

# GREAT K NNNECT

MAY 2017 - AN EXCLUSIVE MAGAZINE FOR THE ALUMNI OF GREAT LAKES INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT

## LEADERSHIP IS A HABIT

Interview with Vinutha Venkataraman  
(PGPM 2005)  
PAGE 05

## THINGS YOU WISH YOU KNEW BEFORE YOU FOUNDED YOUR STARTUP

An article by Sai Sudha (PGPM 2006)  
PAGE 12

## KICKBOXING THE STRESS AWAY

GLAA Chennai chapter met again, this time for a KickBoxing session in the city.  
PAGE 4

## EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS

PAGE 14



# FROM THE EDITORS

## MAGAZINE

It is with great pleasure that we bring you the May edition of Great Konnect - an exclusive alumni Magazine.

Over the years, we have worked hard on making this magazine most relevant and engaging as possible. Starting this edition, we are showcasing active and successful alumni from various batches and chapters across the country in a feature interview and share their success story.

We have the new batch of PGPM joining us this edition and we extend a warm welcome to the new batch. Students and alumni are the brand ambassadors of Great lakes and we are always thankful to all of you.

In this edition of Great konnect we have featured Vinutha Venkataraman of the PGPM 2005 - Pioneers batch.

Sai Sudha (PGPM 2006) shares her experience and valid suggestions for people aspiring to become entrepreneurs elaborating on her article for a magazine in Hong Kong.

Read the magazine further to know about all events , happenings and news from the campus and elsewhere. We also welcome feedback and your suggestions in order to make Great Konnect a better effort to connect with you!

Have a great read ahead!

ALCOM

Great Lakes Institute of Management

# CONTENTS

## MAGAZINE



### 5 KICKBOXING THE STRESS AWAY

Kickboxing session was organized by GLAA Chapter in Chennai.

### 6 LEADERSHIP IS A HABIT

Read about the journey and success story of Vinutha Venkataraman (PGPM 2005) in this interview with the Alumni Relations office.

### 12 SAISUDHA (PGPM 2006) WAS QUOTED IN “JUMP-START” MAGAZINE IN HONG KONG

Saisudha elaborates on a topic she wrote for a magazine in Hong Kong

### 14 EVENTS OF THE MONTH

AMBA Accreditation, NBA accreditation, New batch Registration and outbound orientation program.



GREAT LAKES  
INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, CHENNAI

Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai  
is now

ASSOCIATION  
OF  
AMBA  
S

Accredited

PGPM | PGDM | PGXPM | PGPM FLEX

» p.14

# DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

■ PROF. T.N. SWAMINATHAN

The next batch of PGPM (Glorious Guptas) have arrived in the campus and the campus is buzzing with new faces and fresh energy. With this our family has grown bigger and stronger.

The registration process went without a glitch and the students are getting acquainted with life as a Great laker which all of you went through.

On the alumni front we had yet another chapter event happening in Chennai for a kickboxing session. Fresh and fun ideas like this is what we need to bring together our community and include some value & fun in the meetings.

I will be happy to see many such events happening in other regional chapters of GLAA around the country and elsewhere. We will be very glad to assist you in all ways possible.

I am glad to see the inclusion of new feature from this edition of Great Konnect showcasing active and successful alumni across all batches.

We strive to make this magazine as engaging as

possible and request you all to share your stories with us so we can take pride in sharing it with the community.

We had the accreditation, registration and various news to share with you.

Read the magazine further to know about all events, happenings and news from the campus and elsewhere. We also welcome feedback and your suggestions in order to make Great Konnect a better effort to connect with you!

Have a great read ahead!

ALCOM

Great Lakes Institute of Management

# KICKBOXING THE STRESS AWAY

ALUMNI CHAPTER MEET



Alumni of GLAA Chennai Chapter met again for another fun session in the city.

Chennai Alumni came together to experience & learn Kickboxing. With Sashwath Dash (PGPM 2016), a kickboxing expert and alumni of Great lakes, Chennai offering to train the alumni on Kickboxing, the event saw participation from alumni across batches.

The Alumni met at Thiruvanmiyur beach on early morning of 15th of April 2017 for the session.

