

Information

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Indian talent shortage hits services market

Emma Connors

An internal investigation conducted by AMP has concluded that a doctored curriculum vitae was the cause of intense speculation that the company was preparing to send hundreds of jobs offshore.

The Indian services market is awash with false CVs and the AMP experience shows Australian companies are not immune.

The doctored Indian CV, a copy of which has been seen by *The Australian Financial Review*, features the personal details of a current AMP contractor. It then goes on to say the contractor is responsible for driving a tender for offshore services that was distributed to five major service suppliers.

KEY POINTS

- There has been speculation recently that AMP will send jobs offshore.
- The CV of an Indian IT contractor seems to have started the rumours.
- False claims are not unusual in India's red hot IT services market.

The CV said the initiative "has a strategic impact of 1300 FTEs [full-time job equivalents] including a pilot of 350 FTEs".

Earlier this year AMP was forced to repeatedly deny there were any such offshore plans. The financial services giant recently concluded the CV had been doctored by people unknown.

For Indian service suppliers, this false document is the latest in a long line of dodgy CVs.

Demand for skills by outsourcing suppliers is so high that recruitment agents in India have little time to verify that job applicants really have the skills and experience they purport to have.

Earlier this year IBM, which plans to spend \$US6 billion (\$8 billion) building up its operation in India during the next three years, fired many employees after their performance failed to live up to expectations set by false CVs.

Wipro has done the same, according to a report in *The Times of India*, and filed police complaints against several recruitment agencies for helping these employees falsify CV

information. Tata Consulting Services has opted to bring in an outside organisation that specialises in CV verification to avoid hiring fakes.

EDS, which expects to employ 20,000 people in India by the end of this year, is doing its best to avoid the problems caused by false documentation, said chairman and chief executive Michael Jordan.

"It behaves all of us in the business to do a good job of recruiting. At the lower levels in particular there is a lot of turnover," Mr Jordan said.

Sri Annaswamy, founder and director of Swamy & Associates, which advises on offshore outsourcing, said the recruitment issues are an important indicator of the feverish pace of the Indian market.

"I've had a recruitment agent say to me that he doesn't pay much attention to job descriptions. 'I just check they have a pulse and a heartbeat and I'll put them up for a job,' he told me," Mr Annaswamy said.

Unless Australian companies make the politically difficult decision to send large chunks of work offshore, or, better still, carve out a function and sell it to an external provider, they may be better off looking closer to home, Mr Annaswamy said.

"The quality of the business process outsourcing services market in India has gone down while costs have gone up, partly because demand for qualified staff is so intense," he said.

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Fast facts