

ACUMEN 2005



# Super Achievers In Delhi Durbar

A round-up of the National Finals of the *Business Today-Aditya Birla Group Acumen 2005*, held in association with Tata Consultancy Services.

**T**HE DAY OF THE ACUMEN 2005 national finals dawned crisp and cold. The stage was set at Uppal's Orchid, a charming resort nestled amidst greenery near the Indira Gandhi International Airport. Nattily dressed MBA students could be seen around, some biting their nails in anticipation of the "battles" ahead, and others rehearsing their debate arguments. The day started off with the master of ceremonies Karishma Mansata welcoming everybody to the *Business Today-Aditya Birla Group Acumen 2005* national fi-



nals, in association with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). She then invited Harsha Bhogle, the popular cricket commentator and host of Acumen 2005, on stage, and who kicked off the day's programme by calling on stage Sanjoy Narayan, Editor, *Business Today*, for a welcome speech.

The first semi-finals of the

debate started off on a thrilling note. The topic was "Manufacturing is the real measure of an economy's health, not services..." and was held between the West Zone regional winners Symbiosis Centre for Management and Human Resource Development, Pune (SCMHRD), represented by Anish Basu Roy and Gautam Narang, and South Zone regional winners Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode (IIM-K), represented by Anudeep Nagalia and Saurabh Sharma. The debate was extremely spirited, with IIM-K quite obviously bowled over by India's IT prowess when SCMHRD



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equated the manufacturing sector to a human bodies' pulmonary system and services to the nervous system. Questions about manufacturing being a regulated sector and, therefore, suffering from stunted growth, were raised by the judges who were extremely rigorous in their questioning. SCMHRD agreed wholeheartedly by saying that services had grown by default and not design, whereas IIM-K raised the point that it is indeed the disposable income available to the people in the services' sector that creates demand for manufactured goods. The result: SCMHRD advanced to the finals with their advocacy of old economy and manufacturing.

The second semi-final debate of the day was an intriguing "It's not innovation that matters but execution..." The B-schools in the fray were North Zone regional winners Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad (IMT),

## DEBATE

<b>Winner</b> IMT-Ghaziabad (Top Left) <b>Varun Malhotra and Mayank Mishra</b>	<b>1st Runner-up</b> SCMHRD (Top right) <b>Gautam Narang and Anish Basu Roy</b>
<b>2nd Runner-up</b> IIM-Calcutta <b>Abhimanyu and Abhimanyu Ganesh</b>	<b>3rd Runner-up</b> IIM-Kozhikode <b>Anudeep Nagalia and Saurabh Sharma</b>



**Judges Day Out:** Shailesh Dobhal, Associate Editor, *Business Today*, Shekhar Banerjee, Vice President, Marketing & Communications, Tata Infotech, Charles Barney Jenurius, CEO, Carat India, and Jayant Dua, CEO, Birla NGK Insulators, Aditya Birla Group.

represented by Mayank Mishra and Varun Malhotra, who got vociferous home support, and East Zone regional winners Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta (IIM-C) with Abhimanyu and Abhimanyu Ganesh. The latter supported the topic with examples of supposed failures by Apple and Philips that were vehemently opposed by IMT, whose team ingeniously called 'good innovation' a three-step process that includes innovation, implementation and execution. IIM-C raised quite a furore about the inclusion of execution in innovation, but IMT retorted with a quick reply: Karsanbhai Patel. The man who took on the FMCG giants with an innovative sales strategy combining innovation in an idea and its execution was ample defence. IMT raised another pertinent point in their rebuttal—why do marketing managers get paid more than sales managers if execution is more important?





This was in response to a judge's question—Is the creation of man an act of innovation or execution? IIM-C called man a great innovation gone wrong during execution. The innovative IMT team went on to win and met SCMHRD in the finals.

The National B-school Quiz finals saw four teams, with three of them from IIM-Ahmedabad (Adwaita Chaudhuri and Devadas Krishnan), Bangalore (Swaminathan G. and Thejaswi Udupa) and Calcutta (Apoorva Oza and Satyajit Dixit). The lone ranger representing North Zone B-schools was Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Delhi (IIFT), represented by Sumeet Kaul and Avinash Kumar. Questions ranged from—Who can rightfully claim to be reading *Playboy* for its articles to who was the first man to have appeared in a Lux ad? The answers of course being the Braille edition and Paul Newman, respectively. The

