



A PROUD MOMENT FOR
SOUTH AFRICA
JUNE 2021



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We all have strong memories of the race that made Wayde van Niekerk a national hero at the 2016 Olympics. There was massive jubilation across the nation at the accomplishment of such an impressive feat. But ask the majority of South Africans about their knowledge of the journey he took to achieve such a result, and barely anyone can give you much of the background without performing an in-depth Wikipedia search and read. This is not surprising in a nation that counts soccer, rugby and cricket as its most popular sports, and hence following the journey of track and field athletes does not tend to be a pastime for most South Africans.

The same can be said for the South

African GBS industry in comparison to the Mining and Retail Sectors and its rise from obscurity to compete with the likes of India and the Philippines. Its most recent accolade of surpassing India to become the most favoured front office CX offshore delivery location in 2021 as announced by Ryan Strategic Advisory's Annual Front Office BPO Omnibus Survey, is a massive coup for the country. The many few of us who have been aware of the criticality of our GBS industry's contribution to the growth of the economy, as often reinforced by our esteemed President of the Republic, can be proud of this achievement and this recent recognition goes a long way towards solidifying the industry's importance to the South African economic growth agenda.

But this is where it gets interesting. Just as Wayde is now expected to be the front-runner by most South Africans even whilst his competition focuses on extricating themselves from their positions in his rear flanks, so do South Africans now expect us to drive home our newly found position with our global rivals in hot pursuit. Ryan Advisory's website announcement of the results explains this best, indicating "It is also clear that buyer favorability is fluid... South African outsourcing stakeholders [sic] cannot rest on their laurels." Whilst our clarity on and communication of South Africa's GBS Value Proposition should be applauded, it will be unwise to underestimate the effort it will take to maintain our newfound position, especially in the wake of a global pandemic that has created a hotbed for increased disruption in global industries, with our displacement of India being a prime example. To that effect what should South African GBS stakeholders be doing to avoid "the rise and fall" syndrome?

As one of the players in the Sector, we believe avoiding this syndrome should be approached in two ways.

Firstly, by constantly innovating in the core CX environment through the use of technology enablers to strengthen the foundations built by an accent-neutral, empathic and skilled workforce that has made South Africa a firm favourite with International buyers. This requires continued investment in capabilities such as customer analytics, conversational AI and augmented platforms.

Secondly, by furthering our push towards being at the forefront in the more non-traditional GBS areas that focus on the more complex back-office and niche domain services. This two-pronged approach has the potential to solidify South Africa's foothold in the GBS arena whilst creating significant opportunities to increase employment and enhance our skillsets as a nation. As an example, with the latter approach, there is no reason why the reputation of our Chartered Accountants cannot vault us to the top Global F&A destination ranking within the next few years.

In conclusion, SoluGrowth is proud to be a member of this Sector and to be at the forefront of enhancing our back-office services to our International and Local Clients. We continue investing in technology to achieve continuous improvement in back-office business processes. These include RPA (Robotics Process Automation), Process Mining and several more. Our recently released white paper titled "*Changing Gears*" has more information on how we create value for our Clients by enhancing the business back-office business processes. The whitepaper can be found by scanning the QR Code below:



As President Ramaphosa wrote, "...it is not about a return to what was, but about transformation to what is next." Let us visualise the dream and let us go get it.



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