



Dr Edward de Bono is famous the world over for his concept of lateral thinking. Through his numerous books, workshops, and school initiatives, Dr de Bono has made people not only think about how they think, but also use new ways of looking at things to invent products, find solutions to persistent problems, and resolve conflict. In an interview with *The Indian Express* Editor-in-Chief Shekhar Gupta on NDTV 24x7's Walk the Talk, Dr de Bono talks about some of his thinking tools, how his training in medicine helped him arrive at his basic concepts, and about his meetings with Rajiv Gandhi, Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, and Pervez Musharraf

On the RECORD

EDWARD de BONO
Writer

ers to young children, they start to believe that you don't have to think, all you have to do is search, and you'll find the answer. So, using computers is excellent, but you need, at the same time, to think. Now that extends beyond school.

■ **You said you met Rajiv Gandhi and he was very enthusiastic about teaching thinking. And then you met Narasimha Rao, who was education minister, and he was non-committal. What was your impression about Dr Kalam?** Because he is so popular with children. I liked Dr Kalam. A lot. In fact I made a suggestion to him. I said, 'Why doesn't India get close to China? It's like a marriage. You can still kill each other in a marriage.' (Both laugh) And then, if they get together, then Europe could be worse off. He liked the idea.

■ **He's very popular with young people, he's very popular with school children.** He's a good fellow. I liked him.

"You know something interesting about Islam? The Prophet Muhammad had more to say about thinking than any other religious leader"



motivation, and above all, we have the Indian *jugaad!* Now, *jugaad* is a very Indian term for innovative-ness. We put a few things together. And they actually got the better of the Americans. So how do you look at that? Have you had a chance to figure out this Indian circular thinking? It sometimes works, sometimes doesn't work.

Well, it's a bit like the Italians. The Italians have a very complicated political system. What makes Italy work is the concept of 'everything can be arranged'. And there is a certain amount of creative thinking in that. But it's not the same as changing basic ideas. It's finding a way around.

■ **You won't be surprised that an Italian-born is our most powerful leader right now, Sonia Gandhi.** (Laughs) I often say, 'There's an India which is mainly Hindu, and so on. And the president was a Muslim (A.P.J. Abdul Kalam), the leader of the biggest party is Italian, and the prime minister is a Sikh.

■ **The Speaker of our Parliament is a communist, who doesn't believe in any god.** (Laughs) That's good, it shows that you have tolerance.

■ **Our new vice-president is a Muslim. And yet there's an Indian way of thinking that cuts across religious lines.** You know something interesting about Islam? The Prophet Muhammad had more to say about thinking than any other religious leader.

■ **Is that so?** In the Hadith, he says, 'One hour of thinking is better than 70 years of praying.' He says, 'The ink of a scholar is more holy than the blood of a martyr.' He says, 'One learned man gives more trouble to the Devil than a thousand worshippers.' That's Mohammad. In the Koran there are 130 verses about thinking. So, actually, when I go to the Middle East and tell them this, they don't know.

■ **In fact, one of the things that strikes me, reading your interviews and writings, is that you say that one thing that hasn't changed in the past 100 years is our schools. You know, similar curriculum, taught the same way. One would have thought that now, with computers, connectivity and mobility, it would have changed radically, while it hasn't.** What I say is that there's a little danger in that. If you give comput-

all the neural circuits concerned with fear, and when the lion appears, the antelope runs away. In the lion's brain, on the other hand, a chemical sensitises it to greed and benefit, so when it sees a zebra, it thinks, 'That's my lunch.' So there are different chemicals, according to different moods. If we try and do everything at once, we will confuse things. So the six hats separate out the thinking. Under the white hat, everyone is looking for facts, information, what we have, what we need, what questions we've asked, how do we get the information. Red hat: permission to put forward your emotions, your intuition, without having to justify or explain it. Black hat is critical: what is wrong, the risks, the downside, why it may not work. The yellow hat: values, benefits. The green hat: creative, new ideas, possibilities, alternatives and so on. The blue hat is the organizing hat: summary, outcome. The point is everyone is wearing the same hat at the same time. That's parallel thinking. That's important. Let me give an example. In a normal meeting, we may have someone who is against the idea being discussed. Normally, that person will spend the whole meeting attacking the idea. With the hats, under the black hat, he or she will be encouraged to be as critical as he or she can possibly be. Then, when it's the turn of the other hat, he's expected to look for value. And if he says, 'I can't see any value', and everyone else is seeing value, then he's seen to be stupid. So everyone is challenged to use their brain fully.

