

PILANI BPO PVT. LTD.

BY SANDPAPER PILANI TEAM

Born out of teatime table talk, BITS Pilani BPO Pvt. Ltd. is a noble endeavour committed to providing employment to those sections of the rural population who are educated but unemployed due to lack of opportunities.

The latest addition to the township of Pilani is a Rural BPO, the Pilani BPO Private Ltd. We spoke to the CEO of the company, Manoj Vasudevan, a 2002 batch BITSian.



Snapshot of Pilani BPO

How it all began...

The Goenkas are one of the prominent business families in India, who are presently based in Mumbai but have their roots in Pilani. Over tea with Dr. L. K. Maheshwari, the Vice Chancellor of BITS Pilani, they discussed about providing employment opportunities in the rural sector. Thus the idea of rural BPO model was born. With complete funding from the Goenkas and BITS providing brand support and a five member technical advisory board, the idea was conceptualized and launched on the 15th of September 2007 in the form of a small but well

equipped office housed presently inside Goenka Vidya Mandir – a school in Pilani.

What infrastructure exists presently?

The office is currently designed to provide employment to 54 employees in 2 shifts of 7-8 hours each. A computer lab with all the necessary equipment and internet connectivity (BSNL 512Mbps) has already been put in place. A 20 KV UPS has also been bought to combat the frequent power outages in Pilani. The company offers its employees, twenty of them women, a flexible time schedule for their convenience. Five managers supervise operations and report to the CEO. They are also on the lookout for a CTO to handle the technical supervision.

The aim of the project:

This BPO is aimed at providing employment to those sections of the rural population who are educated but unemployed due to lack of opportunities. Graduates from local colleges hence are an adequate choice for employment. Since these employees need to be molded

according to work requirements before starting full-blown operations, presently, training forms the most important part of work. Computer skills, typing lessons to increase efficiency to 35-40 words per minute, soft skills and a basic knowledge of English are the main focus areas.

So what are the services offered?

The company is on the lookout for Business Development Projects focusing mainly in the area of Image Based Data Capture. To cut a long story short, its application is in banks, telecom, etc. where loads of applications are filed each day and conversion of data from these hard copies to soft copies can be a tedious job, which would be done for a much lower cost for these organizations if out-sourced. Digitization of this technology is the focal point of this operation and data entry into existing databases based on the captured images of the written applications would be the primary area of work this company is hired for. Apart from banking and insurance, educational, government and health institutions are the other industries being considered as target sectors.

What are the challenges?

Pilani is synonymous with distance and connectivity issues especially in terms of internet connectivity and power supply; and this time too the situation is no different. Customer trust and market skepticism regarding quality of manpower is also another issue which they are trying to overcome. Also technology set up should be at par with other BPOs in the cities lest they fall back on business opportunities due to lack of adequate infrastructure.

Future Plans

Maintaining this setup even for a day is quite an expensive endeavor. Currently the funding is adequate but the main aim is to develop a self-sustaining body as soon as possible. Getting a chance to prove their value with a good project is also something they are waiting for. Apart from leveraging the



talents buried in the rural population the long term vision would be to see this model of a rural BPO being replicated and what originally started as "Source Pilani" (what they wanted to call the company) can be a widespread phenomenon tapping the unchartered potentials of rural India.

FLASH!!! FLASH!!! FLASH!!! FLASH!!!!



TN Prabhu chosen as COO, UTV New Digital Venture

BITS Batch: 1984

Earlier: Director, Walt Disney Internet Group. Prabhu was in charge of country specific revenue targets across WDIG's businesses, including premium broadband services, mobile applications, interactive television gaming, and other potential emerging digital services.

Prior to his association with Disney, Prabhu held the position of Vice President Strategy & Planning at Rediff.com India Ltd.