“What a nice day to start with. It was a great kick boxing workout session. We ran for 5 mins to start with, followed by

warm up exercises, kick practise and self defence techniques. Thank you Sangeeta, Bharat, Harish, Tony and Prateek for turning up to the session. And a big thank you to Shashwat for taking out time for all us to teach kick boxing. We are looking forward to have more such sessions like the one we had today” says Naveen who attended the session alongwith the other alumni in Chennai.



# LEADERSHIP IS A HABIT

## ALUMNI INTERVIEW

*Vinutha Venkataraman is an alumna of Great lakes Chennai. She is from the very first batch of the PGPM program (2005) - Pioneers. As a leadership trainer and an independent people consultant, Vinutha is very successful in her field of work. In this interview with the alumni relations office, Vinutha talks about her work, personal life and influence of Great Lakes in her life and career.*



### **Please tell us about yourself.**

By Profession, A Leadership Trainer at Leadership Management International (LMI) and also an independent People Consultant.

I started off as an HR generalist partnering with Business to support the Business Growth by enhancing employee engagement within the Line of Business at HCL after my course completion at Great Lakes. As I believe in the concept of Learning, Unlearning and Re-Learning, I decided to explore Learning and Development within HR at HCL. I had great mentors at work and with my passion towards people development, I ventured into my dream of making a difference in Employee's work life through my behavioral trainings. That was a beginning of another

milestone of my success journey which I still cherish and will continue to cherish. I strongly believe that both professional and personal life has to be balanced well in order to call oneself a highly successful person. I have a son in Kindergarten for whom I devote quality time and my husband works in HR too.

### **What do you do precisely at work?**

I work with people enabling them to become more successful in life by enhancing their leadership skills. People who are leaders/moving towards taking up leadership roles are in such positions probably due to their experience, skill, and knowledge and, of course consider they can themselves successful for reaching such heights. Now in this phase of journey there is a choice – Either they continue to do the same

thing in this role which will thereby produce similar results or they decide to create new habits of thinking and execution which thereby generates greater results. I work in this space of enabling Leaders/Potential leaders at all levels/Industries undergo a systematic change in their professional and personal life to fulfill the desired expectations in Professional and Personal Life. Leadership I believe does just not possess skills but to possess an ATTITUDE that gets/would have got conditioned over a period of time. Through my passion to support leaders perform to the best of their potential I facilitate this change process through successful habit creations to move from a transactional leadership mindset to a transformational leadership mentality.

Also people say Leadership is an art, which means it can be acquired. Some are born Leaders not because

of the knowledge or skills but portrayal of the leadership Attitude that I mentioned earlier. Some become great leaders/ visionaries because they chose to become one. When they choose to, During that change process , people may experience discomfort because change is not easy. If that journey of change can be supported with tools and techniques along with two other main necessary tools – “Desire to change self-first” and follow a Discipline, the Transformational leadership becomes a positive experience. With the right mindset and supporting tools to create excellence through new habits, more successful leaders are created. That is what I passionately help people through the LMI programs for Leaders/Entrepreneurs. Through our program we facilitate people to get into habits, those habits which will help him to become an even more suc-

cessful leader by realization of the end results. For example time management is a broad concept. As Uncle Bala says , “you need to be aware of the “time value of money” and “money value of your time””. While we experienced that in small portions at great Lakes, when it comes to Leadership it is a huge umbrella which has various traits and types that attaches to individual's personality. Successful leaders envision the big picture not just for themselves but ensure it is drilled down to all employees working with them. A vision without a mission makes no sense to me. That mission is accomplished by “effective goal setting and tracking”. Now this goal setting is not a day's job but requires consistency. The consistency requires discipline, perseverance , support and of course the most important aspect “Belief” that all these efforts will lead to a positive transformation.

Vinutha during  
a session  
at Great Lakes  
for  
the  
PGDM Students





“ Successful leaders envision the big picture not just for themselves but ensure it is drilled down to all employees working with them. A vision without a mission makes no sense to me. That mission is accomplished by “effective goal setting and tracking”. Now this goal setting is not a day’s job but requires consistency. The consistency requires discipline, perseverance , support and of course the most important aspect “Belief” that all these efforts will lead to a positive transformation.

