



Vijay K Thadani, CEO, NIIT (in deep blue shirt and specs) and Chief People Officer Shampi Venkatesh (leading the group in red saree) pose with fellow NIITians

## NIIT

### LEARNING SOLUTIONS

EMPLOYEES: 2,448

LOCATION: Gurgaon

YEAR OF INDIA OPS.: 1981

GENDER RATIO (F/M): 1:1.81

RANK 2012: 10

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# FRESH LEARNING

At NIIT, compatibility and competence go hand in hand to strike a unique balance

Anumeha Chaturvedi

'EMPLOYEE' IS A taboo word at the Gurgaon-headquartered learning solutions firm NIIT. All professionals working with the company are referred to as NIITians. Chief Executive Officer Vijay K Thadani feels the company has consciously stayed away from using the terms 'employee' and 'employer' as they create a divide. "NIITian signifies an equality of some kind.

As a company, we look for compatibility in addition to competence in professionals. We

are a training company and can build competence. But what we cannot fill is a gap in compatibility," says Thadani.

And once the company does find its compatibility match in professionals, it is known to nurture them through numerous opportunities of career growth and a change of roles. Priti Arora, general manager of Information Systems Development, started working with the company in 1994.

She has thought of moving on at times but always stuck around because she was provided diverse roles. "Each time I felt I was getting

bored, my bosses were approachable. I could ask for a change and I may not have been given that immediately but it was planned in a structured manner," she says.

Sumit Mago, Development Head, Technology, School Learning Solutions at NIIT, was a part of the company's exalted Chairman's Club initiative last year.

The Chairman's Quality Club is a club whose members come through the most stringent selection process and are personally mentored by NIIT's chairman for special projects. "One gets to learn a lot by working with the chairman and other senior leaders," he says.

Mago started his career with the company in 1999 as a faculty member at one of their centres. Later, he got into school learning solutions and says the nitty-gritty that he learnt from each individual role, seems to have paid off well.

Over the past year, the company has also launched other initiatives like, 'To my leader with love', where team members voted for the leaders they love. "Leaders are the ones evaluating people but no one evaluates them and so an initiative like this creates an equilibrium," says Thadani. Likewise, 'Conversations with the CEO' is a forum, where employees can meet and chat with the CEO whenever they want.

The company also launched a 'Hats off' initiative, which allows performers to collect reward points and redeem them through products over a period of time.

NIIT's global leadership program, which is intermittently held three times a year, has also benefited professionals like Bhavna Kumar, who heads the soft skills division of one of the businesses.

"We are taught by the crème de la crème of India and are exposed to global best practices. It is positioned as programme for high achievers and is a huge acknowledgement of the work done by us," she says.

Thadani says every morning when he leaves home for work, he feels he is going for his first date. "It is a feeling that something good is going to happen and you'll be respected for what you are," he says.

Ironically, the company was also one of the first in the country to give dating allowances in the nineties targeted at their predominantly young workforce.

He says what makes NIIT a Great Place to Work is the company's principle of putting its employees first before customers.