

# New B-schools shun traditional garb

## Move Away From 'Mandi-Model' To Offer Low-Cost MBA Courses For Churning Out 'Mkt-Ready Professionals'

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THE RECESSION is forcing layoffs and prompting the jobless to get back to school, a number of new B-schools that have opened amidst the current slowdown are focussing on churning out "market-ready" professionals who are trained as per the desiderata of the industry.

Apart from offering low-cost MBA programmes, these new B-schools have designed placement models that are different from the traditional "mandi-model".

"Keeping in mind the ongoing recession, our focus is to create market-ready professionals who can directly be absorbed without the usual training and probationary period. In other words, we are focussing on training students according to the requirements of the industry," says Unitedworld Edutech managing director Rakesh Hada, which is launching three B-school campuses under the banner of 'Unitedworld' in Mumbai, Kolkata and Ahmedabad at the cost of Rs 50 crore.

The group also plans to open a residential B-school in Delhi by 2010.

According to Hada, a institute, which will begin its academic session in July, will offer a regular two-year PGPM (post-graduate programme for management) for Rs 5 lakh, while it will also offer a one-year fast-track MBA pro-

gramme for professionals (with over three years of experience) for about Rs 2 lakh. "We have consciously kept our fees low for the initial batches. This has been done to attract a significant number of non-MBAs who might have lost jobs and are willing to upgrade their skills," he said.

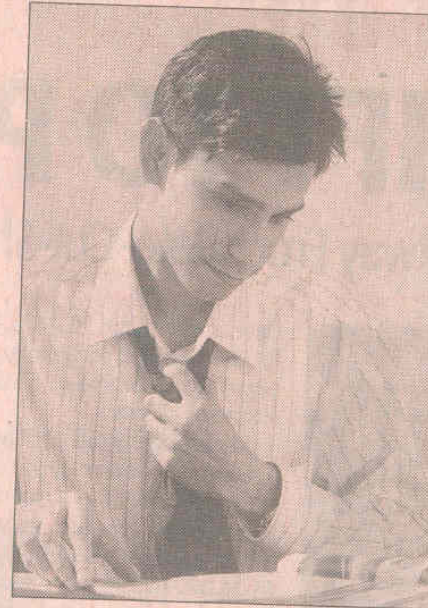
Mr Hada feels that a good number of non-MBAs and expatriates who might have lost jobs, would be looking to upgrade themselves by getting enrolled in quality MBA courses.

"Though the launch of our B-school, during the recession period, was not a conscious effort, we are considering this as an opportunity. We expect a good number of laid-off non-MBAs to come in for our PGPX course (a modular course for executives) when it begins in August," said Mumbai Business School (MBS) CEO Sunil Rai, which will begin its first year of operations in March this year, at Malad (Mumbai) with course fees in the range of Rs 6-8 lakh.

Professor Tridibesh Bandyopadhyay, a PGDM from IIM Calcutta (IIM-C) and having 15 years of professional & entrepreneurial experience in strategic consulting & education says, "Apart from teaching the core subjects, B-schools that can create soft infrastructure with strong industry interface, technology-enabled learning backbone and personality development, can add huge value to the students' career."

"The current indicators from the MBA en-

### FOR A CHANGE



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trance market supports an increase in overall interest from working professionals for pursuing full-time MBA as well as executive MBA. For this segment, programmes with one-year duration, designed with a fresh outlook, can be a strong proposition in the current market place, Mr Bandyopadhyay added.

Mr Rai of MBS feels, "With recruiters finding it increasingly difficult to visit campuses, the placement model has to change. From the standard 'mandi' (market) model, where the recruiters used to visit campuses to pick and choose, we are opting for the rolling placement model."

"The students who pass out from our institute will be fine-tuned and customised as per the specific requirements of the industry. In other words, we will be functioning as an extended training arm for the companies from different sectors," Mr Rai said, adding that the first batch of 45 students for the PGPM course will begin on March 27.

The curricula in these new B-schools have been designed with the help of experts from the industry and special focus has been given to placements. Universal school of business has a special industry advisory board that is in charge of designing and updating the curriculum as per the changing needs of the industry. The school also has a three-tier placement system that will explore zonal, national and overseas placements opportunities.