

The e-commerce delivery business is helping the less-educated enter the formal workforce – a stepping stone to a better career. **By GOUTAM DAS**

It is the morning before Christmas. On-demand delivery company Quickli's small hub in Delhi's Kahu Sarai is abuzz with 10 just-hired men. They get red jackets and Santa hats for a "feel-good factor". There aren't any holidays – when the rest of India celebrates, delivery companies must work. Right now, everyone is gearing up for a training.

Trainer Arpo Ghosh switches on a projector, as the men take their seats. The next one hour is about a lot of must-dos and must-haves. "Always keep ₹1,500 in cash for spot payments." "The mobile needs to be fully charged and 3G connection is a must." "The GPS should be switched on". "If you accept an order and then reject its delivery, ₹50 gets cut from the pay."

A sermon on grooming standards and soft skills follow.

"When you ring the bell at a house, wait between 40 seconds and one minute before ringing again if the door isn't opened," tells Ghosh, as his trainees watch him quietly. "Maintain a physical space between the customer and you; if you are delivering a cake, the left hand should be below the packet; when you are returning change, make sure you do not touch the customer's hand."

The 10 men will need to go through multiple mock tests to polish up these skills, re-skill and up-skill before the rubber of their two-wheelers meet the road. The way they look, what they speak, and how they behave have become increasingly important in making them employable in this crucial last-mile job of India's \$17-billion e-commerce industry. There is no physical touch and feel with the brand, like there is in a bricks-and-mortar store. And there is no e-commerce until the product purchased online is

PEOPLE EMPLOYED

100,000

NO. OF PLAYERS

20+

TOTAL INDUSTRY

REVENUE

₹3,900 CR+

PRESENCE IN

NUMBER OF CITIES

500+

