



TOWARDS A CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR A NEWLY RECRUITED MBA

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Comments : It is useful to all HR industries and connects the management students as well.

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Abstract

Management as a science has come a long way since Taylor and today a number of specializations have sprung up from within its folds. One such specialization is Marketing and this paper is concerned with what happens to the graduate of a B School once he enters the world of industry and business. The paper is based on the author's first hand knowledge of student placements and have many years of experience in dealing with both alumni and corporate houses, supplemented by feedback received from alumni to a structured investigation.

"Dive headlong and learn to swim, it is not just important, it is critical for survival."

David Ogilvy

Introduction

Alice asked the March Hare in Alice in Wonderland "which road shall I take?" the March Hare asked in return "that depends upon where you want to go." Alice looked somewhat bewildered and said, "It doesn't matter." The March Hare looked at her intently and then said "Then it doesn't matter which road you take."

The anecdote stated above quite clearly brings out two things: Firstly that one must know where one wants to head to i.e. the goal one wants to achieve before one makes a leap into this world. The same thing applies to one's career - a person must be aware as to what his ultimate ambition in life is and then accordingly work towards it. Secondly, while David Ogilvy might be a guru and may give strong advice for managerial behavior in a competitive market, that advice is wrongly placed when it comes to building the individual's comfort level in the work situation. Here the individual seeks stability and certainty to the extent possible before he shows his innovative and creative tendencies. This is perhaps a good lesson for MBAs who specialize in Marketing as well as their teachers to imbibe. It has often been stated often that a person who has no aim in life does not succeed except perhaps by serendipity. Hence management scholars have all along emphasized on having absolute clarity of vision, mission, goal and role at the level of the individual the group and the

organization in respect of the person, the process and the product. This clarity gives the individual a focus, which enables progress to be made. It was found in the pilot survey conducted by the author on the campus of SIMS that: (a) Students wanted a job but were unclear about what kind of job they would like, (b) Students did not have a career plan in their mind but everyone wanted to make it big. (c) Students were using the financial package as the only barometer of success in getting them successfully placed, (d) The students were not as well prepared theoretically to meet the challenges of the workplace, as they would have liked to believe, (e) Latest trends in marketing management were spoken of in passing but not gone into depth with the result that the students did not have an enlightened choice about what exactly within marketing they would like to do. (f) Even the students who had found themselves a job in the world of industry and business showed that they had unclear career plans. Hence the author took upon himself to investigate the issue in depth.

A career is nothing but a a sequence of positions occupied by a person during the course of a lifetime. A well-managed career is the inherent need felt by each and every employee. Over the past few years the companies have been recruiting a lot of MBAs at various hierarchical levels in the organization. The career development holds importance not just for the individual involved but also for the company in order for it to effectively harness the human resources it has. In light of these, the company is proposing a career development plan of a newly recruited MBA and the career development process to be followed towards the successful accomplishment of that plan.

Career development, hence is an exercise ensuring enhancement of employee's capacity and capabilities, not only for the personal betterment of the employees but also to ensure the meeting of current and future business needs. Career development is an ongoing process and requires a sense of continued commitment from both the newly recruited MBAs and the top managers of the organization. The process of career development has hence, to be carried on a shared basis.



The process of Career development involves useful inputs from both senior level MBA and the person who has been recruited recently into the organization. The benefits of the program would accordingly be available to the individual and to the organization. It is hence a program for mutual benefit of the individual and the organization.

Methodology

This paper is the product of feedback taken from alumni of SIMS who are in the job market since 1998 and the model posited herein is an ideal culled from the responses gleaned from the respondents. The students randomly selected were from the dual specializations of marketing with 1 finance, marketing with systems and marketing with operations. The sample size taken was as follows:

Marketing with Systems	104 respondents.
Marketing with Operations	26 respondents
Marketing with Finance	110 respondents.

Of those 800 ex-students who were initially contacted only those respondents who had actually chosen Marketing as a corporate career # were included in the above sample. This meant that 240 actual responses were taken. A hit rate of 30% on a schedule administered on the Net is very good by all research standards and demonstrated that the alumni of SIMS was still interested in being involved with what was going on in their alma mater and were interested in any constructive work that would improve the lot of future students.

