

## EVERYONE DESERVES THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED

This is the core facet of our business; it's our "why." During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, many of our customers' businesses took a hit and a considerable number of contractors were laid-off, furloughed or had their assignments permanently terminated. During this time, we looked back to our core value, and did everything we could to help our customers and keep contractors employed.

When one of our customers was significantly impacted by the spread of the virus, we were ready to jump in and help them succeed. In the midst of a pandemic flanked by high unemployment and volatility, we were able to help this customer bring more people back to work.

### Why reach out for help?

Our customer's offshore call centers closed due to the pandemic, and they needed to quickly adapt and build a US-based call center to handle their call volume, while minimizing business disruption to their end customers. With approximately 150 workers to be onboarded urgently to staff the call center to optimal volume, this customer called on Populus Group and one other provider to distribute the responsibility of the quick turnaround and manage the high volume, anticipating 50-75 contractors per provider.

### Keys for Success

- » Remain efficient and flexible without sacrificing our high standards for service. Communication, transparency and close collaboration are key to our ability to keep up with a high volume of onboards and quickly pivot to fulfill any new or changing expectations
- » Create a way to track the progress of all contractors and tell an organized story while capturing best practices for continuous improvement
- » Proactively prepare for challenges and adjustments. In addition to the uncertainty of the time, call centers can prove difficult to find workers to complete assignments and often have high turnover, sometimes before the worker even walks in the door. In order to successfully fill the 150 positions, there would likely be a much higher number of contractors engaged to offset the expected attrition in these positions.

### The "How"

#### Flexibility and Adaptation

- » In the midst of COVID-19, we had to pivot our onboarding strategies to account for social distancing and new safety guidelines. While the vast majority of our onboarding is already remote from our contractors, these additional precautions required a shift in operations mid-project. Now, all onboarding and training had to be done remotely, pick-up and return of equipment needed to be contactless and a new "ABC" shift structure was implemented to minimize the number of contractors in one location, but still achieve maximum productivity.

# CALL CENTER SUCCESS STORY



- » People-first service, strict adherence to our standards and close, open communication all around lead to increased trust from our customer in the early days of the program go-live. As a result, they started to lean more and more on our team to handle the incoming workers, significantly increasing our total headcount beyond the forecasted numbers.
- » Out of the original total forecasted headcount of 150 (50-75 per provider) to staff the call center, Populus Group received onboarding requests for 178 contractors. Between contractors not meeting background requirements and expected call center turnover, 120 workers ultimately onboarded in the Populus Group program.

## **Transparent Communication and Progress Awareness**

- » Our team created a sophisticated and organized onboarding tracker, shared with the customer and program office, to increase awareness and transparency on the status of each worker routed through our program. The tracker made it easy for our internal teams to stay organized through the high volume of onboards and for anyone to filter, review and check on any contractors going through the process to stay up to date at a moment's notice.
- » This tracker can be duplicated to provide awareness, transparency and organization to future large-scale transitions or ramp up projects, either with this customer or any others.

## **Strong, Trusted Partnership**

- » Our transparency, communication and ability to deliver beyond expectations catalyzed the strengthening of our great relationships with sponsors and the program office. Much of the success here can be attributed to our delivery team's never-ending commitment and ownership over the account. A good deal of our teams worked around the clock, making calls at all times of the day and through the weekend to make each contractor feel supported and our partners had all the answers and crystal clarity.

## **Creating Opportunity, Despite a Pandemic**

- » Even in an environment of furloughs and high unemployment rates, this call center initiative allowed us the opportunity to help bring more people back to work to fill the open call center positions.
- » One of the contractors trusted to our management was even the first to complete a successful call out of the new call center; a special moment for Mastercard, Populus Group and the contractor.

## **The Results:**

Our unique culture, determination and commitment to the success of every contractor and our customer pushed us ahead. Over two months, these values lead to exceeding our goals and capturing a much larger market share of the call center business than previously forecasted. To date, we have onboarded over 120 workers, and are actively looking for other ways to drive value and partnership forward.