



HackWithInfy: Infosys’ Innovative Coding Olympics Revolutionizes Tech TA

Infosys Ltd.

Best Unique or Innovative Talent Acquisition Program

November 2024



Company Background



Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	Bengaluru, India
Year Founded	1981
Employees	2,49,312
Global Scale	46 Countries
Customers/Output, etc.	1562 clients
Industry	Information Technology and Consulting
Stock Symbol	INFY
Website	www.infosys.com



Budget and Timeframe

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Overall budget	Confidential
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	30 members representing 11 different teams
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	10 people representing the core team
Timeframe to implement	Eight Months
Start date of the program	January, 2022

Business Conditions and Business Needs

Even though Infosys is one of the biggest employers and largest IT organizations in India, recruiters from Infosys were facing challenges in hiring strong coders and full stack developers abreast in latest technologies for the niche technical entry-level roles: Power Programmer (PP) and Digital Specialist Engineer (DSE). These two roles are part of the Strategic Technology Group at Infosys - a fast-paced evolving unit, under Global Delivery which serves Infosys’ top clients’ projects. It has been ramping up in a big way, resulting in an increased requirement for these roles growing at a YOY rate of 150%.

Another constraint in the current hiring landscape was that – the major hiring happened region-specific concentrated to the IT hubs of the country and Tier 1 cities. In this case, the talent pool from the remote areas/lower tier cities was overlooked to some extent. It not only lacked job opportunities, but also resources to be on par with an engineering fresher graduated from one of the cities which is an IT hub. Bridging this huge demand and supply gap and attracting the right talent from all parts of India required an unconventional way of talent acquisition with a focus on strong brand re-positioning in the mindset of a budding engineer and curating the best talent of the country with no bias whatsoever – and that is how ‘HackWithInfy’ was born in year 2018. The idea was to attract top brains of the country and bring them onboard with the added flavor of ‘competition’, an attractive ‘prize’ money, a ‘chance to work in the most niche and technology driven unit in the company.’



Overview

Infosys has always been branded as a global technology giant, with a huge appetite of absorbing good quality talent. The organization has been known for the excellent training program, world class infrastructure, renowned employee benefits and an enriching career path.

Before the launch of HackWithInfy, Infosys used to visit **top 30 engineering colleges (IITs and NITs)** in the country to hire talent for PP and DSE roles but could attract only **100 or so job offers per year**. In this recruitment model the average interview time was 25 minutes and 40 minutes for DSE and PP role. Evaluating a rather nervous candidate in the stipulated span and assessing his fittingness to the organization as well as the role that demanded special coding skills and knowledge was not only tough but also unfair to the candidate. A bad day or one nervous answer could change the entire career trajectory of a fresh Engineering graduate.

In addition to the shortcomings of current recruitment landscape, the traditional hiring model required the team of recruiters to travel to top 30 engineering colleges (IITs and NITs) for fulfilling the demand for SP and DSE roles. The onset of a pandemic followed by a nationwide lockdown would have put the hiring for these niche roles completely off the hinge.

Besides, the competitors had launched various internship programs to recruit the best talent in the market at much earlier and later converted them to full time offers. This prevented Infosys from getting access to a large talent pool. Thus, the traditional hiring models did not suffice for sourcing quality students, and there was a dire need of innovating.

There was a need to create an innovative program that would serve the following key business and talent acquisition objectives:

1. Establish a comprehensive virtual tool for running a nation-wide program.
2. Offer a level-playing field for all and curate the right talent regardless of geographies and penetrate to the untapped potential talent pool.
3. Set up an inspiring and aspiring program with a strong value addition and multiple student engagement touchpoints that provides them an opportunity for holistic development alongside competition and employment opportunities as against the hackathon model offered by the competitors.
4. Initiate a recruitment model that addresses the limitation of evaluating the student only within the interview time by offering the recruiters and interviewers an opportunity for thorough analysis of the student basis a comprehensive set of criteria over a wide span of the program.

**A 5-year old NEW PROGRAM: New offerings with every edition**

HackWithInfy offerings change and evolve as it grows with each year. This year, the most vital offering was the experience of a **4-day on-ground event** and the first in-person hackathon after the pandemic. Additionally, HackWithInfy now offered the opportunities to be a part of **2 sub-programs, namely: Campus Ambassador and Power Internship**. Alongside the top 3 teams, the best coder was recognized basis his performance in the rigorous 40-hours hackathon called – ‘**Champion of Champions**’

2018

- Inception of the program
- Open to partner accounts only

2019

- Open to all colleges across India

2020

- All Virtual event amidst Covid
- Replica of Mysore GEC on Meridian

2021

- Online hackathon
- Introduced subprogram: Power Internship

2022

- Virtual to On-ground event
- Open to 3rd and 4th year students as well
- Cutting edge technology: Drones, VR headsets, sensors
- 2 Sub-programs: Campus Ambassador, Power Internship



HackWithInfy has been able to positively impact all the above identified goals and contributed significantly to improve the recruitment quality and quantity for its niche roles. It is designed as a technology-driven program to not only hire talent but also continuously communicate and engage with the participants about brand proposition of Infosys, its work culture, latest developments. Even before joining the organizations, the students were given an opportunity to assess their team and role fitment, by working with Infosys employees throughout the hackathon. It also provides opportunities for overall personality development like team building, communication along with great coding skills.

