

# WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT

A Forum for Industry-Academia Interactions

8<sup>th</sup> May 2010, Gurgaon

Aspire™ organized a roundtable discussion between senior industry executives and education leaders on Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2010. This discussion on “What Employers Want” was a forum for Industry-Academia interaction to understand trends, challenges and opportunities. The Industry speakers were Rajeev Grover (MD, Mercer), Rajnish Virmani (Director, COLT), Adil Nargolwala (Head-Sourcing, WNS), Shrikant Rasane (Director, SEED Infotech) and Anil Paranjape (SEED Infotech).



The speakers from Academia were Siddiq Wahid (Vice Chancellor, Islamic University), Col. K.S Gujral (Director, MRIU), Victor Gambhir (Pro Vice Chancellor, MRIU), Sameer Wazir (Head of Finance, Islamic University) and Sandeep Kaura (Assistant Managing Director, Rayat Baha). The two hour discussion touched on Academia's limitations, Industry-Academia gap, importance of employability skills training and need of Industry-Academia partnership including embedded employability enhancement curriculum in the core syllabi.

According to the findings of the survey conducted by Aspire™, Educators' top 5 priorities are Technical or Domain Knowledge & Skills, Aptitude, Communication Skills, Industry Skills, Team Work & Interpersonal Ability whereas Employers are looking at Communication Skills, Adaptability, Emotional Intelligence, Values and Dependability. Rajnish Virmani (Director, Colt) has a strong opinion on better communication skills and confidence “In present global work culture, communication skills are the top priority”. Victor Gambhir (Pro Vice Chancellor, MRIU) feels that “Industry needs to take responsibility of the talent being employable. However the collaboration is required for Academia and Industry to work together”. Rajeev Grover (MD, Mercer) believes that “Industry should engage students on campus itself. We have to run industry engagement and mentoring programs to bridge the skills gap”.



This was a unique discussion. Industry gave a clear signal to counterparts that only students whose functional capabilities are up to a certain minimum standard can get real success in the current job market. Industry and Academia both gave thanks to Aspire™ for providing a wonderful platform to them for better understanding and working out a framework to bridge the gap. This event was exclusively covered by Edu, an education sector magazine. The session was moderated by Amit Bhatia, Founder & CEO, Aspire and Smita Polite, Assistant Editor, Edu.

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