

HRXpert

The Annual HR Magazine
15TH EDITION

Kshitij'21

Bespoke Compensation - Is that a
future reality?

**FACULTY
ARTICLES**

**ALUMNI
INTERVIEWS**

**INTERNSHIP
DIARIES**

WORDS FROM THE DEAN

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome all of you to Kshitij 2021, the flagship HR conclave of the student association (XIMAHR) of School of Human Resource Management, XIM University. This celebrated event, Kshitij, is a confluence of practitioners, academicians and aspiring HR managers across geographies. Over the last decade, Kshitij has carved a legacy in the realm of HR management, bridging the gap between academia and corporate for which we are grateful to leaders in corporate, stalwarts in academia and the disruptive learners of School of HRM.

The theme for this year “Bespoke Compensation- is that a future reality?” arouses ideas and thoughts that resonate with the needs of the workforce of today and future. The global employment ecosystem is experiencing phenomena like ‘the great resignation’ which have fuelled deliberations on compensation and rewards; therefore Kshitij 2021 aims at igniting the dialogue for the future of compensation.

As the talent marketplace outgrows local and national boundaries, it becomes more important to replace a patchwork of compensation programs and delivery with a carefully curated strategy. This move towards a bespoke and harmonized compensation stands in parallel with the increasing global alignment of other HR operations and shared services. In the future years, we will witness acceleration of customised approaches to compensation, especially as technology drives it.

I am certain that Kshitij 2021, decorated with illustrious panel members will help to visualise what the future holds for compensation strategies across industries. I extend my best wishes to each panel member for shaping futuristic ideas with their illuminating thoughts.



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Manthan



Kshitij



Deeksha



HR Symposium



Pro Act



Tol Mol



Case in Point

Established in the year 1987 as the HR association, today, XIMAHR provides a platform to the budding HR professionals to make sufficient inroads in gaining knowledge beyond the classroom and increases interface with the industry to remain more agile and relevant. Through its various activities and initiatives, XIMAHR tries to nurture talent and streamline the competencies of the students. XIMAHR has evolved as one of the leading association of student specializing in HR with its alumni base present in almost all corporate houses of India.

MISSION of XIMAHR

- To collaborate with the management, in designing the academic curriculum as per industry standards and trends
- To become the most sought-after association for HR Consultancy and other industrial HR Solutions in the region
- To get recognized as a platform for learning and development for the HR fraternity of XIM University and provide a blend of Academic Knowledge and Industrial exposure through various events
- To uphold the values of XIM University and working towards projecting it in the best possible light

VISION of XIMAHR

To become an innovative, vibrant, vanguard association dedicated to Human Resources, to facilitate the holistic development of the HR Fraternity and create long term industry relationships and achieve excellence in our executions.

Events/Activities conducted by XIMAHR

HR Symposium: It is an annual event where practitioners across the industries share their thoughts and views in panel discussions on a theme to familiarize students with current initiatives and challenges in the field of HRM.

Manthan: It is a series of workshops that will test the HR knowledge of the students through series of rounds that will cover HR concepts and attention and retention power through quiz

Kshitij: It is the flagship event of XIMAHR. Eminent leaders from the field of HR and IR come under one roof to talk on emerging and relevant HR and IR themes. This event tries to build the bridge between academia and industry.

Deeksha: This is an interaction event with XIM University's experienced seniors who talk about each elective in depth to aid the selection of subjects by giving a fair idea about the electives available.

Case in Point: This is another flagship national case study competition that is conducted during the annual cultural fest of the university.

ProAct: This event is organized during the annual cultural fest of the university and comprises of a mix of HR knowledge and fun where a participant has to show skills of humor, acting, communication and spontaneity apart from his/her HR knowledge.

Think HR Sessions: These are the sessions conducted by the second year HR students wherein discussions are held on various topics of academic importance aimed at sharing knowledge and experience with first year HR students.

Immersion Courses: Courses were offered by industry experts covering crucial topics in the field of HR.

Live Project: In an attempt to increase the industry engagement, XIMAHR brings live project opportunities for the HRM students.

HRXpert: This is the annual magazine published by XIMAHR summarizing all the keystone activities conducted throughout the year involving the HRM students, sharing excerpts of their internship experiences and major achievements.

HRizn: This is the monthly newsletter circulated by XIMAHR, covering the ongoing trends and recent developments in the world of business to ensure that the students are up to date.

Tol-Mol: It is a learning event involving the negotiation between trade unions and management conducted by XIMAHR where one bargains to win and forge strong professional relationships.



INTEGRATING PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT IN WORKPLACE

Dr. Kalpana Sahoo

Assistant Professor, School of Human Resource Management

Employee empowerment is no more a global buzzword. As the world of work changes, the workplace also needs to change. The changing nature of work necessitates that workplaces are increasingly geared for flexibility, collaboration, and connectivity. An empowered organization can facilitate employees to have the knowledge, skill, desire, and opportunity to personally succeed in a way that leads to the organization's success. Many organizations going through a financial crisis. The pandemic has forced employers to change compensation quickly and at scale, relying on tools such as hardship pay, one-time bonuses, severance packages and salary reductions. Empowerment is one of the tools to address issues in digitalized world .Empowerment is based on the idea that providing employees with the resources, authority, opportunity, and motivation to do their work, as well as holding them accountable for their actions, will make employees happier and more successful in their roles. It must be considered as a principle. Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela were not merely to lead their people but to empower them to lead themselves.

Empowerment in Post Pandemic Era

Empowering people, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is giving people power, giving people the ability, or making them able, to do or act. 'Power' has connotation of vigour, energy, authority, influence. Effective leadership entails empowering people, enabling them to do what needs to be done to pursue a vision, mission, objective or strategy and to fulfill their potential. Heller (1997) sees empowering people as 'setting them free to think for themselves'. As Olivier (2001) says, 'Alignment happens when the right "thing" (outside) is linked to the right "feeling" (inside)'. And Goethe in the eighteenth century said, 'whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius and power and magic in it'.



If employees don't see a fast-rising graph in their career path, they lose interest at work, and productivity falls. On the other hand, when you empower them, they become more responsible, more invested. One of the first books about empowerment, written in the genre of a modern fable, is by William Byham (1988). Byham defines empowerment as having responsibility, a sense of ownership, satisfaction in accomplishments, power over what and how things are done, recognition for ideas and the knowledge that is important in the organization. The term 'empowerment' has now become part of everyday management language. The idea of empowerment has now been extended to encompass sharing power, energizing employees, and enhancing self-efficacy by reducing powerlessness, and increasing opportunities for intrinsic motivation at work. Empowerment must be distinguished from the need for control. Sharing power does not diminish power; in fact it multiplies power. Distributing power to others is necessary for empowerment, but not sufficient.

From multiple sources several different uses of the term 'empowerment' can be noted:

- Sharing power with or transferring power to those who do the work
- Redistributing authority and control
- Sharing equal responsibility (between employees and managers) for results
- Full participation of workers and leaders in decision making
- Pursuit of a shared vision and purpose through team effort
- Self-motivation through a full understanding of responsibility and authority
- The capability to make a difference in the attainment of goals
- Synergistic interaction among individuals that emphasizes cooperation and leads to expansion of power for the group

An empirical study of empowerment by Menon (2001) explains empowerment as self-perception of competence (self-efficacy), perception of control over the work environment, and the internalization of organizational goals. Self-efficacy is an important ingredient in feeling empowered. Perception of control results from delegation and autonomy. Menon's work adds to our understanding of empowerment by emphasizing the importance of goal internalization. Goals can be motivating if they are valued as a cause or worthy purpose. If personal needs and objectives are congruent with the organization's objectives, people will feel that they control their own lives and that their actions make a difference. Underlying empowerment, however, is self-awareness and 'perceived competence' or self-efficacy - belief in one's capabilities to do what needs to be done (Wood & Bandura, 1989). In Conger and Kanungo's model, empowerment is a process of psychological enabling, primarily through enhancing belief in self-efficacy. In summary, empowerment is giving people the knowledge, skills, self-awareness, authority, freedom, resource and opportunity to manage themselves. However, along with empowerment comes accountability for behavior and performance.

- Increasing employees' autonomy and encouraging them to think independently and critically
- Raising their level of self-efficacy, self-confidence, competence, self-worth, and self-management
- Augmenting their creativity and risk-taking

The Impact of Empowerment

Empowering workers produce some tangible benefits.

Job Satisfaction and Performance. Myers (1993) points out that when workers have more control – when they can help define their own goals and hours and when they participate in decision making – their job satisfaction rises. Using a participative leadership style is a feature of empowering people. A positive relationship has been established between participation, satisfaction, motivation, quality, productivity, and performance. Turney (1993) found that empowered employees have a sense of ownership and responsibility, satisfaction in their accomplishment, a sense of control over what and how things are done, and the knowledge that they are important in the organization.

Creating a Learning Organization. The restructuring of traditional organization into a learning organization requires employee empowerment. As people accumulate a high level a high level of performance through their empowerment, they develop positive self-esteem. Managers with low levels of self-esteem, negative feelings about their jobs and poor support from their colleagues and bosses are less likely to effect organizational change. In contrast, self-esteem is a powerful motivator. Self-esteem is what some management scientists call 'proper pride', as distinct from the sin of inordinate pride, which shows itself as 'self-love, self-admiration and self-glorification'.

Employee branding

The core idea of employee branding is that you have such a superior work culture that your employees act as brand ambassadors and present your company in the best light possible. When employees feel empowered, the company becomes an ideal place to work for job seekers. Having an excellent employee brand serves various purposes. First of all the company becomes desirable for all the top talents. Empowered employees take personal pride in their work, and they take responsibility for doing a good job. As a result, organizations reap the benefits of empowered employees as they deliver superior products and services.

Additionally, empowered employees can address day-to-day challenges of customer handling much more efficiently. For example, while dealing with an unsatisfied customer, if the employees have the tools and authority to make a decision, they can fix the issue there and then.

Empowering people means treating people as valued individuals, giving power to them, expecting responsibility in return, and enabling them to perform and achieve. In other words, it entails giving people the skills, resources and freedom to manage themselves with accountability for their performance.

Empowerment in Practice

While empowerment is given premium, there is lack of consensus on procedure of its implementation. For example, half of the 12 most senior executives in a Fortune 50 manufacturing company believed that empowerment is about delegation and accountability. Their implicit strategy involved:

- Start at the top
- Clarify the organization's vision, mission and values
- Clearly specify the roles, tasks and rewards for employees
- Delegate responsibility
- Hold people accountable for results

The other six senior executives viewed empowerment differently. Their implicit strategy was to :

- Start at the bottom by understanding the needs of employees
- Model empowered behavior for employees
- Build teams to encourage cooperative behavior
- Encourage intelligent risk taking
- Trust people to perform

A Nepalese Buddhist mantra says, 'Take into account that great love and great achievement involve great risks'. Empowerment carries risk. One is the risk of perceived abduction by a leader; others are fear of loss of control and fear of failure.