Now this goal setting is not a day's job but requires consistency. The consistency requires discipline, perseverance , support and of course the most important aspect “Belief” that all these efforts will lead to a positive transformation. This belief starts with self and then has to move to all employees in the organization and not vice versa. Once the belief is set, trust begins to develop. For a true transformational successful leader, he/has to win the trust of the people by his/her behavior which is a result of the habitual attitude.



Vinutha with her colleagues in an event

A person at a leadership role might be technically sound and contribute towards higher revenues and growth but the equation changes when you have to work with a team. It is no more just about the self anymore but about the team as well. As I always affirm “I grow as my team grows”, Here by growth I also mean growing not by levels but by knowledge, skill and Attitude. Effective Goal setting, time management through prioritization , flexing communication styles , result oriented delegation styles and developing self-directed

work teams are some of the important traits of a good leader that needs to become habitual for one's development as a highly successful self-motivated leader.

**Does this apply for top level managers or for everyone?**

Of course this applies for everyone at all levels who are leaders or who aspire to become successful leaders be in the corporate ladder or entrepreneurial space. We might have be captain in a school team or could have held any



---

have be captain in a school team or could have held any other leadership role in your life journey till now. These concepts apply to everyone since every individual will take up a leadership role some time or the other in his/her life and everyone likes to be highly successful at it.

The point here is there is always a difference between just knowing and actually doing. Everybody knows a lot but doers are less. Suppose I ask you to write with your left hand with the same handwriting as your right hand? Is that possible? Yes, It is possible given you practice for the same, and it has to become habit to get there efficiently.

**You were at Great Lakes for a session recently, what was that about?**

The session I took in great lakes was about one foundation to becoming successful leaders- “goal setting”. Goal setting is a very important habit for any leader. Dreaming big I agree is a great start to become successful in life but like I said a vision without

a mission makes no sense. So the best way to convert those dreams into reality is to start setting goals. These goals are broken down into smaller actionable SMART goals that decides your daily Time picture. When we do that, we learn how to prioritize things in life. We execute these actions through our behaviours which results from our attitudes or way we think day in and day out. We don't train people to become leaders. I spoke about this with an experiential touch with our students with an objective that this thought process need not wait till they join an organization or begin their entrepreneurial journey.

**What was the Great Lake's impact in all this?**

At Great Lakes, we learnt all this by practice. Overall it was another experiential milestone which made us taste what successful leadership could lead to. With the tight schedules we learn to be flexible at work and personal life. When we deal with projects, assignments and exams we learn that period evaluations are good and hence learning is a continuous process.

Vinutha  
awarding  
certificate to  
one of the  
participants in  
her program



---

Since Our learning was experiential. I learnt from the case study exercises that every day is a case study that needs to be worked on with a good planning and execution strategy.

### **When should young professionals start building these skillsets?**

All professionals possess / keep acquiring these skills, but as I such Attitude matters a lot which I believe the positive conditioning of it should start as early as possible. Why are organizations struggling later to inculcate these leadership skills? Attitude is not something that someone develops overnight. Yes of course a great leader seems to wave a magic wand on you but he/she would have incubated these skills and attitude through practice and execution. We as good leaders must know how to flex our leadership style as need be. These skills if nurtured and habituated during their learning period in the institution, even before they join the organization, restart their career, not only helps them to be identified as preferred leaders but also helps the institution produce great leaders. When this is dthey automatically become the whole package that is preferred by organizations. Students should take this seriously during their time in the institute and make the most of the opportunities available. If students realise this early, their actual growth as good human being starts early.

### **Do you think all B-schools are doing it?**

All B-schools have started realizing this and started providing such opportunities to unleash the students

potential early. In Great Lakes students if students don't work/manage with a mindset that others have to change first or organizations have to change rather they think about how they should change , what are the value adds that they need to bring in and how to create opportunities from challenging environments, then in the long run the quality of leaders from Great Lakes is going to stand apart. Take for instance, our Karma yoga program. Karma Yoga is an exclusive opportunity, highly outbound and experiential which helps students to understand the gap between expectations and reality. It helps students to plan out ways to overcome challenges and come up with solutions. It is a collective effort for a single objective to be met. I am glad that Great Lakes provides such environments to create an exposre to real life work situations.

