



The HR perspective

The B-school perception of HR is rapidly changing with the times

The proof of the pudding is in its eating. B-schools may make many claims about their quality, but the HR heads of the recruiting firms are the ones who have to decide where they want to put their money in. *Business India* set out to find out from some of the best known HR honchos what their expectations of the B-schools were. The professionals featured in this perspective study are, N.S. Rajan (partner, human capital, Ernst & Young), Bimal Rath (head, HR south Asia, Nokia), Marcel Parker (head, HR, Raymond) and P.V.R. Murthy (head, executive jobs, portal clickjobs.com).

On why the Indian MBAs are being fancied:

N.S. Rajan (NSR): The trend, prevalent since the 1970s, is towards hiring better quality of students, as there are more campuses and also availability.

Bimal Rath (BR): Indian MBAs tend to give more value for money, as most of these are freshers out of college, whereas, in other countries, people go for MBA after some work experience. The next five years are going to see an even greater rush for talent from the B-schools.

Marcel Parker (MP): This is a pure function of supply and demand for a skill that is in somewhat short supply.

P.V.R. Murthy (PVRM): There is more supply now, that too of good quality, matching the demand.

On whether the fat packages are justified:

NSR: This has clearly been a function of demand and supply. If a company is not willing to match the prevailing offers, the students will not be enamoured.

BR: The packages being offered to MBAs at the Indian B-schools are justified, when we take into account the supply and demand of MBAs from good B-schools in India.

I don't think salaries are justified, even though it should be understood that young people have a mind of their own and salary perks are no guarantee to retain them; they move on following their mind.

MP: Starting packages can never be justified on the track records. Market forces determine this.

On changes in hiring practice:

NSR: The campus related activities are being formally organised with multiple visits, including for pre-placement talk and final hiring – well planned and much ahead in advance. Summer training too has

become more rigorous, getting almost equal attention, since it is being seen as an opportunity to make pre-placement offers.

BR: Employer branding has evolved as a need to differentiate by companies to attract the right talent. Every company has begun strongly to focus on their employee value proposition to brand themselves. Role-based hiring is also taking place and the budget for hiring MBAs is also increasing.

MP: There is a more planned approach to recruiting by companies.

On the global hiring trends:

NSR: There is a keenness among Indian companies to hire on global campuses, even as the perception of Indian B-schools has also changed, resulting in more global hire.

BR: Global hiring will be on the rise, as companies would look beyond nationalities for talent.

MP: There is a lot of two-way hiring unlike in the past, as Indian companies are looking to recruit from global campuses. Also, the young MBAs with a couple of years of experience are keen to work in BRIC countries to gain experience and also for looking good in their CVs.

On corporate engagement:

NSR: There has been a greater degree of industry-academia interaction, which include sponsorship of management events, visiting faculty and summer internships.

BR: Companies follow essentially two routes to get their talent – one, like HUL, which teaches eight out of 20 lectures on a marketing course in IIM C to short-list potential recruits; and another that offers summer internships, as these have become battle grounds for the best companies to attract fresh recruits.

On where schools are headed and the gaps:

NSR: The overall competition amongst the schools, the media-driven ratings and industry interactions have worked towards drawing attention to the key building blocks and has surely enhanced the quality of education. A gap that is difficult to bridge is the lack of industry experience

BR: MBAs become relevant only after one to two years of industry experience, which is why there is quite an increase in experienced candidates to take MBA course.

MP: Overall, there are pockets of excellence among B-schools even though the tendency is to become commercial rather than concentrate on research, consulting, etc, which will help in the long run in any good school. ♦