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India's first travel-based
business immersion programme



Post-Read Notes: Havells

Where scale is not an accident, it is a system built on purpose.

This immersion looked different from the outside. We did not sit through a pitch deck or a case discussion. We walked onto a live shop floor, mid-shift, surrounded by machines, people and product moving at a pace few classrooms can recreate. And what we found there was not really about switches, wires or fans.

Havells is one of India's largest electrical and consumer durables companies. Its plants turn out everything from wiring and switches to fans, appliances and lighting, at a scale few consumer brands in the country attempt, let alone sustain.

The people on that floor were not just assembling products. They were running a system built over decades, one that has to hold together across thousands of SKUs, multiple factories and a workforce large enough to be a small city.

This post read pulls together everything students took away from the Havells immersion. It covers what you saw on the shop floor, what you heard in conversations with the team, and the bigger lessons that connect back to what we study in class. Think of it less as a report and more as a recap you can return to when you want to remember why the visit mattered.

And here is what makes Havells worth studying: growth at this scale is never an accident. It is the outcome of deliberate choices about people, process and product, repeated consistently, year after year.



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1. Key Learnings

People are still the foundation.

Talent and manpower turn out to be one of the smartest investments a company can make. It is easy to assume that as machines take over, people become less important. Havells shows the opposite. Even as the company has brought in more automated, technology-driven processes, its workforce has kept growing. The idea seems simple once you see it in action: automation is there to make people more capable, not to replace them. Havells keeps investing in hiring, training and developing its employees, which is really the point. Growth that lasts is built on people, not just machines.

ERP systems built around the user.

Havells does not run one generic system for everyone. It uses ERP platforms that are tailored to different groups; vendors, customers, employees and internal teams each get tools designed around what they actually need. Vendors get smoother procurement and payments, customers get easier order and service tracking, and employees get systems that fit how they work day to day. The takeaway is simple: technology works best when it is built around the person using it, not forced to fit everyone the same way.

A strong cash position gives you options.

Having healthy cash reserves is not just about looking financially stable on paper. It is a genuine strategic advantage. It gives a company the room to invest in expansion, chase new opportunities, ride out tough periods and react quickly when the market shifts, all without scrambling for outside funding. Havells' financial discipline is a good reminder that cash flexibility often translates directly into business agility.

Seeing Industry 4.0 in action.

Reading about large-scale manufacturing is one thing; walking through it is another. Students got to see how a modern plant actually runs, with connected machines, real-time data tracking and digitally linked production lines. Industry 4.0 stopped being a textbook term and started looking like an everyday operational reality.

Many products, one line.

One of the more surprising insights was seeing how multiple product variants, or SKUs, can be produced on the very same assembly line without losing efficiency, consistency or quality. That takes smart line design, fast changeovers and standardised workflows. It is a core idea in flexible and lean manufacturing: you do not need a separate line for every product if your process is designed well enough.

Automation and manual work, side by side.

Instead of treating automation and manual labour as an either/or choice, Havells' shop floor shows how well they can work together. Machines handle the parts where speed and precision matter most, while people step in wherever judgement, flexibility or a human touch adds more value. This blend often works better than going fully automated or staying fully manual.

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Quality checks at every stage.

Producing at scale demands serious quality assurance and quality control, starting from raw material checks all the way through to in-process inspections and final testing. These checks are really what protect consistency and, in the end, the brand's reputation, especially for a company shipping high volumes across so many product categories.

Why does standardisation matter?

Standardised processes, meaning clear, repeatable and well documented ways of working, are what actually make large scale production possible. They cut down variability, make training easier and keep quality more predictable. This is what people usually mean when they talk about operational excellence.

Managing a wide product portfolio.

Havells has built and sustained a genuinely broad product range, from switches and wiring to fans, appliances and lighting, while still holding on to market leadership. It shows how a company can diversify without losing focus, as long as every category is built around real market needs and the same consistent quality bar.

2. Most Valuable Insights

The Josh, Hosh, Soch way of thinking about entrepreneurship

One framework that stuck with a lot of students was this three-part way of thinking about entrepreneurship. It is simple, but it captures a lot:

Pillar	What it means
Josh	Passion, the energy and drive that pushes an entrepreneur or leader to chase a vision without giving up, even when things get hard.
Hosh	Awareness: staying alert to industry dynamics, market shifts and competition so decisions stay grounded and not just driven by enthusiasm.
Soch	Execution, the disciplined thinking and planning that turns passion and awareness into real, lasting results.

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Automation is not about cutting jobs; it is about better ones.

A genuine realisation for many students was that strong organisations do not treat automation and job cuts as a package deal. Instead of trimming headcount as processes get more automated, companies like Havells put more into their people, training them for higher-value roles and building new skills. Automation, seen this way, becomes a tool for growth rather than something to be afraid of.

Ethics, safety and compliance are not just checkboxes.

Manufacturing carries real risk to workers, to product quality, and to the trust a brand has built. What stood out during the immersion is how deeply ethics, workplace safety and compliance are woven into daily operations at Havells. This is not just about following rules. It genuinely builds trust with employees, customers and regulators, and that trust compounds into a real long-term advantage.

Designing for more than one type of customer.

Serving different kinds of customers, from budget-conscious households to premium buyers, takes a product strategy that is genuinely built around the customer rather than a single product trying to please everyone. Havells shows how differentiated offerings, backed by consistent quality, let a company grow across a much wider market instead of depending on just one segment.

3. Practical Applications

Here is where the immersion turns into something you can actually use in coursework, internships and the decisions you will make early in your career.

- Take ownership and think about the ethics behind a decision, not just whether it works.
- Stay curious about emerging markets, industry trends and investment opportunities so your decisions are better informed.
- Borrow from Havells' culture, professionalism, collaboration and an ego-free approach to leadership in your own group work and internships.
- Remember that training and skill building are not perks; they are what make a team genuinely high-performing.
- Carry forward the shop floor lessons on efficiency, quality control and safety into any operations or manufacturing role you take on.
- Notice how culture and people management show up in the numbers, not just in how a workplace feels.
- Pay attention to hospitality and how stakeholders are treated. It shapes how an organisation is seen by everyone who walks through its doors.

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4. Emerging Themes

Across everyone's individual reflections, the same six themes kept showing up. Together, they give a pretty complete picture of what makes Havells worth studying.

Theme	What students kept noticing
People as a competitive advantage	A strong, recurring focus on talent, training, workforce development and culture as real drivers of business success.
Operational excellence	Real appreciation for quality control, standardisation, safety and manufacturing efficiency as the backbone of scale.
Technology and automation	Genuine interest in Industry 4.0, ERP systems and integrated manufacturing, seen as tools that support people rather than replace them.
Entrepreneurial thinking	A pull toward passion, market awareness and execution, the Josh, Hosh, Soch idea, as the foundation of strategic growth.
Customer centricity	An understanding of how product diversification and market segmentation keep a business relevant over time.
Leadership and culture	Recognition that ownership, ethics, collaboration and hospitality are what actually drive organisational excellence.

A Closing Thought

The Havells immersion was never just a factory tour. It was a working example of how people, process, technology and culture come together to build something that actually leads its market. Hold on to these themes not as facts to remember for an exam, but as a lens you can use the next time you study a company, design a process or find yourself leading a team of your own.