Design of the Program

In 2018, Infosys designed an all-India annual coding competition for engineering students in their final year and launched HackWithInfy. The competition aims to invite participation from all students who have a strong coding aptitude. Winners of the competition get prize money of **INR 200,000, INR 100,000, and INR 50,000** respectively. Top scorers of the competition get a **pre-placement interview (PPI) opportunity** with Infosys for Power Programmer and Digital Specialist Engineer roles. There are no academic criteria involved in hiring through this program, unlike other recruitment activities by Infosys.

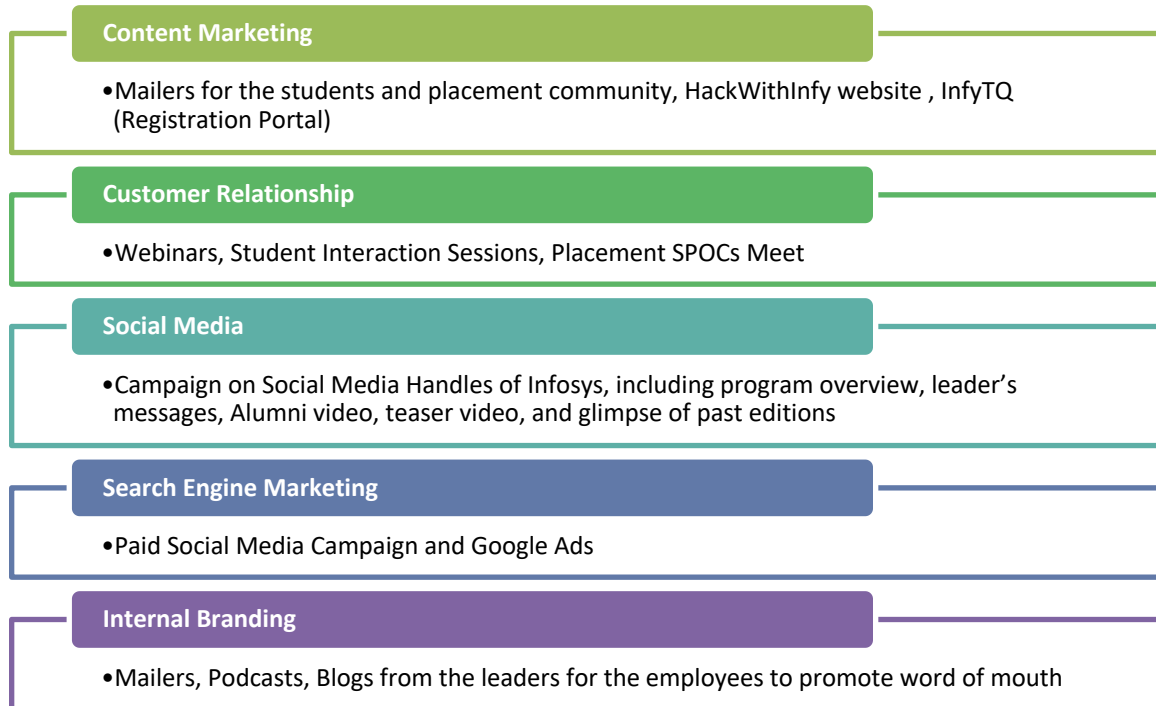
The program happens in 4 phases:

1) Program Launch	Registration
2) Round 1	Online Coding round
3) Pre-placement Interviews	Top performers from round 1 got interviewed for Specialist Programmer and Digital Specialist Engineer roles
4) Grand Finale	First on-ground hackathon after the pandemic. 4-day grand event at Infosys Pune Development Centre



Delivery of the Program

Program Launch – HackWithInfy is launched in the month of January with a strong focus on creating awareness and driving registrations for the program across engineering colleges in the country. The following channels were leveraged for the marketing and communication campaign of the program –



Round 1 – Once the registration window is over, the students are invited to appear for the first round of the competition which is a three-hour coding assessment challenge. It is conducted virtually, offering the candidate a flexibility and ease to give the test in their comfort zones. The questions revolve from low to difficult level in terms of complexity. The objective of the round is to thoroughly screen and identify the high performing candidates. Round 1 of 2022 edition saw a record-breaking participation from **1,31,200+** students and after a thorough scrutiny and evaluation, **Top 116** students were shortlisted which made their way to Grand Finale