LISTENING-THE KEY TO STRONG WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS



Sumitra Balakrishnan
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We live in a world filled with millions of sounds. We have alarms to wake us up, gadgets that beep to monitor our heart rate, apps to remind us to complete our 10000 steps every day, elevators that sing and watches that talk. But, are we listening enough? In a world full of beautiful sounds, we have forgotten to listen well, actively and genuinely.

We are too busy, too busy just hearing what is enough, for that moment to respond, and we forget to listen any more. This is when we forget to listen. Some of us do not even bother to hear enough. This is also because most of us hear to answer, or hear to respond immediately. We do not wait to respond adequately. What is the difference between listening and hearing? People think that hearing a sound means that they are listening to that sound. But there are great differences between the two auditory responses.

Hearing vs Listening

The differences between the two processes lie in the stages of reception, attention, processing and retention. Stoltz describes the difference between the two as “Hearing is the first stage in effective listening. In order to hear accurately, listeners must attend to aural stimuli and concentrate on a particular message” (Stoltz,M.M., 2008). This helps understand that hearing is the first stage in the complex process of listening, cognition and sense-making. Thompson (1993) writes that, “Listening, when it is considered to be distinct from hearing, is usually defined conceptually as a cognitive process mediated by the brain”.

Here it can be seen that listening involves both auditory and cognitive processing. Similarly, Tomatis writes, "Listening is the active focusing of the middle ear to accommodate and enhance the sensory perception of those sounds of particular interest ...It acts more like a directional microphone to highlight the extraneous or background sound". (Tomatis, A., & Keeping, F., 2005). The highlight is on the filtering of specific sounds of interest and the pivotal role of a body part that acts in co-ordination with all the others.

Why don't people listen enough?

Stephen Covey wrote in his famous book, 7 habits of highly effective people that "Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply". Nowadays, most people do not even listen, let alone with an intent to understand, they merely hear with the intent to respond quickly. People are in a hurry to finish the speakers' sentence, not letting them complete their thought. The need to exert a feeling of "I already know what you are about to say", or "I have already heard this", complemented by a look of "Let me complete the sentence for you" makes room for recreated meanings, distorted communication and incomplete transmissions of lexical-semantics.

Incidents in infancy and early childhood could lead to mental constructs (objects) that cause resultant expectations. The object relations theory (Brandchaft, B.,1986) explains how these involve trauma, life-expectations, shaping of relationships and cause certain involuntary reactions to or trouble in listening of narrations of the same. For example, a person who has been overtly criticized during his childhood is likely to over-react to criticism and narrations of any incidents like the same (Nichols, M. P., & Straus, M. B., 2021)

Developing the skill of listening

Learning to listen

People need to put in a learned effort and more time to listen than to hear. There may also be a bigger emotional investment in listening and one may not always be appreciated or lauded. Developing the skill of listening well takes time and exhibition of the right combination of verbal and non-verbal factions. Once mastered and understood, the satisfaction in listening is quite high. All the parties feel quite nourished and content at the end of the exchange.

Listening patiently at length is among the toughest things to do, but as Zenger, J., & Folkman, J. (2016), say listening is not about staying quiet. It is about having a good conversation, about asking the questions that matter, about having enough energy throughout the talk, and about reflecting that energy to the speaker too.

Listening and Responding

Responses matter, and how one responds also matters. The speaker needs to know that what has been said has been listened to, and understood. Merely nodding one's head, smiling or staring at the speaker may not work. The right expression for the right content carries a lot of weight. It means that the message has been delivered correctly.

It is difficult to be an objective listener, and reacting is easy. Resist the impulse to over-react or react emotionally to the other person's thoughts or statements. Listening to a sensitive topic, content that doesn't align with one's thoughts or seems to be a little prejudiced could trigger an immediate extreme response from anyone as a listener.

Though difficult, one should try and think more from the other person's perspective first, then from one's own. Now offer a median view which is balanced and practical as advice. Offer a perspective which is different and helps the speaker understand why the content is not appropriate for a wide audience. Suggestions need to be constructive while being balanced.

Listening as a need for the workplace

With the advent of "virtual organizations" and "timeless time" (Castells, 1996), experiences of organisations, people and life itself has changed. The individual-organisation relationship has changed. Work is no longer a small and vital part of life that dominates a specific time quadrant. During the last year, visible and invisible social reality got increasingly digital and computers were entrusted with more and more functions. People have missed their work-teams and work-mates more than ever. Zoom fatigue (Bailenson, J. N., 2021), heightened workload during WFH (Parker, K., Horowitz, J. M., & Minkin, R., 2020) and digital overload increases the need for internal communication and ethical listening to employees (Ruck, K., & Men, L. R., 2021; Neill, M. S., & Bowen, S. A., 2021)

Listening is often disregarded as a petty skill and there is very little importance paid to it in training programs and curriculum designs of institutional programs . But, the need of the day is for skillful and respectful listeners. Skilled listeners display high levels of focus, interpersonal trust, team-work, openness, ability to enhance self-confidence, gain trust and productive empathy (Burley-Allen, M., 1989).

Creating a safe environment and exhibiting Genuine listening

An environment where the employee feels cared for, respected and comfortable to speak is required. It should be made of trust, authenticity and transparency. The physical and emotional surroundings should feel safe (Zenger, J., & Folkman, J., 2016) to exchange confidential information and should be free from distractions. The listener should be completely available and invested in the conversation, while being reciprocal.

This is active listening. It is correct and appropriate to question, clear doubts, ask for clarifications and reassure the speaker. It is better to be authentic and critical, than to listen in spurts and not be the support. One should similarly be able to suspend memory, desire and judgement and just listen actively, while clearing any doubts - that is genuine listening.

Empathetic listening

Empathy is typically associated in listening literature with being an attentive communicator and other-oriented (Payne, 2005; Stewart, 1983). Empathetic listening is an active form of supportive communication and workplace social support, which is highly required now. It increases mutual understanding, collaboration, reduces uncertainty and misunderstandings. Through empathetic listening, one is able to project oneself into the personality of the speaker and understand the speaker's feelings, experiences and thoughts quite well.

This is also more likely when one may have experiences similar to or exactly like the speaker has had. The shared experience therefore helps moral sensitivity. The feeling of 'I understand' should feel genuine when communicated and emoted by the listener.

Why employee listening is more important now

The last year has been tough on everyone and everyone has had different experiences. The last year had everyone work tougher and live tough. The denominator was equal for everyone- the pandemic. Digitization hastened the arrival of the Future-of-work and the last year and a little made everyone realize how connectivity can make things happen or not. To shape future working lives while accommodating complexities and changes in business, leaders need to be more aural and empathetic.

Supervisors at first, need to be great listeners, and not just good ones now. For this, they can be active-empathetic listeners and promote a culture of openness. This will promote open communication, employee happiness, wellbeing and influence work engagement. Employees need to feel that they are speaking to be listened to, and that they can do this with any team-mate, and at any time, without any repercussions. The culture of "I understand" should be promoted as a genuine thought. Leaders should use their empathy skills to work with managers and employees to create new working models that will accommodate individual and team preferences. This will remove individuals' uncertainty and help them feel that they have control over their work and include them more actively in decision-making.

Listening needs to be genuine, empathetic, morally autonomous and open at all levels. A disregarded petty skill can be a huge boon for teams and organizations alike if used validly.

Alumni Interview

Mr. Parth Khanna

MBA-HRM

2014-2016



Mr. Parth Khanna is an esteemed alum of XIMB- HR, batch of 2016. Currently, he is working at BCG as a Senior Knowledge Analyst as part of the People Organization practice with a specific focus on Organisation Design, Talent Management, and HR Transformation. Post his MBA, he had worked with Jana Laxmi Financial Services & Apollo Munich Health Insurance as a corporate HR. Later, he worked with EY and was responsible for setting up their Rewards Practices. Before his MBA, he worked with Accenture, where he developed an extensive interest in Business Intelligence & Analytics. Talking about his transition from a Big 4 consulting firm to a big 3 MBB, he said that the growth had been magnificent. Working at EY was basically a combination of Strategy and Implementation. Whereas, at BCG, 80-90% work involves some strategic intervention, like analyzing what solution works best for the clients.

In an exclusive interview with Mr. Parth, we tried to get his opinions and views on the Future of the workforce and the workplace and how today the organizations require employees with diverse skills, emphasizing the growing importance of HR Analytics. So, here are the snippets of his interview:

How has the pandemic impacted your work, and how has the post-pandemic era been different from it?

Mr. Parth began by stating that as soon as he joined BCG, lockdown was imposed and therefore he never got a chance to visit his office. It was an entire virtual onboarding process for him. Before the pandemic, while working at EY, he used to work with teams, and there used to be a lot of physical interactions at the workplace and they often used to go to different client locations. But now, because of the pandemic, everyone has to work remotely. According to him during the pandemic, one of the most challenging jobs for the HR Managers was to ensure that the work was not getting impacted with the new ways of work coming into the picture. While they also needed to ensure that as consultants the changes they suggested to their clients were getting implemented in their organisation in a smooth manner without causing much chaos.

Talking about the post-pandemic scenario, he said that companies are now gradually transitioning back to office. However, the future is neither going to be entirely a work from home scenario nor a complete work from the office model. It will be a hybrid model now, wherein the employees don't have to come to the office daily and organizations are taking steps to make this possible so as to retain their key talent.

How do you see the Future of the workforce and workplace shaping? What are some changes you are looking forward to?

We all know that as a consequence of the disruptions created by Covid-19, we are currently witnessing "THE GREAT RESIGNATION," where people are resigning in large numbers, and with this upsurge in resignations, there is a steep rise in the employment of new personnel. For job seekers, new career options are opening up. People analytics is one of the critical roles for which organizations are hiring. People who understand the functional part of HR and are also proficient in key analytical abilities are in high demand nowadays. Every other decision which an organization takes today is data-driven, hence making the role of People Analytics more critical. According to Mr. Khanna, there will be a shift in the role of Corporate HRs since HR analytics is gaining popularity now. The world today is not just about analytics but it's a combination of digitization, AI, Machine Learning. The traditional roles ought to become automated. Therefore, the leaders would now have to strategically think about which position would require employees and which all would not. However, specific skills will be required in the long run. So, the coming Future of the workforce would be a combination of people with diverse analytical skills and people specializing in the traditional crafts.

What was the most significant learning for you while pursuing MBA, which you hold on to even today?

Refreshing the memories he made during his MBA at XIMB, Mr. Parth told that the most effective skill he learned is that of handling pressure.. In the initial days, managing to quickly move from the hostel to the classrooms and back without an elevator facility used to be a task for their batch. Then gradually came the pressure of getting into committees, finding a suitable internship, and at the same time maintaining their academic performance. So handling stress in such a competitive environment and still excelling at everything was the most extensive learning for him. This learning of how to manage pressure at XIMB helped him in his corporate career ahead, where you have tight deadlines, with small turnaround timings.

