

Digital Push: Old Economy Cos Hunt for Tech Talent

Manufacturing, retail, BFSI cos are developing cutting-edge technology

**Rica Bhattacharyya
& Prachi Verma Dadhwal**

Mumbai | New Delhi: Old economy companies are stepping up hiring of technology professionals as demand for tech savvy and digital talent grows in an otherwise slow job market.

Manufacturing, retail, banking and financial services firms are developing cutting-edge technologies, which require tech talent, said HR heads. Companies including Vedanta, Tata Steel, RPG, Philips, Schneider Electric, Whirlpool and Dabur are investing heavily in digital technology to improve productivity and efficiency. "We hire tech professionals because it makes business sense. It saves us man hours, reduces down-time and risk, which directly affect the bottom line," said Madhu Srivastava, group chief human resource officer at diversified miner Vedanta.

The Anil Agarwal-led natural resources firm — which is thinking of implementing blockchain technology for purchasing and sourcing artificial intelligence-enabled exploration and unmanned surveillance systems — is hiring talent in smart manufacturing, industrial cyber security, digital capital management projects and other functional digital projects including exploration. "Digital is getting embedded in every function, including manufacturing, marketing, research and development, and human resources and there is widespread demand for professionals for every domain," said R Suresh, foun-

Tech Check

Sectors Hiring Tech Talent:

➤ Manufacturing, retail, banking and financial services



Cos Investing in Digital Tech:

- Vedanta, Tata Steel, RPG, Philips, Schneider Electric, Whirlpool, Dabur
- Their focus is on improving productivity & efficiency, save costs

der of executive search consultancy Insist.

The RPG group, which started its digital journey by hiring a chief digital officer for tyre maker Ceat and its construction engineering subsidiary KEC International a couple of years ago, has hired data analysts, data scientists and AI professionals, said group HR head S Venkatesh.

Tata Steel, on the other hand, is hiring fresh technology graduates. The country's largest private steel maker, which is targeting to become one of the top five technologically-advanced global steel companies, has new and emerging tech roles in the areas of new material business (graphene and fibre reinforced polymer), digital technologies for process improvements — industrial internet of things, sensorisation, artificial intelligence, natural language processing, cloud computing, data science, chatbots and robotic process automation.

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Expertis survey says tech hiring outlook in non-IT cos has increased 4 percentage points to over 17% in April-September this year



SKILLS IN DEMAND:

Data Analytics, AI, Natural Language Processing, Cloud Computing, Data Science, Chatbots, Robotic Process Automation

tember this year compared to the same period last year, according to a recent survey by IT solutions provider Expertis, which is part of Manpower Group India. Global electronics major Philips, which is currently focused on healthcare and lighting, has seen a year-on-year increase in the number of tech hires across sectors in India.

"Tech talent forms a crucial part of our workforce mix as we seek to digitise the health and personal care segments," said Armaan Seth, head — HR, Philips Indian Subcontinent. In 2019, Philips is estimated to hire more than 800 people, including software engineers and R&D staff, compared to last year.

Schneider Electric, the global specialist in energy management and automation, is doubling its tech talent hiring in India, said Runita Verma, director HR, Schneider Electric India.

Fast moving consumer goods company Dabur India is focusing on hiring tech talent in functions as diverse as manufacturing, marketing, sales, supply chain and HR.