

Cover Story

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Corporates Bet on Fairer Sex

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Popular assumptions lead us to believe that the numbers of men across any organisation outnumber the women... and one would not be wrong to assume this either. However, a few companies are turning this theory on its head. They have the unique distinction of employing a substantially large number of women within their fold. While it is not rare to see at least 70-80 per cent men in any organisation, the situation in these companies is reversed. What is it that led these companies to acquire this unequalled status? How do they cope up with the challenges thrown by such situations?



Mindcrest, a Legal process outsourcing (LPO) firm based in Mumbai and Pune, employs more than 80 percent female employees. This number used to be more than 90 per cent till a few months back. Speaking on the culture in his organisation, Rohan Dalal, managing director, Mindcrest India, explains "We never intended to hire more women than men and vice versa. When we started out India operations five years ago, more women attorneys applied to us as compared to men." A lawyer typically starts out his career by joining a law firm and getting involved in litigation. This process requires one to be patient and is a difficult path to tread. Compared to the traditional law career a LPO offers a structured environment which Dalal feels that women prefer more than men. The traditional process is difficult and may not yield job satisfaction to the attorney. Further, the fact that the company works five days a week during normal office hours sets it apart from others in the outsourcing space. Dalal also acknowledges the fact that since they work out of Mumbai and Pune it is easier for women to get on board as compared to other parts of the country. When quizzed about the problems that he might face Dalal replies, "Our HR policies are fairly progressive. Fortunately, we have not faced any issues with regards the employees. In fact we have close to zero attrition in our organisation."

While Mindcrest did not intend to employ so many women, another organisation based in Noida did it deliberately. RPOworldwide started out in 2003 with about 10-15 girls. As

they went on they employed more and more women with most of them being housewives. Explains Murali Balasubramanyan, executive vice president, RPOworldwide, “When we started out with the process of outsourcing and off-shoring the process of recruitment, we decided that we would employ women who had IT skills.” Initially the company offered the option of working from home to some of the employees but with time more and more employees asked to work from home. Balasubramanyan adds, “With many Indians employed in the BPO sector, we found that women stayed at home and worked nightshifts to mirror the office timings of their husbands.” All the people engaged with the company are salaried professionals working on 8 hour shifts. Speaking on attrition Balasubramanyan states, “We have a very low level of attrition. Thanks to the telecom infrastructure in the country our employees can continue to work with us irrespective of where they may relocate.” The company is looking to increase its workforce and a majority of the new jobs will be offered to women.

It is not a surprise when these organisations state that women hold a majority of the leadership positions within the company. The examples above give workplace diversity a whole new meaning.

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