

Inbox

From Das's desk

WHEN DEAN NOHRIA ASKED ME TO TAKE OVER THE ROLE OF Senior Associate Dean of External Relations from Bill Sahlman last July, I realized it was not going to be an easy task. Not only is Bill a giant in the world of academics, but he is loved and respected by alumni around the world. Having co-taught the Entrepreneurial Finance course with Bill in Fall 2008, I knew he is a wonderful and generous colleague, too. Bill graciously agreed to mentor me in this new role—a comforting thought and the reason why I said yes to Nitin.

I have been a member of the HBS faculty for more than 23 years now. My research has focused on various aspects of customer management in B2B contexts, including customer selection and portfolio management; managing a spectrum of customer engagements, from transactions to long-term relationships; developing appropriate metrics to measure the health of customer relationships; and customer profitability. I have taught a variety of courses, including First-Year Marketing (FYM) in the RC and Business Marketing in the EC. I was course head of FYM for several years. More recently, I have taught and chaired several of our long Executive Education programs, including the Advanced Management Program (AMP) and Program for Leadership Development (PLD).

When I have had faculty from other schools sit in on classes I teach, they always comment that we are lucky at HBS to have such high-quality preparation and engagement from our students. I tell them that the students' commitment doesn't wane even after their graduation. As I have met with many of you all over the globe in the last eight months, I have been blown away not just by your achievements in so many aspects of your careers and lives, but also by the affection and commitment you show for the School. The institution is lucky to have such goodwill from its alumni base, and I and my colleagues are grateful.

My conversations with you have convinced me there is more we can do to build on the important alumni engagement work of the Campaign to reinforce your connection to the HBS. In an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world, lifelong learning is not a wishful thought anymore; it has become a necessity. Over the coming months, I hope to work with you in developing ways HBS can remain a place—perhaps become the best place—you can turn for answers and resources, regardless of where you are on your



I hope to work with you in developing ways HBS can remain a place—perhaps become the best place—you can turn to for answers and resources, regardless of where you are on your career paths or what lies ahead in your professional or personal lives.

career paths or what lies ahead in your professional or personal lives. The School can benefit enormously by actively leveraging the breadth and depth of knowledge and experience available across our alumni base. Together we can and *need* to do it.

I hope to carry on this conversation in future issues of the *Bulletin* and through social media, and I will keep you apprised of our progress in this area. I will also use this platform to update you on what we are working on for alumni; to celebrate your achievements and things we have accomplished for you; to highlight interesting developments at the School and with our faculty members; and to make note of special events taking place on campus and elsewhere that you might find interesting.

I appreciate the trust Nitin has placed in me in overseeing External Relations, and I look forward to working for you and with you over the years ahead.

Das Narayandas is Senior Associate Dean, External Relations and Harvard Business Publishing, and Edsel Bryant Ford Professor of Business Administration.