Grand Finale – It is a four-day extravaganza comprising of a 40-hour hackathon, leadership sessions, workshops, celebrity performances, technology exhibition. The finalists are divided into teams and are given real time problem statements. They are expected to develop a prototype with the help of a mentor and present the same in front of an internal jury comprising of leaders from different business

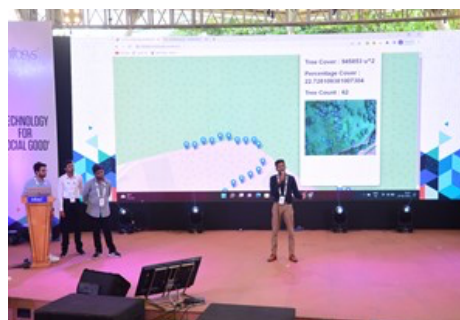


units. The whole program aims at rewarding talent and engaging with potential hires to establish Infosys as a preferred employer by giving them an excellent candidate experience. The focus of Grand Finale is on establishing Infosys a preferred employer in terms of an enriching career path and excellent work culture. The marketing strategy revolves around showcasing the cutting-edge technologies Infosys is engaged with and giving the students a strong culture immersion.

• **HackWithInfy 2022 Grand Finale:**

After Covid-19 pandemic, Infosys Limited was the first IT company to **host the Grand Finale in a physical set up**. The program provided world class hospitality along with fully sponsored travel arrangements to the finalists, and showcased their pictures using digital displays across the campus to recognize and welcome the top 80 coders of the country

The theme for this year was “**Technology for social good**”. Three problem statements were created by the Strategic Technology Group on the lines of this theme as ***Biodiversity Management Using Drones; Hazardous Workplace Monitoring Solutions; XR to address one of the sustainable development goals laid down by WHO***. The teams were free to choose any one of the three problem statements and were closely mentored by the experts from the Strategic Technology Group. It was magnificent to watch the finalists using drones to scan the biodiversity inside Infosys campus. A gaming zone was also provided, and numerous activities were arranged to relax their brain cells and refreshments were served throughout **40 hours of Hackathon**.



• **Focus on Holistic Candidate Experience and Engagement**

A pre-event session was organized to sensitize the finalists with respect to flow of grand finale events, their travel and accommodation arrangements and to further clear their doubts so that the students are acquainted with the grand finale schedule and **pre-enable** them for the hackathon. **Meaningful training session** on creative confidence was conducted to help the students work better in teams and approach the problem statement in a creative manner. To rejuvenate

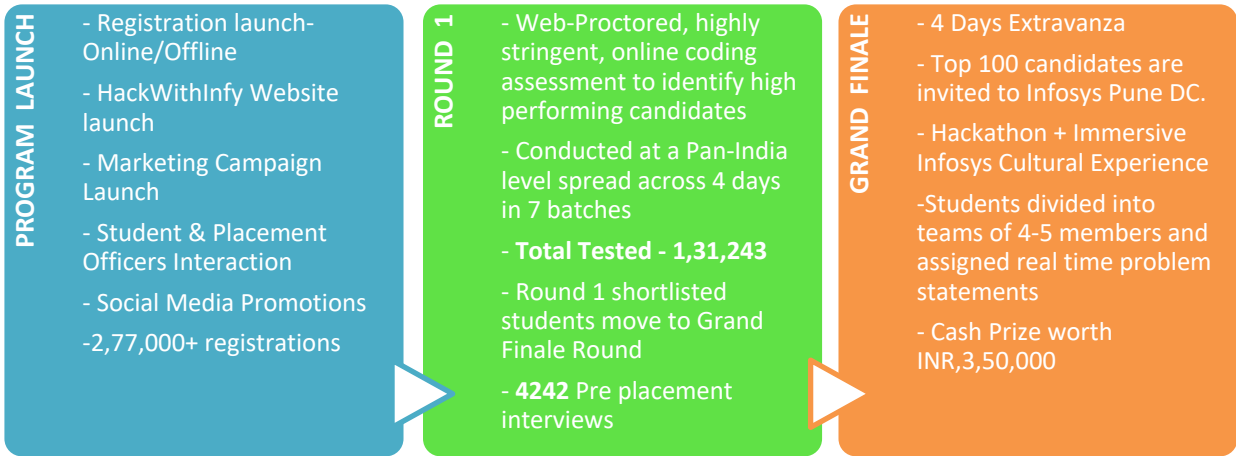
participants' mind, during the 40-hours Hackathon, **filler sessions** such as Infy club sessions including ice breaking sessions, standup comedy, star gazing, yoga sessions, zumba session. To keep the participants engaged and hooked on to the program, technology showcase was organized including Infosys VR tennis setup and meta verse experience, campus tours and bowling session were conducted.