The principal questions were thus posed:

- Q. Are you satisfied with the kind of offering that the corporate world has given to you?
- Q. What would you reckon to be the ideal career path for someone like yourself?
- Q. Is the path delineated by you for yourself realistic and realizable?

Answers came in short essay form as well as in a bullet form. Hence the answers were decoded and findings emerged there from. Based on the findings that emerged from the administered schedule the author personally interviewed 15 corporate managers in the field of HR and 15 in the field of marketing to test the realistic nature of the proposed prognosis. And only when the answers received were definitely in the affirmative that the author proceeded to posit this model.

The career plan tabled is geared towards the needs of a manufacturing company and a going concern, which was financially viable and had a future. This is because the majority of the respondents

This feedback thus received was transcribed into the form of a findings and this in turn was supplemented with the author's first hand

experience with the activities of academics, placement and alumni networks. Hence a hypothetical case has been put forward to guide SMEs (small and medium companies) to be able to accommodate the MBAs they recruit with a fair level of comfort and also tell the prospective manager what he should fairly expect. Accordingly a hypothetical career development plan has been created and is put forth. The field of Marketing is chosen since the author is well versed with it and most of the students opted for this specialization over the period 1999 and 2003. The next large catchment area was the information technology industry. The dot com bubble had burst and as Sadri has often said, dot coms had degenerated into dot cons and then became dot gones. Hence those students who had been placed in the dot com industries during the period 1995 - 2000 had found themselves holding the cleft end of the stick. Resentment amongst these students was very high and therefore the response would have been biased if the author had included them in the sample.

Having adopted the target industry at the SME level and having preferred the manufacturing unit which was a going concern, (as opposed to a sick one), the author proceeded to table a plan. However as is the case with all scientific inquiry, for formulating the career development plan the following assumptions have been taken into account:

Assumptions

1. The going concern in a manufacturing industry of the SME sector had a vision and marketing featured very strongly in that vision.
2. The hierarchical structure across various departments of such companies is more or less similar as can be gauged from the organization structure attached along with.
3. The company so selected was not a uni-product manufacturer but its output consisted of many products whose processes were either vertically or horizontally integrated with one another.
4. The manufacturing organization dealt in various products that are grouped under various brands. At the Asst. Manager and Manager level, the persons are in charge of one product or at most two. The Senior Manager is responsible for a group of products that may fall under the same or different brands. Hence a Senior Manager has quite a few Managers and Asst. Managers under him.
5. The proposed career plan has been given for a single MBA who would be joining in at the Asst. Manager level in the Marketing



division of the company. Similar plans for people joining in other departments of the company can easily be framed. But that exercise is beyond the ambit of this paper and so we shall leave it for other scholars to pursue.

6. The Senior Managers of all the departments would frame the proposed career development program in line with the organizational goals and departmental targets. This would help getting the coordination of all the departments in pursuing with the plan. Also the cross-functional transfers would become relatively easier once all the departments are serious about the program and coordinate for its successful implementation. This would also help establishing a positive atmosphere in the company in favor of the program.
7. The given career plan is logically only a tentative one, since social reality is mutable and we are forever taking decisions under conditions of relative uncertainty. Periodic modifications to the plan would be undertaken in light of any relevant changes. The diversification of the company would mean acquisition or start of new businesses. Based on such developments suitable changes would have to be incorporated in the plan.
8. The Senior Manager of the department along with the Manager, in which the MBA has joined at the Asst. Manager level, would frame the plan, in active consultation with the Human Resources Expert and sound out the new MBA in respect thereof. He is the right person for initiating this process as he would be best aware of the performance of the MBA on the job and would be in a better position to assess his skills.

These eight assumptions have been verified through personal interaction with the HR and Marketing managers who concurred that these were both realistic assumptions as well as necessary assumptions to facilitate the ensuing analysis.

Advantages To The Newly Recruited Mba

Every man like every nation makes his own history but does so under definite conditions over which he often has little control. It is understandable that each individual would like to control his destiny. He would like to chart out a wonderful career for himself. Any organization can provide the MBAs with just that kind of an opportunity automatically has the leading edge in internal customer satisfaction. This cuts down the level of frustration

and lowers the levels of attrition.

