

Part one

Hello Regis. Perhaps you'd like to begin by telling us what company you work for?

I am working for Slash Support Ltd. a company that provides 24/7 worldwide support on IT products – network and telecommunications mainly.

What exactly does your job involve?

I'm working in the Alcatel Voice team and we provide support for internet and telephone systems. When a customer has a problem with a system or wants some technical assistance, they get in touch with the support center and our role is to solve the problem and answer any questions.

Does the company employ mostly local people?

No, it's very hard to find people locally. Most of my colleagues aren't from Chennai itself. Companies such as Slash Support usually have to recruit at national level because it is not always easy to find local people with the necessary foreign language skills. Slash also hires trainees from Germany, France, and Latin America who come on short-term assignments. So, there is a good mix of local people and people from abroad.

Was it difficult to adjust to working in a new environment?

Yeah. It was hard to adapt to the rhythm of work at the beginning. Here we do shifts which are ten hours long – from 8 am to 6 pm.

That's a long day.

It is. And then, on top of that, during the first three months, I was also getting training every morning, so I was pretty tired when I got home in the evening!

What are your Indian colleagues like, you know, in terms of age, education ... are they mostly male or female?

Most of my colleagues are from non-technical backgrounds. They have been hired for their language skills – not because of their technical abilities. One of them is even a lawyer by training. They are almost only men and mostly between 25 and 35 years old.

And how are you settling in? Where are you living at the moment?

The company's been working with the US and Europe for some time now, so everyone's had time to adapt. It's more difficult to adapt outside work than in the office. I've been living with an Indian family, so I had to learn how to fit in with their lifestyle – but they're really kind and I've learned lots about Indian culture from them – more than if I'd stayed in a hotel, for example. I'm hoping to get my own apartment soon, though.

Part two

How do you react when you hear people saying that Indian companies are 'stealing' jobs from Europe and the USA?

Today with globalization, everybody is working together and competition is now worldwide. The first point to make is that it was the European and US companies that contacted the Indian companies. And that is completely understandable. Companies find the same skills at a cheaper price and with more flexibility. So, if it is interesting for the company, why shouldn't they take advantage of it? But one must not forget that it is not always that easy for a company to outsource to India and that it's not always a success. It may be true that some jobs have left Europe and the US, but other jobs have also been created, for instance, in companies which are specialized in helping businesses to make their outsourcing process a success. I think this is only the beginning of the phenomenon, as many countries such as France, for example, have not really outsourced yet. This is a huge market and India seems to be leading the race. But some other countries are coming up as competitors and to keep its place, India will have to stay competitive. But its experience will be a big advantage.