



TAPMI

NURTURING WEALTH CREATOR SERIES

Changing Role of Management Professors

By S. Balasubramanian



Economic liberalisation, global business opportunities, increasing competition, onslaught of technological innovations and emergence of global communication networks have all impacted businesses in a large way. The changing business scenario has necessitated changes in management thinking. There are some major shifts in paradigms. We now speak of 'leaders' and not 'managers'. Career aspirations and expectations from employees are changing dramatically. Abraham Maslow's Theory of Need Hierarchy or Douglas McGregor's Theory X&Y may not be able to answer questions that have arisen in recent times, on what motivates an employee. We need newer concepts and newer theories to explain the new phenomenon.

Today's generation of students is aware of the changes, thanks to the Internet and communication revolution. The risk-propensity of these students is reasonably high and many of them are not averse to experiment. Expectations of these students from their management professors are in turn changing.

All the changes demand that the new crop of management professors adopts an integrated approach to teaching. They need to update their knowledge and skills constantly, deliberately and consciously. Technology is changing the world at a frightening speed. Management professors, therefore, should develop skills in teaching courses that are not only based on sound and proven theories and concepts, but also laced with practical and contemporary issues and dimensions. They need to be leaders. They should possess and demonstrate qualities and characteristics that they would advocate as signals of success. From effective time-management, self-awareness, self-organisation and self-confidence to updating knowledge, net-working and effective communication skills - all these should not only be mere precepts and concepts,

To meet the challenges of the changing business scenario, management professors have to undergo significant changes.

but possessed, practiced and demonstrated by a management professor in his every day life.

As mentioned earlier, technology is driving business today. Digitalising information is becoming the order of the day. Education is increasingly being made available over the Internet and distance-education is assuming a different status. More and more students are seeking higher education through net-based programmes. Virtual chat rooms are replacing classrooms. The management professor of today, therefore, needs to adapt the new technology with enthusiasm and zeal.

The role of the management professor is no longer limited to one of an 'academic guru'. He is not expected to be a mere repository of theories, concepts and other bookish knowledge. He needs to demonstrate his contemporary knowledge and understanding of the complexities in today's business, by providing extensive examples from current business practices and problems to support his theories and concepts. It saddens me to hear that many of our management professors do not

engage themselves in active applied research or consultancy assignments. Such situations will only result in the management professor getting further alienated from the realities of business.

In conclusion, if a Harvard, Stanford, MIT or Kellogg in the U.S.A. can not only attract but also retain professors of international acclaim and acceptance, I am sure that India can also do it, provided we adapt our mindsets as required. Management schools need to revisit their compensation and reward systems, process of recruitment and selection, and continuous improvement programmes.

Prof. S. Balasubramanian is a Professor at T.A. Pai Management Institute, Manipal and can be contacted at sbala@mail.tapmi.org