

TOWARDS AN EDUCATED INDIA:

Transforming the Unemployable MBA into an Employable MBA

Higher Education Forum

Approves recent research paper said that only 21 per cent of the MBAs produced in this country are employable. The rest of the 79 per cent are totally unemployable. The discussions with the industry personnel indicated that while recruiting 75 per cent weightage is given to the soft skills, while 25 per cent weightage is given for the hard skills. By soft skills it was meant skills like negotiating skills, group working, empathy for the downtrodden, etc., while with respect to hard skills it was envisaged that today's MBA should be more like a 'generalist', a Jack of all trades. He must have an integrated knowledge in the areas including:

- General management
- Environment, economy and the implications of the state policies
- Ever-changing technology
- Financial Management and its link to marketing and other business strategies and more importantly
- A behaviour which is ruthless yet humane in nature and also sound ethical and transparent

Each of the above demands leads to several basic issues. For instance, integrated knowledge indicates that the MBA must be able to understand the link between the various focus areas of a business like working capital management, supply chain management, production management, channel management, human resource management, customer management etc. and its implications of any one action on the other focus areas.

Again, what could be the implication of an increase in sales on the financial management aspects, supply chain, aspects human resources management, etc.

By analysing the environment, a successful MBA would have to understand the consequence of a drop in GDP from a high of 7 to 8 per cent to a level of 4 per cent. He needs to understand the implication of the drop in the Foreign Direct Investments, etc.

Internally, the manager should be able to communicate well within as well as outside the organisation. He should appear to be transparent, open as well as should have a high moral value. He should be able to



understand the systems and procedures that are currently being used. He should be able to retain customers, be sympathetic, and have a high commitment and a long term orientation towards the customers.

If these are the qualities that are required to make the MBA student employable, then the issue is what are the changes that are needed in the MBA programme?

An analysis of the syllabus of the various MBA programmes conducted in different universities indicates that the course curriculum does meet more or less the requirements of the industry. What is missing is the application of the various concepts that are used and the linkages between the various functions. For example

the MBA students are taught as to how make a SWOT analysis. But what is the application of this SWOT? How can the firm evolve a strategy from the knowledge of the SWOT analysis of the product or the organisation? Or typically if the debtors or the account receivables are high, what implications does it have on the marketing strategy - the four Ps of the marketing strategy and so on.

The subject strategic management is currently taught in most of the universities in one semester and in a maximum of 30 hours. This needs to be increased tremendously. This subject in some of the B-schools is taught by faculties who have no idea as to how an organisation works. In some cases, it is found that the industry personnel do not have an outlook of the whole organisation. Specialist faculty need to teach specific subjects. Students must be given live projects or at least near live projects wherein it must be made compulsory to meet the industry personnel. In the assignment, specific weightage must be allotted for meeting industry personnel and gathering information from them. Assigning of market research

projects on current and relevant issues must be given to the students which would involve the designing of questionnaires, use of SPSS or other statistical tools etc.

Specific exercises on bringing forth answers to the following questions:

1. What does the student want to achieve in the next five to 10 years?
2. How does he want to achieve the above?
3. Why does he want to achieve the above?
4. What does he see as his strengths and weakness?

Business ethics should not be a mere theoretical analysis. Simulation techniques should be used wherever possible. Today the biggest issue is giving credit to where it is due. Many of the students and members of the society like to grab the ideas and suggestions of others and claim the same as their original idea. This needs to be changed. The B-school itself should follow a system of openness, transparent and fairness. This should be started from the top. In other words, the top management should demonstrate the above. The management should also believe in the principle that Justice should not only be done but also seen to be done.

There is, however, one rider; while it is possible that the B-school would do all of this and much more, there must be a genuine desire in the MBA student to improve himself and an urge to reach higher heights, failing which all efforts would go waste.

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