

# *Madras Management Association - Managing Diversity, Growth and Excellence*

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The case traces the journey of Madras Management Association (MMA) from its inception, its achievement as it climbs up the path of success to the challenges currently it is facing. MMA is the largest affiliate of the All India Management Association. This case presents a comprehensive and vivid picture of the growth of MMA and how it has contributed in developing professional and managerial skills in various business domains.

MMA came into existence in 1956 with the aim of spreading management education in Chennai (Madras). It was run by a Managing Committee having members not more than 21 including 5 ex-officio members. Members of MMA were its main stakeholders and they offered financial support, added brand-value and provided feedback to improve its performance. Since its inception MMA had been successful in attracting various eminent individuals and big corporations.

MMA published a monthly magazine, *Business Mandate*, with a focus on spreading management knowledge from several industry experts to its stakeholders. It had been able to attract articles from eminent personalities from various fields of management. The Magazine also included the details of MMA activities of the subsequent two months. They always tried to exceed the expectation of all nine categories of members and indulged into various kinds of activities such as

- Professional Development
- Continuing Education
- Training and Development
- Annual Conventions

MMA conducted many activities to cater to the needs of different categories of members, such as workshops, discussions, lectures, and seminars. It also gave away many awards to recognize and encourage the innovative thinking in the management arena. Award winners

were supposed to come in person to get the prize, and share their experiences followed by discussion sessions. Therefore, these awards provided a ground for sharing and dissipating learning among stakeholders. In addition to all these, MMA started various unique ventures like, MMA-KAS Project on Entrepreneurship Development, Business School, Postgraduate Certificate Programme in Business Management and creating to the needs of other institutions. Apart from increasing the scope and domain of its activities, it also diversified geographically by going beyond Chennai.

The MMA had been able to maintain surplus funds from various sources like conventions, subscription and membership fees and from other individual centres. In the year 2006-07 it has adopted the strategy of being financially self-sufficient and self-sustainable. It had used technology in its day-to-day management and for dissipating knowledge.

Any organization can survive by meeting and exceeding the expectation of its stakeholders on a sustainable basis. In past MMA was able to meet the expectation of its stakeholders but in the context of changing business environment, will it be able to sustain the same; it is certainly a big question. Before attempting to satisfy the expectation of its members, MMA needed to do profiling of its member based on expectations. This case can be used to highlight the necessity of knowing and understanding the needs and expectations of various customers and stakeholders so that an organization can meet them effectively.

Presently, there are nine types of membership, mostly based on how the membership is obtained. But this categorization criterion does not tell much about the expectations of different membership class/categories. For example, the expectations of associate members, individual members and professional individual members may overlap. It may be better if profiling is

done based on the expectations rather than the manner in which they are inducted. Categorization, for individuals, can be done like students, professional at various levels, entrepreneur, professional from small and medium size companies. The expectations and needs of each category should be explored and debated in detail to reach at a comprehensive list. There can be many expectations that will cut across all the categories and they can be kept in a common pool. There is currently one category in the institutional domain. Similar ways of categorization can also be done in the case of institutions.

MMA needs to tailor its activities to achieve its mission and objectives. Currently MMA invites local and national professionals to share their experience and learning. But to achieve the objective of bringing international management thought and practices to synthesize them with Indian ethos, MMA should invite international experts and conduct seminars and discussions and try to find out the ways in which international practices can be adopted in Indian scenario.

MMA should work in the direction of developing entrepreneurship. It should give an annual award for the best business potential. At the same time, it can invite eminent industrialist and can attract capital from venture capitalists by capitalising on its brand value. This, in fact, will be an important step in achieving one

of their missions of helping individuals actualizing their potential.

In the era of globalization, when the world is shrinking due to rapid development in information technology and communication, MMA should emphasise more on collaborating with other international associations. It can organize seminars and discussion panels where experts can discuss and exchange their views regarding contemporary managerial issues which Indian businesses are facing. It can also tie up with regional association and achieve the scale of economies and will be able to prune the costs. MMA is already moving in that direction by its 'go beyond Chennai' approach.

There are many things MMA should learn from its glorious half a century past. It had been successful because it had always stayed tuned to environmental changes and adapted its offering accordingly. It had been able to attract competent and committed personnel. It had focused more on activities rather than creating affiliations with eminent personalities in various management fields.

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Anything that makes weak - physically, intellectually and spiritually, reject it as poison.

- *Swami Vivekananda*