
Can Student Placement and their Initial Working Duration Impacts Institute Credibility? Using Design Thinking and Systems Approach to Prepare Better Students

Saurabh Singhal

Research Scholar-IIM Shillong
saurabh.phd20@iimshillong.ac.in

INITIAL CHALLENGES POST CAMPUS PLACEMENTS

The challenge currently faced by the engineering or management colleges is the impact on the credibility of institute as students placed with a firm during campus interview won't serve the firm in some cases more than six months or in another cases leave post one year for better opportunities.

This may or may not impact the candidate in the long run, but it impacts the institute in terms of brand, credibility and trustworthiness. The potential recruiting companies may think that students from so and so institute do not stay put for a longer time hence let's avoid this institute for subsequent campus-placement opportunities.

SYSTEMS APPROACH

When one applies the system approach in totality, one can discover that the placement of a student happens because of a wonderful ecosystem working beautifully in the college comprising of learning & development opportunity along with soft skills training and an efficient placement office. This overall system fulfills the objective by enabling the college and empowering the students to go through the selection process with confidence and get placed with flying colors.

DESIGN THINKING

The real problem may not be what it appears to be prima-facie. On one hand we may think that a candidate has left the organization whereas the actual problem will be clear if we empathize ourselves into the situation. As education is not a stand alone activity rather is a part of larger ecosystem wherein stakeholders are not just the student or candidate rather there are others associated to student likewise it is not just the institute imparting that specific stream of course rather there are other stakeholders from that end as well.

The more we try to analyze the problem it goes into design thinking loop which involves observing the problem closely, reflect on it by relating it with current situation and trying to improve the condition by

solutioning it as by making it will ensure that with every iteration of design thinking loop situation should improve.

1) Observation

What is that which drives a student to accept the offer and later once he/she joins an organization they leave in a short span of time. Many factors which influence this decision, some of them could be:

- (a) Accepting the offer during campus-placements in a haste or just to meet the numbers of placements tally
- (b) Realization post-joining that the work they are doing is not something which is of interest to them
- c) Monetary factors the paycheck also drives such decisions as the urge to increase the emoluments and benefits make people switch

2) Reflections

Over a period, the market condition from the perspective of business organizations is something which symbolizes a deep war for good talent, be it at entry level, lateral hires or for leadership roles. The problem statement is for fresh graduates / post-graduates who are fresh out-of-campus and are making frequent switches hence diluting the brand of institute they studied at.

If it is a good talent, even the organizations don't hesitate to poach the candidate from their competitors or from open market.

3) Solutioning

Coming together of all three parties involved will be a steppingstone to achieve a consensus. As the hiring organization can sensitize about the challenges faced by them in re-hiring in case a campus-hired candidate leaves abruptly, they can explain about the time, efforts and financial investment to be done by them again due to such exits. The institute can put across their point regarding the brand of institute as well as the goal to have a sustainable long-term relationship with the recruiting organization. The candidate can also explain his/her point-of-view and share the inclination towards the work profile so that none of the placement happens just to meet the placement score card. And, the student must be told firmly in a transparent manner that any act of accepting an offer made at campus just to use that as a fit-gap placement shall not be appreciated and will be closely monitored.

The ideation of such meetings will result in collaboration amongst all and will result in sort of accountability by the stakeholders towards each other. It is a well-known fact that many companies offer two-months summer internship and six-month hybrid placement programs wherein a student joins an organization in the final year of course itself to have an understanding about the work expectations. Off late it has been found that internship opportunities are also reduced to just aim for

converting them to Pre-Placement Offers (PPO's) and meeting the placement score cards. The very purpose of testing the waters before the boat is placed in the real waters is getting defeated.

Another attempt which could be made is to offer the campus placement with probation period of two years and confirmation only after two years with restriction on resignation during probation period. There can be some terms & conditions to consider exits under exceptional scenarios but will discourage candidates from hopping the jobs.

Moreover, in the long run, the candidate may not be answerable to institute or to employer but to self-conscious.