

## SITEL Thrives in Augusta

SITEL Corporation of Baltimore, Md., is the global leader in electronic customer relation management. Using state-of-the-art technologies, SITEL can service customers for companies, as well as find those customers and help keep them coming back. SITEL currently manages more than 1.5 million customer contacts per day via the telephone, e-mail, Internet, and traditional postal service. More than 25,000 SITEL employees operate in 74 customer contact centers in 18 countries across the globe. And Augusta, Ga., is home to just such a contact center.

In what was once a Wal-Mart retail location, the Augusta center is a thriving hive of workstations with just under 1,000 customer service professionals, serving some of the world's most well-known high-tech clients.

"We like to consider ourselves the support center for 'Best of Breed' technology clients," says Tony Taylor, the facility's general manager. "We need workers who are adaptable, who can learn quickly, and who are good at old-fashioned communication in a high-tech world. The old stereotype of a tech person has changed," he adds.

In an industry that is so fast-changing, skilled labor is a premium asset. "We've found that a critical issue for attracting clients is our own ability to be flexible," explains Mary Campbell, the facility's human resource manager. "We

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MARY CAMPBELL  
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

need to be able to be responsive to our clients' changing needs without changing out internal technical support. This can be a challenge, and our success is directly related to being able to find the right people who can do different things, from billing to technical support."

Fortunately, Quick Start has been highly effective in helping SITEL make sure the people they hire are the people who can answer the needs of their clients. "Quite frankly, our growth will depend on the ability of our workers to respond to our clients' customers. This is, after all, what outsourcing is all about and why a good training program like Quick Start is so critical," says Taylor.

Both Campbell and Taylor believe the southern personalities of the workers in Augusta are an asset to business.

"Our big clients are impressed with the politeness, pleasant tones of voice, and patience of our employees when dealing with irate customers. They can get angry or frustrated people to calm down and channel the conversation in a more constructive way. This is a huge benefit in a transaction where you never come face-to-face with the customer," says Campbell.

SITEL's presence in Georgia is representative of the growing number of e-businesses serving customers directly, as well as business-to-business. According to Dr. Breeden, commissioner of the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education, the world's reliance upon Web technology and e-business appears to be driving the creation of technical- and customer-support jobs throughout the state. Quick Start helped SITEL expand its applicant pool with improved pre-employment training, as well as teaching the fundamentals of positive work ethics, customer contact skills (telephone service skills, for example), and keyboard skills.

With nearby Fort Gordon creating an ever-growing labor pool and Augusta Technical College providing interns and the Service Industry Academy, SITEL is equipped for a productive workforce for many years to come. **OS**



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CORPORATION



Mary Campbell (left), human resources manager, and Sandra Swain, receptionist at SITEL.