The Backdrop

As per a published report, with over 300 universities and 15,600 colleges, India churns out 2.5 million graduates each year. In terms of the volume of production, India trails behind only the US and recently China. Figures of 2006 suggest that each year India produces 350,000 engineers; twice the number produced by the US and these figures could have only grown further in last 5-6 years.

On the other hand, according to a NASSCOM-McKinsey report, the Indian industry will face its biggest challenge ever- a talent shortage of 3.1 million knowledge workers, across industry, compounded by the
fact that only 25 per cent of fresh engineers; and a mere 10% of fresh graduates are actually employable.

Notwithstanding these statistics, one cannot but stress enough on the importance of employers to cherry pick the best fresh graduates from colleges across India. Although the expectations of the prospective employers differ for professional skills across economic sectors, company sizes and regions, the process of selection are varied- based on factors like demand, criticality of role and domain of industry.

So how would one select the right candidate from a big pool within the given time-slot?

This brings us to the question of what are the skills employers need to check out, in their quest for the
right candidate. Based on a research conducted by World Bank, the skills which Indian employers demand from engineering graduates could be categorized into three factors:

1. Communication Skills
2. Professional Skills
3. Core Employability Skills

Of the 3 above, though Core Employability Skills are the most important, Communication Skills are the ones which can be measured relatively easily, followed by Professional Skills, during an interview.

1. Communication Skills:

These include (in English):
1. Written Communication
2. Reading
3. Listening and comprehension
4. Experiments/data analysis and interpretation
5. Verbal Communication

Unlike a country like China, India has been pre-dominantly a service sector industry which underscores
the importance of good communication with the majority of our customers. These skills usually get displayed during an interview conversation, but the focus is on gauging how the candidate converses and conveys his views across to the listener.

2. Professional Skills:

These include various shades of academic skills:
1. Academic Knowledge
2. Use of modern tools
3. Creativity
4. Problem solving
5. Customization to suit a client's needs
6. Contemporary issues appreciation
7. Customer Service

Some of these skills get captured during the written tests, and then during a face-to-face interview. The project work usually says a lot about the candidate's capability and knowledge on the subject. A good interviewer can always make out if the project work is genuine and the emphasis is to find out the level of effort put, creativity, ability to deal with issues and sensitivity to the needs of the subject.

3. Core Employability Skills:

These include the following factors:
1. Integrity
2. Reliability
3. Teamwork
4. Willingness to learn
5. Entrepreneurship
6. Self-discipline
7. Self-motivation
8. Flexibility
9. Empathy

These skills are not occupation specific, but cut across occupations. Some studies refer to this set of skills as generic, catalytic, core and/or employability skills. These skills more define a person rather than his or her academic knowledge. It is relatively challenging to measure these skills in a candidate within a short time, but face to face interview conversations do reveal and help uncover these skills.

A small example of a candidate not coming on time can question his/her Reliability or Self-discipline. But more queries on a candidate's past history and his/her views on the current and future plans does help in making a good perception. From an employers' perspective- Attitude, Aptitude and Adaptability differentiate the best from the average. The graduates need to understand that these are not difficult to evaluate though written tests /case studies or personal interviews and hence cannot be faked.

The Recruitment Process

At a basic level, Organisations while recruiting freshers , adopt the following selection methods.

1. **Aptitude Test** for testing the candidates

     - Quantitative Aptitude
     - Data Interpretation ability
     - Verbal Reasoning ability
     - Non Verbal Reasoning ability
     - Data Sufficiency ability.

 Though all organisations from the private sector do not administer the Aptitude Tests during the selection process for candidates , for aspirants for jobs in Public Sector Organisations , Banks - PO and Specialist Officers, DMRC, SSC and a number of other important organisations, Aptitude Tests are a must. Aptitude Tests are also important for campus recruitment examinations like eLitmus and AMCAT and a number of entrance tests like CAT, GMAT, GRE, SNAP, CMAT, XAT, MAT.

2. **Group Discussions** for testing the candidates

     - Communication skills
     - Thought Content
     - Teamwork and Leadership
     - Participation

The is a very effective selection process and a large number of organizations rely on Group Discussions for screening candidates in the first or the second round.

3. **Personal Interviews** for testing the candidates:

     - Communication skills
     - Attitude
     - Flexibility / Adaptability
     - Teamwork
     - Leadership
     - Learn ability
     - Awareness of current issues
     - Humility
     - Creativity
     - Innovation
     - Entrepreneurship

This is the final and sometimes the only round of selection process. It is imperative that a candidate is prepared to provide the best possible answer to the questions that he / she might face on the above attributes.

The ROM Methodology

ROM Technologies understands the temperament of the current generation of Engineering and MBA students and the challenges involved in engaging the students for a successful and high impact Personality Development and Aptitude Training program.

The best results for implementation of Personality Development and Aptitude Training can be obtained if the programs are made credit courses. However, this is not possible in all situations and depends on the nature of the Institution. In case the programs cannot be made credit courses, the challenge lies in successfully engaging the students with high impact content and training delivery.

The training content from ROM Technologies uses a mix of ice breakers , classroom lectures, Video sessions, motivational sessions, stories and appropriate training games for maximum student engagement specially for the first and second year students of under graduate courses. All trainers from ROM Technologies come with considerable industry background and teaching experience.

The curriculum is flexible and can be customized for students from diverse backgrounds specially for the English language skills part.

