seat would include one PC set up with the necessary live chat, database, spreadsheet, word processor, web editor, and other software (depending upon the purpose of the back office); and a VOIP solution such as Virtual Phone Line (<http://www.mysuperphone.com/>) that interconnects the telephone with high-speed Internet.**

Large call centers are generally set up with workstations that include a computer, a telephone set (or headset) hooked into a large telecom switch and one or more supervisor stations. The center may stand by itself, or could be linked with other centers. It is possibly linked to a corporate data network, including mainframes, computers and LANs. Often, the voice and data pathways into the center are linked through a set of new technologies called CTI, or computer-telephony integration with predictive dialers.

A center can be located in a remote office at any location, a manufacturing site, a place as huge as a warehouse, even one's home, or on the road with wireless Internet. But again, the center may need some hardware and software. For outbound calls, one can use predictive or auto dialers. A predictive dialer uses up to three lines per person. It works best with 8-16 people with 16 predictive dialers. The cost per predictive dealer is \$1000. Give the predictive dialer the phone list to call. It makes 3 simultaneous phone calls at the same time. As soon as one call is answered by an agent, the predictive dialer drops the other two calls.

Predictive and Auto Dialers

Predictive dialers sense answering machines and busy signals. They use pacing algorithms so that call center representatives are talking right away when customers answer their phones. Since predictive dialing lets you make a considerable number of calls in a short time- as many as 100 calls in, for example, a 90-minute period - dialers help call centers improve their ROI (return on investment) by cutting down on

the time and overall cost it takes to reach customers for any calling campaign whether for customer service, sales, technical support or other reason.

An auto dialer dials a few numbers and plays a pre-recorded message. If a customer is interested in buying, he presses a certain key on the telephone keypad and the call is switched to a live sales agent at your call center. "I'm calling on behalf of Future Technologies with hologram wake up call service. You get to choose the character, tone of voice, the wake up message and music in the background. Please press 3 on your telephone keypad if you would like to talk to one of our representatives." No time is wasted. The cost is approximately \$1000 for 4 lines with an auto-dialer.

Agents will feel more confident about incoming calls via the auto dialer calls, knowing the customer has pressed a button with interest in his company's solutions. At the same, there is nothing like seeing your call center representative overcome the objections of the customer in a professional and understanding and close the sale on her own.

Look up "Automated Call Distributor." ACD reads your 800 number when dialed and displays your company name to the MSR, allowing him or her to greet the caller with a customized response. This added touch helps your customers feel as if they are calling your company directly.

Since the ACD identifies specific 800 numbers, it is of great assistance to your marketing efforts. You can use unique 800 numbers for different media sources: one for your magazine ad, another one for your newspaper ad, one for your television ad. Then you can record the number of calls that come in for each 800 number, providing you with accurate media tracking data. This lets you know which media source gives you the best return for your advertising dollar.

In addition to predictive or auto dialers, the call center can buy recording machines to record conversations between agent and customer for quality assurance, training with demonstration of best practices, and coaching and counseling sessions. All kinds of software are available from \$500 to \$5 million. Look at what other call centers are doing. Who are their clients? Who are they selling to? How are they doing it? How do I want to start?

DSL, a great investment

Your call center or back office or even you as an individual businessman or woman need a DSL line. Think of it as an investment. Why do people go to CEBIT in Germany and Comdex in Dubai? Why do they spend the money for hotel, airline, car rental, exhibition fees and time away from their business? As an investment in their future! Get DSL for your business and also for your home. Our company does not sell DSL. We can be thankful to Allah the He has allowed you have some excellent providers who offer this service in Pakistan. DSL is available in Pakistan at 7000 rupees/month equivalent to \$120 per month. Multi.net.pk sells DSL in Karachi. Dsl.net.pk in Islamabad and you have a Cable provider World Telmecca in Lahore.

Users can also get a wireless Internet from Brain Net or PTCL. Brain Net charges 12,000 rupees for a CIR 64 K interface. This is a dedicated 64 connection to have 2-

3 phone lines simultaneously. Or if you don't have that available, get an ISDN connection.

No matter how good of a dialup connection, get a fast Internet access and a Virtual Phone Line. I know personally there is a big difference between dialup and DSL. I can surf several web sites at the same time; have MSN, ICQ and Yahoo messenger open with my video cam open for a business conference; have 3 different email programs open; and make phone calls at the same time, all with my DSL connection.

To get started, there is one given. One thing you have to realize. You have to be "virtually" in the USA. Get a Virtual Phone Line on the web at mysuperphone.com. Sign up before you go home. Without it, you are at zero. It's just the way it is. No questions. Simple obvious truth.

Chapter 3: Permissions

Even PTCL states that the call center business "has enormous growth potential due to unprecedented growth in service industries of the developed countries." The site also states, "PTCL is not only interested in revenue generation but also interested in generating new employment opportunities." Discover the government of Pakistan's position on call centers and special permissions that are required at http://www.ptcl.com.pk/call_center.html.

Let me compliment Pakistan government in its effort to publicize its policies for call centers on the web. I tried entering the key words "Sri Lanka Call Center Policy" and "India Call Center Policy," and my returned responses were not meaningful at all. I entered "Pakistan Call Center Policy." The return response included the following on the date of 28, December 2002 at 10:45 AM CST.

<http://www.most.gov.pk/frames/pressbrifings/brief%20for%20international%20vsat%20policy%20for%20call%20centers.htm>

http://www.ptcl.com.pk/call_center.html

Call center business is not illegal. The government of Pakistan encourages it, gives incentives, and gives cheaper bandwidth and lower taxes. What is holding Pakistan back perhaps?

Take a look at the web sites of the Pakistan government. The Minister of Information and Media Development has designed and maintained the government of Pakistan's web site. Visit it, and you will have a feel for the future-thinking mentality of this country that you can be proud of, and it is because of people like you and the respected people who run the country. So, at least start with what is available. This book, this seminar and the web site are all meant for your benefit.

We will summarize some of the details of the permissions required in Pakistan. PTCL has an interconnect agreement for call center operators. The applicant will meet

certain requirements and present a business plan and company profile. In addition, registration with the Company Registrar Office is necessary. The applicant must adhere to the legalities involved with the Pakistan Telecommunication (reorganization) Act 1996. Other requirements deal with interconnectivity, bandwidth termination, details of customer service partner contracts, foreign exchange laws, leased line network requirements, etc. Forms, directions and requirements are on the web site of PTCL.

Chapter 4: What can you sell? Who can get started and how?

Sell products, services and solutions that are needed by anyone anywhere in the world. The current hot market to sell to is USA. Sell what is in demand. Sell what you know will be in demand soon. Sell what will improve the Return on Investment (ROI) of the Host Company or individual. Remember, it is not possible to solve today's issues with yesterday's solutions. Think out of the box. Read. Surf the net. Research eBay completed items. Chat with people online. Learn. Soak it up. Be a sponge for knowledge. Be a star with your imagination and ambition.

There are the obvious organizations you can sell for: hotels, banks, travel agencies, airlines, pharmacies, insurance companies, counseling centers, newspaper home delivery, charity drives and more. The services that call centers typically provide are customer service, technical support, telemarketing, and administrative support.

