



Srijan

Issue 1 : November 2007



A Student Community Publication
Indian Institute of Management Lucknow, Noida Campus



IN THIS ISSUE



INDUSTRY NOTE: EDA 9

Electronic Design and Automation (EDA), is playing an indispensable role in the progress of the modern world's semiconductor technology. An insight into the Industry and trends.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR? 12

The biggest hurdle to starting-up is getting started. Ashish Goel draws on his experiences in starting a company and attempts to dispel some beliefs that often become hindrances in becoming an entrepreneur.

RETURN OF THE CROWD 14

Social media shifts the balance of power to end users and communities. An exploration of the unique opportunities and challenges this shift presents.

STUDENT COMMUNITY @ IIM LUCKNOW - NOIDA CAMPUS



WMP 2007-2010

WMP 2006-2009



WMP 2005-2008





Indian Institute of Management
Lucknow, Noida Campus

FROM THE SRIJAN TEAM ...

It is with great pleasure that we bring to you the inaugural issue of Srijan, the bi-annual newsletter from IIM Lucknow, Noida Campus. This newsletter is a testimony to the high levels of involvement and commitment that bind us - the students, faculty and staff at this institute. As a platform for learning and sharing, it aims to foster even closer ties between our community that is determined to prove to the world that being different may be difficult but, not impossible.

Srijan literally means creation- creation of a new campus, a new course type, a new pedagogy, a new trend, a new mindset, new opportunities, new challenges, new lifestyles and the list goes on.... The name aptly reflects the purpose: the awakening of creative faculties that become dormant in the relentless pursuit of material benefits. MBA, after all, is not just about earning a degree or a diploma to earn great bucks. It is about the holistic development of an individual, who can contribute to the development of the society at large.

IIM Lucknow is one of the few MBA institutes to have set up another campus outside the main one. The Working Managers Programme has been running successfully at the Noida Campus for over two years now. Though the journey till date has been one of umpteen trials and tribulations, our perseverance and enthusiasm has seen us fight back with greater zest and zeal each time. Enthused by the positive response that the three-year programme has received, the institute plans to launch a one-year full-time International Programme in Management for Executives in April, 2008. The details of the course are available in the subsequent sections.

This newsletter aims to provide a platform to all to share one's interests, aspirations, feelings, concerns and above all, knowledge & experience with others. The Srijan team sincerely hopes that with 'your' involvement this publication shall be read with much interest by all and shall be eagerly awaited in the time to come. For this, we need 'your' participation too.

Looking forward to your feedback to help us improve and provide information that shall be of benefit to all,

Until the next issue...

Srijan Team

Srijan Team

Editor

Shobhika Puri

Design & Production

Qasim Zaidi

Neelabh Singh

Publication

Gaurav Bansal



Issue 1 : November 2007

<http://iimlnc.ac.in>

srijan@iimlnc.ac.in

*A Glimpse at the
two years gone by ..*



Bhoomi Poojan at the Campus venue in Sector 62, Noida



Speakers at the Industrial Lecture Series



WMP students participating in the IIM Lucknow Alumni cum Freshers Meet, 2006



Inauguration of the Campus at Sector 62, Noida

Freshers Party - extending a warm welcome



Back to School

Read more on this in [Memoirs](#)

- Dr. Jamshed J. Irani, Director, TATA SONS LIMITED, Mumbai has been appointed as the Chairman-Board of Governors, IIML, by the Ministry of HRD, Government of India.
- Prof. Punam Sahgal is the new Dean of IIML, Noida Campus for a period of two years w.e.f. 11th October, 2007.

WHAT'S NEXT?

A full time, residential programme at Noida Campus

IIM Lucknow is one of the few IIMs to have set up a campus outside the main one. The Working Managers Programme at Noida Campus has been successfully running for over two years now. Enthused by the positive response that the three-year course has received, the institute plans to launch a one-year full time International Programme in Management for Executives (IPMX) in April 2008.

IPMX is designed for mid/senior level professionals, to prepare them for leadership roles. The programme is designed to impart business education that is grounded in the Indian and international business environment. It will accelerate understanding of business at the functional and strategic levels and prepare students to manage enterprises engaged in global businesses. The curriculum would focus on a strategic understanding of business, rooted in practical skill development through action learning projects and industry interface. A core component of the programme is an international module of 4-5 weeks at Faculty of Management, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, which will provide the students with the opportunity for an international learning experience. The Corporate Resource Centre of the institute would facilitate in providing placement services for non-sponsored students.



Electronic Design & Automation

Electronic Design and Automation (EDA), is playing an indispensable role in the progress of the modern world's semiconductor technology. Let us discover its contribution.

Neelabh Singh

Neelabh Singh is a 2005-08 batch participant in the WMP programme. He holds a B.Tech. degree in Electronics Engineering from Institute of Technology – Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi (IT-BHU). He is currently working with [Cadence Design Systems](#), a leading EDA company. Neelabh can be reached at neelabh.singh@iimlnc.ac.in.

As one of the most important intangible value additions to the semiconductor chips, EDA is the fountain head of the value chain of almost any electronic product that one sees in the market today. There are no mobile phones, LCD TVs, laptops, PCs, Game Consoles and a plethora of other products that have not been touched by EDA.

As such, EDA is nothing but development of software tools. But these tools are highly specialized; to the extent that they help design, fabricate and manufacture equally specialized semiconductor devices.

The Technology

Let us get into the thick of the things. To understand how EDA contributes to the value chain of a semiconductor chip one has to understand the design and production processes that a chip undergoes.

Semiconductor chip designing is categorized broadly into three technical categories – Digital, Analog and Mixed Signal designing. Each category has its own design challenges. EDA companies constantly strive to overcome or to alleviate these challenges. As EDA tools absorb more and more complexity, the design process becomes simpler.

The semiconductor chips can also be functionally categorized into standard components and ASICs¹. The standard components are microprocessors, (like Intel's Pentium processors) and micro-controllers. ASICs are chips designed for specific applications that an electronic device needs to solve, for example, a mobile phone needing to download data to a laptop.

The idea and the concept of semiconductor chip is first coded in a Hardware Description Language, for example, Verilog and VHDL. Once the idea is in the form of an executable code it is put through simulators supplied by

¹ ASIC is an acronym for Application Specific Integrated Circuit.

EDA companies. The designers verify and validate their designs using these simulators and several other EDA tools to ensure that the chip once fabricated would perform the intended functions.

