

CASE STUDY



Quick Facts

- Starwood needed a new center in Canada
- LAG helped the client choose St Thomas, Ontario because it best fit the requirements
- Starwood chose a 25,000 SF renovated facility
- LAG found a city that had suitable French and English speaking candidates

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

"During the community evaluation phase, we toured the short-list communities to get a real feel for what each had to offer, LAG organized meetings with key community leaders, city officials, and local employers, so we were able to gain an understanding of each community's business, economic, and labor climate. These community tours really simplified the elimination process and enabled us to make accurate comparisons, so we could make our final decision with confidence." **Michael English, Senior Vice President of Customer Contact Centers, Starwood Hotels & Resorts.**

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STARWOOD

Headquartered in White Plains, New York, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. is one of the leading hotel and leisure companies in the world, with more than 740 properties in more than 80 countries, and 105,000 employees at its owned and managed properties. The company's brand names include St. Regis®, The Luxury Collection®, Sheraton®, Westin®, W® and Four Points® by Sheraton. Through these brands, Starwood is well represented in most major markets around the world.

Challenge

Starwood was looking for a cost-effective location for a new inbound guestroom reservation center that would handle a high volume of 1-800 customer calls. Originating in Canada, these calls would normally be routed to call centers in the U.S. and overseas. The company selected CBRE's Labor Analytics Group (LAG) because of its comprehensive solutions that combine labor and real estate.

Solution

With the help of LAG's unique four-step methodology that includes strategic analysis and modeling, community evaluation, tax and incentive negotiation, and real estate development, Starwood reviewed almost 500 locations before making its selection. The site selection process ended with St. Thomas, Ontario, located in the heart of Southwestern Ontario, a population 35,154.

The company selected the location because of the city's abundant skilled labor, real estate options, cost-competitiveness, and favorable business development policies.

Benefit

Located at 800 Talbot Street in downtown St. Thomas, the newly renovated 25,000 square-foot customer contact center opened in September 2003 with 75 entry-level and supervisory jobs and grew to 250 positions. Fluent in both French and English, the customer contact agents provide personalized service for both business traveler and leisure guest.