

BREAKING THROUGH

In this edition of Al-Inc eminent NIRMAYANS share with us their toughest experiences and how these shaped them and their careers.



Editors Message



SATISH ROY
MBA FT 2nd YEAR

I vividly remember the animated discussions with my team when we first sat around planning the current edition of AI-Inc. It took us almost a week just to decide the theme of the magazine (as yours truly will tell you, this magazine publishing can be a taxing affair at times).

After extensive debates and deliberations, we settled down on a topic that we felt would be close to the hearts of anybody who would be reading it. "Breaking Through" – what attracted us most to the theme was its inherent simplicity yet profound relatability. All of us who are studying, doing jobs or starting their own ventures are continuously fighting their battles, winning their wars.

Keeping this in mind, we invited articles from our esteemed alumni regarding what has made them tick across all these years. What are the different challenges they constantly face in their careers and what are the qualities that help them in overcoming those challenges. Their stories offer immense learnings about the importance of perseverance, dedication and simply not giving up. We would be indebted to our alumni for their continuous support and valuable contributions.

As I sign off, I would like to thank the entire AI-Inc team from the bottom of my heart. This edition would never have been possible without their persistent and enthusiastic efforts. We hope you have as much pleasure reading it, as we had in bringing it to you.



AMBIKA VISWANATHAN
MBA FT 2nd YEAR

Each and every human being is battling some or the other struggle in his or her life. A struggle to become satisfied or a struggle to exist/survive. Eminent personalities from various walks of life like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Steve Jobs, Malala Yusufzai were all ordinary human beings. What made them extraordinary was how they overcame their struggles – how they were **BREAKING THROUGH!!**

As Kelly Clarkson's famous song goes, "What doesn't kill you, makes you stronger!" This edition of AI-Inc brings to you such inspiring stories and experiences. We bring to you a collection of rich experiences that will encourage our readers in developing the attitude for success.

Editorial Team



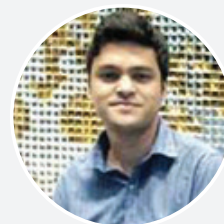
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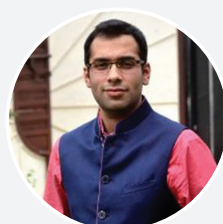


AMBIKA VISHWANATHAN

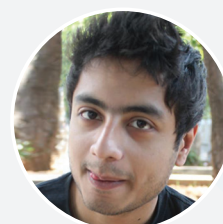


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Message from the **DIRECTOR**

We hope you
continue to
support us

Dear Alumni,

It gives me great pleasure to write this message to be published in this year's issue of AI-Inc. This year's Alumni Day holds a special significance to me as we have completed two decades of academic excellence.

The theme of the magazine is '**Breaking Through**' where our Alumni share their experiences of overcoming challenges in their professional career through their sheer hard-work, dedication and positive attitude.

In this edition of AI-Inc we have also added two new sections namely '**The Entrepreneurship Zone**' and '**The Travelogue**', narrating the journey of becoming an entrepreneur and travel experience.

We are delighted to welcome all our Alumni who have been with us since the beginning of their journey and have helped us reach where we are today. Your success in professional life at national and international levels brings great pride to the Institute. And your desire to help your juniors and the institute opens a pathway of opportunities for us.

It goes without saying that the institute encourages all round development of the students. They still undergo a rigorous curriculum, and along with it many opportunities for participating in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities through various clubs and committees. This enhances their capabilities of managing their career and professional life in an effective manner.

We hope you continue to support us in our endeavour like you have been doing for the past 20 years.

With warm regards and best wishes

Dr. M. Mallikarjun
Director



Message from the **CHAIRPERSON**

We all wish you
a great life and
career ahead



Dear Alumni,

It gives me immense pleasure and pride to announce that the Kaizen Committee is coming out with the latest issue of AI-Inc, the Institute's Annual Alumni Magazine.

MBA programme is one of the most prestigious programmes of Nirma University. IMNU has earned a good reputation for management education over twenty years now. I am delighted to share with you that Nirma University and its constituent Institutes have been accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) with Grade 'A' on 18th November, 2015. This achievement signifies that the University is focused on quality teaching, learning and research and is achieving the promised.

As part of the latest review of curriculum design of the MBA programme, the Institute has rationalized the core and elective courses and skill based general elective courses are introduced in the 3rd trimester of the first year. These general electives are designed to be engaged by industry experts in relevant fields. This gives students varied options to choose from an array of contemporary courses which suit their career goals. The institute stays committed in providing its students with excellent curricular opportunities to groom themselves, not only for them to become good professionals but also socially responsible citizens of the country.

We have always been fortunate enough in receiving distinguished contribution from our alumni in our endeavour to render quality management education. The Kaizen Committee has taken an initiative to organize Alumni Summer meets in different cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Pune, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad. The Alumni have also shown tremendous support in becoming a part of the Institute Seminar Series being held throughout the year. We express our sincere gratitude to our esteemed alumni members, who have been kind enough to share their valuable insights with current students. Mr. Sachinder Bhinder, Mr. Divyanshu Shekhar, Mr. Harry Jose, Mr. Rohit Swarup and Mr. Ashish Bhatia to name a few.

We assure you of our sincere efforts in raising the standards of our knowledge dissemination and creation and supporting our students in their career developments. We look forward to the continued association and engagement of all our alumni with the institute to help us achieve our objectives. We all wish you a great life and career ahead and hope you accomplish all your dreams, adding even more prosperity to your proud alma mater!

With warm regards and best wishes

Dr. Parag Rijwani
Chairperson – MBA (FT)

From the FACULTY LOUNGE

You have been an inspiration to students for more than two decades, how has the experience been throughout?

As a professional, whether you're an industry person or an academician, one always needs to evolve with the changing times. I feel highly satisfied as I could contribute in terms of value addition, adding new courses and adapting to newer pedagogical tools. We as teachers also learn a lot from each batch, each student and each interaction with students as education is a process of co-creation.

What are the changes in the education system you have witnessed during this time and how has IMNU's pedagogy been able to cope up with the change?

Industry and society is changing so fast. We are living in a VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) world, therefore, changes in content and pedagogy need to be commensurate. We at IMNU, sincerely make efforts to engage with industry to update curriculum as per the industry needs.

In the last few years, courses like Data Sciences, Big Data, HRIS etc. have been added based on industry recommendation. Similarly in terms of pedagogy, new tools like Simulation, Moodle and other experiential tools have been added and accepted by faculties across areas. In the last two years, we have introduced Outcome-based education (OBE), where the entire educational processes is centered-around Program-outcome (PO). In other

words, our aim is to make our MBA students engaged, empowered, entrepreneurial and ethical (4E). Each course contributes towards achieving the above four attributes and similarly each session is mapped towards OBE.

Any instances where you have overcome any challenges and obstacles, or in other words, broken through?

Most of the faculty including myself are currently teaching courses which we have not studied in our Master programs. It means, we have added new courses, learnt new concepts and practices and are delivering the same to the students with appropriate pedagogy.

