



STARS IN THE GALAXY CALLED BMA

My Leadership Journey:
Lessons That Shaped Me

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F O R M E R
P R E S I D E N T
S P E C I A L





This special edition of The Learning Blaze: Igniting Minds celebrates the inspiring journeys of former Presidents of the Bombay Management

Association, whose dedication has built BMA's lasting legacy. My Leadership Journey: Lessons That Shaped Me captures their defining moments and timeless insights reminding us that true leadership is rooted in integrity, purpose, and impact.

Each story reflects resilience, collaboration, and the spirit of lifelong learning that continues to guide BMA and inspire future leaders.

J Rishi

Dr. Jagmohan Singh Rishi

President 2025-26



MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

President - 1988 - 89

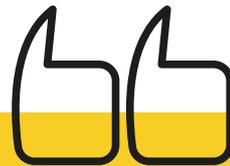


Mr Shailesh Haribhakti
Chairman
Shailesh Haribhakti & Associates

LESSONS THAT SHAPED ME

I often look back with gratitude on a journey that began in the classrooms of my childhood, where discipline, curiosity, and the joy of learning shaped me into a top student. Becoming a National Scholar and later the General Secretary of the Sydenham College Students' Union gave me an early sense of responsibility – that leadership is not about power, but about service. When I stepped into the world of professional practice with Arthur Young in 1980, I was fortunate to be entrusted with McDonald's audit in my very first year. It was a defining experience that taught me the power of systems, processes, and global standards. That early lesson – to pursue excellence without compromise – has remained a constant anchor. Over the decades, I have had the privilege of leading several organizations, each one enriching me with new insights. Leadership, I realized, is less about individual brilliance and more about enabling others to shine, aligning collective energy toward a shared purpose. Philanthropy has always been in my genes, and stewardship of society's trust has been my guiding light. Even before ESG became a global movement, it was in my DNA to think of enterprise in terms of its responsibility to people, planet, and prosperity. Today, as the world races into an AI-powered future, I find myself embracing AI not merely as a tool, but as an operating philosophy – one that can elevate transparency, resilience, and fairness in all we do.

If I were to distill one lesson from this long journey, it would be this:



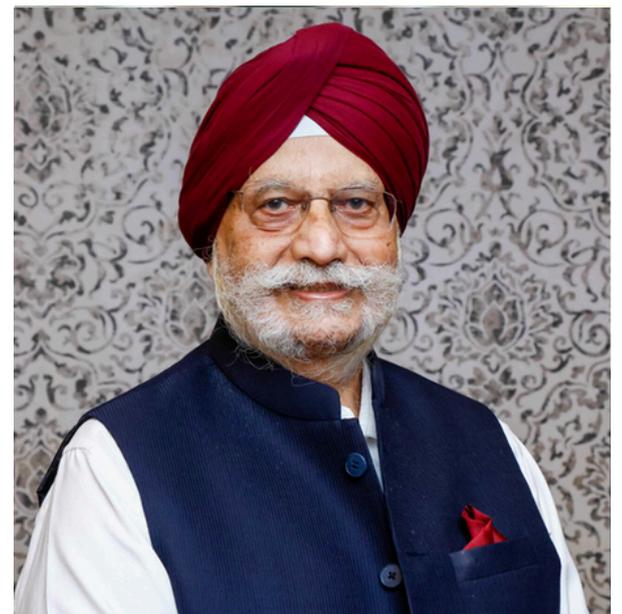
True leadership is about leaving every space you touch more purposeful, more sustainable, and more humane. The leaders of tomorrow will need to blend courage with conscience, intellect with humility, and innovation with inclusivity. My hope is that each of them lights a blaze a flame that ignites minds and keeps burning bright for generations to come.

MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

LEARNING ALL THE WAY

Growing up in small towns of Gujarat, my brothers and I had only three things to do – study, play sports or read. Our mother’s unconditional love and encouragement motivated us to do well in studies and choose streams of our liking. So, I chose electrical engineering for graduation and IIMA for postgraduate studies in favour of the IAF, where I was already selected. Joined Godrej & Boyce, where I was among the first batch of management trainees. We were rotated through the manufacturing plants, branches across the country, service and other departments. Learnt a lot about manufacturing and selling operations. Visits to dealers and customers in the different parts of the country made me aware of the diversity of culture across India. Became aware of what worked in south, did not work in Bihar. Assam and northeastern states were a different country altogether. Post end of training, I was assigned to be a Product Executive, where my boss Dr K.R Hathi taught us all about submitting tenders, preparing promotional materials and advertising as well as about correspondence. Dr Hathi made us aware of the importance of a filing system, which he believed was crucial for durable businesses. Also, learnt that prompt and full responses can lead to sound relationships with customer and dealers, especially in remote areas and much sales can be concluded. Moving up gradually, I became a manager, which was altogether a different challenge. Now, I had to get work done by individual performers.

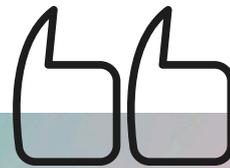
President - 1995-96



Mr Indrapal Singh

Advisor

Godrej & Boyce Mfg



Strong Leaders are curious and always seeking to learn new things.

