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Title : Even small Indian IT companies have Apple, Airbus in their fold

Author : Shilpa Phadnis & Sujit John

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Exilant Technologies is housed in a nondescript building on Richmond Road in Bengaluru. The ordinary facade masks the critical work that goes on inside for high-profile clients like Apple.

Exilant, founded in 2004, has over 1,300 employees and offices in Cupertino, New York, London and Singapore. The company declines to talk about its work, but US-based HfS Research says Exilant has implemented business intelligence solutions for Apple's channel sales, marketing campaigns, customer support and iTunes. It does application development and maintenance for Apple's channel applications. And it offers ERP services to Apple on SAP's business intelligence platform.

Smaller Indian IT services companies tend to get overshadowed by their larger counterparts. But many are doing vital work for some of the biggest companies around the world. And they are able to win customer confidence because of their concentration on select areas.

“The secret sauce of success of small service providers is their focused expertise and relationship management,” says Pareekh Jain, research director in HfS Research. Peter Bendor Samuel, CEO of Everest Research, says there tends to be a more intimate relationship with smaller vendors. “Often the CEO of these firms will be involved and the customer gets more attention,” he says.

Jain points out that RS Software is focused on payments, Fractal on analytics, Happiest Minds on digital, Quest Global on engineering services, and Enzen on utilities.

Ashok Soota's Happiest Minds, founded in 2011, offers digital transformation-related IT services for US retailer Sears. HfS Research finds that Happiest Minds offers Sears services related to omnichannel experience management, store operations & assisted selling (digital signage, electronic shelf edge labels, e-catalogue, push-totalk, mobile point-of-service), and insights & data monetization.

Salil Godika, chief strategy & marketing officer in Happiest Minds, says the company's “laser sharp focus on leveraging SMAC (social, mobile, analytics, cloud) to drive digital transformation with a more consultative approach” has helped.

Quest manages manufacturing non-conformances for Airbus and other aerospace customers. A non-conformance occurs when a component's characteristics (dimensions, material specifications) deviates from the requirements of the engineering drawing. If a nonconformance is identified, then a decision is taken on whether it is acceptable or, if it is not, then what modifications are required.

Raman Sumbramanian, senior VP for strategic initiatives at Quest, declines to name customers, but says the company started by offering design and stress investigation services. “This enabled us to gain product and design process knowledge. Today, we approve the design solutions and manage a significant portion of the process which includes segregation, investigation, approval and analytics of non-conformances,” he says.

Bendor-Samuel says smaller IT firms also often enjoy the advantage of lower people churn and availability of more senior resources. “The big firms deploy a leveraged factory model in which they push work down to the junior resources. So clients often feel like they are constantly training new teams and they are not getting the benefit of the learning curve,” he says.

Jain says the challenge and opportunity for smaller firms is to scale their expertise across other clients and “evolve themselves into the likes of TCS, Infosys or Wipro.”

PRECIOUS ENGAGEMENTS



Customer	Indian service provider	Details
APPLE	Exilant	Business intelligence services related to Apple's channel sales, marketing campaign, customer support & iTunes
VISA	RS Software	Data warehousing and business intelligence projects
P&G	Fractal Analytics	Demand forecasting for multiple categories
SEARS	Happiest Minds	Managed digital transformation initiatives for Sears such as omni-channel experience management
AIRBUS	Quest Global	Engineering design and analysis of wings and pylons
UK POWER	Enzen Global	IT transition, stabilization, and networks transformation

Source: HFS Research