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### NIIT

“NIIT is people,” says P Rajendran, founder and COO, stressing that his company is not just about profits and numbers. It has been so since inception, he claims. “We were the first to introduce many concepts that one takes as the norm nowadays,” he says. These include flexible working hours for women, working from home, taking back former employees (a taboo earlier), paternity leave for men and establishing a casual workplace atmosphere.

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### Why Employees ♥ NIIT

**Lifetime recognition:**  
Conference rooms,  
named after consistent  
top performers.

**Health and well-being:**  
Employee counselling,  
yoga@office, gym  
facilities for employees  
and families.

**Global leadership  
programme:** High  
performers work on  
live projects.



BHUPINDER SINGH

The use of terms like ‘sir’ or ‘ma’am’ was banned and everyone is on a first-name basis. This was done to remove hierarchies, unquestioning attitudes and other such constraints that plagued most Indian establishments. “When you call someone by their first name, it instantly cuts away fluff and brings one straight to the business at hand,” says Rajendran.

What is also remarkable about the company is its ability to groom people for leadership. “Eighty per cent of NIIT’s leaders are home grown,” says Asim Talukdar, Senior VP, NIIT. Some even joined as faculty at the centre level and now head separate business units,” he says. For instance, Bharati Bashyam joined the company 18 years ago as a counsellor at an NIIT centre. She is now the deputy GM for the company’s contact centre. Bashyam rose to her current designation after working through functions like sales, online learning services, customer relationship management and education. The company is now trying to put in place a mobility facilitation centre. “Managers will have to ensure that people under them move after two years. If that has still not happened in four years, then these people will be mandatorily moved to other functions,” says Rajendran. It’s all part of making NIIT a more agile company, and grooming leaders from within its ranks.

—Taneesha Kulshrestha

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