To amplify the brand presence, a Swag Bag with **HackWithInfy branded merchandise was given** to all participants. To enhance candidate experience, the program hosted exclusive breakfast, lunch, and dinner for the participants at exotic different lounges, restaurants, and experience centers inside the campus.

To create a strong, connect with the finalists, **HackWithInfy Feedback board** was installed on campus and various testimonials were recorded and shared over social media platforms which focused on sharing relevant insights about the program like – feedback from the finalists and Infoscions alike.

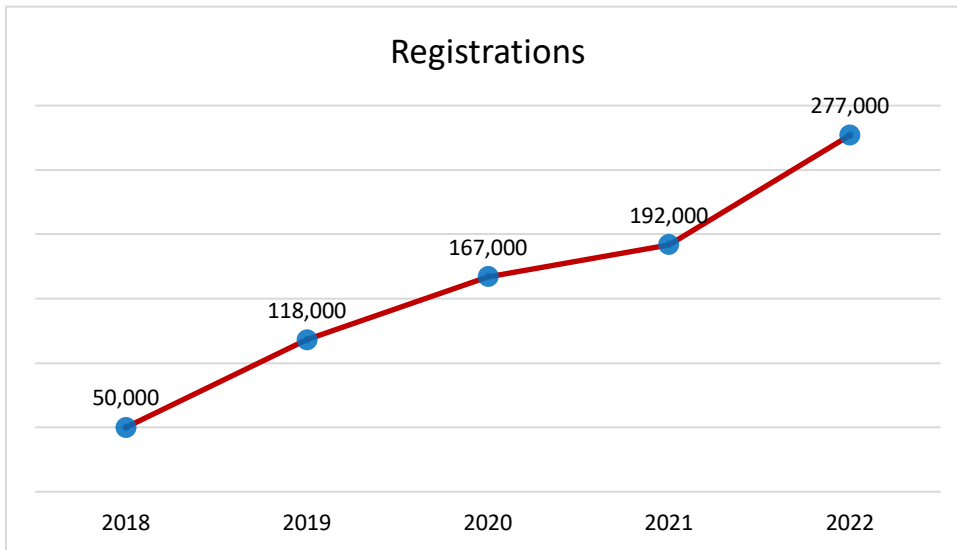
From competing 20 teams, top 6 teams battled their way to the grand finale and projected their prototype to the jury. The Grand finale witnessed an enthralling performance by V dance company followed by a laughter dose by Sorabh Pant. Winners' announcement followed by a War of DJs concluded this year's event.





Measurable Benefits

The program strategically fulfills the dual objective of recruitment and employer branding.





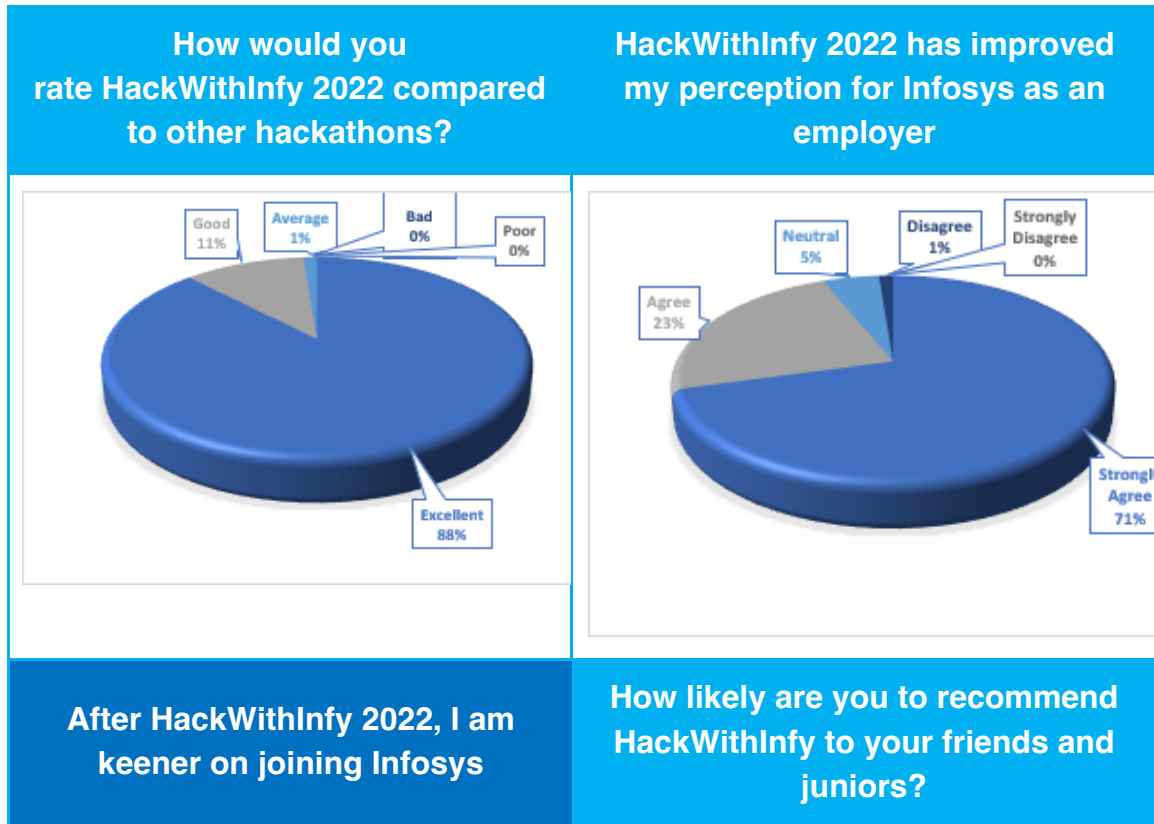
This edition saw **750+** participants from premier institutes (IIT & IIITs), hence promising deeper penetration in this segment. The program has become a **primary source of hiring** Specialist programmers and Digital specialist engineer for the organization with a **585%** increase in the number of offers made since season 1. **65% offers** for Specialist programmers and Digital Specialist engineer are made through HackWithInfy channel only.

