

ICT | CHILE

How LatAm talent can address global demand for data scientists

By Phil Anderson - Friday, August 11, 2017

While governments around the region wrestle with the issue of promoting STEM education, often as part of a national ICT agenda, one multinational firm is showing that private enterprises can step in and add substantially to such initiatives.

The Chilean unit of Swiss business intelligence and analytics firm Evalueserve launched an in-house data science training program in 2013 in partnership with all universities in the Viña del Mar/Valparaíso area.

The firm opened its Chilean branch in 2006 and intended to build the workforce to 500 people by 2014, but a need for specific skills which were not readily available in the market led Evalueserve to consider in-house training. The division finally hit the 500 employee mark in 2017.

Each course is three months, covering data science tools and techniques as well as modules on business acumen, communication, and structured thinking/writing.

The bulk of Evalueserve Chile's employees are Chilean nationals, country manager Sumeet Sangar said, noting that "to be a successful and scalable operation the workforce needs to be locally sourced."

The operation does scout for candidates from the rest of Latin America, and given the global demand for data scientists - even in the US - Sangar hints that his firm's model of 24x5 globalized service can help address this issue.

Thus, he agrees that there is potential for other tech multinationals to devise similar programs in the region, not necessarily in Chile.

He dismisses the possibility that Evalueserve's trained staff will be headhunted by other countries that lack data scientists. "Most of the folks we have really like the team engagement and motivational environment. This, coupled with the exposure we are able to provide to the people, is really difficult to get elsewhere. Moreover, most of the folks are locals from the region who want to stay here," Sangar says.

Evalueserve selected Chile as a center of operations to serve North American clients, mainly because it fits in the time zone but also because it has a similar cultural affinity; is open to the transfer of employees from all over the world, and in the Viña del Mar/Valparaíso area there is a good selection of quality universities from which to draw talent.

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Despite the global nature of Evalueserve's offering, Sangar believes the Chile unit has developed particular strengths, such as its Marketing Analytics practice, which specializes in integrating clients' offline and digital data - something that is becoming more and more necessary with the notion of digital transformation.

"This framework starts with basic data management use-cases, and goes all the way to prescriptive and predictive analytics followed by visualization or story-telling. We have a strong handle on that, which is driving a lot of our future growth," Sangar says.

The Chilean office has also amassed a lot of experience in risk and compliance for financial services – one of Evalueserve's four business units – due to the rate at which bank regulations change, as well as advanced analytics for this vertical.

Roughly 50% of Evalueserve's clients are financial firms of every kind except insurance.

The rest of the business breaks down into three main areas: Providing research and analytics services for global consultancies and Fortune 500 companies across a variety of verticals; data management and marketing intelligence services in the healthcare, pharmaceutical and medical devices segment; support services relating to patents, intellectual property; and R&D.

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