They ask Questions, seek out feedback, and actively listen to the perspectives of others.

This helps them stay informed, adapt to changing situations, and make better decisions.



How does one do that? I suppose delegation, support, coaching and patience worked. Encourage self-development through participation in training programs and relevant reading. Then another step up and faced the challenge of managing managers where learnt that trust and transparency were key to their effective functioning.

Down the road, shift across functions happened and learnt to manage a manufacturing plant. Altogether, a different game requiring to be at the plant at 6.50 am. Got attached to the hum and smell of the machines as they came alive. The next shift was about heading a business and then a group of businesses. At the business level, one needs to know much about financials, procurement, and industrial relations in addition to marketing and manufacturing. Also, learnt to provide leadership for becoming competitive.

Over the decades, got deeply invested into Indian values, managing for quality – Dr Demming's way and Theory of constraints - constraints are good- of Dr E Goldratt. These approaches are synergistic and can work effectively with deep commitment of everyone at business level and top- management's buy - in.



Post liberalization years were quite turbulent and the businesses had to do many more things to stay relevant and thrive. Thus, we learnt that people were now, the source of ultimate competitive advantage.

To leverage this advantage, the culture had to be transformed. Also realized that obsession with strategy was misplaced. Peter Drucker's adage comes to mind, "**Culture eats strategy for breakfast.**"

How does one change the culture?

In two words, with empathy and empowerment. Softer issues are indeed harder. Strategy is easy, fostering new culture, most challenging.

Continuous learning has been a key building block of my leadership journey. Yoga and meditation have my attraction, leading to fairly regular practice. Helping People Succeed" remains my unchanged motto. Reading and learning are my passion. I still get excited about attending a program at 8.30 on a Saturday morning! I believe to grow is to learn and keep learning...



MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

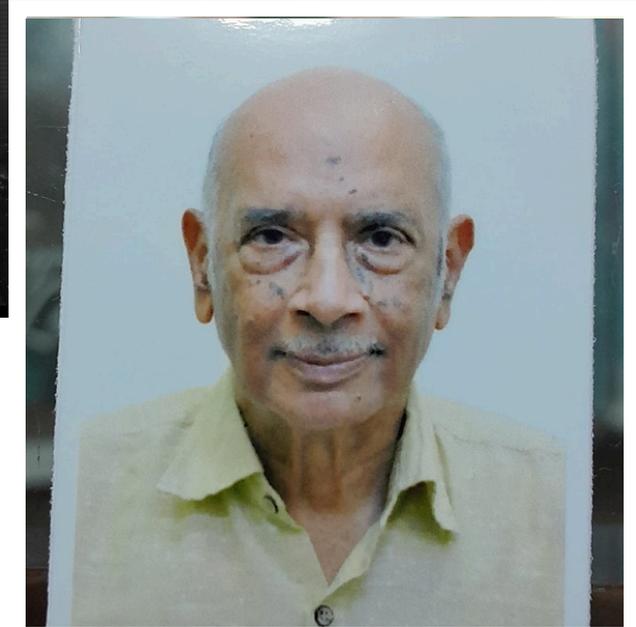
LESSONS FROM LEGENDS

I had my first lessons in leadership from Colonel Leslie Sawhney, Director of TOMCO, a Tata Company which manufactures soaps, detergents and toiletries. As a marketing trainee I was sitting at my desk at 6.00 p.m. when he came in from his office and stood in front of me. After asking my name and what job I was doing, he told me that I should not sit late but spend time with my family.

As a good leader he was concerned with people and not only with the task. When TOMCO launched a new product, he would visit the factory to talk to the staff and workers in the plant about how important their contribution was to the manufacturing of the new product. At periodic intervals he would talk to the entire office staff in the auditorium of Bombay House about his vision for the progress of the company.

As a good leader he believed in communicating with his followers. Based on job evaluation the staff salaries were revised. As mentioned by Peter Drucker, a good leader need not be popular but must be perceived to be fair. Over the years I learned many lessons in leadership from my seniors, colleagues and even from observing persons in leadership positions whom I never met personally. Mr. Ravi Mathai, a founder director of IIM, Ahmedabad, caused a furore when he voluntarily decided to step down and revert to being a faculty member. As a good leader he put the interest of the organization above self interest. Sharu Ragnekar, a faculty member of B.M.A., when he was M.D., used to meet executives reporting to him individually to obtain feedback from them on his performance.

President - 1996 - 97



Mr Ernest Fernandes

Former General Manger
Tata Oil Mills Co. Ltd

A good leader is a servant leader. Dr. P.N. Singh, a former President of B.M.A., was known to be outspoken in his views about the management when he thought it necessary. A good leader has to be prepared to speak truth to power. Dr. K.S. Basu, a founder President of B.M.A., as Director of Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies resisted the pressure to admit students who did not qualify. A good leader has the moral compass and believes in standing up for his principles. Soli Doctor, also a President of B.M.A. Encouraged me to become President of B.M.A. A good leader grooms others to succeed him.

Mahatma Gandhi, in the face of severe opposition, won India's independence by motivating his followers to practice non violence and face the brutality of a colonial regime. The life of Mahatma Gandhi is an inspiring example of good leadership for India and the world.

MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

President - 2005-06

THE PURPOSE DRIVEN REBEL

Leadership, to me, has never been about position or power—it has always been about purpose.

It is a continuous journey of learning, unlearning, and rediscovering oneself in the service of others. When I look back on my years with the Bombay Management Association, I see not just an institution, but a community bound by vision, conviction, and an enduring belief in the power of people. My own leadership journey began within the legacy of the J.K. Organization—a 140-year-old institution built by generations of industrialists who believed in enterprise with integrity. Yet, tradition alone cannot sustain progress. Every generation must find its own way to adapt, to innovate, and to lead responsibly. Early in my career, I realized that leadership demanded more than maintaining what existed—it required challenging it. That belief gave rise to what I call the philosophy of being a “responsible rebel.” A responsible rebel questions the status quo, not for the sake of defiance, but to drive progress. They are unafraid to ask difficult questions, to think differently, and to take calculated risks—while staying true to values of ethics and empathy. I have found that the balance between responsibility and rebellion often defines the most effective leaders.

Innovation has always been central to my journey. Whether leading a business or an organization, I’ve seen that innovation is not confined to technology or product—it is a mindset. When I joined our family’s engineering files business, we were facing intense competition from global manufacturers. Rather than accept the circumstances, our team undertook a comprehensive review of every process—from time-motion studies to cross-plant benchmarking. Over four years, we reduced delivery times, halved rejection rates, and eventually became the largest producer of files in the world. That experience taught me that transformation is not born of chance, but of persistence, teamwork, and belief in a shared goal.



*Mr. Anant Ajaypat
Singhania*

Chairman
CEO of J.K. Enterprises

Yet, as we build the India of tomorrow, we must lead with responsibility. Growth without inclusion is hollow, and progress without purpose is fleeting. The true test of leadership lies not in personal success, but in the ability to create opportunity for others—to uplift, to inspire, and to leave behind a path that others can follow with pride. If there is one message I would share with the leaders of tomorrow, it is this: Dare to dream, but remain grounded in values. Be bold enough to question, yet humble enough to listen. Strive for excellence, but never lose sight of empathy. Leadership is not a destination; it is a lifelong commitment to learning, serving, and evolving.

As I reflect on my journey, I remain deeply grateful to the mentors, colleagues, and institutions—especially the BMA—that shaped my understanding of leadership. The legacy we inherit is only as meaningful as the legacy we leave behind. My hope is that the next generation of leaders will continue to carry forward this spirit of responsible rebellion—with courage in their hearts and purpose in their actions. ”

MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

President - 2007 - 08



CCA Anil Kamath

Chairman

Infigo Lifesciences Pvt Ltd

THE PARADOX OF LEARNING IN THE AGE OF AI

Why Experience Still Matters in a world of Instant Answers

For most of my professional life, I held a firm belief: learning is a lifelong process. Age, I thought, was no barrier to acquiring new knowledge. But in today's rapidly evolving world, that belief has been challenged. The pace and nature of change—driven by relentless technological advancement has introduced a new paradox: the age of unlearning has begun, or has it?

From Change Management to Tech Tsunami

As a senior professional who spent decades navigating change management, we were accustomed to gradual transitions. The pace was measured, the tools were familiar, and we had the support of bright young executive assistants to polish our work. Today, however, we find ourselves in a virtual world where drafting letters and presentations is no longer expected of us. AI tools like ChatGPT and Copilot have become the new assistants—digital genies that respond instantly to our commands. The job gets done, and our role shifts to validating the content and ensuring data accuracy.

Sundays with a Silicon Opponent

Yet, these are exciting times. For those of us who enjoy tinkering with new technologies, Sundays can feel like a bridge game—except your opponent is a world champion with infinite memory and processing power. I recently experienced this firsthand while preparing for an important Board meeting. With limited time and a set of confidential documents and financials to review, I turned to Copilot.

I uploaded the materials and requested an analysis. Within seconds, I had a concise summary—just what I needed as an Independent Director. I then asked for an analytical table with comments, followed by a bar chart. Each request was fulfilled in a jiffy. The result? A well-structured, data-backed presentation that allowed me to speak confidently at the meeting.

