

# Exploring tourism, making learning pleasurable

Zeroing on the potential of education-tourism as a business model, Keonig Solutions founded by entrepreneur Rohit Agarwal is minting profits, discovers **Shoma Patnaik**

While the government is trying to promote Goa as an education hub there are private players who have benefitted greatly from making the state the focus of their education related business.

Delhi-based Keonig Solutions is one of them. The IT training company has a centre in Panaji since 2004 and is in the interesting industry of education-tourism. It is an unusual business concept established by Rohit Agarwal, founder, who says that his company is in dual industries of education and hospitality. It works on the principle of 'learn-as-you-explore' with students enrolling for course and are also tourists during their off-learning hours.

"They learn in a relaxed environment while they travel around as sightseers and enjoy the tourism experience during their free time," says Agarwal.

The Goa centre comprises of around 10 per cent of his company revenues and is successful, he says.

It has trained over 1,000 students since its inception most of whom are foreigners. "There is scope to make the centre bigger and so plans are to market it aggressively to make it contribute to a bigger share in future revenues," explains Agarwal.



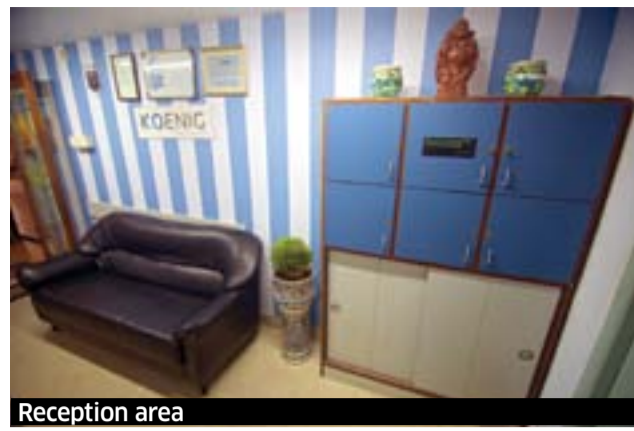
Rohit Agarwal, founder, Keonig Solutions

Keonig Solutions must be pointed out as a specialised IT training institute. It provides lateral training to people who are already in jobs and who need expert knowledge on focused topics.

Most of the students are sponsored by their employers viz companies. They are from Europe, Middle East, African countries and the US.

The teaching is a package deal wherein the students receive training, certification and the package

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Reception area



Authorised Testing Center

includes travel, accommodation, meals, daily transport as well as local tourism.

Training is precise, always one-to-one, and usually in short courses.

The typical duration of the course is 1-2 weeks, although there are even 3-day courses too. The learning hours are from 9 a.m to 5 p.m after which students are at liberty to go for sightseeing etc.

These foreign students are put up in quality accommodation and are looked after well in terms of food and other facilities. For this they are charged a hefty package not less than Rs 80,000 (excluding fare) for a week's course.

Agarwal is a typical entrepreneur who wanted to be in business while he was young and pursued his goal to fruition.

He started the company in 1993 when he was 23 years of age after he passed out from Punjab Engineering College, Chandigarh.

"Initial 10 years were a struggle as we catered to the domestic IT training industry where the market is very competitive," he says.

However in 2002 he discovered that the IT training provided in India, costs a huge amount abroad due to which the company changed its business model by focusing on international students.

"Since then we have never looked back," reveals Agarwal.

The first institute of its kind was established in Delhi nevertheless it was realised that the foreign students did not prefer coming to Delhi due to which the company tried to find options to search for salubrious locations.

In 2004, an institute was set up in Shimla followed by another

in Goa. Subsequently more centres were established in Dehradun (2007), Dubai (2011) and the latest is in Bengaluru (2012).

In all there are six centers with only the Bengaluru institute catering to the domestic market which primarily caters to the needs of IT companies based in the city.

Both Goa and Shimla which are tourist destinations have 80 per cent of global students.

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Keonig has clientele from Fortune 500 companies and also from a lot of foreign government agencies who hire the training services for IT skill development of their workforce on some of the latest technologies.

