

INTERVIEW

Our business is CSR oriented – Pravin Kumar

In line with boosting employee's morale and encouraging healthy competition among staff such that it would translate to the overall development of both employees and that of the organization. This has informed the decision of ISONBPO to organize a befitting award ceremony for outstanding employees of the month at the Ilorin call centre. The recognition of excellence ceremony was hosted by the site head of the call centre, Mr Javid Hussain on 4th February, 2018 with the GCEO of the organisation, top management staff and dignitaries in full attendance.

In this interview with the News Editor of National Moonlight Newspaper, Yusuf Olayinka. Mr. Pravin Kumar reveals the future plans of ISONBPO in Nigeria and other sundry issues.

Excerpts:

Can you introduce yourself?

My name is Mr Pravin Kumar and I am the GCEO of ISON International Limited.

Why is ISON rewarding staff?

Honestly, rewarding employees is a standard practice for the organisation and because our business do not have any other form of competition, we do not have commodities or products in competitions such as gas or coppers and there is always a constant healthy competitive spirit maintained amongst people which we are aimed towards encouragement. The reward programmes are like sport awards, like someone does a wow call, we have the monthly wise, the process and skilled wise and the quarterly wise reward and recognition programme alongside. I happened to be here in Ilorin to grace the occasion and I have also presented two awards to outstanding employees, these are very standard procedures for recognizing good performers in an organization like ours, so the process becomes a benchmark for others.

We heard your organization recruited over 2000 persons last year, was the recruitment strictly in Nigeria or globally?

In Nigeria, we would have hired more than 4000 (four thousand) front liners in the past years but we do not hire managers or senior staff, we just

promote internally. Therefore we hire front liners, who can fill up the junior level positions and can now grow in the business, except for few exceptions when we want to expand and maybe it requires that we hire HR senior role or I.T personnel. Even in our location in Ibadan where the head of I.T was once in a front liner role, he happened to be a graduate of Information Technology and was subsequently promoted internally to head the unit. We have huge focus on development of people which is why we are going to keep hiring and providing more jobs for people.

We have heard a lot about your CSR projects, tell us about those you are running currently in Nigeria?

First of all, you must understand our business is a CSR business. What gives me a kick is providing jobs to people and places which jobs haven't reached yet. The profitability comes then after we have provided these jobs for those places. I always keep identifying globally that the jobs are not there. For example, in Ilorin, an infrastructure of this kind and the technology of this kind were not there from the start, the people are now getting exposed to this kind of technology and infrastructure. They are working for a company that is present in 19 (nineteen) different countries, imagine the interactions and exposures provided for our staff especially



Mr Pravin Kumar

those who were been rewarded in three months for the annual award meeting. They are being exposed to the international communities and cultures. So as far as I am concerned, this company, this project, is a CSR business. I am not presently in Europe or America, I have worked in those places and the idea is to bring this level of exposure to India and Africa. So I can see the same level of exposure happening for Nigeria. I have met a lot of people in Ibadan, Abeokuta and Ilorin, but I must say the people in Ilorin centre are simply the best, but whenever I



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talk to any international customer, there are professional reasons that come up during the cause of our interaction. You know before we bring an international customer on board, we need to test and see what we would like to show, these things which are not there in most of the states in Nigeria. In Ilorin for example, some basic changes was needed for us to be able to keep these international customers, like good and standard accommodations suitable for them. I have listened to the employees from Ilorin centre today, I can tell you they are simply the best. One of them Nana, presented the program in a very relevant manner, with a very good and clear communication skills, the confidence they have is extremely good. This is the kind of talent the Government of Kwara State have as an asset, because how long will the Government of Nigeria depend on oil prices for the development of people. I am confident that every one of them can get you a thousand, two hundred dollars every day as foreign exchange, can you imagine what that will do to the economy? All we need to do is focus. I have a Company I call an African company, though

the business is also in India, but that in India is a subsidiary of an African country.

How would you describe the efficiency of few CSR projects launched from your location centres in Nigeria?

Have you heard of Girl Effect? ISONBPO launched this in partnership with Girl Effect as Girl Connect and this was launched from Ibadan centre in Nigeria. We think that young girls above the age of thirteen become vulnerable and prone to a lot of challenges while growing up, such as biological changes, abuses and so on, so we created this platform to be used as a help line and it works like this; when a girl is in need, she goes to this help line, which can be found easily on Whatsapp groups, directs her prompt through our Interactive Voice Response System (IVR) where she can tell us her problems. This IVR has a huge content that is built by Girl Effect, it transfers the calling girl promptly to a mentor or life coach who in turn helps her overcome her challenges and proffer solutions to them. Now the calling girl becomes confident as she interacts with mentors and life coaches.

So that is a visible project we have launched through the northern part of Nigeria and it is actively running in our location in Ibadan and globally. Locally our team and staff will ensure participation in CSR activities within the location every now and then. In any case when we have to hire, our first 5% recruitment has to be from a registered NGO. So for us at ISONBPO our take is to create jobs.

What should we expect from ISONBPO globally in the nearest future?

Firstly let me say for Nigeria, I will be a very happy person if these business can create Fifty thousand jobs in Nigeria, because once we are able to create those jobs, one would hardly realise when we get to millions. So my vision is to be able to create more jobs for Nigeria and Africa in the nearest future.

We are having 100 percent of new business which has come to us as everybody wants to work with us. All we need is some bit of effect and focus from the Government of the States and this can become a major kick for the economy at large.



• *L-R: Senior Vice President, MTN Account, ISONBPO International Limited, Sir Manoj Mudgal and GCEO, ISONBPO, Sir Pravin Kumar during the Award Presentation to ISON staff at the office in Ilorin...on Sunday. Photo: Olayinka Yusuf*



The GCEO of ISONBPO International, Mr. Pravin Kumar (centre) in a group photograph with other senior management staff and employees of ISONBPO Call Centre in Ilorin...recently.