In the competitive world of today, in order to remain a high performer and to best serve the organization, for which they are working, the MBAs have to constantly keep themselves abreast of the changing requirements. This means that a continuous process of learning (unlearning and relearning) is required. The proposed program provides the MBAs with sufficient number of avenues from time to time to hone his skill and develop his competencies through proactive strategic HRD interventions.

The training and counseling program mooted by the HR Expert in such a company any would also enable the individual to realize some of his latent skills. The program would serve as a means for the MBA to climb the organization hierarchy and take up higher posts in the company on a later date. The successful execution of the program would help the MBA discharge his job responsibilities in a more effective manner.

Advantages To The Company

The advantages the program that will accrue to the company are the following:

With the corporate world undergoing rapid changes employee retention has become a very critical issue. Increasing competition within the industry has led to an increased demand for MBAs. The company has to strive hard to retain high performers. The company has to constantly look out for ways and means to recruit talented people and more importantly to retain them. A lure of better pay packets implies that these MBAs would be on the look out for jobs. A career development program coupled with various other factors provides an effective means for attracting, retaining and developing the employees.

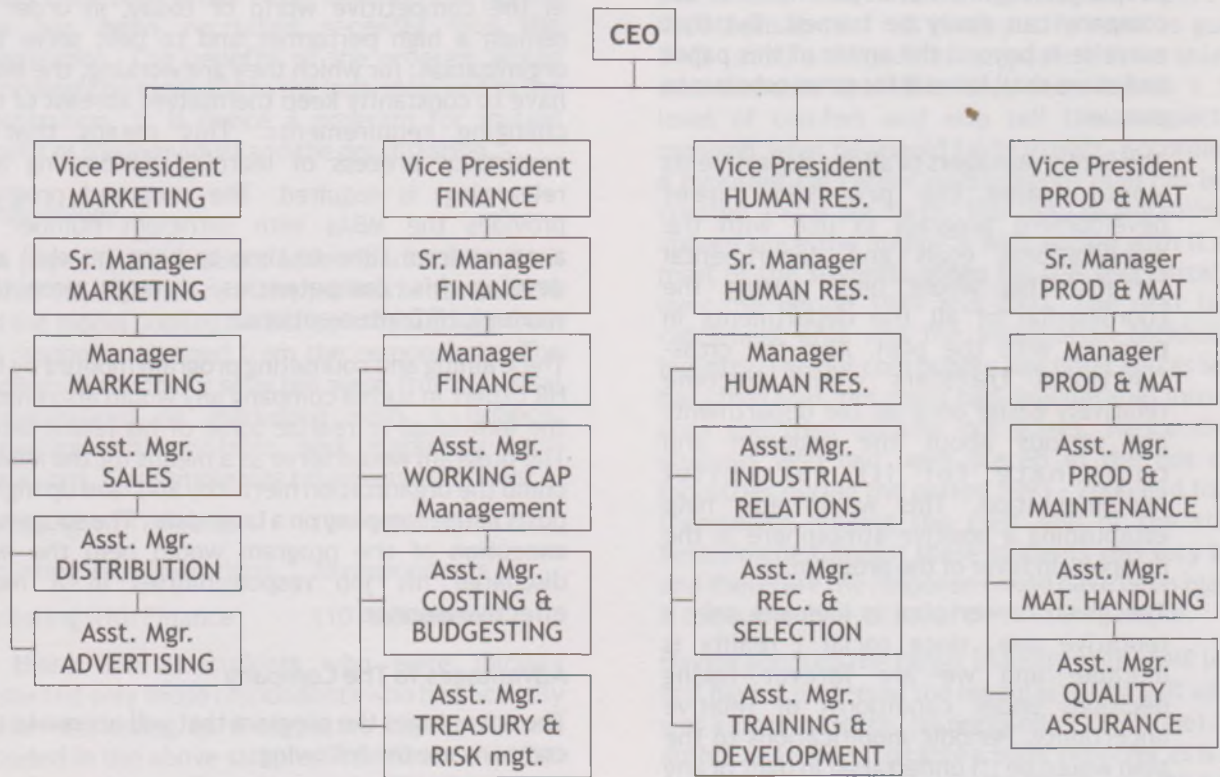
To be able to maintain a competitive edge in a constantly changing environment the organization needs to hone the skills and develop competencies of the newly recruited MBAs. The program also helps the organization realize the latent talent of its MBAs. A well thought out and well delivered career development program serves that purpose.

