

Issue
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People **businesses**

Business is all about people. This issue we talk about how our team go about their work, and how we supported them on a life-changing journey

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Let's fly to Dubai!

The AdvanceTrack team in India stepped up during Covid, when it really mattered. And MD **Vipul Sheth** knew that his longstanding team needed a special reward. This is the story of their life-changing trip abroad.



They say that professional services firms are nothing without their people. It makes sense that, for us at AdvanceTrack, the same saying rings true.

Quite rightly, we spend a lot of time talking about our operational excellence, and focus on processes, security and scalability. But these are underpinned by the technical expertise and work ethic of our people – without whom we wouldn't be here.

With that in mind, MD Vipul Sheth discussed with our managers in India about a plan to reward and recognise some of our longstanding team members. A five-day trip to Dubai was then organised for 2021.

Covid got in the way of that plan, while Dubai's global expo during 2022 meant that we had to hold off the holiday until 2023.

"The team never bugged me about whether the trip would actually happen, but there was no way it was going to be off the cards," explains Vipul. "We just had to be patient."

First-time travel

And so, in April, some 37 of the AdvanceTrack team went on holiday together. And for 32 of these people, it was their first time abroad.



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“When it was announced we were all very excited – a great treat,” says AdvanceTrack’s Mohit Soni.

“It wasn’t in our hands so we couldn’t assume anything about it. But it was fun, and no – I didn’t think I would have to work while we were away!”

The itinerary was a full one. There was a desert safari, cruises and city tours, along with free time for them to go shopping.

“They didn’t want me to have them in a conference room,” adds Vipul. “They chose to go to the waterpark instead!”

Team support

Aanal Shah has a young daughter, and was therefore reticent to travel.

“But my colleagues said: ‘You must come. Don’t

stop yourself.’ Everyone supported me on the holiday with her, and she enjoyed it too,” said Aanal.

“I would say that this is how it is working at AdvanceTrack. All the small things are taken care of for us – we don’t have to ask,” adds Mohit.

Vipul explains that he wanted to do something that “made us stand out as an organisation”.

“Part of that comes down to us giving opportunities that individually they might otherwise not have done,” he says.

“The fact that we were able to offer that life-changing experience is really what it’s all about. It was an important thing to do.”

■ *If you’d like to find out more about our team, how they work, and how we would work with you, please [click here](#).*

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FAQ

Tell us about your Indian team

Our latest FAQ details our team in India, from the perspective of MD **Vipul Sheth**: who they are, their working environment, and why they're critical to our outsourcing and offshoring offerings.



Q How has the AdvanceTrack team grown over the years and what's it like working for the company?

A In 2005 we had five people operating in one of our locations – now our team number is in the hundreds. One of those original five was Rajni, who has been a constant for us and has helped to set the culture and tone of our much-enlarged group – hopefully in my mirror of being honest; decent people wanting to do a good job.

It's also a place where people must feel safe to make it their own – certainly when you don't have the big boss watching over things every day.

The office

If any of our client firms had an office like ours then I think they'd be proud to call it their own. It's spacious and paperless (the exception being HR's printer – some formal documents HAVE to be printed). It's contemporary and modern.

We have meeting rooms, smaller breakout spaces and canteens across all our four offices. We want our people to step away from their desks during breaks – we don't want too much of a production line-style way of working.

Protocols

No mobile phones are allowed in the office for security reasons – that even means guests. Recently the IPL cricket was reaching its crescendo, and people on their break would watch it in the canteen and relay the scores when back at their desk.

There are metal detectors to pass when you arrive, along with lockers for valuables (such as the mobile phone) – for visitors and staff.

Holiday

We have very happy and productive teams, and recently we took our longest-serving members to Dubai (*read about this on page 2*).

Even though our team numbers are growing quickly, we have plenty of people to help them settle into our way of working. It's incredibly calm, and make sure the work's done. But it's important to appreciate and represent the social side of things too.

■ If you'd like to speak to us about your practice, and how it would work with the AdvanceTrack team, please contact us by [clicking here](#).



The season to be jolly (and at conferences)

With the 2023 conference season in full swing, **Vipul Sheth** gauges the delegate (and software company) temperature after the cooling off of MTD.



It's that time of year: when we ponder whether we'll get a 'proper' summer, and the major accounting conferences begin.

First-off, it was wonderful celebrating 20 years of AdvanceTrack. This year, our conference was held in the magnificent British Museum (where we'll be heading for 2024 too).

Xero's Jamie Eddy spoke of a three-pronged set of challenges and opportunities that practices must understand and leverage, namely: your reputation; managing your talent; and, therefore, your capacity to undertake work.

Our newly-appointed sales director Dermot Hamblin (*pictured*) covered a range of topics, from how to manage change in your practice, through to new developments in the world of business and accounting technology.

Brian Coventry from Cloudcapcha spoke about the importance of differentiating your practice from others, and why capturing data from your clients allows you to offer a unique service.

I rounded off the event by reiterating that accountants have a great opportunity to make a difference to their clients – which means moving beyond the commoditised compliance services that all firms offer.





Accountex London

It was, by all accounts, a record-breaking show – certainly in terms of attendees. Of the show itself – the big players put in a lot of effort into their stands and presentations. In fact, there were presentations across 13 stands for the whole of the two days.

While there was an element of a post-MTD lull, in that there were few big product announcements, it was noticeable how busy the aforementioned stages were. People were hungry for information. And this information wasn't specifically 'post-MTD'; instead, there was a range of strategic and operationally-themed sessions.

I was delighted to serve as a panellist on the

'Are outsourcing and offshoring the solutions to the recruitment crisis?' session.

Ironically, some of the outsourcing session covered MTD's impact on changing the way practices work with their clients, particularly around the increasing amount of bookkeeping that firms' clients require. Advocate practitioners on the panel spoke of being unable to manage their workload with outsourcing support.

■ If you'd like to find out more about the pricing models for outsourcing and offshoring, please [click here](#). Feel free to [get in touch to speak to Vipul and the team](#). We'd love to help your practice develop and grow.

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