

***Case Study : Job Selection and Career planning: Unwinding the dilemma**

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ABSTRACT

Most of the people face career related dilemmas in the contemporary corporate scenario. This is due several factors like the wider range of choices available to them, internally in terms of different verticals and externally in terms of the plethora of companies, both established and start-ups who are on a constant look-out for talent acquisition. The dilemma is more intense and confusing for the B-School students. Making career decisions can be like a walk on the tight-rope due to lack of experience and multiple, conflicting sources of information. They need to understand the factors that need to be taken into consideration while selecting their first job, prioritization of the job related factors and the decision making process. Proper career planning isn't easy and involves a lot of thought and right execution of ideas and decisions.

Even after getting the first job, people may want to change. The job may not meet their expectations or they may not meet the expectations of the job or the company. One of the typical examples is a sales job. But they need to make the changes necessary and carry on. This case is a hypothetical case that tries to explore the career confusions and ways to deal with the career confusions. It also throws some light on mid-career changes and adapting to new environments and new responsibilities. The case is written in a dialogue format between the three characters of the case, Vinay, Mukul and Vamsh. The case transcends across areas of recruitment and selection, individual and organization behavior and personal growth and inert-personal effectiveness. The prime motive is to bring out career confusion scenarios and also solutions.

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Case Study

Vamshraj Poojari, Vinay Manuri and Mukul Desai are friends since their days at St.Xaviers high school, and hail from a small city, Pehalgaon; which is a tier-3 city in South India. Vamshraj Pujari belongs to a very affluent family, and both his parents are bankers working with SBI. He has completed his bachelor's degree in engineering from a reputed college in Pehelgaon. Vinay Manuri and Mukul Desai belong to traditional business families. Vamsh, after a failed attempt at CAT, took admissions at a tier-2 B-School, in Bangalore. Vinay and Mukul completed their Bachelors in Business Administration from a college in Pehelgaon, specializing in Marketing. Vinay and Mukul were still thinking of their failed attempt at cracking CAT.

Vinay: Vamsh, I think you've done a good job by taking admission at S B-School. An investment of Rs.8 lakhs is difficult for people like us to manage though. My parents are unwilling to invest so much into my MBA.

Vamsh: But then, I really wanted to get into IIM-Bangalore. Because, getting a great package possibly at least Rs.15 lakhs/annum. I am really thinking, if I did the right thing by getting into S B-school.

Mukul: Vamsh, I don't think this should be a reason to worry. Nowadays, even tier-2 B Schools are ensuring good placements. I guess, you don't have to worry about placements.

Vamsh: Yes mate, you have made a valid point. What are your plans now? What are you thinking of doing?

Mukul: Well, it may look sad. But then, I've decided to pursue a correspondence MBA.

Vinay and Vamsh (in unison): What the hell?

Mukul: Yes. We have a shed in the C N Industrial area I am thinking of setting up some manufacturing unit and simultaneously pursuing my correspondence MBA

Vinay: Wow that sounds great sounds great and impractical. You have no prior experience, no capital and no expertise. And that's an interesting combination.

Mukul: I somehow feel that we should not decide our career on the basis of some impulse feeling or inputs but on the basis of four very important considerations.

Vamsh: Well, what are they?

Mukul: 1) Passion 2) Opportunities available 3) Possible repercussions of your selection, even considering the worst case scenario 4) Willingness to make consistent efforts to succeed in the chosen area, which again depends on passion

Vinay: That's quite a thought. You aren't as bad as I imagined you to be, Mukul ha ha ha.

Vamsh: Cut the crap, Vinay. He is probably going to be very rich, if his plans do work out well. And what are your plans Vinay?

Vinay: Well, I have decided to join politics. No much work, loads of money. (Laughs)

Vamsh: Dude, we are serious, tell us what your plans are?

Vinay: Well, I plan to take a year off, study hard and write CAT next year. I guess I can make it to the IIM's next year with proper, dedicated preparations.

Mukul: That's not bad. A nice idea though. Wish you good luck Vinay!

Vamsh: Enough of all this career drama lets go and have some tea and samosas at Lucky Tea stall

Vinay: I can't agree more. My tummy has gone blank right now.

Vamsh: And yes, the future entrepreneur of Pehelgaon, Mukul will treat us I guess.

Mukul: Yes guys, sure. I owe you a treat.