Where do you get new ideas? Let's consider a few things. If a man is sitting on a donkey facing the rear, why do we automatically think that it is the man who is backwards? Isn't the donkey backwards? How about this? Is the best way to hear something is with your eyes? Because you have heard the sound of tinkling bracelets, when you see them, don't sometimes imagine hearing them?

Some will look at an old bicycle and see either possible parts to repair other bicycles or mere trash. Pablo Picasso, a great Spanish artist, took the seat and handle bars of one, and welded them together into the head of a bull. He saw something that was not there in the eyes of other people.

The African American female inventor Grace Murray Hopper, was "Amazing Grace" to those who knew and loved her. Her mission was to make computers accessible to everyone. Without her vision that computers could be programmed in plain English and her invention of the first computer compiler, it is unlikely that many of us would be on the web today.

What is the point here? There is an infinite number of possibilities in opening call centers in Pakistan and making Pakistan THE CHOICE, but maybe we cannot see them right now. One out of every twenty readers of or listeners to this seminar clearly understand the possibilities available to the nation, the economy, the labor and even the individual entrepreneur.

Case Study 1:

Maria Ramos of Houston, Texas has been buying refurbished computers at \$50 each and reselling them on eBay.com and Half.com from \$300 to \$500 a piece. She also holds down a part time job in small business consulting. Her resale business has gotten so big that she had to analyze the situation and hire someone else to assist. Maria found Ali of Islamabad, Pakistan who had skills that complimented her own. Ali could graphic-edit, web-edit, answer sales inquiries by email, chat or even phone, and relate to potential buyers in a very friendly, professional manner. Maria shipped one of those refurbished PC's (ready to use with FrontPage, MSN chat, FTP, spreadsheets, and other software) a \$99 router, and an Internet phone device for unlimited USA outgoing and incoming calling (\$299 purchase with \$99 per month flat rate) to Ali. Maria pays for Ali's DSL service, approximately \$40 US dollars/month (common range of DSL price is \$20-\$50USD/month).

Now, Maria has a "back office" in Islamabad. She buys wholesale still, takes the pictures, and ships the product when auctions and buys close. Customers get immediate attention. Maria's ROI and number of closed sales have increased tremendously. She has more time for other ventures.

What is in it for Ali? He has always been a night owl. He is most creative in the late evening, perfect timing for USA eBay customers. His DSL service is paid for by Maria. His new career provides new job experiences and the opportunity to improve his English language skills. The extensive research required on what is selling and what is not on eBay and how best to sell is supplying him with material for his Master's thesis. He never has to leave his home for work. Plus he is making \$75 more per month than he would have locally. It's a win-win situation for all.

Case Study 2:

A large multinational cell Phone Company needs billing, MIS and customer care support. Its headquarters are in the USA where the local labor force cannot fulfill these positions lucratively. The employment must be flexible, multi-lingual, and savvy to technology and market change. The local cost of living puts wages at \$15 per hour. High turnover in employment results in high costs for the company. They turn to third world countries for help. The cell phone company saw the value of the "discarded bicycle." In addition, now there are 50 agents improving their way of life intellectually and economically. They value their new jobs at the call center, where they are treated with more respect than they have experienced before, and they will not quit because of trivial reasons such as their USA counterparts would. Overhead for the host company is much lower. There are surprise issues that arise, but the positive aspects of the call center solution outweigh the problems.

Case Study 3:

A travel agency sees more and more of its clients needing service between 10 PM and 7 AM EST. They cannot find a qualified employment force willing to work overnight hours at an affordable pay rate. Half a world away lays waiting in its day time hours with the right skills and the desire to fulfill the travel agency's customers' needs. Just a PC, fast Internet access, the right software, an affordable VOIP solution

for incoming/outgoing calls between the customers in Europe and the Americas and the beckoning call center on the other side of the world will get the show on the road.

Case Study 4:

A fashion outlet in a rural area of Alabama serves a diverse clientele that want unique ladies' wear. Something different! In addition, this same clientele has been surveyed to find that they are increasingly now shopping online for shalwar kameez and saris. These clients are African, Anglo, Latin and Asian-American women with a taste for Persian and Indo-Pak styles. They are so bi-lingual Americans. Should the outlet continue simply offering discount blue jeans and t-shirts, or do they venture out of the box and try to meet these needs? How can they meet them? The outlet has the collateral and USA point of presence. Just a few Karachi families can complete made-to-order items sold through a web site and shipped directly to the customer. Bulk items can be shipped to the store. A call center can be set up in a spare area of one of the Karachi homes for customer service, billing, and sales. Internet access, a PC, and VOIP affordable long distance solution is put in place and bingo! The fashion outlet is the most popular ladies' shop around. The Karachi residents have never been so busy in their lives. Profits sore for all involved. The clients are enthralled.

Case Study 5 OBJECTIVE:

A large retail toy company began to sell merchandise through catalogs. They had developed both a multi-ethnic small-scale catalog and a science-technology for kids' small catalog, but the company wanted to start marketing this new merchandise year-round, worldwide, not just during the holiday seasons. They needed a call center to handle what was predicted to be a huge increase in sales by phone volume from both the retail and wholesale catalogs.

This company was referred to Super Technologies from one of their current clients. They needed Super Technologies to help set up the call center's telecommunications facet in the Middle East. Basically, one was needed that would balance cost reduction with customer satisfaction. This was a brave decision, to open a call center in an area where English was a second language; they were starting from ground zero in a country that was very new to call centers.

Case Study 5 SUPER TECHNOLOGIES' RESPONSE:

Following Super Phone long distance solutions since 1999, Super Technologies assigned a special marketing team to the company's project. A customized long distance calling solution of Super Phone Unlimited (<http://www.superphoneunlimited.com/> and <http://www.virtualphoneline.com/>) was chosen. Why? Unlimited incoming calls from anywhere in the world and unlimited outgoing calls to any USA phone number for a flat monthly rate, perfect! The center was set up with the local DSL service and DHCP-enabled router technology. The center started with five Virtual Phone Lines using the Super Phone Unlimited service. Area codes chosen were Miami, Atlanta, Chicago, New York City, and Detroit. Each had a 1800 number forwarded to them from our partners at <http://www.kall7.com/>. Incoming calls would be placed to the domestic USA number or the toll-free number by the customers.

Local managers hired in the Middle Eastern country implemented quality customer service, customized training (such as accent training) and monitoring to fulfill the company's call center mission statement.

Case Study 5 RESULTS

Before this solution, the company would never have dreamed of opening a call center in the Middle East, no matter how much was saved through reduced labor costs. Now, the unlimited incoming and outgoing calls on each phone line coupled with the reduced labor costs made this a realistic solution. Since the project began, the average revenue for each order has increased by approximately \$40 per order (retail). The toy company has enjoyed a cost decrease of 15% and at the same time a revenue increase of 35%. The toy company has started with inbound sales at the call center. Within just a few months' training of call representatives and a few additional purchases of equipment and software, they will add outbound cold sales.

