

B2R TECHNOLOGIES: RURAL BPO IN UTTARAKHAND, INDIA

I. Introduction: *The BPO sector is the largest employer of youth in India today, currently employing 2.54 million professionals (NASSCOM 2011) and this number continues to grow at a fast pace. However, a majority of BPO companies are concentrated in urban areas and most of these currently face challenges of rising infrastructure & other costs coupled with high attrition. Seeing the opportunity to create an alternative delivery model, Dhiraj Dolwani (Dhiraj) and Venkatesh Iyer (Venki) decided to use their 40+ years of combined experience in the outsourcing sector to set up a rural BPO business in India that would compete with its urban counterparts by operating at a relatively lower cost and simultaneously create employment opportunities for rural youth closer to their homes. In the long run, the company aims to replicate in rural locations the onsite-offshore model implemented by the BPO industry to outsource back-office work from locations in developed Western economies to offshore tier-1 cities in India.*



The company's vision of **intertwining the business goals and social objectives** is represented by three core principles:-

- 1. Create a best-in-class BPO delivery capability:** *gold standard, best-in-class service delivery sets the foundation stone to creating a profitable rural business in Uttarakhand.*
- 2. Generate economic opportunity:** *By bringing business to the villages, B2R aims to provide educated, unemployed youth with the opportunity to earn a viable livelihood within walking distance from their homes.*
- 3. Contribute to integrated community development:** *Invest 33% of the company's profits back into the communities where it operates. This is planned using a three-pronged strategy of profit-sharing with employees, implementing short term capacity-building projects identified by the village(s), and by contributing to long term capacity-creation projects implemented through like-minded Not-for-profits organizations.*

II. People:

B2R's leadership team has a combined experience of 150 + years (in outsourcing) - the promoters have set up and managed captive & third-party BPO delivery units; the leadership team is led by function-heads who come with deep experience in different key areas of : operations & process excellence, learning & development, as well as technology & infrastructure management. In addition, there is a good mix of young, enthusiastic team leads, group leads, trainers, subject-matter-experts – some bringing the BPO business capability from their former urban experience and other young leaders with rural background who apply their understanding of the local context.

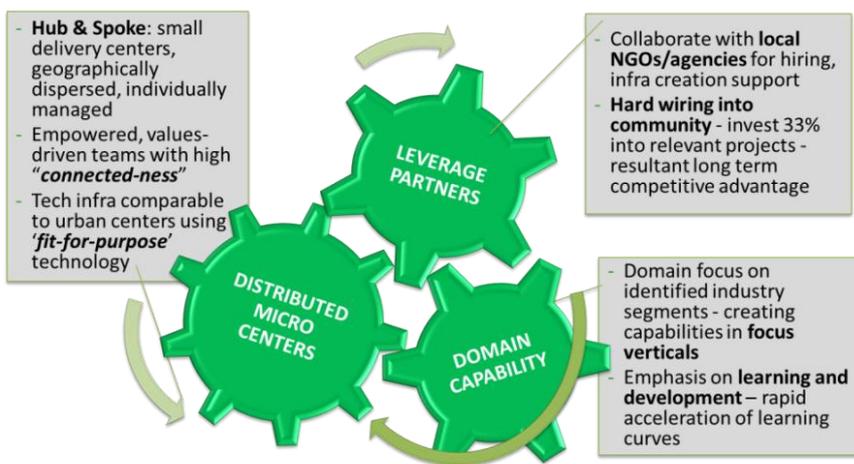
III. Customer Analysis:

MUTUAL WIN-WIN WITH OUTCOME-BASED/TRANSACTION PRICING	PUBLISHING		LEGAL		FINANCIAL SERVICES & ACCOUNTS	
	International Publishing company	eBooks creation Books converted to eBooks in various formats: Adobe, EPUB, & proprietary formats	Leading LPO in India (for US client)	Contract Abstraction Objective coding of legal documents; Review of documents, Extraction of key fields; summarization of information	India's Leading KPO (for US SME clients)	Sales, Financial data review and processing Review & conversion of daily store sales data & bank statements, data scrubbing & reconciliation.
	India's leading law publisher	Digitization and Data conversion : XML Tagging Legal judgments received in scanned form, data extracted with OCR, XML tagged as per data structure, output XML file			Large Indian Micro-Finance orgn.	New customer account setup Customer application form verification and new customer account setup
	WEB RESEARCH, DATA MINING, DATA SCRUBBING, DATA MANAGEMENT					
	Large Indian B2B portal	Product classification and mapping Categorization & mapping of products and services on online portal				
	International advertising company (for US client)	Data Extraction for Retail Extraction of information enabling analysis of purchase trends across (grocery) stores in USA				
	Advertisement analytics company	Video review : pre-analytics for audit of outdoor media Review of video content, data extraction, mapping of information for analytics				
	Leading trade marketing organization	Backend support for MIS generation Consolidate daily MIS reports from sales team in web-application; educate team to send reports in correct & timely manner				
	IT Product company (SaaS for SME clients)	Procurement back-office services Data migration for new customers, ongoing procurement data management (BPaaS)				

