



Gajender Sharma – HEC MBA 2008

A 16-month program was the ideal option for me

For me, the 16-month length was perfect, because I was a little hesitant to start a two-year program: I had already worked for 8 or 9 years, and I didn't want to spend a lot of time earning my MBA. I wanted to take advantage of the academic and extracurricular opportunities at HEC, and I felt that 16 months would give me time to do that. One of the reasons I came to HEC was that I wanted to learn French, and I felt that 16 months would give me time to take intensive courses and become fluent in this language. The length of the program gives you time to learn the language, and if you're motivated, you can really master it.

MBA Council: working with a diverse team to create change

I have a background in community development: I served as General Secretary of the Indian Professionals Association, a community that works to establish links between France and India, from both a cultural and business perspective. In 2004, I founded a group called the International Association for Cross-Cultural Activities. The idea behind these groups was to bring people from different nationalities together, in order to help them better understand each other and break down cultural barriers. I thought that joining the MBA Council was a very good platform to draw on this background and work with a diverse team to create change. For me, being part of the Council has been a real learning experience: I learned how to manage conflict, in order to make decisions and take initiatives.

I feel empowered now because I'm armed with knowledge

During the Core Phase, we develop a fundamental understanding of subjects like Finance and Economics. Now, I'm in the Personalized Phase, and it's interesting to see how we are transporting all of this learning into our strategic work. When I did my internship with Renault, I really saw how useful this core knowledge base is – how it had completely changed my way of looking at things. I also realized how much confidence I had gained through this fundamental training: after eight months of core courses, you really have a lot of confidence in your understanding of the various subjects. I feel empowered now because I'm armed with knowledge, and I know that, when I say something, people will listen.

Participating in an exchange will add value to my profile

One of the reasons I decided to participate in an exchange with NYU Stern is that New York has been on my mind for a long time. I lived and worked in Japan before coming to France in 2004 and, before that, I was in India. The US was always on my list, but somehow I missed it! New York is interesting because it's quite cosmopolitan. Diversity is really what attracts and excites me, and I've heard that there are more than 130 countries represented in the New York. Participating in an exchange with a finance-specialized school will add a lot of value to my profile, since I want to combine strategy with finance and assume a general management or consultancy role in the future.