



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL WOMEN – AMMAN CALL CENTER PROJECT

Final Report, 2009

May 4th, 2009

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Business and Professional Women-Amman.

BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL WOMEN-AMMAN CALL CENTER PROJECT

FINAL REPORT

USAID JORDAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

CONTRACT NUMBER: 278-C-00-06-00332-00

BEARINGPOINT, INC.

USAID/JORDAN

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

MAY 4TH, 2009

AUTHOR: BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL WOMAN –
AMMAN

DELIVERABLE NO: 5B.14.05.0C.10.7.1

DISCLAIMER:

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
SETTING UP CALL CENTERS	3
AMMAN CALL CENTER	3
ZARQA CALL CENTER	3
PARTNERSHIPS	4
PARTNERING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR - AMMAN.....	4
PARTNERING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR- ZARQA.....	5
TRAINING	5
ACCOMPLISHMENTS	6
APPENDIX A	7
Training Reports.....	7
APPENDIX B	9
Launching Call Center in Zarqa	9
APPENDIX C	10
Media Coverage- Zarqa Call Center Launch	10

INTRODUCTION

In the year 2007, the BPW-A submitted a proposal to SABEQ requesting financial support for the call center project. SABEQ approved a grant of JD 57,500 in November 2007, supporting the set-up and first year operation costs for the Amman and Zarqa call centers.

The Amman call center and the Zarqa call center have both been set up. The Amman Call center is operational since March 2008. The Zarqa Call center will commence its operations in May 2009.

The Amman Call Center partnered with the private sector (E3mar); a specialized customer contact center that operates in Jordan, to provide call center and PC software, communications hardware, communication links, IT backbone, management, marketing, agent salaries and benefits, and other headquarter overhead.

Under the patronage of H.E. The Minister of Information Technology and Communications, a launch event of the Zarqa Call center took place on December 22, 2008. More than 200 invitees attended. The list of invitees included USAID and SABEQ managers, representatives of embassies, BPW-A members and friends, Zarqa officials and the local community.

A memorandum of Understanding was signed between BPWA and the CrysTelCall, the winner of the 2 million e-government contract. CrysTelCall agreed to use the Zarqa Call Center facilities to provide e-government contact center services.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business and Professional Women-Amman (BPW-A) is an NGO established in 1976, that aims to empower women and provide an economic enabling environment for women in Jordan. One of the projects that fulfill these objectives was the establishment of call centers. The Call Center project provides incoming and outgoing telephony services for local and international clients. In addition to providing employment opportunities for women, the call center allows BPW-A to model best practices for a women-friendly work environment by offering alternatives such as flexible hours, shifts, day-care center and part time work opportunities. Moreover the call center will generate revenues that will sustain BPW-A as an organization.

The Call Center Project is an initiative setup in collaboration with the private sector that opens a series of call centers across Jordan. The centers are designed to be staffed by the local community, and focus on operating in Arabic. Jordan is known to have one of the most neutral Arabic accents. The project works towards spreading work into the governorates, so that women from less developed regions can work closer to home. Eventually these projects are designed to be owned and operated by the employees.

BPW-A will support the establishment and staffing of call centers, while the private sector provides the employment benefits, technical equipment, training, and marketing for the centers. Different private sector partners may be used across the country.

Two call centers were set up, one based in Amman and the other in Zarqa. The Zarqa call center was launched in December 22, 2008. The call center is technically ready with all equipment needed and there are a number of CV's selected of candidate agents to be hired (Zarqa residents). BPW-A has signed an MOU with CrysTelCall regarding collaboration between the two entities to utilize the Call Center for e-government services. As part of the grant, BPW-A submitted a proposal to SABEQ to support training of 48 women in the call center, 16 of which will be hired to work at the center.

Amman call center is up and running with 15 agents hired as full timers and part timers. Eight are currently working full time on the "Hikmat Road Safety" program and two worked full time on the "From Home" project. Five part timers have been employed, they are available on call.

After thorough analysis, it turned out that Amman call center is not feasible to our private sector partner (E3mar) and to other partners due to high connection costs (leased lines), which makes it unfeasible for a company to operate a call center from outside its headquarter. From that, BPW-A is considering transforming the call center into a "Training for the call center" project. The rationale behind this consideration is that BPW-A has already the PC's needed (22 laptops were purchased for both centers), technical expertise and room space for the training. Utilizing this space for the call center training will be part of the capacity-building program. Moreover training women on call center will qualify them in the future to work as call center agents, hence, creating job opportunities, in addition to sustaining BPW-A as an organization through generating revenue. The training will include English language, IT skills, Communication skills, and Telemarketing.

