HIGH IMPACT HIRING DECIS IONS:
WILL YOU MAKE THE CUT?

HR's approach to retaining talent varies from sector to sector. Even as hiring processes undergo a change, companies look for people who are be the best fit for them…

by Team Careers360

The months of Jan-March each year see thousands of about-to-be-graduating engineers sit for a host of tests, GDs and interviews. The placement season in engineering colleges almost mirrors a carnival, with full-page ads in newspapers claiming record placements by individual companies.

What the numbers tell

But the numbers tell a different story. India has nearly 2.2 million engineering seats of which only around 1.3 million seats gets filled. Assuming a pass percentage of 60 percent, about 7- 8 lakh students would be eligible for placements. Only about half finally get placed. So the competition is extremely tough. Aspiring applicants prepare themselves on the basis of the company profiles and format of interview process, says Pulkit Garg, who got campus placement at The NorthCap University, Gurgaon after completing his B.Tech in 2011-15 and is now working as a Graduate Programmer at Fidelity International. According to Garg, organizations do come up with newer parameters for hiring to surprise the candidates and get the better ones. While big IT service organizations which recruit in large numbers use standardized tests, followed by interviews along with puzzles etc., niche recruiters like consulting companies use games, some role plays and even interactions in informal settings to identify the best bets.

BEFORE YOU go for an interview, do some homework on the skill sets the company requires

Challenges

Not being picked up by a dream company in campus placement is a painful experience. Pulkit faced this; he was disappointed but had faith in himself and started preparing again. He says, "When you've been giving your best at everything, and you don't find yourself even in the vicinity of outskirts of your goal, you start doubting yourself, you

SKILLS REQUIRED TO GET RECRUITED

- Social skills like teamwork and communication, cultural awareness
- Technical skills as evidenced by conceptual knowledge
- Extra certifications on computing, project management
- Leadership skills as evidenced by event participation, team management
- Initiative skills as proven by new projects, events, seminars et al

COLUMN : RICHARD LOBO, Senior VP & Head HR, Infosys

HIRE THE BEST. ENCOURAGE THEM TO GIVE THE BEST

Digitization has created many opportunities to make hiring and on-boarding of hires easier. We use digital and social media platforms to cover a gamut of activities -creating awareness about openings, source talent, receive applications as well as engage with potential hires. Additionally, HR is being impacted by technology, gamification, analytics etc., which is changing the face of HR as well.

Our hiring strategy is simple: we hire the best people and encourage them to make their dreams a reality. We look for individuals with good learnability and communication skills with a focus on technology. We focus on hiring people who demonstrate high learnability, conceptually and technically strong, can scale up in a very short period and thrive in a dynamic work environment.

We constantly seek smart, talented and self-motivated people with an entrepreneurial bent. We provide them with an incredibly supportive environment and like-minded colleagues where they can hone their creative ideas. Today's workforce also realizes that merely moving up the hierarchy is not enough. What keeps a career vibrant and relevant are the experiences that employees gain through different on-the-job opportunities for learning and career building, and Infosys provides opportunities for the same.

Aspiring candidates need to lay a lot of emphasis on communication skills, general awareness and people interactions. They also need to be self-assured. Recent college graduates aspiring to enter the IT industry must demonstrate a keen understanding of technology trends and how they can be applied to solve business problems.

Employers look for critical thinking skills and learnability when hiring new graduates. A deep interest in technology, confidence and a demonstrated ability to work well in teams are critical to land a job in the IT sector. A strong understanding of their core engineering discipline and a good understanding of programming is desired. Currently, the required skills are in the areas of application development, Big Data, Cloud, Mobility, Product Development, Domain/Technology Consulting etc. However, for a student, it's important that he/she demonstrates keenness to learn, a strong problem-solving orientation, and focus on self-improvement, communication skills, and conceptual clarity.

We provide a diverse range of offerings at campuses, each of which require some specific competencies, but the underlying requirement of learnability, problem-solving orientation, etc. run right through every role and level. ⑥

start losing your confidence. You start having a fear that what if you had taken a wrong decision? And people around you instead of giving you the strength to fight, will try and make you lose confidence. Fighting against all these odds is a very tough job."

Trends in recruitments

IT services companies remain the core recruiter. Between them, TCS, Infosys, Wipro and Cognizant recruit over one-lakh-plus fresh engineers. Companies in this sector recruit about 2 to 2.4 lakh engineers per annum. The core sector companies recruit another 50,000 students. SME and other sectors contribute to the rest. Each company demands different skill sets. And the profiles too are changing.

Why should you be selected?

