

38. The Fun of Case Writing (A)

In a leading management institute of India, an exercise of perspective planning was being undertaken to prepare a plan for the next 10 to 15 years. One day in the tea club, some young inquisitive faculty members asked the senior colleagues sitting there, to share their experience/ views on how to manage the task of giving fillip to the academic activities of the Institute. Prof. Chidambaram, one of the senior colleagues, narrated the following story.

“Our times were different. The institute was in infancy stage, say about four years old. There were very few faculty members and little, borrowed/ rented infrastructure. The government funds were sluggish to come o create infrastructure.

Sometimes in 1990, I wrote a case on Apollo Hospital Enterprise Ltd., (AHEL) on their invitation. The invitation came during our meeting to engage the visitors. Since there were two companies conducting group discussion and interviews in two lots, and there were only 30 students, it was not possible to start third selection process for them. And since no one else in faculty was prepared to waste time to entertain them, I as Chairman Placement could not escape keeping them busy. Established in 1983, AHEL, the first corporate hospital of India, had made rapid strides in growth, facing variety of constraints and challenges ([see Case AHEL](#))

I tried to avoid the topic by expressing my difficulty to accept the invitation due to low travel allowances (terms of low Daily Allowance rates). I told them if then can help me in getting some Hotel in Chennai charging Rs. 205/- only for Boarding as well as lodging, I am willing to do the same. They said “not to worry, we will put you in our hotel”.

I visited Apollo, Chennai, interviewed dozen people for five days and collected other information/ data and returned as a mad man. A new Director joined in August 1989. I admire her tolerance for bearing my harsh words “why this institute can’t increase intake in its Post Graduate Programme in Management (PGP) from 30 to 100”. Honestly I would have got irritated if a faculty member had tormented me by repeatedly asking question like that. But she tolerated it. However one day towards end of January 1991, she told in a faculty council meeting that she was going to appoint me as the next PGP Chairman as that was the only way she thought possible, to shut me up.

Perhaps within next 3 days itself, the office order for appointment of new PGP Chairman was issued, which normally used to be done in mid April. I do not remember exactly how it happened, but on July 1, 1991, there were 105 students in PGP I instead of usual 30. It was not a big achievement, but it was appreciated given the fact that it was what a Board member said “adding FMS MBA into BHU MBA”. The only other thing I remember was preparing a check list of all that was needed to be done to have two sections.

“How case writing can lead to increase in the PGP intake remains a lesson and mystery for me even today?” he concluded.

- Q1. “Can you reconstruct the checklist using models of strategic management process?” he asked.
- Q2. In what way, if any, AHEL case writing experience could have pushed/ help Prof. Chidambaram to talk with confidence, on increasing intake.

[\(Contd. The Fun of Case Writing-B\)](#)

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