After the design code is validated it is put through the synthesis process. At this stage another EDA tool assists the designers in mapping the logic to actual electronic gates, like NAND and NOR. The objective of this process is to perform the mapping of the logic to meet the design constraints.

These constraints are the duo of minimization of power consumption and size of the chip. Any and every semiconductor chip goes through this ordeal of power and size minimization so that the mortals like us can relish a long battery life in their thin and slender mobile phones or nano-iPods. Highly specialized EDA tools are under constant innovation to help designers meet these constraints. When two electronic connections run as close as 65 nanometer to each other, there is no room for error.

After the mapping process, the next step is to take the design through the layout and place-and-route process where another EDA tool decides the placement and wire connections on the chip – much as a town planner plans a city and its roads.

Industry Overview

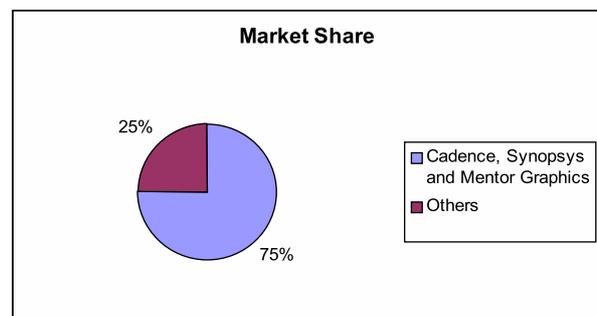
With this overview of the “chip” designing process let us take a look at the EDA industry. EDA industry has evolved over time in bits and pieces as we have seen that several tools are involved in the design process. At the onset of the industry in the early 1980’s, several startup companies - run by entrepreneurs with a zest for technology, developed tools to address the needs of designers. But these tools were discrete, which meant that they did not cover the whole design spectrum. They were named the “point-tools”.

Very few of these companies survived as a result of the unfocussed competition and haywire strategy. The discrete nature of the tools also resulted in the frustration at the customers’ end, as the tools from different vendors would not work together and thus disrupted the design process.

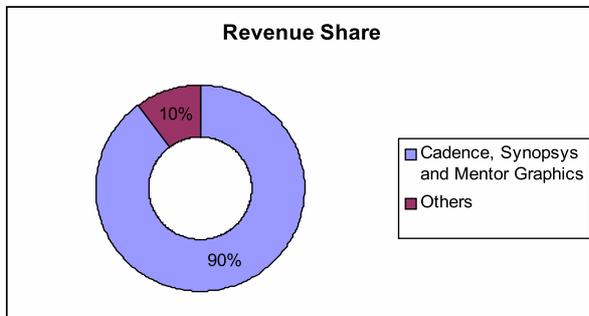
In the 1990’s several weaker firms having technically sound products were acquired by stronger companies. This was warranted as the technology development was costly and had long break-even periods. The new technology deployment also required a well-trained sales and support staff. Not many companies could afford to have both, a good product and an able staff, to deploy and provide support at customer sites. EDA industry, in its infancy, was thus lost in the quagmire of complex B2B situations.

A spate of acquisitions led to the consolidation of the tools in the whole design process, thereby making them more interoperable.

The 2000’s gave way to the concept of design platforms. It was just another way to project value to the customers, wherein the integration of the tools was made more “tight”. Platforms gave the advantage to the customers of dealing with only one or two preferred suppliers. This way the companies could also engage in better customer relationship management, as they could understand the long term technology and design requirements of the customers over a period of time.



EDA is, at present, a highly concentrated industry with the top three players having nearly 75 percent of the market share and about 90 percent of the EDA revenue. These leading players are Cadence, Synopsys and Mentor Graphics.



Structure

It's a contradiction that even though there are only a few big players in this industry the supplier power is not high. This can be attributed to the severe rivalry amongst the players who never adopt a common technical platform for competition. Every company adheres to its favourite – or, what it thinks is, the killer technology standard. The chip designers have a big say in deciding the technology they want to adopt. Consequently, the companies easily fall prey to their demands.

The buyer power is high as the design companies demand value-added products for free, built around the base software tool. Herein, they evaluate one EDA vendor against the other in a cut-throat competition. The designers consider the evaluation stage of the tools as critical to their design cycle, as a tool once selected becomes a significant contributing factor to the success or failure of their designs.

The threat of substitutes is usually low. But, the big Chip Design houses like those of Intel and IBM have their internal EDA departments that can cater to the designers' needs, if they are not met reasonably from outside. Thus, there are occasional threats

of backward integration by Chip Design companies.

EDA industry is currently facing the commoditization of several of its long running tools. The customers now want the basic stuff as free and would only want to pay for value-added applications, like Intellectual Property built around tools that can ease the work of designers. This trend also leads to the problems of the EDA companies not being able to extract enough revenue from the customers, thereby operating on thin margins.

Future Directions

The future of the EDA industry is tied with the fortunes of the Semiconductor industry. The industry follows the business cycles of the latter but, with a delayed effect.

With the ever increasing consumption of semiconductor based products, the EDA industry looks forward to a positive and fruitful growth in the near future. However, the challenge of extracting value commensurate with the contribution to the value chain still lingers on.

Realizing that in a fiercely competitive environment good technology alone cannot generate revenues, the companies have started focusing and investing in brand building exercises with unprecedented stress on customer relationships. Thus, the future of the industry is dependent on technology innovation and customer relationship management, areas already receiving the much-awaited attention by the experts.

What do you need to become an entrepreneur?

The biggest hurdle to starting-up is getting started. This article dwells on the personal experience of the author in starting a company and attempts to dispel some beliefs which often become hindrances in becoming an entrepreneur.

Ashish Goel

Ashish Goel is one of the co-founders of www.itasveer.com – an online photo printing and publishing portal. He graduated from IIT Delhi in 2005 and after a short stint at a Consulting firm, he got bitten by the entrepreneurship bug. He can be reached at goel.ashish@gmail.com.

So, the rather pretentious article title got your attention. To be honest, I do not believe that there is a magic bullet or a specific set of characteristics you need to become an entrepreneur. What I can do tell however, as a first time entrepreneur who is yet to make it or break it, are some things which I learnt in the process of becoming one. I can't presume to know what it takes to be successful, but I hope what I say is helpful, both to myself and my readers.

