HOW TO FIND A TRUSTED SUPPLIER IN BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING: **LOOK FOR DEEP LOCAL INSIGHT**

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP DOCUMENT

In this paper, we examine how finding strong local players with deep local insight is key to delivering the right information & communication technology (ICT) solutions globally, as well as lay out clearly what makes a trusted supplier in business process outsourcing.

THE SEARCH FOR A SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT

Statista calculates that the size of the global market for information and communication technology (ICT) outsourcing reached US$62 billion in 2018. The huge growth over the last decade in ICT outsourcing is being driven mainly by multinationals like international telecommunication companies and other organizations that have many local branches and offices. This is compelling them to opt to hire global ICT outsourcing suppliers to take care of their ICT needs worldwide on their behalf, rather than engage local ICT suppliers themselves in each of the markets in which they operate.

Using a single ICT outsourcing partner to take care of services worldwide has several advantages. The principal one is the establishment of a single point of contact (SPOC) for multivendor and multinational operations through the introduction of a dedicated project management team, a single support center, a single contact for invoicing, clearly outlined escalation procedures, and global coverage. Such a setup allows the outsourcing partner to improve the process of delivering technology solutions worldwide through efficiently and effectively utilizing the client's resources, thus significantly reducing the complexity of the network operations.

The positive knock-on effect of this is that it frees up precious resources and allows clients to focus on their core business

activities, such as building relationships with customers, marketing, and selling products — a crucial advantage in times of fast-moving technological change and competitive disruption. Overseeing and servicing ICT needs at local branches in multiple countries takes significant time, money and manpower. However, with effective and professional ICT global support, clients can deploy globally the most advanced and up-to-date network solutions, improve response times, decrease delivery times, and increase the quality of on-site services.

WINNING THE BUSINESS

The range of ICT outsourcing services is lengthening because end-customers are demanding more technological solutions to address an increasing array of business needs.

Neeco Global ICT Services, for example, covers the whole range of services:

- field ICT services, such as those at customer premises and at data centers, site assessments and surveys;
- professional services, such as network design and project management;
- distribution and logistics, such as OEM relationship management and equipment staging;
- maintenance and support, including on-site and remote technical support;
- global connectivity, such as 3G/4G enterprise and Internet of Things (IoT) connectivity.

Increasingly, end-customers are demanding a full range of services from a single supplier, meaning that clients like telcos

need to meet the full scope of the end-customer project in order to win and keep multimillion-dollar contracts. This increasingly makes ICT outsourcing a necessity rather than a choice.

A case study was Neeco's two-year project with a telco client that had won a multimillion-dollar contract to deliver global connectivity to an airline customer. Neeco's contract was to deliver, install and maintain the equipment supporting the telco client to deliver the connectivity to the airline offices at certain airports. As each airport is a truly unique ecosystem, that's where Neeco's strong local partners came to the fore. The local partners were able to share local insights into how each airport operated, because in many cases they already had existing contacts at the airports and so knew how to approach each of the stakeholders from the airport side to begin discussions about implementing the project. During the project run, Neeco turned out to be not just the system integrator delivering and installing the hardware, but also a trusted advisor helping the customer achieve its primary goal – to deliver resilient global connectivity to the airline offices.

CHOOSING A PARTNER

With more and more companies looking to expand beyond their own borders and develop global reach, demand for outsourcing ICT services looks set to continue growing strongly. Concurrently, as the customer-supplier relationship becomes more trustworthy, there will be a shift in outsourcing projects from non-core services to the core business operations. According to a Global Industry Analytics report, the global business process outsourcing market will reach $220 billion by 2020.

Neeco was one of the first to identify this opportunity in the market when it was founded in 2009. However, emergent markets always attract new competitors and there is now a growing number of ICT outsourcing vendors that are looking to act as genuine partners who can assume responsibility for niche-based knowledge

BUT WHICH ONE TO CHOOSE?

We believe that the two main criteria that clients should look for when choosing a trusted business process outsourcing supplier are experience and a deep knowledge of the local market. Cost, of course, is an important consideration, but should not be put above local insight and experience in our estimation.

"Tell us what you want to achieve and leave the rest to our professionals."

The issue of experience is vital in honing the business processes that will ultimately help clients to deploy globally the most advanced and up-to-date network solutions. Taking the process of onboarding as an example, the engineers and technicians that are sent out into the field must be fully qualified, fully vetted (often the on-site areas to be visited are secured sites), and fully trained and acquainted with the task at hand. From the end-customer's point of view, the engineers who visit the sites will be regarded as representatives of the client, not the ICT outsourcing supplier, and so must fulfil their duties properly in order to achieve high end-customer satisfaction.

This ability to send out fully trained, qualified and vetted engineers is linked to the second key criteria in choosing

a trusted business process outsourcing supplier, that of possessing deep insight into the local market conditions. Neeco, for example, typically partners with domestic companies that are not active globally, who focus on local market projects and have a strong track record of delivering projects in that market. It is this on-the-ground knowledge that is invaluable when the project is in the planning stages: these local partners can point out aspects of the project that will play out differently in their market compared to other markets – after all, what works in the US may not work in Nigeria – while Neeco can, through its local partner, bring international-standard solutions to the most remote markets.

What that means in practice is that business process outsourcers need to enter into a truly bilateral partnership with local firms, treating them as partners rather than suppliers, in order to benefit fully from this deep local insight. Neeco has formalized this relationship through its Global Alliance Program, which gives its suppliers – 20,000 engineers at 55,000 support sites in 160 countries – the power to create a lucrative new revenue stream for their businesses with the right to sell and support Neeco products. These products are the most comprehensive, cost-effective, and high-performance solutions available in the ICT industry today.

Lastly, a key criteria in finding a trusted business process outsourcer is their ability to identify what you, as a client, value most – a real understanding of your business objectives, a true grasp of today's and tomorrow's technology-based solutions, and the ability to deliver on-time, on-budget, without fail. In essence, the offer to the client should be: "tell us what you want to achieve and leave the rest to our professionals."