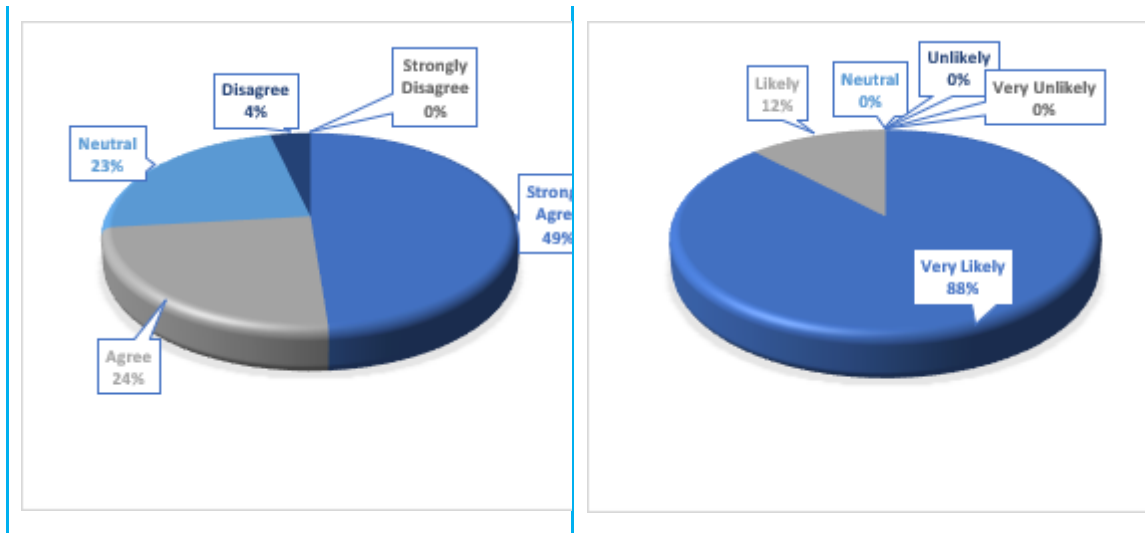
Candidate and Stakeholder feedback

Feedback from participants-

Abhinav Singh- Finalist, HackWithInfy 2022

- *“The hospitality was superb, was welcomed and accommodated in a very warm and comfortable manner, all the processes and activities were hassle free and smooth. The knowledge gained from participating in the hackathon was excellent. All the mentors and the management team helped us in every possible way. Overall, a truly great and wonderful experience”*





Here are some key highlights from the feedback shared by 100% of the finalists of HackWithInfy 2022 to a digital survey on the competition:

- **100%** respondents shared that they are 'Very Likely' (88%) and 'Likely' (12%) to recommend HackWithInfy competition to a friend or a peer
- **99%** respondents rated HackWithInfy 2022 'Excellent' (88%) and 'Good' (11%) as compared to other competitions/hackathons in India
- **98%** respondents rated effectiveness of marketing and communication for HackWithInfy 2022 as 'Excellent' (80%) and 'Good' (18%)
- **96%** respondents shared that they were satisfied with their overall experience of HackWithInfy 2022 as 'Strongly agree' (79%) and 'Agree' (17%)
- **94%** respondents shared that HackWithInfy 2022 has improved their perception of Infosys as a potential employer



Feedback from a panelist who interviewed HackWithInfy PPI candidates:


- “We as a company are doing something right here. **HackWithInfy program is getting us quality candidates** for interview. So, continue to focus on this mode of candidate shortlisting – HackWithInfy is working!”

