

## Business Line

Date:02/11/2009 URL:

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### [Back](#) **Wooring talent with paid internships**

*TARGET GERMANY.*

*Adith Charlie*

Mumbai, Nov. 1

Indian IT companies are wooing talent from German, Swiss and Austrian universities to work here as paid interns. This is part of a larger game plan to turn the tide in the traditionally unfavourable German market which is also the second largest market for software services in Europe.

Infosys, Wipro, Cognizant and Mindtree are among the nine companies that have taken the lead by joining hands with the Frankfurt-based Vibe Internships to create 50 paid internship positions in Mumbai, Chennai and Bangalore, said Dr Karl Kurbel, Project Supervisor of Vibe Internships and head of the Business Informatics Chair at the European University Viadrina (EUV).

#### Stipend

The interns will be paid between €150 and €600 (approximately Rs 10,000-Rs 40,000) a month for three- to six-month projects for business development, test automation, software development etc, Dr Kurbel told *Business Line* on telephone from Frankfurt. (Interestingly, Vibe Internships was established as a students' project at the EUV.)

Traditionally, European countries have not been too gung-ho about sending IT jobs overseas largely because of cultural issues and linguistic barriers. Unlike in the US, where expatriate Indians run the client-facing business, companies in Germany prefer to deal with local talent.

As of 2008, the market for IT services in Germany was €33 billion. While the case for offshore services is slowly registering in the minds of German managers, only a very few really believe it is a strategic imperative.

This programme could help clear misgiving about offshoring causing job losses, as the participating offshore firms will create a significant number of new employment opportunities for top talent in Germany, said Mr Peter Schumacher, President and CEO of Value Leadership Group, a strategic management consultancy firm, which advised Prof Kurbel and Vibe Internships for the initiative.

#### Image building

Indian IT firms are evaluating this initiative in the context of their market development and

brand building strategy for Germany.

“As part of our brand building initiatives in Germany, we will get these interns to work out of our centres here as a result of which they will gain considerable exposure to the global delivery model. Our endeavour is to hire the best of these interns for client facing operations in Germany,” said Ms Nandita Gurjar, Senior Vice-President and Global HR Head, Infosys Technologies.

Mr Puneet Jetli, Head, People Function, at the Bangalore-based Mindtree Consulting, said the company was still working out the stipend details for the initiative. “We will try to structure the stipend in such a way that the interns can help recover the costs as well as see a bit of India,” he said.

Cognizant, Hexaware and L&T Infotech have also agreed to participate in this internship programme.

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