

Bringing Industry in Classroom: A Challenge for B-Schools

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As Assistant Director, Corporate Affairs and Placement Bureau, I always interact with the industry people closely and organize a formal feedback session once the interview is over. In my college, few of the top-notch companies visit every year for MBA placement; Oracle, Emerson Network, Caritor, Ceasefire, Cafe Coffee Day, ICICI, Wockhardt Hospitals, and Diffusion Knowledge Solutions (KPO) name a few. Feedback focuses on three board areas: communication, confidence level & positive energy, and wide gap between industry and class room learning.

Typically over the years B-schools have been trying to address these issues. Soft-skills programmes have been a part of curriculum to improve the communication skills and develop a pleasant personality. Most of the B-schools have language centres as well. The last two areas are really hard to improve upon. Having low confidence is not solely an outcome of a poor attitude. It is much more. It links to the third point. Most of the questions asked in interview are fundamental and have relevance to industry practices. Few companies have now started giving case studies in interview to judge their analytical skills and industry-readiness.

These challenges lead us to answer one question, "How to bring industry in the class room?" There are many ways to address this concern; industry experience mandatory for recruiting teachers (minimum 5 years), strong industry-academia interface through guest lecture, common knowledge sharing forum, CEO Interaction, panel discussions, industry internship, consultancy, industry visit name a few.

At PG level students can study at their own whatever is there in books. What matters most is how teachers can bring real-life experiences into classrooms? Towards this direction, most of the business schools have now adopted case study based teaching and lots of other activities like business games, role play, syndicate exercises, panel discussions, student associateship programmes, learn while you earn and all these have bridged the gap to some extent. Teaching thorough simulation has become very fruitful, and many Business Schools have already established BSL (Business Simulation Lab).

My experiences while interacting with the students have brought out many areas of concern (for detailed discussion refers my book *Teaching -Learning process in Management Education*, IUP, ISBN: 978-81-314-2071-3). Some of them are: students expect teachers to quote real business examples, teachers not to restrict to syllabus, activity based learning like case study, role play, management games, internet based exercise etc, and syllabus based teaching is boring.

I personally think that for a teacher to teach management subjects at least 2-3 years minimum industry experience is must. Without having any industry experience how can one really connect and draw attention of the students, is really a big question? That's why students don't concentrate in the class. They know that they can study at home the same thing and there is nothing new. But no governing body has made industry experience as mandatory for the teachers and still a lot of importance is given to Ph.D. qualification. Many Ph.D. holders also don't have any industry experiences and their classes also become very boring.

To bridge this gap management colleges have initiated various measures such as providing consultancy services under the guidance of senior faculty members, sending teachers to industry in lean period to get some exposures, publishing at least 2 articles/papers every year, writing book is another area where teachers can update their knowledge and share their knowledge with others, making few years of industry-experience to join MBA program mandatory, and applying the new model "earn-while-learn."

Part-time MBA and E-MBA has become very popular now-a-days. Corporate executives having industry-experience join this kind of programmes and are immensely benefited out

of it as they can easily relate the concept easily. Regulatory bodies, from time to time, have put many restrictions on the validity of the courses, eligibility for the faculty, HOD etc. But this has lost the relevance. Success stories of Indian School of Business- Hyderabad, IIPM and many more prove that. Co-operates too don't bother whether you have passed from any affiliated/approved college or some other college, as long as students meet their requirements, deal is fine. Let all the things be left to the market forces and make management education so competitive that not only student, industry, but also society can get benefits out of it.

Time has come to look into these areas of concern and redesign the educational process. Infrastructure alone doesn't define the quality of the education. Teachers are the backbone of any institution and they need to be looked after properly, nurtured properly. Students are the hearts of the institutions, they need to be taught properly, groomed properly to meet the challenges of the corporate world. Having done these, ultimately society, country and ultimately humanity will get benefits.