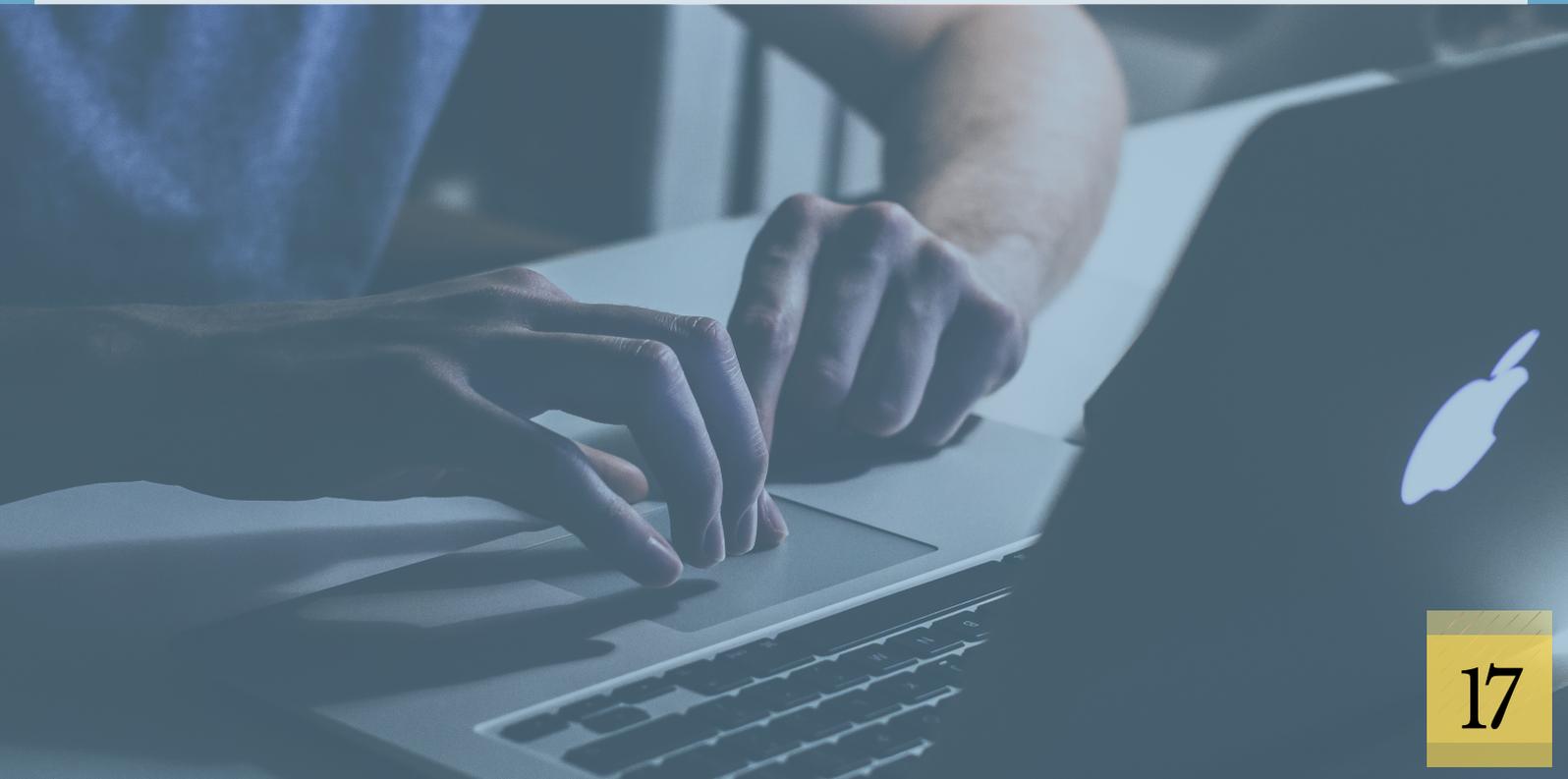
What would be your fondest memory at XIM?

Recalling his college days, Parth talked of two such memories. One was his Student Exchange Program, where he got a chance to study for three months in France. This was an excellent learning experience for him as he got an opportunity to gain different and varied outlooks while studying with students coming from across the globe. He still owes it to XIMB for giving him an opportunity to explore France.

Other than this what he still cherishes is the bonds that he made during his two years at XIMB. His B-school friends are still very close to him, even after the passage of five-six years. He reminisces the days when they used to sit in the corridors of the newly constructed campus and enjoyed among themselves after those long, hectic days. Talking about his shadow days at XIMAHR, he was part of the Sponsorship vertical, where he learnt the art of making an impactful and persuasive pitch which helped him in several ways later on as well.

Any tips or advice for the current batches for their professional journey ahead?

Mr. Parth advised the current batches not to be afraid and to try out and experiment with new and different things. He himself till date says yes to new challenges without giving much thought as he strongly believes that one gets to learn a lot from these experiences. He agrees to the fact that it is quite possible that when we try out new things, we might fail, might need to make numerous corrections, and might even get scolded, but in the end we learn a lot in the process. This skill and urge of always wanting to try out his hands at new things, has helped him a lot personally and he wishes the same for us. At the close of the interview, he wished everyone great success for their future endeavors.





Alumni Interview

Mr. Narayanan Murali

MBA-HRM

2014-2016

Mr. Narayanan Murali is an esteemed Alumni of XIMB - HR batch of 2014-16. He is currently working as People Experience and Technology Business Partner at Amazon where he supports the tech teams which supports the Finance function. Before his stint with Amazon, he worked with DE Shaw as an HRBP for 2.5 years. Prior to joining XIMB, he had worked with leading IT giant Wipro for around 2 years as a Project Engineer. During his MBA he was an active member of Alcom - The Alumni Committee of School of Human Resource Management and XQuizzite - The Quizzing Committee. He enjoys singing and holds a keen interest in music outside of work. He also enjoys quizzing whenever he gets time. In an interview with Narayanan we tried to find out about his experience and learning during MBA and his views regarding the future of the workforce in the post pandemic Era.

How has the pandemic impacted your work and how has the post pandemic era been different from it?

He told us that prior to the pandemic, everyone was used to a high touch environment in terms of planning a workday or planning meetings. But owing to the pandemic, people had to move to a virtual environment for which everyone took some time to adjust. Giving an instance of his role he told that because of the virtual mode of working they had to start planning weeks in advance for meeting agendas with stakeholders. In contrast, before the pandemic, they could just walk up to stakeholders and discuss their issues.

Although work from home induced due to the pandemic gave a greater degree of flexibility to the employees to work at any time from any place, it has majorly impacted work-life balance. There is an expectation that the employees are always available, and hence there exists no start and end time to one's workday.

What steps have your current company taken to give employees a flexible work structure?

Talking about the work structure Narayanan said that at Amazon, they do not have a mandate for employees to punch in a certain set number of hours during a day or a week. Besides that, he informed us that Amazon is taking several measures to provide flexibility to employees. One of them is the part-time work model, which benefits employees who want to take some time off work and allow employees to work at a time or rate that suits them.

How do you see the future of workforce and workplace shaping? What are some changes you are looking forward to?

According to him, the future of the workforce and workplace is still an evolving topic. But he feels that the biggest takeaway from the work from home set-up is that there is no work that cannot be done from home except the high touch roles.

In some organisations, leadership believes that it is crucial to be in office due to factors such as team bonding, but the next generation prefers flexibility and hence would instead choose a work from home setup. In such a scenario, it becomes essential for companies to create a balance between the two.

Organisations are now moving towards a Hybrid model where employees work from the office for a few days of the week and work from home for the rest of the days. In the case of the hybrid model, there is no one size fits all model as different firms are using different variations. According to him, we will have to wait and watch for maybe 1-2 years to see how the workplaces shape as companies are going a little slow while switching to a hybrid model.

When asked about the changes he is looking forward to, he said he is looking out for how big companies evolve. These are the companies who have made a lot of investment in the office space, so it will be interesting to see how the future pans out for them. The other thing he is excited about is how organisations build company culture or how they create a set of common cultural values in an environment like this when many employees are working remotely. While working in the office, employees were surrounded by cultural artefacts that talk about companies' culture, which is not possible while working from home.

In his opinion, it would be a challenge for organisations to culturally assimilate employees while also ensuring flexibility. He further stated an example from his own experience at Amazon. He said that Amazon is a culturally strong company as they have a core set of cultural values. New hires are coming on board with whom interaction is minimal, so it is challenging to get them used to what this company's culture stands for.

Do you like WFH or do you miss the office?

His personal preference would be WFH but he feels that on a flipside with WFH days are typically long and there is a tendency of not switching off and interaction with colleagues and new joiners is also missing. He would thus prefer a hybrid model, but he is not sure what kind of hybrid model as he hasn't experienced any of them yet.

What would be the most significant thing that you learnt while doing your MBA which you hold on even today?

Narayanan feels that the biggest learning of an MBA is that there is no mantra for success. When one joins an MBA, they hear a lot of theories on how to land a good job. People might tell freshers to be a part of a number of committees or to have a POR. According to him, none of that really matters a lot. Speaking from his experience he told us that he did not have a resume as impressive as that of his friends from his batch, but he could sail through and be one among the firsts in his batch to get placed.

He said that getting into a good company and a good role goes a long way in how one's career pans out, at least for the initial two years. He further added that it is important to note that this is not the end, and one will have to assess their career continuously. One has to look at their career as a 20-30 year-long journey. If we break it into blocks of 5-6 years, what we do in a particular block might determine what we will do in the next block. This shows it is important that one doesn't stress too much on what role or company they initially land in.

The second significant thing he learnt from his MBA is one should be open to different experiences. He was a Shadow member of Alcom and XQuizzite. When the opportunity came, he chose to be a core member of XQuizzite as that's where his interest was instead of working towards just building his resume. He further reiterated that there is no full-proof mantra to success. Sometimes we just have to be true to ourselves, trust our instincts, and choose things we like doing.

What are some of the fondest memories of your MBA days?

XIMB is the place where he met the one to whom he is married today. This is one of his fondest memories. Besides that, MBA gave him an opportunity to be more self-aware and learn things he did not know earlier about himself. MBA gave him a chance for self-growth. He lacked a bit on the confidence front, but the opportunity to be the Coordinator of a committee and represent the college at different college fests gave him exposure and helped him grow into a much more confident individual.

Any tips or advice for batch?

His only advice to the Junior batch would be to enjoy themselves and not be too tensed about their journey. He also said they should give their best in SIP as that's an excellent platform to learn.

For the Senior batch, his suggestion would be that they should think of their professional journey as a fairly long one and keep in mind this is just the beginning of that journey. He further added that people would end up in a good company or a role, and even if they do not like the company or role, they should learn from their experience and move on. They will get opportunities to try different roles along the way.

