

Against all odds

With initial concerns of surviving the summer in Rajasthan, Suhas Jirgi learnt to use his weakness as his strength

I spent my life down south in the pleasant atmosphere of Bengaluru. So, I was slightly rattled when I found out that my internship project had been shifted to Kota in the summer. Little did I know that this transfer would enable me to grow in ways I never imagined, as I stepped into my first corporate adventure.

My stint with DCM Shriram Ltd. involved surveying the local cement dealers in Kota to gain a better perspective of DCM's popular cement brand. I spent the first few days in the cement division gaining knowledge about the prevailing scenario, the big competitors, and contacts of dealers. My guides, R.K. Dhir and Vinay Jha, assisted me at every step until I finished drafting a questionnaire and stepped out into the field.

Language barrier

Due to my low proficiency in Hindi and the harsh Rajasthani heat, I struggled to get many responses and often returned feeling defeated.

With concerns rising and confidence in my abilities withering, I went back to the office and sheepishly informed them of my struggles. I expected a stern lecture, but instead was taken aback by the warmth and support I received. My seniors understood my situation and assured me that they would help me – and indeed, an employee lent me his bike to commute the street while another helped with my approach to various dealers. A senior member also told me to use my '*Angrezi Hindi*' as a strength rather than a weakness to add gravitas and engage listeners better.

It did not happen instantly, but things started to pick up. Instead of dread, I



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DURATION:
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woke up eager to explore new regions and interact with construction workers and cement dealers. From just 15 surveys in my first week, it accelerated to 70 in the next two.

Motivation is not something that can be forced. Advice and instructions can only take you so far. The real cause of this paradigm shift in the latter part of my internship was knowing that there were individuals who were genuinely going out of their way for me. When their main motive was to help me blossom and obtaining results was only secondary, how could I not step out of my comfort zone and go the extra mile?

Some people say that your MBA internship is supposed to give you a flavour of corporate life. Suffice to say that I not only experienced how corporate life is, but also how it should be.

Suhas Jirgi is a second-year MBA student at IIM Sirmaur.