Janardhanan V. R., Group Project Manager, PMPR



- “Apple account is one of the largest subscribers to the DSE folks from the STG group. The DSE folks are good, most of them are able to clear the client interview by Apple and are regarded better than the SE employees we get (even by the client). There is a clear differentiation we see in terms of their technical skills and communication skills”

Ashish (Client for Apple)



Following is hiring manager feedback from Strategic Technology Group

Mohammed Rafee Tarafdar, CTO, Infosys

- “This is a phenomenal feat and what started as a new way of hiring for us few years back, has now become an awesome platform to find the best programmers in India. I know that a lot of you have worked hard for this, so kudos and congrats for making this such a successful branding, hiring and tech community engagement.”

Sreeram Venkatasubramanian, Senior Technologist, STG

- “Overall, I am thrilled with impact delivered by the team members who joined from HackWithInfy process, and I can say that it has been very successful in bringing awesome talents to the team.”

Joe Walter Sugil George, Delivery Manager, STG

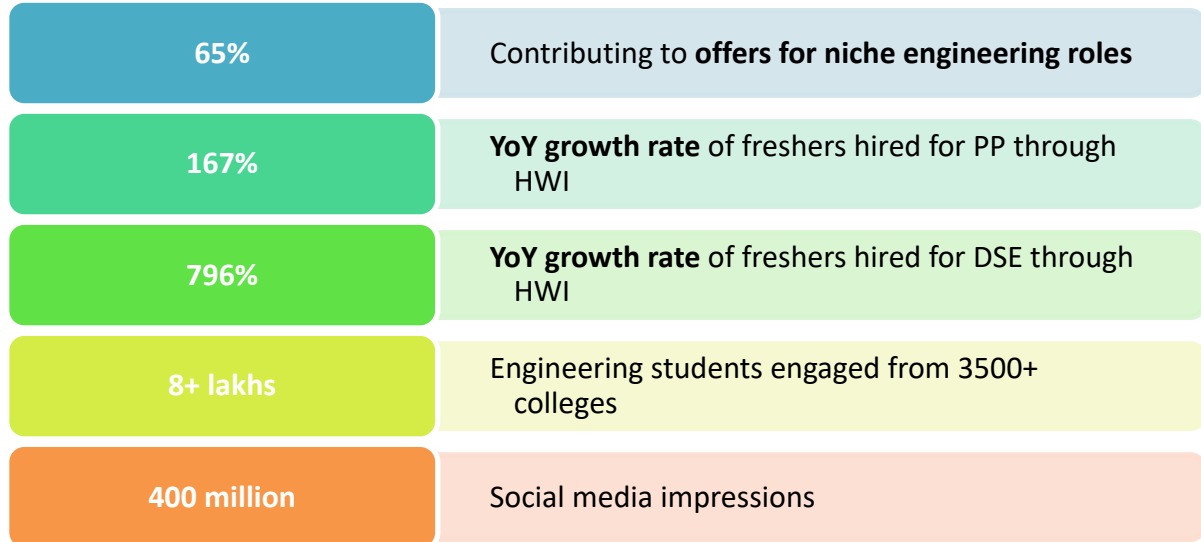
- “We had a great last season, and the numbers below reflect the great passion shown by the team. Thanks to all of you for your relentless efforts in making this a flagship program. As we embark our journey towards setting new milestones for the coming season, let’s get together and carve out the strategy

Increased market coverage-

Registrations received from **3500+** engineering colleges including the top **350** accounts recognized as per the NIRF ratings and training performance.



HackWithInfy program has been able to engage with **8,04,000+** students from the target pool.



Sub-programs under HackWithInfy

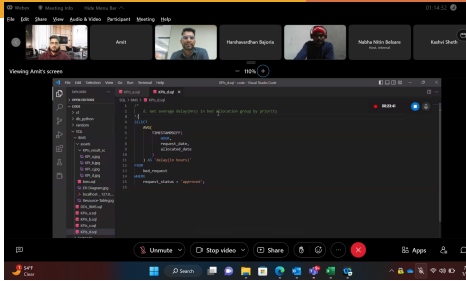
Campus Ambassador-

The best performers of HackWithInfy Round 1 from the batch of 2022 (4th yr. of engineering) –a PPI (Pre-placement interview) is offered to them. This year, for the first time, a Campus Ambassador Program was opened through HackWithInfy 2022, with the vision of **identifying Top Brains from junior batches** for extensive promotion and branding at the select campuses. **Top 184 coders from 2024 (3rd yr. of engineering) and 2025 (2nd yr. of engineering) batches** across the nation were recognized as Campus Ambassadors based on their performance in the first round of HackWithInfy 2022.

