Intelenet Global

Header: Surefooted

Intro: Building up long-term credibility tops the priority list of this company. And quality delivery systems are the key to achieving that ambition. So, for now, Intelenet is quite content with serving a few but large clients.

Do genes matter? Rishi Kapoor, Indira Gandhi, Mukesh Ambani – all very successful people in their own right. Maybe parentage matters. Maybe it doesn’t. After all, we have Kumar Gaurav and we have Rohan Gavaskar. But let’s face it – they also have shone – if not as well as their illustrious parents. Intelenet Global has an illustrious parentage – TCS and HDFC. One of them is India’s top IT services company and the other is the country’s leading home loan company. Both started the company with the intention to leverage each other’s strength and brand equity. And it is doing quite well for itself. And it is this parentage that differentiates Intelenet from other players in the Indian BPO industry, says Susir Kumar, director, Intelenet. The parentage brings in structured organisation and management rigour. Intelenet has been able to incorporate the best practices in recruitment and operations from these companies. While TCS brings in its ability to migrate projects as well as its strong marketing presence in the US and UK, HDFC brings in the operational expertise. Both, TCS and HDFC, bring in the domain knowledge. TCS contributes to the tools and technologies to allow a greater reduction in costs by automating the outsourced project. The brand name also helps in attracting the best people in the BPO industry. They did think of the broad nature of offerings from the very beginning. Indeed, one of the very interesting aspects about Intelenet is the fact that despite starting almost two years ago in October 2001, Intelenet has managed to be a diverse company. While other companies that started around that time are mainly in the contact centre space, Intelenet has managed to get into the transaction processing segment as well. In fact, almost 35% of revenues are from the transaction-processing segment.

Broadly speaking, services offered by Intelenet include back-office processing which include invoice indexing, invoice processing, data processing, customer queries, fraud authorisation, skip tracing, corporate financial management and mortgage processing. In the contact service segment, services include collections, telemarketing, out-bound surveys, polls and account verification. Inbound services include customer services, order taking, inbound sales and call taking. The accounting services include accounts payables, accounts receivables, accounts reconciliation, general ledger queries and check processing.

Intelenet is about a 2,000-people strong company. Rather less, wouldn’t you think? After all with the TCS marketing team pitching in, you would expect Intelenet to do much better. Sandeep Aggarwal, chief marketing officer, Intelenet, is not too perturbed. He says that no company has grown to this size within two years. Secondly, the Intelenet chooses to benchmark itself against Spectramind and the company finds itself on track. Moreover, Intelenet would rather focus on getting the delivery right because long-term credibility and growth would depend on quality delivery. Again Intelenet would rather focus on having few but large clients.

Intelenet has a facility for 450 people at Mhape in Navi Mumbai, a 2,000-seater in Malad, Mumbai and 300 people at Tidel park Chennai. The technology includes Cisco routers, Davox dialers, Lucent switches, Alcatel multiplexers and international connectivity via trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific route.

Intelenet prides itself on its work culture that has an open door policy, a work-conducive environment, concern and empathy, a touch and feel leadership and boundary-free interaction. Recruitments are multi-step processes involving computer-based interviews, group discussions, psychometric tests and personal interviews. Intelenet encourages its employees to refer good candidates through its referral scheme. The company has been hiring around 150 candidates per month.

Intelenet has a training programme that includes induction, generic training on customer skills, voice and accent training, back office skills training on operating on computers, industry-specific domain training followed by on the job training. Regular refresher training is also held.
But some companies with illustrious parentage have done much better – ICICI OneSource for instance. With TCS-HDFC one would expect a company to grow much faster through acquisitions. Why can’t Intelenet be a 4,000-strong company by acquiring companies? Mr Aggarwal says that they have gone through this with the board and have always decided against the idea of going ahead. You could call them conservative – but this is how it is. They would rather grow slowly organically rather than hasten the process.

But Intelenet, Mr Kumar says, has already enough projects in the pipeline to be able to double its headcount from the present 2,000 to 4,000 within the next eight months. Indeed, Intelenet wants to go beyond the BPO proposition of offering cost arbitrage to being able to offer a value proposition in terms of direct measurable business benefits.

Startup Year : 2000
Area of Operations: Call centre, back office and finance and accounts
Director: Susir Kumar
Location : Mumbai, Chennai
Ownership details: Equal ownership between TCS and HDFC
Approximate Headcount: 2000
Approximate Revenues: Projected Revenues for FY ’04 (Rs 12 crore), FY ’03 (Rs 2.1 crore)