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STUDENTS SEEN BAGGING MORE OFFERS

B-School Placements Set to Rock; E-Comm Tops Charts

Students test the market for recruitments despite having PPOs in hand

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Mumbai: Recruiters heading for campus placements will find the batch of 2015 free of the usual jitters. Placement cells of more than 11 top B-schools point out this may be the best placement season in the past few years.

Factors such as bigger pay packets, more job offers and companies waking up from a hiring freeze have resulted in students displaying a larger risk appetite and testing the market for recruitments despite pre-placement offers (PPOs) in hand.

Placement cells of IIM Indore, XLRI, MDI Gurgaon, NMIMS, IIM Calcutta and IIM Lucknow have found students in larger-than-expected groups, wanting to join the e-commerce and startup industry. "E-commerce is the most buzzing sector on campus," says Prabudh Jain, student placement coordinator, MDI Gurgaon. Agrees Suvarna Athavale, external relations secretary, IIM Calcutta, "E-commerce is growing rapidly in India, and many students are interested especially because of its unique challenges. Students are also expecting to bag more offers than before."

Banking and consulting, the traditional favourites, are still popular on campus, especially when it comes to strategy consulting roles from the likes of McKinsey & Co, BCG, Bain & Co and the like.

An earlier indication of the popularity of e-commerce was revealed during the 'ET Top Recruiters in B-School' survey when, for the first time, e-commerce recruiters such as Flipkart and Amazon joined the top 10 rankings, alongside traditional recruiters such as Cognizant, ICICI Bank and Deloitte, which have consistently been making it to the top 10 over the past few years.

At Mumbai-based NMIMS, the placement team is trying to double the number of startups they got last year to placate one-fourth of the batch who want to join these new-age firms. NMIMS has 450 students to place and had five startups hiring from their campus, last year.

"The students are rooting for smaller companies that are below the radar like Salt n Soap, and not just larger ones like Flipkart and Amazon," says the chairperson, placements of one of the top B-schools who does not wish to

Bells & Whistles for the Class of 2015

MANY STUDENTS are planning to opt for smaller startups/e-commerce firms

DESPITE PPOs, some students may sit for final placements

AVERAGE SALARY expected to increase

NUMBER OF offers per company may go up

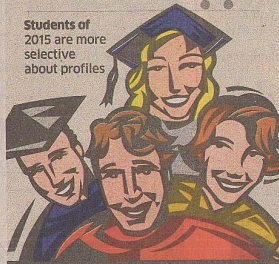


PLACEMENT cells have noted large number of first-time recruiters

Some recruiters in finance and FMCG, who had not hired in past 3-4 years, expected to be back on campus



Students of 2015 are more selective about profiles



be named. Students believe opportunities to learn may be more in smaller firms. Besides, the large number of deals in the startup phase has boosted their confidence, adds the chairperson.

Arpit M (name changed), an IIM Bangalore final year student has a PPO like many in his batch. However, most of his classmates, despite their PPOs, will sit for interviews again during final placements. "In any other year, a PPO would have sealed our decision, but those trying their luck this time despite PPOs could be higher," he says.

Student placement committee member, Mahima Sushil of IMI Delhi, says, "It's still early days but we are expecting a good number of

first-time recruiters as well."

Deferred placements may also increase because more students want to start their own ventures, in an economy that whets the risk-taking appetite. Around 20 graduates from the Class of 2014 across the six older IIMs alone had opted out of cushy corporate jobs to launch their own ventures.

Rajiv Mishra, chairperson, placements at XLRI has already seen a couple of students discussing deferred placements. XLRI has 180 students to place. Usually, a few students opt for deferred placements, but this year could see more doing so. B-schools offer deferred placements to top students who want to start their own businesses but in case of a failed attempt, get help from their alma mater for another shot at recruitment.

Indications are that companies may shell out more for their choice of candidates. A placement cell member at one of the newer IIMs, IIM Rohtak, says that freshers are expecting anywhere between Rs 12 lakh and Rs

16 lakh per annum. "This, despite the fact that average work experience for this batch is about 14 months as compared to three years last time. For the batch of 2014, the average salary was at Rs 9.72 lakh," he says. "The season has begun with a bang," says Jain from MDI Gurgaon. "It's still early days, but as compared to last year when the average salary was at Rs 14.74 lakh, we are expecting around or above Rs 16 lakh."

Although students are treading with caution, some positivity from the summers has rubbed off on the students of IIM Bangalore. "During summer placements, firms made more offers and if that happens again during finals, it will change the game," says Sapna Agarwal, head, Career Development Services of IIM Bangalore. Summer placements ended in record time for most B-schools, and many companies across campuses had to be declined.

At XIM, Bhubaneswar, feelers have been sent from IT firms and FMCG companies that had not hired in the past four years, for IT system profile and roles in marketing.

At IIM Lucknow, PE firms and investment banks are returning with more profiles, says Pushpendra Priyadarshi, chairperson, placement. "The batch of 2015 has also shown signs of being selective about their roles and plans to wait for the right offer than accept the first one," says a student placement cell member of IIM Indore.