

Interactive Alliance advocates creation of call centre association in Nigeria and across Africa

Christopher Bell, Interactive Intelligence's Channel Manager for Africa, has recently called for the creation of a call centre association for Nigeria and other African countries as a way of promoting a standard for call centres. He mentions that such associations have already been set up in Zambia and Zimbabwe, and plans are underway to set one up in Kenya.

"Call centres are helping African governments to provide efficient and effective services to citizens", says Rod Jones, contact centre consultant. Speaking in Lagos, Nigeria ahead of an Interactive Intelligence-sponsored masterclass for stakeholders, Jones says with leading edge technologies such as speech recognition and voice commands, call centres have evolved and transcended beyond ordinary telephone calls. "As we have evolved to become a customer direction centre, we've moved from telephone calls into SMS text messaging. We've taken on the email and social media channel and for customer interaction."

"We've already seen that in South Africa," Jones mentions. The most effective aspect of the government is our Revenue Service. They have built and operate a true world class call centre and it has been responsible for tremendous improvements in revenue collection by the government.

Christopher Bell exclaims that masterclasses held in various parts of Africa, especially in Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia, are conducting dialogues that are being stimulated and more organisations, including government, are developing interests in the diverse possibilities of setting up call centres.

"We've seen tremendous growth in the industry in the wake of the seminars", says Bell. If you keep the momentum going by stimulating dialogue, you make people aware. We exposed some of the participants for the first time to what a call centre is all about."

Organisations in Nigeria such as telecoms companies and financial institutions, are quickly adopting call centres, according to Mbuela Luwawu, Managing Director of Odilum Technologies Limited, an Interactive Intelligence partner in Nigeria.

Luwawu says: "Five years ago, no bank had a contact centre but since 2009, you can pick up your phone, call your contact centre and speak to your customer service officer directly. The adoption has been quite positive." He also states that Nigeria has the ability to take market share away from India; and he predicted there will be lots of contact centre outsourcing for Nigeria from Europe and America.