

THINKING ABOUT OUTSOURCING YOUR CALL CENTRE?

FIND OUT WHY MINDPEARL CHOSE FIJI FOR THEIR STATE OF THE ART INTERNATIONAL CALL CENTRE



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Driven by demands in the outsourcing environment to offer a high quality and low cost English language alternative to those established offshore locations such as India and the Philippines, Mindpearl broke with convention and opened an outsourced international contact centre in Suva, the capital city of the Fiji Islands.

Fiji is an island economy in the South Pacific that promotes itself to international tourists as a tropical paradise of beautiful sun-drenched islands with white sandy beaches and swaying coconut trees and some of the best coral reefs and marine life in the world. It has a population of 868,406 and it comprises 332 islands with a land area of 18,333 sq km. Within these 332 islands Mindpearl discovered a hidden industrious gem, Suva, the capital city of the Republic of Fiji.

Since outsourcing first became popular, locations such as the Philippines and India have dominated the market with promises of low rates and reduced operational costs.

With increased negative publicity around overall customer experience, language barriers and cultural dis-connect in these locations, Mindpearl was looking for an alternative which would ensure competitive rates and reduced operational costs, without compromising on quality or customer understanding and friendliness.

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This led to a four year search involving 15 countries in order to find a suitable location to set up a contact centre. These included numerous countries within the African continent, the Indian subcontinent, Mauritius, American Samoa, Saipan and various

islands within the South Pacific, but none of them could provide what Mindpearl was looking for.

'Fiji offered superior English language skills that are easily understood by customers in Australia, USA, Canada, and the United Kingdom.'

After an exhaustive search, Suva was decided on as the paramount location to fit all Mindpearl's requirements. This unconventional location for BPO offered the perfect complement location to Mindpearl's existing state of the art contact centre facilities in Australia, Spain and South Africa.

Suva was able to provide three essential benchmarks namely: first world telecommunications infrastructure, readily available staff and superior English language skills that are easily understood by customers in Australia, USA, Canada, and the United Kingdom. In addition, it met Mindpearl's quantitative needs.

In late 2009 Mindpearl opened its doors in Suva. Three years later Mindpearl services the major English speaking markets for a number of well-known global brands across multiple industry sectors including; telecommunications, insurance, airline, travel, retail and health/weight management industries.

Fiji has allowed Mindpearl's customers to enjoy extremely cost effective 24/7 contact centre support, increasing their workforce and productivity; whilst still reducing expenses without compromising on quality.

This whitepaper will delve into key quantitative and qualitative differentiators that fortified Mindpearl's decision to open an international contact centre in this uncharted territory.



Suva, Fiji Islands: Key Quantitative and Qualitative Differentiators

Business and Outsourcing environment for foreign investment

Fiji has a market friendly business-regulatory environment, sound macroeconomic policies, low inflation and a relatively stable foreign exchange rate. Fiji also has a modern set of commercial contract laws that are enforced by the judiciary. With an abundance of land and buildings at reasonable rates and well-developed banking and financial institutions, Fiji had no shortfalls in terms of running a business.

- Tax exemptions
- Tax deductions
- Investment allowances
- Rebates
- Duty reductions
- Duty exemptions
- Fast registration of foreign investment projects

Favourable BPO Environment

Also, the environment is extremely favourable for BPO's. The government welcomes and fully supports local and foreign investment, providing abundant incentives to boost business.

The incentives come in a variety of forms such as tax exemption, tax deduction, investment allowance, rebate, duty reduction and duty exemption. The Government also ensures fast registration of foreign investment projects.

24/7 Operational Capability

The time zone, work culture and labour legislation were another draw card for Mindpearl and an attractive offering for our clients, who needed 24/7 operational capabilities.



Time Zone

Fiji is located on a time zone 12 hours ahead of GMT, thus making the country's location ideal for "overnight" processing of calls and data from Europe and North America.

Work Culture

The Fijian work culture is a perfect fit for the contact centre industry. The Fijian workforce is predominately found in the Tourism and Services industries, where shift work is the norm, consequently the Fijian people adapt well to the shift work required in the contact centre environment.

Labour Legislation

One of Fiji's key competitive advantages is the stable personnel costs. This also simplifies the normally complex rostering and workforce management needed for 24/7 operational capacity,

providing Mindpearl clients reduced personnel costs and the ability to cost effectively extend trading hours.

