

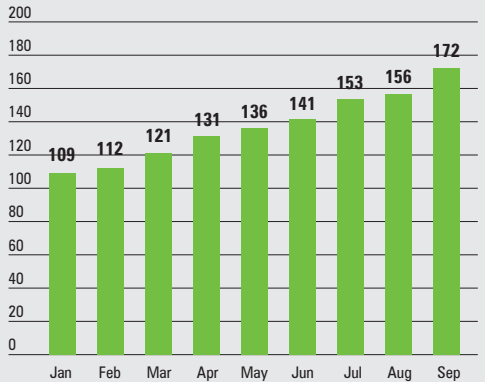
Corporate India on a green hiring drive

ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONALS

Hiring in 2011



Source: myhiringclub.com



PIYALI MANDAL
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Companies are on a spree to hire sustainability officers this year. While the reason for this may be genuine concern for the environment in the case of some firms, others may have gone ahead with the exercise simply to be branded as 'green' firms.

According to human resources consultants, the demand for environmental professionals rose 40 per cent this year, compared to the previous year. Sunil Goel, director of executive search firm GlobalHunt, said, "The impact on the environment is more tangible and immediate now. Many organisations have seen their businesses

being shut down due to protests from locals, owing to environmental concern. So, companies want to have effective green policies in place."

The role of an environmental professional is assessing the direct and indirect impacts of the product on the environment and devising strategies on what can be done to protect the atmosphere. Many products, like air conditioners, cars, mobile phones, batteries, paper, cups, clothes and eatables, have to pass strict environmental screening before they are available in the market.

Essar Group's business process outsourcing firm, Aegis, is an example of such a company. The company's back office has a separate

sustainability team called 'Happy World'. Of the 55 employees in the team, the majority work on green issues. The company is also considering increasing the size of the team.

For companies like Coca Cola India, the hiring of green professionals is a continuous process. "We have had an environment team, led by a general manager, for a long time. We are, perhaps, one of the few companies to have a hydro geologist.

This is not a recent phenomenon for us," said a company spokesperson. Coca Cola India has five people at the company level dedicated to sustainability. Besides, each of its bottling plants has dedicated resources on environment.

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IT'S not only the corporate biggies who are hiring. The trend is being seen across the industry. A quick check of Green Economy India, a portal dedicated to green jobs and education, shows job postings from at least eight-10 mid to small-sized companies for environmental professionals.

According to Vinay Grover, director and founder, Symbiosis Management Consultants, although the power and oil & gas sectors have historically been recruiters of environmental professionals, other sectors are catching up fast. "Companies want to market themselves as environment-friendly, and want to earn a good name among consumers," he said.

In the recent past, the demand for such professionals has been felt across sectors such as banking, telecom, pharma, food and beverages, fast-moving consumer goods, information technology (hardware), automobile, construction and manufacturing. Companies are increasingly hiring environmental professionals, since they realise the tangible commercial benefits of going green. The focus on green and sustainable development is also because of the increased emphasis on such issues across the world.

According to a recent Gartner study, "While awareness about green IT and sustainability issues is very low in Indian organisations, the increasing global focus on energy efficiency, energy security, green IT and sustainability issues is now making the executive leadership in the technology sector track, report and manage sus-

tainable and resource-efficient business practices."

Globally, too, a boom in demand for green professionals is being seen. According to European Union Environment Commissioner, Janez Potocnik, even when the economy was not faring well, the demand for green jobs in the region was rising. An environment ministry official said the strict environmental laws imposed by the government could be among the reasons why companies are focused on green issues.

The job of a sustainability officer is also rewarding. Rajesh Kumar, chief executive, MyHiringClub.com, said over the last year, salaries for such profiles had risen. According to Goel, while a person with experience of two years can draw a salary of ₹5-7 lakh per year, the compensation package of a chief sustainable officer can go up to ₹40-50 lakh a year.