

Jobs shift from Third World

Call centre company says it will transfer work from overseas

BY CRAIG PEARSON, THE WINDSOR STAR JANUARY 14, 2009



Chalk one up for Windsor against the tide of jobs heading to the Third World.

Fast-rising Canadian telecommunications firm Globalive Communications Corp. announced Monday it will create 100 call-centre jobs in Windsor.

The twist for these customer-service and technical-support positions: the 10-year-old Globalive will withdraw its work from phone centres overseas.

“We’re a young, flexible company and we move very fast,” Ezio D’Onofrio, CEO of Globalive Communications, said after a news conference in Windsor Monday. “And we were unable to do that with an outsourced division in India or the Philippines or elsewhere.”

Though D’Onofrio said the call-centre jobs will cost more in Canada — Globalive’s Windsor division will pay phone agents \$11 to \$13 an hour — he said local employees will provide better service for its Yak, One Connects and Canopco brands.

“If we just had long-distance and dial around, the outsourced model probably would have continued,” D’Onofrio said. “But we’re now offering products like home phone, high-speed Internet, and eventually wireless, that are a lot more difficult. And because customer service is such a priority now, we want to have a Globalive team in Windsor.”

Globalive will hold a job fair Jan. 7, start training Jan. 14, and begin fielding calls with perhaps 30 personnel near the end of January — with 100 employees working by mid-February.

The size of the centre is notable, given Globalive has only 135 employees at offices in Toronto and Brossard, Que.

Globalive approached the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, which suggested Windsor and which will provide a few thousand dollars of annual funding for 30 to 40 per cent of employees.

“We chose Windsor because of the quality of the people,” D’Onofrio said. “But also, the truth is, we realize Windsor has one of the highest unemployment rates in Canada. So on the business side of things, it provides us with a pool to hire. And on the moral side of things, we decided as a company to bring jobs to Windsor.”

D’Onofrio said the potential exists for more jobs to come Windsor’s way, perhaps by the third quarter of 2009, if the company expands into the wireless market.

Globalive has already bid \$442 million for wireless licences across Canada, except Quebec, though

the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission must still give the go-ahead.

Incumbent competitors Rogers Communications, Bell Canada and Telus have complained that Globalive's wireless division is bolstered by a 65 per cent stake owned by Egyptian-based Orascom Telecom. According to Industry Canada, foreign investment in telecom firms is limited to 46.7 per cent.

But D'Onofrio said he is confident Globalive, started 10 years ago in Toronto by Anthony Lacavera when he was just 23 years old, will prove it is a Canadian company.

Mayor Eddie Francis noted that Globalive has earned numerous management and employer awards.

Remo Mancini, chairman of the WindsorEssex Development Commission, called the creation of the call centre at Wyandotte East and Devonshire a sign of things to come.

"It's very, very significant that they've chosen Windsor-Essex as their main engine for growth," Mancini said. "This company has four lines of business and we hope that every time they expand, they will consider doing it here."

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