

Cape Town, South Africa, has been voted the top offshore contact center location, knocking India into second place.

Marketing services specialist Ion Group asked marketers to rate locations according to call-handling quality.

South African call centers received a score of 51.1 percent for attributes such as high-quality call handling standards, a strong technological infrastructure and linguistic capabilities.

India, traditionally at the forefront of call center outsourcing, received a smaller share of the vote -- under 50 percent in each category.

Locations that have been popular for offshoring due to their low operating costs are now facing increased demand from clients and their customers for other factors, according to Ion.

Graham Ede, Ion Group managing director, comments:
"Increased competition has seen emerging locations such as South Africa not only able to meet these demands, but offer the advantage of having a similar timezone and culture to the UK."

Eastern European countries and former Soviet nations were found to offer a lower standard of call handling, while the Philippines suffered from reports that it has adopted a "sweatshop ethic."