First, some history. I never planned to start a company barely a year after graduating from college. While the bug was very much there, the path I had planned out for myself was of the more tried-and-tested variety – work for a few years, go to B-School, work some more and then finally start out - packed with a business degree, some real world experience and a thriving network. But it happened earlier than I had imagined, entirely by accident and definitely broke more than a few myths I harbored about starting out. Animesh, one of our co-founders and a friend from college came up with the idea of online photo printing. Three of us, all batch mates, decided to get involved with him, some part time, some full time. We decided that we would give it a six month shot and wrap it up if it didn't work out.

Now a year and a month later, we are still going strong, everyone has left their jobs to do it full-time and the initial idea has borne several new ones. Though success is yet to come but, there is no end in sight.

So what did I learn? The first myth I broke was the monumental need to have upfront what Guy Kawasaki calls the Holy Grail of entrepreneurship² – a business plan. It is hard enough leaving your cushy job and starting up – but the task of writing a business plan makes it all the more arcane and intimidating. Sure, you will have a lot of discussions with your team members, some shared understanding on what you will be doing

² “According to Celtic myths there were once magical vessels that satisfied the tastes and needs of all who drank from them. These myths led to the legend of the Holy Grail. The modern day equivalent of the Holy Grail is the business plan” – excerpt from *The Art of the Start* by Guy Kawasaki.

and some degree of planning - by no means am I saying that you shouldn't do these things. What I am saying is to rein in the tendency to write a formal full-fledged 30 page document with detailed multi-year projections prior to starting out.

Marc Andreessen, one of the co-founders of Netscape offers this advice - "Don't keep a schedule. Not keeping a schedule helps you work on whatever is most important or most interesting at any time". When you are starting out - not worrying about a business plan will help you do exactly that. You should be concentrating on getting a prototype out, getting your team together or whatever things you have to do to get going. There will definitely be a time when you will need a business plan, but only when presented with a specific purpose - such as raising capital - it should not be an end in itself.

The second myth was that of an individual entrepreneur. I realized that at the end of the day, there is only so much one can do by oneself - and trust me, there is a lot to do - lot more than one would expect. Accept the fact that there will always be things you can do better than others and some things you can't. If you dabble with everything - what you will lose is speed - and that is the last thing you want to lose when you are starting a company. Which is why, you need to have a team in place. Beyond shouldering a set of shared responsibilities, having a team is also necessary on other levels. It helps you keep the ball rolling - whenever your pace is slackening your team will be your support system.

The third myth which I harbored was the impending arrival of a niche, world-changing, patent-protected idea around which forming a successful company would be a no-brainer. Turns out that most ideas you will have are a lot more mundane than that. Thus the key is to execute differently, as against writing off an idea as a me-too proposition. What does executing different mean? It could mean anything from the

incremental to the revolutionary - both with different kind of effects. For example, when Amazon.com launched, they launched with 3000,000 titles in an online bookstore - making a 250,000 title rich brick-and-mortar store look paltry in comparison.

Once you do get started - you will find opportunities presenting themselves, new possibilities that you had not imagined and brilliant ideas you hadn't come up with earlier- giving you enough fodder to work on. When I first heard about online photo printing, I thought it sounded rather ordinary. When we first sat together to brainstorm the idea we decided that we will wrap up the business in six months if it didn't work. When we first started working on it - we learnt of a competitor which had launched a week back. It had been a fairly whirlwind journey for us - but entirely worthwhile.

To round it up, let me add that the best thing about starting young, is that you can make mistakes. Perhaps I will look back at this essay after a few years and find my own ideas ridiculous - but I will still have time to start over.

Founded in 2006, itasveer.com is an online photo printing and publishing portal. It offers services like online photo printing, photo sharing, and creation of customized gifts like T-shirts and mugs.

Return of the Crowd



Marketing on a Social Web

Social Media, content that is created by amateurs and volunteers, is redefining the way we do business on internet. This article explores the opportunities and challenges this shift presents

Qasim Zaidi

Qasim is a 2005-08 batch participant in the WMP programme. An Electronics Engineering Graduate from AMU, he has six years of experience spanning several technology domains, ranging from Wireless Protocols to System Security and the Internet. He is currently employed with [TribalFusion](#), an online advertising startup. He can be reached at qasim.zaidi@iimlnc.ac.in

‘Workers should appropriate the means of production’.

Karl Marx

Adam Smith all right, but why would anyone begin a piece on Internet Marketing with Karl Marx? I won't either, but his words are so prophetic! Apparently, what the great communist republics of yore couldn't accomplish, happened on the World Wide Web. The community is back and it is as powerful as Marx envisaged. The new Web is about social media, conversations, user created content and virtual communities. In short, this is version 2.0, aptly referred to as WEB 2.0.

That the Web in particular and the electronic media in general will make publishing accessible to the masses was a no-brainer. Yet, the silent revolution that marked the rise of social media has taken most by surprise. Before the dot com bust of 2001, the Web used to be about mostly static web-pages and anonymous visitors, with limited interaction among the surfers themselves. Today, however, it is about real people, their engagement, sharing and networking.

The trend towards social media isn't entirely a post 2001 phenomenon. Social networking sites such as classmates.com were around in the nineties. It is the recent success of such sites that has made marketers sit up and take notice. Youtube, whose business model involves providing terra-bytes of free space to users for uploading and sharing mostly amateurish home videos, is a case in point. Such a model would have been considered outlandish by the nay-sayers just a few years ago, and yet, it was valued at \$1.6 billion at the time of sale.

But what exactly is 'Social Media'? Wikipedia, which itself is a social media website, defines it as

“online technologies and practices that people use to share opinions, insights, experiences and perspectives”. This new media, which manifests itself in many forms such as blogs, forums, podcasts and vlogs, is essentially content produced by end-users, as opposed to the traditional media, where content is produced by licensed broadcasters and production companies. Flickr, Delicious, Orkut, Digg, Myspace and Facebook are some prominent examples. (See box below for a Who’s Who list.)

When users become content creators, it threatens those in the content creation business. After all, if photographs from amateurs posted on Flickr are good enough,

Web, there is a shift in the balance of power. Regular advertising messages are becoming less and less effective, because they are mostly one way communications from the brand to the customer. People, on the other hand, are more likely to trust other people and social media is the alternative to regular advertising, an alternative that can be trusted. With more and more people doing some kind of pre-purchase product research online, this isn’t good news for marketers.

