Nipuna

Header: Dreaming big
Intro: This one might have started late. It has been only one year into the BPO business. But Nipuna is sprinting ahead and is determined to fly past the early birds

Nipuna has just 200 employees. But it is planning to build a campus for 6,000 employees. Which is a trifle ambitious, one might think. Not really. When you are a Satyam company, you tend to reach out for the stars. Many IT services companies are jumping onto the BPO bandwagon – Infosys Progeon, Wipro’s Spectramind and Satyam’s Nipuna. Not surprising, considering that the growth of the BPO sector hovers around 70% whereas the growth in IT services barely exceeds 30%.

The only grouse is why start so late? Nipuna is less than one year old. The BPO firms not owned by IT services companies started much earlier and have a lead of at least three years. And that is a pretty long time in the BPO universe – especially so when growth rates are in excess of 70%. Well the answer could lie in the very obvious fact that BPO was perceived to be the ‘low end’ one that the Brahmins in IT services industry would not even care to touch with a barge pole. But Vaishya rules.

Nipuna offers technical help desk, human resources, finance and accounting services and customer contact services. It serves insurance and healthcare, banking and finance, transportation and tourism, manufacturing and automation, telecom and media, energy and utilities. In fact, the verticals are direct plugins from the verticals that Satyam serves. In insurance, Nipuna offers claims processing, product support in banking and finance, back office and production planning in manufacturing and the automation segment while it offers technical help desk services to telecom and media sectors.

Almost 75% of the revenues come from the insurance segment – claims processing and so on while 25% of the revenues come from the technical help desk services. Satyam has been running a high-end technical help desk with almost 400 people involved. However, Nipuna will only focus on low-end technical help desk. Though it is also into some high-end BPO work – for instance, it runs production planning services for an automation and manufacturing unit. This involves considerable optimisation planning and it has hired industrial engineers to do the work. Would Nipuna get into other engineering services? Unlikely, Satyam already offers engineering services
within the main company. Despite running a technical help desk, Nipuna, as of now, plans to steer clear of the out bound call centre activity due to the unpredictability caused by the ‘Do Not Call’ controversy.
Nipuna has just 200 employees. So what is the big deal? The big deal is not in what Nipuna is, but in what Nipuna can be. Nipuna has the backing of Satyam and a marketing team comprising more than 100 persons. There is strong brand equity in Satyam ownership and Satyam customers would feel comfortable outsourcing their BPO requirements to Nipuna. Being in BPO requires deep pockets to sustain the gestation period.
This is a BPO with potential. And ambition. Watch out for Nipuna.

Year of Incorporation: 2002  
Area of Operations: Technical help desk, human resources, finance and accounting services and customer contact services  
Location: Hyderabad  
Chief Operating Officer: Dr Prakash Challa  
Ownership: Satyam  
Approximate Headcount: 200  
Approximate Revenues: N.A