

# Wipro Uberizes travel management

Shilpa.Phadnis  
@timesgroup.com

## Big focus on patents, says CEO Kurien

**W**ipro CEO **TK Kurien** said the company expects to file 240 patents this year and hopes to take that number to 1,000 within three years. "Patents this time are around the areas of future disruption," he said at an investor conference in the US on Wednesday. The company had filed 40 patents three years ago.



Kurien said that Wipro, which recently set up a \$100 million corporate venture arm, was looking to invest in startups in the areas of digital, artificial intelligence and internet-of-things. Over the past few months, the company has increased headcount in its artificial intelligence lab from 200 to 700. TNN

at a shift in the back office process model. If Uber can be used by you, shouldn't the enterprise be thinking about using it!" said Anurag Srivastava, senior vice-president and head of business outcome services in Wipro.

Wipro has piloted the solution in the company and also has some four beta customers. The idea is to experience e-commerce-like services inside the enterprise, expediting the process of claim approval and reimbursement. "We are trying

to make it the equivalent of a MakeMyTrip experience, a travel experience that's exciting and proactive," Srivastava said.

The complexity at the back-end is humungous. Wipro employees undertake 2.5 lakh trips annually and each business trip would normally have 25-30 bills to be submitted for various claims including travel, stay, cab rentals and miscellaneous expenses. The company has a 700-member team processing around 75 lakh receipts

every year, making sure they comply with the company's policy. With the new solution, this team would be scaled down to 20 soon.

Wipro has filed for an IP and Srivastava's team works like a lean startup comprising of data scientists and analytics professionals. "The travel solution fitted into our scope of ensuring how a complex back office process could be completely disrupted," said Srivastava. The cost of process, he said, comes down by 40%.

The opportunity is huge. Globally, \$733 billion is spent on travel annually, \$3,244 on each business trip. Late last year, SAP acquired Concur, the cloud-based travel-and-expense management company, for \$8.3 billion, a price that's indicative of the global opportunity. Concur's solution is said to provide a consumer-grade experience and the company has direct relationships with many travel, hotel, and entertainment suppliers.

**Bengaluru:** A Wipro employee travelling to another city would by now have got a first-hand experience of what a paperless business trip feels like. A new end-to-end travel and expense management solution allows the employee to book flights and cabs, and provides flight status, food menu options, and real-time weather alerts among many other things. The employee can even simply tap a button to have a car arrive to ferry him or her to a hotel. And there's no need to submit physical receipts.

For the solution, Wipro has tied up with 20 fulfillment partners, and has even integrated taxi-hailing app Uber to make the entire travel experience a seamless one.

"Travel and expense management as a service is one aspect of saying how a back office process has to become digital. It's not about the app alone, you're looking