A few blog posts, after all, can make a product a hit or a flop. Kryptonite learnt it the hard way, when a blog story about how unsafe its locks were led to a class action lawsuit and a recall costing an estimated \$10

The Social Media Top 10 (based on Alexa Rankings)

1. **Youtube** - A video sharing site, acquired by Google in 2006.
2. **MySpace** - Owned by NewsCorp, this social networking website offering an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos music and videos.
3. **Orkut** - Run by Google, Orkut helps users meet new friends and maintain existing relationships.
4. **Hi5** - Another massive social network, hi5 calls itself an online environment for meeting new people, connecting with friends, and sharing ideas.
5. **Blogger** - Google’s free tool for creating blogs (online journals).
6. **Facebook** - A school/college networking site, Facebook recently opened its doors to everyone.
7. **Fotolog** - An online community of interlinked photo-weblogs (as opposed to text blogs).
8. **Friendster** - Founded in 2002, Friendster was the first social networking site after the dot com crash of 2001, and the inspiration for Orkut and MySpace.
9. **Flickr** - A digital photo sharing network, acquired by Yahoo in 2005.
10. **Craigslist** - A centralized network of online urban communities, featuring free classified advertisements.

why pay the professionals? Newspapers too feel the heat. Media companies aside, traditional businesses are worried too. And here is why. With the social, democratized

million.

Social Media then, is all about conversations, and the CEO speaking to the customers isn’t the only conversation taking

place. More often than not, it is the the customers who speak, and they engage with each other more often than before. The digital buzz is even more potent than its older cousin - the plain word of mouth. Perhaps this is so because it isn't limited by geographical boundaries any longer. Or, maybe because censorship is not an option. Unlike the real world, where the brand experience can be carefully controlled, this is a viral medium, where controlling the message is impossible. Customers can spot fake conversations. 'Wal-Marting across America', a blog purportedly launched by a pair of average Americans covering the Wal-Mart experience, was soon found out to be a PR gimmick, an attempt by the company trying to cash in on social media. It ended up in a fiasco, garnering only negative publicity for Wal-Mart.

If Social media isn't really a fad that will die like many before it, what is the right strategy to deal with it? Since free flowing conversations can't be controlled, ensuring ownership of content is often the biggest concern. Users expect the ability to participate, to create content, voice their concerns and influence product development. Companies fear that letting them do so would make them lose control of their own content. And there maybe some truth in it, as every now and then there is news of some Wikipedia content being vandalised. Fortunately, this is more of an exception (even for Wikipedia, given the sheer volume, the vandalism is statistically insignificant). That is, in much of the new world of social media, old world rules of transparency and trust driving engagement and responsibility still apply. In any case, losing some control is better than losing all your visitors. On the World Wide Web, there is no bigger illusion than a captive audience.

The first step towards this strategy could be to facilitate the conversations. Provide the tools and the space, but go no further, definitely not into censorship/control. ideastorm.com does this for Dell. Users post ideas, discuss them with others, voting for

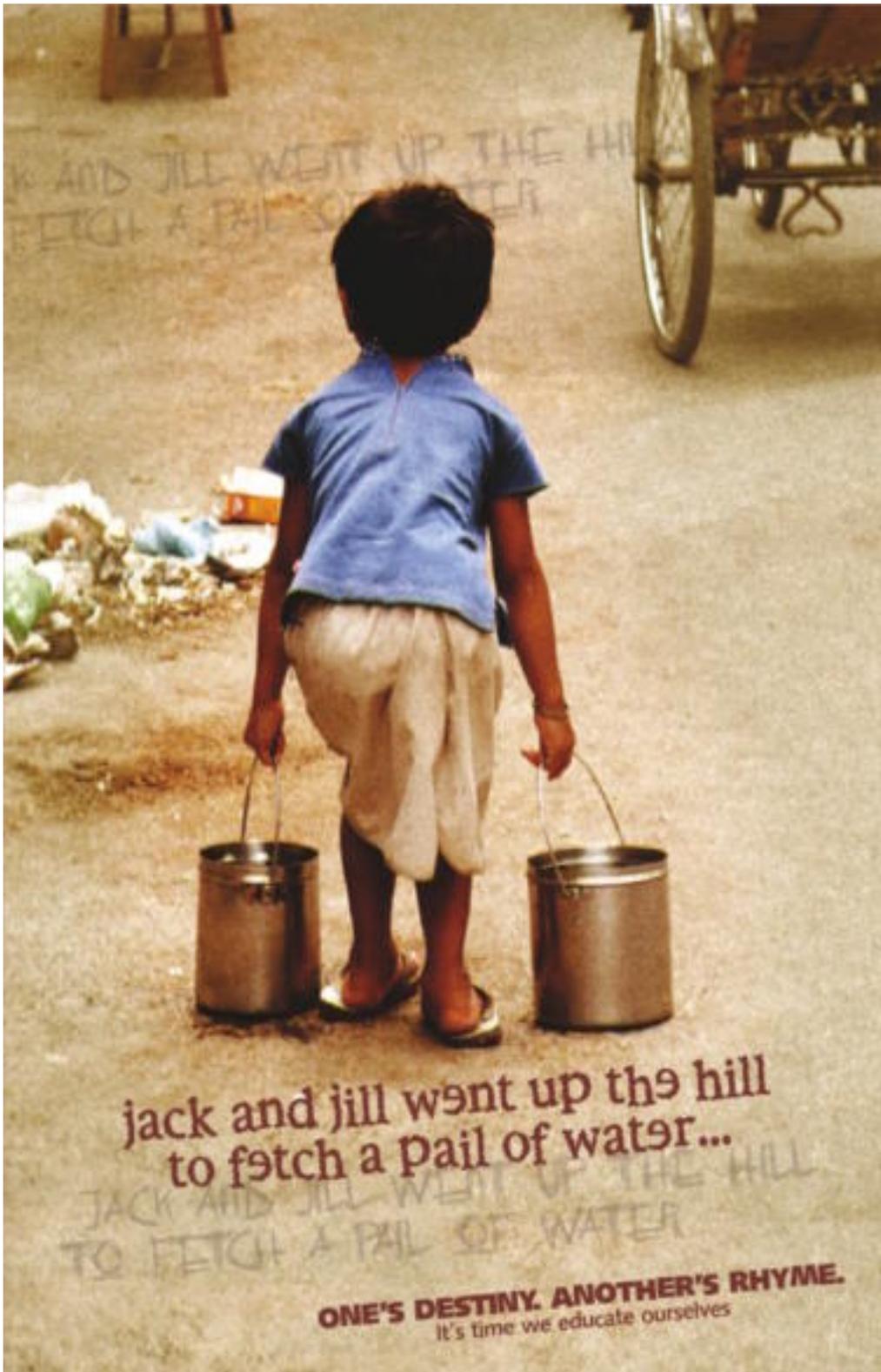
the ones they like and Dell tries to incorporate popular (and feasible) ideas into its products.