■ **Dr de Bono, all your readers swear by your six thinking hats. White for facts, black for critical thinking, red for emotion, yellow for optimism, and so on. In practical life, can somebody do it? Can somebody juggle six hats?** Well, it's very widely used.

■ **Just imagine US President George W. Bush juggling six hats before going into Iraq.** Last year I was told by a Nobel Prize winning economist, I forget the name, it could have been Joseph Stiglitz, I'm not sure. And he said, 'Last week I was in Washington, the top economics meeting in the United States, and they were using your six hats.' Later, when I visited New Zealand, in Auckland, I met a woman who said she was teaching my six hats in the islands of Papua New Guinea, where there's almost Stone Age culture. So from Stone Age Papua New Guinea to top economists.

■ **But not George Bush before going into Iraq.** Well, if under the white hat, he asked, 'What's the information?' And that's not good enough? Yes... But it's widely used (this thinking tool), I'll give another example.

■ **Give me a one-minute primer on the six hats. How does it work?** First I'll give you the reason why we need the six hats. In the brain there are certain chemicals. So for instance, if there's an antelope in African, and when there's a sound in the savannah grass, the chemical concerned with fear-sensitises



"If all 17-year-old girls were to say, 'We like a good, thinking man', all the men will start thinking"

■ **I'll tell you the first time I sort of got sensitised to your writing. It was when General Pervez Musharraf came to India for a summit, almost a decade back. He said that the way to solve the India-Pakistan problem is a step-by-step approach. First step, you recognise a problem, second step, you call me, third step, look at solutions. It was all vertical. And a friend of mine sent me an email the next day, because I was on some TV discussions about this visit, saying, 'Hey man, Gen Musharraf needs to bone up on de Bono.'**

Well, I know Gen Musharraf, and I've been in Pakistan, I've had breakfast with him.

■ **Dr de Bono, reading up on you, one is struck by the fact that you were trained to be a medical doctor. You would normally have expected a psychologist or psychiatrist to get into this business. But why a medical doctor?**

Well, this is very important. Because in medicine, I was dealing with complicated systems. From that I developed ideas on self-organising systems. I then applied these principles to the brain: how the brain works, how neural networks work. And that was the basis for my thinking. I said that if the brain is good at this — making patterns and using patterns — then what if it's not good at it? Changing patterns. And that was the basis for lateral thinking. So the fact is that I was relating thinking to the way the brain actually works. For the first time in history. It was not philosophers just playing with words. That's why the medical thinking became very important.

■ **Well, I think even if you had studied engineering, you would have come up with wonderful ideas, because you have a brilliant mind.**

Well, it's true, (studies) engineering and systems behavior might have done that too, but in medicine I learnt how the brain functions and from that, on the whole, I say, 'We've learnt so little about thinking.' In schools, in top levels, in diplomacy. What I propose to do this year is to set up a palace of thinking.

■ **You have a centre for thinking in Malia.**

This is going to be much bigger, much more iconic. Giving thinking the dignity it deserves, and then, periodically, have international meetings on issues. Because the United Nations is totally incapable of new ideas. Because in representative bodies, people have to represent their countries. So to provide alternatives, possibilities, new thinking, I'm going to do that in this year and the coming years.

■ **Well Dr de Bono, I know you turn 75 next month. All the very best to you. Keep getting younger and younger in body and mind.** Thinking keeps you young.

■ **And keep thinking for all of us. Thank you. Wonderful to have you on the show.** Thank you.

