



— Street Talk

Ring, ring! Call centre heavyweight Acquire BPO bulks up

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When a deal is live, phones are always ringing off the hook.

But that's nothing new for call centre owner and business process [outsourcing services bigwig Acquire BPO](#), which has just snapped up Melbourne-based call centre business The SMART Group.

It is understood the transaction had SMART's owners, Webjet chairman Roger Sharp's private equity outfit North Ridge Partners and two SMART directors, sell out in full, and valued the target at more than \$20 million.



Acquire BPO founder and chief executive Scott Stavretis.

The two SMART directors/owners, chief executive Darren Lord and chief financial officer Jonathon Meredith-Smith, will join Acquire BPO as Australia country manager and commercial manager, respectively.

"While we're big believers that work can be delivered exceptionally from offshore locations, we recognise some Australian businesses require a portion of work done onshore," he said.

"This has become even more evident during COVID-19 as businesses have had to quickly scale up customer care and contact centres, however, they may not require this as part of their permanent headcount."

Acquire BPO funded the acquisition from its existing cash reserves. Marque Lawyers did Acquire BPO's legal work, and SMART was assisted by Melbourne-based firm Wisewould Mahony.

It is based in Australia and has 7000 employees across the Philippines, the United States, the Dominican Republic and its home country. That workforce will grow by about 200 with the acquisition of SMART, which counts Telstra and Beaurepaires as clients.

Acquire BPO founder and chief executive Scott Stavretis told Street Talk his company was posting double-digit year-on-year growth and the SMART acquisition would bolster its Australian offering.

Sarah Thompson has co-edited Street Talk since 2009, specialising in private equity, investment banking, M&A and equity capital markets stories. Prior to that, she spent 10 years in London as a markets and M&A reporter at Bloomberg and Dow Jones. *Email Sarah at sarah.thompson@afrc.com*

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