Teaching is not Training : Employability Skills

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About "75% of the engineering graduates" coming out of Indian Colleges or Universities are unemployable, a news report says. The corporate spend about "US$ 135 billion every year on training" the new recruits to make them employable, another report says.

"It takes 3-5 years to take a seasoned professional and make them fully productive" after on-boarding, yet another study reports.

Many Universities / Engineering colleges have become almost **placement centers rather than places for imparting knowledge.**
The question now comes to everyone's mind is *"Who is responsible for making the students employable?* The possible stakeholders are : the parents, the students, the university / college, the professors / teachers, the employer, and the government.
The situation is so bad that only if a college assures of placement can it expect more enrollment. How can the society, in general, and the parents, in particular, expect the universities and colleges to provide assurance about their wards' placements?

The professors are there for teaching, not for training. *Teaching is not same as training*.
The placement officers play a vital role in bridging the employment gap by arranging for campus interviews. The pressure on them is so high that many placement officers find it very difficult to sustain the placement figures every year, esp. during lean times, and are under great pressure to fudge the placement figures sometimes.

Is the "*main or basic function"* of an engineering college to provide employment or impart engineering knowledge?
While college professors are good at teaching, training may not be their forte. Employability skills need to be trained on-the-job or in a simulated job environment. Neither college atmosphere nor the curricula allow professors to take-up employability skills training besides teaching the subject matter knowledge. It's not the job of the placement officers either.

The *solution* lies in looking at the end-beneficiary of such skill-based trainings. It's obvious that the employer is the one who's going to reap the benefits of a good, productive employee. The employee earns back the money invested on him / her within 2-3 years. Although the *payback period* is longer, the *return*

on Investment (ROI) should be good enough to motivate the employers to invest on employees' training to make them employable. However, the catch comes in the form attrition.

When a fresh recruit resigns after 3 years of employment, all the skills imparted to him / her on the job to make him or her productive (or continuously employable) goes out without making much returns to the investor. From a business stand-point and considering *each human resource as an asset*, a prospective asset will throw itself into a liability for the company if it doesn't serve in the same company after the gestation period. All the money spent on that employee has to be written-off in the accounts books as sunk costs. This is where the employers think twice to spend on employees to make them employable. It is estimated that about US$ 130 billion is being spent globally every year by companies on training and development of new recruits. What is protection available to them to retain the talent that they created? Did they create the talent to let the competitor reap the benefits? Is it ethical on the part of the employee to switch over to another job when he or she has not earned the money back to the employer at least 2 or 3 times the money invested on him / her in the form of stipends, salaries, domain skills development & enhancement, perks etc?

In my opening address at the Placement Officers' Meet at one of the Engineering colleges near Chennai, as the Moderator of the Panel discussion on the topic "*Employability Skills : Is it the Responsibility of the Universities?*, I have addressed these concerns.

Please click the links below to see the video.

https://vimeo.com/105431554 (Part 1)
https://vimeo.com/106364056 (Part 2)
I look forward to seeing your comments and views on this important topic that is bothering most parents, universities, educationists and the governments worldwide.

References :
1 http://www.thehindu.com/business/75-percent-indian-engineering-students-unemployable-report/article44922.ece
2 http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/06/120613133148.htm
3 http://www.forbes.com/sites/joshbersin/2014/02/04/the-recovery-arrives-corporate-training-spend-skyrockets/
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