### **How did you end up in this role? Is this what you wanted to do?**

Of course I am doing what I love. I work with People and I defined my carrier path around my passion. It was my long time desire which created this passion. As I stated earlier I was a business HR in HCL to begin with managing end to end HR solutions like Talent acquisition, Employee Engagement, Aligning HR metrics to Business goals, people management , Performance and reward management to mention a few. For the last two years, I have further enriched my passion by being associated with LMI and impacting people's life in a positive small way. I have lots more to do in life and I will continue to believe in my potential. This is where I visu-

alized myself in my career 13 years ago and I continue to dream big and visualize my future. My role of balancing personal and professional life is challenging and every day is new for me. I believe in doing what I Love and I Love what I do.

### **You are from the first batch of Great Lakes? What made you choose Great lakes?**

Belief that it will be a good choice . I agree That was a big risk I took being the first batch. But We as a family saw a great leader in Uncle Bala. He had the vision and was determined to achieve it. He was our leader. It was a risk- reward model. We won and the institution won as well. We were exposed to a mixture of great experiences and great people.

### **What change do you see in Great lakes after 12 years?**

The first batch of Great Lakes is doing extremely well. We are in constant touch. In 12 years, the perceptions about the institution may have changed a little bit but Great Lakes students are doing extremely well not just in their jobs but in total . As I say, each person may have a different perspective and that perspective is build because of our own behaviors. I see great potential in our students and if they unleash it to their best through the opportunities and exposure provided by the institution we can create a bigger brand for ourselves and great lakes. I have always been extremely proud to say that I am a Great Laker. The brand has been created, but it is up to the students to believe in the institution and make use of the brand to keep their flag fly-



ing high along with the institution.

### **What do you think about Great Lakes growth since its inception?**

It is phenomenal. It is not easy for an institution to achieve what Great lakes has achieved in 13 years. Again, I will attribute it to the leadership which has really helped us evolve to this stage. Success if progressive so to make it progressing, students and alumni can act as brand ambassadors and should take it forward. We should take every opportunity to showcase Great Lakes as this institution has helped us make our foundation strong.

### **Your inspiration at Great Lakes/ from Great Lakes?**

There was a Professor by name Latha Ramakrishnan who taught us a subject on emotional intelligence when I was in Great Lakes way back in 2004-2005. She was and still my inspiration to what I am today. Her leadership style further motivated me to dream big , build on my dreams,



*I see great potential in our students and if they unleash it to their best through the opportunities and exposure provided by the institution we can create a bigger brand for ourselves and great lakes. I have always been extremely proud to say that I am a Great Laker*

give it a shape and execute my goals. She was one person along with my parents who believed in my potential and made me believe in my potential. She broke many of my elephant chains and I must thank Great Lakes to bring in some of the best facilities to help students to become successful and confident. It is not fair if I vouch on other students behalf but for me she was a role model and now I am working under her mentorship and a great team mentored by her. I am glad that she is proud of what I am today and keeps motivating me to be my best.

### **What is your advice for the new batch of students?**

The major difference between a normal MBA and what we do at Great Lakes is how we stick to our motto of Global Mindset- Indian Roots. The environment, the campus, faculty and infrastructure, everything is world class and when such environment is provided by the institute we have make the best use of it for your growth. We have great faculty who are ranked among the best in the country. Everything about Great Lakes sets it apart from other B-schools.

The institution also believes that when we as the institution's prod-

uct are successful , the institution is also successful. So let's all operate in a win win mindset where in we do our best and operative with a positive Giving attitude. As I stated , the earlier you start executing with this mindset , the better equipped are you at your work.

So Dream big, set Goals, Lay down a plan for the future. Think and start working on What you are going to do in the next one year at Great Lakes to realize the goals? The accountability should be yours to make the best use of institute, faculty and facilities that are being provided. When we do the basics right, rest of your job becomes easier. Great Lakes is much more than earning big numbers as a package. Great Lakes is a game changer towards the way you start looking at things differently in life as a whole. Rest is history!