Let me elaborate this further with Reddit, a news bookmarking website. It allows users to submit news stories, to rate them and to comment on them. What Reddit has created is a winning model without the costs. They don't bring the content. They don't even select or review it. All they do is to provide the tools, facilitating their visitors to create, aggregate and review interesting news items. They get more hits than the online editions of most brick and mortar newspapers.

With Reddit or Dell, the surfers have indeed appropriated the means of production. They are not just creating content; they are solving problems and even doing corporate R&D. With these unpaid volunteers, companies such as Dell, whose cost focus prevents them from spending a lot of money on research, can explore innovative ideas at a fraction of cost. But as the case of WalMart illustrates, marketers seeking a social media strategy to reap the rich rewards of co-creation, crowd-sourcing and higher levels of customer engagement should also be aware of the inherent risks.

In the end, it all boils down to whether we deny and resist the shift to social media, or recognize and accept it before the competition does. Is it really as simple as providing the tools and the space to one's audience, engaging them in a conversation, and then getting out of the way? Maybe; Or maybe the right social media strategy is much more complex than this. What is certain however, is the wisdom in Alexander Rolin's words, when he said

['There go the people. I must follow them, for I am their leader.'](#)



Concept, Art Director and Copy by Shahnaz Rupawalla

Saw a great ad recently? Send it to srijan@iimlnc.ac.in. The best ad gets published here.



Memoirs



Gaurav Bansal

Gaurav is a 2005-08 batch participant in the WMP programme. He has done his B.E from Delhi college of engineering. He has five years of industry experience and is currently employed as Sr.Engineer-Sales & Marketing with [Technip](#). He plans to graduate from IIM Lucknow, Noida Campus, with Strategy & Marketing as his areas of concentration. He can be reached at gaurav.bansal@iimlnc.ac.in.

Living upto the trend we started (IIM Grads are supposed to be avant-gardes, so they set trends, accept it. Period.) last time of penning down our series of events, I have finally managed to find time to put my thoughts together to chronicle the events of the last year. The catch here is in the word “finally”. By the way before we proceed let me put the disclaimer right away.

Disclaimer:

Quote

The author has been duly allowed by the editorial team (recorded telecon with the editor to this effect as a proof is available in the safe custody of the author) of this newsletter to follow his natural and instinctive style of writing. Digression, every now and then, is allowed and is expected to be taken in good spirit. You may find yourself getting lost in the middle of the article, but then, making you more tolerant and receptive towards nuisance and diversity is also an ulterior motive of this article (purely in the public interest). Please feel free to be offended by his dogmatic and didactic approach he may take at times. Satire is his virtue. He thrives on it. He is a firm believer of the fact that use of correct grammar knocks the spice

out of language. You are allowed to vent out your frustration of your time wasted after having read this article, by e-mailing directly to the editor. But if there are some of you (just like the author) who run out of ways to make themselves useful, are always looking for suggestions to kill their time and are one of those type who realize that their absenteeism from their offices increases the overall efficiency of their offices, may find this article to their taste. Such species may send in their appreciation directly to the author himself. Our esteemed sources tell us that he is also fond of receiving gifts (tangible/intangible)/vouchers! So, proceed at your own risk. And of course, all characters and references are fictitious. Any resemblance to anyone dead/alive is purely incidental.

Unquote

The reason why I say “finally” has become such an important word in this context is because of the following reason. After putting to test weeks of cajoling, coaxing, and all forms of motivation (both positive & negative) theorems and their corollaries (which are to a large extent inspired by the WMP PGDBM) to best use, by Qasim pushing me to pen down the events (since he said that he has historical evidences which tell him that I did a decent job last year), I kind of gave in. He may run to tell you that I volunteered to do this and that should make a person feel more accountable. But I ask you guys (my type of guys) is that really true? Should I have really felt more accountable? I already hear a loud NO. Thank you guys. I knew you would understand. We all have a right to enjoy our vacations by making a conscious, informed and a learned decision of not doing anything constructive at all and finding whiling away of the time as the best possible investment (and a new learning in the series of time management). Life is to be lived at leisure. At one’s own pace. There will be distractions in the forms of reminders, deadlines, chase ups, ethical shoot outs, but the real men live life at their own terms. No matter how annoying it gets to your

teammates. So, what is the learning from the process? There could be many:

1. WMP system has really injected those theories into our circulation system, that they are now showing results, that they can actually push a guy like me into agreeing to do something in less than 20 days of follow ups!
2. What’s wrong with my creative juices? How could I run out of all excuses that I could sustain the procrastination for a mere three weeks!
3. Am I changing as a person? Is my DNA getting mutated? Lord save me.
4. Am I really becoming a more responsible person (read – age is catching up on me)?..Phew..
5. Am I becoming more empathetic and concerned about “how others would feel, if I don’t live up to my promises”? Damn...that’s not ME.
6. Man, since when did I become such an analytical person, that I have developed this ability to draw out six possible conclusions out of a non-existent situation, which could be clearly understood by a numbskull and a bird brain as me! This IIML is for sure changing my DNA. (The reason why I find it easy to reach to a conclusion that it is indeed IIML which is to be held guilty is because that is the only drastic change which has happened in my life in the last two years)
7. Gosh, they are actually right when they say, why simplify when it’s so easy to confuse!
8. Think twice (or may be thrice) before joining IIML WMP! Infact, you should be taking this call if you are really sure that this is your last best bet and you are willing to be metamorphosed from a normal-easy-going guy into a learned, analytical, well-read, pepped up, conscientious, responsible, disciplined,

fire-in-the-belly, deadlines-are-sacrosanct kind of a guy!

Anyways whatever be the learning, I leave that to the judgment of my learned readers to conclude, I already have the burden to soon find an antidote to unlearn ASAP! But having walked this extra mile, I would rather take you quickly through this “Journey on the road less travelled, year - II, July’06 - June’07”

For the sake of convenience (more mine than yours!), I would structure my dialogue (read-monologue) with you in the format of three terms, chronologically - FIFO.

