

business

TO BETTER MEET NEEDS

Understand culture of foreign clients, BPOs told

AN international consulting firm advised business process outsourcing (BPO) companies in Cebu specializing in voice services to study and understand the culture of foreign clients to better meet their business needs.

Sunil K. Jha, managing director of Australian firm Akiko Business Consultants, told Sun.Star Cebu in an interview that call center agents must not only be good English speakers but also be knowledgeable about their clients' culture.

"There's a specific way of talking and dealing with people from different countries," Jha said, adding that this awareness will add value to the local call center agents and strengthen the BPO industry in the Philippines.

He encouraged BPO

companies to invest in training programs if they want to elevate their services, especially now that Cebu has been positioned as one of the most ideal places in the world for BPO services.

For this year, Cebu placed eighth on the Tholons Top 100 Outsourcing Destinations list.

Akiko Business Consultants also put up an office in Cebu in 2012, located in the Keppel Tower in the Cebu Business Park. To date, it has 50 employees and its office focuses on voice services and chat support.

Jha said that by 2018, the company expects to add 300 to 500 employees.

Akiko Business Consultants is also present in India, which provides data services, while its Australia

office offers consulting.

To date, it has around 55 clients worldwide, ranging from startups to large companies in the utilities, fitness, retail and construction sectors, among others.

Training

Despite its competition with other call center companies that have entered Cebu, Jha said that Akiko is willing to conduct training, especially on cultural awareness.

"There's nothing wrong with teaching your competitors because if they can improve their services that would even be better for us...that means there is a good competition and better quality agents in the Philippines," Jha said.

As a consulting company, Akiko Business Consultants in Australia "ana-

lyzes and reengineers" the business environment of clients to make them more cost-effective.

"The training that we do over here is at par with trainings in Australia," he said.

"I'm not offering them (clients) a cheap call center but a cost-effective call center. We offer more competitive salaries and that will continue to grow as they (call center agents) continue to be in the business," he said.

Jha also said he expects that while call centers will continue to drive the industry's growth in Cebu, emerging data companies will also support that growth.

Next month, he said, Akiko Business Consultants will open an office in the United States, which will focus on sales and



GOOD ENGLISH NOT ENOUGH. Sunil K. Jha, managing director of Australian firm Akiko Business Consultants, says call center agents must not only be good English speakers but also be knowledgeable about their clients' culture. (SUNSTAR PHOTO/ALAN CUZON)

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Scheduled water service upgrading work. Please store water.

DATE :SINCE MARCH 28, 2014 (FRIDAY) to APRIL 23, 2014 (WEDNESDAY)
REASON :Cleaning and maintenance of Well G-2 in Forest Hills, Banawa, Barangay Guadalupe, Cebu City

AREAS AFFECTED : **LOW PRESSURE TO NO WATER** – Forest Hills, Kabulakan, Labos St., Planas St., Banawa, Barangay Guadalupe, Cebu City

DATE :APRIL 14, 2014 (MONDAY) TO APRIL 15, 2014 (TUESDAY)
TIME :10:00 PM (Monday) to 7:00 AM (Tuesday) (9 hours)
REASON :Alteration of distribution line affected by a drainage project on corner V. Rama Ave. and St. Michael's Drive, Barangay Guadalupe, Cebu City

AREAS AFFECTED : **LOW PRESSURE TO NO WATER** – St. Michael's Drive, G. Quijada Drive, Gochan Subdivision, Sitio Kamanggahan Road, Road to Monterrazas, Quijada Compound, Ma. Theresa 1 and 2, Caballes Compound, Sandayong, J. Labra St., Langub Road, V. Rama Ave, from the Guadalupe Church to Guadalupe Elementary School, part of Singson Village, Cebu City

DATE :APRIL 15, 2014 (TUESDAY)
TIME :5:00 AM to 3:00 PM Tuesday (6 hours)
REASON :Non-operation of Liban wells (San Vicente, Jubay and Santa Cruz) due to scheduled, VECO power interruption

AREAS AFFECTED : **LOW PRESSURE TO NO WATER** – Elevated and interior part of Compostela, Santa Cruz, Licaoan, Coloot, Consolacion, Mandaua, part of Mabolo, Reclamation Area, Pier Area, M.J. Cuenco Avenue, Lorega-San Miguel, T. Padilla, Carreta, Mactan area - Lapu-lapu City.

MCWD apologizes for any inconvenience that these interruptions may cause our consumers. These water service interruptions are needed to improve the delivery of our service. Our personnel will exert extra efforts to finish the activity on schedule or ahead of schedule to restore the water service. Except for other developments, these water service interruptions will push through as scheduled. However, these do not include other interruptions resulting from unexpected power failures and/or emergency mainline leak repairs or building up of water pressure. Consumers are advised to prepare for the scheduled interruptions by storing water.

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Mom Makeover Contest YEAR 4

Tell Sun.Star Plus & Special Supplement why your mother deserves a special makeover this Mother's Day.

Inspire your mother with a makeover that will transform her back to her fabulous self through a once-in-a-lifetime makeover by our team of experts. The winning mother will be featured on the May 8 Mother's Day Plus & Special Supplement issue.

To nominate your mother, follow/like us on:

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and leave a post on our Timeline with the following information:

1. Name and age
2. Essay of 100 words or less on why your mother needs this makeover
3. Picture of you and your mother
4. Contact information

Deadline for submission of entries is on April 21, 2014 at 5 p.m.

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