At this juncture, Vamsh, like 85% of people who attempt CAT in India each year, started his studies at S B-School, a tier 2 B School, unlike Mukul who plans to right CAT next year again like nearly 24% of the people who attempt CAT for the first time,

repeat the test in the successive year. Mukul went on and met entrepreneurs in different sectors like mineral water processing, production of noodles, garment dyeing units etc. And then, he came to know about the different variables and difficulties that need to taken into consideration. One of the entrepreneurs told him that nearly 35% of the start-up manufacturing units are a failure in India, and close within one year of commencement of operations. And this made Mukul think over his decision of plunging into a start-up manufacturing unit. Vinay, on the other hand enrolled himself at a CAT coaching centre. He dedicated a minimum of seven hours daily for studies and started getting expertise in the areas of logical reasoning, data interpretation, mathematics, verbal ability etc.

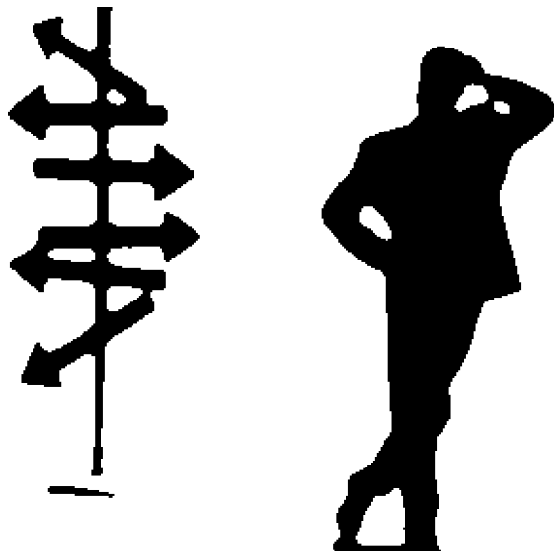
After two years, Vamsh finished his MBA successfully with a good CGPA. He also got offers from reputed companies in the telecom, steel and real estate sector. By now, Mukul had set-up his factory which could produce 1000 kgs of Hakka noodles with a brand called, "Delight". Vinay finally ended up in IIM-B after a lot of struggle. At this point of time, all of them decided to meet up at the Café Coffee Day, the next day.

Vamsh: Hi guys, wassup? How're you all doing? Vinay, your FB status says you're still single! That's so sad. Mukul, you've reduced a lot, I guess courtesy, the faculty at S B-School, (Laughs). You're looking fabulous.

Mukul: Thank You buddy. Look at Vinay, goatee and brand new hair style. Looks cool, adapting to the Bangalore cult?

Vinay: Thanks mate. But then, IIM-B is more pain and very little pleasure, by the way. It's a scary world of case studies, assignments, projects, quizzes, books, and very few good looking babes!

Vamsh: Yes, and that's the right place to be. Look at me, I got a few job offers now, but I'm not able to decide on what to take, because the packages being offered are not that great. The companies are in telecommunications, real estate steel and ITES domain. The profile being offered is that of market research in two cases and sales in two cases. This has got me into a great deal of confusion actually. It's become very difficult to make up my mind and finalize on something.



Vinay: That reminds of a couple of verses from the Bhagavad-Gita. They are:

Arjuna says, "Chanchalam hi manah Krishna, pramathi balavadhridam, tasyahamnigrahamanye vayorivasudushkaram" which means, 'For the mind is restless, turbulent, obstinate and very strong, O Krishna, and to subdue it, I think, is more difficult than controlling the wind'. Krishna replies, "Asamshyam mahabaho, mano durnigraham chalam, abhyasena tu kaunteya, vairagyena cha grihyati", which means, "Oh Arjuna! No doubt, the mind is restless. I agree it is difficult to control it, but it is not impossible. You can control it through practice and will. It may look difficult to those who don't make an attempt, but it isn't for those who try! So Arjuna try!"

Vamsh: That's quite impressive Vinay. You have pearls of knowledge flowing through. That gives me a lot of food for thought.

Mukul: According to me, making up your mind should not be a problem. The company that pays you the best, is the most ethical employer and the right choice. What's your take on that Vinay?

Vinay: Mukul, I don't think so. In fact, there are several factors that need to be taken into consideration, while selecting a job. One of our faculty members, Prof Rao gave us full three hour seminar on this topic .It was an enlightening one.

Vamsh: Hmmm, and what factors did he talk about?