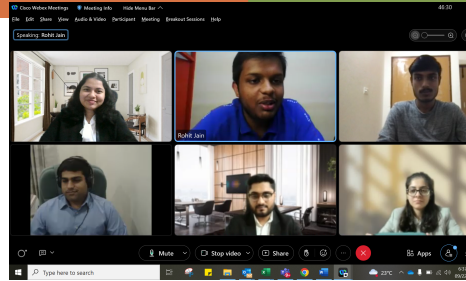
Objectives of the program are:

- 1) Brand amplification
- 2) Identifying high potential students
- 3) Talent attraction strategy
- 4) Year-long engagement with the potential employees
- 5) Enhancing university relations

Till date, the program has achieved over 30 touch points with this selected group of campus ambassadors including training workshops, engagement activities, meticulous code review sessions and many more.



Code Review Session



Interaction with HackWithInfy Alumni



Leadership Connect sessions

Power Internship

Power Internship, the **first unit specific** campus-internship program designed to facilitate specialized training to students in their final semester who have been selected for the niche role of **Power Programmer** at Infosys.

Objectives of the program are:

- 1) Creating a readymade and deployable talent pipeline for STG units
- 2) Engagement with target pool
- 3) Retention of the selected talent until deployment
- 4) Pre – Enablement of Candidates:
- 5) Enhance Offer to Join Ratio



Selection

- The top 35 students identified through HWI ranking



Offer Release

- Communication for final intern selects
 - Offer letter highlighting the stipend, duration, location and other employment details



Surveys

- Understanding Technology preferences for team formation and mentor allotment



Pre – Enabling

- Lex Course Content to be passed on to the students for mandatory completion of courses



The internship is divided into 2 parts:

1. Training (8weeks)
2. Project (8weeks)



For the project, interns divided into teams of 3 members, given a problem statement and assigned a mentor who actively follows up and ensures constant feedback sharing

Following the approach of hiring, training, and deploying the resources it ensures an early supply of trained candidates to STG.

Strengthening Campus Relations with Universities-

Traditional campus recruitment process was only open to limited colleges for hiring these profiles. However, through HackWithInfy, all colleges irrespective of their tier are eligible to participate. In this process, Infosys established a very good stand in the placement community and have engaged over 1000+ placement officers.

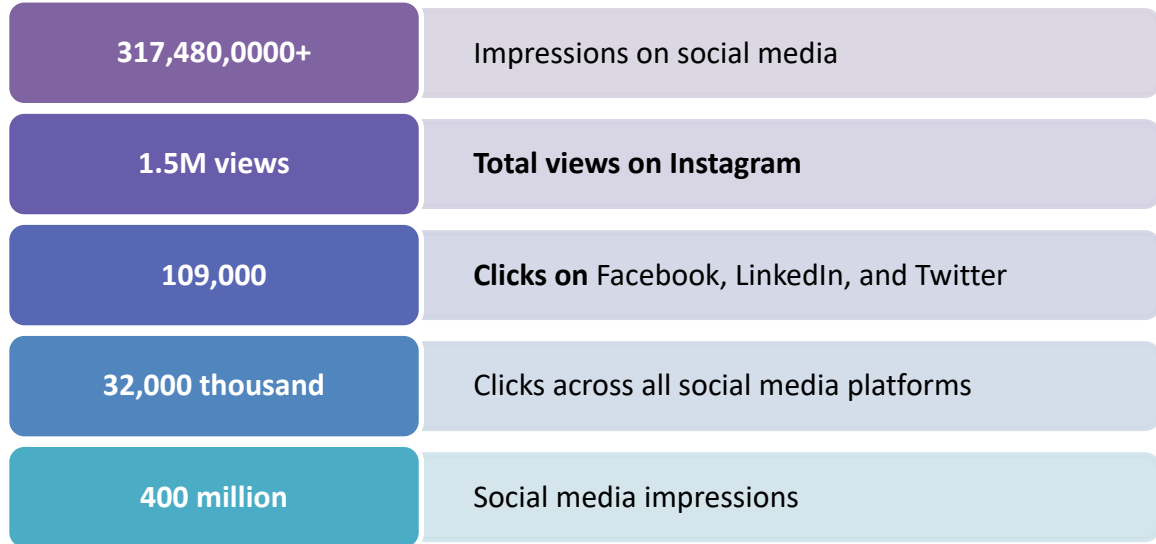
Brand impact

Stevie Awards, United States of America

- *“HackWithInfy is simply brilliant and your marketing and communication campaigns for this exceptionally powerful. Bravo!”*



The marketing activities, brand positioning, and social media promotions for HackWithInfy 2022 had following impact on Infosys' employer brand:





Overall

Engaged with **8 lakh+** engineering students from over **3500+** institutes.

