

# General Management Certificate Programme

## The Programme Need

The risk advisory practice of one of the world's largest professional services firm was facing a strategic talent management challenge concerning their junior management cadre in the 2-3 years experience band. Even though high calibre associates were recruited, the fact remained that the recruits, most of whom were graduates, needed a broader management perspective and all-round business knowledge to bring value and depth in their client engagements. There was also a significant attrition rate at that level due to competitive market situation. With these challenges, the firm approached the Centre for Executive Education (CEE) at the ISB. The brief was clear – to create a customized programme for developing the right skills and mindset required to provide best in class advisory services. At the same time, the programme was to be positioned as a strategic talent attraction and retention initiative.

## Designing a Customized Solution

The custom programme design team at ISB developed the programme in alignment with the strategic objectives for the initiative. An extensive diagnostic study was carried out with structured interviews involving senior management as well as a sample of the target audience to get a clear understanding of the learning need. “The need for developing a holistic perspective on business management came out very strongly during the diagnostic phase”, says Dr. Pramod Mantravadi, Director, Custom Designed Programmes, CEE. Hence the programme was designed to cover a wide gamut of knowledge areas broadly in Economics, Marketing, Strategy, Finance and Leadership. The CEE team collaborated with the L&D team of the client to make the content, tools and concepts in the course specifically relevant to the Professional Services sector.

“All participants are working professionals and have limited time to attend to the course. Hence we decided to design the programme with multiple modules conducted over a period of time” – says CVD Shekar, Programme Director, ISB. The design team managed to integrate the different modules so that there was continuity in learning, each module building on the previous ones. The academic rigor was built into the design through multiple assessments in each module, testing the participants' ability to understand and implement the concepts learnt.

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## CLIENT

A top professional services firm delivering audit, assurance, tax and management consulting services.

## PROGRAMME CONTEXT

The firm wanted to increase the overall business knowledge of its young talent pool so that they can add greater value in client engagements. Also, the need was for a programme with high aspiration value and thus effective in attracting and retaining high calibre talent.

## PARTICIPANT PROFILE

High calibre graduates with 2-3 years of experience in the organization. Participants mostly have a degree in commerce, engineering or are chartered accountants.

## LEARNING SOLUTION

A 2 year comprehensive general management programme delivering a total of 24 courses. The 8 term programme covered business management topics including Economics, Entrepreneurship, Finance, Strategy, Marketing and Leadership.

## IMPACT

Participants have a holistic understanding of business management practices that help them deliver better value during client engagements. The programme has helped the firm to attract and retain quality talent. It is now an integral part of identifying and nurturing high potential employees

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## Selecting the Very Best

The programme was open to all associates at the analyst and associate consultant level. However, a very rigorous selection process was designed to ensure that only the top potential talents can enrol. The selection process was a joint activity, with ISB providing the expertise and the senior management team providing performance insights for selecting the right candidates.

The selection process involved the following:

- Online test design by ISB for evaluating analytical skills and English knowledge
- A statement of purpose by the applicant
- Work performance score
- An interview with both firm senior leadership and ISB team

## The Programme Delivery

The programme is spread over 24 courses and delivered over 8 terms. Participants are required to stay at the ISB campus for nine days every quarter. “To ensure comprehensive learning, we felt only classroom sessions were not enough”, says Dr. Mantravadi. Hence, each subject is covered over 3 days that included faculty-led in-class sessions, assignments, preparation, assessments and tutorial sessions to make it an intense learning experience. All assignments, assessments and grading are managed through ISB’s online Learning Management System which has been

customized exclusively for this course. The final certificates are only awarded to participants who have undergone the entire programme and have successfully cleared all assignments and assessments.

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*“An extremely relevant programme as I use some of these concepts and tools every day at work”*

*Programme Participant*

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To provide a global perspective in the entire learning experience, the programme faculty is drawn from some of the best business schools across the globe. At the same time, the custom design team ensures that the Indian context is ingrained in the programme. “It’s a great experience to learn directly from some of the best global faculty”, says a programme participant.

## The Programme Impact

The comprehensive coverage of the programme has ensured that participants have in-depth knowledge of different business functions, enhanced analytical skills and are better equipped to add value during customer engagements. “My greater business knowledge means I am much more confident during face-to-face client engagements and can analyze and understand their business challenges better. The course is helping me develop both personally and professionally”, says a programme participant.

The highly competitive selection process, the rigorous programme design and the ISB certificate has created a strong aspiration for the programme within the organization. Thus the programme is acting as a talent attraction initiative while the long duration of the programme ensures talent retention.

The firm is delighted by the outcome of the programme and have integrated it with their strategic talent management plan, wherein high potential associates are required to undergo the programme to go to the next level of leadership.