# THINGS YOU WISH YOU KNEW BEFORE YOU FOUNDED YOUR STARTUP

ALUMNI ARTICLE

Sai Sudha (PGPM 2006), Co-Founder of Hidden Truffles explains on an article she wrote for "JumpStart" Magazine in Singapore.

“

Globally, companies are estimated

to lose hundreds of billions of dollars every year due to customer defections and abandoned purchases as a result of poor experience.



---

Inspired by a quote I was asked to write for a Magazine, I decided to elaborate more on a topic that is so important for an entrepreneur and no matter how much you know, you could always do with more – Things you wish you knew before you founded your startup. The points that I have covered here are primarily my first hand experiences and I would love to hear your experiences as well ☐

1. Never be afraid to make mistakes or try something new – What gives me the thrill of a start-up is the infinite possibilities of trying something new. The sense of achievement when we finally succeed gives the courage to push us to our limits. In the process it is inevitable that you will make mistakes. Never be afraid, in fact be proud of learning from them. A mistake made now is a mistake saved from being made when it might be too late. In my opinion, mistakes are the stepping-stones to success.

2. A Business Idea evolves constantly: Don't be too fixated on the business idea that you had when you started. Let the customers lead you along the way. Have an open mind to evolve and adapt to the changes around you. What you did 2 years ago may not be relevant today. The world is changing fast. Grow with it, change with it. But never compromise your values. Values are timeless.

3. Hard work always pays: Hard work endows you now and forever. The endowment comes in various forms – connections, collaborations, ideas, revenue, funding, mergers, ideas, inspiration and courage that will last you a lifetime.

4. Do not try to do it all by yourself: Hiring talent / free-lance

talent is a key investment for you and your company for 3 reasons:

It gives new perspectives

Out-sourcing tasks that aren't your core competency will only get the job done better and faster

Most importantly it frees up your precious time to focus and plan on other core tasks.

5. Keep a journal for your everyday tasks: Maintaining it everyday helps you collect your thoughts and organize your ideas. It is, after-all, humanly impossible to remember all the great ideas, to-dos, reminders and tips that you note for yourself. Going back and reading the journal every weekend will help you tremendously to focus and plan the week ahead.

6. Plan every week ...way ahead: Planning and keeping a journal may seem like overlapping ideas, but to me are completely different. Keeping a journal is to collect your thoughts and remind you of things you cannot remember in detail. Planning is strategic. Planning is acting with a goal. Make a half yearly plan; break it down into quarterly, monthly and weekly basis. Don't shy away from making changes and edits to it as your ideas evolve. This will help your ideas like a blinder helps a horse – inseparable to achieve effective productivity.

Network for the joy of networking and not with an agenda in mind. Great and lasting connections are not made in transactional meetings.

7. Managing Stress: Starting a new business is a very stressful endeavour. No matter how small your start or how big you think. Be

prepared for it. There will be lots of dirty jobs, admin jobs, co-ordinations, marketing duties, time consuming clerical jobs, field jobs, sales jobs etc. all of which you, you and only you will have to do. The beautiful strategic decisions and recognition comes to those who are willing to wait. Try to take on only those things that you can commit to. Do not bite more than you can chew is a saying that has stood the test of time for a reason.

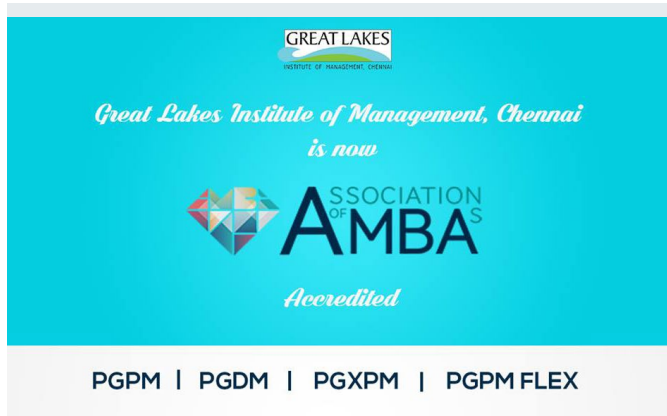
9. Work-Life Balance: In the end it all boils down to striking a good home and work life balance to keep your sanity in check. Remember, in the end everything will pass and life will be good. The precious time you spend away from your family, the bad moods you bring home, and the late nights are only the foundation for your future regrets. There will always be more work, but the today that you lost with your loved ones will never come back. Plan well and set aside a strict rule to spend time everyday for things outside of your work – with family, pursue a hobby, exercise, reading a book or whatever it is that helps you relax.

