



November 2014

# Alumnus of the Month

This edition of the Alumnus of the Month features Mr. Edward Francis Paul of the 2003-05 batch. Graduating from LIBA in 2005, he worked with Hyundai, as a management trainee. Having worked upwards from there with HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, he is currently the DGM-HR with Exide Life Insurance. When asked about his journey to this position, he mentioned that the rich experience he gathered from all these organizations has helped prepare him to face eventualities and to gather insight to deal with situations. Today at his current position, he said, his experience has helped him understand the rules of the hierarchy and how things work at a micro level, thus enabling him to partner with his stakeholders in true sense and add value to the relationship.

When asked about LIBA's role in his journey, he said, "The various roles that one plays at LIBA, some fictional and some real, have their own share of learning. It's again an individual's choice; some of us got it right at the first go and some after a few attempts. LIBA is not just about the academics, it is also about preparing for the reality. I knew what to expect and how to handle situations due to my learning at LIBA."

When asked about the evolving role of HR managers, he mentioned, "HR is now emerging as the true business partner and is no longer confined to the line HR facilitation role." Today in organizations, HR is no longer a

back bench observer, but an active worker in the field; no more a paper pusher but an active expedient in achievement of business goals.

He mentioned that education at LIBA is not just theoretical learning but also collaborating and learning from peers.



He said, "If I were to take my personal example, I started as a 'nobody'. For a moment, I let the exuberance of freedom at LIBA lead me astray, but then, it was LIBA again in its entirety which made me realize my true potential and helped me find my path and here I am today."

According to him, his days at LIBA has always been special, but his most cherished memory is the placement cell and the placement season. He said that playing the role of the placement coordinator taught him many a lesson and he also added that he had met his wife at LIBA, who was also following HR as a specialization.

He quoted **Sam Ewing's** words - "Hard work spotlights the character of people. Some turn up their sleeves. Some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all." and pointed out that LIBA gives us the opportunity and space to bring

out the real self within us. The onus is on us to realize the calling, to identify the path and reach out for what we truly believe in. It is not about what people want us to be, it is about what we want to be. It is not about what opportunity is available, but what opportunity we create for ourselves. He also mentioned that anyone can take the traditional path, but there are very few who carve out their destiny and LIBA gives us that space to reflect and ponder on what we really want to be.

Talking about the skill sets required to be successful as managers in the current professional scenario, he told, "It is no longer survival of the fittest, but it is now survival of the relevant. It is very important to be connected to the employees and to always have a sense of the pulse of the market. As an HR manager in the current scenario, it is very important that you are aware of changes happening, their expected consequences and how to pre-empt any disasters."

As a piece of advice to the current batch of students, he says that understanding the real corporate life is very important and that the knowledge gained from textbooks is only limited. He advises the students to absorb as much as possible, to ask for more case studies, live projects and to be more active in seminars, guest lectures, events, field visits and not to be afraid to get their hands dirty when they start working.