SETTING UP CALL CENTERS

AMMAN CALL CENTER

The Amman Call Center is up and running, since March 2008. The following setup at the Amman Center has been completed by BPW-A, partly using SABEQ's grant:

- 6 Laptops
- Printer/ fax/ copier machine
- 9 work stations
- 5 filing cabinets

Fifteen women were hired in the call center; ten of them are working as full timers (8 of which are currently working on "Hikmat Road Safety" program, and two are working on the "From Home" project), in addition to five women who were hired on a part-time basis.

After a few months of operation, the BPW-A consulted with its private sector partner, E3mar, about the sustainability of the partnership. From a number of meetings, BPW-A learned from E3mar that the call center in Amman was not viable to them due to the high connection costs incurred on the company. Therefore, BPW-A team proposed shifting the call center into a "Training for the call center" project. What motivated BPW-A in proposing this project, is that the organization already has the space for the training, which makes utilizing it for training women in the call center skills beneficial to all the parties involved in this project. In addition to the room space, BPW-A has a number of laptops that can be used for training purposes. Training women in the call center will qualify them to work as agents in any company, thus help in matching them with market demand. Many companies in this field will prefer to hire these women when they acquire the needed skill sets for filling call agent positions, resulting in better performance. Training in this field will be part of BPW-A's capacity-building program, as well as sustaining BPW-A as an organization.

The training will include topics such as English language, IT skills, Communication skills, and Telemarketing

ZARQA CALL CENTER

The following setup was completed at the Zarqa call center through SABEQ grant:

- 16 Laptops
- Cabling for 16 work stations
- 16 work stations1 meeting table with chairs
- 1 secretary station
- 5 filing cabinets
- 1 small meeting table
- Nursery (6 cribs) + toys

Zarqa Call center Launch event took place on December 22, 2008. (Press releases and photos are added as annex.) No agents were hired in this center so far, but are due to start working as soon as the e-government operations begin. BPW-A's partner in the Zarqa call center, CrysTelCall, will hire sixteen full time employees as soon as they sign the contract for the e-government call center. BPW-A and CrysTelCall identified ten candidates to receive training starting mid April, 2009, and be employed subsequently.

BPW-A created networks with the Zarqa community to establish and staff the Zarqa call center. The Municipality is providing valuable support to the call center. BPW-A also established contact with a female community leader in Zarqa [Ms. Nadia Bushnaq] to identify suitable candidates to work as Call Center agents from her network of women with special needs. BPW-A is also networking with local Zarqa NGOs to find suitable candidates, because it believes in the power of synergy. Moreover, BPW-A has invited Al-Aman Fund for the Future of Orphans to submit CVs of its female beneficiaries residing in Zarqa to be considered for work at the Call Center, two CVs were sent. One of the two candidates was selected, and is a Zarqa resident. BPW-A will also be screening additional potential candidates who have graduated from the USAID-funded Maharat project residing in Zarqa. Women from the general Zarqa community will also be considered to work in the call center.

PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNERING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR - AMMAN

To provide industry expertise, marketing, phones and work connections, a private sector partner has been identified and a partnership agreement signed. E3mar is a specialized customer contact center that operates in Jordan.

The following has been set up at the Amman Center by the private sector partner:

- Server
- Network switch
- Firewall
- Router
- Primary line
- Voice mail server
- Call Center software and Cisco systems
- Networks installed between the 2 Call Centers
- VPN Connection device
- 10 Phones
- Cabling for 9 work stations
- Telephone line

BPW-A and the private sector partner are continually holding marketing activities to market the call center. The results of this effort will become evident within the coming few months. The immediate results of these marketing efforts include:

- The Ambassadors of Canada, Switzerland, and the Czech Republic visited the call center upon receiving an invitation from BPW-A. The three ambassadors have requested another meeting in which BPW-A will present technical and financial proposals for the use of the call centers by their embassies.
- Hikmat Road Safety (NGO) has signed a 7-month agreement to utilize Call Center services in both Zarqa and Amman. The total value of the contract is about JD19,000. Of these, 25% will go to BPW-A as per contract. BPW-A will also be receiving an additional 10% of the value of the contract from E3mar in finder's fees.
- The BPW-A Call Center has already completed one project serving the "International Branding Forum".

- The BPW-A and the private sector partner approached several potential clients (such as Women's Complaint Hotline, where a MOU has been signed with the National Commission for Women, Kidz Times magazine, MENA Business Women's Network, to use the call center for annual surveys, World Bank, and the Jordan River Foundation)
- The Call center was utilized to implement the first phase of the "From Home" project.