The Human Edge: Experience

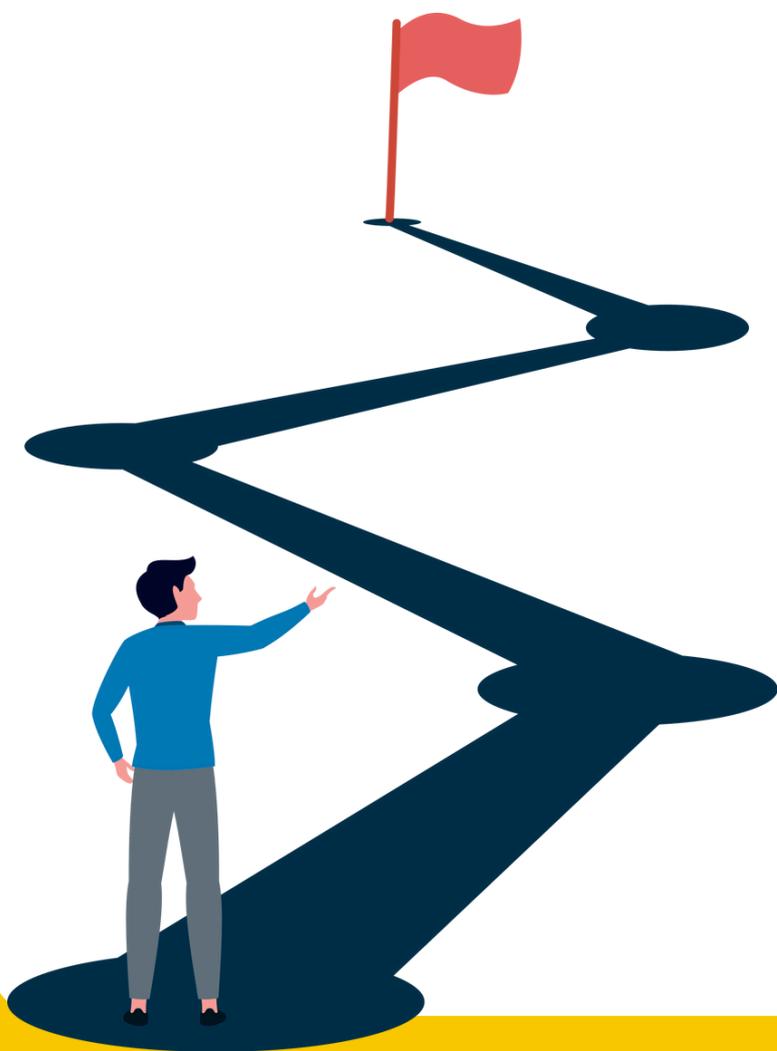
But then came a moment that reminded me of something deeper. The Chairman asked, "Good observations, Mr. Kamath."

But tell us—based on your rich experience, how would you have dealt with the situation?" That question was a turning point.

It affirmed that while AI can assist with speed and structure, it's our intellectual base and lived experience that truly add value.

My assessment, shaped by years of navigating similar challenges, differed from the younger managers' presentations.

Their analysis was sharp, but the Board found resonance in my perspective—and ultimately adopted a similar approach.



Learning vs. Knowing What to Do

This experience answered a question that had long lingered in my mind. Yes, continuous learning is essential. But converting knowledge into action—especially in high-stakes environments—is where experience shines.

It's the difference between insight and wisdom. Consider a complex legal issue.

A well-read lawyer may offer sound understanding, but it's the seasoned practitioner who has tasted the waters of legal jurisprudence, who crafts the most effective strategy, their experience enables them to anticipate pitfalls, weigh nuances, and guide clients toward success. Even in high-profile corporate dilemmas—such as the intricate issues surrounding Tata Trusts and Tata Sons, resolution often demands more than analytical brilliance.

It calls for the seasoned judgment of boardroom veterans like Mr. Soonawala, whose depth of experience, maturity, and credibility can untangle complexities and guide stakeholders toward a fair, trusted, and lasting solution.

Ultimately, in this turbulent environment where data can be churned, twisted, and analysed in seconds, it is "continuous learning and lived experience" that form the true compass. AI may offer options, but it is your rich, intuitive understanding—honed over decades—that will win the day.

MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

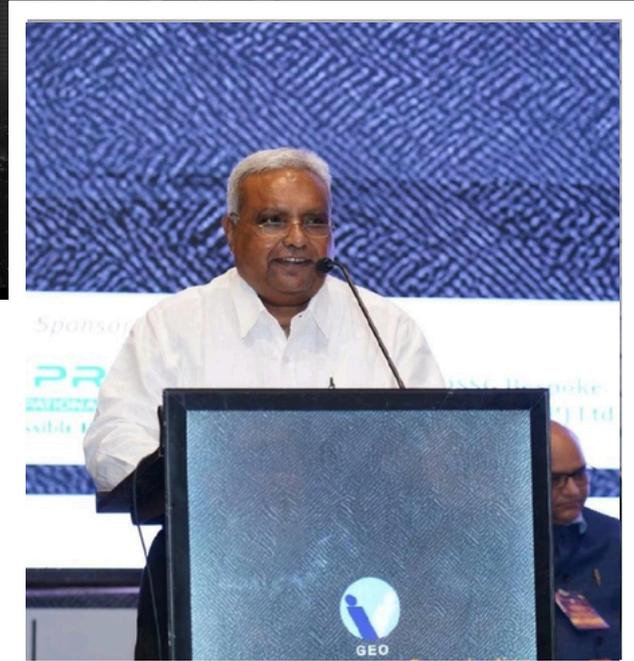
President - 2011-12

YEARS WITH THE BOMBAY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

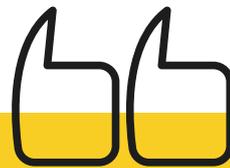
I remain deeply grateful to the Bombay Management Association (BMA) for the privilege of serving as its President. My association with BMA has been an enriching journey, offering continuous learning and invaluable professional experiences. BMA provides a remarkable platform for knowledge sharing, leadership development, and professional networking, enabling members to grow both personally and professionally.

