

Planning placements

POWER OF DREAMS To get the right jobs and make your dreams come true, you need to plan your placement and build a rewarding curriculum vitae already as students, advises V Pradeep Kumar

Francis, an MBA student, always dreamt of joining a leading media or an FMCG company. Realizing the importance of career, he did not depend solely on the institute's placement division. Instead, he used his network and managed to get his two summer projects in an FMCG and media company. Impressed by his work, the companies made job offers. By the time, Francis finished the course, he was in an enviable position of three job offers including one from the placement division.

Dreams are an important source to establish your vision for life. Walt Disney, the great visionary and filmmaker once said, "You can dream, create, design and build the most wonderful place in the world, but it requires people to make the dream a reality." The power of dream gets you into the future, bringing action and excitement into the present and controlling your destiny.

Most students depend on the institute and make little effort in planning their first job, not realizing that it's their future, which is actually at stake. Many B-Schools, Engineering and other institutes offering professional courses, are yet to establish the credibility to attract corporates for campus interviews, making the students vulnerable to accept whatever job opportunities comes their way.

As a student desirous of pursuing your career, plan your placement and build a rewarding career like Francis.

Know your passion

What's your passion? What interests you the most? Passion is a like fire in your heart towards a career, and if pursued, can project the genius in you triggering success.

If you have a strong passion in a field of your liking, then you are most likely to be engulfed by a related career. The driving force to build a successful career is within your inner self. Pursuing a passionate career leads to immense job-satisfaction, which is hard to achieve in conventional careers.

Identify the industry and companies

To get into a rewarding career, critically evaluate the industry related to your passion and understand current and future prospects. If you are passionate about flying and considering a career in aviation, consider the prognosis for global aviation industry. Next, identify the top companies for placement such as Boeing, Airbus, which are into manufacturing or airline companies like Lufthansa, Emirates, Singapore Airlines etc., or service industries like travel and hospitality.

If your passion doesn't lead to a rewarding career, look at an alternate mainstream career and pursue a related hobby.



Working on alternatives

■ **Projects:** A summer project makes you aware of the practical aspects of the theoretical knowledge, which is essential to kick-start your career. Hence, these projects are like small windows that can open doors to the employment world. Choose the right industry and the right organization within the industry for projects. Avoid choosing a subject like 'organisational study' in a summer project, which delivers no value to the sponsoring organisation. Instead, choose specific issues faced by the organisation, and demonstrate your skills, dedication and usefulness.

■ **Networking:** Social media has revolutionised communication bringing together everyone and influencing the way we think and act. Use social media intelligently to kick-start your career. LinkedIn, Twitter, and market place applications in Facebook for jobs, are great as a career resource. Get headhunted with an impressive professional profile with a few recommendations giving an outsider's perspective of your personality.

■ **Support network:** Apart from being connected to professionals using social media, discover the strength of your support network - parents, teachers, relatives and friends, working in different organizations. Many organisations are very positive about references and consider it as a key recruitment technique. Exploit the strength of support network to bolster your career.

■ **Events and promotions:** Use spare times between semesters, vacations etc as an opportunity to take up short assignments in promotions / events in industries, which are

relevant. For example, consider educational fairs, hospitality and travel fairs, property shows, homes and interiors shows, machine tools exhibitions, photography fairs, food and beverages fairs, etc for entry into respective industries. This exposure brings you in direct contact with entrepreneurs and senior managers from industries and helps you to understand current opportunities to plan your career.

Preparing for placement

■ **Curriculum Vitae:** Sharing your profile effectively in a CV facilitates the recruitment process. Candidates just out of college are confused about what to write in a CV. Think of your CV as a silent sales person projecting your passion, your key strengths and career aspirations. Brief and interesting synopsis of projects makes interviewers curious and facilitates interaction and selection.

■ **Group discussions:** Don't get anxious and nervous before a group discussion in a campus selection. The topics for a group discussion are usually on current national issues, sports, movies etc. The objective is to evaluate communication skills, leadership qualities and compatibility in a peer group. Therefore, get yourself updated on current topics.

■ **Interviews:** The prospect of facing a personal interview in the campus, for your first job, can be quite unnerving. However, there's nothing to fear, as the companies are equally eager to select the best of talent.

Prepare for interviews by researching about the company and its performance, market share, expansion plans, job profile

and the challenges. Anticipate common interview questions and answer confidently.

Making the decision

Remember the success story of Francis and plan well between campus selection, direct efforts and summer projects. Evaluate these options preferring long-term prospects to short-term gains. Career growth possibilities in 5-10 years, prospects for the industry, and monetary and non-monetary aspects of the package are important factors to evaluate while making the decision.

However, be wary of jumping into a job, offering highest package, without critically evaluating the career growth opportunities.

Generating the placement plan

Action plans on such an important aspect like your career should not be left out from the mind. Like a professional, convert your thoughts into a written document including career goals, skills and strengths required, identified tasks, and deadlines for follow-up. Continuously review and implement the placement plan effectively.

The world today is very dynamic and competitive, capable of changing the face of a successful organisation overnight. At the same time, a dynamic world builds competitiveness in people and organisations, which is a key requirement to be a winner. Planning your placement is like a GPS that facilitates to navigate a career road map and reach the pinnacle of success with ease.

(The writer is a management and career consultant.)