

PGP BHARAT

India's first travel-based
business immersion programme



Post-Read Notes: Kangaro

Manufacturing & Business Immersion

Nobody has ever paused mid-meeting to admire a stapler. It sits on a desk, does its job in half a second, and gets forgotten the moment the papers are bound together. That is exactly the kind of product this immersion turned inside out. By the end of the day, a stapler stopped looking like a forty-rupee office supply and started looking like the output of a genuinely serious manufacturing and design operation, one that happens to also compete on a global stage.

Kangaro Group makes stationery and office products most of us have used without a second thought. What the visit made clear is how much sits underneath that familiarity: engineering decisions, layers of testing, and a level of vertical integration that would be unusual even for a far more glamorous category of product.

This post-read pulls together everything we took away from the Kangaro immersion. It covers what we saw across manufacturing and R&D, what we heard from three speakers who between them have decades of experience inside the company, 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 a stapler, of all things, ended up being worth an entire day.



PGP BHARAT

India's first travel-based business immersion programme



1. Key learnings

A simple product hides a complicated business.

Even something as basic as a stapler moves through multiple departments, each making real engineering and design decisions along the way. Nothing about it is as straightforward as it looks sitting on a shelf. The simplicity a customer experiences at the point of use is the end result of a lot of complexity absorbed somewhere upstream, not the absence of it.

Owning more of the process means owning more of the outcome.

Kangaro's strong vertical integration, controlling much of its own manufacturing rather than outsourcing it away, gives the company direct control over quality, cost and innovation. When you make the components yourself instead of depending on outside suppliers for them, you are not just protecting margins. You are protecting your ability to actually fix problems and improve products at the source.

One product, many designs.

Product design at Kangaro is not a single fixed blueprint shipped everywhere. It changes based on the country, the consumer and how the product actually gets used day to day. A stapler designed for one market's habits and expectations is not necessarily the right stapler for another. Global reach, done properly, means real localisation, not just translation of packaging.

Getting to market takes longer than it looks.

The R&D walkthrough showed just how much testing, prototyping and validation happens before any product reaches a shelf. What looks like a quick, obvious design decision from the outside is usually the result of multiple rounds of iteration that never make it into the final, polished version anyone sees.

Manufacturing strength travels further than expected.

An Indian company built on strong distribution and manufacturing capabilities has managed to build a genuine presence across international markets, not just domestically. It was a useful reminder that manufacturing excellence, done consistently, is itself a form of competitive advantage that can travel well beyond the market it was originally built for.

2. Most valuable insights

Depth is invisible until someone shows it to you.

What stayed with most of us was seeing the sheer depth behind an everyday product. Understanding how even a forty-rupee stapler moves through multiple departments, and then seeing the actual engineering and testing sitting behind it, changes how you look at ordinary objects afterward. It is unlikely any of us will look at a stapler as a simple product again, and that shift in perspective is really the point. Most of the products around us carry a similar amount of hidden complexity. We just rarely get the chance to see it.

PGP BHARAT

India's first travel-based business immersion programme



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.

- Look past the marketing and the finished product to the operations, R&D, supply chain and people actually making a business scalable.
- Treat vertical integration as a genuine strategic choice worth evaluating, not just a cost decision buried in a supply chain slide.
- Remember that global expansion often requires real product localisation, not a single design shipped everywhere unchanged.
- Respect the R&D pipeline, from requirement to specification to prototype to testing to production, as the actual engine behind products that look effortless.
- Ask what invisible complexity sits behind any "simple" product or process you encounter, because it is very rarely as simple as it looks.

4. Speaker/Session highlights

Three speakers, three angles on the same business.

The sessions were one of the strongest parts of this immersion. Navneet Kumar offered a clear-eyed view of international business and global markets. Ram Gopal Gupta brought nearly 25 years of manufacturing experience at Kangaro, the kind of depth that only comes from actually being in the building through decades of change. And the R&D session walked through exactly how an idea moves from requirement to specification to prototype to testing to production, turning an abstract process into something concrete and easy to follow.

What stood out just as much as the content was how openly all three speakers shared their experience and answered questions. Their command over their respective functions was genuinely impressive, and it was the kind of depth and honesty that made the rest of the factory visit land with far more meaning.

A closing thought

Kangaro is a reminder that scale and sophistication do not always announce themselves. A stapler will never be a glamorous product, and Kangaro has never tried to make it one. What it has done instead is build serious manufacturing depth, real R&D discipline and genuine international reach around a category most people walk past without a second glance. Hold on to that lesson, not as a fact about stationery, but as a lens for the next unglamorous product or business you come across. The depth is usually there. You just have to look for it.