After extensive analysis, and as mentioned in the previous section, our private sector partner (E3mar) was not satisfied with the financial outcome and would like to exit the partnership. Therefore, BPW-A is considering transforming the call center into a "Training for the Call Center" program.

PARTNERING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR- ZARQA

With the support of SABEQ, BPW-A signed an MOU with CrysTelCall to run parts of its operations through the Zarqa call center. CrysTelCall is the winner of the Electronic Government Call Center JD2 million tender, and is looking into expansion into governorates.

Zarqa Call Center offers an excellent option as it is fully equipped with furniture and ready for use.

BPW-A is currently in the process of finalizing the details of the cooperation with CrysTelCall. Once the details of the agreement are agreed, the parties will commence their collaboration. Estimated start of work date is the beginning of May 2009.

According to this agreement, the parties will offer the following:

BPW-A contribution:-

- Ensure that Zarqa call center equipped (including PCs/Laptops) and ready with at least 16 seats for agents.
- Ensure that all related utilities and business related infrastructure is available.
- Ensure that a project manager will be available from BPW-A to provide support. The Project Manager will be based in Amman, and will make periodic visits to Zarqa. She will be the main contact point with CrysTelCall.
- Conduct recruiting and initial screening for agents.

CrysTelCall contribution:-

- Contact Center Infrastructure and Support
- Business opportunities to ensure the employment of the 16 agents
- Employment of sixteen female agents, mainly residents of Zarqa
- Final screening and approval process for potential employees
- Conduct training and capacity building to the agents

TRAINING

The BPW-A, in collaboration with E3mar, held a training program on telemarketing, teamwork, selling techniques, and team leading for 25 potential agents. Eight of them were hired at the BPW-A call center, and the remaining are working for E3mar). This training took place on 20-22/5/2008 and 14/6/2008.

In July 2008, four full time agents received training to become Team Leaders. The training gave the participants a solid understanding concepts of call center management and key

performance indicators (KPI's). Trainees were equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to make positive improvements in their teams. Three Call Center managers from the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) also received this training in August 2008. In September 2008, BPW-A contracted an independent consultant, Mr. Hazem Dabbas, to provide training to 12 GAM call center agents on communication skills and skills to handle complaints. The training topics are included in APPENDIX A.

Training agents on the above mentioned topics was very beneficial in equipping them and qualifying them to work as call center agents. The trainings took place in multiple locations, including AISaket Cultural Center, the private sector partner offices, and at GAM premises.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The below points summarize the targets accomplished from the Call Center project:

- Offer women opportunities to work closer to their homes, on part-time basis, or on flexible time:** The call centers project is designed to help women work in flexible time and shorter shifts. The Amman center employs one woman on work-from-home basis. She works from the center premises twice a week and from her home in Irbid four days a week (telecommuting). A crèche area has been set up in Zarqa to allow women to work more comfortably with their children closer to them. Six cribs have been placed in the nursery plus some toys. The center is also located in the same building as the Municipality's children's library, which allows older children to spend time there, while their mothers work at the call center.
- Help promote the Call Center industry in Jordan:** BPW-A call centers are helping promote the call center industry in Jordan by building a resource base of trained professionals.
- Increase the breadth of services offered to companies requiring Call Center service:** The call centers are increasing the breadth of services offered to companies requiring call center services. The BPW-A Call Center is offering outbound telemarketing, market research, promotional activities, and fundraising. The Minister of ITC has asked BPW-A to set up a training center for on call center and IT skills training, which the Ministry will be ready to support.

Table 1: Next Steps Table

Next Steps	
Activity	Expected date of achievement
Start operating an e-government context from Zarqa	Mid April, 2009
Concentrate on acquiring clients for the call center which require longer term projects (one year or more)	June, 2009
Build on the success of the Hikmat Road Safety Awareness and Fundraising Project, and work with the client to extend the length of the contract.	June, 2009

APPENDIX A

TRAINING REPORTS

Training Report 1

Date of Training: 20-22/5/2008 and 14/6/ 2008. Location: AISaket Cultural Center.
Attendance: 25 potential agents. Trainer: Mr. Hazem Dabbas delivered team leader training

Topics:

Day 1:

- What is Telemarketing
- Communicating with the Client
- Dealing with your own emotions
- How to sell your product

Day 2:

- Team work within the Call Center
- See the value of the product from the client's point of view
- Dealing with rejection
- What does the client want
- Traits of the good salesperson
- Smile, tone, and other
- Building a database

Day 3:

- Selling techniques
- Interest in details
- Closing the deal
- Cross selling
- Phone etiquette
- Follow up

