

South Africa BPO providers ready to support UK energy sector in a time of unprecedented crisis

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- As the UK faces an unprecedented

[energy crisis](#) and as more energy suppliers collapse, the energy regulator is challenged with finding new suppliers for affected customers. This could become increasingly difficult to find a replacement as larger suppliers have already taken on thousands of additional customers and

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Few energy suppliers are geared for the rapid take-on of thousands of new customers from a back-end perspective. BPO businesses are geared for exactly such a transient challenge.”

*Clinton Cohen, CEO of
iContact BPO*

they are stretched as far as they can go in term of resources and managing the logistical and financial fallout that comes with the increased cost of doing business.

Amidst the massive logistical support requirements, administration, back-office support and customer service necessary to facilitate this rapid take-on process of new customers while managing existing business, sits a beleaguered customer in limbo, desperate for answers, service, certainty – and energy.

The total number of households that have been forced to switch energy suppliers since the start of August is almost

2 million, while 12 utilities have gone under. The latest failures show that the crisis is still getting worse.

“The domino effect of the energy crisis in the UK is huge – it’s not simply a case of restoring ‘supply’ – but also managing the transition and take-on of hundreds of thousands of new customers to new suppliers – all in an incredibly short space of time, under tremendous pressure and without any budgetary provisioning made for the sudden increase in the cost of doing business. The reality is that very few, if any energy suppliers are geared for this rapid transition in terms of the human resources, administrative and technical support, data protection and client-facing servicing requirements demanded of the rapid take-on of new customers, all of whom need access to gas and energy as quickly as possible. BPO businesses are geared for exactly this kind of situation where rapid scale, business continuity and professional delivery are crucial, and where businesses need a solution without incurring massive capital outlays to what is essentially a transient challenge,” explains Clinton Cohen, CEO of [iContact BPO](#).

iContact is a BPO serving predominantly global businesses and specialises in inbound and outbound sales and support services, customer experience and back-office fulfilment with extensive experience in the energy/utility sectors. iContact BPO is part of the Alefbet Holdings group which has headquarters in Johannesburg and Cape Town and employs some 1500 full time employees.

“In times of unprecedented crises like this, our systems, processes, technology, people and rapid scaling ability are designed to support our clients to manage their customer engagement and service through proactive offshoring strategies. At the same time, the hard costs of the rapid take-on of thousands of new customers needs to be managed as it’s a highly unlikely that any provisioning would have been made for a situation like this. This is where working with a South African BPO partner provides significant cost and quality advantages – SA is currently the third largest offshore location for UK and Australian organisations which enjoy up to 60% cost savings compared to onshore service delivery, along with a comparable if not better quality of service, cultural affinity and great work ethic of our people. It’s a crucial consideration at a time when UK energy suppliers are under enormous cost, time and operational pressures,” explains Cohen.

Besides the obvious considerations of technology infrastructure, linguistic capabilities and a stable business environment, a key advantage that South Africa offers is a large pool of skilled labour which means that scale can be rapidly achieved. Speed to market, flexibility and professional delivery are key factors in a time of crisis, and South Africa offers this in abundance. As just one example, iContact BPO recently geared up for a US-based automotive client, hiring 100 skilled agents in less than 100 hours, including management appointments, to handle an incredibly pressured and time-sensitive project. There are very few, if any industry sectors in the world that can provide this sort of agility and rapid scaling while maintaining quality and compliance requirements,” adds Cohen.

“Working with a professional BPO provider with solid experience in the energy/utilities sector can help energy businesses derive stability, business continuity and protect business reputations, by allowing them to maintain their focus on their core business of supplying energy to new and existing customers, while entrusting the non-core but critically important back-office, administrative support and customer services to a trusted and specialist BPO partner,” concludes Cohen.



Clinton Cohen, CEO of iContact BPO

Right now, South Africa's BPO sector provides a light at the end of a tunnel for UK energy businesses looking to maintain operational resilience and service excellence, and at the end of it all, walk away with a key competitive advantage and solid brand reputation that comes from demonstrating professionalism and customer-centricity in a time of crisis.

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