

Ajantha S. Dharmasiri

Prof. Ajantha S. Dharmasiri is the Director and Chairman of the Board of Management of the Postgraduate Institute of Management (PIM). He also serves as an Adjunct Professor in the Division of Management and Entrepreneurship, Prince College of Business, University of Oklahoma, USA. He has been associating with Prof. Liyanage for almost two decades.



“Thumbs Up” for the Nation’s “Management Mentor”

Three decades of excellence is what exhibits the evolution of the PIM. Its journey of continuous progress has impacted many individuals and institutions alike. I am humbly happy to be one such beneficiary in sharing my random thoughts on my management alma mater.

My association with the PIM goes back to almost two decades, considering the multiple involvements as a student, visiting faculty, consultant, lecturer, researcher, trainer and the leader. For me, the PIM has always been a sacred place for serene transformation. I myself changed immensely thanks to my association

with the nation’s **“management mentor”**.

I would like to reflect on my transformational tenure with the PIM referring to seven action dimensions. In a nutshell, they are, *waking up, shaking up, brushing up, linking up, looking up, growing up, and cheering up*. Let me take you through them.

1. Wake Up

The PIM challenged me to wake up in identifying my management potential. Having studied electrical engineering and having worked as

a plant engineer, I saw the precious pathway in management looming large. Shifting to human resource management and strengthening its conceptual core was possible thanks to the PIM. Transitioning from being an “engineer of electrical” to an “engineer of hearts and minds” was possible because of such an awakening.

2. Shake Up

The PIM taught me to challenge the assumptions. It was a shaking up in thinking and acting in seeing new realities with fresh eyes. Moving from conventional thinking that led to conservative actions to critical

thinking that led to creative actions has been very much the case. I started asking three questions more and more: “What’s new? What’s next? What’s better?”

3. Brush Up

Even though my first degree in engineering covered some subjects of management, the real crux coated with current reality was on offer at the PIM. It was a case of brushing up my fundamentals of management: “know-what”, “know-how” and “know-why”. Thanks to the competent and committed faculty we had with a rich blend of industrial experience and intellectual expertise, brushing up of what I already had in me was made possible.

4. Link Up

The PIM has always been a rich social network for me. With an assortment of programmes including MBA, MPA and PhD, it draws a diverse student community. Linking up with such a multitude of managers was a treasure for me. I still maintain warm relationships with some of those who did MBA with me way back in 1998. Moreover the vast alumni of the PIM, consisting of more than 200 CEOs, 3000 senior directors and easily over 4000 managers is an excellent opportunity to link up.

5. Look Up

I have been always having the practice of looking up to the PIM for advice and guidance. The veteran PIM faculty provided me with numerous assistance as true coaches. Such gestures not only moulded me in my management approach, but also planted the seed in becoming

one such mentor for needy others. As the leader representing the third generation of the PIM, I continuously seek advice and guidance from my management teachers who are still serving on the PIM faculty.

6. Grow Up

I have been growing up with the PIM right through. It was a partnering to grow together. From the three programmes we had during our study times (MBA, MPA and PhD), now the PIM tree has grown with a wider spread of branches including such courses as MBA in Taxation (MBA-T), MBA in Customs and International Trade (MBA-CIT), MPA in E-Governance (MPA – EG) and Executive MBA (EMBA). The PIM has expanded its wings beyond Sri Lanka in offering blended learning programmes to student communities currently in Dubai, the UAE and Doha, Qatar and very soon in Muscat and Oman. I am humbly happy to initiate and involve in the accreditation process with the AACSB (The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) which paves way to grow up exponentially.

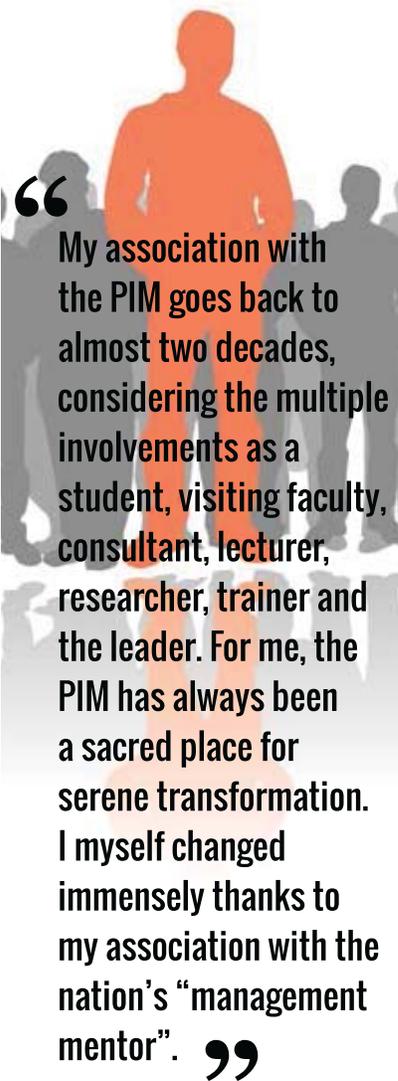
7. Cheer Up

For me, it has always been a positive and progressive association with the PIM. Having taken over its reins as the acting director on July 10, 2014, and having been appointed as the director on May 7, 2015, it gives me a scope to cheer up. I have been provided with an opportunity to be a servant leader which I enjoy experiencing. A key challenge is to sustain such momentum with shared enthusiasm.

Having discussed the seven ups, I think they collectively contribute towards the PIM to move up into greater heights. Having formulated a

Vision of becoming a centre for management excellence in South Asia, my task is to lead an empowered and engaged community comprising academics as well as non-academics to excel in all endeavours. With three core values of the PIM, namely, Passion, Integrity and Mindfulness, being practised, we can build the edifice of excellence with teaching, research, partnerships, sustainability and governance as its key pillars.

I commit myself in serving the deserving community by navigating the *nation’s management mentor* towards more meaningful magnitudes.



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