Alumni Interview

Mr. Farzan Todiwala

MBA-HRM

2017-2019



Mr. Farzan Todiwala is a distinguished alumni of XIMB-HR batch of 2017-19. While at XIMB, he interned with Reliance Industries Ltd., where he bagged a PPO. He was also the Coordinator of Alcom, the Alumni Committee of School of Human Resource Management. While reminiscing about his days at XIMB, he told us that he had some of the most incredible moments of his life here. He is currently working as an HR COE at Reliance Industries Ltd., where he is responsible for D&I initiatives. He is also active in the organization's plan for implementing the labour codes and has even worked in HRBP and IR roles. He came to XIMB as a fresher after finishing his B.tech. in Electrical Engineering. He is a sports enthusiast, and according to him, being in the field has greatly influenced his personality, both personally and professionally.

In a candid interview with us, he highlighted his key takeaways from his MBA journey as well as his job experience, and what the future holds for the budding HR professionals. Here is an excerpt of the talk:

How has the pandemic impacted your work and how has the post-pandemic era been different from it?

Answering to this he shared his experience of dealing with two types of workers: Workman and Contract Labour. He talked about the difficulties his team encountered as the pandemic spread across the country and as a result of which firms were forced to make critical decisions, such as the deciding plant's operational capacity, crafting ways to educate the contract labour about sanitising their hands, wearing masks, maintaining social distance, and monitoring their health. Mr. Farzan also talked about the problems brought by lockdown, which prompted HRs to contact the legal team in order to acquire proper clearances which would allow workers to travel to work during the lockdown.

Further, he added that the positive change that the pandemic has brought about is in the form of increased opportunities to present your work to leadership. This gave a lot of exposure and visibility to employees. In normal times if such meetings were to take place, one had to travel, and that would not have been possible on a regular basis. Because of work from home, these meetings can happen more frequently. Another key point he brought to our attention was the growing emphasis on health and well-being in organisations, which has expanded substantially. Farzan still believes that the post pandemic era is yet to arrive and we are still in the transition phase. A lot more is yet to be discovered.

How do you see the future of the workforce and workplace shaping? What are some changes you are looking forward to?

According to him, there wasn't any fixed answer to this question. There could be 3 to 4 possibilities. An important change could be that many firms are attempting to decrease the personnel present in the offline mode in the workplace. Some organisations are going for an 80-20 split, while others prefer a 50-50 split. There could even be the possibility for employees to come to the office once a week or once a month and work virtually for the remainder of the week or month, and some jobs may be done entirely from home. But all these possibilities would depend upon the needs of the business the organisation is involved in.

He highlighted the fact that as the number of technology-driven companies is growing every day it might necessitate the need to innovate and adapt to evolving technologies in order to avoid becoming obsolete and continue to satisfy changing client expectations. He further added that the current situation indicates a new trend i.e., a rise in the gig labour. As a result of which businesses must develop a model to accommodate gig workers, as well as develop contracts and regulations for them. If there is some innovation done by gig workers, the primary problem that organisations will confront now is intellectual property management. For small businesses, this can be a significant problem. As a result, a well-drafted contract is required, which should include provisions that account for these eventualities in order to prevent legal issues.

What was the most significant thing that you learnt while pursuing your MBA which you hold on to even today?

The most important lesson learnt by Farzan during his MBA days was to develop an attitude of never giving up since opportunities might come knocking any time. Giving an example of SIP and final placement processes, he explained how overwhelming they can be and what doubts they bring into one's mind when going through rejections. During this period, some students are rejected from rounds in which they are often good at. Farzan believes that in these instances, students should never stop working hard since there are a slew of wonderful firms waiting to recruit them, and they must be prepared to seize the chance.

The second important lesson that he learned during his MBA was if you're confused, go for it, there will be challenges but you'll learn something new.

The third important learning he shared was the importance of making good friends in your MBA journey. These are the friends who can be there for you not only on a good day but give you a shoulder to cry on, on a bad day.

What would be your fondest memory at XIM ?

Farzan's fondest memories were of the time when the batch used to enthusiastically celebrate the accomplishments of their classmates. Recalling this memory, he adds that, despite the competitive environment wherein MBA functions, they made it a point to regularly celebrate the accomplishments of their colleagues.

In another recollection he talks about his shadow experience with ALCOM. Farzan later became the HR ALCOM committee's Coordinator, and the lessons he acquired during that time are ones he still refers to when needed. He also has fond memories of hanging out with his friends at Pappu chaiwala and a Punjabi restaurant near the campus.

Any tips or advice for the current batches for their professional journey ahead?

His advice to the junior class is to try to grasp the practical side of HR as thoroughly as possible during the internship and always be willing to do some groundwork. He believes that understanding the company's workforce demography before developing strategies will assist aspiring HR professionals operate quickly and successfully. He also emphasised on the need of asking questions, no matter how basic they may seem, and of attempting to solve an issue as quickly as possible by conducting research or reaching out to peers or seniors. His final piece of advice was to maintain contact with seniors, classmates, and faculty members even after graduation.

Internship diaries

Abhishek Pandey

Deloitte-PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



In a highly competitive environment that the world of management subscribes to, setting goals and achieving the same strategically can become a herculean task. Yet there are some noteworthy journeys that stand out. One such journey is of Abhishek Pandey, whose diligence and humility not only earned him praise at Deloitte, but also led to a Pre-Placement Offer as a culmination of his efforts.

Abhishek's approach towards the deliverables of his project reflects his technical competencies and ingenuity. He shares that a basic understanding of the important subjects from the first year came in handy because through the internship work, he was able to apply those concepts in real time. He adds that no other preparation was deemed necessary and the required skill was data analysis and ability to perform thorough research.

He feels that while beginning one's summer internship, an earnest approach, an inclination towards learning and gratitude for the opportunity to be able to work for an esteemed organisation are must haves.

In his opinion, internship projects are very carefully curated. Depending on the need in the organisation, there can be an assignment of a single or multiple projects. The knowledge gained from the subjects in the first year helped him in thinking along the ways and deriving solutions.

Abhishek firmly believes that it is important to stay in touch with our alums and mentors. They helped him with the understanding of the culture of the organisation and about general expectations from interns. He also got his work reviewed often which helped him gather valuable inputs and feedback.

He carried out all these tasks in a virtual mode, away from the bustling corridors of Deloitte. He feels that working in a virtual setup requires careful planning and division of work along with a focus on relaxation and rest. He did not face any challenges in working from home.

“Hard work and an affinity to associate with the organisation are always valued”, says Abhishek. After all, organisations are looking for sincere individuals who have quick learning and application-based skills.

He shared three takeaways that helped him convert his summer internship into a PPO:

- a) Planning and visualising the final project deliverables in a time-bound manner
- b) Thorough subject matter understanding
- c) Getting feedback for the project from different levels of employees

His advice to future summer interns would be to approach the experience with earnestness, open mindedness and gratitude.

Internship diaries

Anjali Anil Varindani

Deloitte-PPO Holder
Summer Intern 2021



Last year the pandemic situation was grave and job opportunities took a significant hit. But still Anjali Varindani managed to ace the situation by not only grabbing an internship opportunity in one of the leading consulting firms, Deloitte but also ended up converting it into a PPO. The fact that she managed to achieve all of this while working in the online mode makes this feat all the more special. In a candid interview with us Anjali shared her experience and learnings of her SIP journey.

According to her, every intern needs to be well-versed with the latest HR trends and policy changes in their respective organizations and be aware of the work culture present there. She also emphasised that basic knowledge of Excel and Powerpoint comes in handy as interns are required to make numerous presentations and work on complex datasets during their internship. She also believes that it is vital for interns to realize that summer internship is one of the most crucial learning opportunities they'll encounter, and they need to make the most out of it. While their project must be their priority, networking and connecting with colleagues and industry experts is equally essential.

The key aspect that helped her excel in her project was the successful application of concepts and learnings of class in real-life situations according to the organization's needs. Constant interactions with various peers and superiors in the organization, as a part of her project, provided Anjali with a plethora of new ideas that she could implement. One of the primary skills that organizations like to see in any intern is their problem-solving ability, and therefore interns must try and come

up with innovative yet implementable answers to every problem thrown at them. Being observant and catching hold of minor details and intricacies is also very important and can help differentiate a high performer from an average one. She also believes it's essential for interns to articulate their views and put across their points confidently to ensure smooth two-way communication with their managers/mentors. Two months of internship can help one learn and discover skills they never knew they possessed and can completely change a person's outlook towards the corporate world.

Yet, it's skills that one needs to be aware of that helps in achieving success. Anjali's experience was no different; her perseverance and resilient attitude, even when giving up felt easy, were some of the primary reasons behind her exceptional performance. The constant feedback mechanism was another reason that allowed her to understand and rectify her shortcomings, resulting in her impeccable performance. Lastly, it was the networks and connections that she established during her internship that allowed her superiors to assess her strengths and realize her potential, which ultimately led to her successful stint at Deloitte.

Concluding the talk she wished the juniors all the best for their SIP journey and advised everyone to stay inquisitive and energetic not just in the beginning but throughout the two months and not let small failures derail you from this learning opportunity. Hoping there'll be many more success stories from the junior batch.

Internship diaries

Vartika Trehan

Coastr India-PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



The "nerve-wracking" summer internship selection process comes just as students are beginning to navigate the rigours of B-school coursework! SIPs are important in securing our positions at our dream companies. However, getting into a company is one thing, and going the additional mile to land a PPO is another. Vartika Trehan, a second-year MBA HRM student who received a PPO from Coastr India, feels her internship experience was excellent, one-of-a-kind, and gratifying.

She is a BCom graduate from Sri Aurobindo College. Post her undergrad, she worked with Royal Bank of Scotland Business for about a year as a Fraud Analyst. Her inclination towards HR landed her in XIM University. When questioned about any pre-internship preparation, she suggested becoming familiar with the firm, the culture of the company, and being clear about the agenda and project needs. She also stressed the necessity of basic research in understanding the company's divisions/hierarchy.

Having a strong mindset and a positive attitude helped her to grow significantly over the two months of the internship. She says, **"It's okay if you don't have solutions to all of the company's problems; you only have one year of theoretical knowledge in this domain, but it's critical to be open to new challenges, communicate with people in the company, make connections, pursue new opportunities, and focus on making an impressionable contribution to the team."** To grasp the complexities of the project, she believes that one

must be interested and enthusiastic. Keeping this in mind, she networked actively and communicated her expectations clearly. Networking with mentors aided her in refining her ideas because they had a deeper understanding of the industry. She always shared her ideas with them, worked on issues that were thrown her way by providing out-of-the-box solutions, and then adjusted her ideas based on the advice of her mentors. With all internships turning virtual this year, one of the major problems she encountered while working in recruiting at Coastr India was scheduling virtual interviews. Nonetheless, the increasing usage of video conferencing applications alleviated this problem.