More great ideas for selling

These are just a few scenarios ranging from very simple to more extensive operations. Back offices and call centers in Pakistan can do all the following and more for host companies in the USA. Take pizza delivery orders. Remotely complete accounts payable for any size of business, printing checks and settling bank accounts. Create made-to-order greeting cards or any other product. Solicit donations for charities. Edit or translate books and other documents. Make wake-up calls in innovative ways to meet each customer's needs. Take classified ads. Interview multi-lingual job applicants for the host company. Schedule appointments. Handle emails and calls for new and continued water and coffee delivery services to businesses. Tutor students. Assist graduate students and colleges with research. Sell home delivery of the New York Times or any other newspaper.

Offer virtual secretary services, part-time or full-time, like Palm Pilots that have a personality. Home-based businesses are a hit! Start big or start small, but start smart. Make sure you have the basics for your call center, fast Internet access and a Virtual Phone Line. Start with from a one person to a 1000 person call center. A woman can sit at home and work. A young person age 16 and up can work at home. Many of these young people are sitting home already in Pakistan doing their homework and making friends online at the same time. I have personally met several young Pakistanis this way. They are extremely English and computer literate and love to talk and share cultures. So much can be achieved with the technology that is available to you and me. Most of us are late, but we are not too late. That is the reason for this seminar. It's not too late.

NexTel, digital cellular communication service as example

Monetarily, how does this work? Let's say that NexTel, a digital cellular communication service, has 1000 call center representatives in the United States, just for customer service (and many more for technical support and telemarketing sales). They are right now paying on average \$2500 per month to each representative, many of whom will quit within six months and/or who do not really have the skills and desires needed of their job title. At \$2500 per month per representative, that comes to approximately \$3 million per year just on base salary. This does not include other usual benefits like medical and dental insurance.

Hey, is there anywhere out there in the world an educated force of people who will appreciate their job as customer service representative and stay with the company at least a year, who have the necessary computer, people and communication skills? I think Pakistan has the answer. The going rate for a quality staff in Pakistan is minimum \$150 per month per agent. Next, calculate the costs for equipment and other needs.

USA companies already started to look outside of the big USA cities five or six years ago for its labor force to lower employment costs. Z-Tel Communications opened a center in Atmore, Alabama, a town of about 5000 people where \$8 per hour is excellent pay. Remember, if the center were opened in Miami or New York City, the host company would pay at least \$15 per hour to each representative because of the higher cost of living there. In addition, there is a huge difference between real estate rates for call center buildings in the big cities as compared to that in smaller USA cities and even much higher difference between the big cities and outsourcing to Pakistan call centers.

We must remember, again, that Pakistan is competing with Sri Lanka, Philippines, India and other countries. Many in these countries are fluent in English, use the Internet regularly, and have a government that highly encourages call centers.

Don't make the mistakes of these Pakistan call centers

Let's look at a couple of examples of call centers in which I know attempts were made to open here in Pakistan, and where did they go wrong? One started with 16 ports. He bought the most expensive hardware and bandwidth circuit. His mistakes were that he wasted money he did not need to and did very little research. He should have started smaller.

Another person opened one in a beautiful area like Clifton. He hired eight people and bought the best hardware and top-notch equipment. He wanted to provide \$25/hour type of service to the USA. He could have done this with a much lower overhead and a much better return on investment (ROI). They closed within six months.

If you or your company or someone you know or their company already has existing business with the USA such as garment factories, buying houses, or anyone already exporting to USA, you need Virtual Phone Line. Anyone with any kind of link to the USA needs to have at least 1 or 2 Virtual Phone Lines with them. This will begin to familiarize those in your office with the call center concept and save your company \$30 - \$50,000 in less than a year.

Open a Virtual Office

What do I mean by this? I was talking to a gentleman in MSN who has a business base in a country similar to Pakistan. In the past 12 months, he has spent at least \$30,000 by now for an office in Manhattan. To start, minimum wage even for employment is \$5.15 per hour in the USA. He was paying \$1000 per month office rent. His phone bill each month is at least \$100. Manhattan, USA, one of the most prestigious spots for locating a business, even charges extra for local calls unlike most other cities in the USA. Is this you?

Why wait? We can empower you with a \$99 per month Manhattan office 212 number. This will give you unlimited outgoing calls to any USA phone number. In addition, it will give you unlimited incoming calls for anyone anywhere in the world to call your Manhattan 212 number. Your phone where you are will ring even though you are not physically in Manhattan. Imagine this anyway. When customers dial the Manhattan 212 number, they don't expect it to ring in Pakistan. They just simply assume it is ringing in Manhattan. Believe it or not, it is a tough job to even get a 212 number in Manhattan. The big Bell companies have simply run out of these numbers. This is very common. Even so, you can get a 212, 718 and hundreds more Virtual Phone Line numbers from Super Technologies, Inc. Visit mysuperphone.com.

What else will you save by opening a virtual office, back office or call center? Again, look at the guy who opened an office in the geographical area of Manhattan. The worst apartment in Manhattan is \$1400 per month or even in Bronx at \$700 per month. It takes at least an hour one way to go from residence in Bronx to the office in Manhattan by train. Train is expensive. You cannot drive a car, or if you do, it costs \$22 per hour to park a car in downtown Manhattan. It costs \$1.50 by train. That's \$3 per day round trip, \$60 days per month, and \$720 in a year, and look at the wasted hours of your valuable time. So what next?

To hire MBA or a road scholar

What next? To sell what you want to sell in a professional manner, you will probably want to hire an MBA with top English language, sales, computer, and people abilities, but if you find someone with all those skills who does not have an MBA, hire them. Some of the smartest people I know have no education past high school or a couple years of college.

My father has an A.A. in Theological Studies and yet, he has written several published religious books, is a retired officer of the United States Navy and operates a very successful resale business of expensive antiques at a local store and on eBay.com. Again, whom should you hire? Check these facts out. In 1963, Bill Gates a computer hacker. Yes, he was, and also, he dropped out of Harvard University. The best sources of personnel may be found in some of the most interesting places.

Your call center can hire premium representatives at \$400 to \$500 per month. In the USA, a call center would pay someone of equivalent abilities and experience \$3000 per month. It costs from \$30,000 - \$50,000 but as low as \$4000/year in Pakistan.

Rather than only hiring those who own a piece of paper that says they are Masters' graduates, it is more important that they can effectively use the Internet and technology and who have either already communicated with or are eager to communicate with Americans. They should be people-friendly, able to handle failure with a positive attitude, be ambitious and more.

Basic needs of even the smallest call center or back office

Get a virtual Manhattan office or any major USA city virtual office. It is a given. It is a must to survive in the back office and call center world. Your agents should have a

Yahoo Ticker telling them the weather in Manhattan. Set the clocks on computers to Manhattan time. Keep in mind that the customer expects you to know such things as the weather and the time in Manhattan since he is dialing a 212 Manhattan number. You and your agents must know the culture of the city of your virtual office. Use ICQ with Manhattan residents.

Are you convinced at what you can achieve by having a virtual Manhattan office? Pick any major USA city, and <http://www.mysuperphone.com> will get you started. Imagine now... the host company or individual is looking for outsourcing for its customer service, technical support, telemarketing or other service. They discover you, or you make them discover you. They will say, "Oh, they have a USA office. We can do business with them. They are in Manhattan. They are in Detroit."

