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IN MY OPINION

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EQUINITI INDIA:

SIMPLIFYING COMPLEXITIES
WITH THE JUXTAPOSITION
OF RICH HERITAGE
& INNOVATION

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Managing Director



COVER STORY

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EQUINITI INDIA

SIMPLIFYING COMPLEXITIES WITH THE JUXTAPOSITION OF RICH HERITAGE & INNOVATION

By Susila Govindaraj

Equiniti Group, the acknowledged leaders in pension services & share registration market in UK with 3500 employees spread across 29 offices, has been enjoying an enviable client base encompassing nearly half the FTSE 100. To walk the talk of its mission statement – ‘making complex things simple’, Equiniti decided to automate its manual functional testing. Hence, it turned to its offshore arm Equiniti India (EQI), which has been adeptly meeting all of its IT & BPO (or Operations as EQI refers it) needs. EQI automated most of Equiniti’s regression test packs using a robust test automation framework that was completely conceptualized and built by EQI’s QA team based on industry best practices and tweaked it appropriately to suit the needs and nature of the group’s QA processes and applications.

With the strong foundation on test methodology and framework, EQI’s QA teams standardized and harmonized test processes to the best possible extent across business units. The company has given considerable emphasis on ease of maintenance and the framework has been a great success in reducing test execution effort up to 58 percent coupled with crunched test schedule. Showered with unanimous applause from senior management & product stakeholders, EQI’s QA team has been maintaining the test packs in an on-going basis with the new enhancements on application releases and based on defect trends in the core application. No wonder, the company has rapidly ascended into the biggest business amongst Equiniti within just two years of its inception and naturally as an integral part of the group.

Ever Expanding Forte

Prior to 2014, Equiniti had a small setup of IT services in Chennai and had outsourced certain IT & BPO services to third party vendors. In 2014, the outsourced BPO activities and IT services were combined into native services of Equiniti India. With close to 100 staff, EQI

opened for business. These services witnessed impressive performance, fast forward to today, 250+ BPO & IT activities later, the company stands tall with 800+ employees who are accomplishing nearly four million transactions annually. "EQI is not just about financial savings, it is a Centre of Excellence that leverages innovation, transformation & automation to deliver contemporary solutions that expertly caters to client's requirement," explains Sam Halford, Managing Director, Equiniti India.

"Equiniti Group comes from a long heritage that had affiliations; our Pension Services, for instance, goes back to 1836," Sam further adds. Inculcating the group's DNA & values in its culture & business practices has empowered the company to successfully accomplish numerous complex projects, wherein EQI redefined legacy technologies and introduced them to clients in a simpler way. Parlaying such strong expertise to newer generations and blending it with right amount of cutting-edge technical prowess has made EQI's current staff knowledge second to none. EQI team processes volume heavy and complex transactions to meet client SLA in terms of quality and timeline.

The company has equally partitioned itself into IT and Operations teams who work hand-in-hand. While the IT team provides application development, application support, software quality assurance and IT infrastructure management, its Operations team renders backend operations support for Registration Services, Employee Services, Investment Services, Pension Solutions, and HR & Payroll Services. "We deliver the usual services, but with a bit more attitude," proclaims Sam.

The strong skillset of EQI's Marketing & Sales Support team across various departments (Branding, Recruitment Adverts, Business Presen-

Key Management:

Sam Halford, Managing Director

Sam has spent significant years working in both the UK Public and Private Sectors. Prior to joining Equiniti, he operated as an International Business Consultant supporting major programmes in numerous countries. He joined Equiniti around nine years ago and has held a number of key management positions. He was Group Operations Director prior to his current role as Managing Director of Equiniti India.