Vinay: The factors are:

- Pay/Package
- Profile
- Perks and facilities offers
- Financial performance of the company
- The values of the company
- Opinion of your family members, friends and experts in that area
- Job Security
- Psychological factors

Future prospects , and that's all I remember



Mukul: Wow, look at the IIM-B effect! Great, I do agree with you Vinay. The company you work is

the place you spend most of your time. You have to select it with a lot of fore-thought. It should give you a right environment and a platform to showcase your knowledge, skills and abilities

Vamsh: That's seems right Mukul. A company cannot guarantee you everything, but you need to make the right pay-off decision, which will probably keep you satisfied.

Mukul: What does a pay-off mean, Vamsh?

Vamsh: A pay-off is a kind of compromise; an individual may have to do, in case of a choice or set of alternatives. For ex: If a person needs to a great pay, he may have to work in a night shift. Hence, working in the night shift is a pay-off that he/she makes in order to get a desired outcome, which is 'great pay' in this case.

Vinay: Yes, Vamsh, that's very much true. You have to decide on your priorities. But then, package, profile, and future prospects in the company are vital, when it comes to deciding on a job.

Vamsh: In my case, profile is the most important criteria, followed by package and finally future job prospects.

Vinay: I think we can put up a small matrix which sums up our point of view.

Mukul: And how would it look? What would be the constituents of the same?

Vinay: It would look as follows*:

Factors	Level of importance	Scores of Co X	Scores of Co Y
Package	4	2	3
Profile	3	3	2
Future prospects	2	2	1
Brand Recognition/ Brand Value	1	1	1
Total	10	8	7

*Scores for Co X, Co Y and level of importance are assumed for the purpose of representation

And if you look at the above matrix, and compare the scores of Co X and Co Y, Co X scores more and therefore, it would be logical for a candidate to select this company to work with!

Vamsh: That would be great way to go about choosing companies. I will use this matrix of yours when I would have to choose a job.

Vinay: Thank You guys. Before that, you'll have to buy me drink at Shiro's, for the copyright.

Vamsh: Well, that's assured. And yes, Mukul, how is your business going on?

Mukul: As you all know, I started two years ago, with a small unused shed measuring 3000 sq ft, which belonged to my dad, I bought second

machinery from 'Verma Foods' at a paltry price, got 6 laborers with some borrowed capital coming from my lovable dad and an enterprise loan from SBI. And today, I have 5-6 large clients, and around 35 small buyers like restaurants, road side eateries, etc. I reached the BEP at the end the end of the first year of commencement of operations. And I have started making decent profits, this year onwards. My clients range from Big Bazaar, More, Yo-China, Star Bazaar and so on. My clients have shown great interest in my brand. They have been consistently placing orders. This year, we closed at a net profit of Rs. 12 lakhs.

Vamsh: Hey, that's great. Why don't you think of setting up a bigger office, appoint mangers, get two or three computers. That will be helpful I guess.

Mukul: You're right Sir. But then, all this needs more capital. And for small enterprises like ours with thin margins and profits, an increase in costs would mean a lot of headache.

Vinay: (Laughs) Vamsh, this is not a case study solution. Things are real, risky and problematic. A theoretical approach won't help.

Vamsh: I beg to differ with you

Vamsh: If you need to progress, you need to invest.

Mukul: Yes, Mr Vamshraj Pujari, you Richie-rich kids are taught to think this way. But then, small enterprise management is not easy. Keeping

rapport with your suppliers, transporters, laborers, clients, is a tough task. And managing your cash balance is a tougher chore in routine business. So, more investment is definitely needed and good for my business, but a later stage, maybe. And when you and Vinay will be placed in good companies, earning great salaries, I will have no dearth of capital. After another five years, I can demand capital from both my friends. Isn't it guys?

Vinay: Of course, buddy. If we are in a position to invest or help you financially or by any means we will undoubtedly do it. We are in fact proud of what you've achieved in a short span of two years.

Vamsh: Yes Vinay, that's right. Mukul has worked hard and has put in a lot of effort and determination in his pursuit. By the way, so many of my friends are joining IT companies as against companies from other sectors like telecom, retail and electronics.

Vinay: That is obvious, because IT companies pay better salaries, compared to companies in other sectors. They give you more incentives and perks, better designations, the avenues for growth are many, you can easily shift from one vertical to another, you can be promoted sooner, and they have a great recruitment ads and pre-placement presentations.

Mukul: Absolutely companies put in a lot of effort into attracting talent. But, nowadays students are extremely careful and analytical in their approach

to selecting jobs. Companies should have a clean and good brand image in the market, they should have good online reputation, a great job culture, they should be asking for lesser pay-offs and they should have great leaders at the helm of affairs who are the public image of the company.