## B-SCHOOL QUIZ

### Winner

IIM-Bangalore (Top Left)  
**Swaminathan G.  
and Tejaswi Udupa K.**

### 1st Runner-up

IIM Ahmedabad  
**Adwaita R. Chaudhuri  
and Devadas Krishnan**

### 2nd Runner-up

IIM-Calcutta (Top Right)  
**Apoorva Oza and  
Satyajit C. Dixit**

### 3rd Runner-up

IIFT, Delhi  
**Sumeet Kaul  
and Avinash Kumar**



**Rapt attention:** The audience is all ears as contestants vie for their moment of glory

first few rounds of Straight Bat and Hawk Eye saw IIFT racing off to a good start but the round of BT Cover Story saw them take a few risks and lag behind. Questions like— What was the subject of the Rolling Stones' song '*Mother's little Helper*' and which automobile gained prominence during operation desert storm had the audience whispering answers Valium and Hummer, prompting a rap on the (imaginary) knuckles from quizmaster Bhogle.

The round of TCS Go For It saw all teams floundering, except IIM Bangalore, which took a lead in this round, never to look back. Aditya Birla Group Clean Sweep, Bookie's Corner, Turning Track and Slog Overs saw IIM-A catch up from a dismal last to a respectable second.

### B-school Debate Final

The Acumen Debate Final between Institute of Management Technology,



Ghaziabad, and Symbiosis Centre for Management and Human Resource Development (SCMHRD), Pune, lived up to the grand finale image, with both the teams giving their debating best. The topic, ‘Globalisation benefits only the developed countries’ was apt, given the backdrop of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial in Hong Kong.

SCMHRD, speaking for the motion, argued that it’s an unequal relationship, and that the developed world keeps the developing world just about sufficiently interested and engaged in multilateral trade, and that the developing world just gets to have the crumbs thrown at it by bodies such as the WTO. Not very convincing, but then it was difficult for anyone to argue forcefully in favour of such a topic, and SCMHRD’s Anish Basu Roy and Gautam Narang were no Noam Chomsky or Joseph Stigler.

Speaking against the topic, the IMT team of Mayank Mishra and Varun Malhotra argued very impressively and with relevant exam-

## ALUMNI QUIZ

**Winner** (Top left)

**Prashad Shetty,**  
Kotak Life Insurance/ Kousali Institute  
of Management  
**A.P. Alagarsamy,**  
ICICI Bank/ Osmania University

**1st Runner-up** (Top Right)

**Subhendu Roy,**  
ICICI Bank/ IIFT  
**Tathagata Chatterjee,**  
Rediffusion DY&R/ Indian Institute of  
Social Welfare & Business Management

**2nd Runner-up**

**Arvind K,** SBI/ IIM-Lucknow  
**Shiju Thomas,**  
Bases/ IIM-Bangalore

**3rd Runner-up**

**Rathindra Basu,**  
ESPN Star Sports/ IIM-Calcutta  
**Sanjay Verma,**  
Cushman & Wakefield/ Management  
Development Institute, Delhi

ples such as McDonald’s creating jobs for Indians, that globalisation benefits everyone involved, and that the skeptics tend to confuse and play on the relative benefits accruing to the developed and the developing world to present a distorted picture.

The tough part for the participants, however, was taking on questions from the four judges: Sanrupt Misra, Director, Aditya Birla Management Corporation Limited, Jayant Pendharkar, Vice President (Marketing), Tata Consultancy Services, Krishan Dhawan, Managing Director, Oracle India, and Sanjoy Narayan, Editor, *Business Today*. If it was not for globalisation, how could the IT and ITES benefits accrue to India, asked Mr Narayan to the SCMHRD team? And “how can you defend a body and its processes, when even its decision-making process is unequal?” asked Dr Misra to IMT on WTO? In a fiercely contested final, it was IMT Ghaziabad that came out winners of the *Business Today* Acumen Debate Final 2005.



