

has consistently garnered the same spot.

Also included in the list are Cebu City at the 8th spot, Davao at 69th; Sta. Rosa, Laguna, at 82nd, Bacolod at 93rd; Iloilo at 95th; and Baguio at 99th.

Tholons credits the Philippine government and the local IT/BPO sector for the continued growth of BPO in the country. One particular government program is the Next Wave Cities Program of the Department of Science and Technology-Information and Communications Technology Office (DOST-ICTO). Created in 2007, the program seeks to “develop globally preferred outsourcing destinations outside Metro Manila.”

Our competitive advantage

The IT & Business Process Association Philippines (IBPAP) cites numerous benefits of outsourcing in the country.

One is the “business-friendly regulatory environment” that allows companies to “enjoy competitive fiscal and non-fiscal incentives.” These include simplified procedures on customs and import and export, exemptions on local taxes and permits, and permanent resident status for foreign investors and immediate family members.

There is also the country’s edge on English language and western culture. The Philippines is recognized as the third largest English-speaking country in the world and Filipinos are quick to acquire languages and preferred accents. Filipinos are also “well versed in and comfortable with US culture, values, and lifestyle.”

The country’s educational infrastructure and talent pool are also big come-ons. Having been a US colony from 1898 to 1946, the Philippine educational system is closely aligned with US standards. Even our accounting and legal regulatory frameworks and processes are based on US standards as well.

In his “Case Study on Innovation and Competitiveness: The Philippine BPO Industry”, Dr. Cu-



Filipino animators have a hand in developing and producing world-renowned beloved cartoons such as Scooby-Doo, The Jetsons, Popeye, X-Men and Dragon Ball Z.

laba enumerates the advantages of doing BPO in the country: reduced operating costs, higher level of service for the same or even lower cost service, access to world-class expertise, enhanced efficiency and productivity, reduced labour cost, predictability of costs, and utilization of common applications.

Among the foreign companies that have local BPO operations are Accenture Inc., Convergys Philippines Services Corp., JPMorgan Chase Bank N.A.-Philippine Global Service Center, TeleTech Offshore Investments B.V., Sutherland Global Services Philippines Inc., Stream International Global Services Philippines Inc., Sitel Philippines Corp., and Deutsche Knowledge Services Pte. Ltd.

An economic-booster

Dr. Culaba’s study shares the findings of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in 2012 that the BPO is a “key driver of economy” and the “fastest growing source of employment and revenue” in the Philippines.

His study also corroborates

IBPAP data that in 2011 alone, IT-BPO revenues reached US\$11 billion and employed 640,000 direct personnel.

BPO revenues for 2013 reached US\$15.5 billion and the full-time workforce totalled 900,000.

In 2014 over 100,000 new jobs will be created and employment is projected to reach one million by yearend, according to the DTI. At the same time, three more Philippine cities are sent to join the Top 100 list.

The local BPO industry shrugs off calls by American officials urging US companies to stop outsourcing their operations. IBPAP president Jose Mari Mercado argues that “outsourcing is always a business decision and the focus now should be how to supply the skills required by the industry.”

He adds that the local BPO industry, in fact, continues to grow because companies from New Zealand, Australia and Europe are now also outsourcing some of their operations.

Trade and Industry Secretary Gregory Domingo maintains that “outsourcing is still a cheaper and more attractive alternative for most US companies.”

As the demand continues, the industry is fully aware of the challenges of maintaining the country’s competitiveness. The primordial task is to generate a steady supply of highly skilled talents. Toward this end, the IBPAP is coordinating with the Commission on Higher Education in introducing Service Management Programs in the curriculum of five colleges to prepare students for the requirements of the BPO industry.

IBPAP is confident of maintaining the country’s position in the global IT-BPO stage. “While we are very happy with this [current] achievement, we will continue to proactively undertake initiatives that will further the development and growth of the industry, which we hope will help propel us to the top in the years to come,” said Mercado. ■

SUDOKU

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SOLUTION ON PAGE 33

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