



## Why should we bring call centers to Long Island? Incentives to attract the industry

February 27, 2012 - Long Island

The call center industry has lost over 350,000 jobs in the last 10 years to off-shore call centers. Off-shored is what the name implies - sending work across the ocean to another part of the world, with a perceived labor advantage.

This perception is no longer true. Their employee turnover rate is equal to the U.S. Average call handle times at first appeared lower in off-shore locations; however, when "short calls" are factored out, the handle times are much longer. Short calls occur when the caller realizes they have an off-shore center, and simply hang-up.

The majority of the issues associated with low off-shore customer satisfaction have nothing to do with attitude or the willingness to assist. Rather, they have to do with language and the ability to assist.

I am 100% certain that Americans want their calls to a U.S. based corporation to be answered/handled by an American.

The call center industry has developed a coalition, [www.jobs4america.net](http://www.jobs4america.net), and pledged 100,000 new on-shore call center jobs in the next 2 years. I believe that Long Island needs to be marketed to coalition members as the perfect place to bring them!

We have the labor pool they look to hire:

- \* Students (27 colleges/universities)
- \* Retirees
- \* Stay at home moms/dads
- \* Unemployed white collar workers

We have their real estate they look for (10,000+ s/f):

- \* Vacant office space
- \* Vacant 1 story warehouse buildings (high ceilings, parking)

Call centers have evolved to become sophisticated, high tech showcases of service, support and sales. They are the main point of contact between a company and its customers handling order processing, sales, help desk, customer services, collections, telemarketing, solicitation and fundraising.

The "boiler room" concept of the 1960s is a thing of the past. For new construction, they use 150 s/f per agent seat and 45 s/f usable per agent workstation. The work floor is the core of the design and all support functions and adjacencies stem from this area. Most importantly, call centers build for 50% growth.

There is no doubt that Long Island is a costly place to do business. By example real estate taxes in Suffolk range between \$3-\$4 per s/f and \$7-\$10 per s/f in Nassau. Neighboring states (New Jersey and Pennsylvania) are offering far better relocation/retention incentives. Long Island is no longer

considered a destination by site relocation companies and we need to fix this.

How? By working with our federal, state and local legislators, utilities, and banks to develop appropriate incentives to attract the call center industry here. Incentive examples are training grants, real estate tax reductions, payroll tax reductions, health insurance reductions, electrical usage cost reductions, mortgage rate reductions.

Please join the LinkedIn Group, Bring Call Center Jobs Back to Long Island, and help spread the word to your business associates, family and friends to contact their state, county and town representatives to tell them why it is important to have these call center jobs on Long Island.

Laura Sikorski is campaign founder at Bring Call Center Jobs Back to Long Island, Centerport, N.Y.

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540