

GOD'S OWN COMPANY

Offshore IT trainer Koenig takes the spiritual route to growth

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CAN A business follow a spiritual path in its material pursuit? Meet Rohit Aggarwal, CHO—chief helping officer—of Koenig Solutions. His goal is to make India the global leader in online education, and his company, the world's most respected offshore IT trainer. "How great our name is and what lasting value we create are limited only by our thinking", he says.

He dreams of transforming India and making an impact in the world. "Koenig is not a money-making machine. It's an idea-making machine", he asserts. He stubbornly resisted private equity/venture capital efforts to get into his company. "They don't understand our values... I'm in business to help people. My intention is that everyone in Koenig becomes great, and everyone gets deliverance through the path of spirituality. I want all our customers, associates to be happy... Only when a PE understands our philosophy can we take a cheque from it."

Spirituality, he believes, is the path to innovation and progress for business. "Every invention is idea waiting to be discovered. But ideas come only to those who are 'connected' to the 'other world'... I'm just hoping that within the company everyone is having this connection (to the supreme being) to come up with ideas."

He also nurses a lurking hope that "that big idea" that will transform India would one day light up in his head, ignited from "above".

He calls his firm God's Own Company. And 'Happiness Guaranteed' is the



Rohit Aggarwal, chief helping officer, Koenig Solutions

tag line of his company—written almost everywhere in his posh office in Delhi.

Aggarwal, son of a Chandigarh businessman, has a degree in engineering, but he took up teaching as a vocation. "Education can transform the world." He started his outfit in 1993, with just one student. Today, some 12,000 students from 50 countries take IT training, mostly through live virtual classes (LVC), from Koenig, giving him revenues of roughly ₹150 crore this year. Koenig has five centres in India and one each in Dubai and the US. A centre will open in Singapore soon. Some 300+ IT trainers on Koenig's rolls,

he says, is the largest such pool in the world. He works with top global IT players like Microsoft, Cisco, Oracle, VMware, SAP, and a dozen more.

Instead of Koenig scaling up the business in India, Aggarwal wants the entire country to realise the opportunity in virtual education and create an eco-system. "We want to be the Infosys of virtual education", he says, recalling how Infosys led India's global IT foray. Here are his takes on the opportunity:

"The whole world needs IT training which Indian can provide through LVC at highly affordable rates."

"Millions of jobs can be created in India through LVC. Anybody with a

skill can become a trainer and get rated by students."

"Even a two-day training can make a person employable, and courses can be structured into 20% class learning and 80% self-learning."

"IT and many other skills can be imparted for ₹2,000-3,000 per course if targeted right."

"Short-term courses are the future of education. The skills required by industry are diverse. And new job requirements are coming up every year."

Koenig offers some 2,000 short-term courses online.

"We're not going to restrict ourselves to IT. It's about transforming the country. Every segment needs ethical people and practices." His next destination? Finding the honest people in India. He even started a website to spot them.

To justify, he says it is important to invest in "invisible" values, or in things which bring no apparent returns. "Art has no utility. Taj Mahal has no utility. Still, these impact us and stimulate human thoughts."

His 86-class room Delhi office is a mix of the ancient and modern, just like he meshes spirituality and IT. The office complex is replete with a yoga centre, spa, pooja and namaz rooms, Indian and global cuisine, masseurs, forex counter and a stream and greenery in the middle to spend time in solitude.

"We have been growing at 50% from 2002. Our goal is to grow 100% every year... Business opportunity is far exceeding our expectation every year."

Whether or not the path is right, spirituality is certainly helping Koenig win customer confidence, and grow.