

## Media Release

Kaikohe – Monday, 6 December 2010



### **PHONEplus, Kaikohe helps international customers connect**

You could be forgiven for thinking the last person a Botswana airport official would call, with questions about her airport baggage handling system, would be a customer service rep in Kaikohe, New Zealand.

Perhaps surprisingly, that's the first point of contact - if that airport official happens to be a customer of New Zealand multi-national, Glidepath, which has outsourced its international helpdesk to the Far North Customer Contact Centre business and Top Energy Group subsidiary, PHONEplus.

Glidepath is a world leader in the design, Installation and servicing of airport baggage handling systems, which has completed more than 550 projects in over 60 countries, worldwide. With headquarters located in Auckland, Glidepath employs a highly skilled team of mechanical, electrical, and computer software engineers, project managers and international sales managers to support its technology and marketing programmes. The company also operates two fully integrated manufacturing facilities – one in Dallas, Texas and the other in Auckland and has subsidiaries in Canada, Latin America, India, South Africa, China and Australia.

PHONEplus provides the customer service interface, to help Glidepath's clients stay in touch, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Any traveller who has experienced delays at the baggage carousel of a large international airport will recognise how quickly the pressure builds to have the equipment back in service. PHONEplus provides a prompt and highly professional response to these calls, ensuring essential information is correctly interpreted and that technical resource is quickly made available.

PHONEplus has also collaborated with another leading New Zealand company, ACTIVboard NZ to bring cutting edge technologies to schools in this country and around Australia. PHONEplus telesales reps have been making contact with schools to help introduce them to an exciting interactive learning tool called the ActivClassroom. The image from the teacher's computer is projected on to the interactive whiteboard (the ActivBoard) and works like a giant computer screen for all to see. Think of the movie, Minority Report and the Tom Cruise character sorting through the imagistic data on screen provided by the pre-cogs and you come close to the ActivBoard concept.

It is touch sensitive and can be controlled by a pen shaped mouse so teachers and students can write and draw as they would on a regular whiteboard pulling together thousands of global and New Zealand specific resources which make teaching and learning easier. This increases student engagement and lesson

momentum. Already, over 25% of New Zealand schools have invested in ActivBoards to help improve student learning outcomes.

These are just two examples of the many and varied call handling opportunities PHONE*plus* telephone reps deal with on a daily basis. Says Kathryn Starr, PHONE*plus* General Manager, "Our teams are very comfortable with high tech products and helping people to understand how to use them. This is important whether we are selling a technology product or providing after sales support. By partnering with successful New Zealand companies, managing email and voice communications with their customers wherever they might be located, we are creating jobs in a rural area which is important locally and for the economy generally."

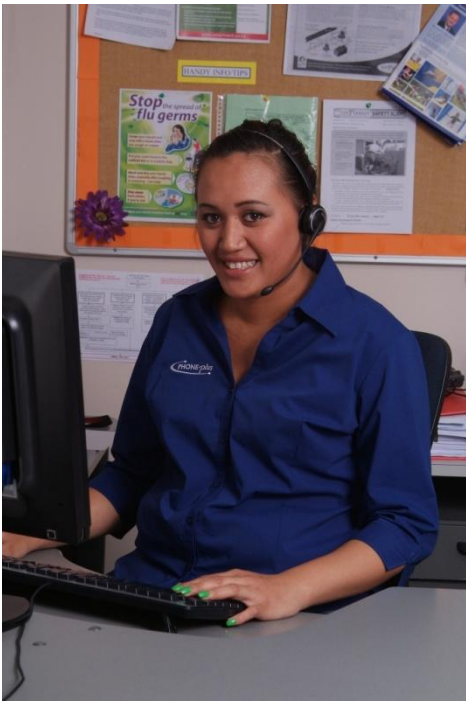
Top Energy's entry into the Contact Centre business dates before the electricity industry reforms of the 90's, when the company sold electricity to Far North power consumers as well as owning the lines network which distributes it. Back then the company operated an in-house customer service centre which provided billing and customer services support for its 25,000 customer base. Following deregulation, Top Energy purchased an independent Auckland Contact Centre business and combined the two operations to form PHONE*plus*.

From those early days, PHONE*plus* has grown in strength and capability and now provides world-class help desk, customer and sales support services for domestic and internationally-based clients. The company has invested in state-of-the-art customer management software, telephony, computer hardware and ongoing quality telesales operator training to maintain best practice standards.

Reversing a trend seen in the last few years, both Glidepath and ActivBoard are examples of New Zealand companies which have taken the decision to have their customer service and telesales functions managed by New Zealand-based Customer Contact Centres.

According to Co-Chair of the Contact Centre Institute of New Zealand (CCiNZ), Nadene Gavigan, "The work being done so successfully by PHONE*plus* reflects a return by New Zealand companies to servicing their customers using local people. Similarly this year we saw both Canon and Greenstone (formerly the Shell retail and distribution brand) choose Auckland for their customer contact centre, over other international options. It's fantastic to see a rural location such as Kaikohe using telecommunication technologies to take market share and create new jobs like this." END.

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Pic: Shona Sofa, PHONEplus telephone rep handles an incoming call.



Pic. PHONEplus telephone rep, Petra Heremaia, makes an outbound call.