Vamsh: But how do you measure factors like online reputation and job culture?

Mukul: if you type 'working at Co X' in a good search engine, it gives you a list of websites that you a list of links of blogs, discussions on social networking sites, opinion polls, news articles from different sources, other websites etc. In case of some companies, invariably the discussion and news is about work pressure in that company, the discrimination, wrong and unethical behavior of the managers. Guess what all this constitutes?

Vamsh: I know, 'bad online reputation'.



Mukul: On the contrary, in case of some other companies, the blogs, chat rooms, the website links and news articles mostly speak about positive work environment, managers who motivate you to achieve more, empower you and do not discriminate on any grounds. Guess what all this constitutes?

Vamsh: Great online reputation. This reminds me of Co G, which has a great online reputation. And how do you actually understand and measure organizational culture?

Mukul: Some days ago, I went to attend a seminar by Mr. Gururaj Patil, an ex-employee of Co D. Though he was no longer working with Co D, he spoke at length about how Co D encouraged innovation at workplace, how it gave out a great pay, how the performance appraisal systems were flawless and transparent. All these stories told me a lot about, 'organizational culture' than anything else, like the Co D's website.

Vamsh: Yes, that right. Great stories about workplaces make up one's impression of the organizational culture of any company. Some times the stories are about the leaders, sometimes they are about events, and sometimes the stories are about the junior employees or trainees. And they have a tremendous impact on the minds of the people. They can make or break the choice of the company.

Vinay: That's quite amazing. Stories and the profound effect they have on people. Stories may

be funny, scandalous and sometimes even false, but they spread faster than aroma. Especially in India where gossip is a part of the job profile, isn't it Mukul? (Laughs)

Mukul: That is well said and is absolutely true. A survey of several IT employees stated that 69% of the employees engage in gossip with colleagues and friends from different companies and at times, reveal confidential information about the company to employees from other companies.

Vamsh: That is some amazing food for thought. At this juncture, may I take the pleasure of inviting you all to my house for lemonade? The post lemonade discussion will concentrate on difference between job and career.

Vinay: That's a great topic. I think we are going to keep discussing till dinner time.

At the house of Vamshraj Pujari,

Vamsh: Welcome to abode of the Vamsh.

Vinay: Thank you. Without wasting much time, please get us some lemonade and some Lays.

Mukul: You will never improve. Vamsh is our host, he will take care of us. Be courteous. It seems you are ordering a waiter at a hotel.

Vinay: Well, well, he is no host, he is just dost! So there is no much formality and no much protocol when I come to his house. And the same rule applies, when he visits my house.

Vamsh: Yes, you are right. We can now start discussing the next topic, which is job and career.

Vinay: I have a few points to make in this regard.

- A job is something you do simply to earn money; a career is a series of connected employment opportunities.
- A job has minimal impact on your future work life, while a career provides experience and learning to fuel your future.
- A job offers few networking opportunities, but a career is loaded with them.
- When you work at a job, you should do the minimum without annoying the boss. When you're in a career, you should go the extra mile, doing tasks beyond your minimum job description.

Mukul: That's an interesting opening to the discussion on this topic.

Vamsh: Most people seem to think that there is not much difference between a job and a career except for the fact that a career is nothing much a series of jobs.

Mukul: I think we need to view jobs and careers independently:

- Every job is a part of your career
- Every job provides skills and resources for the future

- Every job offers networking opportunities
- You should always do your best
- Career is driven by several factors which are controllable and uncontrollable in nature.

Vinay: One of faculty teaching human resources management once said, "There are good jobs, and there are bad jobs. And then there are shitty jobs. You should strive to work only at good jobs. Sometimes you'll have to endure bad in order to meet a greater goal. But you should never put up with a shitty job." He also said, "The focus today is on acquiring multiple skills and cross functionality, and not on specialization. With proper career planning, we can avoid dead end jobs. It helps us to focus on our positive and negative traits.

Planning your career basically starts after the secondary level of education. After a certain level of education, we have to decide on our careers, to be able to pursue higher education that will help us to secure good job opportunities."

Vamsh: Frankly speaking, at this stage of our careers it's important that we engage in career planning, discussions on career issues and also on career optimization. All this might lead us to the ideal career positions. Career planning helps to pave a secure path. For example, if a person wants to become a banker, they have to possess a Bachelor's degree in finance. Preplanning can help

us achieve our educational targets effectively and also helps us to evaluate our personality. In short, career planning is necessary to guide us towards a proper and safer future.