Vartika is of the opinion that the company would assess a trainee's skill set and reliability at all levels. Taking up critical responsibilities and attempting to be entrusted with the task is vital. Understanding the challenges that the firm is facing, interacting with workers in many domains (particularly functional heads), and giving both short-term and long-term solutions are some of the actions she took that aided her greatly.

The words of wisdom that Vartika has for the first years are, "It's a different experience in itself, especially for all those who've never worked in HR before. It's okay not to have answers or solutions to all their HR-related problems. Do good research, understand the pros and cons of all the ideas you give them, and be vocal about them. Focus on generating efficient ideas, not just convenient ideas."

Internship diaries

Nupur Singh
Titan-PPO Holder
Summer Intern 2021



One of the highlights of the MBA journey happens to be the summer internship and performing well in SIP is one thing all MBA students aim for. With a positive mindset and a zeal to learn, armed with the ability to take on challenges, Nupur Singh made a mark at Titan, bagging a PPO. As a curious learner, she was able to cultivate a deep understanding of the project assigned to her which led to a successful stint at Titan.

However, Nupur feels that there isn't a specific skill that one needs to be good at before joining the summer internship. A lot depends on the type of project one is assigned. She suggests reading up on HR trends, brushing up on PowerPoint skills and learning excel until project details are assigned. She feels that if one gets to know the project objectives in advance, one can direct the preparation towards that area.

“Be open: open to different types of people, perspectives and experiences” says Nupur. She feels that the main goal should be to learn as much as one can. Reading up, talking to different people and understanding problems from different viewpoints before working on the solution is an approach she swears by.

She feels that it is imperative to bank on the experience of one's mentors and superiors. She did that by asking a lot of questions. She adds that in a virtual setup in particular, it's important to communicate very clearly and ask questions to understand what exactly is expected from a summer intern.

Since her project involved conducting a lot of interviews and FGDs, doing so virtually was definitely a challenge for Nupur. She did a lot of research to learn more about the culture and practices of the organisation so that she could develop rapport with the employees and make them feel more comfortable during their conversations.

Nupur is of the opinion that no company expects interns to do everything 100% correctly since it is a part of learning. What's important is to demonstrate proactiveness and enthusiasm to learn and give everything one has to offer.

She thinks that the internship experience can get overwhelming so it's important to take it one day at a time. While we consider getting a PPO as the end goal, the focus should not be solely on that. By the end of the internship, one should feel satisfied with the efforts one may have put in, no matter the end result. It's easier said than done but it's important to keep this in mind as interns begin their journey.

Internship diaries

Anjalika Pradhan

Infosys-PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



The first company will always remain close to one's heart. Working as a Developer for almost three years at Infosys- the second-largest Indian IT Company, Anjalika would have never imagined that she would get an opportunity to return to the organization again as a Human Resource Intern. Receiving a Pre-Placement Offer was the icing on the cake. Let's have a walk through her enriching internship journey.

Anjalika's internship project at Infosys revolved around reimagining the role of Business Partner HR in a hybrid work model. She had to conduct surveys and interviews, update the Job Description of BPHRs, find scope for development, and suggest ways for enablement of the same. She also had to do industry benchmarking, which required her to interview BPHRs from other companies.

Initially, she found it challenging to get an Intern ID with restricted access in a virtual setup. But she utilized that period to learn and gather information about the project as much as possible. Once the issue was resolved, she interviewed employees to gather inputs and interacted with people from different job levels. She felt it was challenging to capture their reactions, expressions, and other non-verbal cues. So, for that, she revised and framed more focused questions. This helped her to get relevant information and insights from each of them. Sometimes she had to be flexible if interviewees were from different time zones.

During the final presentation, she tried her best to keep it precise, engaging and at the same time showcased all of her findings, analysis, and learnings. Her familiarity with Excel helped her prepare a database just for her reference, but it turned out to be of great help to the company. This database had well-organized inputs, which made it easier and faster to fetch data and play around. So, she suggests the junior batch to do certifications in Excel and get comfortable with its various tools and features. She says that keeping the mentor updated with work reflects one's eagerness to learn and good work ethics. This attitude helped her to produce quality output and build relations at the workplace.

Anjalika believes that following are the key aspects that helped her bag a PPO:

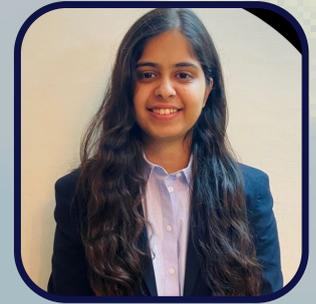
- Meeting deadlines earned the trust of the team and mentor.
- Connecting the dots and efficiently handling the data. Gathering a lot of data will go in vain if one cannot analyse and present the bigger picture.
- Going through different research journals helped her learn various frameworks and analysis methods.

A piece of advice from her to the upcoming batch is, **"Before even getting started with the project, look forward to keeping no room for ambiguity. It's very important to be clear about what the mentor is expecting from the project, what all deliverables are expected from you. If you are not clear, then put your queries. When in doubt, reach out."**

Internship diaries

Nupur Ratnani

Infosys-PPO Holder
Summer Intern 2021



Although COVID-19 brought in challenges in the form of work from home set up for the summer interns of 2021, Nupur Ratnani, through her constant efforts, not only bagged an internship in one of the leading IT companies but also converted the PPO for the same. She shared a few tips for the upcoming summer interns from her experience that can help them to be ready for the upcoming season.

Nupur shared with us that bagging the internship is just a half battle won. Post getting the internship, it is important for the candidate to have a thorough knowledge of the domain in which they'll be working. To provide further clarity on the same, she sighted an example stating that if one is a part of the onboarding team, try to understand what the organisation does apart from just conducting the induction for new joiners. According to her, researching such things beforehand would be helpful.

When asked about the mindset that the upcoming interns should have, she particularly pointed out not having any domain preference in mind. She said the reason behind the same is that there are multiple areas under the HR department, and an organisation might allot the intern any of those functions, so having an open mind would be helpful.

Owing to COVID-19, one of the challenges that posed the batch of 2020-22 was the work from home setup of an internship. But Nupur said that doing MBA from home for a year helped her in being prepared for work from home setup. However, there were times she faced problems like being unable to connect with her manager. She felt that had it been an offline mode, such challenges wouldn't have happened.

Her suggestion to the upcoming interns emphasised on the idea of connecting with people and networking. She also says that one should connect with as many people as possible as down the line we will also need help in our professional lives and the relations built during this time would really come in handy then. According to her, it is vital to meet other employees at the company and learn from them on how to excel in your role. Apart from this, one should also put efforts in building connections in not only their division but also other divisions.

Learning from Nupur's journey from getting an internship in Infosys to converting the PPO, the upcoming interns should pull up their socks to thoroughly research about the domain, make sure to have an open mind and network as much as possible during their internship.

Internship diaries

Snigdha Upadhyay

Ultratech Cement-PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



Getting an internship in a leading company that gives you an immense learning experience makes your MBA journey a fulfilling one but what adds a cherry on the top is bagging a PPO from the same company you interned at. The same was the case for Snigdha Upadhyay, who's calm and composed nature and endless dedication to learning helped her achieve this feat. She shared with us her journey along with a few tips for the upcoming interns.

When asked about the mindset that the future interns should have, she emphasised on the importance of intention of learning throughout the internship. **She says that whenever assigned a task, one should be agile and dedicated to complete that task as per the milestones given. One should put what they have learned in the classroom to action to gain the most from the internship.** She further added that one's goal should be to gain a comprehensive understanding of the business and the project allotted to them rather than bagging a PPO.

During her internship, she was assigned a project where she was required to design a performance management system and process for sales representatives. She said that what helped her the most in performing the assigned task was the knowledge she had gained during her performance management lectures which aided her in developing a comprehensive performance management framework for the assigned unit. The lessons also helped her implement her ideas and understand the need to have a performance management system in place.

She also highlighted that the soft skills that she had learned in her 1st year helped her convey her thoughts in a better manner.

It is said that mentors have a vital role to play in your internship. And so was the case for Snigdha. She was assigned two mentors to guide her throughout her internship. She said that her mentors gave her the freedom to express herself and made her feel like an employee of the organisation rather than an intern. Her mentors made sure to provide her with constant feedback, which helped in the timely completion of the tasks assigned. Internship with Ultratech Cement also allowed her to interact with CXO level executives and show them her designs which helped her gain a sense of ownership for her work.

Working in a virtual setup can sometimes be challenging, but according to Snigdha, her MBA classes and projects that were taking place online helped her to be prepared for the virtual mode. What worked best for her was grabbing every opportunity she got in her way and making the most of it. Her advice to students for their SIP journey is to stay calm and composed during their internship. She added that there would be times when one will feel discouraged due to rejection and times when things will not go as planned but having faith in your own self during these periods sets one apart from the rest of the crowd. It is crucial to learn from the mistakes, interact with seniors, know their experience, and take feedback constructively.

Internship diaries

Kushagra Shivam Tripathi

VMware Software India-PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



Don't pin your internship to PPOs; Kushagra Shivam Tripathi, a second-year student of MBA-HRM, started his internship with this motto in his mind. But in the end all his hard work and efforts congregated and eventually helped him bag a pre-placement offer at VMware Software India at the end of his summer internship! So in an interview with him, Kushagra shared his exciting internship experience and shared with us his journey from being an intern to soon being a full-time employee at VMware Software India.

Soon before starting his internship, he went on to up-skilling himself despite having extensive previous experience in the field of HR. He enrolled himself in specific courses which were quite in demand by the industry, like advanced excel and Tableau. Post which, he thoroughly researched about the company, the recent HR developments there, the existing systems in place, etc., which helped him during his journey ahead. Since HR is not just about recruitment and IR, so in his view, researching about the industry is equally important.

He emphasised on the importance of starting the internship with the right, calm, and open mindset. Being open and flexible to learn anything and everything not only helps you to sharpen your knowledge and get a taste of every vertical but also plays a key role in converting your internship into a PPO. Being MBA students, we know how important it is to grow and then interact with your network. Cultivating this habit greatly helps during the internship.

He did 50-60% of his project only by interacting with and learning from his seniors, mentors, professors, alumni, colleagues, and friends working in various sectors. A very crucial skill that he emphasized a lot throughout the interview is "Creative Proactiveness." This skill helped him gain extra content while interacting with his connections, which helped him deliver his final presentation. From his experience, committing mistakes is fine but learning from those and making sure that it don't get repeated is more crucial. Also, he says that one should be open to getting scolded by the seniors since those harsh words induce to improve the future performance. Being future Managers, doing everything in a systematic and organized manner is of paramount importance.

Sharing his experience, Kushagra told his secret of maintaining a goal sheet, where he had divided his entire internship duration. He regularly used to have interaction with his team manager, HR Buddy, team members, and all other stakeholders involved and kept everyone in the loop. Not only did he keep everyone updated, but he also kept on taking feedback from time to time. All this ultimately helped him in his final presentation.

