

## Indian pharma seeks women part-time sales force in Tier II cities to ensure diversity, stability in cos

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Indian pharma companies are now seeking out to employ women part time sales work force in Tier II cities. The move comes in because the industry is seen grappling with an attrition rate of 18-20 per cent particularly in sales and marketing.

Appointing qualified women for part-time sales , according to Hussain Tinwala, general manager- EMPI, TeamLease Services Pvt. Ltd. brings in diversity and stability to the workforce with variable pay. Many of these locations include Bhopal, Vadodara, Nagpur Ahmedabad, Kanpur, Chandigarh, Coimbatore, Patna, Pondicherry and Pune.

He believes that these sales personnel are committed and motivated. The part time job openings gives another option for qualified women who are pharmacy graduates and post graduates to pursue a full-time career in pharmaceutical industry because of their domestic commitments.

Further, such an arrangement works well in Tier II cities because of the convenience of getting around places to access pharmacy outlets and medical practitioner clinics and hospitals.

From a pharma company perspective, the organization view it as a means to penetrate the domestic market primarily the semi-urban areas.

Part-time concepts allow women to balance their work and home life. They have an option to select the timings according to their conveniences. The time slots given by the company are between 9 am and 12 or 2pm to 6 pm, Tinwala told Pharmabiz.

The growth of pharma in the Tier II cities is driven by medical insurance and affordability to pay for healthcare expenses. Indian pharma industry cannot afford to ignore these promising markets.

The pharma sector has been indicating a boom even during a slow down. There is a hiring of 20-22 per cent year-on-year. The attrition in front-end sales is estimated to be 25 per cent and in the mid-level sales force it is between 18-20 per cent. This is where some companies have looked at trainees to fill up vacancies in the sales and marketing, noted Tinwala.

The other divisions of a pharma company which have alluring job opportunities are research and supply chain management covering manufacture among others. The growing pharmaceutical exports indicate the need for qualified personnel to man many of the production plants.

The patent laws particularly when the World Health Organization has a mandate to constitute International Nonproprietary Names (INN) to facilitate the identification of active pharmaceutical ingredients and the other stringent regulations by international regulatory agencies make pharma industry hunt for the best of talent. This creates ample potential for experienced legal and regulatory professionals, said Tinwala.

Indian pharma's prowess in generic drugs makes the country a popular choice for investments,

mergers and acquisitions. The big advantage for the global majors during a takeover is that they have a ready access to sound knowledge base of R&D, patent expiry drugs and local manufacturing competence that helps them be a part of the Indian pharma growth story immediately. Even if fresh hiring gets stalled, there is efficient rotation of skilled workforce, he said.

In the case of the pharma knowledge process sourcing, Tinwala stated that sector was yet to achieve a benchmark despite India's capability to chip in sales support, market research, consumer insights and medical writing. However, the country's information technology expertise, service delivery and clientele would decide the fortunes of KPO model.

Therefore, there is no dearth of openings in pharma and job opportunities are plum and promising, said Tinwala.

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