Starting a USA business remotely from Pakistan

You can even incorporate your business in the USA. Go to mycorporation.com or incorporate.com to incorporate. You do not even need a social security number to incorporate a business in the USA. Apply for a W-9, a tax ID number TIN. Download the forms from irs.gov. Fill it in. Mail it to the IRS office. You will get a TIN. Then you can fill out a W-7 form (again available at irs.gov) and get an EIN. As soon as you incorporate in NY within a month's time, they send you a temporary EIN. This allows you get a bank account, phone line, and other necessary items.

Have your mail forwarded to your office in the Pakistan by a virtual office provider. Don't forget to explore the USA market online. Look at <http://www.cj.com>, http://dir.yahoo.com/News_and_Media/Business/, and more. You don't have to sell what we say to sell. We are here to encourage you to make your dreams come true. For example, if you are selling large truck scales, you can sell them to the USA. Or say, you have a computer shop, sell them on eBay at <http://www.ebay.com>, and make a lot more than trying to sell them locally in Pakistan.

Use eBay.com to find what is hot to sell

In fact, together we found a wonderful source of information about what are popular buys by Americans at <http://www.ebay.com/>. Click on search. Then click on the "Advanced Search" tab. Type in a key word like "Dell laptop" and choose "Completed Items." (These directions may change periodically. See eBay.com). A list will display all auctions that have completed recently, what sold and how much they sold for, what did not sell, and so on. Research this carefully. The items that did not sell... for example, why did they not sell? Was it the time of the day the seller had scheduled for the auction to close was at 3 AM when not too many are buying? Was it an unattractive layout or a dishonest looking description? Or was their contact information questionable?

USA voice mail numbers, fax numbers and email address source for anyone in Pakistan

For contact information, you need a USA voice mail and fax phone number right now. Go to <http://www.j2.com/> and get your own. <http://www.k7.net> is another source for the same type service available to you. You will start getting faxes and voice mails from your customers to your USA phone number in your email. Don't have a USA address. Ask one of your family, old friends or new friends you make on ICQ or

other chat program if you can use their address. Tell them why. American people like to help. You can always do favors for them when you get a chance.

Don't have a USA email? Go to <http://mail.yahoo.com> and get an email address. Make your email address relate as well as possible to who you are and what you offer.

How do you receive payments? The simplest method is to have your customers send you a bank wire transfer to your bank in Pakistan. A second method, as mentioned elsewhere in this seminar, is to find a friend or family member or partner in the United States who can take checks or money orders at a USA post office box. This should be in the same city as your JFAX number or Virtual Phone Line number if possible. Next, make arrangements for the USA partner to get the payments to you. With your TIN and EIN, you can even open a USA bank account.

Get publicity! Get listed on Pakistancallcenters.com. Get listed on other call center web sites. The owner of the call center and at least one or more of the call center staff should take online courses at such available web sites as <http://www.incoming.com/>. The site offers the prestigious Incoming Calls Management Institute. "ICMI offers the most comprehensive educational resources available for call center (contact center, interaction center, help desk) management professionals. ICMI's focus is helping individuals and organizations understand the dynamics of today's customer contact environment in order to improve performance and achieve superior business results..."

What can you sell and how can you sell in a call center located in Pakistan? Anything! The biggest obstacle to discovering the answer is if you limit your imagination. The second is something called "red tape." Red tape is any requirement that stands in the way of progress, therefore, wasting valuable time. Pakistan has a history of people famous for "thinking out the box" and seeing what other people do not see, and that is opportunity. How can you sell in a call center located in Pakistan? Be virtually in the United States of America with a USA Virtual Phone Line number (your choice of USA city/area code). <http://www.mysuperphone.com/> Don't let a limited imagination of "red tape" keep you from you from living your dreams.

Chapter 5: Who can you sell to?

Now, we see that it is an obvious need to have a virtual USA office in Pakistan and begin your own call center as soon as possible in Pakistan. Who can you sell to?

Phone lists

How do you find the call lists once you have your Virtual Phone Line? What are the do not call lists and where are they? How do you want to start?

<http://yp.yahoo.com/> and <http://people.yahoo.com> are two great sources of call lists. (Remember some people may have moved, and you may be calling someone who has their new number. No problem. Keep talking and be confident, and always be courteous. You have something worthwhile to sell.) Other sources are

<http://www.questdex.com/>, <http://www.muslimyellowpages.com/>, <http://www.polishyellowpages.com/>, and even <http://www.jewishyellowpages.com/>. You can visit us at <http://www.callx.com> and we will provide you with specialized calling lists.

Go to <http://www.fcc.gov/> for do not call lists. There are certain states in the United States in which certain actions should take place when telemarketing. For example, when calling Illinois, you must introduce yourself and your product or solution and then ask, "May I have a moment of your time?" or "May I continue?"

Chapter 6: Anyone can start now with CJ.COM

Take a look at <http://www.cj.com/> where there are an unlimited number of opportunities to be your own "back office" or "call center" for USA businesses. Dollar Rent a Car car rental services, Kmart retail web orders, USA Today newspaper delivery subscriptions, Warner Brothers shop, O₂ mobile services, mortgage and auto loans for E-Loan, employment ads for hotjobs.com with \$50 per signup and \$1 per lead, todofut.com soccer sales at 10% per order placed, and more. Go to CJ's web site and surf the 1000's of opportunities for making profit right away with your own call center.

Choose the market that matches the products you are selling. Sell cell phones? AT&T gives them away for free to their customers, and they give you \$100 per customer that you sign up. Customer needs quality A credit to get this. You need to know how to check people's credit. Trans Union, Experion, and Equifax.com has this. You pay \$1 per name for those with excellent credit.

CJ empowers you to partner with their advertisers, to essentially be one of their back offices. How does it work? An advertiser joins CJ and places an ad. Publishers like you apply to join the advertiser's programs of your choice. If you are accepted, you include the advertiser's offers on your web site. When a visitor to your web site makes an actual purchase online or sometimes just fills out a form, that transaction is tracked and recorded by CJ. Commission Junction handles all of the collection and processing required for ensuring fair and timely commission payment for you, and all of the administration and verification necessary to ensure qualified sales and leads for the advertiser.

What are the benefits to you of being an outsourced sales center for CJ's advertisers? This back office setup includes having your account monitored by an independent third-party, single interface to manage multiple advertisers on your web site, single ID and password to access all your accounts, one consolidated monthly payment via direct deposit to you, payment available in 16 currencies, real-time tracking and reporting online, hundreds of quality advertisers (host companies), multiple link types and offers to choose from, online productivity tools, free service and support, online knowledge base, and free sign-up. See their FAQ at <http://www.cj.com/faq/publishers.asp>.

One of the most frequently asked questions I get about CJ is... "Can I participate if I live outside the country?"

"Yes, Commission Junction is actively making all of their services more user-friendly for publishers and advertisers who reside outside the United States. Publisher commissions are paid in multiple currencies, and publishers can set their currency preference when they sign up or in their Account Information online. Commission Junction services clients in the UK and Ireland from their London offices, and all other clients are supported through our US headquarters in Santa Barbara, CA." Even CJ realizes the importance of making outsourcing user-friendly and available to those outside of the USA.