(The transcript was prepared by S.B. Easwaran. The complete text is available at www.indianexpress.com)

FEATURE
GLOBAL MARKETS

Africa Calling

China has wooed the Dark Continent successfully. Now, it's India Inc's turn to tap Africa for its abundant resources

ASHISH GUPTA

"While India, China and other emerging markets are now permanent fixtures on the radar screen of the media and investors, Africa is humming with under-followed companies and stock markets. The continent is also rich in oil and other commodities, the very resources that are fuelling the booming economies investors are clamouring for."

Richard Bernstein, Chief Investment Strategist, Merrill Lynch

GLOBAL FUND managers may be gung-ho about the endless possibilities of African stock markets, but it is for countries such as China and India that Africa presents an opportunity of untold riches. With demand for natural resources rising sharply, Africa seems like the last frontier for these energy guzzlers, who are otherwise dependent on Middle-East sources.

There are sound reasons to pitch camp on the continent. Africa contributes 7% of global natural gas production and 10% of global crude production. Moreover, 95% of the reserves are concentrated in just six countries—Angola, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Nigeria and Sudan. And the quality of the crude, mostly light, is better than Middle Eastern crude, making it far easier to refine.

The scramble for Africa has begun, and India and China are running neck and neck to woo its powers. China has gradually strengthened its hold on Africa with soft loans, development aid, arms supply and political support. In the process, it has bagged a number of lucrative oil projects. In-

dia, meanwhile, has only just started.

Having lost a few key oil deals to its larger neighbour, India is now adopting an 'aid-for-oil' strategy that tailors in infrastructure development, as well as loans for longer durations at low interest rates to match China's generosity. The Middle Kingdom has pledged some \$20 billion for infrastructure and trade financing till 2010, and written off some \$1.5 billion in debt to African nations. That has helped it secure as much as 30% of its oil imports from Africa (at 37 million tonnes), compared to 18 million tonnes for India.

China's first-off-the-blocks strategy has, however, not dampened India Inc's enthusiasm. "Africa and India have so much in common, historically and culturally. We face the same challenges of empowerment and infrastructure development. Above all, India has low-cost solutions to developmental problems that are more suited to African conditions," says Tarun Das, Chief Mentor of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

Indian companies, both large and small, stand to benefit in Africa in pharmaceuticals, automobiles, tele-

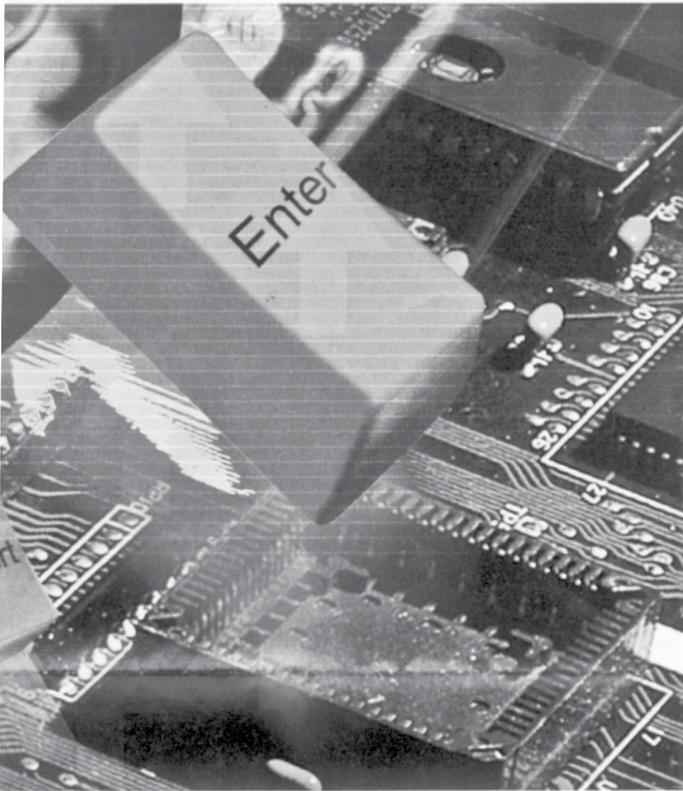


The Indian Presence

Agriculture	Kelcoskars, Sonalika, Escorts, Mahindra, Dabur
Education	NIIT, Aptech, NSIC, EDICIL
IT	TCS, Satyam, HCL, TCIIL, Wipro
Mining	ONGC, MMTC, Tata Steel, Essar, Vedanta
Pharma	Ranbaxy, Cipla, Emcure, Epos Healthcare, Amobindo Pharma
Power	BHEL, Tata, KEC, Kalpataru, Jyoti Structures
Transport	Tata, Mahindra, Ashok Leyland, Sonalika, Bajaj