Closing the interview, he advised his juniors to just go with the flow, never make PPO the "only priority," count your blessings, work hard to convince your recruiters that they made the right choice, and always keep in mind that you are going there to learn because this is the time where you will get to know about the real HR world.

Internship diaries

Aishwarya Raj

Tata Steel-PPO Holder
Summer Intern 2021



Aishwarya Raj, student of School of Human Resource Management, XIM University, interned with Tata Steel. Her perseverance and determination paid off when she bagged a PPO in Tata Steel, one of the leading steel manufacturing companies of India.

Aishwarya has completed her graduation in B. Tech - Electrical and Electronics Engineering from Manipal University, Jaipur. Post which, she worked as an Inside Sales Representative at Power2SME. We had the privilege to be a part of her journey as she shared her valuable insights.

“The focus of an intern while beginning their SIP is that they must have a growth mindset, willingness to learn and inquisitiveness through which they are able to approach their deliverables holistically”, says Aishwarya.

Gaining clarity and insights on the project is extremely important.

Talking about her internship project, she was responsible for designing a leaner organisation structure for which she referred to a few concepts from Organisational Behaviour. Apart from the subject matter expertise gained during the first year, the soft skills that she learnt while collaborating with her peers enabled her to excel in the project. Thus, in order to create a niche during the SIP tenure, an intern must not only possess the domain knowledge but also have other skills. Business Acumen, Identification and Communication with all the stakeholders associated with the project and clear understanding of the organisation’s vision, mission and values helped her make her mark.

At Tata Steel, she got the opportunity to associate with her mentor's entire team. This enabled her to learn and get insights from them whenever she experienced any bottlenecks in her project. At Tata Steel, the mentors believe in giving complete autonomy and encourage their interns to discover solutions. Thus, regular communication and understanding the challenges faced by the stakeholders and listening to their experiences enabled her to tailor the recommendations according to the requirement(s).

“Initially, there may be issues while working remotely, in a virtual setup. One may experience difficulty in expressing his/her views or in understanding the deliverables clearly”, says Aishwarya. However, with regular interactive and feedback sessions as well as informal sessions with the mentors, she did not experience much difficulty in adapting to the online mode.

To the students starting their SIP journey, this is what she has to say:

“I would advise all the interns to be confident and be themselves when it comes to their SIP Journey. This is your journey and there might be situations where you feel dejected. But in those moments, you have to believe in yourself, learn from your mistakes and build on your strengths and you will make your way”.

Internship diaries

Anoushka Das

Tata Steel-PPO Holder
Summer Intern 2021



An ideal HR professional can adapt to any situation, favourable or critical. More often than not, the manufacturing sector is assumed to be unfavourable for female HR professionals. Breaking these stereotypes about the industry with her critical understanding of the steel sector and openness for challenges owing to her hospitality background, Anoushka Das created a mark for herself at Tata Steel. Her stellar performance in Tata Steel-a-thon led her to a podium finish, her first tryst with the steel giant which led to a continued association as a summer intern followed by a PPO.

She firmly believes that there is no specific preparation required before the internship. However, she adds that gaining industry insights, understanding the operational nuances of the sector and keeping oneself updated about the organization and its competitors come in handy while working on the projects and interacting with seniors and peers during the internship.

“Have a growth mindset, prepare yourself to persist in the face of challenges and setbacks.”

She is of the opinion that, right from the first day, being open to feedback from all levels and turning every interaction into an opportunity to learn something new goes a long way since SIPs are an ideal opportunity to expand one’s horizon about various HR functions in the corporate environment and develop insights while networking with seasoned and experienced professionals in the industry. She thinks that one should join their internship with the mindset of making the best out of every situation.

The project undertaken by her involved thorough understanding of various HR functions that play a role in employee retention. Therefore, she could leverage multiple concepts and learnings from her first year such as Performance Management, Learning & Development, Compensation - Strategies and Administration, and Staffing in Organizations. These lessons helped her understand the challenges associated with the project and ideate relevant solutions for the same.

Her interactions with the designated mentor helped her gain know-how about the manufacturing sector and the role HR plays in it. Anoushka notes that the organization expects summer interns to understand the challenges associated with the assigned projects, engage with various stakeholders and deliver feasible solutions that can be implemented and measured.

Understanding the industry and acting in accordance with the culture of the organization is critical whenever you start working on new projects, says Anoushka. She suggests being in touch with one’s mentors, colleagues, and peers throughout the project to ensure that the project is always on the right track which ultimately facilitates value creation during the SIP process.

Internship diaries

Arjun Dattaraju

Tata Steel-PPO Holder
Summer Intern 2021



One of the goals of joining an MBA program is to have a good career trajectory, and the first step of this is SIP. Some students turn their SIPs into exemplary experiences by achieving a PPO and one of them is Arjun Dattaraju, a second-year student of the School of Human Resource Management, XIM University. Arjun completed his internship with Tata Steel, one of the most renowned companies in the field of IR and HR. Here's a glimpse of what Arjun had to share.

Arjun pursued his Bachelor of Engineering in computer science and then worked with Infosys, as an Information Security Engineer before joining XIM. As a Tata Steel Inspire intern, Arjun worked on the project 'Benchmarking of succession planning and developing a framework for Individual Development Plan for potential successors'.

Talking about his preparation he told that the best preparation that one can do to achieve the most out of his/her internship experience is to read up on the related topics. Usually, the project assigned is made available at least a week prior to the internship start date, and fundamental knowledge of the domain to which the project relates can come in handy. For his project, from the first year precisely, knowledge in performance management and learning & development came in handy in understanding managerial growth, IDP creation, and curating leader-specific training modules. He **specifically stressed upon being flexible with learning, he believes that one has to be proactive in terms of grasping the project requirements.**

Most often, the project requirements might not align with one's understanding of the project, which is why it is of paramount importance to have an open mind to changes and to be articulate in your understanding.

He had a phenomenal learning experience under his mentor Ms. Nidhi Basu, she not only helped him grasp the intricacies of his project but also helped him connect with various senior leaders across the Tata Group in his benchmarking exercises to understand best industry practices. Thus, establishing that networking well with your mentor is an essential component of a good internship experience.

However, he too had to face the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic in the form of working from home in a virtual environment. The way out of this mammoth issue, as per him, was to communicate and he could not stress on this enough. He believes that one must connect with their mentor as frequently as possible to get the problem statement understanding and insights right.

Talking about the few expectations that companies usually have from their summer interns he said that coming up with solutions to problem statements aligned with their business goals is very necessary and so is having a root level understanding of the project, keeping the timelines compact, and addressing problems categorically. The most crucial thing during a summer internship is to have a clear understanding of what your project entails and the company's expectations. While it is equally important to get even the silliest doubts clarified at the earliest, only then can the execution be at par with their expectations.

Internship diaries

Shubham Bannerjee

Tata Steel-PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



With an unconventional SIP experience of making it to TATA Steel through its corporate competition, Subham Banerjee, a second-year MBA-HRM student of XIM University and a PPO holder for TATA Steel, goes down the memory lane of his journey from winning the Steel-a-thon case competition to bagging a PPO. Subham pursued his Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Science and then worked with Wipro Limited as a Project Engineer before joining XIM to pursue his master's in Human Resource Management. Here's what he has in store for us.

He differentiated between the two approaches to grab a summer internship. Cracking a corporate competition calls for clarity about the various verticals of HR and the nuances of the same. The most important aspect is the solution that one suggests in the competition. On the other hand, for the typical SIP route, it is vital to brush up on the core concepts through various foundational subjects like Introduction to HRM, Labour Laws, and Organizational Behaviour. When asked about the apt mindset while beginning the internship, Subham emphasized that having a solution-oriented approach to solving problems distinguishes one from the crowd. He also underlined how a clear state of mind without any preconceived notions or biased judgments about the organization could help you perform better as an intern.

"Leveraging the experience of the mentors is the crucial aspect in the internship," says Subham.

Building networks and conversing with the superiors also serves as a precursor of getting accustomed to the organization.

In the online setup, it is essential to audaciously over-communicate with mentors as and when required. Chalking out a proper schedule of how the eight weeks of the internship will look is essential in managing to work in a virtual setup.

Subham enumerated specific points when asked about the expectations that the organizations have from the summer interns. The eagerness to learn is something every student should possess. An innovative solution, topped up with a clear and neutral perspective for approaching any conundrum, substantiated by the academic learnings, is what the companies look out for.

Shubham believes that following are the key aspects that helped him bag a PPO:

- A structured thinking approach enabled him to channel his thought process about the problem to provide a feasible and innovative solution.
- A robust primary and secondary research by interviewing the right target audience is crucial before delving into any solution.
- Posing the right questions at the right time plays a pivotal role in increasing one's visibility.

The words of wisdom that Subham has for the first years before they embark on their SIP journey was, "Identify the root cause before jumping into any solution. If you are not aware of what the problem is, you are solving the wrong problem. Take ownership of the issue at hand. A customized, practical, and implementable solution for the problem will make you different from others."

Internship diaries

Sonali Paul

Tata Steel-PPO Holder
Summer Intern 2021



When anyone commences an internship, they embark on a learning curve with a dream to convert their SIP into a PPO. And Sonali was one of them as she fulfilled her dream of transforming the summer internship into a pre-placement offer. We got in touch with Sonali, who interned at Tata Steel, and agreed to provide us with insights of her journey through which we got to know the crucial aspects of an internship which we need to take account of before we start on it, some of which are the expectations of an organizations, how to overcome challenges while working in a virtual setup, mindset students must be in before proceeding for an internship, etc.

Sonali is an alumna of Bhilai Institute of Technology, Durg, and during her college days she had interned with various organizations like Nearbuy, Eride, and Simplex Castings Limited in multiple roles. Post her graduation in 2019, she had worked in Cognizant as a Programming Analyst Trainee.

Talking about her journey she feels that before embarking on an internship, students should be comfortable with their relevant academics (LL and OB helped her in Tata Steel), gain insights about the trends in the industry, and should be thorough with their resume. She stated that a person should hone their skills based on the project they would be working on. In her case, topics like NPV, motivational theories, and excel calculations were a great help. She advised that **everyone should commence their internship with a positive and confident mindset.**

They should have a clear idea about their expected deliverables and be proactive and listen carefully to what the mentor/guide says. She said that her exposure while participating in corporate competitions wherein she had gained perspectives while making the final ppt for final review and analysing the objective & need of the project were of great help during her internship.

But like others she too had to face challenges during her SIP. The major bottleneck for her was collecting primary research data from various stakeholders in a virtual setup through a telephonic interview. And to overcome this problem she reached out to her mentor who helped her overcome the barriers with his suggestions, which allowed her to interact with over 200+ employees. He also, with his experience, provided her insights and clarity about the project she was to work on. She also emphasized that the **organization expects summer interns to be patient, receptive to what they say, and provide practical recommendations.**

She ended the conversation by providing tips which worked for her to convert a PPO and they are:

- Gain clarity on the deliverables at the beginning of the internship and understand the expectations of the project.
- Complete the work within the deadline and interact with the mentor frequently
- Always provide practical and feasible recommendations.

