

Global Opportunities

An Interview with Saurabh Ranjan,
Managing Director-Global Operations, UST Global

EDITORS' NOTE Saurabh Ranjan has more than 22 years of extensive experience in Human Resource (HR) Management, international/Asia staffing, resource management, and HRIS project management. Prior to joining UST Global, Ranjan spent more than 12 years working for large IT product and service organizations like Cadence, Keane, and Covansys, where he developed organizational capabilities by implementing recruiter skills training, consistent regional processes, systems updates, and indicator reports. He was also part of multiple development programs such as workforce analysis, recruitment strategy, university relations, and employer branding.



Saurabh Ranjan

How do you define your role and focus your efforts?

Three years ago, India and China were known as the place for labor arbitrage. We could see a decline coming so we began to evaluate what we could do in other regions to create value while giving people jobs to sustain families and communities.

We looked at different areas and began to wonder if we couldn't develop a model in Latin America. We did some research and found out this is one of the most promising and growing regions.

We contacted Mexico's President, Vicente Fox, and presented our concept for creating jobs through technology and training. We believed this could eventually create a stronger social environment and stem violence, and that Mexico could become the second-largest IT hub in the Western Hemisphere.

We are now experiencing great success with this effort and are being recognized by the government of Mexico.

We took this same model to countries like Spain, the UAE, and Brazil where it has been well supported because, at day's end, we are change agents creating local jobs. We're not exporting them to China or India, but are helping fuel the economy of that country.

In return, we have received many helpful concessions that have fostered opportunities to invest in their technology, in their

culture, and their land. So everything they can do jointly with us, they are willing to do because we are taking the risk and hiring people on our dime.

We have also brought the same concept back to America, where we will hire 100 minority women in each of many inner cities.

Our strategy is to increase our global footprint to give our customers an option beyond just in India, Manila, and Asia, but also in Mexico, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

Today, we are poised to take any complex business and deliver it from any of our centers across the world.

Does your process vary by country or does it work across different cultures?

We're replicating jobs, technology, training, and peace in any country in which we gain access, because every country on every continent is trying to harness the knowledge economy. Technology does not require that you have an office before you begin. Electronically, you can start remotely anywhere in the world; you just need to decide on your name, your brand, and what you want to do.

Are there certain countries that you consider key priorities?

Most countries are finding it difficult to create jobs and keep their young people in the country. However, we are choosing to go where there is enough need and where we think UST Global can scale.

We are locating to countries where there are employment issues but where there are also good schools, good colleges, good careers, and good people; we have the data that allows us to evaluate that. We're also looking to go to countries where people are calling on us to help them because their youth are struggling, such as Spain and Greece.

Greece's Prime Minister Samaras called us but we could not do anything because they are funded by the EU, which is not willing to fund anything at this point. But typically, whenever a country calls us, we pay attention.

What is your process for evaluating whether your investment in a country will be viable?

In evaluating new countries to approach, we try to first check our U.S. market customers. UST Global today has 125 global Fortune 500 customers. Most of the companies we work with in the Fortune 500 space are global.

For example, when we were looking to open in Spain, we went to Costco and asked what interest they might have. They were extremely excited and told us that, if we open in Spain, they would certainly give us business and guided us on the specific interests they had.

At the same time, we went to another financial client and told them we were looking at opening in Costa Rica. Likewise, they indicated that they wanted to do business with us there.

So our first move is to check with current customers; then we evaluate the research that has been done by third-party sourcing companies and what they are saying about those marketplaces. This data gives us the confidence that if we move forward, we will have enough business to support our investment.

The third thing is, we find out from the local communities what kind of support and business they give if we come there.

We try to apply the 1/3-1/3-1/3 mechanics: so one-third of the business comes from America; one-third of the business comes from the local country; and one-third of the business comes from the rest of the world.

So we definitely do the research before we invest and make commitments.

How critical is corporate responsibility to the company and to bringing in talent?

It has been a priority in our culture from day one to give back and to work for a bigger cause. When Sajan (Pillai) founded the company, we established these principles in the company in India. We gave back to women who were not educated and provided health care to those who could not buy benefits as a part of our CSR program.

It's an integral part of the soul of the company. We are here to transform lives and to give people the power to change their futures. Technology is the vehicle we utilize to do that. We realize that, by doing that, we are changing lives of people and we brought that into the central theme of the company, that we will train people for IT jobs so they can get higher pay to bring more sustainability to community and family. ●