Having a well-developed career development program definitely improves the motivation level of the new MBAs. This helps improve their performance on the current jobs. Besides it ensures a much better performance for the organization both in the short and the long run.

The program would help establish a transparent mechanism and a system of open communication in the organization. Such a transparent environment would help bring forth invaluable suggestions for any job/exercise carried out by the organization even though they may not be directly related to that job.



A TYPICAL ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE



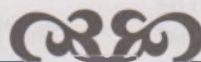
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) OVERALL SUCCESSION PLAN OF THE COMPANY

To ensure smooth running of business the companies have to adopt a proactive approach. Gone are the days of stable workforces. We are currently operating in a highly volatile environment wherein the companies have to strive hard to retain high performers. Earlier succession plans were merely replacement plans wherein whenever any key post fell vacant the organizations used to look at persons immediately below that level as possible successors. However., now the concept of succession plans has undergone a change. The main objective of the succession plan of the company is to ensure leadership continuity. To enable the proper achievement of this objective the following succession planning process has to be followed in the author's opinion.

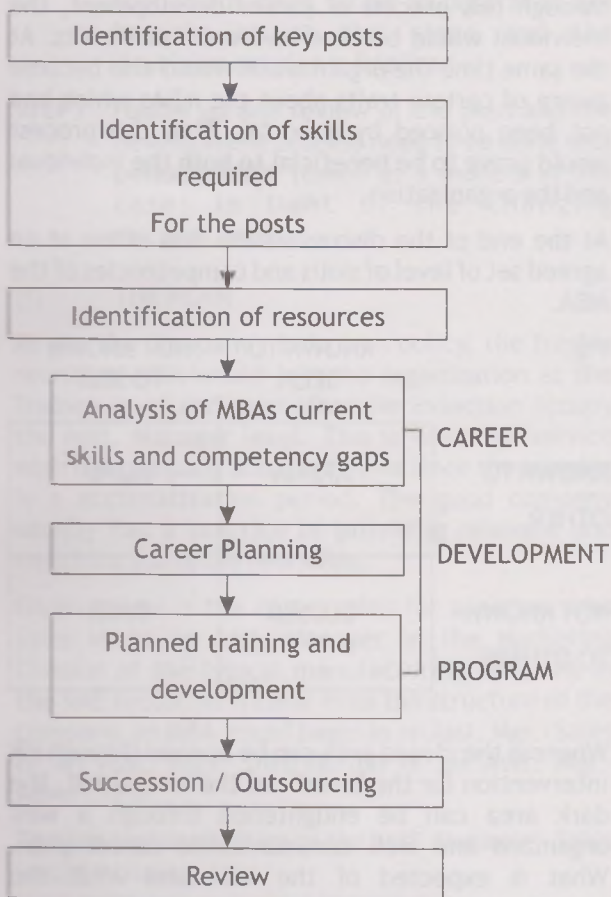
It is no longer acceptable for Marketing Managers and Human resources experts to operate as discrete sets. There is a growing need to look outside of one's specialization and open the euphemistic window so that knowledge transfer is made possible, inter functional competency increases and a symbiotic relationship between various functions emerges with an organization. This is undoubtedly the need of the hour if Indian manufacturing companies are to get back their pride of place in the macro economic calculus - a place they have steadily lost to the information technology sector between 1991 and 2001.

The plan will not work of its own free will. It has to be implemented and for that implementation to take place a process is required. This process is given in the typical (low chart as shown below





A FLOW CHART SHOWING CAREER PLANNING PROCESS



As seen above, the career development program must ideally form a part of program of the company. A career development program if successfully linked to a succession plan can help the organization in maintaining leadership continuity. A well conceived career development program would form the basis for early identification, retention, and enhancement in capabilities of a potential future top-level manager.

