

IBA expands Bulgarian business

 **BULGARIA**

IBA Group has opened a second office in Bulgaria, as part of a plan to grow its new product areas. IBA Group is a global IT service provider headquartered in Prague, Czech Republic and the establishment of the new office is a step in the implementation of the IBA Group's expansion strategy in Eastern Europe. Typically, IBA relies on organic growth rather than on acquisitions. However, in 2007 it purchased a 50% stake in Stone Computers, a Bulgaria-based IT vendor. The deal generated benefits for both companies, it says.



Bulgaria and the 17th across the world. To date, IBA Group employs more than 2,000 people. Its development centres are in Belarus and Czech Republic, and its sales offices in the United States, Germany, Cyprus, Russia, and Bulgaria. IBA Group is a multipurpose IT company that operates as an ISV, VAR and OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer).

IBA Group timed the opening in Varna to coincide with the introduction of its product, the IBA Information and Transaction Terminal (ITT), to the Bulgarian market. The ITT is a self-service device designed for financial transactions and for quick access

railway stations, hotels, tourist centres, and educational institutions.

Commenting on the event, Sergei Levteev (*left*), IBA Group President, said: "To meet client demands, IBA will proceed with expansion in Eastern Europe. The company will also continue its quest for innovation. The IT market is highly dynamic. It is hard to predict what will be on demand tomorrow and therefore we keep exploring new trends and technologies. When several years ago we unveiled ITTs, nobody understood why. No similar products existed either in the West, or in Eastern Europe. Even banking institutions did not see how ITTs can be used for their benefit. Today, this line of business is showing excellent results."

► **OUR ANALYSIS**

Bulgaria is proving attractive as the South East corner of Europe benefits from incoming Middle East and Russian investment. Increasingly sophisticated technology is proving attractive both to enterprise and small and medium businesses. Now the trend is to move outside capital cities.

With assistance from IBA Group, Stone Computers is expanding its service and product portfolio. As for IBA Group, it has achieved a local presence in Bulgaria.

The Varna office is the second IBA's office in

to reference information. Using the terminal, it is possible to pay by card for public utilities and telephone, Internet, and cable TV services, as well as repay loans. ITTs are typically installed in bank branches, retail chains, commercial areas, airports,

Changing of guard at Microsoft Spain

 **SPAIN**

MICROSOFT Spain has announced the appointment of María Garaña Corces (*right*) as new President of the company.



Corces, who replaces Rosa María García, now become VP Microsoft Western Europe for the Consumer & Online division, will be responsible for developing a new corporate strategy which will allow the Spanish subsidiary to consolidate the results achieved under the previous leadership.

In her new role she will also be in charge of coordinating all Microsoft Spain's activities, integrating the new Consumer & Online division into the other business areas.

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Contact centre attrition continues...

 **EUROPE**

THE proliferation of new contact centre locations globally has done little to allay fears of wide-spread price and attrition increases for outsourcing vendors. In a recent strategic focus report, "*Trends in Global Contact Center Outsourcing Pricing and Attrition*", independent market analyst Datamonitor illustrates some of the key challenges facing outsourcers in key onshore/offshore delivery markets and highlights strategies that may be deployed to counter these problems.

The UK and Netherlands are among the most expensive onshore delivery locations; but there is pricing pressure across domestic markets. The UK, the Netherlands and France rank among the most expensive in terms of fully-loaded price per agent per hour (including wages, benefits, telephony/technology, property, mark-up and other expenses).

However, Peter Ryan, head of contact center outsourcing analysis at Datamonitor and author of the report, also notes that while these markets are among the most expensive in which to deal, there are several trends that vendors may face when dealing across established onshore markets.

"It is clear that no matter whether in Western Europe or the USA, contact center vendors are

facing problems in terms of recruiting well-qualified contact center agents. Many cite an inability to find contact center agents of a high calibre and are frustrated at their unwillingness to stay in their role over an extended period of time. The result is an erosion of margin or higher costs being passed back to the client. Either way, the vendor's competitive positioning is compromised."

While contact center agent churn has been characteristic in all regions of the world, Datamonitor has noted several examples in which local issues have been pronounced. In markets such as the Philippines, the presence of multiple contact center vendors has led to bidding wars for contact center agents, and has resulted in their switching vendors at a rapid rate. Lower attrition levels can lead to stable price points. Datamonitor's research clearly shows that there is a correlation between keeping price points stable across delivery markets and low rates of agent churn.

According to Ryan in order to retain staff and keep attrition as low as possible, contact centre vendors must be able to show their employees that over the long term, they will be able to glean career opportunities. www.datamonitor.com