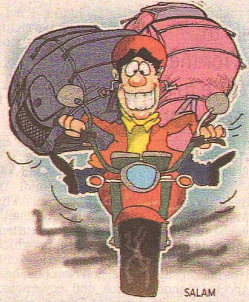


Clip: 1 of 1

Every e-tailer Wants to Woo the Boy Who Delivers

Staffing firms scout villages, tie up with NGOs and employment exchanges and hire students on part-time basis to deliver goods ordered online



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Mumbai: Ram Singh's daily beat is a 40-km stretch of Gurgaon's sector 31, 45, 46, 39 and Jharsa 'gaon'. The 26-year-old Flipkart delivery agent dropped off 242 parcels on October 9, 2014, three days after the mega sale. He started delivering packages at 4 am and kept at it till 10pm. He was approached by rival Amazon, but spurned the offer.

With millions of consumers now ordering about \$10 billion worth of products ranging from food to furniture and from lipstick to lingerie online, demand for ace delivery boys like Singh is rising.

About 2.5-3 lakh are already delivering goods ordered online all over the country according to estimates by Iqya Human Capital Solutions. Large e-commerce companies like Flipkart and Snapdeal are all looking to double the number of such delivery agents they source from staffing firms.

"High performing team members like Ram Singh are an essential part of our success story," said Neeraj Aggarwal, senior director-Last Mile Deliveries. Flipkart has more than 12,000 dedicated delivery agents, largely provided by major vendor, Ekart.

Logistics and staffing firms are now scouting in villages, tying up with NGOs, employment ex-

changes and hiring students on part-time basis to meet the soaring demand.

Iqya Human Capital Solutions has around 14,000 delivery agents on its payrolls and expects to double this in a year. It has a 70-member staff to hunt for delivery boys in cities like Bengaluru from nearby towns of Belgaon, Kolar and Tumkur. Salaries for these last-mile agents range from ₹7,000-15,000 with firms like Amazon and Flipkart reported to be the better paymasters.

"Competition is high, they get 25% raise for lateral moves and we battle 80% attrition," Gurusprasad Srinivasan, director staffing of the Bengaluru-based

recruitments company. "We have to replace an entire team most of the times," he added.

Logistics firm Gejavas has grown from 20 delivery agents in 2011 to 400 in 2014 and expects to treble that number in a year. "We have tied up with five NGOs in Jaipur, Delhi and Mumbai who help us with candidates, besides depending heavily on referrals and employment exchanges," said Vijay Ghadge, COO of the company. The company's client list include Snapdeal, Flipkart, Lenskart, yepme.com besides their former parent company, online fashion retailer, Jabong.

"We will need at least 25,000 delivery agents in the next 3

months," said Dilip Chenoy, MD and CEO of National Skill Development Corporation.

The last mile agents are trained within the first 8-10 days. Companies need to keep them motivated by providing perks like gift coupons, grocery vouchers, team get-togethers etc.

The constant weekly and monthly appreciation along with a career chart is rolled out to retain them. Loyalties change every six months; so firms look out for the likes of Singh and Tejas Chauthan. 26-year old Tejas Chauthan, who works for online food chain Fasoos in Pune says that hope of a job in a bigger city keeps him going more than his present ₹7,500 salary.