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Corporate trainers gain traction in Gurgaon

BY BHUVNESH TALWAR, ET BUREAU | UPDATED: AUG 21, 2013, 10:37 AM IST

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GURGAON: Human Resource is the biggest asset for any organisation but dealing with colleagues and employees at all levels is not a cakewalk. This fundamental problem, having a direct bearing upon the productivity and output of a company is getting resolved through hiring services of professional corporate trainers.

Gurgaon-based corporate training firms are providing holistic services catering to the fundamental business problems faced by corporates. And so their services focus on training and development of managers and employees at all levels. These 'people development programs' are customised.

"Understanding human resource and accepting people development program as a necessity has recently picked up amongst India Inc," highlights Nishant Saxena, founder and CEO of Elements Akademia, one of the first in India to offer training as consulting.

Adding to it Bikram Kumar Singh, CEO of BK One says, "Every organisation is made from and by its people, and so they are the biggest asset and should always be a priority." BK One is a multinational consulting, training and learning solutions based out of Gurgaon and New York.

Being a boutique-consulting firm, Elements Akademia in its five years of existence has over 25 clients as it aspires to be a consultant and not mere trainers. "Our programs are designed to impart incremental set of skills at all levels. Today managers have become functional heads who don't think and when it comes to business acumen and strategy, they fail to take the company to newer heights," emphasises Nishant.

Amongst all its clients, the big Indian corporates and MNCs constitute over 60 percent coming from FMCG, publishing, consulting and the remaining are SMEs.

Elements Akademia's HR Practice offering intervention to improve organisational culture has satisfied clients like J&J, Nestle, Cadbury, Kraft, HT Media, Amway, etc. It has also served consultants like KPMG for training managers and executive to 'Think Right & Express Right'.

For some it has been training their finance department in increasing business acumen so as to bridge financial activities with business strategies resulting in partnering in business decision.

BK One and Franklin Covey India have been in training and consulting for over a decade in India. For Franklin Covey, their leadership and effectiveness flagship program is called 7-Habbits Solution.

Bikram of BK One says, "Every client seeks a bouquet of 10 to 12 training programs for different verticals based on function and skill-sets." Adding to it, Lavleen Raheja, chairman and CEO of Franklin Covey says, "Good companies organise at least 8-10 training days every year as they understand the efficiencies gained through an effective workforce far outweighing the cost."

Franklin Covey conducts over 250 workshops a year. A two-day workshop, comprising of 30 employees, costs anywhere between Rs 2-3 lakhs.



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Franklin recently assisted a renowned consumer goods company that in its internal survey on poor performance found there was not enough clarity and commitment of strategic agenda by people down the line. Franklin's team trained client's 21 in-house trainers in disciplines workshop to bridge gaps and after 4 months of sessions and workshops, initial results show great willingness, ownership and acceptance of new approach.

Both are having clients in IT/ITES, hospitality, BFSI, media, manufacturing, aviation. Franklin has also clients in ecommerce, telecom and retail sectors. Franklin Covey, today has over 150 clients and ratio between SMEs and startups and big corporates is 25:75.

Apart from catering to corporates, Franklin also conducts public workshops for a minimal fee open to any individual be it a housewife or youngsters and to managers of SMEs appointed to attend the workshop.

Incase of BK One, it is primarily focused on MNCs and some big Indian companies, as over 60 percent of Fortune 500 companies are its clients. However, in June 2013, they have launched a complete Indian subsidiary named CBK Learning dedicated to Indian companies and SMEs in top cities and tier- 2 & 3 towns.

Multisoft Systems has recently entered into this specialised training, as its core business is IT consulting and training for corporates. The company conducts 'engagement programs' based on SWOT analysis of the company that helps in understanding the decision-making structure, identify in-built gaps and get hold of the real problem that is to be resolved.

"Our programs are based on the concept of theatre and role-play /games, action planning that helps people understand how it is to be in other's shoes and internalise what has been taught and follow-up. For B2C firms- communication skills and customer relationship is important whereas for B2B firms it is project management, presentation and coordination," explains Ashish Baskhi, the director.

They conduct workshops both at their training centers and also sometimes at client's designated place. At present, firm has nearly 30 clients from IT/ITES, services, auto and consumer durables.

For Toyota India, Multisoft has designed a 3-year roadmap sufficing the need of the organisation. Perform training session and a one to one round with employees every month. The objective is to work upon trust, team building and hierarchical workflow.

For these training firms, client conversion rate varies from 20 to 40 percent. General time-period for conducting workshops is one to four days along with post-program support. Training being a continuous process can be for few months to a yearlong period.

When it comes to dealing with big corporate clients and SMEs, one has to adjust with learning and development budgetary constraints and different requirements. For big corporate/MNCs, primary requirements are imparting business skills to finance professionals who don't think beyond accounting and non- finance people with business acumen so that everyone can become partner to decision-making.

For SMEs it's not only about budgetary constraints but also about building a team and a work culture. "SMEs suffer from lack of professional employees as the initial team comprises of founder's loyalists and so a new skilled team has to be formed. Along with it, leadership development program for CXOs in SME is vital and popular," emphasises Nishant Saxena of Elements Akademia.

Adding to it Ashish of Multisoft Systems says, "Fighting attrition rate to retain talent and continuous skill upgradation is critical for SMEs." Revenue model for corporate trainers is based on the duration of the project or program that will include daily man-hours plus fixed fee for customised content or curriculum created for training.

"We usually charge Rs1 lakh for a day workshop along with a fixed fee for customised content and training module at Rs50,000. Hence, we tell our clients to have an annual budget of Rs12 to Rs18 lakhs," says Nishant.

Adding further he says, "Our fee might look huge but in reality it accounts for only 2 to 3 percent of the incremental revenue and production growth for SME."

The challenge here is generating more and more awareness about the importance of life and people skills in corporate success especially in case of India. According to players, in the last few years, learning and developing budget that used to be a casualty of budget cuts have become stable although clients scrutinise a lot.

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