SELECTHER

OBJECTIVE

A social development incubator had developed a programme, funded by a large investment bank, to improve gender diversity ratios and quality of candidates entering the retail sector. This was a one-of-a-kind innovative pilot programme designed to upskill and employ underprivileged women at premium and luxury retail brands in India. We came in as programme management partners to deliver and manage the programme which was operational in Mumbai and Bengaluru.

SATTVA'S VALUE ADD

In order to reach the desired outcome for the company and other stakeholders we needed to ensure that the programme developed was aligned to the market. So, we built a training curriculum based on feedback we got from two large market players who gave us an outside in perspective. The curriculum focused on English skills and conditioning women to nuances of the retail sector—customer service, understanding the segment, corporate sensitisation. All this co-developed by the on-ground training partner. Our role was focused on pre-screening and evaluating fitment to the programme based on a few basic criteria – educational qualification, basic English proficiency, and alignment to retail sector. Alongside, we actively engaged with potential employers in the market who gave us feedback on gaps in training and other value-adds needed, if any.

KEY LEARNINGS

This two-month programme clearly identified that training candidates on high quality customer service for premium and luxury brands trumps English proficiency even though the latter is a key requirement. Training women on softer aspects – confidence, communication, presentability – helps them engage with customers better and eventually find employment opportunities across sectors. As the next step in our endeavour, we are now looking to expand to other aspirational industries which value customer experience as a core skill.

It also gave us and other stakeholders involved gainful insights about this segment of women. For instance, most women or their families don't want to be associated with retail due to long shifts and physical labour involved. Many came in to learn English therefore mobilisation was a key challenge. These findings helped us relook at the programme to bring in more value-additions. The duration, for one, was not enough to build both English and soft skills. Alongside, the company was able to assess their needs better from the programme. Overall, these insights helped develop skill sets for candidates to be more aligned with job function.

OUTCOME

No. of women trained: 34

No. undergoing training: 37

Placement rate: 76%

Average salary: Rs 11,000 in Mumbai and Rs 10,500 in Bengaluru

Companies placed: Fossil, Madura Fashion, W, FabIndia, Reliance Trends, Tata Trent, Louis Philippe, Aurelia, Shoppers Stop.

Educational qualification: Std 12th and Graduates

BLURB

"Training women on softer aspects of retail business will eventually enable them to move jobs across sectors. As the next step in our endeavour, we are now looking to expand to other aspirational industries which value customer experience as a core skill."