

LPOs for Industry-Academia Tieup

SAKET AMBARKHANE

MONDAY, APRIL 30, 2007

PUNE: Indian legal process outsourcing (LPO) industry is pitching for industry-academia partnership to meet surging demand for talent. Even as the sector grows at a scorching 100% and firms are on a recruitment spree, industry experts believe such a collaboration alone will help the industry maintain that momentum.

Scores of LPOs are roping in professors from the US and the UK universities to train employees on the legal systems in those countries. "We get professors from the law department of the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Washington and the Duke University for training programmes for our employees. We also encourage a lot of students from best law schools in India to do internship with us," said Sanjay Kamrani, co-founder and co-CEO, Pangea3.

On the other front, some firms are also acting as facilitators, helping Indian universities and law school forge alliances with those in the US and the UK. However, things are not as easy as stated. "Although we tried to get some law schools to tie up with Indian Universities to introduce their curriculum, it didn't work out," says Ganesh Natarajan, president and CEO, Mindcrest, the US-based LPO firm.

"Now we are planning to invite faculty from the US law schools to teach US law here." This initiative, he adds, will support the industry as it will spend less time on training students on US laws. As LPO firms get larger pie of the legal work from the US and the UK, they are intensifying their effort and hunt for talent.

According to Nasscom estimates, the legal offshoring segment of the Indian BPO industry is worth about \$60-80 million. It is estimated that the industry has about 50-60 firms that employ about 700 lawyers. With more and more LPO firms springing up, the demand for such law graduates is going to swell rapidly.

Eventhough LPO firms are going overboard to rope in US faculty, Indian law schools aren't complaining either. With the growth in the industry and increase in the employment opportunities for law students, the colleges are also keen on industry-academia interaction.

"Although our focus is to train students on Indian laws, with the rise in the LPO industry, we have no problems in letting foreign faculty train students on US laws," said Vijayanti Joshi, principal, ILS Law College, Pune. "Finally, not all students are interested in pleading cases in courts."

“We have offers for yearly internships from Canada-based legal process outsourcings, scheduled to start their process by June, but we are more focused on exposure, understanding and long-term joint programmes with broad implications for skill building and impacting learning process,” says Shashikala Gurpur, principal of Symbiosis Society’s Law College.

Copyright © 2007 Times Internet Limited.