



Community Banking Since 1869

2 September 2010

MEDIA RELEASE

No threat of offshore Contact Centre for SBS Bank – ever!

SBS Bank's Invercargill-based Contact Centre team have just celebrated their 10th anniversary safe in the knowledge that they will never be based offshore.

Established in 2000 with 11 fulltime and part-time staff, SBS Bank's Contact Centre team now boasts 30 specialised staff who are able to efficiently and effectively provide SBS Bank customers with quality, personal service.

When two SBS Bank managers were tasked with establishing the Contact Centre more than a decade ago, they were adamant that the society's commitment to its member service was paramount.

SBS Bank Cromwell manager Lynn Manson, who was a founder of the Contact Centre, said the SBS Bank focus was always on the customer and technology was going to be the enabler for the Contact Centre communications – not the driving force behind it.

“When our customers ring our Contact Centre they know they speak to a person – not a recording. With many of our new and existing customers not living near one of our SBS Bank branches, the Contact Centre team are their lifeline to SBS Bank and any queries they may have.”

Contact Centre manager Christine Hollingworth said all calls from SBS Bank customers throughout New Zealand and those calling from overseas were routed to the Invercargill team, who each received three months of intensive training so they could meet the members' needs efficiently and effectively.

“Our customers are paramount to us. We don't ask them to push a number to get to a particular department – when the phone is answered we are ready and waiting to talk directly to them.

“When we first started in 2000, we completed approximately 48,000 calls in the first year. Ten years later and our team of 30 have just completed about 250,000 inbound and outbound calls.

Mrs Hollingworth said the SBS Bank Contact Centre received more than 200,000 calls from customers every year, averaging 800 inbound calls a day.

“It's great to be able to say 86 percent of these calls are answered within 15 seconds, when the industry standard is around 80 percent. Meanwhile, the outbound team attempted a further 48,000 calls each year with more than 21,000 successful attempts during the past year.

“10 years later we know we are continuing to get our personal service right with our members because they tell us just that – every single day.”

“A highlight of the Contact Centre culture here at SBS Bank is the team camaraderie. We're always looking for different challenges, projects and fundraisers to enjoy team bake-offs dress-ups and get-togethers.

Mrs Manson said the Contact Centre had become a major gateway to staff furthering their employment at SBS Bank.

“During the past two years alone, 90 percent of our Contact Centre staff have made the transition into other departments within SBS Bank to progress their careers. Our SBS Bank people are the driving force in delivering what we stand for so it is great to see them advancing their careers with us.

“As New Zealand’s only customer-owned community bank, we will ensure that the exceptional service our members receive is not diluted. A strong and successful New Zealand-owned community bank is one that has the best interests of its members and its communities at the heart of everything it does.”

For further information please contact:

Christine Hollingworth, Manager SBS Bank Contact Centre

Tel: 03 211 0717; Email: christine.hollingworth@sbs.net.nz

Lynn Manson, Manager SBS Bank Cromwell

Tel: 03 445 0685; Cell: 021 272 7005; Email: lynn.manson@sbs.net.nz

www.sbs.net.nz