(b) A PROCESS OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Any program on career development cannot be a success unless and until a joint effort is made by both the company and the individual (in this case the new MBA). Wholehearted commitment from the top management is undoubtedly the starting point of this program, one must remember that the program would be an exercise in futility till the individual is also serious about the entire effort.

The following, the investigation revealed, would be the essential prerequisites for the successful implementation of the program:

The objectives and purpose of the program need to be spelt out right at the outset to ensure that all the parties involved in the program are well aware of it. Clarity of vision mission goal and role must be

insured.

A wholehearted commitment from top management is needed not just in letter but in true spirit. Top-level managers must walk their talk.

An active participation from the MBAs (for whom the plan is being set up) needs to be secured. They must be convinced about the merits of the program (personal as well as organizational) for them to give their full cooperation. This means that the idea has to be sold and accepted.

A system of open communication needs to be established throughout the organization so that all the involved parties are aware of the minutiae of the program. Moreover, transparency needs to be built within the system to ensure that the program carries out on a smooth and fair basis.

Since the cross-functional development of employees is an inherent part of the program a committed effort from all the departments to this effect has to come forth. To be able to successfully execute this, the program has been framed by the Senior Managers of various departments.

c) THE PROCESS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A newly recruited MBA enters an organization with certain goals and aspirations. The first introduction that the person gets to an organization is through the induction program. The induction program must make the new MBA aware of the vision, mission, objectives, organization structure, communication channels, roles and tasks expected of him., organization culture, values etc. Having gone through the induction program the new MBA feels a lot more comfortable in the organization and he can get started on his work with much more devotion and commitment. How well he has been prepared at his B School to face the challenge of the workplace is the onus of the lecturers while how well he adjusts to the workplace is the onus of the HR manager.

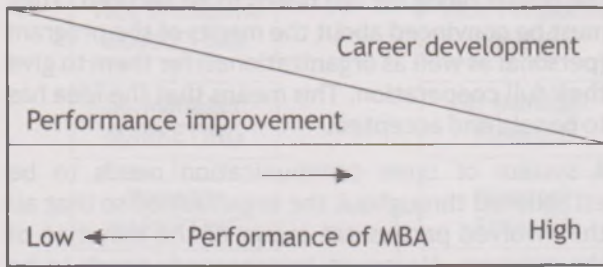
The first question that needs to be addressed at this stage is when should the career development program start for a newly recruited MBA. The first step towards career development plan for an MBA would start approximately 6 months after the date of joining the organization. This is just about the time when the first performance appraisal of the person would have been completed. Thereafter, performance appraisals every 6 months would provide information about the person's performance on the job.

The performance appraisal holds importance in this regard because there is a close linkage between the performance of the person and the initiation and continuation of his career development plan. The diagram given below demonstrates this linkage.



Fig. 3 :

CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT



The career development exercise has to be taken up for those persons whose performance on the job is as per or exceeding established standards. These are the MBAs having high potential and hence a career development plan for such employees needs to be charted out. For the MBAs whose performance is for certain reasons below the expected standards, he/she needs to be motivated to improve the performance in his/ her current sphere of activities. As the performance of these MBAs improves on the current job, a career development plan for them would also have to be framed. Having identified the MBAs for whom the career development plan needs to be charted out, the following process could well be started.

(d) ANALYSIS OF CURRENT SKILLS AND COMPETENCY GAPS

Competency mapping is a very important exercise. The books cited in the reference pay great deal of attention to this aspect, as do modern day management gurus. How does it work for the newly recruited Marketing MBA?

STEP 1: The MBA and the manager separately assess MBA's skills and competencies.

STEP 2: The manager then analyses both the assessments.

STEP 3: The manager then arranges for a discussion with the MBA. He must set out quite clearly the purpose of the discussion. At this stage a two way discussion takes place between the Manager and the newly recruited MBA. During the course of the discussion the two exchange views and jointly try to find out MBAs skills, competencies, strengths and weaknesses. An effort to achieve a fit between organizational and individual goals is made.

The concept of JOHARI WINDOW needs a special mention out here. Every person has certain strengths and weaknesses, which are known to both

the person and to the persons who come in contact with him. However, there will be such traits, which the individual is not aware of. But after going through this process of career development, the individual would become aware of such traits. At the same time the organization would also become aware of certain traits about the MBAs which had not been noticed by it so far. Thus the process would prove to be beneficial to both the individual and the organization.

