

Convergys plans to triple Asian workforce

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Convergys officials said Monday they plan to nearly triple their Asian-based workforce by the end of 2005.

Renea Morris, a spokeswoman for the Cincinnati-based billing company, said Convergys plans to increase its combined India and Philippines payroll from about 6,500 workers to 20,000. Morris said she had no details about where the expansion will occur.

Convergys has said in the past that it wants to be responsive to demands of customers who may not want work handled in the United States for a number of reasons, including higher costs. Also, many Convergys customers in Europe and Asia have to be served by workers who understand the language and the culture, the company has said.

This fall, Convergys announced a restructuring that would cut 250 management jobs in its information-management group. The disclosure came the same day it announced a nearly 50 percent drop in third-quarter profits.

The company said the cuts would have no impact on an existing job-creation agreement with Cincinnati. In 2003, the company was awarded nearly \$200 million in incentives to keep its world headquarters in downtown Cincinnati and to create at least another 225 new jobs over three years on top of roughly 1,500 existing positions.

Last month, the company also said it would give pink slips to most of its 1,100 workers at a Nashville, Tenn., call center that it took over from Sprint in early 2004.

Even as it promised new domestic positions, Convergys, which employs about 63,000 worldwide, has been criticized for focusing most of its jobs expansion overseas where it can employ workers at a fraction of what it costs to pay U.S. workers. The \$2.3 billion company opened the first of 13 Indian call centers in 2001 and now also operates two centers in the Philippines.

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