

Offshoring teams in 2026: South Africa

Scale Smarter. Grow Faster. Stay Competitive.

GKR International is a leading real estate talent specialist and consultancy, providing expert advice and recruitment services to businesses looking to grow, with a dedicated South African outsourcing model.



Real estate; offshoring - the **more** you know:

What if you could scale your agency or development firm faster without diluting your equity or tethering yourself to high-interest debt?

Imagine injecting capital back into your business by eliminating the "overhead drag" of traditional operations.

An offshore or nearshore talent strategy is the hidden lever for modern real estate leaders. It allows you to transform your cost centre into a growth engine - helping you move from "running the business" to "closing the deals."

In the real estate sector, this isn't just about "outsourcing"; it's about building a global extension of your local team.

Your offshore specialists handle the time-intensive, process-driven tasks, allowing your local agents and brokers to focus on high-value human interactions and site visits.

Offshoring

as a strategic growth lever:

Building an offshore team is a proven strategy to unlock growth, capability, and scale without taking on debt or diluting equity.

By accessing high-calibre international talent, businesses can significantly increase capacity, accelerate delivery, and free senior teams to focus on higher-value, revenue-generating work.

When executed correctly, offshore teams operate as a fully integrated extension of the onshore business, delivering improved productivity, stronger operational resilience, and long-term competitive advantage.

Find opportunities that can transform your organisation:

Rather than think solely about one function or individual, look at the entire business holistically in terms of the future vision.

Working with an offshoring growth partner such as Potentiam brings tremendous insights into successfully growing a company without relying on debt or equity dilution.

Fail to prepare, prepare to fail:

Offshore staff can bring highly effective talent into a company's workforce.

Key considerations should be given to local leadership, mentoring, team collaboration and future team development alongside remote infrastructure.

Offshore scaling strategies defined

In the real estate sector, there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution; the right choice depends entirely on your portfolio size, growth velocity, and the level of control you require. Many high-growth firms actually employ a hybrid model, using different strategies for different departments.

One strategy we intentionally leave off the long-term comparison chart is freelancing. While hiring an individual on a project basis can be invaluable for a one-off rendering or a quick logo fix, it is not a sustainable scaling strategy.

Freelancers tend to follow the project, not your company's mission, and will often move to the highest bidder, leaving you with significant "key person" risk and zero institutional knowledge.

Offshoring strategy options

Offerings	Outsourcing	Direct Offshoring	Nearshoring	Employer of Record (EOR)	Offshore Partnership (incl HR)
Definition	A 3rd party delivers a service using its own shared offshore resource base offshore.	Build your own offshore hub to take advantage of lower cost but takes time and up front set up costs.	Nearshoring versus offshoring is usually in a similar time zone such as South Africa.	EORs operate in hundreds of countries allowing employment of staff without setting up a local entity.	Using a 3rd party HR operation to legally employ your staff and provide a full HR support service locally including office and IT support.
Cost	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Speed	✓	✗			✓
Flexibility	✓	✗		✓	✓
Control	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
Cultural fit		✗	✓		✓
Proximity		✗	✓	✓	✓
Business disruption	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓

Reasons to consider offshoring:

- 1 Lack of available budget:**
 - Growing businesses typically require up-front funding to build innovative technology, develop and bring new service offerings to life, scale staffing, and much more. Without self-generated new income, CEOs are forced to take on debt or sell off equity, diluting their ownership.

- 3 Staff are consumed performing low-level tasks:**
 - CEOs have reported that their growth was seriously hampered by their most valuable staff, focusing too much capacity on transactional matters as the business couldn't find or afford the right calibre support staff.

- 2 Access to talent:**
 - The adage that 'any business is only as good as its people' rings true. While the UK market is far from empty of specific talent, finding, enticing, and recruiting from a limited pool restricted by geography was the second most significant issue faced by CEOs in recent years.

- 4 Inability to scale; stuck in a low growth cycle:**
 - A scale issue is an inability to break out of a low-growth cycle due to a lack of capacity and capability to break into new markets or develop new services.
 - Companies in this cycle tend to flatline or even experience negative growth.

