

MORE FIRMS PAY EARLY VISIT TO SIZE UP ASPIRING SR MANAGERS

Offers for senior positions take longer since companies spend more time screening the 1-year executive management programme students

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Hundreds of executives who are doing their one-year executive management programmes from prominent B-schools like the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and Indian School of Business (ISB) have cause to cheer.

Due to the economic slowdown, there was some apprehension over placements this year but recruiters have started visiting the campuses two months before the final placement seasons begins.

Consider this. The first batch (2010) of the Executive Post Graduate Programme in Management (ePGP) at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIM-B) expects 50-60 companies to come to the campus over the next two months. Companies started coming into the campus from middle of November itself and close to 25 per cent of the batch has received offers. The institute has 70 students to place from this batch. The institute holds 15-20 offers from companies in IT, healthcare, finance and retail space where roles in mid-senior positions have been offered.

"Unlike the two-year Post Graduate Programme (PGP) where recruiters hire within the placement week, placements for executive management participants are a longer process. Companies like to spend more time with the participants since offers made are for senior managerial positions," explains Sapna Agarwal, head of career development services at IIM-B.

The average work experience of participants from the one-year executive management programme is usually upwards of 5-7 years. Placement season is a rolling process and goes on from January to end of February or beginning of March. Last year, average



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ly across the campuses owing to the financial meltdown and institutes had invited more companies to ensure that their students got placed. Even this year, institutes plan to invite more number of companies just to be on the safer side.

"Definitely we have sent out more invitations this year as we expand our base every year. Officially, placements are likely to begin in mid-January in 2010," says Shailesh Gandhi, chairperson, Post Graduate Programme in Management for Executives (PGPX) at IIM-A.

Even on their international immersion programme where participants spend a few weeks in foreign countries, PG-PX students are also leaving no stone unturned in making the placements successful.

students are making contacts, meeting people and inviting companies to the campus for upcoming placements," adds Gandhi.

Similarly, at the Indian School of Business (ISB) Hyderabad, there is a sense of optimism in placement this year. "The placement process is just starting at the ISB, with many companies coming over for pre-placement talks. The indications are that the requirement for talent this year will be significantly higher than last year," says V K Menon, Senior Director, Admissions and Financial Aid & Career Advancement Services at ISB.

"We can see requirement for talent across sectors. It is not restricted to some specific industries. Almost all the classical hirers of management

means that we will see increased recruitment in areas like consulting, finance, marketing, technology etc. Also some sectors like healthcare, telecom etc will be large recruiters," says Menon. Last year, ISB had 326 companies in the campus where the average domestic CTC was a little over Rs 15 lakh.

IIM-C is yet to formally begin inviting firms to its campus for its Post Graduate Programme for Executives (PG-PGX). Nevertheless, the institute is quite upbeat about the placement scenario for this year. "Our assessment is that we should be able to place all our students. Moreover, the average salary offered by firms will be a little higher than last year," says Mrityunjay Mohanty, convener of PG-PGX

Last year 30-odd firms offered jobs to 37 students at IIM-C.

While around 80 students will be participating in the placements from the PG-PGX batch this year at IIM-A, 51 students from the PG-PGX batch will be sitting from IIM-C. At IIM-A, last year, 70 students opted for placements, while four students of the class decided to start their own venture in fields such as manufacturing, services and clean energy. The average salary offered at campus was Rs 20.16 lakh.

A total of 34 students out of a batch of 37 students participated in placements last year from IIM-C. The second batch of PG-PGX at IIM-C saw the highest salary touch a figure of Rs 35 lakh per annum while average salary hovered around

[STUDENT'S CORNER]

Last week, we asked:
Has the CAT fiasco marred the image of IIMs with regard to their handling of technology?

Best Response: It should be definitely regarded as a positive move to shift from paper based format to Online format of CAT (common admission test). However, the glitches in conducting the exam at such a large scale (2 lakhs) in a country like India are bound to be there. The reason behind the same are not only that the penetration of Internet is less here and hence adaptability is an issue but also that the authorities were unaware of probable failures like virus attack etc at such a large level. The exam process in itself, which was scheduled for 10 days, tried to minimise probable risk. Officials had themselves got a chance to improve and

respond to situation on the following days. Even with such safeguard, finally the problem was huge as more than 60,000 applicants out of 2 lakh were affected. Now who is to blame. If we look back, XLRI tried to do same thing few years back in changing the format to online method, they were also unsuccessful and had retreated to the older paper-based format. But in case of CAT, IIMs have shown persistence in continuing with newer format for following years with greater risk mitigation methods. Such a development would help increase computer's reach and penetration in India and would help integrating e-learning in our schooling pattern. Its always difficult to implement such a grand effort in a country like India. we need not underestimate the management capabilities

of IIMs, But should appreciate for the underlying initiative of making India e-ready.

- Sujit Kumar,
Indian Institute of Management,
Kozhikode, second year,
batch: 2008-2010

■ Yes. The CAT fiasco has given the IIMs food for thought on how to implement innovation in the modern era. IIMs which are known for their integrity, initiative and magnificence are yet to master the technology aspect on online testing. The inability to conduct CAT exam online within the stipulated duration has shown the world the pathetic management skill of a pioneer. Rectifying the mistake next year cannot be a solution to whatever that has happened. The need of the hour is accountability. Image makeover should be the mantra for the IIMs. Students

who are attempting the re-exam should be given appropriate compensation for a mistake which could have been averted by proper methodology.

- Swaminathan Sridhar,
Institute for Technology and
Management, Chennai, first year,
batch: 2009-11

Dear Students,
Your responses should reach us by Friday evening every week. Please avoid attachments and email us your full name, institute's name, year, batch, and complete mailing address for your entries to be accepted. The student who gives the 'Best Response' will be awarded Rs 500.

NEXT WEEK'S QUESTION:
Will it make sense if online CAT is scrapped this year, and taken as a pencil-and-paper test? Can the IIMs justify it?