I had the honour of learning from several distinguished past presidents, including Prof. Arya, Mr. Indrapal Singh, and Mr. Ram, whose guidance and vision continue to inspire. During my tenure, we developed numerous Management Development Programs (MDPs) to benefit our members and organized insightful industrial study tours to renowned organizations such as TISCO Jamshedpur, FFM, Arvind Mills and Raymond.

It was also a matter of great pride to confer the Lifetime Achievement Award upon Mr. Rahul Bajaj, a visionary leader and icon of Indian industry. I extend my sincere appreciation to the BMA support staff for their unwavering assistance and commitment, which played a vital role in executing our initiatives successfully. My time with BMA stands as a tribute to an institution that has consistently fostered excellence and provided professionals with exceptional opportunities for growth and contribution.



Mr. Bhaskar Joshi
HR consultant and
visiting faculty.



***Legacy is not what you
leave behind in buildings or
programs – it's what you
ignite in people: the
courage to dream, the
strength to grow, and the
wisdom to give back." –
Inspired by John Wooden***

MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

NO PRIMA DONNAS

For a large part of my work life I worked with Anil Kapoor. A man who filled the room with his presence, who had a strong opinion on everything and a belief that one of the facets of leadership was the ability to build a strong organization culture. Over the years he preached a culture code that we all embraced and something that has stood us in good stead over decades.

Two stories that will hopefully bring alive these life lessons in leadership and team building.

Very early in our journey with Anil we experienced the word "Prime Mover". We knew the meaning but learnt firsthand what it really meant. For most of us who had worked in other organizations before Ulka leading a project meant that you took the decisions, you were the boss, and you carried the can. It was late evening (it always was late evening's) when I presented on a project and announced the decisions that I had taken. As was his wont, Anil hit the pause button and asked the others for their opinion. Several hours of debate later we were no closer to a solution.

Exhausted I asked, "so what is the point of having a prime mover". Anil, I think was waiting for the question. He launched into a little story and concluded that "A prime mover" on a project is only the first among equals. There must be consensus on every major decision, and no one has absolute authority on any decision.

Put differently there are no Prima Donnas or no bosses in the team. Listen to the others. Swallow your pride and remember that every decision must be bought in by everyone on the team. One day I was in my room discussing a campaign when I heard a knock and a young lad peeped in. He was among the brightest of our management trainees, the teams liked him, the client loved him, and he always delivered.

He clearly looked distraught and was working up an anger. I closed the meeting and beckoned him in. No sooner did he sit down that the dam burst, and the upsets started pouring out. He had just received his increment letter and was horrified to discover that his increment was the same as everyone in his

President - 2014-15



Mr. Niteen Bhagwat

Director

Karira Consulting

batch; and as he pointed out even those who clearly were not doing well had got the same increment. I smiled and could very vividly remember a similar conversation that I had with Anil. I said "Beta" remember, in a team there are "No Hero's and No Zero's" You should never pass judgement on performances over just a year. All of us know you are good at your work, but you also have a very supportive and responsible client, you also have a boss who really knows what to do. The choice of the boss or client is not in your control, so you must realise that some of the great work that you are doing is because of the circumstances. God forbid if you had a really difficult client and a boss who could not manage the client would it have been fair to penalize you for a sub-par performance. Grudgingly he accepted.

A decade later our trainee who had since left the agency to get into marketing came visiting. He had done very well for himself, and the visit was to thank all of us at the agency for the culture code that was imprinted in his mind. For the next hour he regaled us on how he told his juniors the meaning of family, of non-evaluative conversations and most importantly that at Ulka there were no prima Donnas and no individual was a Hero or a Zero.

I sat and smiled understanding what Anil must have felt when he took the first culture "Paath shala" on team building and Prima Donnas.

MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

A MASTERCLASS THAT LASTED 37 YEARS

I met F C Kohli, DiC, on the morning of 2nd Jan 1979 – the day I joined TCS. Jose Abraham (JPA) of HR deposited me in the square outside his office and my file with Ms. Nicky Pavri his jovial Executive Assistant. When my name was called, I walked in with all the panache of a USA returned 24-year-old.

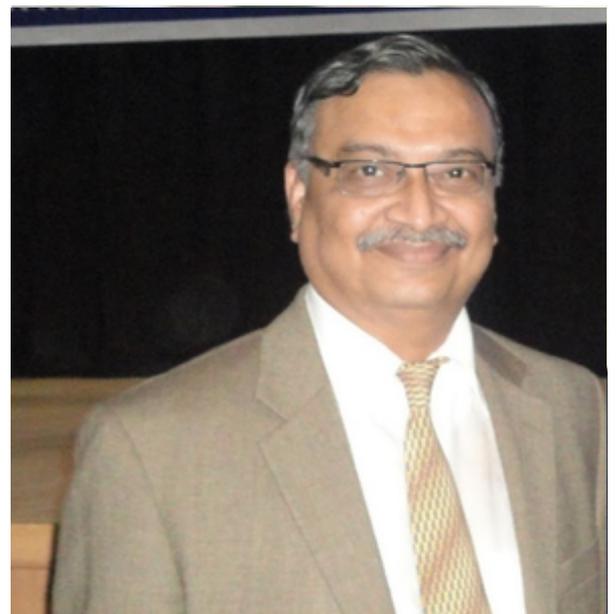
It was an imposing setting. The view of sea with a mist covered Malabar Hill in the background. Seated behind a large desk was a powerfully built man with a wall-to-wall bookshelf as the back drop.