come to grips with about our changing world. It also underlines some of the changes companies need to make to maintain their competitive advantage. Firstly, ICT is creating global opportunities as well as threats. It's true that the opportunities are sometimes hard to see. For example, despite much noisy public opinion to the contrary, a recent report by not-for-profit organisation The Work Foundation found very little evidence that jobs had been lost in Europe as a result of off-shoring. As the author of the report, Katerina Rudiger, said: "Technology has always led to people being displaced from some lines of work to others, but what is not happening is a straightforward migration of jobs from North to South, West to East."



Rudiger failed to find evidence of a clearly defined trend for western multinationals to off-shore work to reduce labour costs. Rather, she found that many companies were mixing business models, combining near-shoring and off-shoring to spread their operations around the globe, while keeping some operations close to home. Essentially, these firms were 'right-shoring,' or getting work done wherever it would be done best. What's more, Rudiger found many examples of successful Indian companies that were setting up and creating jobs in developed western countries to improve their ability to target their markets.

Levelling The Playing Field

What's happening is that this technological revolution is driving change—compelling organisations to become more efficient, putting disadvantaged regions back on the eco-

nomie map and helping to raise skill levels right across the globe. The impact is evident from the fact that one-third of IT spending now occurs outside North America, Western Europe and Japan. And this development will create new innovation in IT, new competitors, new usage patterns, and continued cost-improvement benefits for users, according to Gartner.

But as a recent study commissioned by BT, 'Building Business with BRICS', reveals, while western executives understand that the so-called 'BRICS' nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) have accounted for 30% of global growth since 2000, few have taken advantage of the opportunities for collaboration and new business that this presents. And even fewer are really prepared to engage with the new world economic order. Which is worrying.

Perez's model suggests there is serious 'structural' work that needs to be done before we can reap the rewards of the 'golden age' that may result from this revolution. Each surge brings with it new organisational paradigms and new best practices, but it's up to the companies concerned to implement them. With

The ICT revolution is putting disadvantaged regions back on the economic map and raising skill levels

today's communications and flexible technologies, it makes sense for businesses to organise themselves as agile creative networks, and to do so on a global basis. That way, we can all take advantage of the different talents and perspectives on offer around the world.

Carry The World With You

It's an approach global organisations should be keen to adopt. We operate globally, so it makes sense for us to resource globally as well, recruiting and deploying whoever is best for each task. We've set up regional resourcing centres in Hungary, Brazil and China that employ local people, for example. Alongside them, we have global resourcing centers. India is the perfect example of a place where a great deal of work is done through outsourcing partners, as well as through locally employed people. And in the UK and Spain, we have specialist resourcing centres that recruit the people our businesses need in those countries.

I agree with Perez: the ultimate opportunity is a future "when the amazing, wealth-creating information technology paradigm lifts all boats and produces global welfare." But, as she notes, this is just the potential, not an actual blueprint. To make the opportunity real, companies will have to adapt to the new paradigm and continue to invest both in technology and in people—not just in their own backyard, but right across the globe. Developing nations are obviously keen to tap ICT's potential, and established companies can do a great deal to pave their way forward. If business and society work together, this latest technological revolution will prove to be an important force for good all round ■

COVER FEATURE

Up for grabs

A booming economy and an expanding service sector; it is jobs for all

By Vijaya Pushkarna

Hukam Singh of Nigohee Deeg village in Rajasthan had dreams in his eyes when he sent his four sons to college. They were the first generation in his family to get formal education. But not even in his wildest dream did the farmer expect his son Neeraj Kumar, 19, to get a job so quickly. A technical graduate from the College of Technology and Engineering, Udaipur, Neeraj was selected by Cairn India, an oil and gas exploration and production company, as operations engineer when it visited the campus for recruitment.