Without proper planning, we may find ourselves lost – it will also be difficult to find the job we want in the future. It motivates and drives us to accomplish the task.

A well-planned career helps us to achieve our goals and dreams. As time passes by, we grow and our needs change. Therefore, to keep pace with the future, we need to plan well ahead. It helps us to make many adjustments along the way as we keep learning throughout our lives. Successful people are those who have adopted proper career planning.

Mentors and guides play a pivotal role in this. It is an important aspect of our lives, but we should



not put too much pressure on ourselves, as that would probably discourage us from making any real, profitable choices.

Mukul: Yes, starting to do this early in your career surely acts as an advantage. A famous saying goes, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail"

Vamsh: And there are a few people who tend to think that career planning as such may not help at all. One of the blogs that I was reading recently quoted, "*We are poor at predicting what will make us happy in the future, hence its better not to try career planning with a great deal of intensity.*"

Mukul: Another argument against career planning is that "*People begin to understand that the future holds vanishingly few certainties...*"

Vinay: Well, what steps do you think we need to take to ensure that we are on the right track, and towards a great future?

Vamsh: There is no standard SOP in this case. Each person has to travel a different path. On the trail, he discovers his loopholes, understands where he lacks, and gets a grasp of what he can do in order to succeed.

Vamsh: to sum up, he has to concentrate on adding to his soft skills and his technical skills or domain skills.

Vinay: Definitely, with a strong will to succeed and consistent efforts in the chosen area, any person can win.

Vamsh: I think there are some key considerations that play a great role too. In terms of your career, you need to engage in the following:

- Periodic Introspection
- Minor Changes
- In rare cases, major changes

It becomes important to ask your self, if you're happy with the job you're doing. Periodic introspection helps you understand your loopholes better, you can improve on your blind spots, make any minor corrections if necessary, like a change in your selling approach, a new database management technique etc, and also if you also may have to take some major decisions like a change in your domain, a change of company etc. If these decisions are taken at the right time, they help you to carve a niche for yourself and prove your mettle.

A recent report by Globalhrstudio stated that nearly 47% of people have faced a mid-life career crisis. Nearly 27% of people have stated that they changed their domain or vertical of work in the first three years. Surprisingly, over 65% of the people said that they need to upgrade their skills to be promoted to the next level in their jobs.

This piece of information gives a lot of food for thought and underlines the importance of diligent job selection and meticulous career planning. All our lives, we are in pursuit of a successful career.

Mukul: Hey guys don't forget the marginal influence of the 'luck' factor. That's how Vinay got into the IIM's (Laughs)

Vinay: You are right and that's what got your business ticking isn't it?

Mukul: No, I was kidding. Luck is just an excuse for non-achievers and a sign of humility for achievers.

Vamsh: That's such a stark truth. Luck is after all an unplanned, uncontrollable and un-accounted factor.

Vinay: I wonder why people still get birth stones; believe in wearing a particular color of clothing for being lucky, wait for the right time which they think is lucky before beginning any activity and so on.

Vamsh: I think that's more of a psychological comfort factor. People feel psychologically comfortable and better prepared to perform in those circumstances because they tend to think it's favorable.

Mukul: All said and done, this discussion has been a really engaging and interesting one. In fact this discussion has been as good as a guide book.

Vinay: Yes, and I guess this will surely help us select better jobs and make better career decisions.

Vamsh: I wonder how we ended up deciding on this kind of a topic. Our usual topics of discussions include bollywood, cricket and scandals. In rare

cases we discuss politics. I think this is the first time we have discussed something of real relevance to our lives.

Vinay: Ok guys , time for the break, lets go and grab some burgers and soda!!!

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Questions for class room discussion :

- 1) Have Mukul, Vamsh and Vinay taken the right decisions after completing their graduation?
- 2) Which character from the case do you recognize yourself the most? Why?
- 3) Differentiate between a job and a career?
- 4) What are the different factors that need to be taken into consideration while selecting your first job?
- 5) What are the steps that companies need to take to ensure that they attract the right talent?
- 6) What is career planning and why is it important?
- 7) How can companies ensure good online reputation?
- 8) Is entrepreneurship a good option when you pass out of a B-school?
- 9) What are the different factors you need to take into consideration before starting a business?
- 10) Examine the role of social networking sites in terms of career decisions.
- 11) How can people deal with mid-career confusions and delusions?
- 12) Can luck be deciding factors in terms of your career?

Note: This case study is an original work of the author and has not been published elsewhere.