FCK read through the file and asked me some questions with respect to my knowledge in Systems Engineering and I was out in 5 mins. I had been X-rayed and filed away in the recesses of that amazing brain. I got off easily, as Prakesh Kriplani (PNK) later revealed as he and FCK were qualified Systems Engineers and FCK had great respect for that tribe.

CUT TO 30th Oct 2014, 5:30pm; my last day and farewell. I got a message saying FCK had landed from Delhi and was coming to my farewell first before going home. So, I was to wait.

And in between was a 37 years old association which shaped my personality, my professional life, in fact every aspect of my life. In the 80s, most of my TCS projects were in Management Consulting. I worked under various bosses (N R Bhalerao, H A Lakhani, M G Badal, R J Fernandes amongst others) but every report I wrote went through V I Philips and finally FCK. For some of the important projects like University of Bombay and MSEB,

President - 2015-16



Suresh Mhatre

Former Vice president

Tata Consultancy Services

FCK would attend the final presentation himself, seated in his usual Chair in the Executive Conference Room on the 11th Floor of AI. He gave a lot of suggestions and pointed out weak areas. But not once did he ever check the budget for the project. As long as we were doing a good job, making money on a project was not important. Delivering quality was. During this time, I learnt the unwritten code of FCK feedback. If your monthly progress report came back with 'Pl discuss' in that distinctive Waterman turquoise blue ink (followed by his initials which to the uninitiated would look like YOU), it meant you had him intrigued and that was good. 'Pl see me' meant not so good but 'Pl speak' meant you were in trouble. And these notes would be delivered to your desk by his special agent (Office boy), Narayan Dhumre. But being invited to visit the corner room was never a happy prospect. In fact, as one saw Narayan walk towards your seat, your heart beat would increase and if he passed you, then you heaved a sigh of relief.

In mid 80s, FCK took the top management to TMTC, Pune and revealed his strategic plan for TCS. We would be run by various Task Committees (TCs) viz. RTC for recruitment, TTC for Training, PATC for personnel admin, MATC for manpower allocation...

It was sometime in '89, I was called in to meet FCK along with JPA and told to take over MATC. TCS had about 10,000 consultants then. And straight away I was pitched forth into the pulls and struggles of ensuring all projects had adequate manpower. All key resources and hot skills had to be shared fairly amongst USA, Europe, and UK. This entailed pulling out these skills from some projects and feed the ever-growing demand of newer markets.

So, I would end of upsetting one of the 'big bosses.' I survived only because FCK had full faith in me that I did not play favourites and always acted in the best interest of TCS. So, he acted as a shield and I lived to tell you this tale. Under FCK's tutelage, I kept learning and growing in knowledge. The following anecdote illustrates this. Every April MATC and TTC would meet to draw up a training plan for the new joiners would flood in from June. How many do we train in Java and how many in C++ was a perennial problem.

Train too less in one skill and we would lose business during the year while on the other hand we would have a bench of the bunch we trained in excess. FCK would visit USA and Europe in early spring and come back in time to give us the percentage break up of skills to be trained for the year.



In all my years in MATC he never got this wrong. We never trained too many or too little in any of the skills. So how did he get it right every time? It did not seem humanly possible.

Towards the end of my stint in MATC, I requested him to share the secret of his annual magic act. He said there is no magic. Every year he goes on his annual trip and talks to CTOs of key clients as well as HoDs of leading universities and asks them only one question: What technologies/platforms are you planning for your applications? He would come back and give us the summary of those conversations. Key lesson: **Talk to the Customer!**

In '99, FCK felt the international market for IT services would boom and we needed to grow much faster. I was asked to take over Global Recruitment and ramp up hiring from 300 pa to 3,000 pa - And without loss of quality. The current strength of IIMs and IITs would not support our 10x demand so we had to source from many more colleges.

But how do we know their output would be good quality? FCK along with Prof P N Murthy and MSK had worked out a way to assess the teaching-learning process so that the output would be acceptable to TCS.

We got 300 NiCs and other well-known colleges accredited and shortlisted those who qualified as per our criteria. A new aptitude test would further cut down unqualified candidates. We were soon the largest recruiters of engineering manpower in the country.

FCK himself would sample of results of every college and ensure there was no slip up. As a result, very, very few failed to clear the 52-day induction program. We had managed to ramp up hiring to meet the demands of the fast-growing TCS propelling it to be one of the top IT Services Company globally. FCK was a multi-faceted personality.

When we had to accommodate additional recruits in the same office space, he designed the Y shaped 3-seater workplaces – a design which was quickly copied by the industry – except CMC (which had a monopoly on government assignments) which had a new age building. When someone pointed out that CMC had created an intelligent building, he remarked that 'that's all that is intelligent in that building'. He had a wicked sense of humour.