Infrastructure and telecommunications

Fiji is the centre of trading in the South Pacific for – Asia, USA and Europe Region, making it a hub for global communications and transportation (shipping and air travel) routes.

Fiji welcomes more than 1.2 million international passengers and over 450,000 domestic passengers through its airports annually and services 20 airlines which connect Fiji to 14 international cities. Consequently Fiji offers well-developed infrastructure, including electricity, water supply, transportation, excellent medical facilities and well-developed banking and financial institutions.

Southern Cross Logical Loop Configuration:



Fiji has state of the art telecommunication infrastructure.

The Southern Cross cable links Fiji directly to Australia, New Zealand and the US, giving Fiji fast, reliable connections to the internet and the carrying capacity for the level of telecommunication traffic and high volume data transfers needed by Mindpearl.

The Southern Cross fibre optic cable places Fiji on par with any other competing location globally.

Labour costs

Fiji boasts extremely competitive and stable labour costs. Fiji's wage rates are around one-fifth of those in Australia and New Zealand. Companies in these locations can obtain a substantial cost reduction by outsourcing to Fiji. Fiji's wage rates are also comparable to those of its main competitor – India, without the language barriers and cultural challenges.

Today, globalisation and the internet drives 24/7 customer support.

Fiji's unbridled wage structure has become its competitive advantage as many other nations cannot compete with this simple and effective model for modern day commerce and e-commerce.

Linguistic ability

The abundance and native English linguistic ability in Fiji was a key deciding factor for Mindpearl.

Due to a heritage stemming from being a British colony until 1970, the education system in Fiji is based on the English language and all lessons are delivered in English from age 5. The education system is still state funded through to tertiary level, therefore graduates from Fiji's secondary and tertiary institutions have an excellent and natural command of both spoken and written English.

English is also the preferred language in the private and public business sectors in Fiji and one of the official languages of the country. Subsequently, Fiji offers a first class native English speaking workforce.

Educational levels

Linguistic abilities, and relevant sector experience is typically a pre-requisite for Mindpearl employees in addition to client specified requirements such as industry recognised qualifications, interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence to name a few. Fiji

offers a rich, highly skilled workforce.

Fiji's literacy rate of about 94% is higher than that of India (57%), China (84%), Dominican Republic (84%), and Mexico (91%), and is only slightly lower than that of the Philippines (95%) (UNESCO). Overall, the population of Fiji achieved an attainment index of 0.88, which is higher than the average for the developing countries as a whole.

In addition, approx. 50,000 – 80,000 of the total population are deemed to be contact centre labour force eligible being in the suitable age and literacy demographic.

Customer Service experience

Mindpearl's core offering is based on providing superior customer service; naturally this was a critical consideration when choosing a location. Fiji's economy is dominated by the services sector. It accounts for 70% of employment and income. As such, the majority of employment opportunities in Fiji require excellent customer service skills. Further to this, local residents tend to focus their tertiary studies on the Tourism and Hospitality Industry due to greater employment potential.

This provides a rich selection pool of local staff that has experience in customer service and the necessary industry qualifications.

Corporate Social responsibility

As a community orientated business, Mindpearl is committed to the continuing contribution to economic development, while improving the quality of life of our workforce and their families as well as the communities we are located in globally.

Fiji offered an opportunity for us to create a legacy.

The commercial, social, education and financial benefit to the local South Pacific community are widespread and lasting. By investing

in Fiji and its people Mindpearl is making an enormous impact, through continued job creation and skills development.

