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etc. which are part of the course fee. The company has a global presence and we serve customers in over 50 countries which include many Fortune 500 companies and governments.

Our team comprises 300+ full-time corporate trainers and our services include offshore training in India and Dubai, live virtual classrooms and a package called 'fly me a trainer'.

Were you always interested in computers and information technology?

I am a graduate in Computer Science and Engineering from Punjab Engineering College, Chandigarh. I always had a penchant for mathematics and computers, which inspired me to develop a mini-ERP for the SME sector while still in college. My stint with the corporate world began when I joined my

father's firm Essen Deinki.

What gave birth to the idea of setting up Koenig Solutions?

Initially, the company was just another IT training center catering to the domestic market. However, when the dotcom bubble burst, the firm ran into rough weather. We struggled to survive in a highly competitive market and suffered huge losses. It was only because of one unique thought that Koenig Solutions managed to stay afloat. We noticed that almost every training batch had one or two students from Europe. So we thought if we could offer accommodation and airfare to offshore students within the training package, it could be a win-win situation for the company as well as foreign students. The idea clicked and our business flourished exponentially. Koenig Solutions then opened training centres in tourist places such as Shimla, Dehradun

and Goa and pioneered the concept of education tourism in India. Our learning packages now also include visits to tourist attractions, thus offering best education and tourism at the same time.

How has the need for training changed over the years?

Back in 2002, IT training was very expensive in Europe. There was a huge cost advantage of travelling to India and doing a course here. Though the cost advantage has eroded somewhat because of rising costs in India, stagflation in Europe, and rising air fares, we continue to have some edge yet. Over the past few years though there have been two significant changes:

1) the number of technologies has exploded and thus the training requirements have become more diverse so that courses have become shorter but more diverse and

2) apart from classroom training, live virtual class training has also become popular.

How does this work as a business model for your company?

The business model of Koenig Solutions is based on a niche sector called education tourism in India. Due to high-priced IT training in USA, UK and other European nations, students are turning to India as their IT training and certification partner.

While students from USA, Europe and Australia look towards India for their IT training needs because of low costs and tourism, African and Asian students choose India for its quality and availability of highly skilled trainers. Apart from training and certification, our package includes travel, airfare, accommodation, meals, daily transport as well as local tourism and therefore offshore students get to learn IT skills and explore tourist destinations at the same time. The total cost of training comes to nearly half of what similar training packages cost in the UK or USA.

What are the challenges that you face in this industry?

The main challenge is convincing customers about the advantage of education. Though the ROI of good IT education is proven, it still does not get the priority it deserves. This is true because of the non-urgency of IT education (it tends to get postponed) and therefore though the results are empirically proven, they are not guaranteed for every transaction.

Could you name some of your major clients?

Apart from individual students from all across the globe, corporate houses such as Dell, Microsoft, Colt, Bechtel, Headstrong and Orange, etc. also look towards Koenig



Solutions to conduct technical trainings for their staff.

What scope does this sector have to offer in the future?

There is huge growth potential for offshore training and LVC delivery from India for the same reason as IT outsourcing to India has become successful – economics and Indians being very good at everything connected with IT. We are, for instance, growing at more than 50 per cent year-on-year and hope to increase this to 100 per cent from 2015. The growth opportunity is immense. The company is now aiming to tap the Indian education tourism market through their education tourism business which will grow to USD 1 billion by 2020.

What kind of R&D is involved in your line of work?

After developing the offshore training model by bundling travel-related services with world-class training, we are now working on perfecting the offshore LVC delivery model. Even as we work on this, we can see on the horizon the 'flip-classroom' method of training delivery which will require R&D to make it an effective method of IT

training. R&D is intrinsic to every evolving enterprise.

What is your view on entrepreneurship?

Like every skill, entrepreneurship is not for everyone but everyone should consider it as a viable career option. Also, within enterprises, many managers work as entrepreneurs of their own domains with full empowerment and accountability. The world could do with more entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship.

What are your other involvements outside your professional domain?

I like reading, movies and travelling. I also take an interest in philosophy and social upliftment. Our pioneering efforts to bring down the dropout rate in government schools won Koenig Solutions the Microsoft Citizenship Partner recognition in 2009. I also take an interest in human resource activities. For example, we have laid down expectations of exemplary moral conduct from all our employees. These are documented on my blog.

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