At the end of the discussion the two arrive at an agreed set of level of skills and competencies of the MBA.

Fig.

	KNOWN TO SELF	NOT KNOWN TO SELF
KNOWN TO OTHER	ARENA	BLIND
NOT KNOWN TO OTHERS	CLOSED	DARK

Whereas the closed area can be opened through HR intervention for the benefit of the incumbent, the dark area can be enlightened through a well organized and well communicated career plan. What is expected of the MBA and what the incumbent expects of the organization must be in sync such that an equilibrium saddle point is achieved. Once an equilibrium opposition of expectancies has been reached, the process of implementing the plan begins. The well-known 6-D Methodology could be employed at this stage.

(e) CAREER PLANNING

STEP 4: The manager initiates efforts to set up a career development plan for the MBA. Also he explores various development opportunities for the MBA to be carried on during the course of MBAs stay with the organization. Various actions need to be taken, to accomplish each of the identified plan steps. Equally important is the timeframe within which they are to be achieved. Also the Marketing Manager, the HR Expert and the incumbent together try and assess how much resources would be required in finishing of various stages of the plan.

STEP 5: The manager at this stage also identifies various barriers that might disrupt the progress of the career development plan. With the help of proactive HRD intervention these barriers are systematically removed.



STEP 6: The manager then shows the proposed draft for career development plan prepared by him to the MBA. Any changes that might need to be incorporated are brought on at this stage and the development plan is finalized.

STEP 7: Follow up and review of the plan and the development process need to be done on a periodic basis (taken as 6 months in this case) in light of the changing circumstances.

(f) THE PLAN

As per the company's induction policy, the freshly recruited MBA would join the organization at the Trainee level and soon after the induction occupy the Asst. Manager level. This is when his service with the company actually begins since the training is a acclimatization period. The good company usually has a practice of providing relevant and enriching job to the new MBAs.

Given below is the career plan for a person who joins in as an Asst. Manager in the Marketing Division of the typical manufacturing company in the SME sector. As is clear from the structure of the company, an MBA could begin as an Asst. Mgr. - Sales or an Asst. Mgr. - Distribution or an Asst. Mgr. - Advertising

The job responsibilities of the Asst. Manager - Sales would include:

1. Achievement of sales target for the product of which he is in charge
2. Customer evaluation
3. Overall product promotion in the specified area of operations
4. Helping the top management in setting the credit policy. He will provide the inputs relating to his area of operation.

The job responsibilities of the Asst. Manager - Advertising would include:

1. Forming a media plan for the product under him
2. Formulation of the advertising budget for the product under him
3. Recognition of various promotional opportunities
4. Contacting advertising agencies and doing the necessary dealings with them.

The job responsibilities of the Asst. Manager - Distribution would include:

1. Maintaining of dealer relations.
2. Establishment and constant review of channels of distribution for the product

under him.

3. Ensuring timely delivery to wholesalers or retailers.

As stated above, and as the investigation revealed, the Asst. Manager's performance would be appraised from time to time. Based on the appraisal reports and the discussion of Manager with the MBA (Asst. Manager) his skills and competencies and his areas of interest would be identified. Based on all these the Asst. Manager would be provided with sufficient opportunities from time to time to take up responsibilities as Asst. Manager of some other operation within the same department. Like Asst. Manager sales could be given a chance to take up job as Asst. Manager Advertising or Asst. Manager distribution. This would enable the MBA to get a complete picture of the job in various operations within the marketing department.

In addition, the investigation revealed that to ensure the development of cross functional skills the Asst. Manager would have to be given opportunities to take up job responsibilities in other departments at the same level. This practice is in line with a progressive company's policy of building managerial competency with a strategic perspective. Since this would help them in performing their tasks in a much better way at the senior managerial levels, he investigation revealed that career planning was an activity that could not be either taken lightly or conducted unprofessionally.