The South African advantage:

Linguistic Nuance	Agents possess a high level of "Neutral English" and emotional intelligence, critical for sensitive tenant disputes or high-stakes lead qualification.
Time Zone Alignment	Perfect for UK/European firms (0-2 hour difference) and manageable for U.S. East Coast firms (6-7 hours) for "follow-the-sun" support.
Legal/Financial Rigor	South Africa's legal framework is based on English Common Law, making their professionals naturally adept at understanding complex lease structures and titles.
PropTech Talent	With a booming fintech and BPO sector in Cape Town and Johannesburg, you access talent that is already "tech-native."

Focusing exclusively on South Africa is a sophisticated move. By 2026, South Africa has emerged as the premier "High-Value" hub, particularly for firms that find the Philippines too administrative or Eastern Europe too technical.

In the real estate sector, South Africa offers a unique "Cultural & Competency" match that makes offshore teams feel indistinguishable from your local office.

Offshorable Skills

Key roles and functions:

The most effective offshore strategies focus on high-impact functional hubs rather than isolated tasks. Within Real Estate, Property Operations teams act as the engine room of your agency, where professionals manage the entire lifecycle of a tenancy, from processing initial applications and performing rigorous credit checks to managing the complexities of lease renewals and compliance tracking.

Because South African educational standards for business administration are high, these team members don't just follow a checklist; they understand the "why" behind the paperwork, ensuring your portfolio remains audit-ready and legally sound without constant oversight from your local directors.

Moving deeper into the business, Financial Services and Trust Accounting have become a cornerstone of the South African offshore model. Given the country's strong alignment with international accounting standards, offshore finance teams handle daily rent roll reconciliations, contractor disbursements, and the sensitive task of arrears collection.

By placing these roles in South Africa, firms benefit from a "controlled friction" environment where collectors can remain persistent and professional without the awkwardness of a local agent having to ask a tenant for money one day and show them a new property the next. This clear separation of roles often leads to a significant reduction in days-past-due across the board.

Finally, Growth and Sales Support roles, specifically Inside Sales Agents (ISAs) and Listing Coordinators, provide the scalability needed to capture market share. These specialists act as the first point of contact for every inbound inquiry, ensuring that no lead goes cold while your local agents are out at viewings.

By offshoring these "top-of-funnel" and "middle-office" functions, you allow your local stars to focus exclusively on the "last mile" of real estate: the face-to-face negotiations and relationship building that ultimately drive revenue.

Department	Role/Function	Demand in South Africa
Finance & Administration	Accountant	High
	Credit Control	High
	Financial Controller	High
	Finance Manager	High
	Purchasing	High
	AP/AR Clerk	High
	Procurement	Medium
	Project Finance	High
	Digital Marketing	High
	E-commerce	High
Marketing & Sales	Marketing Data analytics	High
	CRM/ Database Management	High
	Social Media	High
	Survey Analysis	High
	Pre-Sales Research	High
	Contracts & Customer Setup	High
	Senior Developers	Medium
	Data Engineers	Medium
	Business Analysts	High
	QA Testers	High
Technology	Project Managers	High
	System Architects	Medium
	Data Analyst	High
	L1 & L2 Service Desk	High
	Site Reliability engineer	Medium
	Engineering Support	Medium
	Compliance Analysts/KYC	High
	Operations	High
	Multilingual Customer Service	Medium
	Network Engineers	High
Service Desk & Infrastructure		

The Business Case:

South Africa vs. Domestic

By shifting core operations to South Africa, you aren't just saving on salary; you are saving on the "management tax" often associated with harder-to-train offshore locations.

Cost Efficiency: Achieve 50–65% savings on total employee costs (including benefits and office space) compared to UK or US equivalents.

Talent Quality: In South Africa, a Real Estate Analyst or Property Manager role is a prestigious, career-track position, resulting in 30% higher retention rates than equivalent domestic entry-level roles.

Compliance: With POPIA (Protection of Personal Information Act) closely aligned with GDPR, South African teams are already trained in the data privacy standards required for handling sensitive tenant and financial data.

Job types that are commonly outsourced:

- **Property Management:** Handling maintenance ticketing, lease renewals, and arrears collection.
- **Inside Sales (ISA):** Outbound prospecting, lead nurturing, and booking appraisal appointments.
- **Finance & Trust Accounting:** Rent rolls, bank reconciliations, and end-of-month disbursements.
- **Marketing & Creative:** Property descriptions, video editing for walkthroughs, and social media management.

Essentials for successful offshoring:

Strategy

Develop a plan that aligns with your company's goals, team structures, and phased roll-out.

