

Chapter 11

What Do Business Schools Expect From Aspirants During Recruitment?

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ABSTRACT

This chapter will discuss the practices that business schools need to include/incorporate in their admission process. The contents of this chapter are relevant to business schools admitting students for undergraduate, postgraduate, and/or both programs. In this chapter, the author will elucidate various aspects that need to be considered by decision makers to help them achieve a wholistic outcome post the recruitment drive. Red flag areas which can result in stagnation or rigidity in the selection process and impact the overall quality of a cohort will also be highlighted. For the benefit of the reader the author has segregated the study into four different groups. Some areas may be general and relevant to business schools recruiting for both, undergraduate, and postgraduate studies, other areas may be more specific to a program or level of students.

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the fastest growing industries in developing economies and has already made a strong base in developed ones. The service and academic offerings of business schools have evolved progressively to cater to the needs of each generation. Global business trends are changing at a rapid rate and this means that every business school also needs to adapt to the current scenario. Earlier it was acceptable and perhaps even sufficient to impart technical and theoretical knowledge to students enrolled in a program, but this is not the case in today's environment.

While it is true that getting into a good business school has become harder than before because the competition at the candidate level is fierce, it is also true that many top schools have lost traction in terms of a number of applicants, because the competition at institute level is equally strong. Applicants have become more alert, aware, and careful in their selection of institutes and therefore, the value addition that

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a school can make to a student's overall candidature is a crucial aspect which should be at the crux of every school's offering. This assists in the creation of an impactful and prestigious brand image for the school and to ensure that such an image is maintained, each school needs to be judicious in the selection of their future cohorts. The more talented students a school embarks, the better it's chances of staying ahead in the market and increasing its brand value. So in fact, this is a cycle which needs to be reviewed and repeated year after year for high-quality standards to be sustained and continuously improved.

One of the main objectives of a business school is to equip their students with the skills and knowledge required for them to succeed in their professional and personal lives. To ease the process of achieving this objective, it would serve the institute well to adopt a robust recruitment process. This will save time for both, an applicant and an institute whilst also sending out a message about the portfolio dynamic that applicants need to keep in mind while applying to a school. Most schools are bombarded with applications in each new academic year and sometimes it is an easy road to take when schools start giving undue importance to revenue generation. In the process, they may take applicants who are misfits either in terms of the vision, contributions, ethos, or overall expectations at both ends. Such operations can eventually result in the school diluting their own brand, and students left feeling that they got a raw deal, either of which will be detrimental to the future of both. It is important to understand that every school has their own vision, and hence their own requirements which translate into one vertical/attribute having higher emphasis over another. For example, ABC institute may have the vision to create and produce academic geniuses, and hence their filtration process will be stringent about an applicant's past academic records. This may not be the case for XYZ institute.

Bearing this in mind, there may be various permutations and combinations that individual schools adopt during their recruitment process, and sometimes it works, other times it fails to achieve the desired outcome. Therefore, there is a need to look at the recruitment process in detail and capture some of the important aspects of selection while also elaborating on the pitfalls and concerns that can be encountered, and how to overcome them.

The objective of this chapter is to assist decision makers to adopt a holistic view of the recruitment drive so as to attain a high-quality cohort while also maintaining the brand image and value of the institute.

BACKGROUND

Business Schools across the world have gone through an evolutionary process in all aspects, which include governance, admissions, teaching, and placement opportunities offered. In the Indian context especially, the process of change has been very rapid. Kashyap & Saikia (2012), 'As per estimates, there are approximately 4000 business schools in India with a seating capacity of over 3.5 lakhs. This indeed marks a big leap from the time schools such as XLRI, Jamshedpur and Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management, Kolkata, were established in 1949 and 1953, respectively.' There is a plethora of material available in the form of articles, papers, and journals to elaborate on the changes made in the education procedures along with recommendations on the best route to take to recalibrate functions. One such function is the admission process and how it has been realigned to fit current world scenarios. With the IT revolution and globalization, business schools find themselves at the cornerstone of a revolution themselves, and in recent times to come many more aspects will need to be changed to accommodate present and future demands of students and markets. (Jha, 2016), 'The employability of fresh MBA graduates is at an all-time low. Recruiters increasingly report a gap between the skill-sets

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