

*Arise Telework Model*  
*www.arise.com*

**Overview—Arise Virtual Solutions, Inc.**

Arise Virtual Solutions, Inc. has broken new ground to be a leading provider of virtual call center services in North America. They deliver breakthrough 24x7 quality customer service results for the customers of America's premier brands through a labor pool of certified professionals who perform work in their homes.

Arise started in 1997 as a consortium of Bell South, the State of Florida, and Florida State Services for the Blind with growth facilitated by the Internet and web technology. Training became web-based in 2002. This change allowed increased access to military spouses, retirees, stay-at-home parents, and persons with disabilities and has enabled training for new clients to be performed more rapidly and without travel expenses. Arise has over 7500 agents with plans to increase this number in the next couple of years.

**Realizing Business Incentives Through Telework**

Their virtual contract call center model provides a number of advantages for clients.

- 1) **Traditional call centers have higher overhead costs due to building and real estate expenses.** Virtual offices enable Arise to focus on cutting bricks and mortar costs. Financial resources can be better applied to the refinement and high quality technology.
- 2) **Increased customer service quality and consistency.** Traditional call centers have difficulty providing consistently good services for peak load periods and at atypical hours (late evening and very early morning) because of employees' reluctance to work short shifts and to travel at night. (About 4 of 10 Arise corporate clients want 7 X 24 coverage.)
- 3) **Turnover at traditional call centers normally is quite high.** This leads to inconsistent service and increased recruitment, selection, and training costs.
- 4) **Work flexibility impact on productivity.** Agents typically work 10 to 65 hours per week, based principally upon a teleworker's desire. Most agents provide services to more than one client, which Arise has found beneficial for both clients and teleworkers. Service levels for clients are generally higher as customers encounter more positive agents. And because certified professionals do not handle the same type of calls at all times, they tend to be less tired, more refreshed, and higher performing.

There are promotional opportunities for some teleworkers such as specialists in providing technology support to other agents, while others have become involved in

advising applicants. Still others are promoted to a group leader role and supervise a number of other agents. Finally, some agents find a niche in training agents about new services or new clients' products.

Arise offers their corporate clients well-trained agents who can provide superior service for more complicated transactions. Increasingly, clients not only need services to be provided around the clock, every day of the week, but a team of agents who can provide more detailed explanations and responses to unstructured situations.

The virtual agent/certified professional model is quite different than the traditional call center operation for employees as well as clients. Each certified professional is required to incorporate as a small business and establish a separate business checking account. Agents pay for their own computer, high-speed Internet connection, and IT maintenance charges. Arise provides workshops on tax matters and other small business topics.

For the most part, agents are guaranteed an average wage per hour, with final compensation being determined by either the number of minutes on the phone or the number of completed calls. The average starting wage is between \$10 and \$14 per hour. Some agents earn up to \$20 per hour by staffing higher stress positions such as the American Automobile Association's emergency line.

Successful teleworkers must be technology savvy, entrepreneurial, disciplined, self-starting, and able to set and work their own hours. They must also have strong communication skills, be willing to ask for help if needed, and adapt to, and learn, new technologies. The average age of an Arise agent is 38, and more than 80% of agents have had previous call center experience. About 70% of agents are women, and 30% are bilingual.

**Reach Out to New Geographic Labor Pools.** With certified professionals spread geographically across the country, the likelihood there will be loss of technology and major blackout periods without customer service is minimized. Arise offers a dispersed workforce that is important to corporate clients who are particularly concerned about 24 x 7 customer service.

The Arise business model has evolved through years of customization and adaptation to both technology and market conditions. The company's expansion illustrates that its telework business model is meeting a true market need of corporate clients by offering enhanced service levels at lower cost than traditional customer call operations