

## Drone manufacturers on hiring spree amid fresh funding, policy initiatives

**Business sentiment has improved in drone industry in the last six months and we are getting larger orders from govt and private customers," said Omnipresent Robot Tech's Sinha**

Aneesh Phadnis | Mumbai May 27, 2022 Last Updated at 11:43 IST



*Drone manufacturers are doubling their headcount to develop new products and tap new markets in India and overseas.*

Drone manufacturers are looking to double headcount in their organisations to develop new products and tap new markets in India and abroad. This comes on the back of fresh funding and policy initiatives that have simplified the production and operation of drones.

“Our staff strength is 60 and we expect to double the number in the coming quarter. Most of the new hires will be on the technology side – in drone design, engineering, and pilots. We are also looking for people in senior roles in sales for our defence and private sector contracts,” said Aakash Sinha, founder and chief executive officer of Omnipresent Robot Tech, a Delhi NCR-based firm that provides drones to the government for mapping villages and oil companies for inspection and surveys.

**ALSO READ - [Making of India's drone economy](#)**

He said business sentiment has improved in the last six months. “We are getting larger orders from the government and private customers. We are about to bag a Rs 50-crore order from a state government, which will be our largest order till date,” Sinha added.

Similar is the case of ideaForge, which makes drones for defence, homeland security, and industrial applications. “The last two years have been the best so far and our revenue has grown 10x,” said Ankit Mehta, co-founder and CEO of ideaForge. Mehta founded the firm in 2007 and it currently employs 350-400 people (including contract staff). “We will double our permanent staff from around 200 to 400 and most of the new hires would be in engineering functions,” he added.

Garuda Aerospace plans to increase its current headcount from 200 to around 1,500 by hiring drone pilots, engineers, and sales executives to serve both domestic and export markets that include UAE, Malaysia, Panama, and countries in Africa.

“We are scaling very quickly and sustainably,” said Agnishwar Jayaprakash, founder-CEO of Garuda Aerospace. Along with drone manufacturing and services, the firm also provides clients with data analytics and artificial intelligence applications, Jayaprakash said.

While ideaForge received \$20 million in series B funding last month, Omnipresent Robot Tech raised an undisclosed amount from Zerodha co-founder Nikhil Kamath’s investment firm in February.

“Most of our capex would be for development of new products and improving the effectiveness of existing solutions,” Mehta said. Sinha said his firm will use funds for working capital and business expansion. “We aim to expand our manufacturing and drone training facility in Gautam Buddha University,” Sinha added.

IdeaForge and Omnipresent Robot Tech are among the 14 firms that were selected as beneficiaries under the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for drones last month. Last September the Centre cleared the scheme to make India a drone hub by 2030. It provides up to 20 per cent incentive to manufacturers of drones and drone components. The government hopes that the sector will attract investment of over Rs 5,000 crore and expects a jump in turnover from around Rs 60 crore in 2020-21 to Rs 900 crore in FY24.

“In some of our products, 70 per cent of components are indigenous. We are trying to double down on that and the PLI scheme will encourage us to do more local value addition,” Mehta said.

“While the list of beneficiaries has been announced under PLI, it is imperative to expedite the granting of type certificates under the Drone Rules 2021. This becomes important especially since import of drones has been banned and boot in domestic manufacturing would largely be dependent on granting of the type certificate which is a prerequisite to commercial drone development,” said Huzefa Tavawalla, head of disruptive technologies practice at Nishith Desai Associates.