C2C: Smooth Sailing from the Campus to the Corporate World

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Robert Maynard Hutchins rightly asserts, "The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives." Post the campus placement season with a job in their kitty, many technocrats and management students are on the threshold of their academic careers and are mentally preparing for the transition from being happy-go-lucky students to being responsible employees in the corporate world. It may signal the end of their academic education, but it also marks the beginning of their professional education. To make this critical transition as smooth as possible for them, colleges should orient and equip students with the necessary skill-set so that a professional outlook is inculcated in them. One should also not underrate the importance of the fact that every student who steps out into the corporate world is a brand ambassador of his or her alma mater.

The most common industry requirements from any fresh graduate are in-depth technical skills, independent learning and decision making skills, commitment to deadlines, result orientation and team work. But industries are yet not satisfied with the skill set of current fresh graduates, with academics stressing more on drilling concepts rather than focusing on practical applications.

An ideal situation for recruiting companies would be when even newly inducted employees perform to the best of their abilities rather than stumble at the initial stages. Most industries make freshers undergo a three to six months exhaustive training program before deploying them on projects. This training comprises not only the revision of basic technical concepts and soft skills but also aims to change behaviors and attitudes to suit corporate requirements. The trainees are virtually on a treadmill, continuously driven to learn, perform and deliver results. The objective of such trainings is to transform the students' attitude to match industry expectations. Consequently, the trainees get habituated to excel, and their self esteem is increased.

Planning for the journey ahead, colleges need to empower and equip students with an idea of how the corporate world functions. New recruits should strive for professional and personal excellence right from the entry level and be confident enough to take on roles with increased responsibility and accountability. Along with comprehensive pre-placement training programs, colleges should also provide for post-recruitment and pre-joining sessions, on the lines of 'Finishing Schools'. Three suggested phases of the carefully-planned and structured capability-building training are:

• A general overview of the company's background, work culture and professional ethics. This could involve soft skill and interpersonal training, cross-cultural awareness and corporate etiquette.
• Modules on specific technical topics and their updates which inductees will be required to implement in company projects. This will place them on a common platform with existing employees and reduce disparity. This can also involve inviting expert talks from recruiting companies/corporate world.
• In the third phase, colleges can collaborate with recruiting companies and can identify live projects which can be taken up as Final Year projects. Site visits can also be arranged to facilitate experiential learning.

It is imperative that the right image is projected and this is only possible if the right approach and attitude are inculcated throughout the teaching-learning process. It is necessary to implement skill-based courses and well-devised training plans in addition to the existing engineering curriculum to make the fresh-out-of-campus graduates industry ready. Such trainings will improve employability and enhance engagement levels and productivity in new recruits.

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