Even post-retirement, he continued to inspire us. And I got to learn a little more about the human being behind the stern façade. Like he was a dog lover. He had a series of Boxers, all named Groucho after his childhood hero Groucho Marx. Another lesson to learn from him was his lifelong commitment to fitness. In spite of multiple cardiac interventions, he continued to walk daily on Marine Drive (13mins to a mile as he would proudly claim).

Whenever I feel too lazy to maintain my fitness regime, I think of him and find the energy to take the first few steps. He had made it habit to remember names and connect with family members of employees. On all social functions he would greet my wife by name and check about my daughters. He and his wife Swaranji attended my daughters' wedding, once even taking an early flight back to join us for the reception. Once freed of the day to day running of the company, he turned his attention to adult education and created a revolution which benefited millions. In fact, for this he was given a 2nd Lifetime Achievement award by BMA – the only person to be so honoured.

My last meeting with him was on his 92nd birthday. A group of Operations boys decided to celebrate his birthday at Y B Chavan auditorium. He gladly accepted. On the occasion he took the mike and standing ramrod straight spoke for 20 minutes on his dreams for a digitally strong India – unaided by any papers or props.

And that perhaps is how the Almighty intended I should remember him: **A wise old man sharing his dream of a digital future inspiring us to greater heights.**

*Legacy is not what you leave behind in buildings or programs – it's what you ignite in people: the courage to dream, the strength to grow, and the wisdom to give back." –
Inspired by John Wooden*



MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

President - 2019 - 20



Ms Chhaya Sehgal

Founder & CEO

The Winning Edge

OF PURPOSE, GROWTH & TRANSFORMATION

Roots That Anchored Purpose

I was born into a Maharashtrian educationist family in rural Madhya Pradesh, where wealth was measured not in possessions, but in values. My father, a respected Mathematics professor, lived by honesty, hard work, and quiet idealism. My mother, an Agra University scholar and postgraduate in Philosophy, embodied wisdom, spirituality, and sacrifice.

In our home, education, culture, ethics, dignity of work, and accountability formed the foundation of life. From Hindi-medium schooling and college in a small town to earning merit-based admission to ICT and JBIMS, my journey has always been guided by perseverance and grace.

"Character precedes achievement, purpose precedes passion, and service precedes position."

My mother remains my North Star – reminding me that true success is measured not in titles, but in values lived.

Corporate Foundations: Discipline, Governance & Accountability

My professional journey began in 1983 at HPCL, a Maharatna PSU. Over nearly 15 years in finance leadership roles, I learned that ethical leadership and accountability are the true currency of trust.

Blessed with stellar mentors – one of whom told me, "Never take No for an answer" – I learned that resilience, not entitlement, shapes leaders.

"Leadership begins with responsibility, not authority."

Those formative years instilled discipline, governance, humility, and grit – qualities that would shape every chapter that followed.

Entrepreneurship: Empowering Others to Rise

In 2000, entrepreneurship became a natural extension of purpose, not a departure from it. 'The Winning Edge' was born from the belief that true leadership lies in enabling others to succeed.

Supporting leaders across corporates, MSMEs, the armed forces, government bodies, and social organisations has been both honour and responsibility. My work expanded organically into academia and ecosystem building.

Key initiatives included:

- Founding the Entrepreneurship Cell at JBIMS with NEN
- Launching BizOrion at JBIMS with World Trade Centre
- Mentoring women entrepreneurs via NMIMS–SIDBI–Scottish Enterprise University of Sterling & AKDN
- Supporting rural and social innovators through NITI Aayog's AIC
- Serving as visiting faculty and mentor across universities for three decades

My book, **"Can Moms Take a Chill Pill?"**, emerged from the lived integration of motherhood and leadership – *a celebration of love, empathy, balance, and purpose.*

BMA Presidency: Purpose in Action, Institution First

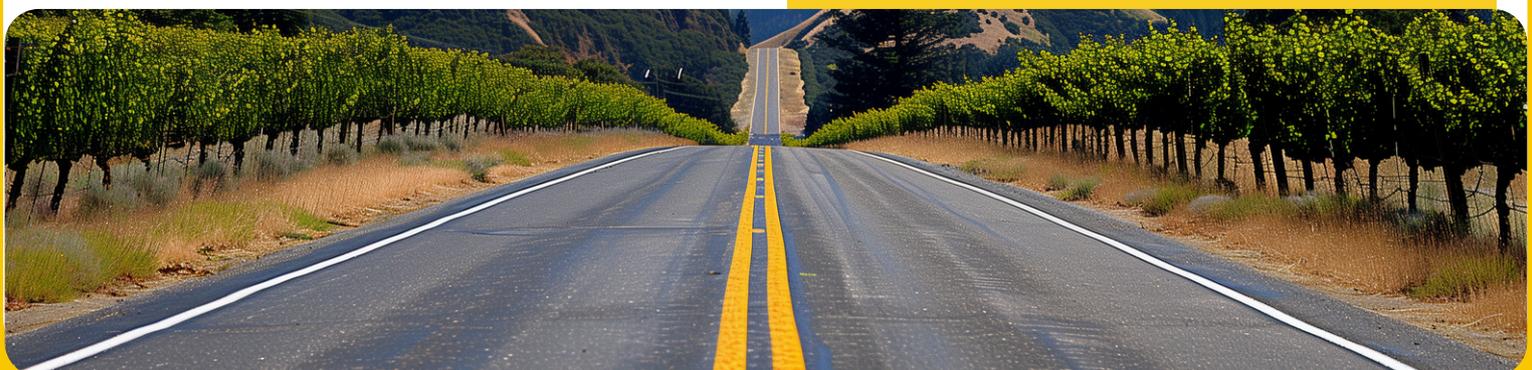
Serving as the second woman President of the Bombay Management Association – India's first management association – was both privilege and mission.

