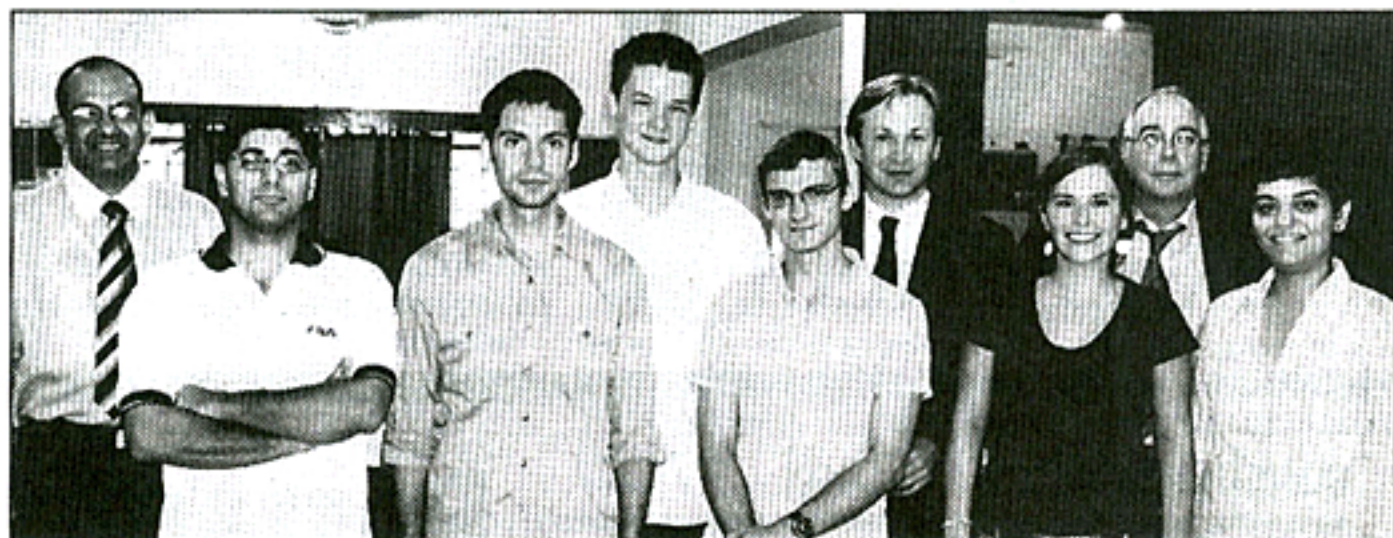


Pune IT cos attracting foreign employees



The German delegation with Extentia's senior officials in Pune

Padmaja Shastri | TNN

Pune: ● Last month, Extentia Information Technology, a 200-people software development and consulting company in Pune, had delegates from Fachhochschule, Neu Ulm, a business school from Germany visiting it to expand its internship programme with the company.

● Zensar Technologies, a city-base IT and BPO company, employs people from 14 different nationalities, including countries like the US, China, Japan, Malaysia, Germany and Australia. And the 4000 plus-people company is planning to increase that number.

It is not just the big three of the Indian IT industry — Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and Wipro — that are bolstering their non-Indian employee strength, even the medium and small-sized IT companies in the city are attracting talent from foreign countries.

"Around 4.7 per cent of our employees are non-Indian. We expect that to reach 10 per cent by end of this decade," said Ganesh Natarajan, deputy chairman and chief executive officer of Zensar Technologies.

The company is enabling technology collaboration in the University of Essex, University of Sydney and more recently, 33 Universities of Hubei province in China to increase its global presence.

The number of summer interns from abroad that the

company is attracting is also expected to increase exponentially to 200 next year (2008), from 40 this year. Natarajan expects his company to have interns coming from Eastern Europe and countries in the Asia Pacific region like China, Australia, Singapore and Philippines among others.

For many a Pune IT companies, inviting foreign nationals for internships, who become their potential recruits in their country of origin, seems the first step in their goal of becoming a truly global company.

KPIT Cummins Infosystems, another mid-sized IT and BPO company in the city, is also actively talking with universities abroad for internship programmes. The company has infact identified it as a major recruitment strategy in the coming year. It has over 100 non-Indian employees at present, who account for around 2.5 per cent of its total staff. The plan is to grow it multi-fold in the next few years.

As companies are expanding their global footprint, having foreign nationals from those areas on their rolls makes sound business for them.

This is because such employees bring with them a good understanding of their own geography, culture and local language skills. They not only interact with customers in their respective geographies and make them feel comfortable, but also help the Indian

teams in working with clients in these countries and understanding their culture.

"...As international borders dwindle, I think it is extremely important to understand how business is done on different parts of the globe. I believe the best way to do that is by experiencing a foreign culture and their way of doing business first hand. As India is an emerging market that is fast becoming a major player in the global business scenario, I thought it would be a good opportunity to come and work here..." said Zoya Zaylor of Canada, who did her internship at KPIT Cummins last summer.

She is not alone. With the India story gaining ground, more and more students in foreign engineering and management colleges are looking for an 'India experience' to sharpen their corporate skills. Even if the salaries don't compare, especially as Indian culture is inclusive and assimilating.

Global internships also help in building the brand value and image of the companies abroad, so that when they set up base in the countries from where they have had interns they are not complete strangers there.

"The recognition of our company in their countries increases tremendously when our interns go back and talk to their classmates and friends about us," said Umeed Kothavala, director — India operations of Extentia.