TimesPro's Student Employability Quotient Readies Graduate for Successful Career

TimesPro
Best Advance in Learning Measurement
January 2019

Company Background

Headquarters	Mumbai, India
Year Founded	2012
Revenue	Rs. 35.22 Crs (2016-17); approximately $4,830,282.
Employees	412 (September 2017)
Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)	India
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	Digital marketing and banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI).
Industry	Education
Website	www.timespro.com

Budget and Timeframe

Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	30 to 40
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	One subject matter expert
Start date of the program	November 2016

Business Conditions and Business Needs

It's been observed on a broad spectrum that even though students have accomplished an academic criterion, there is only a small fraction of graduates who are employable.

Therefore, there was a strong need to have an assessment criteria to essentially provide a platform where students could be specifically evaluated to gain an insight into the employability level of the students and chart a course to develop the required skills through continuous evaluation during the course.

TimesPro understands the industry requirements of having confident professionals who also have good communication skills. As a result, in November 2016 with a revision in the curriculum of the post-graduate diploma in banking management (PGDBM V3), the company devised the Student Employability Quotient (SEQ) to evaluate students on the following:

- **A** — Attitude;
- **B** — Body Language;
- C — Communication; and
- D — Domain knowledge **(A-B-C-D).**

Students now are interviewed either face-to-face or over Skype for Business by evaluators from the head office.

Overview

SEQ is an initiative undertaken by TimesPro to increase the employability quotient of all students who enroll for the post-graduate diploma in BFSI management. It is in line with the organization's vision, which is "to enable millions of learners by making excellence accessible through learner-centric innovation and global collaborations."

Through this measurement tool, TimesPro aims to improve the communication skills and confidence level of the participants, thereby making them "Day One job-ready." The goal is to assist students in kick-starting their career in the BFSI sector.

According to the process, students undergo pre- and post-assessments during the start of the program and during course completion, respectively. These assessments are conducted either through VCs or in person in a one-on-one interaction. The students are judged on the ABCD parameters that stand for A — Attitude; B — Body language; C — Communication; and D — Domain knowledge. The students are rated on each parameter on a scale of 5 and then scored. The assessor is an independent person who provides feedback to the faculty. The faculty, through the delivery mechanism, ensures that they work at bringing about a transformation in the student's skillset through various channels in the program. At the end of the program, the students are assessed again to determine the change created.

Design of the Program

TimePro's SEQ model of assessment was developed bearing in mind that students are generally young university graduates with virtually no or practically very little exposure to the real-world work environment, in addition to a lack of confidence and communication ability.

Founded on this prerequisite, the SEQ measurement model was designed to gain an insight into the knowledge and skills level of the student at the beginning of the course (Month 1) and then toward the end of the program (Month 4) to gain an insight into the improvement in the knowledge and skills level of the students brought about through the delivery of the course.

To ensure improvement in the students and to gauge the change, capstone courses are included in which students undertake the following: articles, case Lens (movie-based cases), industry insights, role-plays, and immersions, just to name a few.

This evaluation method began in November 2016 in which students were evaluated on:

- **P** — Personality;
- **A** — Attitude;
- **C** — Communication; and
- **E** — Employment preparedness.

The parameter matrix was revised in September 2017 to ABCD — Attitude, Body language, Communication and Domain Knowledge.

Delivery of the Program

Considering TimesPro's Pan-India presence (a combination of company-owned learning centers and franchisees), the SEQ evaluation is conducted by a team of experienced professionals with years of experience in the education field. The connect is done either in person or with the aid of technology (i.e., through Skype for Business) or an in-house video-conferencing tool.

Currently, the measurement model is implemented for the post-graduate diploma in banking management course, which is scheduled for 18 weeks of delivery. During this engagement, and based on the parameters defined, the students are interviewed on two occasions.

The first interaction is held within the first month of course commencement. Here, the focus is on evaluating the student's skillset, knowledge level and readiness to adapt to the dynamic industry requirements.

At this juncture, the evaluator provides feedback to the student, highlighting the areas to focus on to be ready to face the interview opportunities and kick-start their careers in their chosen field. The feedback provided is individualistic and a gist (key areas) of the same is documented in the evaluator's sheet. The sheet is shared with the concerned faculty, who also are briefed on the student's performance to enable them to work and guide students on the improvement path.

The faculty members are primarily responsible to ensuring and monitoring the progress that the student is making.

The second and final evaluation is done in the concluding, or the fourth month, of the course.

It is at this stage that the student is evaluated once again on the given parameters and an inference of the progress made is recorded.

Subsequently, any relevant feedback also is provided to the students.

To ensure that TimesPro diligently works toward the improvement of the students, at the end of every evaluation the faculty receives the score for each candidate along with the evaluator's comments and the average score for the batch.

Faculty KPI has been mapped to have a minimum batch average score, which is monitored by the zonal program coordinators, program delivery head and head of academics at regular intervals.

In case a batch average score is low, faculty are asked to plan additional activities apart from the ones planned in the regular course of delivery to bring about an improvement in the students.

Change Management Efforts

The prime challenges encountered in implementation of SEQ were:

- The students generally followed a tendency to give very stereotype answers (i.e., the ones that were available in sample interview dialogues).
- A clear lack of depth in the answers. The substance element in the students' outlook toward their professional focus was lacking; most of them followed a standard format/structure.
- As young graduates who were looking for an entry into the industry, most of them had attitudinal concerns and lacked a clear awareness of basic interview protocols, which was more due to lack of exposure to such situations.
- Technological concerns, which ranged from connectivity concerns, lag in video and voice.
- Absenteeism; student attendance.
- Resistance to change by stakeholders.
- Lack of objectivity, as the scores and feedback are based on the interaction with the evaluators, which could have a bias quotient.