Term 4 July 06 to Oct 06

The year unfolds with a lot of enthusiasm, with lots of new (Okay I accept they may be old, but what the heck?..if they are taken afresh, they are as good as new!) resolutions and promises. Promises to ourselves for becoming a more disciplined student, a more able working manager, a better husband and/or father, (as the case may be!) a better balanced family man, etc.

Having mustered the courage yet again, of taking life head on, we step into our term-4, with a new bunch of seventy odd working managers having joined the race.

This takes the head count of the battalion to about hundred and twenty. The increase in the head count was already making me (secretly) feel stronger. I said to myself, that now, with these new guys I would be able to put so many (pent up) thoughts of mine to action, which have been simmering for so long (almost a year now) for the sheer want of like-minded-pepped-up guys.

The thoughts of the entire plethora of the IIML brand promotion activities, the thoughts of building up our own culture, the thoughts of the Industrial Lecture series (ILS), the thoughts of the Business Plan contests, the thoughts of starting up our own newsletter, the thoughts of participating in (and may be starting on our own) the various B-school events like INDEX and Manifest,

the thoughts of seamlessly integrating the Noida Campus with the rest of the family based at Lucknow, the thoughts of having an improved and a more interactive website, the thoughts of intra-batch sports events, the thoughts of writing articles for the print media and of-course (the more frequent ones) the innocent thoughts of batch night outs! We gained some, we lost some..will soon find out.

The first ritual to be performed was of giving the new guys a fresher’s welcome. (Campus



life revisited!). So what if the guys are working managers, so what if the guys are coming with an average work experience ranging from three to twenty years, so what if the guys have some directors, armed force personnel, country managers in their batch..that shouldn’t rob them off the simple pleasure (and their fundamental right) of receiving a fresher’s welcome, and our pleasure (fundamental right again) of ragging them!

It’s a cult, it’s a ritual which rather be performed, else annoy the spirits of the holy seniors! Since this was a concept new to the senior batch, was never done before in the WMP (but we at IIMs set trends, remember?), issues were brought up, meetings called, and brainstorming sessions held.

Discussions covered the entire gamut of points from deciding the venue, the menu, timing and date, liquor (important!), funds and what not.



After sacrificing a couple of (precious) inter-class breaks, we arrived at a consensus and the party rocked @ Skywok, sec-18, Noida, on a Saturday night. Had a decent turnout, the busier and the sober ones stayed out! The ice was broken with the new batch. We departed as long lost brothers!

The second highlight of this term was an opportunity to be a part of the Industrial Lecture series (ILS), wherein we the participants of IIM Lucknow, Noida Campus were delighted to interact with Mr. Mario Gasparri, the Managing Director of New Holland Tractors India Pvt Ltd (NHI). In the one-hour long session held on 14th October 2006, the gentleman shared the vision for his organization. He also discussed the various steps of the learning curve he had to go through as an expat, who comes from Italy, new to the Indian business environment. What was equally interesting for the students were the people management efforts Mr. Mario had put in as the chief of the organization and the positive outcomes from the same. The session concluded with an open forum discussions where the working managers were quick to shoot their questions, which were promptly answered by Mr. Mario, to the satisfaction of the students. The students could be heard chatting over the high tea session post the interaction, about the kind of corporate insights, which such sessions provide to these working managers. This lecture was just another case in point!

And of course there were the rather lesser brighter sides of the eventful term-4, wherein we had to also come face to face with FM-II, HRM-I, QAM-III, ECO-II and CFM-II. After all that's the *raison d'etre* for being here at IIML (no matter how much we deny, but that's the truth). And to accept it candidly, having spent two years here with this system, I have kind of started liking the academic rigour here at L, and the amount of energy and passion put in by the professors. I guess it is this rigour which brings out the best in you, makes you live by the golden principle of doing the balancing act, being taught by the most eminent faculty of the nation. I guess now this is what I call as digression. Focus, Gaurav, focus! This is not what you are here for, not IIML brand promotion atleast. You are just a narrator. A story teller. Stick to your role. Period.

On second thoughts, amongst the five of the above, CFM-II turned out to be the saving grace (for me atleast), with our video recorded presentations on one hand giving us few seconds of stardom, and on the other hand (more importantly) showing us the nuances of business communication. I never knew till then that body language was actually such a big tool that it could be used to your great advantage while making a business presentation. This was also a term when we were brought face to face for the first time with the subtle but vital aspects of Human Resource Management. I, atleast never knew for sure that Trade Unions have had such a major role in the past and have had such an organized existence. The lesser said about QAM, FM, Eco, the better. Please feel free to blame my catastrophic grades for this rather disenchanted treatment to these subjects. Okay let me try harder, Eco-II reminds me of the Classical vs Keynesian Theory, the Okuns law, and the IS LM Curve. FM-II was a delight in itself, not so much because of the content, which varied from CAPM, WACC, NPV calculations but more so because of the art of the teaching displayed by the then faculty, Prof. Chaudhary. Sheer pleasure. The balls

on the pitch of QAM-III were bowled from two corners by two eminent faculty of IITD. I still find it difficult to figure out the problem of the “Milkman”! Whooff.

Term 5 Nov 06 to Jan 07

We, working managers, ensconced in the comforts of our ultra urban metro lives, talking strategy in the close confines of the boardrooms, were pleasantly surprised to hear Mr. Pradeep Kashyap (of MART Rural Solutions fame) speak on the 03rd Nov 2006, about the issues, opportunities and challenges of the Rural Marketing. This was another talk in our series of ILS. The opportunities thrown open by the rural sector was a real eye opener for most of us. He was also quick in dismissing a lot of myths which most of us carry about the rural markets. Heterogeneity in the rural market and the constantly swelling disposable income group class are two prominent conclusions I clearly remember. “Yahan jo dikhta hai, woh hi bikta hai”, Mr. Kashyap was quick to remark.

The next highlight brings in mixed emotions. You try find happiness in your friend’s happiness, but in hearts of your hearts you know that he is never going to be same again. He would soon get tamed. Yes, you heard it right. He would be TAMED. You can’t fool yourself. You always knew this was coming. You always knew that this is going to happen to you too, sooner or later. OK, I know he has his own life, but then what about all the bachelorhood fun and all the drunken night outs? All goes for a toss? Guess, that’s a story foretold. You accept it. Marriages do happen! Your friends do lose their bachelorhood status, and you would soon join THAT gang too.