Internship diaries

Palak Batra

Aditya Birla Capital Ltd-PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



It is indeed a goal for every intern to bag a job offer from the company that he/she has dedicated all the time and efforts to. Palak Batra did exactly that with her hard work and dedication. Palak is a second-year student of the School of Human Resource Management, XIM University. She pursued engineering and worked as an engineer with Accenture before turning towards HR. She interned with one of the most revered financial services firms in the country- Aditya Birla Capital. Not only did she present a marvelous project but also proved to the company that she is an asset to them.

Palak had a rare opportunity to work on multiple projects which gave her the freedom to explore more, but it had its own challenges. Her projects pertained to the domains- Quality of Hire, Competency Mapping, Designing Career Path, Learning & Development, Compensation & Benefits, Gamification. To ensure a smooth execution in all these projects, Palak leveraged the knowledge she gained from the subjects in her first year of study like Managerial Computing (Excel), Human Resource Planning, Staffing in Organizations, Learning & Development, and Quantitative Methods. She also expressed gratitude towards her faculty, seniors, and batchmates for the same.

As per her, **data analysis was the backbone** of her recommendations which managed to make her stand out. She said recommendations without data would make a project look soulless, as it lacks credibility. She specifically suggested working on analytical skills, basic and advanced excel skills, and presentation skills, as you will be accountable to senior leadership.

One thing she stressed was on **creating an impact!** As per Palak, an intern should be curious to learn from anywhere and everywhere. An intern should always be on the lookout to grab each and every opportunity and not just stay limited to the role assigned, be willing to showcase his/her skills wherever possible.

Palak also discussed the dynamic she shared with her mentors, which significantly helped her in landing the PPI offer first. She was fortunate to have mentors who, despite their seniority, were approachable and encouraged her to take multiple projects to explore the **"World of Opportunities"** that Aditya Birla Capital is known for. She said her mentors were her anchors. The suggestions that Palak presented were applied at the organizational level, which boosted her sense of accomplishment. All of which was only possible due to the guidance she received, thus emphasizing the importance of sharing a harmonious rapport with your seniors.

Internship diaries

Swapneel Das

Aditya Birla Capital Ltd-PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



Starting one's MBA journey virtually can be highly demotivating for some. Still, the online mode didn't deter Swapneel, a fresher, from getting an internship in one of the country's most prestigious organizations, Aditya Birla Capital. After clearing several rounds of evaluation and being one of the first interns to experiment with the hybrid work model, not only did he successfully complete his project but as a result of his exceptional performance also secured a PPO. Swapneel das sits with us for a short session to share his insights and experience from his internship journey.

Unlike most others, Swapneel was fortunate to start his internship offline from Mumbai and had the opportunity to experience the work culture at ABCL. Although a few weeks into his internship, the second wave hit us, and everything had to be shifted to the online mode again. When asked about the pre-requisites one must have before an internship, he stated that he doesn't believe any single set of skills or in-depth knowledge of any particular subject is required. The zeal to learn and commitment towards your project is enough to help you learn on the go and perform exceptionally. However, he did mention the importance of knowing basic excel and making presentations to be an essential skill that might help interns in their daily tasks.

Talking about his experience, Swapneel tells us about the most critical aspects for an intern to perform successfully in their projects and highlights some of the key areas for freshers to work on before and during their internship.

As a fresher, he believes showing the intent to learn and being resilient enough to find solutions or trying to find answers to problems outside your area of expertise is one of the essential qualities that can leave a striking impression. He also states that the aim of the internship shouldn't be to finish the project assigned to us, and interns should instead try to interact and establish networks and indulge in meaningful conversations with people at work to an overall learning experience.

Key Takeaways from the internship:

- **Firstly, thinking out of the box** was something of utmost importance as he believes companies want and welcome fresh ideas from the younger gen as their years of experience tend to make them think on a single and very similar line to each other.
- **Establishing a great relationship with your mentor/manager** is also crucial as they are the ones who'll be judging your work, and making an excellent first impression can go on a long way in helping you get recognized amongst several interns.
- **High resilience** was another helpful trait that helped him go, as often internships can get exhausting and make you give up on tasks or procrastinate until the deadline.

He concluded by suggesting **the upcoming interns to emphasize the importance of being aware and agile** and, prove to the organization that they are a motivated, dedicated, and culturally fit employee with a zeal to learn and possess the right attitude to become a future employee in the organization.

Internship diaries

Kanika Suneja

HighRadius - PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



It is indeed the main goal for every intern to bag a job offer from the company that they have dedicated their time and efforts. Kanika Suneja, student of School of Human Resource Management, XIM University, interned with HighRadius in 2021. Her persistent efforts and determination paid off when she bagged a PPO in HighRadius, a Fintech company.

Kanika has completed her BA in Psychology from Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University, Gandhinagar. We had the privilege to be a part of her journey as she shared her valuable insights on how she converted the internship into a PPO.

Sharing her interview experience, she recalled that the questions were particularly behavioral and situation-based in nature.

To work with a Fintech organization like HighRadius, it is essential to be well versed with Microsoft Excel as most of the work revolves around the same.

“HighRadius, as an organization encourages and appreciates creativity”, says Kanika. Thus, open-mindedness and out-of-the-box ideas are always welcome. One should be patient and shouldn't hesitate to take up responsibilities.

Kanika's internship project revolved around restructuring the organizational structure and creating trackers for various HR Functions. Her learnings from the first year of MBA came in handy while coming up with solutions for the deliverables.

Weekly meetings with the manager and co-workers ensured a smooth transition, helped her stay updated, added perspective to her approach, and contributed immensely to her learning experience.

Talking about the challenges faced while working in a virtual setup, Kanika said that some days were hectic and mentally draining. But it was an equally satisfying learning experience. The interactive sessions with the interns and co-workers were fun and extremely valuable as well. She said that the appreciation from the organization truly encouraged her to give her 100% to the work assigned and ensure that the deliverables were being met. Her zeal to make her work count and her ideas being implemented within the organization steered her internship.

To the students starting their SIP journey, this is what Kanika has to say:

“At times, it might get tricky. But consistent efforts and determination will yield fruitful results. In the end, the sense of accomplishment makes it all worth it”.

Internship diaries

Kushika Khanna

HighRadius-PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



The first few months in an MBA institute aren't a cakewalk! One is always swamped with assignments, committee work, case study competitions, and innumerable things. In the blink of an eye, companies start coming for the summer internship program. Still managing to excel at everything, converting an excellent company for the internship, and then bagging a PPO is in itself an outstanding achievement. Kushika Khanna, a second-year MBA-HRM student from XIM University, who bagged a PPO at HighRadius, walked us through her internship journey at HighRadius.

Being a fresher, this was the first professional experience for Kushika, so she went with a learning mindset. Converting one's internship into a full-time offer is everyone's dream, but going with that mindset won't help. So, in her opinion, every intern must start their journey with an open and flexible attitude. Kushika mentioned the importance of taking the initiative. Always saying "YES" and volunteering for every work and not just HR-related activities helped widen her knowledge base. Acquiring the skill of handling pressure and yet excelling at everything during MBA, helped her during her internship as she said that every intern needs to be on their toes throughout the internship period. On being asked about the relevance and use of first-year subjects during the internship, she mentioned that theoretical knowledge always helps. Knowing the basics of every topic is of paramount importance as that assists you in understanding the complexities of your project. In her case, though there was no direct

application of the subjects taught, however, each subject indirectly catered to her in numerous ways.

Talking to her seniors and mentors helped her gain many insights related to her project. She approached many of her friends and colleagues working in certain IT Companies or who had similar projects to gain their perspectives. She benchmarked her project to various other prominent companies.

Sharing her experience, she mentioned the three main things which helped her to bag this PPO.

1. **Taking Initiatives** in other minor projects as well, even if they were not directly related to her major project.
2. **Submitting complete and quality work on time** as one likes to see incomplete, below standard, and delayed work.
3. **Being Visible**: Every intern works in teams, so being visible amongst everyone, especially in a virtual mode, is a tough job. Even she faced this difficulty at the start of her journey. But gradually, she learned how to make her presence felt by the management.

Closing the interview, she emphasized the importance of approaching the senior managers yourself because they don't need you, but you do, and you need to learn the practicalities of the trade. She advised the juniors to always share their ideas, never hesitate to speak, and even if the manager doesn't assign any work, they themselves go ahead and ask for more work.

Internship diaries

Rahul Bhatt

HighRadius - PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



As a fresher, most of the students have an apprehension that work ex-people have the edge over them during the internships. Rahul Bhatt, a BTech graduate's internship journey at HighRadius, is of great inspiration to all such students. A right mindset, hunger to learn, and complete dedication and focus have been instrumental for him in achieving the remarkable feat of grabbing a PPO.

Rahul emphasized on how the various learnings he had in the first year lectures were fruitful during his SIP. Being up to date with the happenings of the HR world is something that he feels is necessary before starting the internship. He also suggested the junior batch to research on the specific skill-set that the company is looking into even before joining the internship. He pointed out that it will certainly help in a smooth transition into the organizational culture, which will be an added advantage while doing the projects.

He feels that his mentor played a vital role in hand holding him to the corporate world. The mentor helped him in having a crystal-clear picture of how a corporate functions. From giving a push in the beginning to grabbing opportunities and facing the challenges, the mentor's two cents had a considerable impact on his work at HighRadius. Though remote working has its challenges, it made him innovative, resulting in quality output.

He also says that **"Keep your eyes open at all times and be on your toes. It's a lot of hard work on most days, but the end result is worth the extra effort."**

According to him, organizations expect the interns to maintain a certain standard of work and comply with their own methods and styles of work, but at the same time bring something unique of one's own to the company culture.

Three significant takeaways from his internship experience, as stated by him, are:

- Stay focused on work every single day. A strong mentality goes a long way. Try and minimize your mistakes while learning from each of them at the same time.
- Maintain the quality of work. Keep changing your working style if that's what the organization, or even a situation, demands. Do everything in your power to ensure that even if the quantity/amount of work you're doing is not the greatest, the quality of the inputs and the outputs is.
- Prove your worth to the organization and the business that it is doing. Do your work deftly and present it in a way that screams brilliance. Make yourself available and bring something unique and valuable to the table.

Finally, Rahul wished the junior batch good luck and advised that **"The single most opportunity that you have had for quite a long time is waiting to be grabbed. Where you end up and what you do might just define you as a person for years to come. This is the first step, stay focused and work hard consistently."**

Internship diaries

Ritika Mittal

HighRadius - PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



"Bagging a PPO shouldn't be the mindset while beginning the internship; one should rather have a learning mindset and dedication to complete the assigned tasks with openness to constructive criticism" says Ritika Mittal, a PPO holder of HighRadius.

