

# Back to school: Start-up CEOs on a learning drive

**Want to be trained in business and leadership skills**

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For start-up entrepreneur Sunil Reddy, business and books are most lovable things in life.

He started his own business, Hazzel Dairy Products, right after his graduation in engineering and learnt business books and practice.

“But with time, I felt an increasing need for structured learning and meaningful discussions with knowledgeable people,” Reddy who took a break from business to join Indian School of Business (ISB) for his MBA, told *BusinessLine*.

He is not alone and there has been increasing number of start-up executives knock-

ing the doors of business schools for different courses.

In ISB, for instance, there are 21 students who are entrepreneurs of this kind in the on-going class of 2016. Though numbers vary, our enquiries with Great Lakes Institute of Management, Woxsen School of Business, ICFAI Business School (IBS) and Institute of Management Technology (IMT), among others, do confirm a similar trend.

### Key drivers

There are varied reasons for this tendency. For many including Reddy, an opportunity to learn innovative business models in academic programmes is vital in this age of ‘cut

throat’ competition. “Most of the start-ups are being floated by engineers. Though good in technology, they lack business and leadership strategies and wish to bridge the gap by joining executive programmes,” said S Venkata Seshaiyah, Director, IBS campus, here. Those who cannot afford to

join full time courses prefer to take up specialised programmes as is the case with Great Lakes, which is witnessing growing demand for its executive education programmes.

The need for a seamless transition from functional roles to general management responsibilities is also

driving young entrepreneurs learn in a formal mode, observed RS Veeravalli, Director, Executive MBA, Great Lakes.

Apart from academics, peer learning and networking opportunities are other important takeaways from

these programmes for start-up leaders.

### Investors

According to Amitesh Gir, Director, Centre for Executive Education and Consulting, Woxsen School of Business, the need to build up a profile is also drawing them to courses.

“After proof of concept stage in a venture, investors will also see the profile and qualifications of the team leaders to confirm their ability to lead the businesses. An exposure to a management programme will help later rounds of funding,” he said.

As pointed out by Dhanjay Singh, Chairperson, Admissions at IMT here, infant companies are also coming forward to sponsor executive courses for their promising team leaders.

