

Seeking more than just engineers

More students from unconventional backgrounds are making a beeline for B-schools to secure their career

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One of the cliches that we come across in our everyday life is the quintessential engineer-turned-MBA-turned-corporate-leader. Well not anymore what with most B-schools looking for more than engineers in an attempt to diversify their class composition. "Our 15th PGP batch saw few doctors and lawyers opting for an MBA, which is indicating a changing trend," says Debashis Chatterjee, director, IIM-K. Why such a transition? "Well, avenues for an MBA student are much more than any other profession. A doctor or a lawyer is stuck up with the hospital or the court room, while opportunities for biz grads are maximum than any other profession," reasons Chatterjee.

While IIM-K saw 9 per cent of students coming from non-engineering background last year, the figure this year has touched 13 per cent indicating a healthy trend of diversity.

This justifies the students' point of view. From the institutes' angle they are happy to induct students from various streams like the usual run-of-the-



mill commerce and also ones like medicine, journalism, law — who 'generally' don't opt for a career in management. "It helps when students get to interact with people from different streams. Like the universities abroad, where people from several countries come together and study, exposure to different cultures and backgrounds will enrich our students' life experience," he explains further. "But at the same time, institutes should not look down upon an engineer or overlook the admission

prospects of somebody just because he isn't cult," he warns.

The scene is similar at Institute for Financial Management and Research, Chennai. "Last year our batch mostly comprised engineers. But this time, we have finalised more people from the UG streams like arts and humanities and journalism. We even have two veterinary doctors," says Suresh Babu, placement officer who also handles admissions. But Babu is also quick to add that this is just an occasional phenomenon.

"Last year, majority of the students were engineers. Next year, we might see the surge of engineers again".

Vishnu Vijayakumar, a first-year MBA student of International School of Business and Research (ISBR), Chennai, who successfully made the shift from hotel management and catering shares his reasons, "My UG course helped me to only whip up sumptuous delicacies, but did little to my ambition of becoming a hotelier. That was when I realised I need much more than just mere culinary skills to manage my business in future."

This is a sentiment shared by his fellow classmate, Madhu Arunachalam. "When I graduated from NIFT, I had nowhere to go as I didn't zero in on a job. That's when I came to a conclusion that only an MBA can save me and better my prospects," he says.

One more remarkable trend is the induction of more female students when compared to last year, at two prestigious institutions in the country — IIM-K and ISB, Hyderabad. There are a record 167 women entering the Class of 2012, who make up 29 per cent of the total intake of 573 students of ISB. Likewise, IIM-K has also seen a 5 per cent increase in induction of female students compared to the previous year ■

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