



# ValueFirst

A leading MVNO of data services to the enterprises

Mobility solutions as the panacea for the BPO Industry

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## BPO Industry – A snapshot

The Indian ITES-BPO industry lived up to expectations and market projections during 2005-06, setting the stage for higher levels of growth and achievement over the year 2006-07. Having attained consolidation-driven by a spate of crucial mergers and acquisitions-*the key players within the sector are gravitating towards higher levels of process excellence in operations and product and service quality.*

By the year 2008, the industry is expected to employ over 1.1 million Indians, according to studies conducted by NASSCOM and leading business Intelligence Company, McKinsey & Co. *Market research shows that in terms of job creation, the ITES-BPO industry is growing at over 50 percent per annum.*

With the economy in good shape and the jobs being created in various industries it is difficult for the BPO industry to meet the ever-increasing demand of skilled people. *Inflated salaries and the real estate prices triggered by the rising demand of skilled people are putting pressures on the BPO industry to **cut costs** and increase **employee efficiency** using innovative means and cutting edge technology.*

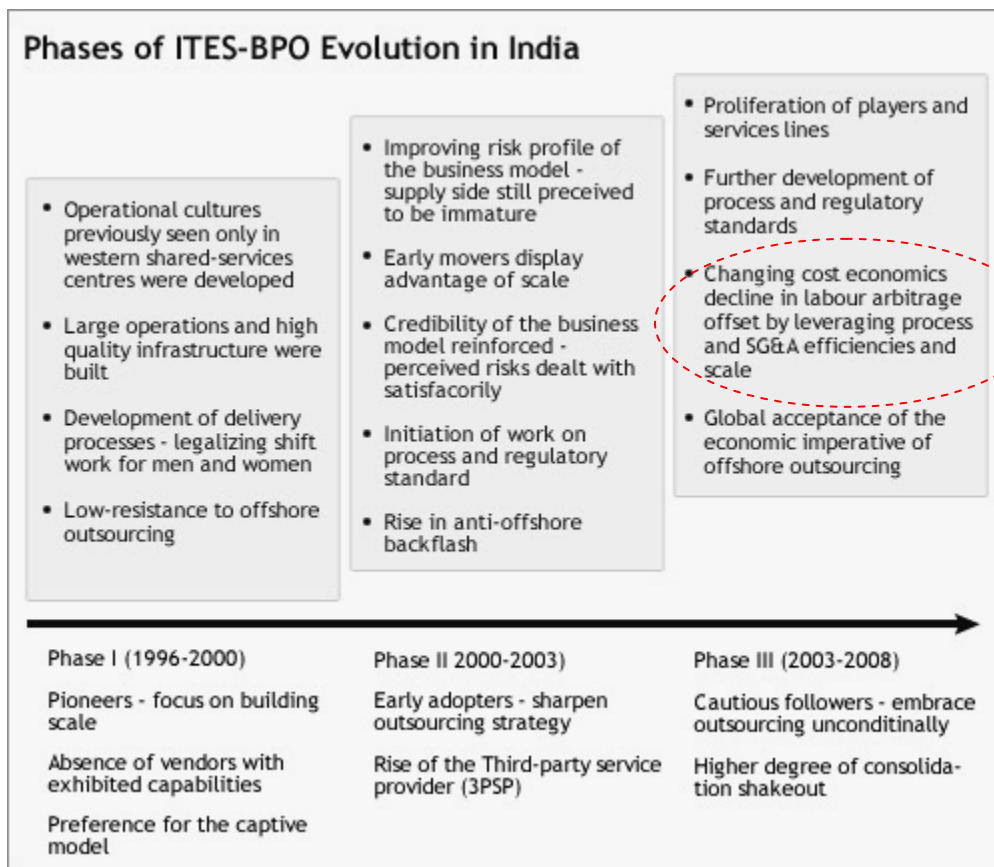


Fig 1.1 Evolution of BPO Industry in India

## BPO Industry - Areas of concern

Going by the trends and current market dynamics in the BPO industry, we can conclude that the top four areas of concern for the industry are as below:

### 1. SLAs

Increasing competition is driving the SLAs of the BPOs to an extremely demanding level where they have to maintain a near-zero downtime for all of their processes. These stringent SLAs create an atmosphere of high pressure in the organization and often sets the panic in the function / department where the failure has occurred.

### 2. Churn / Attrition rate

A BPO spends huge sums of money on recruitment, training and welfare needs of employees. However, as the attrition rate is high, all this results in cost disadvantage on account of recruitment costs, training costs and development costs. Therefore, BPOs are looking for innovative means of optimizing the overhead to stay cost competitive in the marketplace.

