

National Index of Communication Skills

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Preface

The National Index of Communication Skills (NI-CS) is the first in a series of efforts to create an index of the talent pool available in the sphere of English Communication Skills across the country. NI-CS aims at identifying and measuring the communication skills of the talent pool across regions in India for the BPO Industry as well as the Services Sector.

A pioneer in the field of Skills Assessment in India, MeritTrac has a 5-year history of pre-recruitment testing to its credit and has an enviable client base that includes key players in the corporate space. Over the years, MeritTrac has been able to garner rich performance data on more than 200,000 candidates in its communication tests. The NI-CS Report aims at presenting meaningful information based on exhaustive analysis of this data, with a view to helping the industry gain greater insight into the dynamics of talent supply with respect to communication skills.

The Crucial Importance of Communication Skills in English

Across industries, it is a widely accepted fact that English communication is a critical skill required in a candidate. Gone are the days when only voice-based BPOs insisted on good spoken English skills. The rapid advent of globalization and the growth in the service industry has brought about a situation where every organization from every domain considers it mandatory for its employees to possess good communication skills.

However, each organization looks at different parameters while evaluating communication skills. While some of the voice-based BPOs rate Neutral Accent as the most important parameter, others players in the BPO sector also look at parameters such as Grammar and Fluency. In the service industry, parameters such as Articulation, Assertiveness and Confidence are considered important.

MeritTrac Suite of Communication Tests

To address the varying demands of several industry verticals on measures of English Communication Skills, MeritTrac has developed a suite of tests in Communication Skills.

The Test Suite includes the following:

- **Spoken English Test (SET) *designed for the BPO industry***
- **English Communication Test (ECT) *designed for the IT industry***
- **Group Interaction Test (GIT) *designed for the Service industry***
- **Persuasive Communication Test (PCT) *designed for Sales roles across verticals***

Apart from the Communication Test Suite, MeritTrac has also designed the following:

- **Written English Test**
- **Listening Comprehension Test**

National Index- Communication Skills (NI-CS)

A scale of measurement that compares the communication skills of applicants across the four regions of India for employability in the BPO and the Services Sector

The National Index will be published periodically using new data points, and will focus on tracking and presenting the dynamics of the availability and quality of the talent pool in terms of communication skills.

A. National Index- Communication Skills (NI-CS) for the BPO Industry

NI-CS for the BPO Industry is a scale of measurement that compares the employability of applicants from all Graduate streams, based on the MeritTrac Spoken English Test (SET)

This index has been arrived at by analyzing the performance of a sample of 10,500 Graduates spread across 17 cities in India between January and March 2006.

Please note that it is incorrect to interpret these regional indices as a ranking of the regions.

- These regional scores/indices have been arrived at based on the location where the candidates have taken our Spoken English Tests and therefore, due to the migratory nature of the talent pool, do not reflect the quality of the residents of the region.
- These indices have been captured over a period of 3 months - between January and March 2006 - and are to be seen more as a "view from the trenches" based on actual applicants and their performance. The attempt was not to conduct a research to arrive at these indices, but more to collate the results of MeritTrac's tests and analyze the performance therein.

The NI-CS for the BPO Industry is 41

Region-wise Performance (percentage indicates the pass-through rates on various parameters of the Spoken English Test)

| Region | Voice Clarity | Accent Neutrality | Fluency | Grammar | National Index |
|------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| East | 84.80% | 33.60% | 29.20% | 23.00% | 85 |
| North | 52.79% | 35.28% | 32.36% | 33.69% | 60 |
| South | 94.27% | 13.29% | 22.71% | 13.78% | 38 |
| West | 71.73% | 23.86% | 23.71% | 21.43% | 44 |
| All India | 90.91% | 15.71% | 23.43% | 15.41% | 41 |
| Tier I Cities | 86.71% | 21.66% | 27.74% | 20.40% | 58 |
| Tier II Cities | 94.86% | 10.12% | 19.39% | 10.73% | 25 |

Performance in the MeritTrac Spoken English Test(SET)- Inferences drawn on the national talent pool

- Over 90% of the tested population has an acceptable Voice Clarity
- Just over 15% of the tested population has a Neutral Accent - which is considered a key parameter for the voice-based BPOs
- 23% of the tested population fares well in Fluency
- Only 15% of the tested population meets industry expectations in Grammar

On a cumulative rating based on all parameters, only 10% of the total tested population meets industry expectations.