The company has a talent pool of

over 300 certified trainers which are mostly of engineering background while some of them are BSc graduates with knowledge of latest technology.

"In IT, understanding of technology is more important than the qualifications," points out Agarwal. The company offers training in modules such as Microsoft, Oracle, Cisco, VMware, Dynamics, etc.

The IT industry is dynamic and needs continuous updating of skills and hence offers opportunities to training companies like his, says Agarwal.

Keonig Solutions has generated profits on its foreign students but also provides admission for local students, he added.

The fee for domestic students is somewhat lower. The Delhi institute has fair percentage of locals while the proportion of foreign students is highest in the areas of tourist destination, says Agarwal.



Interactive trainings

## SAIL's Diwali fireworks

Cost controls have lifted sales 20 % to 7.52 million tons during April-Oct



SAIL's steel plant

Cost optimisation, modernisation and expansion measures at SAIL are beginning to pay off, with the largest steelmaker posting a 20 per cent growth in sales during April-October period. The Maharatna's consolidated sales increased 20 per cent to 7.52 million tons during the first seven months in 2016-2017, company officials said.

SAIL chairman PK Singh said, "The management's sustained emphasis to improve every process from production up to reaching the consumers is beginning to show results."

The stabilisation of new mills under the modernisation programme has also contributed to the improved volumes and sales, he added.

"All this would strengthen the state-run company's performance at a time when there is a pick-up in activities of steel intensive

sectors. Also the positive environment brought in by the government including its competitive trade policies and measures, has helped improve market sentiment," he said.

During April-October 2016, domestic sales went up by 15 per cent with improvement in both long and flat products.

Exports volumes also increased by more than three times backed by a conscious strategy of the company to expand its footprint in neighboring markets.

On the production front, the April-October period clocked better performance with 22 per cent growth in saleable steel production compared with the corresponding period last year.

The techno-economic parameters also registered an uptick with 7 per cent improvement in blast furnace productivity and three per cent improvement in coke rate. **IANs**

## Explosion fears haunt Samsung's other products

Samsung has recalled 2.8 million top-loading washing machines in US due to explosion fears



Samsung's explosion woes seem to continue as the company has had to recall nearly three million top-loading washing machines in the US due to fears of explosion.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), which is working with the company to facilitate the recall, said Samsung has received 733 reports of washing machines "experiencing excessive vibration or the top detaching from the washing machine chassis".

"Before you do another load of laundry, contact Samsung and respond to this recall," said CPSC chairman Elliot Kaye.

"These top loading washers present a risk of injury when used on a high-speed spin cycle. The best way to prevent injury is for everyone who might have a recalled washing machine to contact Samsung immediately," said Kaye

The recall pertains to 34 of Samsung's top-loading models that were sold from March 2011 to November 2016. Those who possess these machines can get free repair and one-year warranty along with an exchange rebate on a new washing machine for a Samsung purchase or a full refund for eligible new customers.

Reacting to the recall, John Herrington, senior vice president and general manager of Home Appliances, Samsung Electronics America said, "Our priority is to reduce any safety risks in the home and to provide our customers with easy and simple choices in response to the recall. We are moving quickly and in partnership with the CPSC to ensure consumers know the options available to them and that any disruption in the home is minimised."

The Korean electronics manufacturer, which recently faced a mammoth smartphone recall has had investigations into exploding incidents of washing machines going on since 2013. But the company acknowledged a serious issue with certain batches in US this year in September after it received several reports of abnormal vibrations.

Some users have reported severe injuries including a broken jaw, an injured shoulder, and bruises and blunt force injuries. Three consumers in the US have even filed suits against Samsung claiming that their machines suddenly exploded while being used.

Michelle Soto Fielder from McAllen, who is one of the complainants, says her Samsung washing machine, purchased in June 2012, exploded in February 2016. The violent explosion even left a dent in the wall of the garage, where the machine was installed.

The latest recall puts a serious question mark on the company's safety standards when it comes to consumer technology. **International Business Times**