### 3. Pressure on resources

As the BPO companies are scaling up leaps and bounds, it is putting huge pressure on the administrative resources in these organizations. As a result activities like infrastructure management, transportation management and HR management related activities are suffering.

### 4. Employee Satisfaction

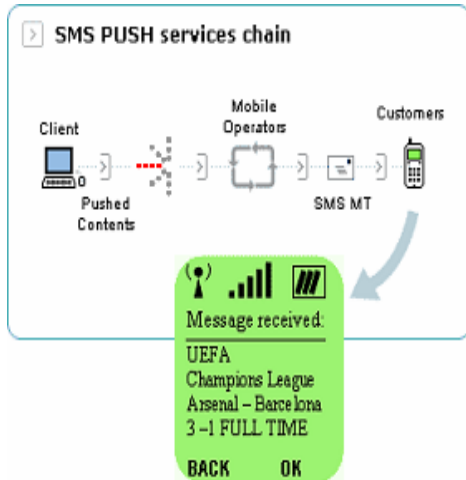
The repetitive nature of the work and irregular work timings make it important for the organization to frequently come up with schemes which not only gives the employees monetary benefits but also create a sense of involvement to make them feel that they are an integral part of the organization.



**Employee satisfaction results in lower churn, there by resulting in cost benefits which again creates space for more and more resource which results in virtuous cycle...**

## Introduction to Mobile Messaging

### What is Mobile Messaging?



Mobile Messaging, or Short Message Service (SMS), is the ability to send or receive text messages to or from mobile handsets. The text can comprise words or numbers or an alphanumeric combination. SMS was created as part of the GSM Phase 1 standard. The first short message is believed to have been sent in December 1992 from a Personal Computer (PC) to a mobile phone on the Vodafone GSM network in the UK. Each short message can be up to 160 characters in length when Latin alphabet are used.

There are four types of mobile messaging scenarios possible between the IT Applications and mobile phones:

#### 1. PUSH Services

PUSH Services allow pushing the relevant information from the IT system to the mobile phones. They can be deployed for Information Services, real-time notifications and direct marketing offerings.

#### 2. PULL Services

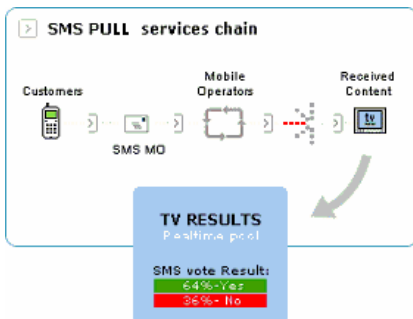
Mobile users "pull" or request information by sending an SMS from their mobile phones to a service number linked to the service of the content provider.

#### 3. PUSH-PULL Services

The service is initiated by a Push SMS from the application to the mobile user prompting the user to reply via SMS.

#### 4. PULL-PUSH Services

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Mobile messaging is going to grow at a rapid rate over the next two years owing to the key market drivers such as the cheaper mobile technology..

### Customer Usage and Market Growth

There is no doubting the success of the Short Message Service - the market in India alone has reached over one billion messages despite little proactive marketing by network operators and phone manufacturers. Key market drivers over the next two years such as the access of cheaper mobile technology to the masses will fuel this growth path.

## Can Mobile Messaging be a panacea for the BPO Industry?









Based on the analysis of the BPO industry scenario and the pain points of the industry it can be concluded that the three main business drivers for the BPO companies are:  
 1) Cost efficiency 2) Process efficiency 3) Employee satisfaction

Mobile messaging can be efficiently used to contribute to these business drivers as described below:

### Process Management

Stringent SLAs of the business processes necessitates BPOs addressing problems as soon as they occur. A lot of times the service engineers attending to the problems are not on their desk and there is a delay in resolution of the problem which affects the SLAs of the BPOs.

Mobile messaging service is being used by many of ValueFirst's clients to fill the above gap in the process management as mentioned below:

-  Automated critical failure alerts on triggering of process failure which can be configured based on specified business rules
-  Push updates about the process recovery
-  Periodic MIS to the stakeholders on process performance
-  Proactive alerts to process owner based on pre-configured rules about the process performance
-  Escalation of the messages to higher level if not attended by the assigned service engineer
-  Pull status of process typically done by mobile employees

**Managed service** BPO operations of companies like HCL Comnet, TCS and Kanbay have been the early adopters of the messaging service, but process BPOs have also deployed these services to send critical alerts in case of server failures.