Another term for, you the publisher, who is using cj.com for product and services to sell in your call center are also called an affiliate. This does not just mean having web links to these CJ advertisers' products and services. Selling in that manner requires a high traffic web site. The second method is to have call center reps make cold calls to USA customers and sell the products and services. Next, the reps sign up the customer by clicking on the web links and filling in the order form for the customer.

Open a CJ account today. Start with yourself as the call center agent and then add more agents as your business grows. Then, in no time, you are the manager of others doing this for you.

CJ is one of the easiest ways to get started on selling. You don't have to beg for call center contracts. They come to you. CJ allows you to choose from 1500 merchandisers.

Again, the opportunities seem unlimited. Sell USA Today or New York Times right here in Pakistan. Remember, you must research the products and services you plan to sell. For example, read the New York Times at <http://www.nytimes.com/>. You can sign up in 5 minutes as affiliate right now. Think of this. If you called New York Times 5 years ago, asking to sell for them, it would not have been possible. Cj.com makes this and more possible. Use CJ to start selling flowers, cell phones, DSL lines, newspapers, shoes... it's up to you! It's the simplest way to get started to utilize your call center. Sell one subscription for the New York Times. Take the order. Press "submit." **You get \$25 per order. Process one customer for a DSL line, and make \$75 per line. Be an affiliate for AOL at \$50 per customer signup.** <http://www.cj.com>.

Chapter 7: Successful selling practices

Creating a mission statement for your call group:

Believe so much in what you are doing that you can put it into just a few statements of mission that will inspire you, your group and potential companies that will outsource you and eventual potential customers. Often these mission statements will be posted in plain view on one's web site. The mission statement should be very easy to understand and very precise and to the point. Here is a good example.

"Building the bridge between old and new economies, we provide high-end CRM solutions through integrated multimedia contact services. We are equipped to provide high tech marketing and communication services to our business and corporate clients. We are a dedicated, highly trained, and motivated staff that will provide you with a cost efficient means of communication for telemarketing.

Because every customer matters, we strive for a firm relation on every call. We firmly believe that quality is never an accident. It is always result of carefully planned but creative effort. Our systems are evaluated and continuously streamlined by our experienced team of advisers."

(Templates for mission statements, business plans and more can be found at <http://officeupdate.microsoft.com/templategallery/>. Take a look. Business cards, labels, brochures, newsletters, training manuals, corporate forms, project management, cover letters, and more are in the scores of materials available.)

Making the best of cold calls:

Never assume you are interrupting a customer's time. Ask for a few moments of their time or simply thank them at the beginning for giving you a few moments of their time. Show a position of confidence and strength and belief in your product or service. Never just introduce yourself and just tell the product you sell. Paint a picture of how you can meet their needs. They may not even realize these needs. It is your opportunity to help them see that need and how you can meet it. Ask the customer a question that moves from what you offer to what they need. Get them to talk about themselves. The customer will not hang up when they are doing the talking.

An example is "Hello sir. I am Tariq Ali calling from Future Technologies in New York City. May I have just a moment to share with you? We help anyone anywhere in the world have a USA phone number with 5 cents per minute unlimited calling to any USA phone number... Which location in the world do you need to call the most? I really want to listen."

Allow Icarus to fly:

There is a famous Greek myth of the tale of Daedalus, the father and Icarus, his son. King Minos imprisons Daedalus and his son Icarus in the labyrinth that Daedalus himself made. It is so complex that even its builder cannot escape. Daedalus finds feathers (from fowl the Minotaur had previously dined upon) and attaches them to his and Icarus' arms with glue. They fly out of the labyrinth over the sea. Daedalus warns Icarus about flying too close to the sun lest the glue melt, but as a youth Icarus flies higher and higher. Finally, he gets too close to the sun. He believed he could do it, but only needed a little more guidance to channel his positive thinking in the right direction.

A good call center will encourage its agents to fly, to try new things. The management will guide them to achieve and excel but will not clip their wings. Encourage positive thinking with positive management. Fear of rejection stifles success. Always, as long as the customer is on the phone or on chat, there is lurking sale. Always, the next is a sale. The call center's peak performers will quell any negative thoughts, words or actions. He will listen tentatively to each customer and

elicit more from the customer in a positive manner. He will not be constantly reminded of yesterday's "failures." In fact, yesterday's failures will only spur him on to new plans of action.

The agent will be empowered to believe that he is in control of his success. What is the very worst thing that can happen? He will always be thinking about helping his prospects have a better life because of the service or product. He will plan ahead for success and constantly learn from the past to make changes.

Abraham Lincoln taught himself to read by firelight and ran for political office so many times and lost, and then he finally became President of the United States, one of the most memorable.

A reporter once asked Thomas Edison how he felt about having "failed" so many times. Edison replied, "I didn't have any failures. I just learned almost 2,000 things that would not work." They each had some kind of support, whether from within themselves, their religion, their family or a few friends or mentors along the way who encouraged them.

Listening, the most important aspect of selling:

The most effective way of getting what you want is to help the other person get what they want. The customer wants someone to listen to her! Use the person's name in a respectful, friendly manner. Take notes on the call to refer to as needed. Restate the customer's concerns and needs. Summarize critical points and show the customer you are in "his boat" with him ready to assist in any way.

Build self-worth and confidence in your call center agents:

Publicly and privately recognize the best practices of each agent. Talking to them, writing good reports on them, telling other agents what they are doing, and posting these successes in writing are very important. A "Good Practices" bulletin board is an effective source of recognition. Never publicly reprimand an agent. Do it in private and finish by allowing the agent to restate the situation, his goal to improve and how.

The assumptive, caring close of the sale:

Unless you actually close the sale, it is not a sale. KISS. Keep it short and simple to begin and end with a trial close that is very likely to result in a sale. I.E., "I'm David Gerlach with the Friday Times. Thanks for giving me a few moments of your time. We are going to deliver you the Friday Times in your neighborhood guaranteed before 6 AM. Your zip code is _____?"

Do not be afraid to ask for the sale. It is in the agent's job description to steer his client in the correct direction, the right decision, to purchase the service or product you offer that she needs. If the customer is listening to you, why not ask for the sale or even assume it?

Listen for the customer's buying cues. She may ask what forms of payment are accepted. Do you deliver? How do you deliver? How will take for me to get it? Answer the question and make a closing statement. I.E., "since you want this shipped to Pakistan, we can guarantee shipment within 2-3 weeks. To get the solution there where you need it, I'll start your order. I have your name as _____. What is your billing address?"

Another effective form of closing is "Ayesha, that is all there is to it. Do you have any questions?" If they have a question, answer it and ask again, "Do you have another question?" If not, then begin filling out their order. If they stop you, ask, "Is there still something you need to know?" Many people will say, "No," and you will be able to continue filling in the form for their new order. Another great close is a question about quantity or form of delivery. "Do you want five or ten shipped?"

Overcoming objections, better known as hesitations:

Make a list of the five or more most common customer objections to purchasing the items you are selling. Too expensive, uses another brand, already has one, too busy, bad experiences in the past, or why do I need it? One worksheet per item you are selling with these common hesitations should be created.

