

Where should you base your customer service teams?

Onshore

Onshore call centres are located where the businesses are based, which for us is in the UK. Agents tend to be native English, with an understanding of cultural nuances – meaning less need for training on local norms, laws and products. **This makes this base particularly suited to complex and high-value calls.**

Pros

- ✓ Perceived to offer the best customer experience based on cultural knowledge
- ✓ Strong brand alignment
- ✓ Strong GDPR and regulatory compliance
- ✓ Convenient for training and team collaboration



Cons

- ✗ High labour costs – up to 3x higher than other locations
- ✗ Difficult to hire at scale
- ✗ High overheads
- ✗ Offering 24/7 support can be a challenge
- ✗ Not always seen as a long-term career, which can attract lower experience candidates and cause high attrition

 **Higher hourly costs**

Nearshore

For us, nearshore call centres are located in countries close to the UK, including Eastern European locations like Poland, Romania and Slovakia. **Many agents are bilingual, with experience working with UK clients and within UK time-zones.**

Pros

- ✓ Cost-effective when compared to onshore, but still more expensive than offshore
- ✓ Strong time zone overlap
- ✓ Closely aligned to UK standards
- ✓ Strong cybersecurity laws and IT infrastructure

 **Medium hourly costs**

Cons

- ✗ Potential for economic and political concerns
- ✗ Slight time lag – making overnight shifts harder
- ✗ Smaller agent base which could lead to slower response times
- ✗ Higher labour costs than offshore teams



Offshore

Offshore call centres are located in a different country to a UK business' customers, most notably in India, South Africa and the Philippines. **Agents are majority English-speaking, with a large talent pool of graduates in IT, finance and communications. While most locations are in a different time zone to the UK, South Africa is just an hour ahead – making it an attractive offshoring destination.**

Pros

- ✓ Native-level English with mainly neutral accents, especially in South Africa
- ✓ Lower labour costs, sometimes up to 30% lower than UK-based operations
- ✓ Lower wage inflation
- ✓ Strong legal system with GDPR-aligned data laws
- ✓ Flexible infrastructure to allow for service to be scaled with client needs
- ✓ Customer service roles are valued as real career opportunities, especially in South Africa. These roles allow people to support their family, and, as a result, they truly care about the support they're giving to customers

Cons

- ✗ Perceived cultural and language barriers – more prominently in the Philippines and India
- ✗ Potential issues with data privacy, depending on storage location
- ✗ Trips to the location for training can be costly
- ✗ Some customer service agents can have less neutral accents, particularly in India. However, this can make them more suited to more non-voice tasks

 **Lower hourly costs**

Trust Sigma Connected for proven onshoring and offshoring solutions

Whether you're looking for onshore, offshore, or a blend of both, at Sigma Connected, we maintain the highest levels of professionalism and empathy across both our onshore UK teams and offshore team in Cape Town. Our teams are able to navigate the most complex of interactions across heavily regulated sectors, while staying sensitive to difficult situations involving vulnerable customers.

Here's how we maintain the best results:

- ✓ Compulsory cultural training is part of every induction
- ✓ UK Account Directors oversee all operations
- ✓ Data is stored in UK data centres, with strict compliance and security controls
- ✓ Specialist training is given in complex problem-solving

Get in touch with Sigma Connected to talk about our trusted customer service solutions – and create the ideal communication experience for your customers.