*Many of the existing clients are using ValueFirst's **AirMail** which converts a SOS Email generated as a result of server error into a SMS.*

**Managed service BPOs and Process BPOs are using Airmail, the Email-2-SMS services to send critical server alerts..**

**"The messaging services have helped reduce the trauma that all process stakeholders used to go during process failures due to increased transparency of the information flow"**

**VP- Technology  
HCL BPO**

## Human Resources Management

Frequent employee incentive and promotion schemes are common in BPOs to attract and retain the entry level employees. In many cases, these entry level employees do not have access to the email due to security and cost considerations. Therefore, HR normally puts up the notices at some key locations in the office campus. This communication mechanism is not able to generate high employee involvement as the notice is missed for multiple reasons.

Another issue which HR faces in BPOs is a high demand to manage candidate pipeline (*shortlist to offer letter*) for recruitment and consequently they end up spending lot of their quality time making phone calls to fix and co-ordinate interviews and intimate the offers.

Several of ValueFirst's clients are using messaging services for the HR processes as described below:



Employees are intimated about

- Referral schemes
- Account transfers
- Incentives



Scheduling interviews and sending offers to prospective employees

By using the messaging services the employee involvement has increased which has positively contributed to the employee satisfaction.

## Roster Management

The scheduling of assignments for the agents is dynamic as it is based on number of factors related to work load forecast. Further, in a few companies the agents are provided the flexibility to decide their own schedule, which makes the scheduling more complex.

Providing home pick up and drop facility to employees has become a norm in BPO industry. Typically, the scheduling of cabs is managed by a roster management system. The roster management system intimates the employees about their cab time based on the requests of pick-up/drop of other employees and the optimal route algorithm.

Once the cab timing is decided, it is flashed at key places in the office, the employees miss it frequently. If an agent decides to take a day-off, he/she has no mechanism to

**"I was off duty when the announcement was made that person attending calls out of turn would be entitled for Rs 2000 gift voucher...I missed it as the notice was placed in the office.."**

***D Sinha, Process Associate at a leading BPO in Gurgaon***



**"Earlier there was no mechanism through which I could enquire about the cab delay and I had to wait for 1 hour at times....."**

***Nayani Singhla, Process Associate at a leading call centre in Gurgaon***



intimate this to the logistics department. This results in sub-optimum utilization of the cab, fuel wastage and low employee attendance.

Several of our clients are using our messaging services to overcome the above mentioned deficiencies of the roster management system as follows:-

-  Push of cab pick-up time and delay notice to the employees
-  Pull of cab pick-up and drop information and fixing up drop/pick-up by employees using messaging services

## What ValueFirst's clients have to say?



"ValueFirst services has drastically improved the efficiency of several of our functions by filling the communication gap between the management and the employees"

*Convergys,  
Gurgaon, India*



"The application is been optimally utilized for HR communications and IT escalations, thus creating an efficient supply chain management".

*A leading MNC BPO,  
India*



"The application is being used by us in areas of IT escalations and process failures intimation. We are also looking to use it for process fail-safe notifications as well"

*HCL BPO,  
Noida, India*



## Is the industry prepared for OEM integration?

The BPO industry uses off-the-shelf software solutions for these resources management be it roster management, infrastructure management or human resources management. The mobile solution can be easily integrated with these suites as a plug-in to offer benefits of space and time neutral information flow.

Our existing clients said that it would be extremely beneficial for them if our messaging platform is integrated to their roster management, HR management and Infrastructure management solutions. Integration of the SMS gateway with the existing set of applications would make it easier for use and utility would also be high as rich features can be incorporated through the integration.

Software companies such as SSA Global which specialize in transportation solutions said that the messaging requirements for the transport solutions have matured and today its clients are demanding a messaging plug-in shrink-wrapped with the roster management solution.

There have been instances of the OEM integration of messaging solutions in other industries in past. One such instance of such integration is of Amadeus, the global travel distribution system with one of the wireless messaging platform provider, where an SMS can be sent to the customer intimating him the about his booking, delay or cancellations.

## Would BPOs consider providing messaging to client?

Have the messaging requirements in the BPO space matured to a stage where they must provide inbound and outbound messaging requirements of their clients. This will result in significant cost saving and efficiency enhancement. Many of our clients felt that taking care of the messaging requirements of their clients can be a significant differentiator in the market place and they would consider doing it provided the quality of messaging solution is exceptional.

