

Booking business

IBS Hyderabad prides itself on its case studies

A part from a 100-strong full-time teaching faculty, the ICFAI (Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India) Business School (IBS) has another 20-25 who work almost exclusively on developing cases for studying in the institution's two-year MBA, one-year executive MBA and PhD programmes. "All our courses are taught through case discussions," says D.S. Rao, director, IBS Hyderabad. "We don't teach subjects in classrooms any more. We mostly use our own cases, but also source from the IIMs, Harvard Business School and others." No other B-school in India does this, except IIM Ahmedabad, he points out.

IBS – a constituent of the ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education (IFHE) 'deemed' university – has more than half the number of cases in its kitty, as Harvard does, Rao says, 7,000 against the US giant's 12,500. "Our faculty has a work load of only four to six sessions a week," he explains. "This is because we expect them to spend time on research." But with the institution bringing out 18 management journals and more than 200 research publications every year, he wants to add another 40-50 faculty members.

"We have the largest repository of cases in the Asia Pacific region," says Nagendra V. Chowdary, dean, IBS case development centre. "These cases win international competitions regularly; and we have regular customers for them, including the top 30 B-schools in Europe and the top 20 in North America, like Kellogg's, Wharton, Yale – and Harvard!" Most of these buy them through the European Case Clearing House, on which the cases are uploaded. Many of IBS' cases are included in international best-selling textbooks and translated into languages like Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, French and German.

Requests for cases come to IBS Hyderabad

from around the world, testifying to their popularity among educators and institutions, especially in the US. "I have continued to use your cases in the past years in my MPA (masters' in public administration) and executive MPA courses," writes George Abonyi, visiting professor, department of public administration and executive edu-



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Rao: no more classroom teaching

cation programme, Maxwell School, Syracuse University. "I have come across your excellent Website, and saw a large number of cases of potential interest." William D. Greenfield, Jr, professor emeritus, Portland State University, describes IBS' Web page and the materials reflected in it as "a wonderful resource".

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"I have used your cases in my MBA classes," says Karen L. Koza, associate professor, marketing, and co-director, Center for Business Research, Ancell School of Business, Western Connecticut State University, Danbury. "I

would love to use your site for cases more... you have a different perspective from traditional case sites." Joseph Holt, professor and director for executive ethics in the executive education programme at the University of Notre Dame, US, who teaches ethics courses in the MBA and EMBA programmes, talks of IBS' many 'excellent' cases, adding, "Thank you for your great work."

'A case factory'

Not everyone is so enthusiastic. "Academic case studies must describe situations, with conceptual arguments built in," says a professor from IIM-A, who describes IBS as 'a case factory'. "This takes six to nine months of work, using primary data. But ICFAI is much faster – it uses a lot of secondary data." Nonetheless, he says, he and some of his colleagues do use some of these cases – so obviously, the facts and data are reliable.

ICFAI, which got into business education in 1994, almost a decade after its establishment in 1985, began with a post-graduate diploma in business management. "It was not approved by AICTE (All India Council of Technical Education), but we got 100 per cent placement," says S.K. Sharma, director, development. "When newly formed states like Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand encouraged private universities, we set up in Dehra Dun. Then it struck us that the entire north-east is an underserved market – so we established the ICFAI University in Agartala. We are now in five states, and plan to open in Assam, Orissa, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh too." Of its B-schools in various places, however, only IBS Hyderabad has deemed university status – and has escaped unscathed in the recent purging of 44 such institutions – because IFHE didn't get permission for off-campus location.

"This is the time for good growth," says N.J. Yasaswy, member, board of governors, ICFAI. "We have eight campuses notified already, and we'll have four more in a couple of years. We are pursuing MoUs and letters of intent for seven more." That's a case study in itself.

♦ SEKHAR SESHAN