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IV. Business Model:

B2R Technologies is a rural Business Process Management (BPM) company operating in the villages of Uttarakhand. The company offers best-in-class outsourcing services to cater to the needs of businesses at a relatively lower cost. As a for-profit social enterprise, the company's model works such that the business benefits for customers and social value creation for the local community are tightly coupled.



V. Organization Snapshot

An extremely robust, scalable organizational model has been built over the last three years. Training, performance measurement, career development, rewards and recognition processes have been institutionalized strongly in the Company. In addition a strong emphasis on the B2R Values and inclusion has helped in engendering a vibrant and empowered workforce

Centers & People

Technology is a strategic backbone for B2R. From redundant servers to redundancy in the internet pipes to closed circuit cameras on the floor to biometric access on the one hand to smooth workflow management and tracking using technology, B2R has replicated the same technology environment available to a client in the city

Technology

Organization

Operating five centers in the villages of Simoyal, Sashbani, Chimmi, Simalkha & Jhutia in Distt. Nainital, Uttarakhand, India. 280 people as team members, team leaders, trainers and managers (58%women).

Clients

Leading national & international publishing firms, a large media company, a leading Legal Process Outsourcing company, and many other clients. Currently 16 clients

Funding

Seed funding from Promoters and professional associates. Institutional Investment - Series A by Aavishkaar (2010) and Series B - by LGT VP (2013)

Recognition

- Feb 2013 - Invited to participate in Social Enterprise Conference at **Harvard Business School**
- Nov 2012 - Chosen in "League of 10" among **NASSCOM EMERGE 50** – recognized as among "Hottest Technology Startups" in India
- Oct 2012 - Chosen among **11 Finalists from 370 international** applicants in **SAP Ashoka Changemakers** "The Power of Small" Competition
- Feb 2012 - Honored for **outstanding contribution in Social Entrepreneurship by National HRD Network** at Northern Region HR Summit at Lucknow
- Feb 2012 - Shortlisted among the 5 finalists for the **Intellicap Annual Sankalp Forum 2012** under Technology for Development Category
- Dec 2011 - **Winner of Villgro-Wantrapreneur Social Business Plan Competition 2011** in the Early Growth Stage category
- Dec 2010 - Won **TiE Lumis Excellence Award** - assessed by an independent eminent jury based on a detailed examination of the business model

VI. The Social Dimension of the Project...a quiet revolution in the hills

- Economic Return:** The most significant positive impact of B2R is the economic return accruing to the youth as a result of gaining employment in the company. In a region where the average household income ranges from Rs 1000 (\$15) to Rs 2000 (\$35) per month, youth employed at B2R earn Rs. 5,000 (\$85) to 6,000 (\$100) p.m.
- Reversing local migration:** Another noteworthy trend is reverse local migration. Prior to joining B2R, financial pressures coupled with the lure of corporate life attracted several young men to neighboring towns and cities even though these were typically low paying, dissatisfactory jobs. These youngsters now see a reason to stay back in their villages and even return from nearby towns, thanks to the opportunities available at B2R.
- Shifting of girls' marriage age:** A clear shift in the marriage ages of the girls employed at B2R can be seen. The job at B2R has enabled these girls to be seen as valuable economic contributors to the family.
- Transforming Lives:** Several employees have expressed how their lives have transformed for the better since they began working at B2R. For some, simply the routine of coming to work every day has made them more disciplined, responsible individuals who now command greater respect at home.
- Local Economic Development:** B2R is also spurring local economic development in the villages where its centers are located. The company's secondary research estimates that for every one person directly impacted by employment, at least four others are benefiting indirectly.

- Community Development:** B2R is continuously exploring opportunities to leverage its expertise and infrastructure to engage in social and community development initiatives.

Towards this end, the company has formed Village Advisory Committees with representation from the community, partner NGO (CHIRAG) & B2R representatives, who are involved in various community development activities: from setting up community resource centers (library, internet kiosks), supporting garbage-cleaning drives to practice & educate on cleanliness, recycling and hygiene, to co-organizing a half-marathon to encourage physical activity & sports in rural youth.

