BPO BULLHORN

Straight talk. Smart insight. No bull.

Thursday, January 15, 2026

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Hello there

Results are in from last week's poll on what will shape outsourcing decisions in early 2026. **Rising delivery costs** came out on top at 42%, followed by **economic uncertainty** at 35%. Talent shortages and spreading operational risk trailed at 13% and 10%.

Cost pressure is clearly at the forefront of mind as we move into the year. The question is whether operators can absorb it or if it forces pricing conversations that clients are not ready to have.

This week's question cuts closer to operations: **Who really feels in control of CX right now?** Clients talk about resilience and speed. Operators talk about headcount, handoffs, and systems that do not always keep up. The goals are bold. The constraints are real. **Add your take here**

This week:

- iQor–OP360 deal across Asia and the Americas
- Firstsource acquires TeleMedik to deepen U.S. healthcare services
- UK contact center workforce unrest escalates

Let's get moo-ving! 📣🐂

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BPO Bullhorn

Editorial Team

Bullseye: The Essentials 🎯

Industry News

→ iQor acquires OP360 in multi-country expansion play

iQor has acquired OP360, a BPO provider with operations in the Philippines, Colombia, India, and the United States. The combined organization will have more than 47,000 employees across 11 countries. OP360 CEO and Founder Tim Boylan states that the integration will provide expanded resources and deeper technology capabilities. iQor notes clients will gain access to its Insights iQ analytics and infinityAiQ platform.

→ Firstsource acquires TeleMedik to expand U.S. healthcare capabilities

Firstsource Solutions Limited has acquired TeleMedik, a Puerto Rico-based provider of technological solutions for healthcare. The acquisition expands Firstsource's clinical and utilization management capabilities across U.S. healthcare payer and provider markets. TeleMedik operates in Puerto Rico and around the U.S., serving health plan clients. Firstsource states the deal strengthens its presence in Medicaid, Medicare Advantage, and dual-eligible populations.

Employee Engagement

→ Diligenta contact center staff escalate strike action in pay dispute

Approximately 1,000 Unite members at five Diligenta sites in the UK began a **week-long strike** on January 12. The action follows five days of strikes in November and December. Diligenta provides outsourced contact center, back office, and complaints-handling work for financial services companies, including Lloyds, M&G, Aviva, and Phoenix. Unite general secretary Sharon Graham states the company has failed to make a fair pay offer.

→ **Contact centers rethink management approach to get more from hybrid agents**

Thought leaders from contact center technology and workforce management providers, including NiCE, Genesys, Calabrio, and Five9 highlight how BPOs are **adjusting to hybrid work at scale**. The articles emphasize outcomes-based management, technology-enabled WFM, and consistent performance and engagement practices across remote and in-office teams.

Customer Experience

→ **Average handle time criticized as an outdated contact center metric**

Gillian Chamberlain, Managing Director at Capita Experience, argues that **average handle time prioritizes cost control over value in contact centers**. Zendesk data cited in the article shows 73% of consumers will switch to a competitor after multiple bad experiences. Chamberlain recommends focusing on first call resolution, customer effort score, and Net Promoter Scores rather than call duration. The industry benchmark for average handle time sits around 6 minutes and 3 seconds, according to Call Centre Helper.

Media Field Guide 📝

Video

Cultivate Your Critical Inquiry Skills | Alex Edmans — YouTube

You do not need to be a data expert to spot misleading information. Alex Edmans explains that the real challenge is recognizing our own biases and the mental shortcuts that shape what we believe. This short lesson shows how asking better questions leads to clearer thinking and better decisions.

Why watch: a practical reset on critical thinking in noisy information environments.

Podcast

IdeaCast: What You Need to Know About Executive Recruiting — Spotify

Executive recruiting often feels like a black box. Mark Thompson and Byron Loflin break down how search firms assess senior leaders, from how your story is evaluated to what matters in references and assessments. They also share how aspiring executives can build relationships with recruiters before opportunities appear.

Why listen: a practical look at how C-suite hiring works and how to position yourself early.

Books

Hidden Potential: The Science of Achieving Greater Things — Amazon

Adam Grant challenges the idea that success is about natural talent. Instead, he shows how progress comes from learning well, building character, and creating conditions to grow. Through research and real stories, Grant makes the case that anyone can improve far more than they expect.

Why read: a grounded take on growth for leaders and teams focused on long-term development.

What media would you like to see more of? **Hit reply** and let us know. We'll give you a shoutout if we include it.

Continue the conversation

Resource Rodeo 🤠

Featuring NEW releases:

State of Contact Centres 2026 (Puzzel)
Based on insights from CX leaders, the report outlines key trends shaping contact centres, including tech consolidation, data quality, and human-AI collaboration. It highlights how teams are adapting operations to meet rising customer expectations - **Download**

2025 State of the Shared Services & Outsourcing Industry (SSON / Celonis)

The report highlights top priorities for shared services in 2025, including automation, generative AI adoption, and operating model modernization. It outlines how leaders are using process visibility and digitization to improve efficiency and expand service delivery - **Download**

Toro's Timetable 📅

January

21 - **Customer Contact Week Orlando** | Orlando, FL

February

10 - **Medallia Experience '26** - Las Vegas, NV

23 - **Customer Contact Week Berlin** | Berlin

March

4 - **CX Alliance Workshop** | London

18 - **CCW Digital** | Sydney, AU

The Tail End 🐂

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Thanks for reading. See you next Thursday.

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