

Hunter Contact Centres

For a varied career path and great opportunities, a contact centre most certainly fits the bill; including, in many cases, on the job training.

The Hunter Region has a significant professional community of contact centres with more than 35 centres ranging in size from 6 to 260 seats.

These centres are a mix of private and public sector organisations and industry sectors covering financial services, insurance, government services, health, tourism / hospitality, consumer sales and services.

The contact centres in the Hunter support outbound and inbound calling from both local and national callers, although centres servicing local clients tend to be smaller.

In the majority of cases, these centres employ predominantly full-time staff, with short-term or part-time staff employed for particular contracts and campaigns.

Source: Industry and Investment NSW; Survey March – May 2009.

The Benefits of Working in a Contact Centre:

- Flexibility to maximise work/life balance.
- Appeal to large range of workers including disabled, people returning to the workforce after a break etc.
- Flexible working arrangements often available.
- Promote skills development which may assist progress within the industry.
- Multi level entry points.
- On the job training often provided which may lead to externally recognised qualifications and transferable skills.
- Qualifications achieved through on the job training may assist career progression.

Current Career Opportunities:

- Customer service
- People management
- Training
- OH & S
- Administration
- Sales and marketing
- Business management
- HR management
- IT

Vacancies in contact centres are advertised in print media such as newspapers, on job websites such as www.seek.com.au and through employment agencies.

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Case Study 1

Vicki Bennett

Team Leader for Newcastle Permanent's Contact Centre

Qualifications: Certificate IV in Financial Services, 28 Years experience in Customer Service and Finance.

Career Achievements: ATA 2008 NSW Team Leader of the Year.

Newcastle Permanent's vision is to be the obvious alternative to traditional retail banks, and as a mutual building society to contribute meaningfully to the communities we serve.

I joined the company in 1978 upon leaving school. I worked in the Branch network in various roles before joining the contact centre team in 2003, where I worked as a Member Support Representative and became a team leader in 2004.

Working for the Newcastle Permanent has allowed me to pursue and achieve many personal career goals throughout the time I have worked for the organisation.

Without hesitation, my current role as a Team Leader in the Member Support Centre is the most rewarding one so far. I can honestly say I am one of those lucky people who genuinely love their job and winning the ATA 2008 NSW Team Leader of the Year Award certainly validated the work I do on a daily basis.

A team leader is someone who provides guidance, instruction, direction and leadership to a group of individuals and a team is a group of people with a common goal. The importance of understanding the difference, and also the synergy, has been crucial to my success as a team leader.

I work in an environment that is fun and friendly, while maintaining a professional atmosphere at all times. There is a vibe in our contact centre that is indicative of the calibre of our staff, and the importance we place on our member's needs and their satisfaction.

I strive to be the best I can be and continue to find ways I can improve, do things differently, constantly learning as I go. This role is all about growth, both for me and my team, and I look forward to the journey ahead.



Case Study 2

Amanda Bennis

Acting Supervisor for RailCorp/ CountryLink Contact Centre

Qualifications: Certificate III in Customer Contact.

Career Achievements: Hunter Trainee of the Year for Customer Contact in 2008.

Countrylink is the largest transport operator in NSW with train and coach operations to over 360 destinations linking regional NSW with Sydney, Canberra, Brisbane and Melbourne.

I began my employment as a part time Reservations Sales Agent. After approximately 12 months in the contact centre I gained full time employment. I have since acted in a number of positions including Administration Assistant, Quality Services Supervisor and I am currently acting as Duty Supervisor.

My job is very customer focused. I enjoy being the first point of contact for CountryLink customers. Our contact centre strives as a whole to provide customer service at Australia's best level. We also work in teams which is great fun. RailCorp offers numerous training opportunities. CountryLink provided me with the opportunity to complete my Certificate III in Customer Contact by paying for the entire traineeship and allowing study time while at work. Completing the Certificate III resulted in me being named Hunter Trainee of the Year which was a great experience and I am very grateful for it. We are also lucky enough to work in a modern contact centre environment with great views of Newcastle Harbour!

My career goal is to obtain a supervisory position within CountryLink that is challenging and also utilises my skills and experience. I would like to take on more responsibility and provide more individual input.



Case Study 3

Mathew Gray

Deputy Manager Centrelink Contact Centre

Qualifications: Diploma of Front-Line Mgt, currently enrolled in the Public Service Management Course (NSW).

Career Achievements: 18 months living in Katherine and servicing remote communities; being nominated for the ATA awards in the role of Champion and securing the role of Deputy Manager, Centrelink Contact Centre.

Centrelink is an Australian Government Statutory Agency, assisting people to become self-sufficient and supporting those in need.

I commenced as a Youth Trainee in 1992 with Dept of Social Security working at Cardiff and Toronto locations for 4 years. I then joined the contact centre for 6 months before working in Katherine NT Customer Service Centre for 18 months. I returned to the Newcastle Contact Centre and after 10 years, I have progressed from working on the phones to Deputy Manager with many roles in between (Scheduler, Team Leader, Trainer, National Projects).

The best thing about my job and the workplace is the team. There is not one visitor that does not make the comment that Newcastle Contact Centre is friendly and welcoming. We deal with a complex environment but we all have fun achieving.

My career goal is to lead a high performing contact centre which is recognised both internally and externally.