The clients of the voice based BPO have both inbound and outbound messaging requirements. Pull messages can be used to record customer query and call him/her back. Push based messages can be used to run mobile marketing campaigns along with voice based marketing campaigns.

**"Several of our clients are looking for a messaging platform integrated with our Route planning system.."**

*Manager,  
Supply Chain & Logistics,  
SSA Global*

**"We see high value in integrating our dialer solution with the messaging platform of ValueFirst..."**

*Sachin Bhatia  
Drishti-soft*

**The Mobile messaging solutions have contributed immensely to cost efficiency, process efficiency and employee satisfaction...**

## Conclusion

Mobile messaging is capable of contributing to the cost efficiency and process efficiency in the BPOs due to instant access to information and optimum utilization of resources. Improved efficiency in the BPO contribute to greater employee satisfaction as it reduces the stress levels in the organization and efficient deployment of resources lead to better employee welfare.

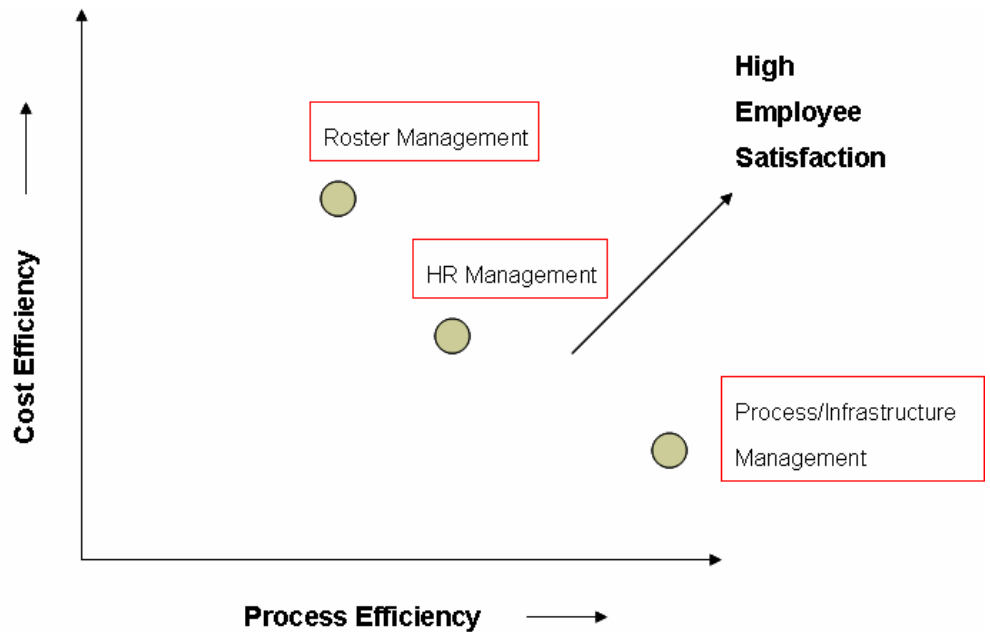


Fig 1.2 Contribution of messaging to business drivers in BPO

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As shown above, deployment of messaging solutions in all three processes help improve the cost efficiency and process efficiency in the BPOs and hence enhance the employee satisfaction levels. The cost savings in roaster management can be quantified in terms of – reduced fuel costs, higher employee attendance and reduced number of phone calls. Similarly, HR management and process management also results in cost and process efficiencies.

BPOs which have taken the lead in deploying the mobile messaging solutions are witnessing better productivity and have a competitive edge over other players in the market place.

*For further information on how BPOs can leverage the mobile messaging technology and solutions to enhance their competitiveness, please feel free to write to Nimesh Bhandari, VP- Mobility Solutions, ValueFirst, at [nimesh.bhandari@vfirst.com](mailto:nimesh.bhandari@vfirst.com)*



*ValueFirst empowers its customers to communicate between varied IT back-end systems and mobile phones using SMS Services. ValueFirst provides a unique, end-to-end, global carrier-grade mobile data service. Its mobile data service offering includes "plug and play" application licensing and hosting. Employing a partnership with Mobile operators, ValueFirst acts as an MVNO (Mobile Virtual Network Operator), with a clear focus on SMS mobile messaging. ValueFirst's Mobile Messaging Platform is capable of delivering SMS services to virtually any CDMA/GSM mobile handset. ValueFirst combines signaling information from the mobile world with innovative applications running concurrently on its own IT applications platform and thereby pave the way for mission-critical international messaging services.*

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