The company hired many other students from engineering colleges in small towns. Employers representing the cross section of the economy are flocking to colleges not just in big cities and premier institutions but also in small towns to fill vacancies at the entry level. Never mind that they are lacking in skills the workplace requires. Says N.S. Rajan, partner,

human capital, business advisory services, Ernst and Young: "India will create over 10.25 lakh new jobs this year, marginally lower than the number of jobs created last year."

THE WEEK-IMRB Survey found that BPO, IT and ITeS continue to top the list of hot jobs along with banking and retail. According to Dr Naresh Malhan, managing director, Manpower India, in terms of the employment outlook India is second only to Singapore. This is vindicated by almost everyone in the business of tracking employment trends and recruitment. Their only difference lies in the perception on the most happening sectors. Says Smarajit Dey, president, strategic initiatives, NIIT: "There is hardly any sector that is not happening now. With around 9 per cent GDP, almost every service sector will have an incremental growth." According to him the top three sectors are banking, financial services and insurance sector (BFSI); health care; and retail.

While the hospitality sector will



A dream come true: Neeraj was selected by Cairn India as operations engineer

have 4.3 lakh new jobs in 2008, real estate sector will be the largest provider of jobs. Says Rajan: "Many developers are expanding their business solutions from local players to regional to pan-India operations. This has triggered a complete change in the management practices and workforce trends of this sector."

Many real estate firms have started adopting latest talent recruitment methods like on-campus recruitments, using recruitment portals and executive search. The salary offered is also increasing in this sector and sometimes it is even better than other



leading sectors like IT, pharma and auto. The survey found that most of the students expect a starting salary of Rs 15,000 to Rs 20,000.

Says Ishan Mehta, head, HR, Emaar MGF: "Currently we are in residential, commercial, retail and hospitality sectors. We have plans for health care, education and infrastructure sectors. The focus for the year would be to strengthen the middle and junior level team. We plan to hire over 700 employees. The majority of our hiring would be in the specialised fields like project management, design and sales."

Rohit Gera, chairman, Gera Developments, a real estate firm with

Oil and gas exploration and production is a new hot area. The starting salary in the energy sector is in the range of Rs 6 lakh to Rs 8 lakh.

projects in Goa and Pune, says that his company will soon go to Bangalore and Nagpur. By the year-end, it will be present in half a dozen cities and will increase its recruitment by 35 per cent. Yet another two-tier Pune-based developer, City Group, plans to recruit 100 people in the next few months. Says Aniruddha Deshpande, its managing director: "There will be a lot of opportunities for skilled supervisors, managers in infrastructure, urban planners and architects."

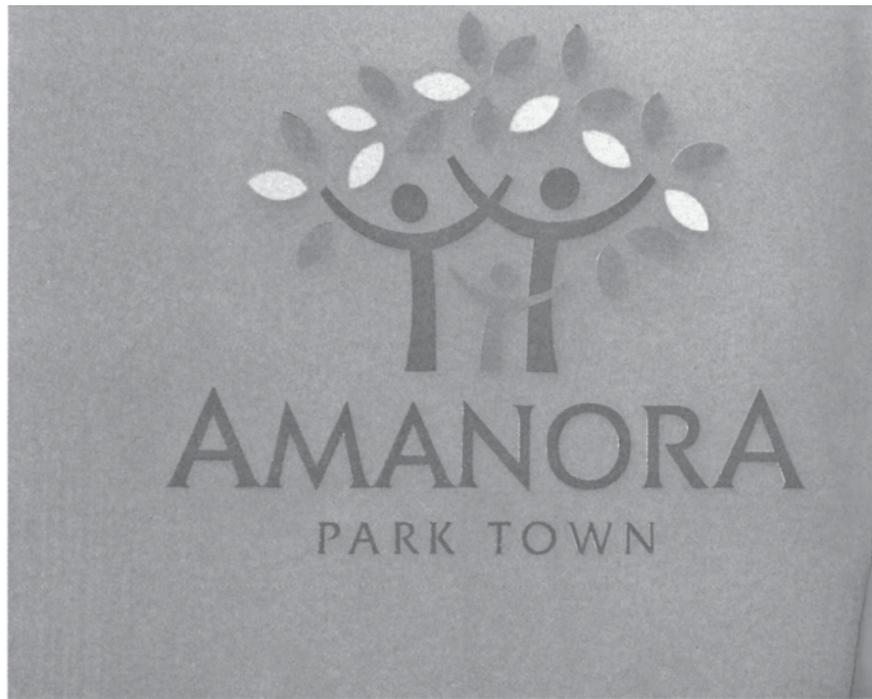
Most of the real estate companies are hoping to get a slice of the infrastructure development projects under public-private partnership. This, according to Prof. Sushil Kumar

