



Positive Momentum

no nonsense business expertise



Quick Tips : Tearing your hair apart wondering about India? It is indeed a land of contrasts...

Perhaps you have colleagues based in India; perhaps you have outsourced work to a third party in India or perhaps you are looking towards India as an exciting potential for future growth but are unsure where to start.

Whichever it is, we aren't surprised if you are feeling challenged in understanding India; after all it's geographically the size of Western Europe from Scandinavia to Spain with a population of over a billion people... Hey, the pictures you have historically seen on TV and in magazines depicting India as a poor, under-nourished country are absolutely correct. However among the billion, there are 300 Million Indians who speak good English and have a reasonable disposable income. This is really what makes India attractive to do business in. Picture the hustle and bustle in a typical Western shopping mall during Christmas sales; that is the way a mall in Delhi or Mumbai feels like virtually every Sunday. You will know that India has grown to be the IT hub and the back office of the world, however did you know that quite a few countries from around the globe also outsource launching their satellites to India?

Rural Poverty & Urban Riches, Traditional & Technologically Advanced, History & Modern Mathematical Skills...reminds us that all too frequently when you see only one side of the picture, you can't believe the other! Further complicating the scenario is the fact that you will see quite different patterns in different parts of the country. As an example, the Northern folks (Delhi, Gurgaon, Punjab) are more aggressive in their approach to the day-to-day business demands than their Southern counterparts (Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad).

Having said all this, here are a few easy tips that will give you more insight into doing business in this amazing place.

1 Family Orientation.

As you hire your first employee in India or your first consultant, remember that you will be hiring a part of the family as well. What do we mean here? You will notice that the borders of work and family are quite porous. Work is quite often carried back home and impacts the rest of the family. Likewise there will be days that the family intrudes into the office timing as well. So make sure you have a few employee family picnics planned over time and don't be surprised if your new employee brings his mum along to the office to show her around.

2 Development & Growth.

An average employee in India is very serious about his/her career. There is a distinct need to grow self-marketability and equally an importance to be seen to be growing. Thus, getting faster promotions through smaller steps in the hierarchy of the organisation and getting

fancy designations is important. Don't be surprised by an Indian employee saying "Give me an opportunity to learn in another department, and I am happy to invest 3-4 hours extra daily after putting in my standard hours". Show them a career path.

3 The Ability to say 'No'.

The average Indian employee finds it very difficult to say 'No' to any request that you make. Perhaps the desire to please others and not 'spoil relationships' has something to do with it. So, do not take an affirmation at face value. If someone says that a job can be done, probe a little more to assess whether there is genuine readiness.

4 Is Estimation Realistic?

Probably linked with the point made above, having a strong desire to please, an average Indian employee will estimate very aggressively. It is quite likely that the Indian manager will assume that the team will slog over the weekends, not take their vacation breaks, etc. whereas the American or the British manager knows the employees will take time off for Christmas etc.

5 Continuous Improvement mind-set.

We see strong ambition at every level and even the junior most employees on the shop floor will be striving to improve and doing things differently - locally termed 'Jugaad'. Let's get real, it is a difficult work environment in India, but thanks to the innovative spirit of the employees (who are also willing to run that extra mile) things get done with a 'Jugaad' approach...however, make sure through governance and audits that this 'jugaad' doesn't cross over into any legal grey zone.

6 Harness the Energy.

A British HR Leader once quoted "If I could bottle up the energy and enthusiasm of the employees here and sprinkle that on the team back home, our company would be in a totally different league altogether". As a leader, your challenge will be to harness this energy appropriately; else employee attrition sets in very fast...



Rajnish Virmani

Rajnish Virmani is a true global leader having led large Indian, British, American and European teams during his career spanning over 30 years. He has played a variety of Senior Management roles such as CIO, COO and CEO across multinationals. Voted as 'Role Model Leader' on numerous occasions, Rajnish uses his experience gained in varied cultural backgrounds to help prepare the next generation of Senior Leaders in the corporate world. A keen sportsman, he displays a high degree of sportsman-spirit and partnership in all his dealings.

Energy • Engagement • Edge

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