They would be there to welcome you with their open arms. To see another guy in a similar pain and agony gives you a weird sadistic pleasure, aint it? Or it atleast pacifies your own! The thought already sends such a bad shiver down my spine that I forget the fun we had celebrating the marriages of our

friends, Iqbal (17 Nov 2006), to be



soon followed by Varinder Paul Singh (25 Dec 2006). Hey guys! No offense meant. Way to go. Rahul Harlalka and Amit Sharma were soon to catch up with them, having tied the knots on 16 Jan 2007 and 29 Jan 2007 respectively! Four good guys swept off their feet in less than four months. Not happening man!



Another reason why this term is dearer to our hearts is that it is marked by an active participation by our batchmates in various B-school competitions across the country, organized by the likes of IIFT, IIM-A, IIM-L, IIT-D, et al, wherein we got short-listed as finalists for most of them. Amongst them, one event which stands out is the business plan competition held at IIM Lucknow, Nirvan 2007, where the team from IIML Noida Campus competed against the stalwarts from IIM-A, XLRI, FMS, SPJain, et al and brought back home second runners up award. Kudos to the team (Amit Sharma, Amit Singh, Ashish Shah, Bhaskar Majumdar, Varinder Paul Singh, Harpreet Bagga).



Index 2006

The next highlight is marked by participation in a two day long event, called as INDEX, held at IIM Lucknow, main campus, on the 25th and 26th Nov 2006. This is a very effective disguised marketing research fair, sponsored by a lot of leading organizations who want to have a disguised market research done. It was indeed a learning experience for us, as we could actually see all the Marketing Management, Market Research theories put into practice.

We viewed the fair from the perspective of both, a customer and a student. Our friends at the main campus extended all the possible support in making us get the grip of the subject and needless to say made our stay at the main campus very comfortable. The event culminated with a treat @ tunde-ke-kebab.

Reading Marketing Management-II was like *deja vu*, a reunion long awaited (atleast for me). Love it, hate it, but you can't ignore it! The next few months flew by reading the Marketing Bible by Philip Kotler. The projects became all the more grilling and started demanding time. This time my team chose Dabur Foods Limited, and our three months long interaction across the levels of the Dabur corporate office and factory gave us a new bent of mind towards Sales and Marketing insights in a production driven FMCG company (and of-course some new friends at Dabur!). This term also ushered in our first interaction with Management of

Information systems (MIS), or was it ISM, or SMI? I am still confused. But the message is loud and clear. MIS is the keyword for all sunrise organizations. Learnings on SAP were the icing on the cake. The course on Business Environment gave us a holistic view of the significance of various policies prevalent in India. And more importantly, how do we see ourselves on the global map. Some key learning included, but was not limited to, the industrial climate; the forces of globalization, and the WTO. We also had a heated debate on corporate ethics. This term also opened up the Pandora's box of a species popularly known in most of the B-schools as the electives. Thankfully, the choice was simple for this term, as one had to choose between AOC (advanced oral communication) and PM (Performance Management). Choices were made. Some based on gut, some on the basis of the faculty and most on the basis of liking of one subject, or the dislike of the other! Prof. Neerja Pandey continued to enchant us with her communication prowess. She worked on us, her students, as an artisan will work on his magnum opus, teaching us all the tricks of the trade! And, Prof. Ajay Singh equally delighted PM students with his corporate insights.

Term 6 - Feb 07 to April 07

The term kicked off with simultaneously coinciding with a rather auspicious and a much awaited event of our Sec-62 campus inauguration by Shri Hari Shankar Singhania, (the then Chairman - Board of Governors) on the Wednesday, 7th Feb 2007. Having spent the first two years at the NTPC PMI, we, the participants were more than eager to attend our classes in our own campus, from 5th July 2007 onwards. The campus is armed with the state of art facilities and infrastructure, in line with the IIM standards.

Now coming back to other term events, in the series of our ILS, we were in for a surprise when we saw a young bloke all of twenty-four years of age, buzzing with

energy and enthusiasm walk towards our premises on the 24th March 2007. We did not have the faintest of the clues that it is going to be this gentleman, younger than most of us, who would be telling us the tricks of the traits for “Seed financing”. He charmed us, one and all. He had a lot of conviction in each and every word he spoke. “Dream big, and don’t copy” were two of his success



Guest Lecture: From Seed to Startup

mantras that he shared with us. He was quick to cite that a leader is “Joyous, accountable, inspiring and has the capacity to say-I don’t know”. I am sure that we could see most of the traits right into action in front of us. I am sure that this one and a half hours talk sure did stir a



Sachin Duggal being felicitated

couple of chords within us, inspiring us to take lives head on, accepting challenges, dreaming big, and being entrepreneurs. Way to go Sachin!

Sachin is a serial innovator and has been one since he started his professional life. He has been an innovations, business and technology strategist for large multinationals that include Deutsche Bank AG and Videocon International.

The last term of the year concluded with the receipt of a cordial invitation to the 21st Annual Convocation of the Indian Institute of Management Lucknow held on 17th March, 2007 at the IIM Campus, Prabandh Nagar, Lucknow. Shri Kishore Biyani, Group CEO-Future Group and Managing Director, Pantaloon Retail (India) Limited, had been kind enough to address the event, as the guest of honor. The event was memorable and inspiring.

This term was quite an action as far as academics were concerned. There are reasons, why I say this. This was the first time we had the flavour of experiencing a subject, carrying one and a half credits. The subject was “Strategic Management” a term used so often by each one of us, as if we are born strategists, coming from the “jugaad” – as - “strategy” school of thought, in the Indian Context! Thanks to the interface we had with Prof. Anadi Pandey (ex-Professor, Strategy group with IIM Lucknow, currently working with Hero Honda). A perfect blend of theory and practice. He made us see different prisms of strategy. He made us realize that Strategic Management as a subject amalgamates the knowledge gathered in all other subjects read till date. He so very beautifully and succinctly brought out the components of strategy formulation and implementation. We were soon conversant with reality and the message went loud and clear that we needed to strap our belts and get going. We all still thank him for his six hours on that Saturday that evoked our interest in the subject. The next three months were spent understanding what Alex Miller & Pearce and Robinson had to say under the able facilitator ship of our instructor, who generally let students do their thing, and would efficiently navigate

the class discussions. We soon realized that the thirty sessions had gotten over! We walked out a little more learned than before.