of IIM-Lucknow, has spawned a new breed of consultants. "Most of the infrastructure we see now is made under a public-private partnership, with a different brand of consultants, who act as interface between the two," he says.

"The infrastructure sector is growing at a rate of 60-75 per cent," says Harsh Shrivastava, senior vice-president, marketing, Feedback Ventures. The consultancy is involved in infrastructure building. It has a staff of over 800 and plans to add another 500 during the financial year beginning April. While most of the entry level job profiles would be for civil and electrical engineers, a few architects and MBAs would also be enrolled. "Over 45 per cent of our business in the last two years has been by way of public-private partnerships in huge projects spread across 17 states, besides involving the Government of India," he says, adding that this will be the trend in infrastructure development.

The boom in real estate and retail sectors has led to the growth of the Indian logistics sector, which has gone beyond basic transportation to cover end-to-end supply chain solutions. According to K. Prabhakar, CEO and president, express delivery service division of Transport Corporation of India, the logistics, real estate and retail sectors are looking for civil engineers, salespersons, logistics IT managers, warehouse managers, materials handling engineers and system analysts. "Most fresh graduates from engineering colleges should find themselves a job. Most of them will be on the fast track with a bit of experience," he says.

Even though the penetration of organised retail in India is just 4 per cent, the retail sector is poised see more action this year. Slated to enter the Indian scene are big brands like American giant Wal-Mart and French major Carrefour. The Metro Stores, now in three cities, is going to expand to other locations. Says Anil Rajpal, vice-president, Technopak Advisors, consultants for most of the organised



**RUCHIKA BORA, 23,
DESIGNER, CITY GROUP,
PUNE**

When Ruchika Bora finished her diploma in interior design from Bangalore, she knew she would not be unemployed. So she went looking for a house to buy in Amanora Park Town in Pune. There she came to know that the apartment's developer City Group was looking for a designer. Ruchika was hired. "There is a lot of excitement in doing the interiors of homes for people with diverse tastes," says Ruchika. So what is the scope of this job? "With so many projects happening everywhere, and customers getting more and more design conscious, the sky is the limit," says Ruchika. She gets Rs 3 lakh a year as salary.

retailers: "We expect to service 60-70 first-time clients this year. Retail is a manpower-intensive industry. We are looking at 2.5 million jobs in the next 5-7 years, and most of them will be fresh graduates."

Key retail players like Reliance, Aditya Birla Group, Bharti and the Future Group together will invest over \$6 billion this year. With many international players in the race, the investments may go up to \$36 billion in the next five years. According to Anil, the players already in the market may constantly need to add to their front-end staff, while those planning to open stores are going to need both front-end as well as back-end staff like suppliers and logistic managers. THE WEEK-IMRB Survey says that while most hot jobs require academic qualifications, retailing lays more stress on soft skills.

