

Placement challenges during the Pandemic

Dr. Harshal Borgaon

Assistant Professor, Global Business School, Hubli
harshalb80@gmail.com

Mr. Yogesh Kumar

Placement Manager, Global Business School, Hubli

Introduction

January 2020, a banking organization of repute in the private sector had plans to expand its horizon to multiple locations across Northern part of Karnataka. Mr. Suresh, Manager in the Human Resources of the banking organization had plans to hire at least 50 - 100 personnel at different levels as part of the expansion plan. He had plans to hire 20-30 MBA fresher from the Business School in North Karnataka, who would join the banking organization and help him to expand the operations. He approached couple of promising Placement Manager from reputed business school in north Karnataka, who would help him to source the MBA fresher. Here is where the HR Manager spoke to Mr. Naik, Placement Manager of reputed business school in North Karnataka; who readily agreed to fulfil the vacancies by placing the interested final year students of the institution. The banking organization had offered to complete the recruitment process by March 2020 and the shortlisted students who join the organization after completing their MBA's by September or latest by October.

Covid-19 Scenario

March 2020, with the beginning of Covid-19 pandemic, schooling institutions across nation over needed to agree by official laws and shut down the institution to maintain the wellbeing of students and check the spread of the Covid -19 infection. The final semester of reputed institution in North Karnataka was about to end by 28th March 2020 and the final year students of were supposedly start their major concurrent projects at organization of their choice from 30th March 2020. As part of the Covid protocol All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) in its letter to the Universities, stated that the students could complete the internship while working from home and the projects strictly should be done online adhering to the Covid protocol of the issued by the Government of India. Final year students of the institution completed their projects online in the month of May 2020. The students awaited for the semester end examination and viva-voce schedule from the university. Finally, the wait ended, as the semester end examination of MBA IV semester were schedule in the month of August 2020 followed by Viva-Voce in the month of September 2020.

During the interim period, the Government was issuing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) to check the spread of Covid-19 infections. The economy was slowly recovering during the period of September and October 2020, but there were still a lot of companies deferring the job offers made pre lockdown period, though there were opportunities in Edutech and Banking Companies.

Recruitment and Selection

The Placement Manager of institution spoke to the final year students about the vacancy and arranged for a list of interested students in the banking organization. The Placement Office informed the students about the various stages of recruitment and selection that included Online Aptitude Test, and a Personal Interview. 52 students applied for this job and only 28 were shortlisted for the Personal Interview. The placement office had a successful stint during the recruitment and selection procedure of the banking organization as Mr. Suresh selected as

many as 15 students to join the organization to join them in three different phases. Mr. Suresh during the pre-placement talks had clearly mentioned to the job aspirants that they would be posted in any location in North Karnataka during the recruitment process. The students were supposedly joining from September 2020 for the position of Customer Service Officer; this job profile had about 25% operations profile and 75% of sales profile.

The banking organization had certain procedure to complete. The students had to finish the MBA at first place and scanned provisional mark cards were to be uploaded on banks recruitment portal as part of the recruitment and selection policy of the banking organization. The selected students started to get the offer letters with date of joining and very importantly, along with the place of their work (Refer Annexure I for location).

Onboarding

The banking organization had decided to onboard the new joiners in a time bound phased manner. Therefore, the first phase had three joiners, second phase had four joiners, third phase had five joiners and last phase had three joiners (Refer Annexure II for date of joining).

Akmal, Geetha and Girija joined on the date and location mentioned as per their appointment letter by the organisation. Geetha was the luckiest among the three as her job location was about 2 kilometers away from her residence. Though Akmal and Girija were from Hubli had their job locations as Bagalkot.

The trouble

After about a week's time on 10th November, the college Placement Officer received a call from Geetha regarding her health issues and she would be resigning from the job any time that day. Couple of days later, Akmal and Girija called the college Placement Officer to inform about "the food which we are having is not compatible to our taste and we both would like to opt for a change in job location".

Considering their requests, Mr. Naik spoke to the HR Manager, but he wasn't successful. Mr. Suresh was very upset with the first three joiners to the organisation, be in terms of the job performance or reasons given by the job aspirants. He further told Mr. Naik that he would like to blacklist the business school and would not hire any more job aspirants from this institute.

Heena, a student of MBA program, a backbencher but a hard working individual was placed in the banking organization based on her competencies, and ability. Heena was given 23rd November 2020 to join the banking organization. Heena, who belonged to a poor family, was desperately waiting for her joining the banking organisation. Now she is not sure of her joining the banking organisation and wait for a miracle to happen.

Questions

1. What do you do if you were to be in the Heena's place?
2. How Mr. Naik convinced the HR Manager?

Annexure I

List of students selected by the banking organization
(as on July 2020)

Sl.No.	Name of the Student	Location
1	Akmal	Bagalkot
2	Girija S	Bagalkot
3	Mohini	Bagalkot
4	Kiran	Bagalkot

Sl.No.	Name of the Student	Location
5	Heena	Belgaum
6	Manjunath	Belgaum
7	Rajashree	Belgaum
8	Geetha	Hubli
9	Jyostana	Dharwad
10	Krishna	Hubli
11	Praveen	Jamkhandi
12	Preeti	Haveri
13	Ashalatha	Not assigned
14	Vijay	Not assigned
15	Rekha	Not assigned

Annexure II

List of students to joining the banking organization phase wise

Sl.No.	Name of the Student	Date
1	Akmal	2nd November 2020
2	Geetha	2nd November 2020
3	Girija S	2nd November 2020
4	Heena	23rd November 2020
5	Jyostana	23rd November 2020
6	Krishna	23rd November 2020
7	Manjunath	23rd November 2020
8	Mohini	14th December 2020
9	Kiran	14th December 2020
10	Praveen	14th December 2020
11	Preeti	14th December 2020
12	Rajashree	14th December 2020
13	Ashalatha	Not Assigned
14	Vijay	Not Assigned
15	Rekha	Not Assigned

Case Study teaching note available on request,
corresponding email address harshalb80@gmail.com