

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE INDUSTRY

RE-MODELING WORLD CLASS ACADEMIA WITH NSBM

DEMETRIOUS PERERA
SENIOR GENERAL MANAGER
TOYOTA LANKA: SRI LANKA



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What is your perception of NSBM in the Sri Lankan higher education arena?

As a lecturer of MBA faculty and Industry expert of Human Resources and Law; being able to associate with NSBM Green University, the first ever green university in South Asia, is a big milestone in my professional career. With more than 12-years of hands-on experience with TOYOTA, the largest and globe's No. 1 automobility maker and mobility solutions provider, gives the perfect blend of practical and business sense of the corporate university exposure. This helps us in delivering a global knowledge with practical sense in an amplified and simplified manner to our undergraduates.

With the best practices and design architecture with green field

curriculum design of both business and corporate focused education have re-modeled the world-class academic offering for students, thereby opening a new chapter in the Sri Lankan education arena. In this light, NSBM holds a clear edge as the frontier with over 9500 plus students being accommodated under three faculties of Management, Computing and Engineering. The qualified global-local lecturers with modern business school curriculum are helping our undergraduates to face any challenge the world has to offer. Creating an excellence in education, NSBM extends beyond course deliverance as they are partnering with industry giants in providing opportunities to get "genba" exposure for students to feel pulse of future-proof real corporate ambience even before they steps into to corporate life.



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How impactful have NSBM been in creating the best for this country's current requirement?

One of NSBM's strategic priorities were to set up a fully-fledged university facility of prime and modernity. Today, NSBM is infused with ultra-modern facilities to equip the university stemming from the door-way to the corporate-hallways, whilst course descriptors and modules have been carefully developed with a mind of making future-ready corporate personalities of High-potential (HIPO) developments through various academic and e-learning interventions.

The student center and independent study areas available at the university create an appropriate environment for learning and research. The state-of-the-art auditoriums, sports complex and open theatre helps to unleash creativity and spring-board to lead the corporate boardrooms of tomorrow, today. Recreational activities pursuits as in sports ground, gymnasium and swimming pool enables to groom well-rounded and grounded students. Medical Faculty is equipped with modern art to start facilities ensuring that the students


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get the very best.

Students' hostels are constructed with an ultra-modern touch to them to make the environment study-friendly and relaxing in a greenery surroundings. For staff a serenity working environment has been created with an ambience of both physical and psychological comforts. Looking at all these makes NSBM a holistic University Town of future, built today to last.

How do you imagine NSBM to be in the next few years through its contribution?

Inspired by the vision of making Sri Lanka the best educational hub in Asia, NSBM Green University has positioned its unique market value proposition to be truly dedicated to the nation in building a gifted future for students. NSBM is today, well poised to be a force to be reckoned-with in the top university rankings not only in Asia but beyond. In pursuit, NSBM will continue to be equipped from management and technical laboratories to libraries and access for world class global e-libraries. NSBM also exposes its students to various global travelling and touring opportunities to give

diverse multi-national corporate experiences every year.

As a future-proof university, NSBM's Long-Term Strategic Plan devised by the Strategic Committee will provide the direction, drive and leadership for NSBM to be the most sought-after choice in education with a unique market value proposition at affordable investment for students' future.

As an industry giant what are your industry's expectations from our NSBM graduates?

As Corporates, we expect the graduates to demonstrate competencies that matter to ensure organizational success. They should be self-motivated and groomed in an inspirational leadership realm. Given the scenario, we expect the graduates with high potential to employ an innovative mindset, entrepreneurial spirit and leadership. We see many graduates coming into the workforce lack basic skills such as spoken and writing proficiency, critical thinking and problem solving etc. These aren't skills that are unique to any industry, they can be applied across companies. The competencies (skills) such as critical thinking and problem solving are cogs and crux of how all companies function. Businesses are constantly faced with challenges every day, and if we don't come up with a solution with the right talent with the right skill and attitude, to lead corporates in ever challenging world; the companies will be in great deep waters.

Graduates must muster, demonstrate and apply these critical skills, in their early corporate life, if not it will be an immediate disadvantage in the market. Beyond these, employers wish to hire

candidates who are going to be best-fit for the purpose. The character (which represents by KASH=Knowledge, Abilities, Attitude, Aptitude, Skills & Habits) and competencies plays a bigger part in the success, therefore it is imperative not only NSBM, by all means all Universities must continue to develop the curricula to give more time and direction in sharing business cases with business sense, turn-around stories and soft skill development to inspire-ignite-drive the leadership with innovation and entrepreneurial mindset. At the end of the day we try to create a success profiles for graduates, to create a competitive personality with high performing and potential leadership fit, thereby taking the guesswork out of the process and bring high potential men-at-work of highly competitive.

As a known personality for leadership and self-motivation what do you have to tell the students of NSBM?

Leadership and self-motivation both are key ingredients to muster corporate leadership of future. Carlos Ghosn the former CEO of Renault and then Nissan Corporations who was monumental to make the one-time loss-making company into a profitable organization within one year; and the CEO of Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Alliance; said "Leaders are not born; but they are groomed". With the advent of global ramifications, breakthrough technological advancements and transformations; global corporate offices have become a melting pot with culture and diversity. It's a fact that leaders with right motivation must be developed from the home-grown to corporate verticals with all the attributes of leadership and these young aspirants should

be made self-motivated and self-driven as autonomous cars to drive the businesses to next level. As Corporates, we believe leaders should be groomed through their experience of corporate life. It can be done also through their own experiences and developments by placing them through the situations and circumstances. Youngsters must groom to be doing common things uncommonly, mold to work in strike force agility and create the mindset for doing more than, what they are paid for. They must profoundly prepare to take great risk and stretch themselves in the process to grow and drive themselves to be successful and even every failure must convert into a lesson of love and life for the next time, to be bigger and stronger.

Therefore, the big challenge we face today as corporates and c-suites, are to know what kind of leadership and motivational attributes that we need to foster and cultivate for the future, meaning for the next 10 to 15 years. Whether is it automotive, software, aeronautical, pharmaceutical, manufacturing or servicing, in general speaking; corporate and business world is in full transformation where some are disruptive or re-architecting (re-shaping) with modification in the relationships between various stakeholders. All these means, us to think that we must groom leaders with the right motivation for one that extremely need for the 10 to 15 years with knowing it is going be different than today with great uncertainty.

In conclusion, we would beseech all undergraduates that they must learn in omni-channels with active listening and active application of knowledge, most importantly being humbled with the mindset of better to be a "learn-it-all", than a "know-it-all" perspective.