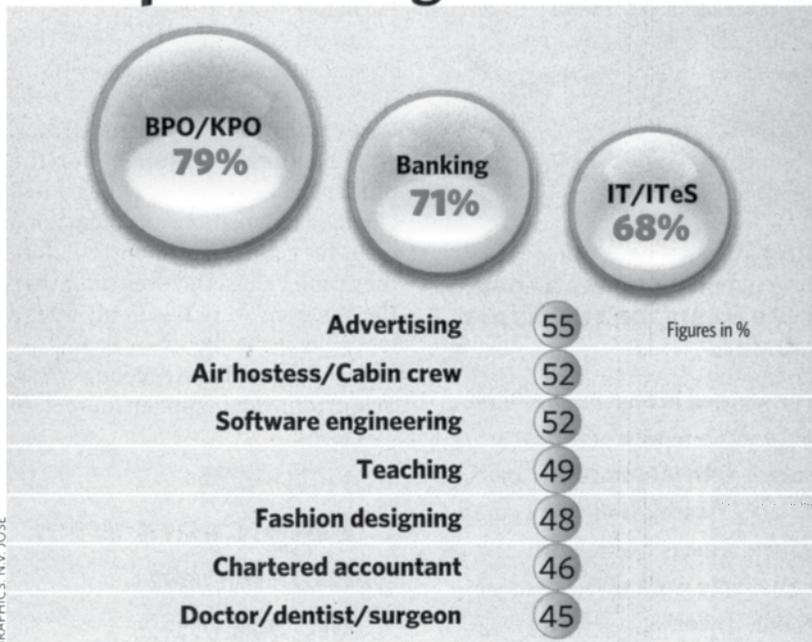
If retail, real estate and infrastructure are growing rapidly, can the people planning for and providing the finances, ensuring insurance of assets, lag behind? The Institute of Finance, Banking and Insurance (IFBI), a partnership between ICICI and NIIT, estimates the BFSI sector would need 1.5 million new people in the next five years. When IFBI opened at six locations last year, they took 4,500 fresh graduates with 50 per cent marks, rejecting three out of



THE WEEK/IMRB survey

HOT jobs

Popular among students



four applicants. Those selected were first given an employment letter from ICICI, ICICI Lombard, ICICI Prudential, HDFC Bank or Kotak Securities. After a three-month training, they were appointed as interns with these organisations and later confirmed as staff. The starting pay package is Rs 2.5-3 lakh a year. The survey says prospective candidates look into three aspects before accepting a job offer—money, job security and reputation of the organisation.

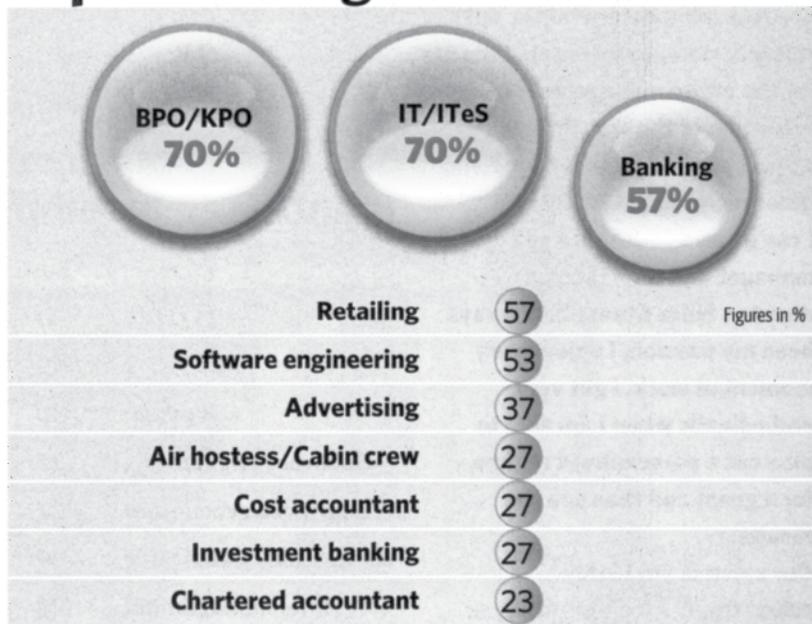
This year IFBI will enroll a total of 12,000 graduates. The institute will expand to 22 other cities including tier-II and tier-III cities by next year.

Given the talent crunch and skill shortage, poaching is one way by which the rapidly expanding sectors are staffing their offices. If retail is pecking off from the older hospitality sector, new players in retail are virtually buying off even people with a few months' experience. Outlet managers of Subhiksha Trading Services say they have offers from other players, and many have actually left.