Look at each objection. Remember that while each objection may have some merit, the objection is nothing in comparison to all the great benefits and features of the product or service. In addition, it will solve problems and enrich the life of the customer in many ways. Your response to customer objections should have an understanding and professional tone, with a friendly and confident edge to it. It must be clear to the customer how what you have can benefit him or her. Get him or her to talk, and be sure to listen to every word.

Empathize with the customer. Put yourself in their boat. If she says, she is busy, respond with, "I understand how difficult it must be to juggle everything you do. Career, home, and more... what is it like?" Listen. Then respond with a statement that shows you understand. Follow up with the plusses, the advantages of having your product or solution in her life.

What if the customer says he wants to wait to make a decision? Find out why he wants to wait. Again, show you understand. Maybe it is because he wants to compare your product to others. Here is a cue that should already have researched your competition and know exactly how your offer excels over the others. Be specific and match the benefits and features to this particular customer's life. If he needs to discuss with others before making a purchase, find out when you can talk to that person.

If the objection is price, ask questions about what he would like to do with such an item or service that you provide if it met his needs. Let him talk. Then assure him what you offer meets his needs, that he deserves the quality you will provide. If the item or service will be used for his business, help him to see how it will help him meet his business goals. Always close. Make a closing statement such as, "We can have this in your hands to enjoy as early as next week. I just need to get your correct shipping address."

Stay away from negative statements like, "Why not?" "Yes, but..." "You mean you wouldn't want to save 60% by purchasing now?"

Instead, say for example, "If you had a medical insurance that would assure you 50% off all regular and follow-up doctor visits and on top of that, even pharmaceutical purchases, you can start going to the doctor every time you need to, right?"

Or, you can say, "I understand how much you must be doing in your busy life. We can deliver you the newspaper daily or just on Sunday. Which do you prefer?"

Create images in your customer's mind. "It is like brain candy, a pleasurable combination of information and entertainment." "The ads are so wonderful they would even make great posters for your nephew's walls." "These perfumes take you places from a walk in a fresh forest to the warmth of cinnamon apple pie." "Such a cell service is one you deserve to keep you up and confident with your successful lifestyle."

Do not emphasize so much about the customer buying your product or service. Instead, share with her how she can easily use it, how it will change her daily routines to the better, how it will look on her, how it will improve company ROI, and what other people will think of them after using it.

Make a record of your successful rebuttals to common customer objections. Make a list of new ones to try. Memorize the best of them, so that you can truly listen to each customer and easily pull from your repertoire of ideas "in a heartbeat." ("In a heart beat" means right away.)

Best sales practices

Role-play the situations with supervisors, trainers, coaches, other agents, friends and family. Record yourself. If you are the manager of the call center or sales group, you record your agents. Dub on to another tape or CD the best rebuttals, the best sales pitches, and methods of overcoming objections for a library of successful practices for all to listen to. What a great training and retraining strategy! It is also a great way to recognize when agents are doing a good job.

Chapter 8: Selling to American culture for maximum ROI (Return on Investment)

As a teacher for sixteen years in the American school system, I noted how very important it was for even every high school student to have a certain core knowledge of American culture in order to survive with success in life. The same is true for call center, back office and any sales situation in Pakistan where American customers are the market.

Not everyone in the USA speaks English. It's a salad bowl or a melting pot. If you and/or your call center agents can speak a language other than English even, you can meet the needs of the English speaking community as well as the many ethnic

communities in America. Americans are used to hearing foreign accents. Be confident enough that your accent is quite common in the USA. Get over the fear of speaking English. It's a common thing in America that people's neighbors are from all over the world, even Pakistan. You have McDonald's and Pizza Hut in Pakistan. Many Americans have seen a sitar, tasted biryani, and seen a mosque. (You still need to get them familiar with the tasty nihari and chicken karahi dishes.)

Get used to calling USA

Do you know anyone in the USA? Speak to them at least 15 minutes per day on the phone. Start talking now even in Urdu. Even if you use PTCL phone lines, there will be a delay that you have to get used to that you do not hear on a local phone call. I am thinking of a gentleman in Pakistan who called me once. He had a strong command of the English language but he had no experience with a phone call between USA and Pakistan. He was talking so fast that he was way ahead of the lag. I never got a word in. He kept saying, "Hello! Hello! Can you hear me?..."

The magic and practicality of Internet chat

Get to know people. You watch people in the mall or the marketplace, right? Observe them in chat rooms. It's fun to people-watch either. It is a great way to become more culturally literate. You can do this in ICQ, MSN or Yahoo chat... and also on phone for experience in how to interact with people who are in the USA. If your call center agents are not comfortable with having a USA phone line with him, it is useless. Train them by speaking on the phone.

1800 and 1900 numbers

What is an 1800 or 1900 #? 1800 is a toll free phone number that can be called free of long distance charge in the USA. If you have a Virtual Phone Line, they will be free also or at most 5 cents per minute. A 1900 number is a service usually of a suggestive and erotic nature, but not always. One example is a psychic line where people call to hear their future and get possible solutions to personal and financial problems. A 1900 number is a phone number that provides a commercial purpose. Many USA children accidentally call these numbers and ring up a huge long distance 1900 bill for their parents. These are just a few bits of USA culture you may not know. There is so much out there.

Typical USA wait time for customer service calls

How long do people wait in the USA to finally speak to someone in USA customer service? I personally know it can be 15 minutes and longer. Make the call... you are passed around with automated directions. It is much faster to reach customer service in Pakistan. You don't hear, "Please hold. Our agents are busy with other customers right now." Try it. See what the USA customer is experiencing. Call USAIR or American Express. You will be transferred all over the place. Your customer will be

so happy that someone is picking up on the 1st or 2nd ring and immediately settling his problem from your call center in Pakistan.

Geographical layout of USA; effect on traveling

How common it is to drive a long ways in the USA? Between two cities it can be a six hour drive? Americans would often prefer to drive, not fly; whereas, in Europe, you can go from Germany to UK in six hours. In the USA, a person can hardly commute from Houston to Pensacola comfortably in one day. Many commute at least one hour one way for their job, every day. I am an example. I drove 20 miles every day to drive from my home to my job and 78 miles a day from my home to a university where I was studying for my MA. I did this for a whole year. This is life in the USA. Everything you learn about USA culture will help your call center or back office be more successful.

Music in USA

Country music is popular to many in the USA, not just the TOP 40 pop songs by Christina Aguilera and Justin Timberlake. Dixie Chicks and Kid Rock are a favorite, too. Make sure to know about Elvis Presley, the Beach Boys, Billie Holliday, Louis Armstrong, the Jackson Five, and Hank Williams Sr., as well as any new and current musicians.

USA history and politics

What about some key events and people in American history and politics? Who is the president and the vice president? What is Homeland Security? What is the IRS? The Internet is the best tool around for finding up-to-date answers. Second, talk to the people who live in the USA to find out more.

Who was Susan B. Anthony, and what did she have to do with women's right to vote? In the 1840's, she helped woman and children who were abused by alcoholic husbands. She is most remembered for trying to vote in the March 1873 city elections. When she was refused, she pushed the voter's booth over and was tried and convicted of violating voting laws. At that time, women could not vote in USA elections. Who was Jackie Robinson, and what did he have to do with integration of African-Americans into Major League Baseball? He broke the "color line" and became the first African-American to play baseball in Major League Baseball.