English language skills is one of the main inhibitors that deters students from non-metro background engaging into the PDP programs. In view of this ROM Technologies strongly recommends implementation of the PDP programs from the first year of the undergraduate courses for students from non-metro background to enhance their English language skills before integrating them into the advanced topics of a PDP course from the second year onwards.
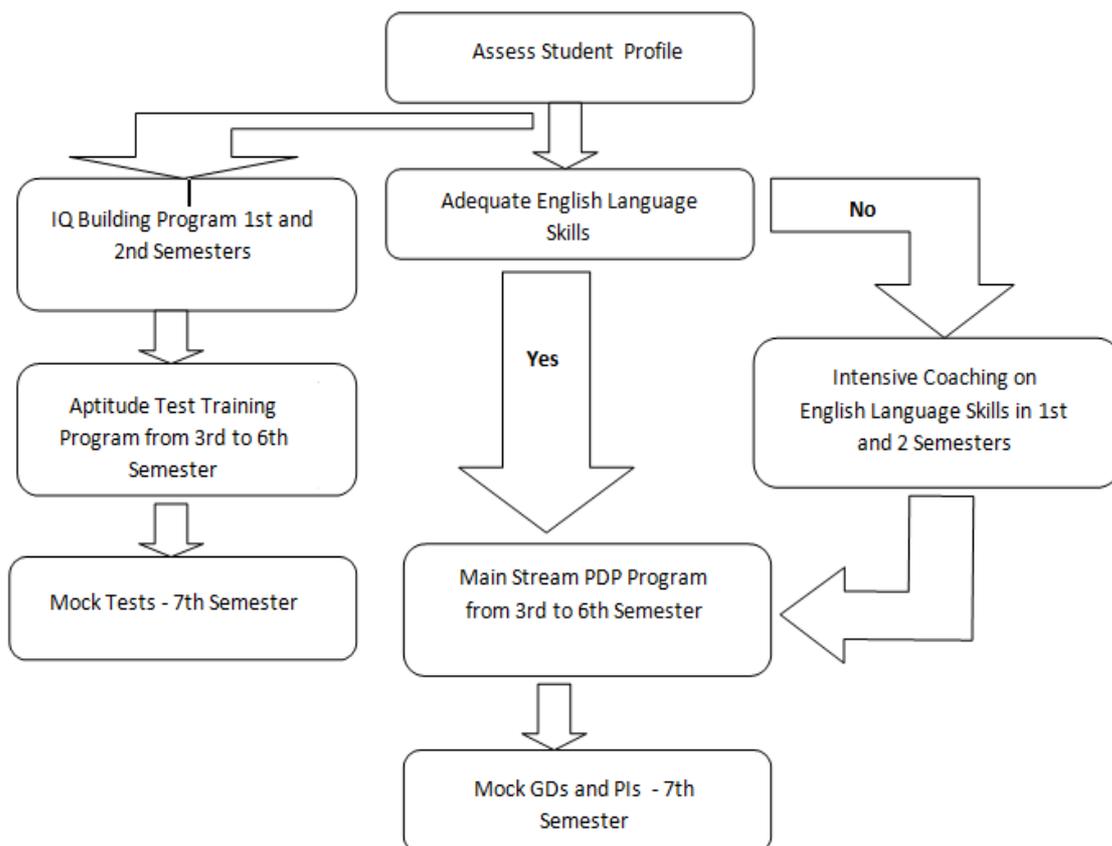
Summary of Topics

Personality Development Program:

1. Industry expectations from Freshers.
2. Reading and Comprehension.
3. Pronunciation correction and practice
4. Vocabulary build up and usage
5. Sentence Correction for common mistakes
6. Fill in the blanks with antonyms , synonyms.
7. Positive Attitude
8. Debating with practice
9. Personality Tree
10. Personal Introduction with practice.
11. Communication Skills
12. Public speaking with practice.
13. Presentation skills with practice.
14. Time Management
15. Goal Setting
16. Assertiveness
17. Corporate Etiquette
18. Leadership
19.Conflict Resolution
20. Resume Writing
21. Group Discussions
22. Personal Interview

Aptitude Test Training:

1. Speed Maths
2. Numbers
3. Percentage
4. Profit and Loss
5. Time and Work
6. Time and Distance
7. Progression and Series
8. Simple and Compound Interest
9. Permutation and Combination
10. Probability
11. Geometry
12. Syllogism
13. Analytical Puzzles
14. Blood Relation
15. Direction Sense
16. Coding and Decoding
17. Series, Calendar, Clock.

The Organisation and The Team

ROM Technologies is a Training and Consultancy organisation focused on creating value for the customer by innovation and use of technology in the areas of Corporate Training, Higher Education and Primary Education through Learning Services, Skills Assessment and Recruitment / Placement Processes.

In the Higher Education segment the learning services offered include Personality Development, Aptitude and Technology Training programs for students to enhance placement opportunities, faculty development programs, assessment services and counselling services.

In corporate training ROM Technologies offers learning solutions that encompass on-boarding, sales training, process training, product training, curriculum design, assessments, soft skills training and technical training. ROM Technologies is the Master Affiliate in India of the renowned Florida, US based Management Consulting firm Elaina Zuker Associates.

The eLearning services from ROM Technologies are offered across all the segments and are very comprehensive in nature starting from eLearning consultancy to managed Learning Services.

The core team at ROM Technologies has over 35 years of experience in the IT, Telecom and Education industry in areas of Campus recruitment, Personality Development, Aptitude and Technology Training, Content Development and Business Development. The trainers associated with ROM Technologies come with rich Corporate experience from organisations like IBM, Tata Communications, HCL, Monster.com, Manipal Education Group, Computer Sciences Corporation, Wipro and GE Capital.

With client services set up through offices in New Delhi / NCR and Mumbai and partners in Kolkata, ROM Technologies is well geared to serve most of the large organisations and institutions in the country.