Planning

Ensure senior management can set up and onboard staff effectively.

Local leadership

Appointing the right team lead is critical to the success of your offshore operation.

Team structure

Build teams with a mix of juniors, mid-levels, and seniors to improve retention and resilience.

Staff development

Create clear career paths to integrate UK and offshore staff, supporting growth.

Internal communication

Keep the vision clear and address any internal resistance directly.

The Business Case: what offshore teams can enable.

Offshoring isn't just about saving pennies; it's about reallocating capital. By shifting non-core functions to a lower-cost environment, you effectively create an internal "grant" to fund your next big move.

Equity Preservation: Scale your headcount by 3x without seeking venture capital or private equity.

Margin Expansion: Increase your EBITDA by reducing the "cost per door" in property management.

Businesses using integrated offshore teams consistently report:

- 30%+ productivity improvements within weeks
- The ability to grow teams 2-3x faster without increasing fixed cost base
- Stronger employee retention through better team design and clear career paths
- Faster innovation, service delivery, and time-to-market
- 40-70% labour cost efficiency compared to UK hiring
- Access to a deeper, global talent pool unrestricted by geography
- Faster scaling without compromising quality or culture
- Releasing "free" capital for reinvestment into growth
- Improved productivity by removing low-value work from senior staff

Case Study: The Hybrid Agency

The Client: A property management firm with a portfolio of 1,800 units.

The Challenge: High staff turnover in the local back-office and a "maintenance bottleneck" that was leading to landlord churn.

The Strategy: Transitioned 65% of administrative and financial functions to a Managed Operations team in Cape Town.

The Implementation:

The firm built a specialised "Real Estate Squad" consisting of:

2x

Lettings Administrators: Managing referencing, compliance documentation, and CRM updates.

1x

Maintenance Coordinator: Dedicated to contractor liaison and 24/7 emergency triage.

1x

Client Accountant: A degree-qualified professional handling rent rolls and arrears collection.

Why it worked:

The Hybrid Agency

The "Common Law" Advantage

Unlike other regions, the South African team required zero training on the concept of "Freehold vs. Leasehold" or the fundamentals of property contracts. Because South African law mirrors the structures used in the UK and Australia, the team could "talk shop" with landlords from Day 1.

The "Unsung Hero" Effect

In 2025/2026, many firms found that their South African staff weren't just "support"—they were over-performers. In this case study, the Credit Controller in Durban was actually shortlisted for an industry award in the firm's home country for reducing arrears to a 5-year low.

Metric	Before Offshoring	12 Months Post-Implementation
Operational Cost	100% (Local Market Rates)	38% (Combined Cost)
Tenant Response Time	6.5 Hours	45 Minutes
Arrears Rate	4.20%	1.8% (Due to consistent follow-ups)
Staff Retention	14-month average	100% (South African team)

Key Takeaway for your business:

By moving the "process noise" to South Africa, the local directors were able to:

- Reinvest the £180k+ annual savings into a new acquisition of a smaller competitor.
- Eliminate burnout for the local team, who now only deal with high-level client strategy and site visits.
- Scale the portfolio by another 400 units without hiring a single additional local staff member.



Q:

If you could free up your local team from all maintenance coordination and rent collection tomorrow, how many more listings could they realistically bring in each month?

Key considerations for **successful offshoring** include:

Leadership & Development:

Investing in leadership within offshore teams fosters accountability and long-term success. Senior offshore professionals often play a critical role in mentoring junior team members, ensuring quality and continuity.

Long-Term Workforce Strategy:

Offshoring is not a short-term fix - it's a strategic move that supports scalability, resilience, and cost optimisation. When implemented correctly, it enhances an organisation's ability to remain competitive in an evolving global market.

Collaboration & Communication:

Clear communication frameworks help bridge any geographical or cultural gaps. Regular check-ins, aligned work schedules, and strong team collaboration tools make a difference.

Talent Integration:

Offshore teams should be aligned with your company's values, work culture, and strategic objectives from day one. A structured onboarding process ensures smooth integration.

Intellectual Property Protection and Data Security:

In a world where cyber threats, intellectual property theft and data breaches are becoming ever more commonplace, companies must have the processes and technologies to protect themselves and their data.

Alongside the technology and security, the legal aspects and nuances must be firmly explored and instigated.

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Are you hiring?

Get in touch with our team at GKR.



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