Who was Martin Luther King, Jr., and what was his dream? "I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice." The complete famous dream speech is at <http://www.usemb.se/Holidays/celebrate/mlk.html>. What was the American civil war, and how did it change the United States? It took place in 1861-1865, and if the South had one, USA would be two nations, not one.

USA children's interests

What do children like? What toys do they play with? Which video games are favorites? What are some typical children's bedtime stories? The most famous is "Goldilocks, and the Three Little Bears." The complete text is at <http://www.hiyah.com/library/goldilocks.html>.

What does any of this have to do with selling? One of the most creative telemarketing agents I have ever met used "Goldilocks and the Three Little Bears" to actually close a sale. The lady that Fiesta was presenting a new life insurance policy on the phone was trying to get her four-year-old to go to sleep. Fiesta offered to the lady that she put the phone on the little girl's ear and let Fiesta tell her the story. She did, and the little girl was mesmerized. The mother took the phone back and graciously listened to the rest of Fiesta's pitch and signed up for a policy within the next week after talking to her husband.

Know what different regions, states, and cities are famous for in the United States. What are the people proud of? Sheboygan, Wisconsin residents are proud of their bratwurst sandwiches. They call them "brats." Boise, Idaho, the capital of Idaho, sports the Egyptian Theatre. It is a movie theatre decorated Egyptian style, very beautiful. The center of Brunswick, Maine has a park that is the ice skating rink, very popular entertainment spot in the winter when it snows.

USA food

Food is a great topic to be well-versed on. In the southeastern part of the United States, people eat grits with butter or cheese. It is a fine-ground corn that is usually white in color. It has a bland flavor by itself and is usually served for breakfast. In the northeastern part of the United States, brown bread and baked beans are very popular as a combination. Brown bread is made with whole wheat flour, molasses, raisins and other ingredients.

Take a look at the term "ham." Ham is not just pork or pig meat. It is cut from the leg of the animal such as pig, turkey or other meat. It is cured and smoked. Polish sausage is a popular carnival and fair food, along with cotton candy, fried blooming onions, and candied apples.

Louisiana is famous for its Cajun foods such as jambalaya, almost as good as Nihari, but not quite. Cajuns love peppers and spicy foods. Beignet's Café in New Orleans, Louisiana is a hot spot for tourists where the Beignet's doughnuts are the specialty. In fact, Americans love to eat out. Be familiar with some restaurants like Pizza Hut and McDonald's. Pakistan has its own of each of these. Red Lobster is a popular seafood restaurant across the USA. Starbuck's Cafes are everywhere, even in the small city of 100,000 people in Pensacola, Florida.

American idioms, dialects, and colloquialisms

Language is another great topic to be "bone up on." ("Bone up on" is an idiom that means to become an expert at or to become familiar with.) There are colloquialisms (terms only used in certain areas of the USA), slang (very non-standard English but used in every day language), idioms, and Ebonics. "No-see-ums" are the tiny biting

bugs that are so small a person cannot see them with the naked eye. People in the South say, "Y'all." This term means "you all." This is not accepted in standard English but is spoken in every other sentence by southerners especially in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia. Ebonics is Black English, and it is in very popular use by many Americans. "Homies" are your best friends. A "Boo" is your boyfriend. "I'm down witcha" means "I understand exactly what you are going through." "Let's go down to de sto," means "Let us go to the store."

Language... whether to say "How are you?" and how to do that

A sales agent will often ask, "How are you doing today?" to the customer when introducing herself. The customer may say, "Busy," or "Pretty good," or "Fine." What can the sales agent say in return that sounds familiar and normal to the customer? Listen and read how different respond to "How are you?" Some typical responses include the following. "Sounds good." "I'm glad to hear that." "Having a challenging day, sir?" "I'm doing fine too." Or even "Gotcha." ("Gotcha" here means "I totally understand" or "I'm with you.") There are times to be very respectful and times to be friendly. Listen to the customer and relate to them.

USA news, music and weather web sites

Sales agents can become familiar with the news at <http://www.nytimes.com/>, with the music at <http://www.launchcast.com/>, with the weather at <http://weather.yahoo.com>, and in fact, Yahoo is a great source for many topics.

Chapter 9: What kind of call center and back office representative are USA companies and even entrepreneurs looking for? What does Pakistan have to offer?

Pakistan has a rich history of a diversity of people who mirror the same qualities of its present day people: determination, courage, integrity, inventiveness and ability to adapt to change. These are some of the same qualities that USA companies are looking for in making their choice for outsourcing. "I don't allow people to kick me out. ... Win or lose, I fight." Find this quote from Bhutto, in an interview with The Associated Press after her second ouster, in November 1996. Quaid -e- Azam Mohammad Ali Jinah was a man of principles. He is said to have been probably the only person among all the big leaders of the subcontinent, who never went to jail. His motto was: Unity, Faith and Discipline. India never took risk of invading Hyderabad or Junagarh during his life time.

General Pervez Musharraf received his education from Saint Patrick's High School, Karachi and Forman Christian College, Lahore. He fought in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 as a young officer, and was awarded Imtiaz Sanad for gallantry.

On May 26, 1993, Moin Qureshi, an unknown to the Pakistan public, was appointed the caretaker Prime Minister. Despite the fact that Moin Qureshi was new, he quickly exposed the misdeeds of the previous governments by publishing the lists of

defaulters of bank loans and taxpayers. These lists exposed a number of affluent persons who were involved in abusing the banking system and dodging the tax collectors. Moin Qureshi made the State Bank of Pakistan an autonomous body with an effort to keep out political interference in the working of the bank.

Do not forget the gentleman repairing trucker's work pants in a tiny cubicle at midnight.

Call center representative qualities

Because call centers are now recognized as extremely critical to a host company's overall success, agents and representatives hired for these centers need certain qualities.

A key component is product knowledge or even more important, the desire and effort to acquire product or service knowledge as well as the regularly expected changes in a product. What does this mean?

"A creativity teacher invited one of his students over to his house for afternoon tea. They talked for a bit, and then came time for tea. The teacher poured some into the student's cup. Even after the cup was full, he continued to pour. The cup overflowed and tea spilled out onto the floor.

Finally, the student said: 'Master, you must stop pouring; the tea is overflowing --- it's not going into the cup.

The teacher replied, 'That's very observant. The same is true with you. If you are to receive any of my teachings, you must first empty out what you have in your mental cup.' "(von Oech. p. 12.)

Moral: Sometimes we need the ability to unlearn what we know, so we can be all that Allah has given us the ability to be. Just because mom did it that way and grandma did it that way, does not mean that we have to do it that way. I do not insist that my mail be delivered on horseback just because that is how my grandmother did it.