The above plan would include job rotation i.e. shifting the MBAs from one area to another including interdepartmental shifts that would be followed up by periodic discussions with the MBA to build in a system of reviewing of career plan from time to time. The MBA would be given a choice to build a career in the area of his interest as long as manager was competent and the objectives of the company did not get disturbed in the process. The organization follows a system of merit-based promotions. This helps building a healthy competitive atmosphere in the organization. His results and the skiii enhancement undergone by him would evaluate help management to the MBAs performance in light of the job responsibilities discharged. The Asst. Manager would ideally be promoted to the ranks of a manger in a period of 3 to 5 years. This is not automatic but usual since the track record of SIMS alumni was good. However, one cannot generalize on the basis oC this and the time frame would be quite fluid. The Asst. Manager could become the Manager of either the Marketing Department in which he got his first appointment or if he so wishes and provided his performance and skills warrant, he could become a Manager in the department (other than Marketing), in which he has had sufficient exposure in the last year and a half. This of course depends on a number of factors such



as aptitude and attitude of the incumbent as well as the policy of the company.

The investigation further revealed that the Manager in the Marketing division (of a given manufacturing product), the individual would ideally be expected to carry out the following job responsibilities:

1. Setting up of target level of sales for Asst. Managers for the given product and ensuring that Asst. Managers working under him achieve the sales targets.
2. Reviewing and finalizing the advertising budget and media plan (for the product under his operation) prepared by the Asst. Manager and getting it approved.
3. Effort to ensure a congruity between sales, distribution and advertising efforts of the product under his operation.
4. Looking out for opportunities for new or more efficient dealer networks and making continuous efforts for reduction in selling and distribution costs of the company.
5. Suggesting new means of promotion for the product.

The company would have to continue introducing new products in future so as to thrive on the cutting edge of competition. Based on the manager's performance, he/she could well be asked to undertake the launch of the new product. This would provide a challenging opportunity to the manager and would prove to be useful when the person would be held in charge of various products as a Senior Manager. The performance of the manager would be reviewed on a periodic basis. A manager would take something like 5-8 years to become a Senior Manager, if the performance was above par and the targets were being consistently met.

The senior manager would ideally be heading the various product managers. His job responsibilities would include:

1. Setting the overall sales targets for all the products under him and ensuring that the targets set are achieved.
2. Review and compilation of overall advertising budget and media plan for the various products under him.
3. He could even be made in charge of an entire brand depending upon the range of products in that brand.
4. Framing of dealer related and credit policies for all the products under him.

5. Setting up of price of various products in conjunction with Senior Manager of the Finance division.
6. Looking out for opportunities for market potential of products and setting out plans for which all products could be launched in future.

Investigation revealed that the job of Senior Manager provides enough opportunities to the person to develop his skills and competencies, as he would be exposed to variety of products whether under the same or different brands. This would help the person identify the strategic issues involved in marketing products of different kinds. A senior manager would ideally get promoted to the ranks of Vice President, Marketing in a span of 8-11 years if the manpower plan provided for this kind of movement and the targets were being met consistently.

The job responsibilities of a Vice President, Marketing in a manufacturing company ideally would include the following:

1. Set/Approve the sales targets for all the products and ensuring that they are achieved.
2. Compilation of overall advertising budget and media plan for all the products.
3. Framing of overall distribution, pricing, credit policies for the company.
4. Taking strategic decisions on launch of new products and launch of existing products to new markets.

The Vice President would report to the Board of Directors and would be involved in taking of various strategic decisions relating to overall company matters from time to time. The Vice President would get promoted to the rank of CEO in around 10 years.

Besides the above stated plan it would be worthwhile mentioning that the above is only an indicative plan based on the present investigation. A manager who consistently performs well on the job and who keeps acquiring new skills and competencies would obviously have an accelerated ascendancy up the organization. Also if the company is planning to diversify in near future, then as a direct offshoot of the efforts of diversification of the company new avenues for promotion would open up. It would also lead to more challenging job assignments.