These challenges were addressed using the following:

- To better understand the mindset, attitude and comprehension ability of the students, at the end of the first interaction they were advised individually to focus on their own uniqueness rather than giving standard answers. Selection during the interview is based on uniqueness along with ability to showcase an understanding of the job role and willingness along with ability to adapt to situations.

- Students were advised to speak on key areas that helped in showcasing the prime competency that they possessed and what they could "bring to the table." The focus was on the personal connect they felt as to why they have chosen banking as their carrier path. The students were made to substantiate their claims. They spoke about their strengths and a genuine life example could be a validation of the same. This would not only showcase them having the requisite talents to deliver what was expected from an entry-level perspective, but also focus strongly on their verbal and reasoning abilities.

- Technological lags and delays were addressed by the IT department of the organization.

- Pertaining to absenteeism, faculty members were given a heads-up while the schedule is shared monthly. Also, the connect is once rescheduled to ensure all students are evaluated. In case a student is repeatedly absent, however, the same is not conducted.

- To bring about objectivity to the evaluation method, the pre-and post-evaluations are conducted by two in-house personnel. Also, in the revised version TimesPro has standardized the parameters for all connects held with the student during the course under the career alignment and mentoring program (CAMP).

- With regard to the resistance to change by stakeholders, it was addressed by showcasing the results at the end of the initial batches and feedback by the students.

Measurable Benefits

The implementation of the newer system of evaluation and measurement has seen the team of evaluators interact with approximately 2,687 students across 200 PGDBM batches launched since November 2016.

The overall average score for Intervention 1 (SEQ 1) under PGDBM V3 (November 2016 to August 2017) was 1.14 and Intervention 2 (SEQ2) was 2.465, whereas the improvement average for these batches was 1.35.

The overall average score for intervention 1 (SEQ 1) under PGDBM 2.0 (September 2017 to March 2018) was 2.318 and Intervention 2 (SEQ2) was 2.718, whereas the Improvement average for these batches was 0.34

The evaluation matrix has assisted the organization in gaining an insight into entry-level employability skillset and the change created by the course.

The same also is seen in the reduction of number of opportunities required by students to get selected by recruiters.

The overall feedback from the students has also been positive. There also is positive feedback from the clients (recruiters) with respect to the skillsets and abilities of the students.

As an organization, TimesPro has set out on the journey to increase the employability skills of the graduating Indian youth.

- **With a Vision** — Fulfill aspiration of millions of learners by making excellence accessible, through learner-centric innovation and global collaboration.
- **And a Mission** — Enable one million learners' aspiration through education by 2022.

Overall

Key Findings

The learning through this entire process has been that irrespective of the learner's age group, they develop or adapt best to situations and accept feedback when it is provided in a constructive manner with an outlook to guide and bring out the best in the individual.

Moreover, through the years of education, individuals want to complete either their graduation or post-graduation and the emphasis is on conceptual learning and not skills or life-skill enhancement.

As stated earlier, this evaluation matrix is just in the birth stage and the task of monitoring and making necessary rectifications has already begun; however, this is an ongoing process.

The outcome that TimesPro sees is the reduction in the number of placement opportunities required by the students and an improvement in their skillsets.

With respect to the future, TimesPro is planning to apply the measurement tool to the other programs and is working toward its feasibility. Moreover, it also is working on reducing the subjectivity involved in the evaluation.

About Brandon Hall Group

Brandon Hall Group is an HCM research and advisory services firm that provides insights around key performance areas, including Learning and Development, Talent Management, Leadership Development, Talent Acquisition, and HR/Workforce Management. With more than 10,000 clients globally and more than 25 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

Inspiring a Better Workplace Experience

Our mission: Empower excellence in organizations around the world through our research and tools every day. At the core of our offerings is a Membership Program that combines research, benchmarking and unlimited access to data and analysts. The Membership Program offers insights and best practices to enable executives and practitioners to make the right decisions about people, processes, and systems, coalesced with analyst advisory services which aim to put the research into action in a way that is practical and efficient.

Membership Offers Tailored Support

Our membership delivers much more than research. Membership provides you direct access to our seasoned team of thought leaders dedicated to your success, backed by a rich member community, and proactive support from our client services team.

RESEARCH ACCESS & EVENTS
• Reports
• Case Studies, Frameworks & Tools
• DataNow® & TotalTech®
• Webinars and Research Spotlights
• Annual HCM Conference

ADVISORY SUPPORT
• Ask the Expert
• 1 on 1 Consultations
• Research Briefings
• Benchmarking

CLIENT SUCCESS PLAN
• Your Priorities
• Executive Sponsor

• Client Associate
• Monthly Meetings

Strategic Consulting Offers Expert Solution Development

Our consulting draws on constantly updated research and hundreds of case studies from around the globe. We provide services that simplify and target efforts to produce business results.

BENCHMARKING
• Competitive/Comparative
• Maturity Model
• Custom Research

STRATEGY
• Business Case
• Planning
• Organization & Governance

TECHNOLOGY SELECTION
• Vendor Selection
• Architecture Design
• Systems Evaluation

DEVELOPMENT & INTEGRATION
• Program Design
• Assessment
• Survey
• Process Integration

For more information, contact us at success@brandonhall.com.