A candidate has to score a minimum of 3 on all the four parameters to be considered acceptable by industry standards.

Region-wise Inferences:

West:

- Scores are above the national average in Accent, Fluency and Grammar
- Scores are below the national average in Voice Clarity

North:

- Performs significantly well in terms of Accent Neutrality, Grammar and Fluency
- Voice Clarity is an area requiring improvement

South:

- Scores are above the national average in terms of Voice Clarity
- Virtually on par with the national average in terms of Fluency
- Accent Neutrality and Grammar are the areas requiring improvement

East:

- Performs well in parameters such as Accent, Fluency and Grammar
- Voice Clarity is an area requiring improvement

Tier I Cities vs. Tier II Cities

- Tier II cities are below the national average in terms of Grammar
- Tier II cities outperform Tier I cities in terms of Voice Clarity
- Tier II cities lose out greatly on Accent Neutrality to Tier I cities and are also significantly lower than the national average
- Tier I cities perform slightly better than Tier II cities in terms of Fluency while Tier II cities are slightly below the National average

B. National Index- Communication Skills (NI-CS) for the Services Sector

NI-CS for the Services Sector is a scale of measurement that compares the employability of applicants from the MBA stream, based on the MeritTrac Group Interaction Test (GIT)

This index has been arrived at by analyzing the performance of a sample of 800 MBA Graduates spread across 14 cities in India between January and March 2006

Please note that it is incorrect to interpret these regional indices as a ranking of the regions.

- These regional scores/indices have been arrived at based on the location where the candidates have taken our Group Interaction Test(GIT) and therefore, due to the migratory nature of the talent pool, do not reflect the quality of the residents of the region.
- These indices have been captured over a period of 3 months - between January and March 2006 - and are to be seen more as a "view from the trenches" based on actual applicants and their performance. The attempt was not to conduct a research to arrive at these indices, but more to collate the results of MeritTrac's tests and analyze the performance therein.

The NI-CS for the Services Sector is 66

Region-wise Performance (percentage indicates the pass-through rates on various parameters of the Group Interaction Test)

| Region | Articulation | Grammar | Assertiveness | Confidence | National Index |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| East | 40.53% | 34.74% | 69.47% | 69.84% | 49 |
| North | 54.05% | 50.91% | 64.86% | 63.06% | 70 |
| South | 68.80% | 42.00% | 52.00% | 57.60% | 57 |
| West | 68.55% | 46.37% | 74.19% | 73.79% | 86 |
| All India | 59.95% | 42.86% | 64.83% | 66.29% | 66 |
| Tier I Cities | 63.95% | 56.85% | 69.77% | 72.97% | 89 |
| Tier II Cites | 56.92% | 32.31% | 61.10% | 61.23% | 49 |

Performance in the MeritTrac Group Interaction Test(GIT)- Inferences drawn on the national talent pool

- **60% of the tested population fares well in Articulation**
- **Just over 43% of the tested population does well in Grammar**
- **65% of the tested population scores high on Assertiveness**
- **Close to 67% of the tested population displays high levels of Confidence**

On a cumulative rating based on all parameters, 33% of the total tested population meets industry expectations

A candidate has to score a minimum of 3 on all the four parameters to be considered acceptable by industry standards.

Region-wise Inferences:

West:

- **Scores are above the national average on all parameters**
- **Significantly higher scores in Grammar and Articulation**

North:

- **Scores high on parameters such as Grammar and Assertiveness**
- **Areas requiring improvement are Articulation and Confidence**

South:

- **Scores well in Articulation and Grammar**
- **Areas requiring improvement are Assertiveness and Confidence**

East:

- **Scores excellently in areas such as Assertiveness and Confidence**
- **Articulation and Grammar are the areas requiring improvement**

Tier I Cities vs. Tier II Cities

- **Tier II cities lag behind Tier I in terms of Articulation**
- **Tier II cities are significantly lower in terms of Grammar**
- **Tier I cities display higher scores in Assertiveness and Confidence**

Conclusion

The National Index of Communication Skills benchmarks English Communication Skills across the country, and will aid corporates in their talent acquisition strategy. The NI-CS helps them recognize the availability of talent across locations and identify regions with specific skill sets in English Communication..

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