India Headquarter: Chennai

Offerings:

- **IT Services:** Application Development & Maintenance, Quality Assurance, Monitoring, Backup & Restore Services, Incident Management, Third Party Management, Application Deployment, Database Administration, IT Service Management, Change Management, Configuration Management, Release Management, Network Administration, Service Desk, Server Administration, Implementation & Configuration, PMO And Information Security
- **Marketing & Sales Support:** Branding, Recruitment Adverts, Business Presentations, Digital Marketing, Internal & External Communications and Research
- **Finance Shared Services:** Procure to Pay, Order to Cash, Record to Report and Master Data Management
- **Registration Services:** Non Carrier Allotment Team, File Loading Team, Client Reporting Team, SAYE & SIP Transactions Team and SAYE & SIP Correspondence
- **Shareholder Services:** Share Register Maintenance, Transfers & Letter of Indemnity, Estate Registration, Re-Issue Party Payments and General Correspondence
- **Investment Services:** Postal Share Dealing and Contact Centre
- **Pension Solutions:** Amend Scheme Benefits, Death Registration, Enquiry, Member Record Update and Payroll & Payments
- **Central Reconciliation Team:** Queries (Payment queries - over 5k), New Funding, Formal Recs (Non-Client Money Formal Reconciliations), Month End Recs, Verification (Verification of Non-Client Money Formal, Reconciliations), PO/Matching, Client Money Formal Recs, Client Money Month End Recs and Daily Calc
- **HR Payroll:** BACS UPDATE, Full Calc, Validation Report, Final Report, All Plants Reports Suite, Tax Codes, Starter, One Off Payment, Variable Import, End of Period and Leaver

tations, Digital Marketing, and Internal & External Communications and Research) is applied in creation of databases, development of sales literature, formatting & styling presentation, website maintenance and social media updates. The company's People Services team delivers

techno-driven recruitment services, HR & Payroll, Data administration, Reporting and Advisory services for all Equiniti employees. EQI's Finance Transformation Project aims to establish a new blueprint for the finance function, deliver effective end-to-end processes that suits orga-

nization's requirements by delivering the right balance of quality & value.

The Innovation Lab & the Innovative Minds

EQI has established an innovation lab last year to exploit technology to its fullest, where its employees are encouraged to unlearn their past learning and start afresh. "We invest in innovation to drive towards automation & transformation. Each member of our staff is encouraged to use the lab to experiment their ideas & concepts. Already, we're making advancements," remarks an impassioned Sam.

Work Life & Culture

EQI ensures that its people have enough time-off to recover from the working environment, because having such good work-life balance also helps them to work with a renewed energy. The rationale draws us back to the company's staff-optimized work environment, wherein employees are allowed to work from home as well as in EQI's flexible milieu in UK hours or Indian hours wherever it is possible. There are career progression charts for IT & Operations staff and for further growth opportunities, the company also moves people from IT to operations & vice versa, as Internal Job Postings.

While the company has implemented a carefully built transition program in UK, the Chennai team also frequently undergoes a complete training program, including several transition activities for days (sometimes weeks) until they are ready to efficiently work in harmony with their UK colleagues. Trained by SMEs from India & UK, Operations staff go through a structured certification process which ensures that each user is competent enough to process the activity efficiently and effectively. EQI constantly hones its



people's English fluency and keeps them abreast with latest technologies & trends and industry needs through development programs, role based & skill based training programs as well as through its magazine/newsletter – The EQI, which publishes information about happening technologies. "I try to ascertain that staff in India are able to achieve the objective within the budget we have available to develop that certain service program," asserts Sam. He adds, "I want to ensure that every member of our staff is included in the innovation lab and ameliorate it with their creative ideas & concepts. The idea is to make EQI as the biggest business power in the whole group – even bigger".

Fervent to Grow

Highlighting on the fervent marketing strategies that have contributed to EQI's meteoric rise, Sriram Rajaraman, Head of Marketing & Sales Support, EQI, responds, "Our brand building activities include advertising through print, social media marketing (LinkedIn & Twitter), participating in networking events

conducted by British High Commission in India and also establishing partnership with British government bodies like UKIBC".

With the growth pace that India has currently picked up, Sam believes that it is the right time to be present here and will be even better in the coming years. Till date, the company has been serving the Equiniti Group, but now looks to bank on this growth and tap into the Indian market soon. "We plan to enter into the Indian market with more services that are currently provided to the UK market by acquiring or establishing partnership with a suitable Indian organization in the next three years," adjoins Sam. EQI anticipates that its headcount may swell to 1500 by 2019. Resolute to exploit new technologies to the fullest, the company is geared up to launch few mobile applications and technologies. Accomplishing more than just BPO activities, EQI aims to be perceived as a fin-tech company, rather than as an operational BPO tax server. Judging by its passion, the day doesn't seem too far when its aspirations will come true. 