

Leaving an Indelible Imprint

Koenig-CSR aspires to abridge the skill gap in and around Delhi/NCR in its own little yet substantial way

BY JYOTI K. SINGH

SERVING the community is gaining widespread importance in the modern corporate world and every company aspires to either start a CSR project of its own or to get associated with some NGO to 'make a difference.' But how many of these aspirants hit the bull's eye is anybody's guess yet some of the companies nowadays are successfully ushering a positive change in our society. They are being instrumental in development in the true sense of the word. One such name is Koenig solutions.

Rohit Aggarwal, director and Co-founder of Koenig Solutions, completed his engineering in Computer Science from Punjab Engineering College, Chandigarh. In 1993, he made a successful venture into Software Training by starting Koenig Solutions (P) Ltd. with an initial capital of ₹50 lakhs and today the revenue has gone up manifold. (2009-2010 revenue was ₹21 crores).

Koenig was initially focused on the competitive domestic training

industry. But today, it is a leading name in IT training with authorisation from Microsoft, Cisco, Oracle, VMware, Red Hat, Adobe, Check Point, Novell, CompTIA, EC-Council, LPI, CWNP and SCP.

A partner in Essen Deinki (manufacturer of high-precision, high-performance electrical & electronic connectors & microswitches), Rohit identified Offshore Training (aka "Education Tourism") as a possible niche in 2002, which today has become an industry in itself and is projected to be US\$1 billion industry by 2020.

Apart from business, Rohit takes keen interest in philosophy and social upliftment and the success of Koenig-CSR and school projects are glaring examples of his social commitment. His pioneering efforts to bring down the drop-out rate in Government schools won Koenig the Microsoft Citizenship Partner of the year for 2009. During an exclusive discussion, this is what he shared with 'Skills Ahead' regarding the CSR project:

When and how did Koenig -CSR come into being?
 With every person and enterprise there comes a time



FACULTY INPUTS



THIS course is for unemployed youths who are minimum 10+2(pass), are honest, hardworking and cannot afford to pay from any of his/her resources. For such needy youths, this free vocational course provides increased job security and additional career opportunity. We offer Comptia A+ for entry-level IT technicians that provides competence in areas such as installation, preventative maintenance, networking, security and troubleshooting. Comptia Network+ on the other hand, is for networking professionals that enables the individuals to manage, maintain, troubleshoot, install and configure basic network infrastructure competently.

— Sanjay Manocha,
Manager – CSR, Koenig Solutions

when after a period of initial struggle, success is finally achieved and the suppressed desire to do something for the community comes to the fore. For Koenig this period was 2007 when we started the project.

What inspired the startup?

Since it was our hard earned money we wanted to maximise the bang for our buck. Hence we decided on the following:

1. Invest exclusively on education because it will have a lasting impact on the society.
2. Manage the projects ourselves since, as per our perception, less than 50% of the money given to NGOs actually gets used for the intended purpose. Initially we tried several different projects. With trial and error we zeroed onto the current model of Free Vocational Training, which became an instant hit.

What is the modus operandi of the organisation? Whom does it benefit and how?

Using our core skills as an MCSE training institute, Koenig provides free computer training to unemployed youths in Delhi. We are able to train and place around 10 unemployed BPL youths every two months.

Which region/s do you cater to and why did you feel the need to address the needs of urban and rural poor?

When we decided to do something for the local communities, we realised that the best thing that we could do was to help reduce unemployment. We also realised that jobs are available for the right skills, but the necessary "skills-bridge" and funding is missing. We decided to step in and fill the gap.

Currently we are focusing our resources in Delhi but we will expand to other cities as well in due course of time.

Where all do you think the under-privileged people lack when it comes to skill-based employment opportunities?

They lack professional skills and the funds to acquire them.

How important are proper training opportunities for these people?

Proper training is critical for making unemployed people transition to employability. In our experience, the limita-



tion is neither the number of unemployed people nor the job opportunities. It is the "skills-bridge" and affordability.

We have discovered that the teacher is the most

STUDENTS' TESTIMONIALS



As an arts graduate, I did not know what to do next for my family was heavily dependent upon me financially. I started working in a domestic BPO but the salary I used to get there was meager. I was getting frustrated by each passing day and it was then that I got to know about the Koenig-CSR project. I wrote to Sanjay Sir. He called me for a meeting and offered me this chance. My training is getting completed next week and I have got an offer from an IT firm in Noida for Rs. 12,000 per month.

I am extremely grateful to the entire Koenig family for making such a big difference to my life.

— Praveen Kumar,
Mayur Vihar

I came to Koenig with the reference of a friend who had done the same course. He is doing very well as a networking professional in a good brand and after 20 days of my training so far, I also feel that I would emerge out as a better human being and a self-dependent professional.

Thanking Koenig from the core of my heart,

— Hitesh Kumar,
Karampura



important component in the success of a vocational training project. We take great pains to hire teachers who are not just competent but also motivated to the cause of social upliftment. We take all the necessary measures to keep them motivated and truthful in their efforts. The success of our projects is only because of our teachers.

Do you think our government is doing enough when it comes to skills training? Kindly elaborate.

The government is not doing enough but it is certainly doing a lot by defining policies and providing funds. The government is not in a position to micro-manage the projects. This is where private enterprises can step in to use their core skills for social upliftment. If the country benefits, we all would surely get benefitted.

What challenges have you faced till date and how did you cope up with them?

When we started, we did not have the right formula. We initially tried offering DTP and other such courses, which were not our core competency. But gradually, we discovered that we could achieve best results by using our core skills only. We initially struggled to find good teachers but we now have a good team.

An interesting component of our model is "pay-back". The candidates voluntarily pay back a nominal amount

(₹1,000) after obtaining gainful employment. This acts as an irrefutable and automatic quality check since only a youth who has truly benefited will pay-back.

The "pay-back" initially was 0%. Now over 50% of our graduates voluntarily "pay-back".

What is your future plan?

We are convinced that we are getting a positive ROI from our CSR projects. The returns are in terms of employee morale and customer goodwill. We can therefore afford to step up the investment.

As our business grows (we are growing @ 50% per annum) we will accelerate the number of unemployed youths that we train per month. We hope to train and place 20 youths every two months in 2011 (100% growth over 2010).

Any message to the readers?

We strongly urge readers who want to do good for the society to invest in education of the underserved communities. Entrepreneurs are sure to get automatic return on their investment. We will be happy to share our experience with individuals and entrepreneurs who want to adopt similar projects for the communities. They can contact Sanjay Manocha, Manager -CSR at sanjay.manocha@koenig-solutions.com