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## Context to the nugget

People often equate Consumer Goods with Sales and Marketing. Finding your first job after an MBA can be confusing with people often resorting to using compensation as the sorting factor. Prakash sheds some light on how people could think about a career in Consumer Goods.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Since you pursued a consumer goods path, any insights on the questions people should ask themselves to determine if a path down that road would make sense? If you look at people that joined the consumer goods path and people that dropped off at some point in time, is there any pattern that emerges in terms of what did not work out for them?

Prakash Iyer (PI): I used to think that the industry specific is not such a big variable, and if you find the work that you enjoy and the challenges that you have, then the product could be different. So, whether it was a consumer product or industrial one or a financial services product may not have made a difference. But having said that, the reality is that there is a difference. I do remember how, if you decided to go and sell soap, you then ended up being in small town India, going across to rural markets, which is not everybody's idea for a great life. Not everyone says, I went to one of the better business schools in this country to then go to places where the good life isn't really there. There are friends of yours who are saying, oh, you know I was passing through Singapore when I met this other friend of ours who's going to do this deal in Hong Kong and we were hoping to catch up in London. And you're saying, yeah, but, you know, as I went from Jalpaiguri to Asansol life is very different. So, are you comfortable with the idea? If you are, then, hey, I think, consumer products is for you.

If you're comfortable with the idea of being able to talk to a distributor in a language you don't understand and trying to convince them to buy some more soap because you know that eventually that's also something that will be of use to you in your career if you're good with that, consumer products might be for you. But if you're not and if you're really looking for other things in life, then, maybe, you're cut out for other stuff. But I still say this, that you could be in another business but you still need to understand your customer. You still need to spend time with your customer. You still need to be willing to do the hard yards, do the dirty work, do the small stuff, because that will then equip you when your turn comes to play the role of a leader. There are no shortcuts and I don't think it's a good idea to take a double promotion and say, you know what, and I don't want to do the tough bit first. I'll just go and become a leader straight away. That won't work. You can choose your industry segment. Hard work isn't an option, I think.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: To build on what Prakash says, this comes back to having a clear sense of what the day in a life looks like for a career path and not just going by what courses you liked on campus. So, talking to a few alumni who have gone on that path helps. Also talking to people at different points helps. People who are 1 year out have a different perspective from people that are 5 years out or 20 years out. It is also worth having that talk to people who have been on that path and also talk to people at different stages of that path will give enough insights for you to be more considered when you make the career choice.

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## End of nugget transcription

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## About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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