

STREAM



How to satisfy customers

Stream finds people with essential skills in Northern Ireland

Stream is a global technical support and customer service solutions provider. The company's award-winning systems and processes provide effective contact centre solutions that help clients achieve business efficiencies and provide an exceptional

service experience to their customers. Stream established a technical support centre for hardware and software in Londonderry, Northern Ireland in January 1996.

"We've succeeded in Northern Ireland in large

measure because of the exceptional work ethic of the people we've employed here. As well as working hard, they have proven to be very well educated."

Christof Abrahamse,
CEO, Stream, EMEA.





The Challenge

In 1995 Stream was growing rapidly and wished to expand its technical support and customer service outsourcing business to Europe.

To maintain its overall growth and develop a strong base in Europe, Stream needed to find a supply of people with the aptitude and skills for exacting work in a technical contact centre. They wanted staff with good people skills and the ability to grasp technical issues who could then quickly help callers solve their problems.

The Solution

Stream found in Northern Ireland what it was looking for - a fresh supply of reliable people who were able to relate easily to customers and could adapt quickly to dynamic hardware and software technology.

Within three months of the decision to set up in Northern Ireland, Stream was solving technical problems for European customers from a state-of-the-art centre in Londonderry (Derry).

Sean Canning, Stream's UK and Ireland Managing Director, explains why Derry was the best location: "The Northern Ireland psyche is well suited to contact centre work. We've found that the Northern Irish are intuitively good at customer relations - they understand how important it is to deal with queries efficiently and effectively. It can be challenging to train employees to develop these skills so having them as an essential part of most employees' outlook on life is a huge bonus."

The Benefits: Adding Value through learning and technology

"The calibre of the customers served in Derry is a reflection of the outstanding qualities of our people here," Canning adds.

The team in Derry has a track record of adding significant value to the company's operations in Europe by mastering developments in technology. As a result, it is now the US company's primary contact centre on the island of Ireland for callers from Europe using the Internet through the fast growing Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology.

Staff have also been quick to embrace Stream's innovative approach because of its service offering. These services give customers the means to resolve their technical difficulties through self-help on the web, e-mail and chat.

Canning says: "This approach ultimately saves time and money by increasing the efficiency of our support personnel as well as standardizing the level of high quality support data available to our customers.

Canning points to other benefits from the people it has hired in Derry: "Such is the quality of the workforce in Londonderry, that Stream is winning new business which had previously been outsourced from the United Kingdom to India. That speaks volumes about the level of service and cost structures which we can offer clients."

Stream has become a learning company with support professionals honing their skills through the successful Stream University at the Derry centre. Among the outcomes of this approach is Stream's achievement as the first company in Europe to receive the Support Centre Practices Award, the globally recognised quality standard for technical support operators. Stream was also the first customer contact centre in Northern Ireland to gain the UK Government's Investors in People Award.

Stream's experienced team in Derry has kept the company at the forefront of the industry by constantly asking "How can we improve?"



KEY FACTS

- Stream, Londonderry
- Headquarters in Richardson, Texas
- 45 million customers enquiries handled a year
- More than 11,000 employees in 24 state-of-the-art customer contact centres around the world
- Operates an integrated service offering
- Londonderry site established in 1996
- 15,000 customer service and technical support calls dealt with daily via telephone, e-mail and the Internet
- 500+ people employed

