

# InterraIT: The Trusted Name in ICT

India is an IT powerhouse. Today, this has become a cliché. The expansion of the sector has been truly mind-boggling in the last decade or so. Hence, it is no surprise that multinational investors are drawn to the country like moths to a flame.

The US-headquartered IT services and solutions company, Interra IT, realized India's potential at the opportune time. Founded in 1996, the company has been able to scale many new heights. However, not sitting pretty over the laurels, Interra IT has been showing a fairly impressive growth rate each

recipient of Corporate & HR Excellence Awards from one of India's leading universities.

Incorporated in 1995-96 by two extremely talented people, Dr. Ajoy K. Bose (Chairman of Interra IT) and Mr. Asoke K. Laha (President, MD & CTO), Interra IT has emerged as one of the leading IT consulting and service provider companies. It follows a Global Delivery Model to provide information technology consulting services to *Fortune 500* companies, regardless of where its clients' facilities are geographically located. Interra IT is also one of the largest

has two state-of-the-art development centres in Noida and Kolkata (India), which are the focal points for servicing its customers across the globe in North America, Europe and Asia.

What makes Interra IT a cut above the rest? Mr. Laha attributes this increase in the company's fortunes to the quality of its people and the management. "A quality that is nurtured on a continuous basis by the innovative HR practices and an open and dynamic environment. Our management style is employee-friendly: being trained in the US and worked in the US most of my adult life, I tried to adopt the best practices of US management in InterraIT," adds Mr. Laha.

"I think the critical aspect that helps us be rated highly is the quality and value of the deliverables. It is a direct outcome of the quality of the people within the company. I would say the innovative HR policies, our inherent belief in quality service and an environment that allows people to grow and mature are the factors that have helped Interra IT achieve the high ratings. Meeting the deadline, and exceeding the customer satisfaction are our DNA," says Laha.

Interra IT offers a comprehensive portfolio of IT and IT-enabled services with a distinct focus on providing product engineering services, ERP solutions and web-based custom enterprise applications. Interra IT has its strength in projects in the areas of Enterprise Application Integration, Mobile technologies, Mainframe technologies, Web Services & SOA and other web-based applications, Process integration, using both Java and Microsoft technologies.

The company's service portfolio includes Business Consulting, Product Engineering Services, Custom Application Management, QA Testing Services and Package Solutions Management. Interra IT also provides end-to-end solutions in certain technologies, which include Enterprise Application Integration, Mobile Solutions, Open Source Engineering, Identity Management, Remote Database Management and Web Services.

Having worked with customers from varied industries in the last eleven years, the company

consciously aligned itself with specific industry verticals, which include Telecom, Retail, Iron & Steel, Mining, Financial Services, Logistics and Independent Software Vendors (ISVs). This has helped Interra IT in developing tremendous domain knowledge and subject-matter expertise, resulting in delivering innovative solutions and enhanced business value for its customers.

"Interra IT has developed innovative service-oriented solutions that enable its customers to have real-time, end-to-end visibility and streamlined control over business functions and improve their performance. Interra IT specializes in services for ISV and Retail & Logistics verticals. We provide SaaS and licence-based outsourced product development solutions that leverage innovative frameworks and technologies such as open source, web 2.0, and Mobile," says Mr. Laha.

Quality has never been soft-pedalled at Interra IT. "As a matter of fact, it has been a way of life at Interra IT; it permeates to all levels within the company. We went in for ISO 9001:2000 and CMM at a time when we were doing quite well without it, but I felt it important to ensure the quality within the company," says Mr. Laha. The company has an independent quality group whose only job is to ensure the quality across the company and projects. "As for security, we have been handling extremely sensitive clients including some in the healthcare or IP-driven product development companies. To ensure their security, we have established stringent security measures that have enabled us to service our clients with the utmost of quality and ensure security for them," he adds.

No description of Interra IT will be complete without referring to their HR practice.

"The core value of Interra IT is dedication to the highest quality of customer service. To do this, it is essential to ensure that you form an organization that is in complete agreement on the philosophies, goals, values, strategies and customer deliverables. It has to be a way of life for them – the people who are accountable – individually and collectively and this is what our HR practices strive to do," says Mr.



