



Offshoring Challenges: How culture impacts attracting staff offshore

Often many organizations from the U.S. find it difficult to attract the right talent at the offshore location. Competition for competent staff in countries like India is intense. The environment is similar to what U.S. experienced during the Internet boom, when it was difficult to attract and retain good talent. It is not uncommon to find that a good developer with 4 to 5 years experience will have multiple job offers. Several variables impact your ability to attract staff; key among them is culture.

Culturally, your prospective employee is influenced by the social network; while the individual usually decides who they go to work for, in countries like India, the social network has a big influence and the decision on which company he or she goes to work for is more likely to be a group decision with input from the extended family and friends.

Culturally brand names are important offshore. If you are a hot startup with a bright idea, but you are competing head on with companies like IBM or Wipro, unless you are offering some unique differentiator, you do not have a chance.

Job titles carry a much bigger importance offshore; in the social hierarchy, titles play a much bigger part in a country like India; your prospective employee would rather work a company that gives them a better sounding title. In this context I have advised several companies to create a set of titles that are unique to the offshore location and do not directly translate to the same level responsibility in the U.S.