Here is a good list to start with of good salesperson attributes that will reflect a more creative attitude:

1. Quick, helpful, pleasant, show grace under pressure, reliable
2. Basic customer service, problem-solving, and literacy skills
3. Customer focus
4. Empathy: ability to walk in someone else's shoes, to see the other person's point of view,
5. Risktakers

6. Future-thinking
7. Open-mindedness
8. Toughness
9. Ego strength
10. Communication skills
11. No habits of thinking, feeling or acting of a negative nature
12. Not afraid to make mistakes and learn from them
13. Good at listening
14. Team player, ability to encourage those around them
15. Effective use of time
16. Ability to multi-task
17. Ability to at least speak and comprehend, but also read and write the English language with a desire to research and use dialects and idioms correctly
18. Ability to develop rapport with customers, to try to understand and solve their problems
19. Ability to handle rejection and complaints in a professional and understanding manner
20. Assumptive and confident nature

Insisting on quality assurance and allowing creativity at the same time

Call center agents and representatives do not need to be clones of each other. It is more important for them to be fast learners, open to change and new ideas and even better... self-starters, who will take it upon themselves to do research in some of the most unheard-of manners just to improve.

Let me give you an example of this. Steve Jobs, computer entrepreneur, once said, "Innovation is usually the result of connections of past experience. But if you have the same experiences as everybody else, you're unlikely to look in a different direction. For example, I went to Reed College in Portland. At Reed, most of the men took modern dance classes from a woman named Judy Massey. We did it to meet the women. I didn't realize how much I learned about movement and perception from that class until a few years later when I worked for Nolan Bushnell at Atari. I was able to relate how much resolution of movement you need in terms of perceiving things for video games."

We learn how to laugh at things anew from children. We learn to sing a new tune from a bird. I learned from the gentleman sewing jeans at midnight for truckers in Karachi... that it's just plain wonderful to breathe air and be alive.

What do USA companies want from the call center representatives? Well-rounded, flexible, open-minded, friendly agents who are eager and quick to learn... these are a few of the most wonderful qualities that will make your agents the right choice.

Chapter 10: What are the advantages for Pakistan?

Take a look at an excerpt from a Pakistani boy's essay and a wise tale to see the advantages for Pakistan.

A young Pakistani boy named Saad Shakeel won an essay contest this past year. In his essay, he makes a statement that is so wise and much-needed. "We dream of a Pakistan that starts firmly on the path of development... We dream to see social justice and equitability prevalent in our country... This will create employment opportunities for the youth."

"Two men had an argument. To settle the matter, they went to a Sufi judge for arbitration. The plaintiff made his case. He was very eloquent and persuasive in his reasoning. When he finished, the judge nodded in approval and said, 'That's right, that's right.'

On hearing this, the defendant jumped up and said, 'Wait a second, judge, you haven't even heard my side of the case yet.' So the judge told the defendant to state his case. He, too, was very persuasive and eloquent. When he finished, the judge said, 'That's right, that's right.'

When the clerk of court heard this, he jumped up and said, 'Judge, they both can't be right.' The judge looked at the clerk and said, 'That's right, that's right.'"

Moral: Truth is all around you; what matters is where you place your focus.

We can either continue to complain about how good things used to be and how life used to be easy, or we can use our imagination and even common sense find new ways to get things done smarter.

The call center idea needs to be shared with all sectors of people in Pakistan. Call centers and back offices will give the citizenry new possibilities for career experience and advancement, improved resumes, practice in using the most used language in business and on the Internet - - English.

In Pakistan, even every day people in Pakistan "think out of the box." Look at a line waiting for service at a business. If it takes too long, it breaks into 2, 3, 4 and more

lines. Look at the traffic. Karachi traffickers make their own paths, and it works somehow. In America, there are rules, even understood rules, such as walking only on the right side of the mall. If an American doesn't get his drivers' license the first time, he may not try again for a while. If a Pakistani doesn't get his drivers' license the first time, he will keep trying and trying. This shows you that Pakistanis are brave and are ready for rejection, knowing and believing that success is around the corner.

Pakistan people have the mentality to make the country the call center choice of the world. The economic and educational opportunities are the biggest advantages for Pakistan. **Pakistan is ripe and ready to be number one!**

Chapter 11: Important web links

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/asia/july-dec02/telemarketing_11-05.html#

Dialing for dollars. A look at international source of telemarketing calls.

<http://www.sellingpower.com/>

Zero cost articles on every topic imaginable for sales success.

<http://www.callcentermagazine.com/>

Technologies, services, and strategies for contact centers. Everything you need and more for success.

<http://www.callcentermagazine.com/article/CCM20011204S0007>

The smell of predictive dialing success.

<http://www.callcentermagazine.com/article/CCM20021127S0002>

Quality control.

http://www.ptcl.com.pk/call_center.html

Call centers: catalysts for corporate change.

<http://www.erlang.com/forum/callcenter/>

Share ideas on call center operations and engineering in this forum.

<http://www.callcenterops.com/>

Call center operations.

<http://www.callcentrevoice.com>

Call Centre Voice discussion forums.

<http://www.callcentercareers.com/home.jsp>

Call center careers.

<http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/>

World time zones.

<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

Universal currency converter.

<http://www.supertec.com/>

Innovative and cutting-edge VOIP solutions for call centers and back offices.

<http://www.k7.net>

Get a USA voice mail and fax number.

<http://a4esl.org/q/h/>

About 1000 self-study quizzes for ESL students. Free!

<http://www.ebay.com/>

Become an eBay seller with online auctions.

<http://terraserver.homeadvisor.msn.com/famous.aspx>

Famous USA places for more cultural literacy.

<http://www.incoming.com/>

Host of Incoming Calls Management Institute seminars and workshops.

<http://officeupdate.microsoft.com/templategallery/>

Templates for business documents.

<http://www10.americanexpress.com/sif/cda/page/0,1641,15565,00.asp>

Business articles and tools for success.

<http://www.multi.net.pk>

DSL in Karachi.

<http://www.dsl.net.pk>

DSL in Islamabad.

<http://thecallcenterschool.com/>

The Call Center School.

Creative Whack Pack. Roger von Oech. Copyright 1983. Creative Think, Menlo Park, California. (Excellent source of ways to think "out of the box.")

Chapter 12: About the author

Suzanne Lombard Slay has a wide variety of experiences and careers. She graduated from Pensacola Junior College, Pensacola, Florida with a Liberal Arts A.A. From there, she completed her English Education B.A. major at the University of West Florida, Pensacola, Florida. She completed graduate studies in Instructional Technology at the University of West Florida and Media Education at the University of South Alabama.

At Renaissance Fitness Center, she managed the sales and instructor staff for six years. She taught English, Computers and Gifted Studies at Carver Middle School, Century, Florida, for sixteen years. In addition, she was the Intranet Sales Library editor and Sales Trainer at Z-Tel Communications (local and long distance CLEC). New York Times sub-contracts out to Publishers Circulation Fulfillment where she is sales coach. She has been integral to the marketing department of Super Technologies, Inc. four years.

Suzanne received many awards throughout life including Middle School English Teacher of the Year and Emmet Smith Charities, Inc. Writing Award. She wrote and was granted over \$500,000 worth of educational grants including Foundation of Excellence, Core Knowledge, and Gifted Studies Technology. She was named Most Valuable Player at PCF. In addition, she assisted Super Technologies, Inc. in winning Best of Show Client Device Award at Spring Internet World 2001 and Internet Telephony Magazine Editor's Choice Award in 2000. She has traveled extensively throughout Pakistan, India, United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Germany with a mission to improve education and to share VOIP opportunities.

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