**Asoke K. Laha**  
President & MD, Interra IT

year for the last three years,

With some innovative best practices like Individualized Corporation and flexi-timing, Interra IT has shot to fame as one of the best places to work in. In fact, Interra IT has so many other credentials to hog the limelight of the media, including Mr. Asoke K. Laha, President, MD & CTO of the company, being conferred with the IES Udvog Ratan award and

privately-held offshore consulting companies. Headquartered in San Jose (California), Interra IT has sales offices in San Jose (CA), Fullerton (CA), Roseville (CA), Sacramento (CA), Irvine (CA), Omaha (NE), Addison (TX), Chicago (IL), Princeton (NJ), Bellevue (WA) and Columbia (MD). The company has also its presence in Canada, United Kingdom and Japan. The company

Laha. "With this in mind, we introduced the concept of an 'Individualized Corporation' that empowers employees to take decisions and risks at work and creates a sense of ownership. Each unit working as an Individualized Corporation and at the same time working in alignment with the company's goals," explains Mr. Laha.

Interra IT has a "hire for attitude" policy – the aim to find and keep people who are fit. The philosophy, in short, is "Hire for attitude and Train for skills". "There is also a lot of focus on people development with stress on defining and rationalizing roles within the company and competency development. A number of internal as well as external training programmes are organized to enable employees to constantly upgrade their skill sets," says Mr. Laha.

With the Global Delivery model involving a lot of cross-cultural interaction, the employees are also vigorously trained on the behavioural aspects to better understand and interact with the clients. An in-house training resource pool works constantly at enhancing in-house technical skills and this result is a well-rounded techno-savvy team. Based on the feedback of the employees, the company set up a Toast Masters Club to enhance communications skills across the organization. "We operate on the premise that one of the best ways of developing people is by putting them at jobs that stretch them, while offering support and helping them succeed. Tough deadlines and a dynamic environment ensure that this happens," adds Mr. Laha.

The company also has an exhaustive Talent Review system. The managers are encouraged to work as mentors and coaches – identifying the—"Star performers" putting them on the fast track and

training the others. The Pay-for-Performance philosophy further enhances this system by being a strong motivator for them to perform.

Finally, to further the feeling of ownership among the employees, the top management holds a regular quarterly "Communications" meeting to discuss the achievements and planned movement of the company. This is the forum where the employees come forward and participate in deciding the direction of the company. "We believe that with a motivated and flexible work group of employees, the sky is the limit. In addition, the Managing Director has a monthly lunch meeting with randomly selected twelve people," maintains Mr. Laha.

Adhering to the principle of quality of services and timely delivery, Interra IT has been able to successfully retain many global clients in the last eleven years. The biggest credential of Interra IT is that about three-fourths of their revenue comes from repeat business from existing customers demonstrating high customer satisfaction

Asked about why India is so special to the company even though they do not have many clients here, Mr. Laha says, "Interra IT believes that India will be a super economic power within next twenty years, along with USA and China. The Indian market is, therefore, very important to InterraIT, and we are planning to have a significant share of Indian business. The Indian IT market is growing at more than 40 per cent year-on-year. Adoption of IT services has recently increased both at the infrastructure as well as at e-governance level. And we have created a separate focus group that is closely monitoring and bidding for various projects for government and PSU sectors to make our

presence felt in e-Governance space. Interra IT's Kolkata location has been dedicated to cater to requirements related to all domestic projects."

He adds, "Both our development centres – Noida and Kolkata – work independently as well as in collaboration to provide our entire range of services and solutions. Our Noida centre, which is the bigger of the two centres in terms of number of engineers, serves as the centre of excellence in areas such as EAI, Retail practice, Mobile Technologies and Mainframe Competency. The Kolkata centre not only provides extended support to these initiatives, but also leads the way in some other initiatives in industries such as Steel, Power & Coal, and Process Control. We employ 500-plus talented manpower."

The global economy has grown at a rapid pace and the IT consulting and services market has expanded horizontally and vertically in various disperse geographies. So, in order to cope with the expansion, the company is also expanding its global presence

in various geographies as well. Apart from increasing network of sales offices in the US, Interra IT has started servicing the European market aggressively. Mr. Laha adds, "In the Indian operations also, we have recently added to our capacity significantly in the Noida centre by acquiring new office space. There are also plans to expand to other locations in India for which we would explore smaller towns, especially in Eastern India."

#### Finally...

With so much of goodwill in the market, 2007-08 is going to put Interra IT on the high growth track. As per the company sources, the company targets to achieve a baseline growth of over 50 per cent in revenues, over the last fiscal 2006-2007. This is really optimistic, given the fact that the dollar rate is sliding and competition is very, very high. However, with the able leader like Mr. Asoke K. Laha, Interra IT will probably make it possible. Towards this, the company has already started optimizing its resource utilization and T&D initiatives to have a favourable experience mix in its projects. ■

