

**Mr. Vikas Prasad, Associate Director,
Global Technology Services, IBM India Limited**

Guest's Profile:

- Project Executive & Base Growth Leader, IBM India, Mumbai
| January 2014 – Present
- Associate Director – Managed IT Services, IBM India, Mumbai
| January 2013 – December 2013
- Country Head Sales – Business Continuity Services, IBM India, Pune
| January 2010 – December 2012
- General Manager Sales – Geo Expansion, IBM India, Bengaluru
| January 2009 – December 2009
- Regional Manager Sales – Services, IBM India,
| December 2005 – December
2008
- Regional Sales Manager, Network Solutions
| January 2002 – November 2005

Summary of the lecture

Mr. Vikas Prasad delivered a very captivating lecture to the student Managers of IMT Nagpur on the 6th of December 2014. His lecture was divided into 3 parts:

1. Process & Trends in sales and Technology industry
2. Brief about IBM's history and products
3. Career in sales

In the first part of his lecture, Mr. Prasad started off by enlightening the audience on how direct selling as a medium of lead generation has evolved over the years. He emphasized the power of social media as a major driver of B2B interactions on the web. He pointed out that with the arrival of Google in 1998, B2B companies started to focus on search engine optimization (SEO), pay-per-click (PPC) advertising and email marketing to drive traffic to their website. They also created content such as whitepapers and webinars to convert traffic into leads. Moving forward, he defined the sales process. He shed some light on the basic techniques of lead generation and prospecting. He explained the sales process with the help of two key concepts: AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) and SPANCO (Suspect, Prospect, Approach, Negotiate and Close order). The AIDA concept stated that you need to know how

much knowledge your prospects have because you want to know what you will have to tell them in order to sell to them. This is important because you want to make sure you are continuing to build interest by feeding them information they aren't aware of.

He continued- golden rule of the sales process is “Features only tell! Benefits Sell”. Then he touched upon the fact that the seller should welcome objections of the buyer because buyers want their objections out of the way so that they can say “yes” to the product/service unhesitatingly. Then he emphasized the importance of timing the close of a deal. The golden rule here being “Don't Celebrate till the deal is signed”. He then discussed the trends and forces shaping the need for predictive modeling in sales, and the mechanics of how to implement predictive models today. He then touched upon the recent trends in the technology industry that impact sales. Major trends highlighted by him included ‘The Internet of Things’, ‘3-D Printing’, ‘Context-Rich Systems’, ‘Cloud/ Computing’ and ‘Risk-Based Security and Self-Protection’.

In the 2nd part of his presentation, Mr. Vikas spoke briefly about IBM's business structure and in the final part of his presentation he spoke about the most coveted topic in the mind of the audience- “Career in Sales”. He busted all the myths around a sales career and addressed the pre-conceived notions held by a sales enthusiast. He highlighted the merits of a sales career:

- **It is challenging-** Getting people to buy from me versus my competition is a constant challenge in this field.
- **Provides great degree of freedom/flexibility-** You are not supposed to be stuck in a cubicle all day
- **Allows you to make a difference-** Your product or service is helping other businesses make money, save money or mitigate risk.
- **Allows you to solve problems-** As a Sales person your role is to identify your client's problems and offer them the best solution to match their needs.

He concluded his talk by sharing some tips that worked for him in his corporate career. The most influential out of these being the “80/20 thinking rule”. As per this rule, in most cases, there is a scenario where 20% of the work contributes to 80% of the impact. We need to find this 20% to be successful. In the end he summarized his mantra for life as: “Effort is important, but knowing where to make an effort in your life makes all the difference”