In addition, Mindpearl Suva, has taken this commitment to



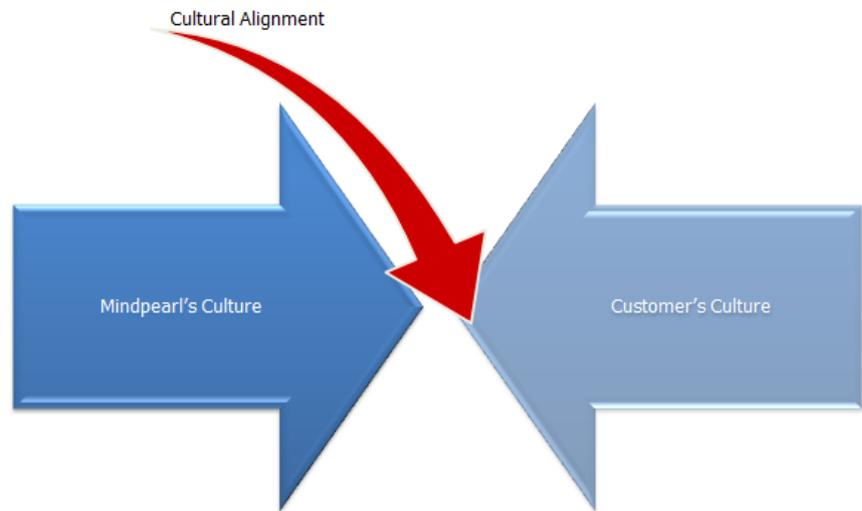
another level by creating dedicated Mindpearl Care Teams, who coordinate projects and initiatives to help the local community. The mutual benefits are invaluable. Not only does the local community benefit, but Mindpearl appreciates a more engaged satisfied workforce with a sense of purpose.

This sense of purpose also translates right through the business, which increases performance, productivity, staff retention, and teamwork.

Cultural alignment

Mindpearl seeks not only to hire the most qualified employees, but to focus on aligning staff with the culture of both Mindpearl and the client.

Mindpearl's culture is based on passion and enthusiasm. This synergy is enjoyed with all our customers, so cultural alignment was a prerequisite.



Culturally, Fijians are known to the world as the friendliest people on earth with the renowned 'Bula' spirit, and their dedication to 'make people happy' which is evident in their approach to customer service. The Fijians are a non-confrontational people and this old school 'the customer is always right' ethos makes for a very warm and welcoming customer experience. Recent surveys and studies, conducted by Tourism Fiji to delve into why Fiji has the most returning visitors amongst rival holiday destinations with similar backdrops, confirmed and validated Mindpearl's decision to come to Fiji. The study revealed that despite the wonderful climate, beautiful beaches and fantastic diving, which were all consistently recurring themes with competing holiday destinations, the one constant that visitors referred to was the 'happy people'.

In a world where people spend every day of their lives engaged in the pursuit of happiness, this survey revealed that the people in Fiji already possessed this in abundance.

The fun loving attitude to life of the Fijians translates very well to the contact centre environment and that welcoming 'Bula Smile' comes shining through the telephone and immediately brightens your day. This is truly what solidified Mindpearl's decision to commit to Fiji.

Conclusion

Mindpearl's search for a BPO location was extensive. Mindpearl was looking for a low cost, high quality English workforce, to complement our multilingual workforce globally.

The ideal location had to meet not only quantitative requirements, but Mindpearl's qualitative requirements as well.

Superior customer service, protecting our clients' brands, innovation and first class technologies are the cornerstone of Mindpearl's core offering. Mindpearl's success is achieved by employing the most qualified, passionate and enthusiastic people.

Fiji, has allowed Mindpearl's customers to enjoy extremely cost effective 24/7 contact centre support, increasing their workforce and productivity; at an extremely affordable price. Fiji not only met all our requirement, but exceeded it by providing us with the world's friendliest people, ensuring a customer experience equivalent to none.

Contributors:

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Visit www.mindpearl.com

About Mindpearl:

Mindpearl is a BPO specialist focusing on international, high quality contact centre operations. Mindpearl's management are the majority shareholders in the business, which allows clients a direct route to the top level stakeholders. With an emphasis on inbound customer support, through multiple communication channels encompassing phone, e-mail, web chat and social media.

Mindpearl supports global brands in the aviation, leisure, telecommunications, retail and weight management industries. Mindpearl have a reputation for 'spin on a dime' flexibility and will challenge convention, improve your service offering and deliver a superior customer experience.

Our success lies in our ability to offer cost effective, tailor made, intimate solutions focused on innovation, quality, and value-add. With our highly skilled, motivated multilingual workforce and our strategically located 'Follow the Sun' locations, in Brisbane, Barcelona, Cape Town and Suva, Fiji, we have the know-how, experience and resources to maximise your business performance and profitability – so why not 'Make the call'.