

## Team-of-Twenty-One

More than ever before, Indians are going back to work in India. Rajesh Jain wrote in July 2003: "There is an optimism in the air. Opportunities abound. India is rising. The time to think about a return to India is Now."

Two years later, the trend is really and truly gaining ground.

Most US companies are chartered with the goal of reducing the % of employees in Silicon Valley or other equivalently high cost location. Anxieties abound on whose jobs are going to get dislocated, and when. There is a win-win, though, which companies and HR departments worrying about this phenomenon should try to understand.

Culturally, India is a diverse and very large country. The language differences, the cultural nuances, the cuisine variations are all dramatic and significant. Yes, there has been movement and inter-mingling. But still, a remarkably distinguishable ethnic identity prevails in each part of India.

So here is pseudocode for an algorithm on how to address the "India Relocation Strategy" for companies:

# Do an ethnic population mapping of your Indian workforce. How many are Gujratis, Marathis, Tamils, Kannadas, Bengalis, ... ? What city are they from? Where are their respective families and roots?

# Do an ethnic map, also, of your India-born management rung that would consider moving back to India, are capable of, and interested in building, running and scaling an off-shore Operation.

# Given that Bangalore is going fast down the path of becoming an infrastructure chokepoint, you will need other satellite offices. This means, you will need multiple General Manager (GM) types who can run significant operations in multiple Indian cities.

# Try to find five GMs, each from a different city in India, and a core group of twenty somewhat experienced people with leadership qualities that would like to move back, to go with each GM.

# There is your Team-of-TwentyOne per Operation.

# The rest can be locally hired, or filled out from more junior people in the company.

In your Team-of-Twenty-One you have already designed in management scalability to sustain a 200-300 people operation from the get-go. You've set the culture, the tone, the pace.

I believe, companies that are building 1000 people operations in one Indian city are making a mistake. They would be able to draw much higher degree of loyalty and emotional bond from their employees if employees are provided the opportunity to speak their own language, eat their own food, be close to their loved ones (India still has extended family structures), and raise their children in a familiar cultural environment that they themselves grew up in.

India is not America. People do not move as easily. Language and Food are very crucial ethnic phenomena, which Americans don't understand because it is not part of their cultural heritage. Americans also do not understand the need and desire of older cultures to have access to their history, their legacy, their ancestors.

Hence, my recommendation of five Teams-of-Twenty-One : chosen from Bangalore, Delhi, Pune, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Kanpur, Indore, Cochin.

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### About the Author

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