



## AOL tells us

### Down with clichés

Let's tell everyone on the phone! Nowadays, no-one sets up a company in Provence "only" for the "dancing" sea, stridulating cicadas, the sun that "perfumes the skin", Marseille's famous pastis that quickly brings a bit of color to the palest face, and to join the never ending procession of pilgrims following the footsteps of Marcel Pagnol and Paul Cezanne like a string of rosary beads - this style of regional marketing seen in the old days is gone forever, and AOL is the living proof!  
The Internet access provider chose Marseilles for its French call center after being attracted by a wide range of advantages and surroundings; Christophe Famechon, AOL's General Manager, joined us on the telephone to confirm strategic choices made by local players in this sector. Verbatim version...



#### > Letter to France

For a long time, AOL Europe had grouped all its services in Dublin (Ireland). We thought it would be preferable to set up in France to boost the development of our activity and make progress towards our aim of improving the quality of services provided to our French customers, particularly in terms of geographic and cultural proximity.

We issued a call for bids in several regions three years ago, and Marseilles offered the best services.

#### > Let's all go to Marseilles !

Therefore AOL France, a subsidiary of AOL Europe, set up its customer service head office in the L'Estaque district of Marseilles in August 2001.

This center employs 550 persons, and houses the Call Center France and all administrative supports for customer service in France: planning, training, human resources, financial services, project and technological development branches.



#### > Good morning call center !

The AOL Call Center is more than a help center, it is also an organization integrated into the group's strategy.

The Call Centers sector is expanding, particularly in France. Just think that we were the only one in Marseilles in 2000! Although it is true that the cost of labor is still high in France, companies like AOL that have a genuine policy of providing good customer service (loyalty, proximity, good practice exchanges, high quality training) will not sacrifice their policy simply to reduce charges.

This is our philosophy, and we are certain that there is a future in it.

#### > "I'll give you the earth"

Marseilles has many advantages, but there is no doubt that its position as the third largest city in France and its very young employment basin were of overriding importance since this facilitates fast and large-scale recruitment.

Apart from financial subsidies and tax incentives for our installation – but which are not specific to this region – we were particularly well assisted by local institutions such as Provence Promotion, DATAR, the General Council, the Regional Council, the City of Marseilles, the ANPE 13 (local Employment Office) and PACA User's Guide that did a very impressive amount of work with us.

#### > The ANPE - a real live wire

This partnership with ANPE 13 made a big difference right from the beginning. The ANPE 13 worked with us on our recruitment methods, and interviewed nearly 8 000 candidates to preselect 300, a year before we moved. Although this was not a direct financial subsidy, it was extraordinarily helpful in our move and helped us to maintain our deadlines.