

Minister of Manpower visits Gulf Air and Infoline Call Centre.

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Gulf Air's (GF) Worldwide Call Centre at the Knowledge Oasis Muscat (KOM 2) which receives approximately 1.7 million telephone calls a year is all set to handle calls from Kuwait the USA Germany Malaysia and Thailand by the yearend senior Gulf Air officials told the Times of Oman yesterday.

The airline's WWCC which will be launching a premium team and concierge service today providing another opportunity for development will handle calls from the rest of the Middle East by 2007 (subject to the approval from the telecom regulatory) the officials said adding that they also hoped to increase the use of outbound overseas calling from WWCC (subject to the approval from the telecom regulatory for VoIP – Voice over Internet Protocol). Plans are also a foot to transfer the frequent flyer customer service unit of GF to Oman by mid2007 providing an opportunity for 15 additional staff the officials said. Their future plans include application for the WWCC to be registered as a training centre the officials added.

The officials were speaking as part of a ceremony organised for the WWCC's third anniversary celebrations at the KOM yesterday.

Dr Juma bin Ali bin Juma manpower minister who was the chief guest on the occasion toured the state of the art facility that caters to customers 24/7 using some of the most sophisticated telecom technologies in the market and expressed his satisfaction on the WWCC's workings.

"I am pleased with the visit. Our people (Omanis) aid that they enjoy working at the WWCC and they have stated that they are doing quite well. "I want to thank Gulf Air for their efforts and with their call centre here they have been able to offer many jobs for Omanis. It is great work that they are doing here" the minister told the Times of Oman on the sidelines of the visit to the WWCC yesterday morning.

Also present was Lee Shave vice president marketing and sales Gulf Air Bahrain); Jaffar Juma general manager Oman Gulf Air; and Sameer Gupta executive vice president Infoline (an international custom contact centre based in KOM). The WWCC has notched up impressive achievements in he three years since their inception. Other than receiving 1.7 million telephone calls a year they will now be receiving calls from Oman Bahrain the UAE Saudi Arabia the UK Ireland South Africa France Australia and Singapore.

Meanwhile Sameer Gupta executive VP of Infoline said on the sidelines of Gulf Air's WWCC 30th anniversary celebrations' at the KOM yesterday that Omanis working at the Infoline customer contact centre at the KOM are not only excellent in their work they could be compared to the best available in India.

"Most of the Omanis trained at our contact centres have turned out to be good agents and supervisors who can be compared to the best available in India.

"We are also conducting a training programme to train them in call centre nuances so that they can come up and become good agents he said.

"Honestly some of them are excellent workers. I have got no issues with them. They have taken just two to three months of training and have turned out to be good" he said noting that the total number of staff (only for Infoline) varied between 110 and 160 depending on the processing that they had.

"We are training 30 Omanis right now as part of the Bahwan CyberTek contract (Infoline is a vision shared by joint venture partners Bahwan CyberTek Omantel and PEIE).

Out of the 30 25 will be absorbed as Infoline employees and five will go to Nawras. Out of that five two are visually challenged. They are trained on taking calls" Sameer informed.