## WINNING MOMENTS



**Acumen 2005 National Finals Debate Winners:** Varun Malhotra and Mayank Mishra receiving Acumen Trophy from Sachin Pilot, MP and alumni, Wharton Business School, and Mr Jayant Pendharkar, Vice President (Marketing), TCS, as Dr Sanrupt Misra, Director, Aditya Birla Management Corporation, looks on



**Acumen 2005 National Finals B-school Quiz Winners:** G. Swaminathan and Thejaswi Udupa receiving prizes from Dr Sanrupt Misra



**Acumen 2005 National Finals B-school Quiz First Runners-up:** (L-R) Devadas Krishnan, Mr Jayant Pendharkar, Mr Sachin Pilot, Dr Sanrupt Misra, Mr Pavan Varshnei, Publishing Director, *Business Today*, and Adwaita Chaudhuri

### Alumni Quiz Final

The Acumen Alumni Quiz Final was a cracker of sorts. With the four teams—each representing North, South, East and West—at their professional best, the questions from quizmaster Harsha Bhogle came in fast and thick, with many a question going abegging for answer. Sample some really weird questions: Why is the euro 500 denomination note called a Bin Laden in Italy? Because, though it exists, no one has seen it lately. Which cult-classic Hollywood film is infamous for virtually cursing most brands, such as Atari, Bell and Coca-Cola, associated with it? *Blade Runner*. Which beer brand is named for an Archangel in Christian & Jewish mythology who only appears in the Biblical *Book of Daniel*? San Miguel. Arthur Conan Doyle once wrote an article about



**Grand Audience Prize Winner:** Abhishek Matha receiving the Yamaha Fazer Bike key from Harsha Bhogle

**FROM THE PODIUM**



Sachin Pilot, Member of Parliament, Chief Guest, Acumen 2005



Dr Santrupt Misra, Director, Aditya Birla Management Corporation Limited



Sanjoy Narayan, Editor, *Business Today*

skiing in this Swiss winter sports town, which is often recommended to patients recovering from lung disease. Which town? Davos.

And though the teams were very competitive, the tone and tenor of the competition was relaxed.

The team from South Zone,

**Acumen 2005 Googlies**

Till 1963, this company made only tractors. According to legend, the owner, a sports car collector, met Enzo Ferrari at a party and pointed out several flaws in Ferrari's designs. Enraged Enzo retored, "If you don't like the way I build my cars, why don't you go build one in that tractor factory of yours." The owner took up the challenge and which marquee resulted? Lamborghini by Ferruccio Lamborghini.

McKinsey once set up a project to answer one question, "if we're so smart at generating great ideas, why are clients having problems implementing them?" The informal core group of 15 to 20 people who worked on the project between 1977 and 1981 had a star, Rajat Gupta. This study was later spun off into what? The bestselling "*In Search of Excellence*" by Tom Peters and Bob Waterman (both McKinseyites).

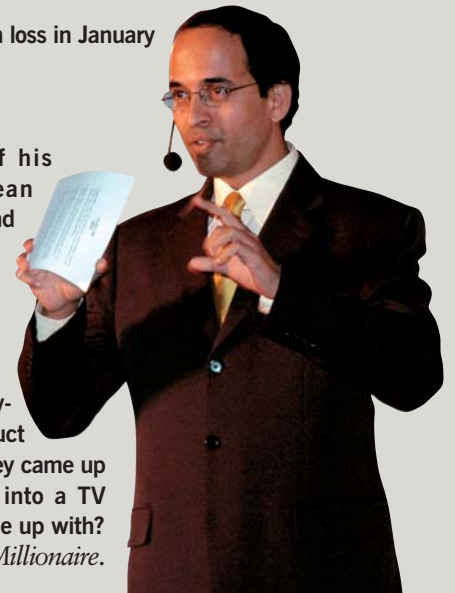
In 2003, Steve Ballmer wrote a memo to his employees in which he famously stated "We've met the enemy, and its X". What is X? Linux.

Between the years 1916-1931, which currency was the legal tender in what is now Iraq? The Indian rupee.

Which company posted a record \$98.7 billion loss in January 2003, the biggest in corporate history? AOL Time Warner

In 2005, who spent \$200 million of his fortune upgrading the Central European University, a graduate school he helped found in Budapest in 1991. This is the second largest endowment in European history after Oxford? George Soros.

In 1999, Group M—a WPP global media-buying company wanted to push AT&T's product awareness. Since traditional ads cost a lot, they came up with a product placement that was built into a TV programme. What brilliant idea did they come up with? The phone-a-friend in *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*.



represented by Prasad Shetty and A. P. Alagarsamy, finally pipped the team from the East, represented by Subhendu Roy and Tathagata Chatterjee, to emerge winners.

The event's chief guest, Congress MP, Sachin Pilot, an alumni of Wharton Business

School, Mr Pavan Varshnei, Publishing Director, *Business Today*, Dr Santrupt Misra, Director, Aditya Birla Management Corporation, Mr Jayant Pendharkar, Vice President (Marketing), TCS, Sanjoy Narayan, Editor, *Business Today*, gave away the prizes. ■