

India losing voice in BPO space as domestic IT firms rush to LatAm

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Bangalore, Apr 4: India, once the preferred location for foreign companies to set up business process outsourcing centres (BPOs), is literally losing its voice. Experts point to the shortage of quality workforce in the voice-based BPO industry, which has driven many IT companies, including TCS and Wipro, overseas.

Companies are attracted to the ready availability of superior voice talent in Latin American countries like Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and Peru, making them new BPO hotspots. IBM, TCS, Accenture and Unisys have already set up centres in the region.

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New windows

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and BPO portfolio, serving about 20 clients. Says Raman Roy, chairman and managing director, Quattro BPO Solutions, widely regarded as the father of the Indian BPO industry: "We have not fine-tuned our skill sets. Appetite for this industry is huge, but our tier-II and tier-III colleges are producing mostly educated unemployable youth. Quality of the workforce in the BPO industry today is not good."

"We are still short on Eng-

lish language skills. BPOs train people for 12-15 weeks here, but still they are not ready, whereas in places like Colombo, we give training for three to four weeks and they are ready to head for work." "Latin America is making huge strides," says Gopi Natarajan, CEO & president, Omega Healthcare Management Services.

According to Ramesh Kamath, chief financial officer, Aditya Birla Minacs, companies are venturing overseas

because these regions offer greater geographical proximity to the US. "People from Latin America can relate to the US better, compared to those from India. Voice accent is a limited issue, not the whole." Minacs too is looking at entering South America in the near future.

Industry experts say the attrition rate of 10-11% in India's BPO industry makes the country an unfavourable destination.

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