

Scorching pace of growth in e-commerce and digital space fuels hiring across consultancies

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MUMBAI: The scorching pace of growth in the e-commerce and digital space is fuelling a spate of hiring across consultancies as they rapidly build up their digital practices to ride the wave.

The Boston Consulting Group (BCG), PwC, EY, Deloitte and KPMG are among those doubling and even trebling team sizes across levels. Senior talent in the space is highly in demand; while many have already switched jobs in the past few months; more movements are on the cards. "As organisations across sectors embrace digital and mobile, most leading management consulting firms have set up digital as a specialist practice," says Anuj Roy, partner, digital practice at executive search firm Transearch. The firms have started to hire senior talent across digital marketing, product management and technology to cater to their client needs, he adds.

Last November, Rajiv Gupta, former partner at KPMG, joined as partner and managing director at The Boston Consulting Group to drive the Technology Advantage office. Suprakash Chaudhuri, former MD, SAP India & subcontinent joined EY as partner, information technology advisory services while earlier in May, Sumeer Goyal, former CTO at Quikr joined as director, digital practice at PwC.

Other senior talent that has moved on in the past few months include Vinod Subramanian, executive director, EY who was earlier with Oracle for over 15 years; Sandhya Arun —practice leader, digital experience, Deloitte Digital who joined from IBM in November and Manish Khanduri, former VP, business development and marketing, IMImobile who joined as director Consulting, Broadcast & Digital Media at Cognizant Technology Solutions in September.

Among those slated to join in the coming months is Saibal Chakraborty, international director at Booz & Co, who will join BCG as senior principal.

Consultancies are working with clients across industries in areas such as e-commerce strategy, omni-channel experience, social workplace, web or social analytics

The Digital Pull

- **Consultancies** are doubling and even trebling team sizes across digital practices
- **Senior talent** is being hired across areas such as digital marketing, product management and technology, among others
- **At junior levels**, talent is being hired from engineering campuses, institutes such as ISI while higher up, analysts, experienced managers in digital companies or other consulting firms are being tapped

Scarcity of talent is pushing up salaries. At the top, salaries can be upwards of

₹ 1.5 cr



RECENT MOVEMENTS AT SENIOR LEVELS



RAJIV GUPTA

Former partner, KPMG joins BCG as partner and managing director in November 2014

SUMEER GOYAL

Former CTO at Quikr joined as director, digital practice at PwC in May 2014

SUPRAKASH CHAUDHURI

former MD, SAP India & subcontinent joined EY as partner, information technology advisory services

and enterprise mobility. Clients span industries such as healthcare, consumer, financial services and even government organisations.

KPMG's digital transformation practice offers a range of services including conceptualisation, advisory, transformation, implementation and programme management. "The practice has worked with marquee clients across industries especially BFSI, retail, e-commerce, manufacturing and FMCG," says Akhilesh Tuteja, partner and head of IT advisory services.

At PwC, the emerging technologies practice set up around three years ago has been rebranded as the digital practice, which works on digital strategy, marketing and branding, security, tech and organisation. Digital strategy is mostly executed by consultants who came on board through PwC's acquisition of Booz & Co in April 2014.

"We doubled our team size in the past few months with around 200-250 hires and will be doing another 150 hires before the year ends," says Arnab Basu, joint leader, technology consulting PwC India.

As overall team sizes grow, talent across levels is being sought after. At Deloitte, the team size has tripled in the past one year, with hiring across levels from consultant to the director. Through Deloitte Digital, the firm is "creating a new model for a new age" as an agency and a consultancy, said a Deloitte spokesperson.

EY has increased the size of its client serving technology professionals in India to around 1,200 people from nearly 500 people a year ago. The Boston Consulting Group has been aggressively building its digital practice over the past year. "Last year, we were a team of 40 in APAC. We will close this year with a team size of nearly 120," says BCG's Gupta.

"While some of this growth has happened inorganically as a result of acquiring Digital Ventures (around 30 people in the region), we have also had more than a 2x growth organically," adds Gupta. The TA (Technology Advantage) practice of BCG, along with DV (Digital Ventures) is the fastest growing practice area for BCG globally and in the region.

As demand soars, talent in this space is taking home hefty pay packets. Digital marketing pay varies from Rs 40- 60 lakh, while tech and product pay can range from Rs 80 lakh to Rs 1 crore. For business roles, it can be above Rs 1.5 crore, says Transearch's Roy.

"The scarcity of talent is pushing up salaries," says a business head at a Big Four firm who does not wish to be named. At a junior level with 3-5 years' experience, people are getting 30-35% more than their peers. A manager with 8-10 years of experience would get about Rs 30-35 lakh, he adds.

Talent at junior levels is being tapped from engineering campuses, Indian Statistical Institute and the like, while higher up, analysts, experienced managers in digital companies or consulting firms are being roped in.

"There is significant growth in this sector driven by the growing space ecommerce is occupying in products and services and the scale of investments it has attracted. Corporates are also actively working on digital strategies," says Raja Lahiri, partner, Grant Thornton India. The company is looking to hire senior talent in this quarter, and a source who did not wish to be named said at least four new partners could come on board in the vertical in a year's time.

In India, it is more about functional consultancy, says Ram Sarvapalli, partner, emerging markets and national advisory leader, E&Y India. "We are seeing a lot of traction in cloud computing and the digital space. Analytics too will become a huge area of growth. We hope to double our size (number of people) in the next two years," he says.