Ritika completed her Bachelors in Business Administration in the year 2020 from Christ University, Bangalore, with a commendable performance before her kickoff at XIM University for an MBA in HR. Here's a glimpse of our conversation with her.

"Learn about the company in detail and read articles on different subjects.", says Ritika. When asked about the necessary preparations during the pre-internship period, she emphasized how prior research about the company and project can provide an edge over the others. Bracing up the Excel and Powerpoint skills is a must, as it comes in handy in many situations. One should always 'begin with the end' attitude regarding learning outcomes, skills, and experiences. By the end of the internship, one should be more confident about their interest and enumerate their strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement.

When asked about the correlation between the internship and the knowledge gained in the first year, Ritika recollects that even though none of the subjects was directly related to the assignments, LL indeed helped her out on the POSH work. Working in virtual groups on several projects helped her become more efficient in teamwork, communication, prioritization of multiple tasks at a time.

Ritika recalls how fortunate she was to have two mentors with more than 15 years of experience in the HR domain. She highlights that effective communication is the key to leverage the mentors' experiences during the internship. One should note the constructive feedback to exceed expectations.

Despite working virtually, Ritika aced her internship because she had clarity on how visibility is affected in the online medium and thus, resorted to agile approaches to make her presence felt. When asked about the expectations that organizations have from the summer interns, she says, "**The prime expectation from an intern is to show diligence. An intern is also expected to be hardworking, show the eagerness to learn, and possess the ability to work effectively across diverse teams.**"

The key takeaways for Ritika that helped her convert the internship opportunity into a PPO, as stated by her, are:

- Displaying enthusiasm to work hard on any project assigned
- Taking the initiative and delivering projects on mutually agreed deadlines
- Being available and communicating effectively

Her advice for the students who are yet to embark on their internship journey is to brush up their learnings over the first year and be open to learning opportunities. It is advisable to learn about the organization's culture during the internship as it does matter. Communicating clearly without hesitation topped up with the right attitude is the key to success.

Internship diaries

Soham Chattopadhyay

HighRadius-PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



When any student joins a B - School, they aim to land up their dream job. And when the summer internship placement drive commences, they hope to get placed in a good organization for SIP, and once in SIP, they try their best for PPO in the hope that they will land their dream job. And Soham has achieved that.

We got in touch with Soham, who interned at HighRadius. He has provided us insights wherein we get to know various aspects of an internship like the expectations of organizations, overcoming challenges while working in a virtual setup, and the mindset students must be in before proceeding for an internship. Also, he has provided us with various takeaways and has advised everyone eagerly waiting to start their summer internship and hoping to convert a PPO.

Soham is an alumnus of Heritage Institute Of Technology, Kolkata. During his college days, he was the Head of Marketing and Public Relations for the On the Rox E-magazine, and post his graduation; he had worked for 34 months at TCS as a System Engineer.

He has provided various insights that would be helpful for the students who are eagerly waiting to embark on an internship. Before embarking on an internship, he has advised people to be aware of the role they are venturing into. Having an idea of this would be a great advantage while being adept with Excel and PowerPoint is a must as it is the crux of any project.

He further stated that with this being his first internship as an HR, he was determined to give his 100% and learn as much as possible.

He proceeded to the internship with a mindset of learning and relearning anything, and everything delved out to him. Despite the first-year classes being held virtually, which did have certain cons, the case studies and activities taught in class proved to help solve particular problems. He further stated that the college mentorship program was of great service, where he got the chance to interact with industry veterans and learn from them.

Although he faced various challenges, such as digital fatigue in a virtual setup, his batchmates' presence was a blessing in disguise. He highlighted how their teamwork was crucial as whenever anyone was stuck or could not proceed, someone was always present to help them out. Besides organizations expecting individuals to know the role before the internship, their willingness to learn new things and be accountable for their jobs is also looked upon positively.

Also, the three takeaways that he would suggest to upcoming interns that would help them convert a PPO and which also helped him in converting a PPO are:

- i) **Dedication** towards the work
- ii) **Research Skills**
- iii) **Responsible/Accountable** for the job being done

And while conveying his best wishes to everyone embarking on an internship, he advised them to show utmost sincerity and dedication and hopes that everyone comes out with flying colours.

Internship diaries

Manik Pal
Bikayi-PPO Holder
Summer Intern 2021



Doing an MBA is like racing against time. You may never win, but you might survive it, or so we are told. One is almost inclined to believe this, but to bust this myth, we have success stories closer to home that shows us not just how to survive but how to thrive. Manik Pal's story is just that. He is a second-year MBA-HRM student who received a PPO from Bikayi, provided us with an insight into his experience as an intern and how he converted his PPO.

Manik was hired for a Talent Acquisition role and before the start of his SIP he performed some background research on the firm and read extensively about the TA function as part of his pre-internship preparation. He shared that he began his internship with the intention of learning as much as possible and dedicating himself to completing the task. As a fresher, his goal was to understand the company's business in depth and bring value to the organisation. His mindset enabled him to accomplish his tasks efficiently.

Since Bikayi is a growing startup firm it did not have a formal HR structure and therefore with time Manik was assigned additional responsibilities and his role changed to that of an Human Resources Generalist and he got the opportunity to learn a lot. Subjects such as ERMP and SIO aided him in this endeavour.

Mentors play an important role in guiding you through your internship is what Manik believes in, it was the guidance and support of his mentor that motivated him to work diligently every day. Being a start-up firm, Bikayi did not have any fixed working hours and therefore Manik made sure that he was available on a real time basis whenever a need arose.

According to him, the three things that helped him convert the PPO were -

- **Proactiveness**- he had to be quick on his feet to get the work done by making timely decisions.
- **Asking doubts**- He made sure that he always asked the minutest of his doubts.
- **Delivering quality work**- He ensured that he focused on the quality of submission over every other thing.

His two cents for the junior batch are:

"Before starting out on the SIP adventure have an open mind. Always look for methods to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to make both their and your time valuable. Make sure that you are bringing value to the organisation at all times."

Internship diaries

Mimul Nanda

Cognizant - PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



“Self-belief and hard work will always earn you success”

Mimul Nanda, student of School of Human Resource Management, XIM University proved it right. She interned with Cognizant, a Fortune 500 company, as part of her Summer Internship. Her diligence and determination paid off when she converted her SIP into a PPO - a goal for every intern.

Mimul has completed her graduation in B. Tech.- Mechanical Engineering, post which she worked as an Application Development Analyst at Accenture. We had the privilege to be a part of her journey as she shared her journey and key takeaways from it.

“It is essential to be well versed with Microsoft Excel and Microsoft PowerPoint before the commencement of the internship”, says Mimul. In addition to that, she suggests acquainting yourself with the latest HR trends and the company’s ongoing activities. Along with that, time management is crucial. Professionalism, a mindset to network, and learning from everyone is the key to maximizing your internship experience.

Talking about her experience at Cognizant, like other interns she too believes that mentors are incredibly crucial during the internship. They guide the interns throughout the project and acquaint them with the culture of the company. Reaching out to the mentor in case of doubts/queries/advice is essential. “I watched, learned and reflected on my work by asking for regular feedback from my mentor”, says Mimul.

She already had the experience of working in a virtual setup in her previous organization, which made working remotely less challenging for her. Although the initial days were a little intimidating, Cognizant had arranged several ice-breaking sessions, formal and informal meets, ensuring a smooth transition. In addition to that, there was a provision of an online chat platform through which she could reach out to her mentor and co-workers for a quick call or chat.

When asked about the expectations that organizations have from the summer interns, she told that it is imperative to be punctual. Considering the virtual setup, it is essential that the intern logs in and reports to his/her mentor on time. It is also vital to share and discuss ideas and get feedback on the same, or one would never have the opportunity to realize that the idea could have been the best one. Constant feedback from her mentor and co-workers in the team, talking to peers from other companies and alums, and extensive secondary research helped Mimul bag a PPO.

To the students starting their SIP journey, this is what Mimul has to say-

“Take one day at a time and keep track of your deadlines. Make sure you walk the extra mile and show what you can bring to the table. They can make anyone work, be someone they can't work without”.

Internship diaries

Riddhi Mediratta

Cognizant - PPO Holder

Summer Intern 2021



What sets an outstanding internship experience apart is perhaps the art to remain calm, which is what Riddhi Mediratta, a second-year student of the School of Human Resource Management, XIM University focused on throughout our conversation. Riddhi completed her bachelor's in Philosophy before turning towards HRM for her master's. Riddhi interned with one of the leading names in India - Cognizant and was able to attain her goal of gaining a job offer. Here's what Riddhi had to say about her experience.

Riddhi worked on compensation and benefits during her internship, which is termed as the 'Total Rewards Scheme' in Cognizant. The two weeks prior to the beginning of her internship Riddhi focused on refreshing her learnings in the classes of compensation - strategies, and administration. She sought guidance from the faculty concerned with the same subject as well.

Her advice to the upcoming interns is to read thoroughly on the project one is going to work upon. In case the project is assigned before the commencement of internship, brushing up on the generic HR topics, so that some level of preparation is done, come what may. Riddhi also emphasized that the companies know that the interns are not professionals, but they do expect foundational knowledge that they can work with. She focussed on having good research and presentation skills. As per her, there is a vital gap between the way presentations are designed in college and the way they are designed in the corporate world. So, interns must be able to visualize and formulate slides from scratch and be well versed with PowerPoint.

She recalls how she was a nervous wreck before her internship, as this was going to be her first glimpse of the corporate world. She had a period of self-doubt, which she overcame by focusing on the aspects that were in her control. She also advised interns to also be excited for the wisdom that they are about to receive, which often gets overshadowed by the internal anxiousness, as this is one experience that will shine out in your MBA journey.

According to her, it is imperative to not be hesitant when it comes to asking questions regarding anything the mentors. She mentioned that for the first ten days she was not assigned any project, so she was proactive in her approach and asked for smaller tasks. She also accentuated having abundance clarity on the deliverables, by sharing ideas with mentors and collecting constant feedback.

One key aspect she pointed out was to admit to the mentors in case someone is unaware of a concept instead of beating around the bush. She also suggested setting up a schedule of meetings with the mentors in the very beginning in case it is not done on their part, especially in a virtual setup. Concluding the conversation, Riddhi weighed down her success to being adaptable and flexible in getting molded as per the company, while also being able to bring your unique perspectives to the table, merged with patience. Companies also like to scrutinize microscopic details, so it is advisable to be pedantic, which in turn will lay the foundation of your success story.

QUIZOTIC

Find the term that best describes the connection between pictures in each set



XIMAHR CORE TEAM

2021-2022



First row: Tanvi Sharma, Ritisikta Mishra, Ishaa Uttam, Ayush Sahoo

Second row: Ankit Sahu, Ritika Mittal, Jhelum Sarkar, Ritirikta Mishra

Third row: Tanvi Mahajan, Mohit Jain, Aparna Dixit

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