"We as a teacher also learn a lot from each batch, each student and each interaction with students as education is a process of co-creation."

Dr. Nityesh Bhatt



Delivering value to current students whose attention span is very low is a continuous challenge.

What are the key qualities an individual must possess to overcome challenges in personal and professional life?

As discussed earlier, environmental challenges mandate continuous changes in our courses and pedagogy. Therefore, we cannot remain complacent. As a professional, we regularly need to update ourselves with contemporary business practices, academic researches and modern pedagogical tools. This requires hard work, persistence and total commitment towards his/ her profession.

Your message to the students and alumni of IMNU.

For the students my message is, “Together we can and we will make the difference.” “Efforts may fail, but don’t fail to make efforts.” For the Alumni, “Keep us making proud with your professional achievements. We look forward to a continuous relationship with you for institutional growth and holistic development of our students.”

Dr. Nityesh Bhatt is a Professor (Information Management Area) and Chairperson of MDPs at Institute of Management, Nirma University, Ahmedabad. He holds MBA and Ph.D (e-Governance) degrees from M.L.Sukhadia University, Udaipur - India. He has also completed a four months Faculty Development Programme (FDP) of IIM-Ahmedabad, and an online ‘Internet Governance Capacity Building Programme’ of DiploFoundation, Malta in year 2006. Out of more than 20 years of experience in academia, corporate training and research; in his first three years, he was associated with NIIT and First Computers at Udaipur (Raj.). In 1998, he was awarded as the best faculty of NIIT in North India. He has authored 40 papers and also co-edited seven books. In year 2006, Dr. Bhatt was invited to participate in first Internet Governance Forum (IGF) meet jointly organized by United Nations – IGF Secretariat and Government of Greece at Athens. He is the recipient of ‘Dewang Mehta Best Teacher of Information Technology Award’ in 2009

BREAKING THROUGH

THE VIRTUES OF STRUGGLE



Each successful individual has overcome numerous challenges and hurdles.

In this edition, we look at the struggle behind the success.

“Each one of you is an ACHIEVER and I look forward to hear more and more of your success and achievements.”



Dr. Nina Muncherji

Prof. Muncherji has a Doctoral Degree in Management. She has been with the Institute of Management, Nirma University, Ahmedabad since 1997. Currently she is the Programme Chairperson for the BBA - MBA (Five Year Integrated) Programme.

Twenty Years!!! Twenty years I have seen you come to this Institute filled with enthusiasm, keen and with stars in your eyes and year after year I have seen you leave us as professionals ready to face the exciting but ruthless, challenging and yet demanding corporate world.

I am sure each one of you can vouch that life outside these four walls of your Alma Mater was filled with surprises (both good and not so good ones), excitement and fun but along with all this there must have been disappointments, frustrations, failures, constraints, dissatisfaction. Despite all these negativities you have emerged victorious and have made us all proud.

The key to this Breakthrough Success is your ATTITUDE of Never Giving Up; Your Perseverance, Your Constancy to Purpose; Commitment to be an Achiever; and Your Self-Confidence i.e. your belief in yourself. It is said that you should aim for the stars, dream big, but never forget to build a foundation to help you get there.

Focus on your Goals and Passions, Step out of your comfort zone and pick up challenges which force you to push yourself, Be patient and Humble and Never, Never Give Up.

Remember nothing comes easy. To be successful, you will have to be ready to make sacrifices, face disappointments and overcome obstacles. There will always be someone who will try to pull you down, stop you from achieving your goal, create problems for you but then there will also be those who will support you, stand by you, help you and glow in your success like your parents and your teachers.

Each one of you is an ACHIEVER and I look forward to hearing more and more of your Success and Achievements.

Looking forward to meeting you all on the Alumni Day, let's celebrate together your Breakthrough Success!

All the Best!

Nina Muncherji

YOU NEVER LOSE - YOU ALWAYS LEARN



ASHISH BHATIA

Batch of 2002-04 MBA FT

Principal - Technology Strategy at
Accenture Strategy

Apprehension and excitement. These are the feelings which we experience when stepping into the unknown. The ways we deal with such situations go a long way in defining us as a person. And like each person, the management of these situations varies from individual to individual. But like they say, you never lose – you always learn.

And there has been a lot to learn in these years. As I reflect back on my career, I would like to share with you all a few lessons learnt along the way – and a few things I wish I had done – to make you better prepared for your journey.

Know your priorities: At different stages of our life (and career), we may have different priorities. Why did you take up this job? Why do you want to change the job? Is it money? Growth? Family? None of them are wrong (and there could be multiple other reasons). It is important to be honest to one's own self while evaluating what your priorities are. Use your priorities to drive your decisions rather than being influenced by something or someone who cannot be in your shoes.

Learn, Learn and Learn: The ones who don't learn fast enough - perish (much akin to Darwin's Theory of Evolution). Learn about the technology/ function/ industry domain you are working in. Learn the business behind the numbers. Learn to ask Why? One has to invest (time and effort - more than money) to learn and be ahead of the curve. As a rule, successful people invest a minimum of 5 hours a week in reading about topics which are not core to their work area.

As we grow more experienced (and older), the work pressures do not decrease. It becomes all the more important to have other avenues of interest apart from the primary job.

Develop a hobby: Music, art, sports. Anything. It is important to have an area of interest which one is passionate about and which can quickly relax and rejuvenate you.

