

# United Colours Of TCS

TCS' move to expand its talent pool with foreign hires and set up more near-shore centres is paying rich dividends

**KUNAL N TALGERI**

**I**N MARCH 2006, 24-year-old Gareth Williams of New Zealand was at the threshold of an Asia-Pacific position at Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). He had come to India (as one among 50 such overseas students) for a year-long training effort that had been put in place to instil project experience among its new hires.

Although the ACE career development initiative by TCS was intensive, for Williams, and the other potential recruits, it was not all hard work during the year. For a few days, he, along with seven other overseas students, found time to rehearse a dance number set to a popular Bollywood tune. They were preparing for a day-long event in Mumbai that would bring together Indian recruits and the 50 ACE associates from 23 countries. Global Village (as TCS' annual event would become known) was to feature stalls for each country (with its cuisine, and manned by students from those regions) and stage presentations, apart from fun and dance.

The stalls were also set up to inform IT professionals of opportunities in regions where they could be deputed. "It was the opportunity to work alongside team-mates, which I wouldn't normally have found myself with on a project, that was both fun and challenging," says Williams, who now works with TCS Australia. Over the years, the event has morphed into

a showcase of the Rs 19,000 crore IT major's overseas talent pool, and the symbol of a decision TCS took in 2002 to use the best talent of a region to cater to its clients. The move is now paying rich dividends.

**Big Idea**

For TCS, the idea of near-shoring occurred as early as 2001. It was a time when IT companies were developing their off-shoring models and multinational firms were ramping up their India centres. Although 9/11 caused TCS to put its global talent search on the backburner, its resolve to expand globally was strong. "A company that has a global presence will imminently de-risk from any one region," says S Padmanabhan, Executive Director for Human Resources at TCS.

There were other, more important, triggers. By mid-2002, companies in North America were looking at alternative markets that were situated closer to their time zones and methods of functioning. This turned out to be the fundamental driver of TCS' expansion into Latin America.

By April 2003, TCS had acquired third-party interests in TCS America and its European subsidiaries to make them wholly-owned. Two years later, the company incorporated centres in 11 new countries, including Uruguay, Argentina and Spain.

Having done that, TCS asked itself

**PEOPLE MIX:** TCS employs 108,000 from 67 countries, 9,000 of them overseas

