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IT TRAINING

From Finishing School to Pubs

East-based Globsyn adds KnowledgePubs to its TechnoCampus offering, targeting the mass market

The demand continues. Last year, India's IT training and education market grew 33%, crossing Rs 1,500 crore. But half that figure came from the top two players, and 70% from the top ten.

The Calcutta-based Globsyn Technologies is not in that top 10. Promoted by Bikram Dasgupta, former chief of PCL, the three-year-old training and software company now ranks #17, with Rs 7.5 crore in IT training revenues last year. While IT education and training constituted about 60%, software exports accounted for the

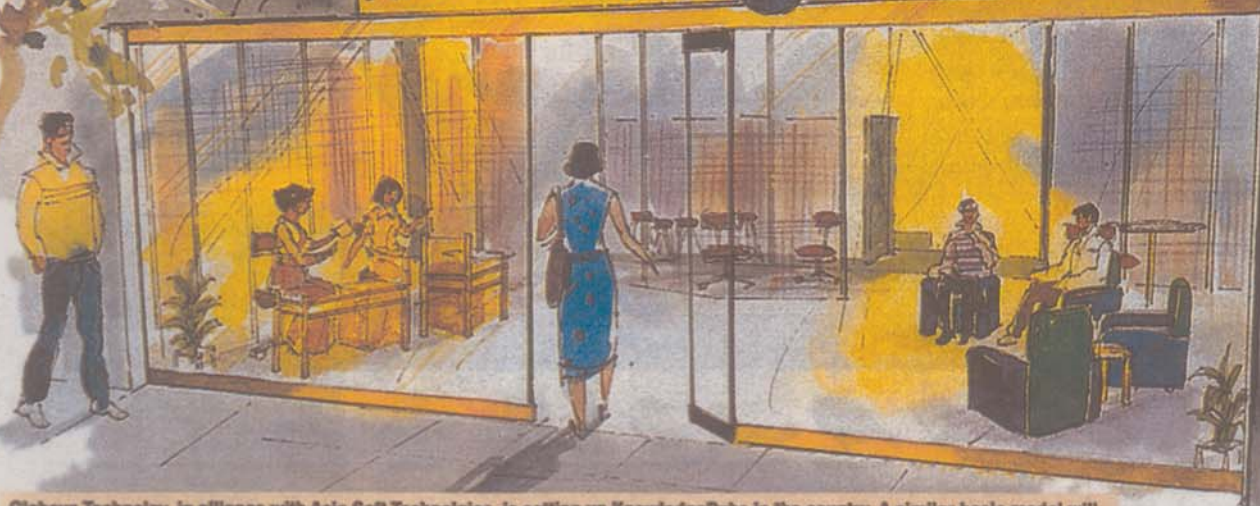
balance. In the IT education and training segment, it grew at over a 40%, thanks partly to its focus on a gap it identified: software "finishing schools" that combine business education with focused software area skills.

Now, in addition to partnering with the West Bengal government for an IIIT (Indian Institute of Information Technology), it's eyeing bigger volumes, with "KnowledgePubs". The objective: to cater to more segments of the market, from first-time learners to students, with an eye on serious IT careers, scaling up to professionals seeking specific skill updates.

Pubs for all

Globsyn's core product stays at the high end of the spectrum: TechnoCampus, its finishing-school concept blending software training with business education. The programs have built in managerial modules to equip software professionals with business savvy. Currently, Globsyn has seven TechnoCampus Centers. For the IIIT, it's a corporate partner of the West Bengal government, and will provide IT training at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels as part of the university system in eastern India. The IIIT campus located at Globsyn's Technocampus in Salt Lake, Calcutta, has commenced two courses—Bachelor's Diploma in IT and Master's

Knowledge Pub



Globsyn Technology, in alliance with Asia Soft Technologies, is setting up KnowledgePubs in the country. A similar basic model will be followed throughout the country and it will house three laboratories enabling the three modes of IT learning—Web-based,

Diploma in IT—from August 2000.

At the lower end but with an eye at the mass market are the KnowledgePubs. These 'Pubs' or centers are providing all the three modes of IT skills instruction under one roof—instructor-led, computer-based and Web-Based training. The focus is shifting from technical certification courses to overall IT and professional skills. Launched in August this year, the company intends to set up about 100 KnowledgePubs across the country over the next two years with an estimated investment outlay of Rs 30 crore. GlobSyn chairman Bikram Dasgupta says that the KnowledgePubs are designed as all-age learning centers where almost the entire family can find a suitable course of study—from the first-time learners to students with an eye on serious IT careers. They are positioned as an "integrated learning concept blending



TechnoCampus is GlobSyn's flagship IT training product, now operational in six Indian cities—Calcutta, New Delhi, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar and Mumbai

all the three aspects of IT training". Conventional IT training centers offer only instructor-led training, which is today failing to keep pace with the frenetic pace of technology changes and the consequent need for rapid changes in curricula and instructor skills. The other extreme, the Web-based model also leaves the student groping for guidance, and is also severely limited by low Internet penetration under 2% today.

Will it succeed?

The company's software exports business seems to be growing faster and with higher margins. In this business, one is not sure about the long-term

focus of the company. So while in 1999-00, IT education and training accounted for over 60% of revenues, its overall 85% growth was primarily from software business, about 380%. So in the long term, whether the company will focus on the high-margin software business or the low-margin, heavy-competition IT training and education business remains to be seen. Also, unlike the TechnoCampus finishing schools concept, the KnowledgePubs do not appear to be bringing much that is new in the market. The "pubs" description may even be seen as frivolous by some, or confused with cyber cafes. GlobSyn believes the KnowledgePubs will bring it volumes, and big revenues. But here in the mass market, it will compete with the heavyweights: NIIT, Aptech, SSI and LCC. Sure, the market demand is huge, but in the long run, GlobSyn's success in the mass training market will depend on its ability to develop the brand to a bigger extent than it has managed with TechnoCampus—and to reach an audience many times bigger.

At #17 among training vendors with revenues under Rs 8 crore, GlobSyn hopes to move up the ladder with its KnowledgePubs, taking on some heavyweights in the process

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Top Training Vendors

Rank	Vendor	Revenue (Rs lakh)
1,2	Aptech*, NIIT	71,485
3	SSI	13,565
4	LCC Infotech	4,921
5	Tata Infotech	4,098
6	CMC	4,018
7	Datapro	3,763
8	STG International	2,743
9	CMS	2,190
10	IIHT	2,112
11	Boston Education	2,004
12	Jetking School	1,857
13	IBM Global Services	1,781
14	IIS Infotech	1,504
15	SQL Star International	1,329
16	Edutech, Informatics	1,100
17	GlobSyn Technologies	743
18	CADD Center	382
19	Gebbs Infotech	203
20	Maars Software	190

*Includes Aptech, Asset International, Arena Multimedia