



Students juggle smart decisions, strategic planning to maximise hiring at IIMs, IITs

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MUMBAI: The adrenalin-powered frenzy in the placement cell at the Powai campus of IIT-Bombay matches that of any trading room in a stock broking firm. A 146-member team - mostly students - are industriously working dozens of phone lines reaching out to 5,000 companies to place 1,600 students graduating this year.

The students have organised themselves efficiently into six placement managers, 50 company coordinators and 50 department placement coordinators. The company coordinators call employers and convince them to come to campus for placement season, department placement coordinators prepare students for aptitude tests, group discussions and interviews and another 10 associate placement coordinators also help out the different groups. "We are one of the best placement teams across the country and work very hard to maintain that reputation," says Mohak Mehta, B.Tech Student Representative for IIT-Bombay. IIMs too are gripped by a frenzy that is equally intense — it takes around 60 emails and over 100 phone calls to get one company to come to the campus to recruit, even if the firm is an old timer.



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Two Talent Battles Annually

Hundreds of students — who handle most of the placement work under the leadership of a few professors or institute staff — juggle smart, on-the-ball decisions, mathematical calculations, strategic planning and innumerable probabilities to maximise hiring from their respective campuses. Welcome to the annual placement ritual that will decide the future of over 9,000 students from IITs and 3,335 students from IIMs. This annual affair that stokes up ambition, excitement and emotions is now also unfolding in hundreds of other engineering colleges and B-Schools.

BREAKING THE GROUND

Armed with a set of visiting cards, [Nishith Kejriwal](#), Coordinator, Placement Committee for IIM-Indore, visited 40-50 companies during every term break for a year. The 16-member placement team lived in relatives' homes during such visits and worked 6-8 hours after his classes during final placements for batch of 2014, while he was in his first year. He is attentive to every whim of the recruiters, which salad a recruiter likes, for example. "Most (students) do not even say a thank you after they get placed," said Kejriwal, who will sit for placements this year.

But the larger placement mission is bigger than such niceties. Indore has over 500 students to be placed in 2015 and students like Kejriwal have been working on it since July. At IIMs, the first year students handle the final placements, while the second year looks after the summer internship placements. This way, the entire database collected by second year students during summer internships is handed down to the first year students like a family heirloom.

Pulling Off A Class Act

A Peek Into the Placement cells of India's Top Campuses

ABOVE

9000

NUMBER OF STUDENTS
PASSING OUT OF IITS IN 2015



ABOVE

3000

NUMBER OF STUDENTS
PASSING OUT OF IIMS IN 2015



PLACEMENT DYNAMICS

- **It takes** at least 60 emails to get a company to recruit from campus
 - **Placement cells** make at least 100 calls to each co
 - **Strength of team** can vary from 20 in IIMs to 146 in IITs
- Separate placement cells** with 10-15 land lines, special software monitoring calls and databases are made to track placements in IITs and IIMs
- **Decisions on slots** given to companies are taken with placement officers, keeping in mind the number of hires, compensation offered, company-college relation, student preference and profiles offered

PLOTTING AND SLOTTING

It's not just the students, sophisticated project management software also power the work done by placement cells. IIT-Kanpur, for example, has installed a software which monitors all calls, records those missed and alerts on the call backs. Preparations started this February and 250 recruiters have registered. IIT-Kanpur's 46-member placement team will now have to strategically decide the order in which firms get to interview talent while keeping all employers happy. Students at IIMs and IITs also jot down their dream companies and the placement cells ensure these firms do come and recruit. Generally two talent battles rage in the thick of the annual placement action. First, companies fight with each other for the best talent. Second, campuses fight with one another for the best recruiters, job offers and salaries.

An alumni of one of the top IIMs explains how they got the best to recruit without ruffling feathers in year 2009. If company X has 20 openings and recruits 10 at IIM-A, before going to IIM-B and IIM-C, the latter two campuses stand to lose out.

Another IIM alumni shows how negotiations with companies go: "I can't promise you a better slot; but I'll start your process an hour before the others in your space." Or, the placement team would try to convince them to offer more and better roles. So, if one bank wanted a better slot than two other banks, and all of them were offering the same roles in consumer and corporate banking, the placement team would try and get the first bank to offer treasury roles, which were coveted.

There are always negotiations to persuade companies to make more offers. So, if one company was making 4 offers and has 2 on the waitlist, the placement team tries to get them to make more concrete offers.

D-DAY

The placement team works late into the last day before placements begin. Early in the morning of day zero, teams run through the check list one last time: hotel arrangements, food preferences, special arrangements for international recruiters etc.

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