But Shashikanth, president, manpower, Subhiksha Trading Services, is not much worried. "We believe in a fragmented market and there is enough room for everyone. We have our own training programme. It is easy to pick up graduates who have basic computer skills and the win-

GRAPHICS: NV JOSE

Popular among head hunters



Methodology: THE WEEK-IMRB Survey was conducted across 10 cities—Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune, Kochi, Chandigarh and Ahmedabad. Industries or sectors included in the survey are aviation, media, designing, finance, banking, IT, government, manufacturing and art and skills.



**NILESH KANTAK, 38,
ASSISTANT SPA MANAGER,
CLUB OASIS, GRAND HYATT,
MUMBAI**

I graduated in physics and then did a sixth-month certificate course with International Sport Science Association. The course equips fitness trainers to effectively work with personal training clients.

I began my career by working in a gymnasium as a personal trainer. I also worked in a cruise liner to manage its gymnasium, spa and salon before taking up this job. Here, I am responsible for the entire management and operation of the spa, fitness centre, pool, tennis court and other recreational facilities. I can go on to become a spa manager and then the spa director. Since fitness has always been my passion, I enjoy every moment at work. I get very enthusiastic when I am able to plan out a personalised regime for a guest and then see the results.

Our salaries are highly competitive. An employee in an urban-style spa facility like ours would earn Rs 6 lakh a year.

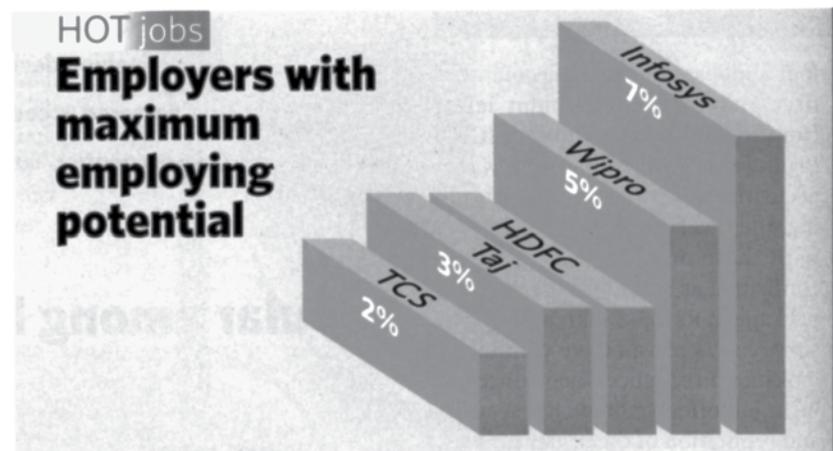
ning attitude, and polish them up,” he says. The chain is in an expansion mode, with plans to add another 1,000 stores and recruit 25,000 people before the year-end.

But in high growth areas that require special knowledge and training, recruitment is not easy. Says Kanika Vaswani, associate partner, who handles recruitment for the pharma sector of Elixir: “We have had clients with positions that remained open for six to eight months before they came to us. And even after that, the positions were filled only after a lot of change in the salary band.”

Says Rajan of Ernst & Young: “With manufacturing being outsourced to

India, most of the pharma companies are revamping their manufacturing teams and prefer to hire Indian talent for their operations abroad. The war for talent has become acute, in particular for certain roles in manufacturing and R&D. Multiple opportunities, influx of talent from diverse fields, along with big salary hikes have changed the traditional bastions of the pharma industry.”

Biocon, which recently acquired a 70 per cent stake in Axicorp, a German pharma firm, sees spectacular growth ahead. Says Ravi C. Dasgupta, its HR head: “The manpower plans are being consolidated right now as a part of our budgeting



Top most employment opportunities mentioned by employers

Figures in %

	Base	Employer	Respondants
IT/ITeS	48	Infosys	23
BPO/KPO	49	Wipro	14
Banking	30	ICICI	57
Software engineering	28	Wipro	14
Chartered accountant	24	ICICI	17
Air hostess/Cabin crew	19	Jet Airways	21
Hotel management	22	Taj	14
Advertising	16	Lintas	6
Designing	13	Maya	8
Programming	16	Wipro	13

Base: Employers who have given the list of top 10 hot jobs