

ORGANISATIONS OFFER PRIZE MONEY & JOBS

Cos Take Live Case Study Route to Sift Grain from Chaff at B-Schools

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Kolkata | Mumbai: Last December, Citibank rolled out Citi Campus Innovation Challenge across top business schools to ensure the company gets the right pick. Students were asked to work on case studies along with company seniors.

Citibank says this benefits both the company as well as students. The process helps Citi engage with prospective candidates in a more focused manner and assess their abilities of application, logical thinking and problem solving, says Anuranjita Kumar, chief human resources officer, Citi South Asia. "It is thus far more enriching for the candidates and us, than recruitment only through an interview or group discussion process," she adds.

The need to maintain quality standards while battling time constraints and larger hiring targets has led to India Inc increasingly conducting competitions.

The registered students are asked to work on projects or 'live' case studies along with company seniors. Those shortlisted are offered final placement interviews or jobs. Unlike few months of internships, these competitions are held across India and prize money worth a few lakhs is offered to the winner.

Hindustan Unilever's LIME, Coca-Cola India's 'Showcase', Tata Steel's 'Steel-a-thon', Mahindra Group's 'War Room', SABMiller India's 'Brew-a-Career', Nomura Holdings' 'IAG', Asian Paints' 'Canvas', JPMorgan's 'The Deal', ITC's 'Interrobang', Tata Motors' 'Mindrover' and GE's 'Genius' are some of the competitions conducted across B-schools.

Live Lessons

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HOW IT HELPS

Besides serving as a powerful recruitment tool, this also enables HR teams to get a more detailed analysis of aspirants

These competitions test the mettle of students with organisations presenting some of their most pressing real-time issues as detailed case studies and problem statements



WHO'S DOING IT

Citibank's Citi Campus Innovation Challenge; Coca Cola's Showcase Challenge, Amazon's Amazon Customer Excellence Challenge, HUL's LIME, Tata Steel's Steel-a-thon, Mahindra Group's War Room, GE's Genius are some of the competitions across B-schools today

These competitions are often conducted on social media platforms. FMCG company Marico uses its campus Facebook page to share 'live' projects and business challenges on the page

"Case study competitions allow students to understand the industry landscape better and are an opportunity to interact with Citi seniors at closer quarters," adds Kumar.

Beverage major, Coca Cola, started 'Showcase Challenge' in September 2014, where each college was given a unique business challenge besides access to mentor videos for a better understanding. "Even if the company isn't in the hiring phase, the winners or the top participants have higher chances of being considered during a recruitment drive," says Sameer Wadhawan, VP, HR & services, Coca-Cola India and South West Asia.

The practice of competitions on live case studies started few years ago, but top B-schools have spotted the trend scaling up across sectors. "Besides serving as a powerful recruitment tool, this also enables headhunters to get a more detailed analysis of aspirants," says a placement team member at SIBM, not wishing to be named. "These competitions test the mettle of students with the organisations presenting some of their most pressing real-time issues as detailed case-studies and problem statements," he adds.

Organisations that have conducted competitions over the past few years are surprised by

the increase in participation.

Participation in the Amazon Customer Excellence Challenge, conducted by the e-commerce company, grew by 111% in 2014, as compared to the previous year. The competition, in its fourth year, received more than 3,800 registered teams from 18 B-schools across Asia and winners will be offered pre-placement interviews.

"As such winners are already evaluated at some level—we are able to identify some relevant and quality candidates before the actual hiring season starts," says Raj Raghavan, director HR of Amazon India. They are also well prepared and aware of Amazon when they appear for the interview process. "This improves the chances of those students performing better and works as a leverage for our final hiring," he says.

Besides placement teams, companies also approach college clubs.

"A lot of companies have been approaching us for case-study competitions while our campus clubs (consulting, marketing, finance etc) are also approached to do live projects including marketing research, price strategy etc," says Sapna Agarwal, head, career development services at IIM Bangalore.

Competitions are often conducted on social media platforms. FMCG company, Marico uses its campus Facebook page to share 'live' projects and business challenges on the page. Started in 2011, Marico Campus Connections now has a fan base of 73,000. "Not only do these students get an opportunity to work on a real business case, which is an experiential learning for them, they also get an opportunity to contribute to the accelerated growth of these organisations," says Ashutosh Telang, chief human resources officer, Marico.