(g) PLANNED HR INTERVENTION

Besides the normal job providing adequate learning opportunities, the progressive minded manufacturing company would ideally hold the



following development programs from time to time for management cadre at all levels. Such programs would quite obviously lead to enhancement of skills and competencies of managers besides keeping them up to date with the latest developments in the managerial arena and industry.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMS: The investigation revealed that modern day competitive Company holds various conferences and seminars from time to time. This would help the managers to get exposed to the ideas of speakers who are experts in the fields. The topics that might be covered under conference may range from specific managerial techniques to broad topics such as relationships between business and society. The conferences would be made absorbing by ensuring a careful selection of speakers and by introducing two-way communications and discussions. Some of the conference programs organized by the organizations in manufacturing companies in Western India during the past few years include:

- Time and stress management
- Conference on inter-personnel skills
- Conference on computer graphics
- Strategic decision making
- Direct marketing

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: The progressive minded manufacturing company, the investigation further revealed, generally intends to stay in constant touch with major business schools for conducting various management development programs. These programs intend to expose the managers in theory, principles and new developments in management. Also such programs a valuable interchange of experience among managers. The areas that have been covered in the last few executive programs include:

- Managerial process and organizational behavior.
- Modern methods for quantitative and qualitative decision making
- Assessment of personal values and goals
- Organizational diagnosis
- Business Process re-engineering

Based on the inputs of the HR Experts who were consulted after the initial findings were written down by the investigator, it devolved that every manager would ideally be expected to attend Management Development Programs of at least 3 weeks ever}year. Out of these 3 weeks at least 1 week should be in area other than the one in which the manager is working as part of his regular work schedule with the company.

LABORATORY TRAINING: Programs involving case discussions, role plays, computer simulations, management games, problem solving exercises, group discussions have been organized by many companies in the recent past and it was felt that they would continue to organize them in future as well so to ensure that managers learn to apply various managerial techniques to decision making in simulated work situations.

TEAM BUILDING SKILLS: The Company that wishes to excel in the

face of market competition, the investigation revealed, usually would lay special emphasis on building team skills in managers. The nature of work that a person would have to handle in the company would require people to come together and pool in their efforts for successful completion of tasks. Also individuals contribution as a team member would form an important part of his performance appraisal. Hence the company would organize special seminars, lectures, role-plays for building and promoting team skills in managers at all levels.

Besides the above mentioned programs the managers from time to time would quite often be given opportunities to write proposals for new systems, procedures and policies that could help bring efficiency in organization's operations. They would also be encouraged to take up take up readings on various issues on a regular basis. For this purpose the company would ideally also have a well set up library that house many interesting and enriching books, magazines and journals. Many companies have already started having their own libraries as was evident from the feedbacks received during the investigation. The managers would also be free to use the CD-ROM and Internet facilities for widening the scope of their knowledge.

END NOTE

Last but not the least, it must be remembered that without the combined effort of the entire organization the program would remain an exercise in futility. Trust, transparency and teamwork are the guiding lights for the Company and its managers to go forward in the competitive world. As an offshoot of the responses received the respondents showed the following concerns which the author wishes to highlight.

It was felt that many B-Schools advertise their competence to get jobs (placements) for their students rather than give importance to their ability to impart quality education when recruiting students. This gives too much importance on placements and considerably little importance is placed on imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes.



Many students who see the MBA program as a job ticket rather than a managerial learning experience end up in the corporate world and find that their knowledge is inadequate to cope with real world issues at the workplace.

Respondents were critical of institutes that make the mistake of assuring 100% job placement in their prospectus instead of saying that we will give quality education which in turn will make you 100% marketable.

The respondents suggested that the number of full time faculty be increased and the full time faculty should actually enter the classroom and teach instead of taking on administrative and coordinating tasks.

The need for a competent Placement Officer was keenly felt and respondents admitted that as final year students they start missing classes, taking on added tension and begin liaison with the corporate world for jobs. They further lamented the fact that there is a mad rush for jobs and academic activity takes a second place in the scheme of things under such circumstances.

The philosophical question then arises: are B-Schools set up to educate the managers of the future or create students who will get jobs and thus become a preparatory-placement agency? Granted that the student gets the job, what are the odds that he will stay on there? Job hopping and high levels of separation are the hallmark of MBAs. And a career plan in the author's considered opinion, based on this investigation, can work wonders in curtailing attrition and bringing about stability.

Gratitude is being extended to all the academic colleagues who went through the initial draft of this paper and gave valuable suggestions. In keeping with their request no names are being cited.

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