The next memories are that of having studied “Strategic Human Resource Management”, under the able mentorship of an esteemed faculty member Prof. Anjani Kumar. Once again, he was a man with wide industry exposure, a large part of his career spent at GM. He supplemented theories with real life examples very well. A well-read man he indeed was! He was a charmer. Come to think of it, he could actually make all of us read Mello, in his own inimitable style. His “aa-ha“ punctuations and his 5-minute stress buster breaks still bring a smile on our faces. He so very seamlessly integrated DWO and BIO (long forgotten) with SHR. He is one living example of how to get an output of one and a half credits from an otherwise half credit course! (Of course his input to the course would have been more than the collective inputs from all of us). The structured interview he made us do in our own organizations was one of the most practical theory applications we have had so far.

The session on “Carbon Markets” was taken by a faculty from the Lucknow Campus, Prof Sushil Kumar; I am told by my friends who took his course that even they were all throughout kept on their toes with the it-can-happen-anytime-quizzes-of one hundred credits! I am sure they must have come out more knowledgeable than before.

Financial Markets and Institutions was a subject dear to many a hearts. And it became even dearer, having taught by Prof. Dutta. He taught about Bond markets, Money markets, Derivatives markets, the green-shoe option, the BASEL and the CAMEL norms, etc. But the intriguing discussions on “Efficient markets”, “Illustrious stupidity”, “How is derivative the child of volatility”, “How is Float the child of Delay”, “How no one can make more than the average market’s rate of return”, “How if everyone

knows everything, MFs are not needed”, were very interesting, even more so because of a dash of Shakespearean touch.

The course on Sales & Distribution Management (SDM) was indeed a pleasure. It was a journey from Amritsar-Ludhiana-Phagwara-Tarantal-bhagirath-muzaffarnagar-beas-chawribazaar-tarantal! The man of the Usha Sales, Tata Sky Shop fame very succinctly brought out the concept of spin selling, category killers, bulk breaking, the cash and carry model, the plateauing of a salesman, the relationship of a distributor - wholesaler- stockist amongst others. Listening to his own personal experiences was indeed a delight.

Last but not the least, the Pandora’s box which had been opened a couple of terms back, was simmering pretty bad by now. It was actually boiling hot. The time had arrived. It was time to make decisions. The decision of choosing electives for the next three terms. The reason why this is finding a place in this chronicle is that this was more than an event in itself. More so, when you look at this in the light of having no precedence of a similar thing been done before by any IIM for working managers. The IIML management did some groundwork and made a proposal to the participants. The guidelines were laid. We were asked to act within the framework and come up with a final “basket of choices”, as is generally called in the IIML semantics. Vocal discussions were held, more than just a few breaks and precious weekends sacrificed, chain of e-mails exchanged and finally the volunteering committee proposed a model (I happened to be more of a passive member of the committee). The first few drafts were discarded outrightly by the fellow participants. The anomalies were weeded out; all theory learnt upto now was put into practice. The premise was simple, maximum gain for all! After months of brainstorming sessions, and tête-à-tête with wish list vs realism, we did reach to a consensus. We gained some, we lost some. The thankless

job of trying to keep most of them happy was over. The crown of thorns was planted. Our dear editor volunteered to come up with a comprehensive report. The process has been preserved for posterity. A trend has been set. (We, IIM grads set trends, remember?)

Summer Break - May 07 to June 07

The most awaited, long yearned for and the much deserved summer break was here. And suddenly everybody seemed to have gone into a state of nothingness. Zap! The state of zero entropy. The state of stability. The state of rejuvenation. The state of recuperation. The group mailing list was also left to cool off for a couple of weeks. No words of wisdom exchanged between the participants. No love lost. Personally, this is the kind of system which is closest to my heart. And, if I had my way, this is the way things would operate in my set up. However, it's just that there is no such thing called 'my set up'!

The first month of vacations was put to its best use by sleeping through the lazy afternoons, clearing the backlog of a lot of movies, doing the damage control efforts at the office (an attempt to make good for the sins of the last one year), the long overdue US trips for our software engineers and those of other family commitments, things that had been hanging loose for the last one year. Some of us (more from the junior batch, since it was their first time), packed up for some excursions. And last but not the least, many of us comfortably basked in the glory of the World Cup 2007 fiasco.

And then after a month or so, guilt started catching up with some of us. (Crazy!) NO, I said to myself. I yelled. But nobody would listen. The dare devil had woken up within us. The IIML system had spoiled us into becoming an action-oriented lot, who start looking at every simple pleasure of life in terms of RoI. I mean come to think of it, who really wants to do anything constructive during vacations? And for the sake of an

argument, is going into hibernation not creative enough? Anyways, I didn't have many supporters (it's a tough world outside). The great minded men (like me!) do face resistance from the lesser mortals like the action-packed-lot. I gave in.

The group mails started seeing some activity. The work began on improving our web portal. The seed of starting our own newsletter, as a means of letting the world know that WE HAVE ARRIVED (and secretly venting out our pent-up frustrations, like mine!) was planted. Two teams for the two different efforts were in place. And surprisingly, I don't know how on earth, I volunteered for both of them! May be I am suffering from a split personality syndrome! I need immediate medical attention. And the ball rolled on. The fun of vacations was lost. It was now supposed to be work all the way.

And here I am in an extremely reminiscent and a sober mood. Wading through the sands of time. Doing a bit of occasional (hey! this is not me) introspection, standing on the crossroads. Flipping through the pages on how life has really been for the last one year. Not bad is what I find myself saying. We gained some, we lost some.

But then as the wise men say,

*"Har aarzoo पूरी हो तो जीने का क्या मजा,
जीने के लिये बस एक वजह की तलाश कर".*

On this thought, I find myself raring to go the last mile, on this road less travelled...

The views and opinions expressed by the author are personal. The Srijan team does not necessarily subscribe to the views expressed herein.



About the Institute

The Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow is one of the six national level management institutes set up by the Government of India. The Institute's aim is to help improve the management of corporate and non-corporate sectors and public systems, through pursuit of excellence in management education, research, consulting and training. IIM Lucknow has broken new grounds in being the first IIM to start an additional campus in the country. The [Noida Campus](#) is being developed as a centre of excellence in the area of executive education.

<http://www.iimlnc.ac.in>

About the Newsletter

Srijan is a newsletter of Student Community @ IIM Lucknow, Noida Campus. The views reflected in this newsletter are the opinions held by various authors, and not necessarily those of the institute . Contributions, responses and suggestions may be sent to srijan@iimlnc.ac.in.



Licensed under Creative Commons 3.0 Attribution Share-Alike License.