

Infosys Works Hard To Keep Staff

Attracting and retaining staff is critical to keep the Indian outsourcer's business growing

By John Ribeiro, IDG News Service

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In the Indian outsourcing industry, attracting and retaining staff is critical to keeping the business growing. To keep its staff, Infosys Technologies pays them the same or, at times, better than the rest of the outsourcing industry in India, and has set up large state-of-the-art facilities that pamper the staff with on-campus beauty salons, shopping arcades, subsidized restaurants, jogging tracks, and large gyms. The job also gives staff an opportunity to be posted abroad, which is a key attraction for a lot of Indian staff. Infosys, like other Indian outsourcing companies, does not have a trade union. The company does not encourage unions, nor have the employees shown any inclination to unionize. Part of the reason is that salaries in the Indian outsourcing industry are already far higher than in other sectors of the Indian economy.

Trade unions have instead complained about the large number of hours staff work at outsourcing companies. IT services staff often work late in the evening, as they need to deal with customers in the U.S. and Europe, in different time zones than India.

"I am usually late at the office, either completing work or to get a call through to a customer or a colleague in the U.S.," said an employee at Infosys' Bangalore facility. Business process outsourcing (BPO) staff have to work night shifts to service customers in the U.S.

"Work in all offshore operations is hard, and I am usually in the office for 11 hours a day, apart from about two hours of commute time," said a software engineer at the Indian software development subsidiary of a U.K. company. "The salary at Infosys at my level is lower than what I currently get, but every software engineer wants to work there for the brand image Infosys has," he added.

Work at Infosys tends to be in fits and starts. "You could be working up to 13 hours a day when you are on a project, but for months on end you could be without anything to do," said an employee at Infosys' facility in Hyderabad, India. The employee joined Infosys in May but was without work till August this year, though on full salary. "When you join a services company, you have to prepared for this," he said.

On the bright side, there are fewer layers of management at Infosys than at many other offshore operations, and opportunities for career growth are high, said the Infosys employee in are working on a small portion of a project for which the specifications have

been laid out by the customer, so you don't get a feeling of ownership," said an engineer at the Bangalore product development subsidiary of a multinational technology company.

The Pictures that follow were taken at the Bangalore Infosys Campus in February 2005. L/R Beverly Hicks, CWA District 3; Pete Castelli, AFL-CIO Solidarity Center Sri Lanka, Steve Tisza, CWA Local 4250 and T. Kalai, AFL-CIO Solidarity Center Sri Lanka









