

## Alumnus in Focus: May 2016



**Yogesh Chordia**  
(PGDM Batch: 2007-2009)

**Current Affiliation: Co-owner of Rajdeep Investments, Sumerchand & Co.**

Excerpts from the interview,

**Alcom: Tell us about your life at IFMR.-Memories & Experiences.**

**Yogesh:** *IFMR was a life changing experience; it was a period of self-discovery! It was also a humbling experience, we had high achievers from various fields while I was a run of the mill commerce graduate without any work experience or any great achievement under my belt and that made me feel insecure, it was as if I had to put ten times the effort during the two years to carve a name for myself, to have an identity, to stand out in the crowd. Imagine being a student at an institute that had people from the length & breadth of the country, from backgrounds as diverse as lawyer, merchant navy, cost accountant, FIDE ranked chess players, hotel management, state level gold medalists, and many others among the high achieving engineers, IT professionals, and economics experts. It was a great classroom set up we had got, the right mix of people with different views providing an excellent opportunity for many meaningful discussions and learning.*

**Alcom: What other opportunities did IFMR provide you besides education (in terms of extracurricular activities, personality development)?**

**Yogesh:** *IFMR provided a fantastic platform to meet/ hear and know highly successful people both from the industry and the research community. Right from inception of the course we had opportunities to work with organizations like Dun & Bradstreet, UCAL Fuels systems among many others. We had the opportunity to work on a comprehensive project with Banyan - an NGO that takes care of mentally ill destitute people. We had a social service club Samarthan, through which we conducted various events including blood donation camps, eye checkup camps, visiting NGO New Life charitable trust every year and spending a day with kids. We started Lakshmi Bal Mahotsav, where children from 4-5 NGOs would spend a fun filled day at our campus. We also*

*had mandatory sessions on soft skills to make us better prepared for the industry, and that really helped.*

**Alcom: Tell us know about your most memorable event at IFMR.**

*Yogesh: Every single day during the 2 years at IFMR was memorable, you could pick a date and I could probably tell you what happened on that day or week. Every day brought up a new challenge, or a new opportunity, a new debate or a new reason to celebrate. Having said that, there were moments that stood out and some of them are fresh even today. Our first recruiter for that years placement process, Lehmann Brothers, was supposed to visit our campus for the first time ever for recruitment and it was supposed to be on 16th September 2008 at 10 am at the APEEJAY Business Centre on Haddows Road, it had filed for chapter 11 on 15th September 2008. Our aspirations were shattered and to add to the misery even our regular recruiters declined from recruiting in such turbulent times. It took a lot of hard work, determination and backing each other that saw our batch through as everyone was placed over a period, though our CTC's had almost halved compared to our immediate seniors and job offers per person became an irrelevant term in comparison to it being a prominent jargon during the preceding years in the business schools.*

**Alcom: Who was/were your favorite professor(s)? Why?**

*Yogesh: Professor Raghu Raman has been a favorite of many people across batches, even people who hardly cared about a subject as mundane as organizational behavior, professor Raghu made the topic of discussion interesting and meaningful. Though I majored in finance at IFMR, there was one marketing elective that I chose which was the most taxing course in the entire 2 years, it was taken by Professor TN Swaminathan, every class would require a pre study of about 200-300 pages of material, a session would be entirely student driven, Professor Swaminathan would just provide direction to the discussion and critique the ideas thrown by the students. If he was not satisfied with our analysis of a case study he would make us re-do the same till we found the right approach to solve a case. Another gem at IFMR was Professor R L Shankar, he made the sessions on derivatives really interesting. Every faculty at IFMR strived to make their session a unique learning experience with their own ways of pushing us towards deriving solutions to problems that we were supposed to face in the real world.*

**Alcom: What are the work life challenges you face today?**

*Yogesh: I am a strong believer in Randi Zuckerberg's theory of –Pick 3 from - Maintaining friendships. Building a great company. Spending time with family. Staying fit. Getting sleep. For any successful individual it is a challenge to strike a balance between these things, it's a matter of prioritization and one must give his best at 3 of them while managing the remaining 2.*

**Alcom: How did IFMR help you cope with the challenges at work/ key learnings at IFMR?**

**Yogesh:** *At IFMR we were exposed to all sorts of things, apart from the rigor in the course, we were exposed to various things which helped us face the toughest challenges in life and at work. Apart from the usual case discussions, guest lectures, student activities and the industry visits, there were few things which I believe gave us an edge at IFMR. We had a course called 'Journey to self' run by Prof. Vijayalakshmi and Mr. Dave Wallack, which helped me deeply understand who I was, what I thought about myself vis a vis who I was, what my peers thought about who I was and who I could become. The entire course was run like a workshop with open dialogue and the faculty acted as facilitators during the entire course. The fact that we passed out during turbulent times in the world economy made us really strong to face any kind of challenges in our life & career.*

**Alcom: Any message or suggestion/tips for the budding managers at IFMR?**

**Yogesh:** *If you think your MBA is going to be of any advantage to you with respect to your peers in your future company then you are wrong, as all your colleagues are going to be at least as educated as you, so it is more or less going to be a level playing field.*

*Your real test will begin the moment you walk out of the business school, the work ethic that you develop, the skills that you build, the extra mile that you are willing to walk, the amount of focus you have are some things that will take you to great places & positions.*

*Make the most out of your 2 years at the business school, to particularly get things beyond the MBA degree; all your peers are going to achieve that. What else is it that you are deriving out of this program? There are tons of things you can gain from your 2 years at IFMR, as long as you are willing to!*

- *Walk up to a faculty, ask if you can assist them in some research project, it may turn out they are indeed looking out for someone!*
- *Your B-School Library is a World Bank depository, how much time do you spend there?*
- *You have the sharpest minds in the campus as your batch mates, seniors & juniors, how many times have you collaborated with a variety of them? Do you think you can ever again in life get a chance to team up with such a diverse group so easily?*
- *If you ever wanted to be an entrepreneur, why not sow the seeds of that idea now? You have the best critics and mentors you can hire around you, why not use their expertise that too free of cost?!*

*B-School life is not just about the courses, assignments, placements and the usual stuff; it provides you a larger opportunity to build yourself as an individual who knows how to maximize learnings, build skills, and nurture relationships. While you are still not stuck with a 9-5 job, make the most of it!*

**Alcom: Your future plans.**

**Yogesh:** *To make and be a part of a strong alumni base of a business school that has a lot to offer to all its stakeholders, past, present and future!*