BPO BULLHORN

Straight talk. Smart insight. No bull.

Thursday, October 29, 2026

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Hello there

Top stories

- Sutherland Ends Seven-Year Kingston Lease as Jamaica BPO Vacancy Hits One Million Square Feet
- Microsoft Offers Voluntary Exit to 60,000 Employees While Committing $190 Billion to Data Centers
- Bangladesh BPO Sector Misses Export Target as One Operator Cuts Workforce From 600 to 400

New this week from Heard: David Rickard makes the case for why Kenya deserves a bigger conversation than the voice pitch gives it. **Read it here.**

Let's get moo-ving! 📣🐂

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Bullseye: The Essentials 🎯

Industry News

→ **GraceKennedy puts BPO outsourcing space for rent after Sutherland lease ends**

Sutherland Global has ended its seven-year lease at GraceKennedy's 60,000-square-foot facility in downtown Kingston, which employed more than 1,400 people at its peak and is now listed at $75,000 a month. The space is being marketed to outsourcing operators, call centers, government agencies and corporate headquarters. The Jamaica Gleaner's tally of public real estate listings shows BPO vacancy space in Jamaica has grown from 245,000 square feet in August to one million square feet, which the publication describes as a sector downturn. Independently reported.

→ **Microsoft Offers Buyouts to 60,000 Staffers**

Microsoft is offering voluntary buyout packages to approximately 60,000 employees, about 27% of its global workforce, across the US, Canada, India and the United Kingdom. Eligible employees must confirm their decision in December and would leave the company on December 31. The move comes as Microsoft commits between $175 billion and $190 billion in 2026 to building data center capacity, and the tech sector now accounts for approximately 30% of all job cuts announced in the US this year. Independently reported.

→ **IT exports grew 9% in FY26, but AI concerns mount**

Bangladesh's IT-enabled services exports, which include BPO, grew 11.28% to $604 million in FY2026 but fell 14% short of the government's target. Industry leaders told the Daily Star that demand for routine outsourcing work is declining as clients now require fewer outside workers to complete the same volume of tasks. One BPO company reported its workforce had dropped from more than 600 to fewer than 400 employees, and its CEO said the company now only hires staff who can work within its AI-assisted workflows. Independently reported.

→ **Kenya Explores BPO Investment Opportunities With German Customer Service Firms**

Kenya's State Department for ICT met a three-day delegation from the Customer Service and Call Center Association of Germany, which represents

336 member companies employing more than 560,000 people in the German customer service industry. The discussions covered connecting European businesses with Kenyan workers, developing a skills pipeline through training institutions, and progress toward EU data adequacy, which affects the legal basis for cross-border data transfers. Kenya highlighted more than 10,000 ICT graduates annually and its time zone overlap with European working hours as factors in its pitch for European outsourcing investment. Independently reported.

Governance

→ **Korea privacy watchdog orders call centers to curb data overexposure**

South Korea's Personal Information Protection Commission inspected five brands and four call center operators, including Coupang, CJ ENM, Gmarket, SK Broadband, MetaM, Ubase, transcosmos Korea and Hunect, following a March case in which an outsourced Baemin call center agent unlawfully accessed customer data and used it to commit a crime. Inspectors found that agents at some centers could retrieve a customer's full address by entering a single piece of information such as a name or phone number, and that key personal data appeared on counseling screens without masking. The commission issued four corrective rules covering what data can be displayed, who can access it, how long query logs must be kept, and how operators must oversee their call center partners. Independently reported.

Insights

→ **US Employee Engagement Below 30% for First Time in 15 Years**

US employee engagement fell to 29% in the third quarter of 2026, its lowest level since 2011, with each percentage point representing approximately 1.6 million workers. The sharpest declines were recorded among remote and hybrid employees at organizations that have adopted new technology tools, where workers also reported less clarity about what is expected of them and were less likely to feel that someone at work cares about them. Gallup, which has tracked engagement since 2000, said the total number of

engaged workers has fallen by approximately 11 million since the 2020 peak of 36%. Independently reported.

Media Field Guide 📝

Video

How AI Is Rewriting The Corporate Org Chart

Deepali Vyas, an HR expert speaking at the 2026 Forbes Future of Work Summit, outlines how organizations are restructuring roles, recruitment, and retention as job functions change. She covers what leaders need to do to maintain trust and engagement with their people through the transition, and where most organizations are currently falling short.

Why watch: Org charts are being redrawn without asking the people in them. Vyas gives you the framework to manage that before your best people make the decision for you.

Podcast

Bots Calling Bots: Is the Contact Center Ready for AI Customers?

Tom, CEO of Expivia Digital, works through what happens to contact center operations when customers send bots to handle their calls instead of calling themselves. He covers Gartner's prediction that 20% of inbound contacts would come from machine customers by 2026, the routing and staffing problems that arise when bots sit in queues alongside human callers, and the legal questions around who is liable when a customer's bot agrees to something the customer did not intend. The episode also identifies which industries face the earliest impact: retail, internet services, energy, and SaaS subscriptions.

Why listen: Tom thinks more than half your inbound volume could be bot-to-bot traffic within 18 months; your IVR, your staffing model, and your service level agreements are built for the wrong caller.

Book

What Could Possibly Go Right?

Danny Meyer built 700 businesses across 24 countries by treating culture as something that has to be actively maintained at every stage of growth, not a byproduct of it. The book covers the tools he uses to keep human relationships working at scale, and what he learned from closing a restaurant he once publicly promised himself he would never close.

Why read: This week's edition covers operators consolidating, workforces shrinking, and engagement at a 15-year low. Meyer's argument is that culture is not a destination you reach during good times. It is a practice you maintain through the difficult ones.

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 🤠

Previously FEATURED:

- **PwC Global Business Services Index 2026**
- **2026 State of International Voice for the Contact Center**
- **A Practical Guide to AI Governance in Contact Centers**
- **Talent Insights Report Q3 2026 (Jobtrain)**
- **AI Visibility Index Q3 2026 - Armasourcing**
- **A Practical Guide to Impact Sourcing**

Toro's Timetable 📆

November

7 - **CCW Europe Summit** | Amsterdam

10 - **BPESA BPO Conference** | Cape Town

18 - **Contact Centre and Customer Experience Expo** | London

December

7 - **GITEX Global** | Dubai

The Tail End 🐃

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