

EDP: Being Eligible And Employable

The market is changing, and so is the management drill. To stay aware and competent, many are opting for executive development programmes at B-schools

The Harvard Business School plans to gather up to 1,000 next generation business leaders in India for a one-and-a-half day executive training programme — the first such short duration course from the world-renowned business school.

It is also in the process of launching more focused, need-based programmes that will take learning from small classrooms to bigger conclaves with up to 20,000 students. The B-school has identified Bangalore for the launch of its first very-short-duration programme, which will be held sometime next year.

Similarly, many top Indian B-schools such as Indian School of Business, Indian Institute of Management, MDI Gurgaon, IMT Ghaziabad and IMI have come up with various executive development programmes (EDP) for all levels of management — mid, senior and top level — customised as per the changing dynamics of business environment, global economy and technology driven needs of organisations of today.

Shift In Focus

B-schools mostly offer two types of EDPs — long-term courses and short-term management development programmes (MDPs). Earlier, in the long-term programmes, similar content as that of two-year MBA programmes was delivered with slight modifications. Hence, they were largely theory based. The focus has now shifted from theory to application to fast-track the career of executives with relevant work experience. Even short-term MDPs, which were largely about generic programmes, are more customised today as B-schools are targeting at the desired skillset of managers in particular domains to improve their on-the-job performance.

The traditional executive development programs, which largely focussed on core disciplines of business such as finance, marketing, leadership and strategy, are changing. “There has been an increasing emphasis on more specialised programs that can address the learning needs of executives, stemming from the rapid growth of

business practices in recent times, which include programs in areas such as digital marketing, social media, business analytics and data-driven decision making, cloud computing, and design thinking,” says Mohan Lakhamraju, Vice Chairman and CEO, Great Lakes Institute of Management and founder and CEO of Great Learning, an online learning startup.

Lakhamraju further stresses on the fact that the nature of executive careers has changed substantially in the past two decades. Before the advent of technology and technology-driven disruption, the way business was conducted was relatively stable. However, the past two decades have witnessed massive disruptions in business practices. First, because of the Internet and the resulting globalisation; then, the mobile revolution; and now because of analytics and cloud computing.

The programs are aimed at senior-level and top-level management capability building through board-level workshops, directors’ conclave (for board members), advanced management and global leadership programmes (for functional heads), wealth creating mindset (for various companies for middle, senior and top management), and a host of open programs offered by IMI faculty on contemporary and emerging issues among others.

“We also conduct in-company programmes on request for public and private sector companies that want us to design and deliver specific modules exclusively for their employees for both senior and top management,” says A.K. Rath, dean of Executive Education and International Relations at International Management Institute (IMI).

IMI conducts a number of EDPs — specially-designed customised in-company programs, global leadership, and online programs — in various functional areas every year.

MDI Gurgaon also offers a range of executive development programmes to young and middle level managers such as the national management programme and post graduate programmes in energy management (PGP-EM), public policy programme (PGP-PPM) and part time (PGP-Part Time). “Many long and short EDP programmes serve as an ideal platform for gaining new insights in order to be successful, keeping in mind the dynamic business environment,” says Sangeeta S. Bharadwaj, dean of Executive Graduate Programmes, MDI Gurgaon.

In the last few years, several new areas of operation has gained prominence in the market, which most mid-career executives did not study about in college. While some are learning on-the-job or through employer-organised training programs, many others are using open learning global platforms such as Coursera and EdX, among others to self-learn. India is the second largest market for Coursera with over 1.5 million users. But for those who need a more intensive or an in-depth learning experience, the best option is to enrol for an EDP at B-school, according to Lakhamraju.

He further says that according to a recent research report on executive education released by Ken Research in September 2015, enrolments in EDPs grew from around 53,000 in FY10 to over 1,19,000 in FY15. The number is expected to grow at a CAGR of 13 per cent till FY20 to cross 2.20,000.

Staying Relevant And Popular

To stay relevant and keep growing, most mid-career executives are having to learn and develop new competencies, either on their own or by enrolling for some kind of learning programs. "This is especially critical for those executives who are looking for a functional or domain shift. For instance, the business analytics executive program offered by Great Lakes Institute of Management saw an increase in enrolment from about 100 in FY15 to 1,000 in FY17. Over two-thirds of participants who have completed this program have been able to make a successful career transition," says Lakhamraju.

"There has been a substantial surge in the number of applications and enrolments for executive programmes in business schools. The reason is simple; professionals want to move to the next orbit in the organisational hierarchy by acquiring skills in domains like strategy and leadership," says Somayajulu Garimella, dean, Executive Education & External Relations, IMT Ghaziabad.

"We have conducted EDPs for various civil service officers at the central and state cadres, the army, government officials in Bhutan and Afghanistan, public sector corporations, and so on. The topics include: leadership, finance and budgeting, stress management, and general management," says C. Gopinath, dean at Jindal Global Business School.

Executives opting for EDPs are getting greater responsibilities in their organisations, involving general management roles. It is also seen that those who have been successful in using the new concepts and approaches learnt in classrooms have been

promoted while still undergoing the programme.

Lately, there has been a change in the orientation of organisations towards learning and developmental activities for executives. Now, more and more organisations are ready to sponsor executives for long-term and short-term programmes as they works as a retention tool as well as a tool for organically developing an organisation's leadership pipeline.

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