

## Engineering, B-school campuses lap up boom-time lollies

Kalpana Pathak & Shivani Shinde / Mumbai March 25, 2011, 0:29 IST

India Inc, specially start-ups, are rolling out the goodies like never before in engineering and business school campuses. Salary hike isn't enough anymore, it's time for stock options, promise of deferred entrepreneurship and much more.

When Nihar Jain of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay, took up the job offered by a start-up company, what lured him was not the salary package, but the stock option. And Jain wasn't alone. A host of graduates from India's premier institutes have opted for start-up jobs for the same reason.

Amit Bansal, CEO of PurpleLeap, a Pearson-Educomp company specialising in entry level talent management, says start-ups can't afford to pay salaries as high as large companies do. So they are trying to compensate through stock options.

Companies are also offering candidates the option to work on their own ventures even while working with them. For instance, at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, three students have got a job profile where they can work for first two years at the firm and later build their own entrepreneurship venture, of course with the firm's help.

Salary increases have been over 20 per cent this year after a gap of over two years. "Unlike the past couple of years, most companies this year have increased entry level salaries by 15-20 per cent, though bulk recruiters like IT companies have not joined the bandwagon," said the placements chairperson of Mumbai-based Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute (VJTI).

At VJTI, Microsoft has increased the salary from Rs 10.34 lakh in 2010 to Rs 12.5 lakh this year, an increase of 21 per cent. When contacted, a Microsoft India spokesperson said: "We continue to aim to become one of the most attractive organisations on engineering campuses, both in terms of compensation and overall employee value proposition."

V Suresh, executive vice-president and head-sales, Naukri, says entry level salaries offered at the placements of engineering and management institutes have been raised by many sectors. The hike will depend on the type of institute (Tier I, II or III) and the profile for which the student is being hired. "These hikes also highlight the demand-supply gap. During the slowdown, many of the firms didn't hire. Now, with markets being buoyant, firms are back at campuses," he added.

Students who are hired by companies like Microsoft, Google and Yahoo, tend to draw a fatter pay package. Those who are hired for a research and development profile get a pay package in the range of Rs 6.5 lakh to Rs 18 lakh, according to industry experts.

Students in engineering institutes began working for start-ups when, on the back the global meltdown, big-ticket firms stopped flocking to their campuses. For instance, in 2008, IIT-Bombay's Entrepreneurship Cell joined hands with the National Entrepreneurship Network to organise a campus recruitment programme for start-ups, which saw enrolment of over 200 students.