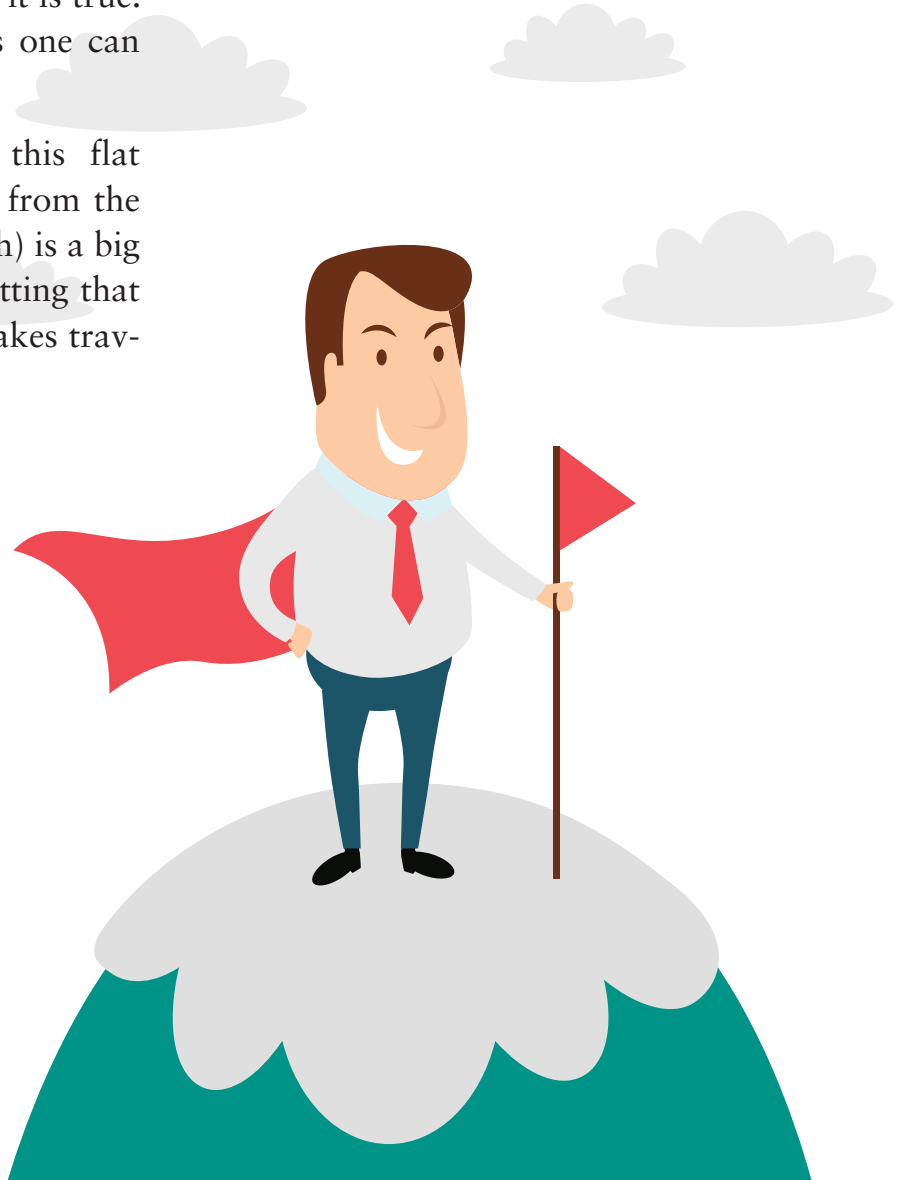
"LEARN ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGY/ FUNCTION/ INDUSTRY DOMAIN YOU ARE WORKING IN. LEARN THE BUSINESS BEHIND THE NUMBERS. LEARN TO ASK WHY?"

Health above everything: One must learn to take care of one's health. There are more and more instances of lifestyle diseases (diabetes, blood pressure – which in turn lead to more serious ailments) striking at an earlier age. Hearing about friends and colleagues affected by these in their early 30's is an eye-opener and makes one reconsider the priorities in life.

Travel: A lot has been told about the importance of travel in shaping your personality, career and life. And all of it is true. Travel is one of the best teachers one can hope to find.

Learn a foreign language: In this flat world, knowing a language apart from the local Indian languages (and English) is a big differentiator when it comes to getting that coveted job. Not to mention, it makes travelling easier and more fun.

And last but not the least, be true to yourself. Do not deviate from your beliefs, your value systems which you have grown up with and define you as a person. As Sheryl Sandberg says, "Bring your whole self to work". You need not be a different person from Monday to Friday than over the weekend. Be true to your roots. Be true to your conscience. That is what will define success in your very own way, on your own terms.



INFINITE OPPORTUNITIES, ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES



KUSHAL SHAH

Batch of 1999-01 MBA FT

Research & Analytics, General Insurance
Domain Consulting at WNS Global Services

After graduating from Nirma, when I first talked about becoming a quant, they said someone with undergrads in accounting and graduation in finance had never done it before – certainly not in India! When I talked about a career transformation from trading to risk management to risk analytics to data science, they laughed at me! When I developed a fraud analytics solution for insurance industry, they said products developed by Indians never worked well in industry! When I talked about selling my products to Americans, Europeans and the Japanese, they said I didn't understand sales. I had two choices back then: first one was to take the easy way out and give up. Prove them

all right and be one of them! The second one was to take it up as a challenge, break through the myths they had lived through and prove myself right!

Today, fifteen years later, I have gone through four career transitions – each one more successful than the previous one. I have developed and sold a number of successful products in international markets. I have worked on multi-billion dollar deals and have saved millions for my clients through financial analytics, risk analytics, fraud analytics and spend analytics. For me, it was breaking through them – each one of them who said I could never do it. Of course, the transition I have gone through in last fifteen years is very insignificant when I look at those who I consider my role models. My journey and achievements are very limited – in acquiring knowledge, transforming that knowledge to wisdom and creating impact. However, one thing that is certainly unlimited is potential – there are infinite opportunities and endless possibilities. And the only way forward is to embrace the change, accept the challenges and keep breaking through continuously.

In 2006, I got my first opportunity to travel to Japan for an onsite project for a leading Japanese bank. The first challenge came from my family and friends – being a vegetarian, they told me that there was no way I could survive in Japan for three months. They also told me that nobody would understand English there and I would

REAL WORLD IS NOT A PLACE – IT’S AN EXCUSE. IT’S JUSTIFICATION FOR NOT TRYING.

be in trouble with almost zero knowledge of Japanese language. They suggested that I should carry less clothes and more instant food packets in my luggage. When I landed in Tokyo, I had no food packet in my luggage. And I survived through Tokyo for three months, got my stay extended and stayed for one more month, survived the extension too and learnt only two words in Japanese in those four months: Kon’nichiwa and Sayonara! I completed a successful risk analytics project, won a multi-million dollar contract for my employer, brought back a lot of learnings from Japanese culture and had to my credit a whole group of Japanese friends waiting for my return to Tokyo. I broke through the myth that a vegetarian non-Japanese speaking Indian cannot survive in Japan. None of those who had advised me not to go, had ever been to Japan before.

In a similar example, I was traveling to the US to sell my first proprietary fraud analytics product to prospective clients in 2009. I was told by many, including my then manager, that I was wasting my efforts and company’s money. My product would never sell. When I landed back in Mumbai a month later, I had two major client contracts in hand: eBay and PayPal. Three years later, Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, US appointed me on their advisory board in an honorary position on recommendation of eBay. I broke through the myth that Indians couldn’t develop world-class products, Indians couldn’t communicate with Americans in a language they would under-

stand and most importantly, one could never sell in America sitting in India – you would need a large sales team in the US to sell there. The ROI on my travel cost (the only incremental cost incurred by my employer) was 10000:1 – the highest ever in the history of the company.

Now that’s enough about my success story and what I have broken through in past fifteen years. Let’s talk about what you should break through in your career – the upcoming challenges when you transition from campus life to corporate life.

Firstly, break through the mindset of “learning from your mistakes”. You don’t really learn anything important from your mistakes. The only thing you learn from your mistakes is what you should not do again. How important is that? Wouldn’t it be better to instead learn what you should do? And you can learn that from your successes – small and big. Success teaches you what works and you would actually do it



better the next time and probably achieve better success. Break through the myth about learning from mistakes.

Secondly, break through the real world myth. You would often hear people saying that your idea or product or innovation would never work in real world. Real world is not a place – it's an excuse. It's justification for not trying. It has nothing to do with you.

You need to break through the startup mindset. Now that for sure is a very provocative thought but I own it nevertheless. Break through the myth that businesses are driven by valuation. Businesses are driven by the value they create – value for the founders, value for the employees, value for the customers and value for the society at large. Businesses drive valuation but vice versa is not true. Don't call your business startup – call it a business. Startup simply means you would sell it off at higher valuation whereas business is a going concern as they say in accounting parlance.

You need to break through the planning myth. Planning is guessing – period. Plans are inconsistent with improvisation. Plans drag you down to rigidity and take away agility. In your career, your single biggest differentiator can be your agility, your adaptability – how soon you can adapt to changing business environments and requirements. Planning your career would kill that advantage – just let it be and go with the flow.

Our culture celebrates the idea of workaholics. We hear about people burning the midnight oil. They pull all-nighters and sleep at the office. It's considered a badge

of honor to kill yourself over a project. No amount of work is too much work. Kill this myth – break through it. You work to live – you don't live to work. Working hard is one thing and being a workaholic is another.

Break through the concept of being perfect in everything that you do. Forget the concept of delivery perfection. You cannot deliver perfection without a cost. Your customer and employer would be ok if you deliver the basics right and compromise on everything else. Get the core right – the core is what your career cannot exist without. Everything else is peripheral and not necessary. Forget the concept of customer delight.

Lastly, break through the concept of Fortune 500. Everyone wants to work for Fortune 500. Everyone wants to deal with Fortune 500. There is so much competition in all that. You are one of the millions aspiring to do that. Why not work for the Fortune 10,000 or even better Fortune 100,000? You would be better off being a big fish in a small pond than being a small fish in a big pond. Working for a Fortune 500 employer or client, you would become what they want you to be – you would forget who you are and what you aspire to be. Go with your aspirations! You may think that I have done my MBA in Finance or Marketing or HR or Operations and I need to work in that field only. Well, that was true in 1970s! We live in the twenty first century and the world has come a long way since then. If you are not you, if you can't be you, if you don't aspire to be you, who else would?

"You need to break through the planning myth. Planning is guessing – period."

A BRAINY HABIT WORTH CULTIVATING



GUNJAN YOGENDRA

Batch of 1998-00 MBA FT

Sr. Manager at GenPact

A mother says to a lazy teenager – Break your habit! Sounds familiar? A phrase constantly doled to children, teenagers, youngsters, and adult friends, when they spiral down in unhealthy routines, bad company, drugs, or illogical behaviours.

As I mention habits, I must also acknowledge Charles Duhigg's bestseller, *The Power of Habit* – a wonderful and easy read on how habits work. It's a useful manual to understand how to break a bad habit into a new healthy pattern. In individuals. In groups. In corporations. In societies.

Let take an example – a man takes drugs. When asked why, he will most likely reply – Oh! It gives me a high, each time I take it. Mind you, each time!

As Duhigg suggests, constant repetition of an activity, in this case, taking drugs, can trigger a cue and reward continuum till a strong craving emerges.

Human minds are mysterious – when we train our brain to learn the alphabet, it stays with us for the rest of our lives. But, has it ever occurred to any of us, why it stays for so long?

The logical answer is because we don't question it. We don't even attempt to break it or develop a new language code. On the other hand, we now accept it as a law of nature.

Groups and societies around us function because of old habit currents that run through them. As familiar as it sounds, we never question age old traditions, customs, norms, rules. Ultimately, we suffer from our own crutches, chains and bondages in today's times. The rich get richer, the poor poorer, is a phrase that best exemplifies a pattern repeating itself.

If we really wish a better world for our future generations, we must start asking ourselves – what breakthrough can I make for their sake? In my life, in others' lives. What do we want to leave for these generations? These thought patterns could apply to age-old atrocities on women, minorities, under privileged children. It could also apply to daily eating habits, if we want to lose weight. Or to our reactions to people who we don't like.

Let us make a habit of breaking through in every situation we don't want in our lives. The caveat – it should be for the benefit of us and others.

It is only then, that we will be able to make a breakthrough for our future.

BARRIERS ARE REAL AND WE CAN BREAK THEM



MEENU BAGLA

Batch of 1998-00 MBA FT
VP, Marketing at Quinnox Inc.

In the recent courtroom drama, *Pink*, moviegoers were thrilled by a compelling storyline that put women's biases and barriers right at the forefront. With a plot that pits three professional Indian women against some influential boys in a high-stakes legal battle, the film exposes so many of the societal obstacles placed before women that are firmly embedded in our culture.

Although the film puts these important issues in the spotlight within the context of a highly dramatic courtroom battle, the barriers that Indian women face on a daily basis – whether professional or personal – don't usually garner much publicity, which, of course, is part of the problem. We've

become so conditioned to accept these prejudices as a normal part of life, that it has become the norm and status quo.

The grim reality is that every Indian middle-class girl is born with multiple pre-existing barriers. And that's especially true if you are born in a traditional family where barriers are varied and prevalent. Traditional ways are firmly entrenched in our society, making any deviation from the so-called path of least resistance a shocking act of rebellion.

In my life, such defiant acts took the form of fighting for a new school uniform, and having the audacity to strive to attend a better school. In fact, one of my toughest decisions was to choose to go out of town for higher studies – quite an act of mutiny!

But, much to my shock and dismay, at B-Schools, I found that I encountered another set of barriers in my journey to achieving my potential as an ambitious and strong-willed Indian woman. Throughout our country (and dare I say throughout most of the world) B-Schools don't create rebels most of the time – they create conformists.

When you consider some of the great innovators of our day, how many have looked to B-Schools for fresh thinking? How many Jobs, Gates, Premjis, Ambanis or Hazares came from these institutions? The stark answer is that very few of our modern day innovators and business rebels graduated from B-Schools.

On a very personal level, I would consider my decision to marry a man of my choice my second war of independence. Yes, I married for love, which some in our culture would still consider quite a rebellious act! And, even though I married a seriously intellectual specimen (an IIT, Kellogg alumni) I knew that this alone wouldn't guarantee anything in my life.

I still recall the guilt imposed by my ex-mother-in-law every time I didn't cook for his intellectual son, or didn't wear the quintessential symbol of his ownership of me ... the sindoor (the vermillion on my head). On one hand I was this so-called professional B-School graduate having a good job in the USA, but on the other hand, I was still bound by the shackles of my surroundings and the cultural confines rooted in feminine prejudice and biases.

Once I entered the corporate world, once again, to my shock and dismay, the barriers were not only well-rooted, but they had been elevated from a professional level to a personal one. For example, no one described male managers as "man managers." Then why "women managers?" And that's when I turned into a rebel, but a rebel with a cause. Nowadays, I am fully committed to letting go of all my mental barriers, both from my past, and those I still encounter in the present.

In doing so, I take heart in knowing that what I am doing now can make a difference to future generations, so I go for it, no matter how hard or long I have to fight the battle. I have also learned lessons – both negative and positive – from the people that have shaped my life and continue to do so.

- People that take me for granted – I walk away gracefully (remember, Karma is the best revenge).

- People who judge me negatively – they can continue to do so, and that's none of my business (it's their time and their mind).

- People who choose to mentor me – I'm grateful, and always try and help them in any way I can.

- People who demean me – I feel sorry for, and move on

- People who stood by me in tough times, and continue to do so – I'm also grateful for, and hope they will always be there, no matter what.

- People who have believed in me and still do – thank you, and, please, keep believing in me!

Today, after all my personal and professional successes and milestones, I often sit back and ponder over the many rebellions, and the many ways I have sought to shatter the many cultural and corporate biases towards women in my own life. Yet, I still see many more obstacles on the horizon, certainly more barriers that need to be broken.

Miles to go before I sleep.



THE ENTREPRENEUR ZONE

Get to know IMNU's very own entrepreneurs.

ROHIT SWARUP
BATCH OF 1996-98

**FOUNDER: XPLORA
DESIGN SKOOL**



XPLORA DESIGN SKOOL: Pioneer in the Digital Design domain in India with 125+ campuses across India and China; 70000+ trained and placed students in Digital Media and Communication Design domains over last 16+ years. Xplora today has associations with some of the top national and international design and communication institutions providing both professional and vocational programmes.

Innovation and Research Foundation: Consults industry and academic institutes for Innovation and Design Thinking. The Foundation is a conglomerate of top academicians of the world. IRF has trained 15000+ professionals and faculty and 55000+ students of Management and Engineering domains on Design and Innovation. Consulting assignments in India, Australia, China, Dubai.

Recipient of two National Awards: Shiksha Bharti Puraskar for National development through employment oriented education and Indian Leadership Award for Educational Excellence for Best Education Framework and Curriculum addressing the educational needs of the 21st Century.

ROHIT SWARUP: Entrepreneurship for some is a natural extension of oneself i.e. the excitement to create one's own venture and the joy to see that it positively

impacts the lives of others; such that one can contribute to the society and world with a freedom to try out new things and create new entities.

Entrepreneurship is not an easy domain, globally less than 1% of ventures make it to 7 years. Being an entrepreneur for about 16+ years now, one experiences a changing market landscape, changing industries, changing socio-economic-cultural factors, changing roles that an entrepreneur plays in a company and all of this leads to a rollercoaster of inherent excitement and challenge to constantly innovate, constantly think and work with changing times; this also brings with it life's ups and downs – but that is life. The four factors that I would like to cite that have gone into overcoming the challenges are intense discipline, passion, hard work and constant learning. Belief in oneself and God keeps one going. The excitement and joy of entrepreneurship lives on and thrives to make this world a better place.

"Entrepreneurship for some is a natural extension of oneself."

AMIT MISHRA
BATCH OF 2003-05
FOUNDER:
SCHOOLSAMAAN



SCHOOLSAMAAN.COM is a marketplace building solutions to bring sellers/providers of curricular and extra-curricular products and services online. Its a niche platform bringing schools and vendors online to provide convenience to parents in purchasing need based products and services; such as school uniforms, text books and all other ancillary requirements.

AMIT MISHRA: The idea was a result of trying to “scratch our own itch”. Chhavi (one of the co-founders) germinated the idea with one single question: “Why do I have to stand in queue every time to buy uniforms and books?”. Essentially this question translated to: “Why is this not online and delivered to my home when everything else is?” And this question just had one answer; “LET’S DO THIS”. One thing we decided was that initially we will just follow our instincts and do what it takes, no analysis, no excel sheets, no number crunching.

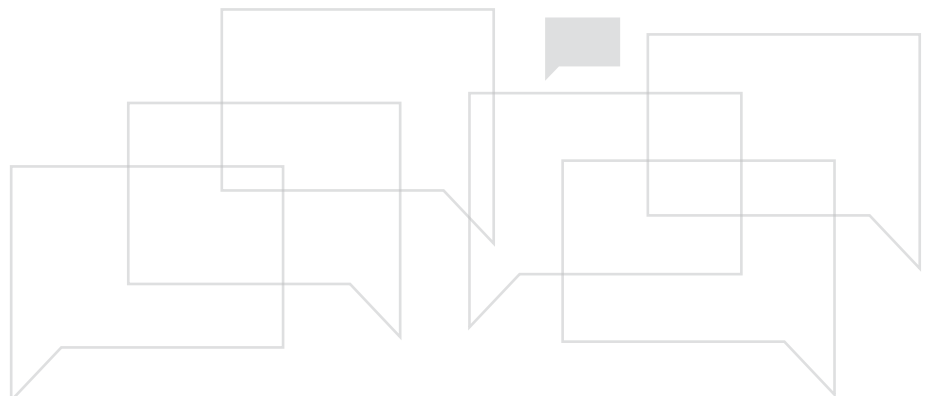
Interestingly, while we have seen e-commerce revolution sweeping this country, this particular marker segment was ignored/under served. And we realized why, once we started meeting the sellers of curricular products (like uniforms etc.). This market had a completely different dynamics and kind of products. We also learned that while we started to “scratch our own itch”, the problems were on the supply side. And that’s where we are creating the difference now. We, while

providing convenience to parents, are ensuring that we are providing right solutions to our partners in the ecosystem. We see ourselves as a IT and services company building solutions for sellers/providers, consumers and institutes.

Any startup has inherent challenges built into it, challenges to survive, and sustain while also continue to grow and scale. There are only two ways to meet these challenges a great team and a great network of friends and family. SchoolSaamaan has been blessed with both. SchoolSaamaan team is one to dream for, a team which laughs, debates, fights together but ultimately walks together to achieve that single vision. A great network of friends and family not only help you with money, but more importantly they give you hope, they hold your hands and sometimes clear the path for you when you can’t.

SchoolSaamaan.com has just started on its journey, a journey to partner with every kid, from the first step of learning they take, to the entire lifetime of education and development.

"The idea was a result of trying to scratch our own itch."



PRITISH NARULA
BATCH OF 2006-08

**FOUNDER:
DR GREEN**



DR GREEN is a leader in providing full service consultancy and management for all Horticulture needs including sustainable landscape project management from conceptualization to designing and construction and is also a leading supplier of plants and other greening material.

PRITISH NARULA: Working professionals look up to an entrepreneur. He wakes up late, bosses around, and above all, has no strings, no bosses. Entrepreneurs that have worked in the corporate world at some point, however, miss the perks, the stability and the lack of chaos at the workplace that comes with the territory.

I was driven to the idea of venturing out on my own during my stint at Citibank. To be inducted in the Corporate banking division during the Ecommerce boom was instrumental in shaping my thinking as my job profile required me to understand and demystify client's business models. I would often be awestruck by the sheer confidence and self belief of the young and budding entrepreneurs. Looking back, I can now appreciate the value of surrounding yourself with talented people and visionaries. It can instill a sense of ownership and can bring out the best in people.

After fiddling with a couple of ideas in 2012, I finally ventured into the world of entrepreneurship with an ecommerce start up selling eyewear. The venture fizzled out quickly with funds drying out and the business model for most players moving from product specific to generic and marketing specific. The stint, however, gave me the confidence to try out other business ideas.

The idea of starting a landscaping and horticulture business came from a meeting with one of the clients at my job. This gentleman happened to mention the growing interest in the market and lack of educated players in the space. The market is generally driven by large contractors who have been in the business for long but still lack scientific approach to a vastly technical business or plant nursery owners who do not have the right understanding of horticulture. In my opinion, landscaping is more about horticulture than beautification of a subject area. Luckily, I had help in that department. My father had been a scientist in Horticulture. He could be my mentor and support me technically; I could run the operations and business, thus 'Dr Green' was born. We got our first contract from ISB, one of the most prestigious B-schools in the world. In just two years, we are working with some of the top names in the industry including TAJ Hotels, Interglobe Hotels (IBIS), LandT, HUDA and have become their preferred landscaping partner.

Running a business is more about planning than firefighting. The biggest challenge is going to be finance. Setting up the business itself will drain resources quickly and there are going to be lean periods. Enough emphasis should be given to planning for contingencies and setbacks. Early in business, we did not forecast and found ourselves mentally stressed and stretching our reserves to the point where I maxed out my credit cards and needed to borrow more capital from the bank.

We are so keen to close sales and build hype around the product that we tend to neglect the importance of setting up processes and learning about statutory compliances we need to fulfil. We took up contracts even before the implementation team was ready. We got notices from government agencies and had lots of explaining to do. We stalled projects until we got the regulatory requirements sorted out. We now have a team in place and have streamlined basic processes.

Other important aspects are setting up a competent team, client/ customer feedback etc. Once you have taken the decision to start your own venture, you will have to combine enthusiasm with a little pragmatism. It's true, in entrepreneurship, you don't have another boss. But you have to wake up every morning because you want to – you work only as hard as you are willing to push yourself. You don't have the cushy advantages of paid leave, earned leave, and sick leave like your employees. You can choose whether you travel by Economy or Business class because you pay for the tickets yourself. The toughest part is working for the toughest boss – yourself. The biggest reward is that the achievements are yours and yours alone.

Entrepreneurship is only as tough as you want it to be.

"Running a business is more about planning than firefighting."

MAHIP VYAS

BATCH OF 2007-09

DIRECTOR OF BD &
SALES AT MAVIN INC.



Mahip currently works as Director of BD & Sales at Mavin Inc based in Mountain View, CA. He has worked in multiple mobile Internet apps & gaming startups since 2010 and launched numerous products for mobile consumers across the world.

MAHIP VYAS: Five toughest challenges you'll come across in an entrepreneurial role.

As you sip your morning tea and browse through mobile news apps for top stories, it is hard to miss out on news headlines about startups. So what makes some of these startups so successful such that their stories inspire you to think about leaving your corporate job and launch a brand new startup with a great business idea? On the other hand, many of the startup shut down stories are enough to scare you away from entrepreneurship and force you to continue your routine corporate job. I thought I would pen down the top challenges which you may face in your future entrepreneurial roles based on observing various startups in India and Silicon Valley during my 7-year work experience in startups since 2010.

Identifying a real-life problem and starting from scratch: Most Indian startups are the ones that do not want to reinvent the wheel. They launch a product that has been successful in other markets by adding an Indian flavor. The real value of a startup lies in innovation. Can you identify a problem that has never been solved in the market and build a product that addresses it? How much power does your product have in changing user behavior? A comprehensive business plan may sound great in theory, but as you start from ground zero you'll need to continuously experiment, learn, adapt and improve your product idea for making it suitable for the target market. Most importantly, you have to be really passionate about solving the identified problem else you may lose your motivation of running a startup.

Hiring and Firing: Finding the right team member is as critical as finding your life partner. Hire for quality. Don't hire in a rush. Hire someone only if the person would fit well in the team. Firing is equally important. You are bound to make hiring mistakes, it is important to identify if things won't work out in the long term. Firing decision should be made within 1-2 months of joining with well-defined KPIs to avoid disappointments.

Funding: Cash provides oxygen for any startup. Raising funds successfully is showcased as a huge achievement by the media, while the real investor (big-boss) pressure to deliver results begins as soon as the money is wired to your startup bank account. It is important to carefully choose investors and more importantly avoid some hypercritical investors based on your startup's business model, culture and projected growth. It is absolutely essential to show that your initial pilot experiments about your startup idea are working well in the target market before approaching any investor for funding. Always remember, funding never ensures success for a startup.

Work/Life Balance: Your startup is your family – call it a spouse or a child. You have to devote 24*7 for it and still manage your “real” family life. Over an above, you also have to be prepared for risks like not getting paid a high corporate like salary, infact not getting paid for many months with zero company perks, traveling away from family for weeks to grow your startup and much more. What really counts is the support of your spouse, kids, and parents during this process. Once you have their support nothing else will bother you. Make sure that you do not overstretch yourselves and fall sick. Remaining fit, healthy and active is a must for running your startup and scaling it up after launch.

Remain agile while being calm and positive: Apart from all the above challenges in starting up, you will face lots of mental stress, unrealistic situations, competition pressure, consumer complaints, etc in your journey. Train your mind and heart to be calm and remain positive under any situation. You must always be alert to change your strategy based on market situation without being bogged down under pressure. Patience and your optimistic nature will be an extremely key quality in making or breaking your startup.

Everyone loves the charm of running a startup and making a real business impact in the market. But you have to make sure you overcome the toughest challenges for as long as possible to reap the real rewards of running a startup spending your blood, sweat and tears and leaving a comfortable 10am - 7pm corporate job. Go for it!

"The real value
of a startup lies in
innovation. "



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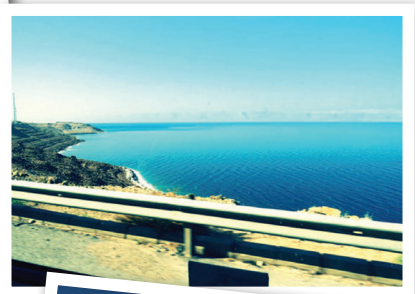
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Alumni Travelogue



**Randeep
Arora**



Destination: Amman, Jordan

Best way to reach: Immigration at Queen Alia International Airport, Amman. From there, a cab ride to the city centre takes about 40 minutes to an hour depending on traffic.

Best time to visit: April or September

Traditional delicacies: Falafel, Shwarma, Hummus, Labaneh

Tourist attractions: Dead Sea, Petra, Ajloun Castle

Your experience in a few lines: I had one of the best experiences of my life during my 40 week stay in this middle eastern country. It was nothing like I had imagined.

Destination: Dublin, Ireland

Best way to reach: Immigration at Dublin International Airport. From there, a cab ride to the city centre takes about an hour depending on traffic.

Best time to visit: December

Traditional delicacies: Irish stew. Though a pint in a local pub can be the best thing!

Tourist attractions: Dublin city centre, Cliffs of Moger, Howth Cliffs, Glendalough (Wicklow), Ring of Kerry

Your experience in a few lines: Ireland has a lot to offer to a traveller. One of the best experiences for me has been going to local pubs and watching a game of Rugby.





Debasis Sahoo

Destination: Kenya

Best way to reach: Fly to Nairobi from Mumbai via Doha / Dubai

Best time to visit: August to February – Winter Season

Traditional delicacies: Ugali (Corn Meal), Kenyan Pilau (Biryani), Meat Stew / Nyama Choma (Roasted Meat)

Tourist attractions: Nairobi the capital of Kenya, Masai Mara National Reserve, Mount Kenya National Park, Nakuru Lake, Rift Valley, Amboseli National Park

Your experience in a few lines: The vast open spaces, the amazing wildlife, the great cuisine and the genuine warmth that is displayed by its people. A perfectly good place to just unwind for a few days or get adventurous and wild, Kenya has something to offer to everyone. Even the food is as diverse as the country. From truly great vegetarian food to the best of game dishes, Kenya has something for everyone. I went there to photograph some of the beasts of Africa and the 10 days of travelling the country gave me an opportunity to capture them at their wildest best.



Madhur Agarwal

Destination: Goecha La Trek, Sikkim

Best way to reach: New Jalpaiguri (NJP) » Yuksom » Sachen Tshoka » Dzongri » Thansing » Lamuney » Goecha La

Best time to visit: April or November

Traditional delicacies: 'Tongba' - Millet based beer, offering Tongba is respect to a guest in Limbu culture.

Tourist attractions: Magnificent view of mesmerizing snow covered peaks of Mt. Kanchenjunga, Samiti Lake

Your experience in a few lines: A brilliant experience, tough trek, the glimpse of Mt. Kanchenjunga from the base camp inspired me to conquer many such mountains. The breathtaking view of the region covered with snow and the windy atmosphere gave me a feeling of satisfaction and peace.



SARAL

“HAPPINESS IS NOT SO MUCH IN HAVING AS SHARING. WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET, BUT WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE”

The members of SARAL live by this motto and bring about a change in the lives of underprivileged children. SARAL was started in 2009 and it has organized several charitable activities such as clothes distribution drive and free health check-ups for NIRMA students. The SARAL kids have become an integral part of IMNU and the members of SARAL have been instrumental in planning out various activities for these children. From organising their performance in the Talent Night to celebrating festivals such as Rakshabandhan and Janmashtami with them, SARAL leaves no stone unturned in making sure the children are involved in all the major events of IMNU. SARAL members also teach the kids daily for an hour and put in a lot of effort to schedule their studies in a manner which ensures each and every child builds a strong base in all the subjects be it Science, Maths, English, Hindi, Gujarati or General Knowledge.

The students of IMNU also play a major role in SARAL's success by participating in all the fund-raising activities of SARAL. SARAL gives students a chance to do something for the kids which gives a feeling of immense satisfaction. Above all, SARAL gives every student an opportunity to contribute and make an impact on the society at large.





**WHAT'S UP @
IMNU**

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in campus.

CONCLAVES



Arthoday - Finance Conclave

Arthoday 2015, the finance conclave of Institute of Management, Nirma University, was organized by Finesse. The conclave had the theme, “Emerging Trends in Finance”. The session was inaugurated by Shri P. C. Sahoo, Regional Director of RBI Ahmedabad. He spoke about financial inclusion, financial literacy, foreign exchange management and effectiveness of the Pradhanmantri Jan Dhan Yojana. The second session was presided by Mr. Mukesh Gandhi, Co-founder and Director Finance, Mas Rural Housing and Mortgage Finance Ltd. Mr. Gandhi talked about experimenting with small finance banks to achieve financial inclusion. The third session which had the topic “The Changing face of India’s International Trade” was addressed by Mr. Prosenjit Kundu, Senior VP and Treasury Head, TEOCO Corporation, USA.



Ayatana - Marketing Conclave

This year the proposed theme of Ayatana the marketing conclave was “Marketing in India: Opportunities and Challenges”. Ms. Debadutta Upadhyaya, Co-founder and CEO, Timesaverz Dotcom Private Limited addressed the first session on ‘marketing to an e-consumer’. She spoke about how the mode of communication across all generations is shifting to the electronic medium. Mr. Pramit Ghosh addressed the 2nd session on “Changing face of marketing communication - their impact on modern marketing professionals”. Ms. Amandeep Kaur – Head – Marketing Communications, Myntra.com addressed the 3rd session and spoke about Marketing Communication 3.0.



Antarprerna - Entrepreneurship Conclave

Antarprerna, The Entrepreneurship Conclave was headlined by Ms. Nandini Vaidyanathan, Founder CARMa Venture Services, Mr. Nand Kishore Chaudhary, Mr. Nikunj Patel, Chairman and MD Dangee Dums, Mr. Gaurav Dahake, Founder and CEO BuyHatke, Chairman and MD, JaipurRugs, Mr. Rohit Patel, President GCCI. The sessions were attended by the entire MBA FT, FB and BBA students. Being an inaugural Conclave the speakers were able to share wonderful insights with the students and give them a view into their entrepreneurial journey and fuelling the spark of entrepreneurship amongst the student community.



Pratidhwani - Alumni Conclave

Pratidhwani – The Alumni Conclave was organized by the Kaizen Committee on 6th February, 2016. Pratidhwani this year initiated a new format of a panel discussion and was divided into four panel sessions consisting of a Marketing panel, Finance panel, Human Resource panel and Entrepreneurship panel. The theme for the conclave was “Change is the only constant”. Twelve distinguished alumni from the different walks of management shared their views on the changing dynamics of management and the resulting challenges. The novel concept of the panel discussions was extremely interactive and engaging.



Pravartan - HR Conclave

The Human Resource conclave, Pravartan 2015 had the theme of Make HR to “Make in India”. The inaugural speaker Mr. H N Shrinivas, Advisor, Tata Sons, started the session with a critical analysis of the present state of education and training in the country. The second speaker of the session was Mr. Abhay Kapoor, HR Leader at Escorts Ltd. He explained how the three important initiatives ‘Make in India’, ‘Skill India’, and ‘Digital India’ can be successful only with talented and trained individuals. The third session was based on the theme “harnessing talent pipelines”. The theme of the final session of the day was “Creating Emotional Infrastructure”. The key note speaker of the session was Mr. Sandeep Tyagi, Director HR, Samsung Electronics who highlighted the importance of ‘employee engagement’.



Prajoyan - Operations Conclave

Prajoyan, the Operations Conclave was held on 12th December, 2015. It was based on the theme “Make In India: Opportunities and Challenges”. The theme of the first session was “Passion for Manufacturing Excellence- The Need for Make In India”. The second session dealt with how logistics in India can be taken to the next level. The third session related to ‘Quality Consciousness’ and understanding the global expectations of quality. Session four was about “Make in India- Opportunities and challenges with specific references to textile industry”. The last session dealt with the the latest trends used by companies to expand in the growing economies.



NICOM

The 19th Nirma International Conference on Management (NICOM) commenced at 10:45 am on 7th January, 2016. NICOM has been an annual event providing a platform for an interactive discussion between academicians and industry veterans on topics of a common theme. The guest of honour Mr. Ramakant Jha addressed the audience by imparting knowledge on how the aspirations of society grow with corresponding growth in various fields. Dr. Ram Shankar Katharia, Minister of State for HRD, the chief guest for the day, then addressed the audience with thanks for the invitation and the chance to interact with budding managers.

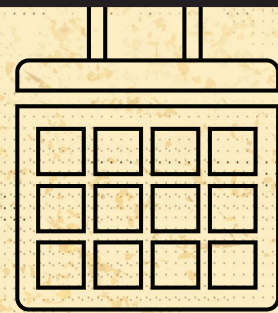
The first plenary session of Day 2 was presided by Mr. Sanjay Kaul, IAS and Mr. Chirag Dhebar, General Manager and Competency Lead, TCS. Mr. Sanjay Kaul talked about innovations and start-ups in India. Mr. Chirag Dhebar talked about Digitalization. He changed the words Digital India to Digit-All-India. He asserted that Indians have not only the correct technology but also value the appropriation of its uses.

Day three of NICOM started with Mr. Hasmukh Patel (IPS) addressing the students on the topic of change management. The second speaker of the day was Ms. Komal Shah from E-Spark, Viridian Ventures who spoke about accelerating entrepreneurs. The chief guest for the valedictory session, Professor Ajit Prasad, Director, IIM-Lucknow, conducted the session on The Crisis in Global Strategy. He started the session by emphasizing on how Indians are too obsessed with quantity nowadays, as opposed to quality.

2015-2016 YEAR IN REVIEW



Talent Night



Brandwizer





Break the Code



Copa 2016



E - Insights



Exposure 1.0



Festember





Jam Session



Manthan



Nandotsav



Junk to Jewel



Out of Box



Paintball



The Showdown



Paradigm



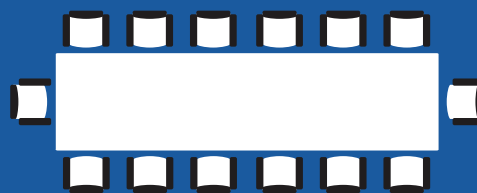
Slam Dunk



Showering Smiles



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Greetings!

This is a special year for the Institute – we celebrate the 20th year of our coming into being. Each one of you has come into our world at different times over these twenty years, a twinkling star in our horizon. Today, we are privileged to be under this star-lit sky. We thank you for granting us this privilege.

Our alumni meets this year were so much more gratifying- both in terms of presence and engagement. Once again, thank you for your wholehearted response to the initiatives of our Kaizen team. The entire Kaizen team, alongwith the rest of the institute fraternity, await your homecoming on October 1st our annual alumni day.

Best Wishes.



Prof.
Harismita
Trivedi

Dear Alumnus,

On this “Alumni Day of IMNU”, i.e. the day, which is just a step forward to bring the alumni closer to their past, the “home coming celebration’s day”, gives me an opportunity to welcome all of you. I wish you success in all walks of your life and also look forward to your continued interactions and association to help us improve the quality of our academic programs, strengthen our industrial-linkages and organize more activities that will ensure continuous improvements and standards of services to our present and future students.

We all know that the alumni play an important role in building the credibility of their universities. It is a matter of pride, when we the faculty of your alma mater, see that our students are successful in their mission and may contribute immensely to the growth of their universities. The alumni may bring numerous laurels to their institutions that brings a lot of joy and pride for all those associated with their alma mater.

Dearest friends, you are the brand ambassadors of the institutions wherever you have studied and faculty members on their part are always keen to strengthen their bonds with their students. Your active participation and support in various activities will help us work together to take your institute to new heights in the years to come and you will also feel the pride for the same. We also look forward to your continued feedback on various activities and suggestions for the new initiatives.

God bless you.

Dr. Pawan
K. Chugan



Greetings!

Engaging with alumni is important to us. Staying involved and connected is simple, but a powerful bond. We all have special memories with room-mates, professors, staff, classes and experiences that have touched our lives. We have to keep those memories alive by actively staying connected. What makes our Alma Matter unique is the rich culture of twenty years with a growing community at IMNU. It is very helpful for us when you stay in touch with faculty, with students and above all, with all of us.

We have an ambition of becoming one of the leading B-schools in India, subsequently in Asia and gradually in the world. Our strategic plan lays out the route to achieving this objective and we believe that we have the faculty, staffs, students, alumni and the facilities to succeed. Let's collaborate!

Let us strengthen our connections, deepen our engagements and make IMNU proud.

With best regards.



Dr. Subrat
Sahu

Prof.
Tripurasundari
Joshi



Dear Alumnus,

It is a pleasure to connect once again with you through this platform. Congratulations on your achievements so far. Many of you are regularly in touch and that's very heartwarming indeed. Your alma mater has taken several initiatives to reach out to you. Thank you for your response and keep the engagement going. Wishing you the very best in all your future assignments.

Greetings!

As this premier Institute has completed two decades of successful education for our students, I often feel tempted to reflect upon how effective this education has been. The responses I get from our alumni are very encouraging. Some of them return to inform us how well they have prospered. Others demonstrate what a difference they have made to the lives of other people, particularly the underprivileged. What has been a common trait amongst all our alumni is their unique ability to accept, adjust and accommodate to various trying and adverse circumstances. Moreover, they have been keen on learning new things even beyond their academic accomplishments. I congratulate all such alumni and take pride in their achievements. I wish you all success in life!

Thanking you.



Dr. Monali
Chatterjee

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ALUMNI MEET

2016

“In the end we always go back to the people who were there in the beginning”

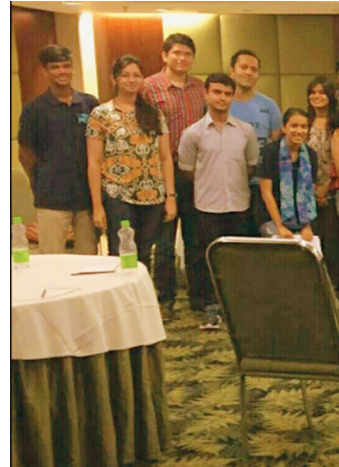
The Alumni Meet is held every year in the month of July. The meet was held in six locations across India - Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Pune which could see close to 250 plus alumni. In the meets, we have discussions on ways to strengthen Alumni-Institute relations. It is also a formal medium to keep the alums informed about the various events and happenings in the Institute throughout the year. Brainstorming takes place about new initiatives that can be taken in order to ensure overall development of the students.

The meet is a perfect reunion for the alumni as well as introduction of new alums (recent pass outs) to join the legacy. The meet helps in flourishing new bonds while the old bonds from the college days get strengthened.

Few insights that were gained via meets at various locations included Alumni suggestions to promote HR as a career. Annual Alumni Batch meets, strengthening and promoting Alumni network through Almaconnect. Suggestions also saw alumni interest in mentorship programmes for current batches. The meet tried to have small discussions on exploring sports and strategy management as career options. Alumni asked students attending the meet to focus on certification courses and other value adding activities that would enhance their resumes and convey the same to their batch mates. A suggestion that was immediately put into execution was an online portal for alums to buy the institute merchandise.

Alumni are dear and a big asset to the institute. Both institute and alumni have been trying to enhance and strengthen relations with each other and will continue to do so for years to come.

“Yes, the meeting of dear friends atones for the regret of separation; and like it so much enhances affection, that after absence one wonders how one has been able to stay away from them so long.”





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