5700+ top hackathon performers have joined Infosys

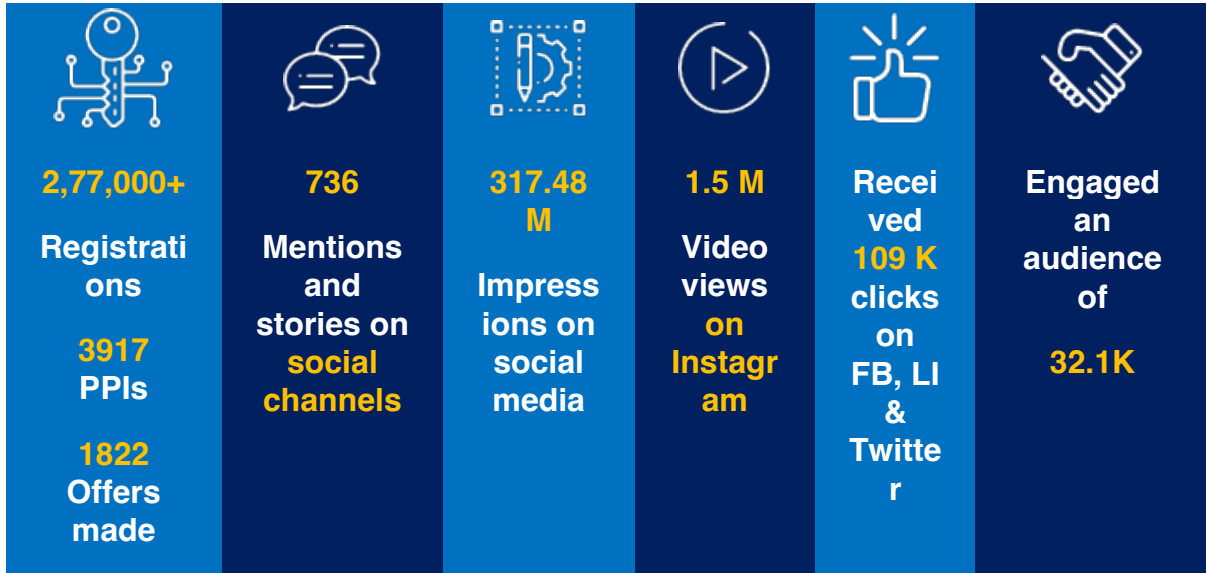
15000+ Pre-Placement Interviews from 2018 and **7500+** job offers

Continuous interaction and engagement with Target audience for **8 month**

- HackWithInfy has won seven international awards – **5 Brandon Hall Gold Award** for *Best Recruitment Marketing and Employer Branding Program* and *Best Candidate Experience*, a **Stevie Silver Award** for *Best Youth Employment Strategy* and **Global HR Excellence Gold Award** given by **World HRD Congress** in *Best Innovation in Recruitment Category (Brandon Hall - 5 gold, Global HR Excellence Awards – 1 gold, Stevie – 1 silver)*.
- HackWithInfy 2021 has been ranked 3rd in the segment Dare2Compete Prestigious E-School Competitions 2022.
- HackWithInfy has become a **complementary channel** in campus hiring for freshers and **primary channel in hiring for Power Programmer and Digital Specialist Engineer roles**, filling the gaps of the traditional hiring model.
- HackWithInfy has helped Infosys employer brand directly engaged with **8.04 lakh engineering** students from **3500+ institutes** and selected **7522+** top brains of the country for Infosys.
- Extensive branding, marketing, and interaction through the program has **strengthened the foothold of Infosys** as a **preferred employer**, helping the recruitment team attract top coders/full stack developers.
- The increased focus on candidate experience and brand positioning has helped in improving the **joining conversion rate** of candidates.



- Due to the ease in hiring and quality of talent joining Infosys, the **Year on Year growth rate** of freshers hired for Power Programmer and Digital Specialist Engineer roles through HackWithInfy is **167%** and **796%**, respectively.



Roadmap ahead and Learning:

- Having successfully captured the India talent market, the long-term vision is to take the competition global in a systematic manner and make it the largest in world par excellence.
- The program levels up to geographies of USA and Canada taking it global step by step.
- The edition has a strong focus to fostering diversity in participation, thereby bringing in more diverse workforce in the organization.
- HackWithInfy is getting towards becoming the **Olympics of Coding** and is set to go global in the upcoming editions. With the same vision, we have launched HackWithInfy 2024 in January.



- We have revamped the **HWI website** to resonate with the young global coders, making it a one stop solution for all information related to the competition. The website aims to project a culturally diverse and a gender-neutral approach towards talent. Elements like preparatory guidelines, sample papers, archives of last edition and testimonials prepare create a seamless candidate experience.

“I must say, participating in HackWithInfy 2021 will have special place in my heart”, Balakrishna Harode- Finalist -HackWithInfy 2021.

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