10. Invest your time with like-minded people: Sometimes, it is possible to lose track of your vision and the zealous motivation that you once had. The very best way to keep your motivation at its peak is to surround yourself with people who are full of it. The spirit is contagious and a wonderful cycle will be formed in no time that will never let the fire die within you and within the people you surround yourself with. After all, birds of the same feather will flock together.

Here, I said it. Now don't tell me I wish you had told me so.

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

## WHAT IS HAPPENING IN CAMPUS



In addition to PGDM program receiving NBA accreditation Great Lakes is now accredited by AMBA (Association of MBAs, UK). PGPM, PGDM, PGXPM & PGPM Flex programs have received this international accreditation which places Great Lakes among an elite group of B-Schools in the world.

Dr. T. N. Swaminathan's paper co-authored with Dr. Rajan CR & Ms. Pavithra M titled "Key Drivers of Purchase Intent by Indian Consumers in Omni-Channel Shopping" has been published in May issue of Indian Journal of Marketing. (ISSN 0973-8703). The link to the publication is given below

<http://www.indianjournalofmarketing.com/.../artic.../view/114233>.

Prof Sandeep Srivathasan's paper titled - "A Queueing-based Optimization Model for Planning Inventory of Refurbished Components in a Service Center," has been published in Computers and Industrial Engineering Journal (106, pp. 373-385). Prof. Sandeep has co-authored with Prof. Vishwanathan.S from College of Business (Nanyang Business School), Singapore.

<http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=3068076>

## ACADEMICS HIGHLIGHTS



*The new batch of students of PGPM 2017-18 - Glorious Guptas have arrived on campus. Registrations took place on May 01 - 02 , 2017 in the campus. The process went seamless with entire Great Lakes working to get the students settled in their new environment. Later, students attended the outbound bonding session at Tapovan.*



# GREAT KONNECT



Connect with us on

Great Lakes - Facebook | Great Lakes - Twitter | Great Lakes - Pagalguy | Great Lakes - Wordpress | Great Lakes - LinkedIn | Great Lakes - Google Plus | Great Lakes - YouTube | Great Lakes - Official Website

BUILD

THE FAMILY!

<http://www.greatlakes.edu.in/pgpm-talent-listing/>

## ASSOCIATIONS



**BAUER**  
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

Stuart School of Business  
LUNDS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

**UMKC**  
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI  
KANSAS CITY

**UNIVERSITE DE BORDEAUX**



**HKUST**  
BUSINESS SCHOOL  
香港科技大学  
WORLD-CLASS IN ASIA

**HHL**  
LEIBNIZ UNIVERSITÄT  
HAMBURG

Campus: Dr. Bala V Balachandar Campus, East Coast Road, Manamai, Tamil Nadu - 603 102 | Tel: +91 44 3080 9000 | Fax: +91 44 3080 9001  
City Office: 2nd Floor, NPL Devi Building, No. 111, Kalki Krishnamoorthy Salai (LB Road), Thiruvannamiyur, Chennai - 600 041  
Tel. : +91 44 2441 2450 | Fax. : +91 44 2441 2458 | Web : [www.greatlakes.edu.in](http://www.greatlakes.edu.in) | E-mail: [info@greatlakes.edu.in](mailto:info@greatlakes.edu.in)

## Disclaimer:

Views expressed in Great Konnect are solely that of the contributors and not ALCOM 2017 or that of Great Lakes Institute of Management

All rights reserved 2017 @ GREAT LAKES INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT