HT Mumbai

How 3 Indians turned SAP into a cloud computing major

DEUTSCHLAND DREAMS India-born Sikka tipped to be frontrunner for CEO's position

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NEW DELHI: Six years ago, $23-billion (R1.42 lakh crore) German software major SAP, best known for its business software products (enterprise resource planning or ERP in geekspeak), faced a problem: it was still king in ERP but didn't have a strong presence on the cloud, which was seen as the future of computing.

Cloud computing is a system of "renting" software over the internet instead of buying it on license. It is cheaper than buying software and, so, is preferred by many firms.

After several brainstorming sessions among senior SAP executives, the company's chairman H. Plattner and its chief technology officer Vishal Sikka (46), who grew up in Vadodara, decided to venture into the cloud with a database management system (which tracks and analyses massive volumes of data), where SAP had little presence, but with a small twist that proved to be a masterstroke.

The new product was called HANA or high performance analytic appliance, which for a variety of technical innovations, speeded up real-time data analysis by up to 100 times.

Analysts, rivals and even some insiders predicted failure. As recently as September 30, 2012, Oracle CEO and co-founder Larry Ellisson took a dig at HANA, calling it a "small thing." He had earlier dismissed SAP's innovation as "wacko".

But Sikka, who is now being called the father of HANA, had the last laugh. At the end of 2013, the product had about 3,000 customers worldwide, making it the bestseller in its class. Oracle, too, has now adopted this new technology. According to company

INDIAN BEATS

HANA, the innovative software developed by Vishal Sikka and his team, is now a flagship product of the German giant

SAP'S PROBLEMS

- Customers, rivals and stakeholders thought it was slow and lacked innovation
- Its cloud-based applications were 'unexciting'
- Competitors such as Salesforce.com, EMC and IBM were nipping at its heels

THE SOLUTION

- Enter cloud-based database mgmt systems
- Disrupt the market with an innovation
- Store data in hardware memory instead of disks
- Arrange the data in a new, innovative way
- This speeds up the solution by up to 100 times

THE MEN BEHIND HANA

HANA is the brain child of Hasso Plattner, one of SAP's founders but India-born Vishal Sikka, who led the team that developed it and took it to market is now being hailed as the "father of HANA".

VISHAL SIKKA (46)
Member of the executive board, SAP

EDUCATION
- Studied engineering at MS University, Baroda
- Doctorate in computer science, Stanford University, US

WHAT HE DOES
- Member, SAP executive board
- Leads research, products and innovation at the co
- Has global responsibility for development of products across SAP
- Led the development of HANA
- Considered front-runner for CEO post

ANIRBAN DEY (41)
Managing director, SAP Labs India

EDUCATION
- Engineer from IIT, Kharagpur
- Masters in engineering from University of Nebraska-Lincoln, US
- MBA (Finance) from University of California, Berkeley, US

WHAT HE DOES
- Handles research, development and quality certification for SAP HANA

GANAPATHY SUBRAMANIAN (36)
Vice president, Customer engagement & strategic projects, SAP Labs India

EDUCATION
- BS and MS in software systems, BITS Pilani
- Diploma in Executive General Management, IIM-Bangalore

WHAT HE DOES
- Develops applications built on SAP's technology platform, including HANA

grapevine, Sikka is now a front-runner for the post of SAP CEO.

"HANA was the right product, at the right time, at the right price," said Milan Sheth, an analyst at consultancy firm EY.

Several SAP executives around the world contributed to HANA but the ones who stand out are IIT-Kharagpur alumnus

Anirban Dey (41), MD of SAP Labs India and a golf enthusiast, whose team developed the system that programs the database that is to be analysed. And his colleague, Ganapathy Subramanian (36), VP, SAP Labs India, builds applications to make the HANA and other tech platforms more versatile

and user-friendly.

Not everyone, however, is impressed. "We cannot term HANA as an exceptional technology," said an analyst requesting anonymity, as his firm has dealings with SAP.

But for now, Sikka and his team are basking in the glory of HANA's success.

Country-specific THE rankings indicators soon

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Times Higher Education's ranking agency has agreed to draw up an India-specific indicator that would help global education stakeholders and international students judge Indian educational institutions, writes Shashi Tharoor for TNN.

Minister of State for Human Resource Development Shashi Tharoor said international rankings were perceived to be of significance in enhancing the global mobility of students and teachers and in attracting funding. For this reason, a committee constituted by the standing council of Indian institutes of technology, or IITs, held meetings with the *Times Higher Education* and Quacquarelli Symonds rankings agency on the matter of ranking IITs. *THE* also held a workshop in May 2013 where universities and technical institutions were invited.

The ministry has been stressing that parameters to judge institutions in the US and the UK cannot be applied to India since the nature of higher educational institutions is different. For instance, IITs are judged independently and Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University have to compete with US and British universities.
http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140213180504919

Request made to Union HRD Ministry to increase more attempts for IIT aspirants as well

After learning about UPSC's recent announcement of increasing attempts to appear in Civil Services Exam, for all the categories of candidates, Mathematician Anand Kumar of Super 30 fame has come forward with his similar request of increasing number of attempts for students to be able to qualify in IITs.

Kumar urged the union HRD minister MM Pallam Raju, by writing him a letter for introducing a similar` opportunity for students to be able to qualify the JEE advance examination.

Through letter that Kumar has addressed to the union HRD minister, he requested the ministry to also take the initiative to increase the number of chances for JEE aspirants as well.

He urged ministry to consider his request, particularly for the underprivileged sections in the rural areas, since the students from those regions are hardly able to undergo quality schooling like students in urban areas. He added that students from rural areas begin with their preparations late due to dearth of opportunities.

Anand Kumar has been making this request for the last four years and he had also met former HRD minister Kapil Sibal twice in the year 2010 and 2012. He demanded the same through discussion during his meeting with the Prime Minister as well. He mentioned through the letter that he would like to meet the union HRD minister MM Pallam Raju as well, to discuss the same whenever he has time.

Anand explained that increase chances of attempts for IIT aspiring students will help decrease the urban-rural divide and this will let the bright students from rural areas come forward. Most students from remote areas cannot afford costly coaching though they possess talent to excel, yet they fail to reach the level that IIT demands. If given them a little more time by increasing attempts, those students shall be able to raise IITs bar and contribute in making IIT more inclusive, he stated through his letter.

All in all, Kumar tried to throw light on this matter, for the Ministry and JEE board to think on similar lines as done for UPSC examination.

http://www.jagranjosh.com/articles/request-made-to-union-hrd-ministry-to-increase-more-attempts-for-iit-aspirants-as-well-1392374292-1

HRD Ministry: No new IIMs to be set up in next 3 years

The Ministry of Human Resource Development ([MHRD](#)) has announced that following the establishment of the six new Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), no new IIMs are expected to be set up in the coming three years. While earlier the focus was on increasing the number of available IIMs to enable more students to take admission, the new agenda is to carry out a thorough check of the new IIMs to ensure they live up to the expected standards.

Under the 12th Five-Year Plan consideration will be given to improve the six new Indian Institutes of Management: IIM Thiruchirappalli, IIM Kashipur, IIM Ranchi, IIM Raipur, IIM Udaipur and IIM Rohtak. The most common problems they are facing are related to insufficient number of quality faculty and inadequate infrastructures. Although the older IIMs are helping in the role of mentor, special attention will need to be given to the new IIMs to bring them up to mark.

Management course admissions for the academic year beginning 2014 at the six new IIMs were coordinated by IIM Trichy. Around 9,600 candidates had been short listed on the basis of Common Admission Test (CAT) scores for the Personal Interview and Written Aptitude Test used for admissions. A grand total of 800 seats were available in the six new IIMs, raising the total number of seats available across the 13 IIMs to 3,335.

IIT-Kharagpur student uploads nude pics of woman on internet

PTI | Feb 14, 2014, 02.47 PM IST

KHARAGPUR, WEST BENGAL: An IIT student allegedly uploaded nude photographs of a woman on internet, police said on Friday.

18-year-old Surajit Kumar Jain, a second year Electronics and Communications student from Bilaspur uploaded nude pictures of a woman, who is a teacher in the same district on the internet last month, police said.

Following a complaint by the woman, Chhattisgarh Police tracked down the Internet Protocol (IP) address which revealed that the photographs were uploaded from IIT Kharagpur campus by Jain, they said.

Police visited the IIT Kharagpur campus on Thursday in search of the accused, who was reported to be absent for the past two months by IIT Director, Tapan Ghoshal, they added.

MIT emails applicants falsely stating they were selected

Press Trust of India

In a rare gaffe, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) emailed some prospective students mistakenly stating that they had been admitted to the prestigious academic institution.

The MIT sent an email to applicants last week about financial aid with a line at the bottom that read: "You are on this list because you are admitted to MIT!" For prospective students already accepted through MIT's early action programme, the line was simply part of a routine.

But for the many applicants still awaiting a final admissions decision in March, those words may have raised false hopes of entry

into one of the world's top higher education institutions.

It was not clear how many students received the message in error but the gaffe prompted an apology from MIT's admissions office and an explanation how the mistake occurred, The Boston Globe reported.
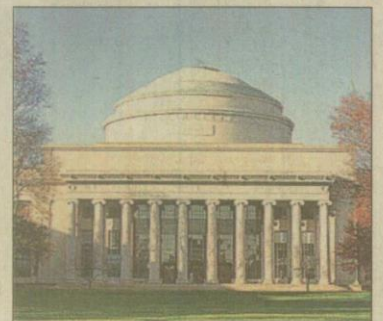
"My guess is that overall a very small number of our current applicants even noticed this," Chris Peterson, an MIT admissions counsellor who handles web communications, was quoted as saying by the paper.

"But any number of people getting this kind of mixed signal is too many." He said the error occurred after admissions staff tried to consolidate email lists of both applicants and admits using a technique recommended

by an email marketing service provider.

"However, there is also an (apparently) undocumented side-effect...it replaced one line, in small print, at the bottom of the email, after we had already (extensively) drafted, reviewed, and approved the text of the email itself," Peterson wrote on an admissions office blog. "We never even knew."

The "footer" of the email sent to applicants still awaiting a decision from MIT should have said: "You are receiving this email because you applied to MIT, and we sometimes have to tell you things about stuff." Peterson said admissions staff noticed the error after some confused applicants began posting questions about the email on a college admissions forum website.

■ Error occured while consolidating emails of applicants and selected students FILE PHOTO