

BPO blues: Study says Indians have `yes` problem

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Despite widespread use of English, India and Europe have significant cultural differences that are showing up as concrete obstacles to offshore work.

In a study on European small and medium IT companies in India by **Value Leadership Group Inc**, all the companies surveyed specifically mentioned the tendency of Indian workers to “over commit” (say yes to every request) as a significant cultural issue.

“We saw several examples of missed deadlines and project failures that the companies attributed to this trait,” it states.

The study has been authored by Peter Schumacher and Eric Olsson. It says the cultural differences work both ways, with many Indians uncomfortable with the bluntness of Germans.

Speaking to Business Standard at the ongoing Hannover Fair, **Peter Schumacher, president & CEO, Value Leadership Group Inc**, said India's proposition of value for money, top talent and tremendous flexibility was not going unnoticed by small and medium European enterprises that had exhausted their options in Europe.

While the study mentions a number of factors that contribute to the India advantage, it also lists some other challenges faced during companies' off-shoring work in India. One of these is that unlike in most Western countries, salaries and incomes tend to be public information in India.

This fact alone can create salary pressures for companies operating in India. The study quotes Jens Borchers of Case Consult as saying: “Never expect that a secret agreement you share with one employee will stay a secret — he or she will tell the first person in the hall after leaving your office.”

However, on one issue Indians in the IT industry score over others. This is because many of them deal only with foreign customers and tend to have substantially more experience dealing with a wide variety of people and cultures than many Europeans do.

Indian IT also has an advantage because most of the companies have always worked on a “global delivery model”, while many European companies face an uphill struggle switching to this model from their current “proximity to customer based” model.

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