Skill sets too vary across the companies. While values like honesty, integrity, sincerity and commitment are valued; companies are on the look out for individuals with hunger for performance. According to experts, every aspirant needs to be a good communicator,

EVERY COMPANY requires specific competencies. Apply only if you fit the bill
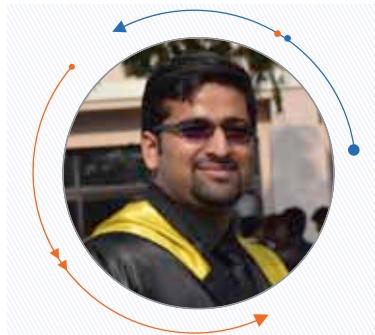
Pulkit Garg,
Alumnus,
The NorthCap University, Gurgaon

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possess substantial energy and be willing to put in hours. The start-up culture demands absolute commitment and at times extraordinary levels of endurance. "Countless students pass from engineering colleges every year, yet only 30 percent graduates receive jobs, which is a clear sign that graduates need to develop some special skill-sets in order to be an ideal choice," says Sanjay Vats, General Manager, HR, Insecticides (India) Limited.

BK Gupta, Director School of Professional Attachment and Placement Head at The NorthCap University, shares similar views. "Companies are highly focused in their selection process. For a consulting company, the prime concern is a student with the right kind of attitude along with right set of communication skills. For an IT company, knowledge of latest technologies is the concern; and for core companies, hands-on experience and working knowledge of the latest design software tools are added benefits," he said.

But it is not as if communication skills are not essential for an IT company aspirant. The focus and thrust on the skillset varies. It is generally assumed that being an engineer, one is endowed with analytical and logical thinking to

solve problems.

And problem-solving is a skill essential for any job across roles in like HR, IT, BPO, Consultancy, Media, sales of non-technical products, even for careers in Administrative Services and politics according to Sanjay Jain, VP & Corporate HR, SPML Infra Limited. Conceptual knowledge is very important, all experts agree. "One should be well-versed with the theory, but practical knowledge is highly important. Think logically and intellectually and just don't restrict yourself to books as the world consists of unlimited resources, which can be used for innovations and invention," Jain said.

Job positions and salary packages on offer

In the engineering sector, generally freshers get job positions and salary as per industry standards, which vary from company-to-company. Profiles would be Developer, Testing Engineer, App Developer, Designer, Production engineer or Trainee in any of the functions like manufacturing, materials, logistics or Research and Development. And packages would vary accordingly. The lowest could go down to Rs. 1. 2 lakh and a lucky few would get even 1 crore-plus packages. In general, a Developer's job in an IT services company like Infosys would fetch you around Rs. 3.5 lakhs per annum. New start-ups such as Flipkart, Snapdeal and Infibeam would hire engineers at much higher packages.

There are no generic benchmarks and the position and salary packages vary a lot between various firms according to their needs and capacity to pay. Key industrial sectors have now standardized their job roles, and process for inducting fresh graduates and offer competitive packages. "Regarding our company, we employ fresh Civil, Mechanical, Electrical & Instrumentation engineers for our project locations and take CA, MBA and engineers (for planning & monitoring) of our corporate office," affirms Jain.

Shivi Chaudhry, Manager-HR at Hi-tech Robotics shares that the average salary packages differ from institute to

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institute. "Students from a Tier-1 institute gets Rs. 6-8 lakhs, from that of a Tier-2 Institute get Rs. 4-6 lakhs, while students from other institutes get Rs. 2.5-4 lakhs per annum," he said.

Branches always fetch you better placement

Engineering branches such as Mechanical, Electronics and Communication, Computer Science, Chemical are considered to be evergreen branches for placements. With the evolution of technology, there is a great demand of engineers in the IT sector. "Almost every job at Infosys in influenced by IT, while some people develop, implement and manage the IT application and solutions, others work on process

transformation, operations or work in business enabling functions. The qualifications for each job are different, specific to the job and ranges from graduates to MBAs," says Richard Lobo, Senior VP & Head HR, Infosys. According to the India Skills Report 2016, graph of engineering employability is portrayed as 52.58 percent in 2015 in comparison to other domains and percentage of increase in hiring is denoted as 24.83 percent, for those who are from engineering background. "Over the last couple of years, there has been a good demand for students from CSE or IT background, followed by those from ECE and Mechanical branches," says Prof. Gupta.

Will online hiring replace placement cells?

A few companies hire talent through their online process because they believe that online assessment tools help to hire better performers. According to Vats, this is a changing trait of the times that cannot be ignored. A number of organizations have shifted their focus from campus hiring to online hiring through their alumni network, website, and social media. A lot of hiring is happening through networks like LinkedIn as it makes the process quicker and hassle-free. "However, it is not yet time for placement cells to be phased out. We are in a world of overlapping realities, where traditional coexists with the new. I am sure placement cells will reinvent themselves and will work with employers to set up mutually favourable practices as they play an important role as a facilitator," Vats said.

"We hire engineers through Campus, Consultants, Social Media such as LinkedIn, Euron-dist, Worldwide Robotics; Job Portals like Naukri, Hirist, Robojobs; Job Fairs; Conference/Workshops; References; etc. and in my company preferences are given to candidates subjects to their experiences in relevant domains such as Robotics, Industrial & Warehousing Automation Solutions," sums up Chaudhry.

With inputs from Aeshwarya Tiwari