



CUSTOMER RELATIONS

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF
THE CUSTOMER RELATIONS
SECTOR IN HAUTS-DE-FRANCE

ABOUT THIS REPORT

In this dual interview, you'll get insights into the **socio-economic impact of the Hauts-de-France customer relations sector** from Yann Pitollet, Nord France Invest's Chief Executive Officer, and Olivier Charras, our Project Director for the Service Sector.

Their views originally appeared in the 2020 edition of *Survey of the Economic, Social and Regional Impacts of Outsourced Contact Centers in France*, a study conducted by EY and SP2C, a trade group of leading French CRM providers.

[Fast fact]

Hauts-de-France is the leading French region for outsourced contact centers, with 12,000 jobs.



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Can you remind us why contact centers are so important in the Hauts-de-France region?

We should start by pointing out that **our region was the birthplace of customer relations in France**, especially in areas like Lille and Amiens. Today we're home to **more outsourced contact centers than any other region of France, with nearly 11,000 jobs**. Leading players in the sector—most of them active members of the SP2C trade group—have major facilities here. Majorel, Amatis, Sitel, Teleperformance, Webhelp and Coriolis all chose Hauts-de-France as the place to grow their business.

There are several reasons for this, starting with our **talent pool**. Our region is well known for its strong recruitment potential and wide range of training programs for contact centers. We also offer extremely competitive **operating costs** in areas ranging from real estate to human resources. And we're in a **strategic location**, with rail connections that put several Hauts-de-France cities just an hour away from Paris.

What role do contact centers play in developing employment, training and skill-building ecosystems in Hauts-de-France? And what impact do they have on young people and the long-term unemployed?

When a new contact center opens, it usually creates hundreds of jobs, which in turn reshapes the landscape of the local labor market. It also affects a wide range of candidates, including young graduates, people with disabilities, the long-term unemployed and people who are just breaking into the world of work. And when you have these waves of job creation, you have to train people fast so they can hit the ground running. It's fair to say that **outsourced customer relations help people find their place in the labor market and in society, because they offer steady jobs with excellent career growth opportunities**.

In Hauts-de-France, we've developed **extensive expertise in the recruitment and training programs companies need to launch and expand their contact centers successfully**. In recent years the region has made jobs a priority. To take one example, our Proch'Emploi program provides custom-tailored support to business leaders, from understanding their workplaces and

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staffing needs to connecting them with the right candidates. And we're developing an ecosystem with partners including the Hauts-de-France Regional Council, the French National Job Center and local employment offices.

And here's another major impact: **contact centers jump-start positive economic trends that can re-energize struggling regions and buoy urban renewal.** That, in turn, launches a whole panoply of new services—leisure activities, restaurants, and even expansion of the housing and mobility offer in areas where the new customer relations employees work.

How could contact centers contribute even more to socio-economic development in the region?

The corollary to that question is “How can the Hauts-de-France public sector contribute to the growth of this important industry in our region, especially in the vital areas of employment and training?”

Today's contact centers are changing fast. For customer relations players, it's clear that digital ETC, new consumer lifestyles, “enhanced call center” technology, AI and CSR are all major challenges—but they're also opportunities to contribute even more to socio-economic development in the region.

In Hauts-de-France, we recognize the sector's importance for our future, so we're stepping up our contacts with key players and bringing all of our resources to bear, particularly in training and recruitment. All of this clearly shows that **we're committed to helping customer relations companies grow their business, whether they're launching a new call center in Hauts-de-France or expanding an existing one.** We planned an event on this very theme for spring 2020 in Lille.

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