Training Report 2

Four full time agents also received training to become Team Leaders on 20/7/2008 at the private sector partner offices. Mr. Hazem Dabbas delivered team leader training. The training aimed to provide the trainees with a solid understanding of what Call Center management means, Key performance indicators (KPI's), equipping supervisors with the skills and knowledge they need to make positive improvements. The training focused on the following topics:

- Difference between inbound and outbound calls
- Service level target, Response time, Efficiency, Average handling time, First Call resolution, Call quality, Occupancy
- How to calculate base staff (Erlang C)
- Improving quality and productivity
- Forms of Calls statistics, Evaluate staff who handles complaint , ...etc

Training Report 3

Three Call Center Managers from the Municipality of Amman (GAM) received training on Call Center Management Skills on 19/8/2008 at the GAM premises. Mr. Hazem Dabbas delivered team leader training. The training aimed to provide the trainees with a solid understanding of what Call Center management means, Key performance indicators (KPI's), equipping supervisors with the skills and knowledge they need to make positive improvements. The training focused on the following topics:

- Difference between inbound and outbound calls
- Service level target, Response time, Efficiency, Average handling time, First Call resolution , Call quality, Occupancy
- How to calculate base staff (Erlang C)
- Improving quality and productivity
- Forms of Calls statistics, Evaluate staff how to handle complaint , ...etc

APPENDIX B

LAUNCHING CALL CENTER IN ZARQA

Pictures



APPENDIX C

MEDIA COVERAGE- ZARQA CALL CENTER LAUNCH



Actionglobalcommunications

CUTTING SERVICE

Jordan

MEDIA:	Anty Magazine	MEDIA SPECIFICS	
DATE:	February 2009	TYPE:	Various
PAGE:	140	FREQUENCY:	Monthly
SIZE	Col. 11	H. 1	
CIRCULATION: 30.000			
HEADLINE: شراكة ما بين القطاع العام والخاص و المجتمع المدني			





Action global communications

CUTTING SERVICE
Jordan

MEDIA:	Sharkeyat Magazine	MEDIA SPECIFICS	
DATE:	February 2009	TYPE:	Various
PAGE:	103	FREQUENCY:	Monthly
SIZE	Col. 7	H. 4	
CIRCULATION: 30.000			
HEADLINE: افتتاح ثاني مركز اتصالات لجمعية نادي صاحبات الأعمال و المهين			

افتتاح ثاني مركز اتصالات لجمعية نادي صاحبات الأعمال والمهين

تمت رعاية وزير الاتصالات وتكنولوجيا المعلومات، باسم الرسان، افتتاح ثاني مركز اتصالات لجمعية نادي صاحبات الأعمال والمهين - عمان، وذلك في محافظة الزرقاء.

حضر الحفل رئيس بلدية الزرقاء، وعدد من أعضاء المجلس البلدي، والمؤسسات الدولية، والوكالة الأمريكية للإغاثة الدولي، وعركاء المشروع من القطاع الخاص، بالإضافة إلى عدد من ممثلي وسائل الإعلام وأعضاء وأصدقاء الجمعية.

وأشار الرسان في كلمته بأن افتتاح هذا المركز يتوافق بشكل كامل مع جهود الحكومة الرامية لتطوير ورفع

جاهزية الأردن في قطاع مراكز الاتصالات، والذي يقدم خدمات الدعم والإسناد بالإنابة مما يجعلها تلعب في هذه الصناعة إقليمياً وعالمياً، إضافة إلى خلق فرص عمل.

وبالتحديد للمرأة، ضمن بيئة مناسبة تساعد على القيام بالأدوار المطلوبة منها.

وهذا ما حددت عليه رئيسة جمعية نادي صاحبات الأعمال والمهين مساء عطانية في الكلمة الترحيبية التي بيثت بأن هذا المشروع يأتي ضمن أهداف الجمعية بتأاحة فرص العمل للفتيات، وبخاصة في محافظة الزرقاء، ويعلم المشروع فرص العمل والتدريب للحوالاء النساء، موفرًا نموذجاً لبيئة العمل الصديقة والداعمة للمرأة من خلال تأاحة فرص العمل الكلي والجزئي وساعات العمل المرنة الأكثر الذي يتيح لهن أن يتساعفن في تحسين وضع أسرهن الاقتصادي وبناء الاقتصاد الوطني.

USAID Jordan Economic Development Program
Salem Center, Sequleyah Street
Al Rabieh, Amman
Phone: +962 6 550 3050
Fax: +962 6 550 3069
Web address: <http://www.sabeq-jordan.org>