We worked as One BMA Team with invaluable mentorship from the Former Presidents, committed to reinvent the institution to be financially stronger, future-ready, and respected for thought leadership. We revived legacy initiatives, strengthened existing ones, and introduced new programs through frugal innovation and collaborative leadership.

Key initiatives included:

- Leader 2020 - WEF recommendations based Leadership Development Program for Senior Industry Members
- Digital Leadership Summit 3.0 a maiden initiative with AIMA in West Zone
- Innothon 2.0 & Dandekar Trophy hitherto Sponsored by ACC
- BMA Management Week Celebration with Dr. K. Sivan - The Mars Man of India
- Weekly digital leadership talks series & webinars
- BMA Members Connect newsletter
- BMA's first e-journal "e-Ambit"

Together, we achieved record sponsorships, financial resilience, and accelerated digital transformation – just as the world faced the pandemic



A Landmark Milestone: BMA ASSURED Enterprise of the Year Award

We institutionalized the BMA "ASSURED" Enterprise of the Year Award, inspired by Padma Vibhushan Dr. R.A. Mashelkar's 'ASSURED Innovation Framework' – honouring enterprises that are:

Affordable • Scalable • Sustainable • Universal • Rapid • Excellent • Distinctive

With Dr. Mashelkar as Chief Jury and mentor, this award reinforces BMA's vision to champion ethical, innovative, and futuristic thought leadership.

Honors & Gratitude

I am humbled to receive honors such as:

- S.S. Nadkarni Fellowship – University of Mumbai
- Corporate Contribution to Education Award – Higher Education Forum, a peer based recognition

These are blessings – reflections of divine grace, parental values, inspiring mentors, a supportive family, and dedicated teams.

Leadership, The Human Way

My journey has been shaped by mentorship, humility, empathy, and service. I believe that excellence flourishes when people feel safe to innovate without fear of blame.

"The buck stops with the leader – yet success must always belong to the team."

True leadership blends vision with compassion, accountability with grace, and authority with empathy

A Life of Purpose, Still Becoming

As I continue this journey, my purpose remains simple: to serve, to empower, and to inspire.

"Hope my journey encourages the readers to lead with integrity, humility, and service."

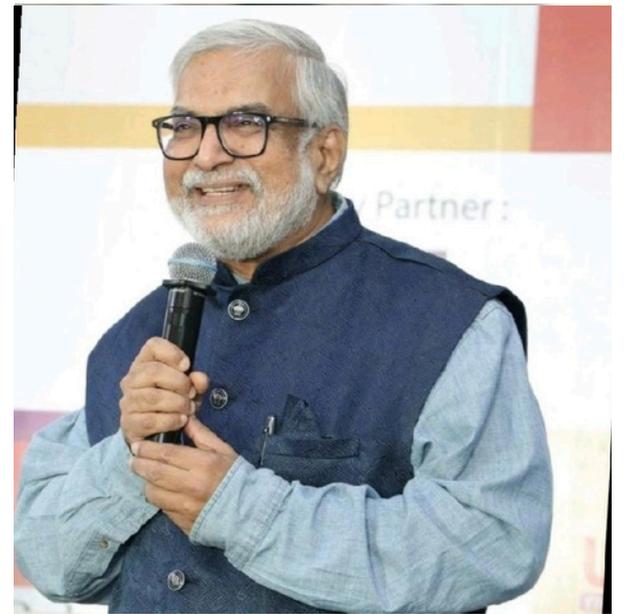
And, in doing so I have honored the values with which my life began and my purpose is fulfilled."



MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

President - 2020 - 21

THE COURAGE TO CHANGE



Prof Dr RSS Mani

Vice President

Institutional Development & Co Founder,
ITM Group of Institution

TRULY , it was moment of sheer delight when the realisation sank in that after a span of 20 years , I would be the second professional from the ITM Group of educational institutions after Dr PV Ramana who would occupying this prestigious position of the President of BMA .This in itself was a unique event in the annals of BMA at that point in time as it was the first such occurrence .

However , soon enough emerged the anxiety & challenge that I would face when taking charge as the President of the prestigious Bombay Management Association (BMA) for the period 2020 to 2021 in the most Turbulent & Unprecedented Times of the Corona pandemic .

April 2020 to May 2021 marked one of the most challenging periods in recent world history. With the world reeling under a complete lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic; It was a moment of great responsibility and uncertainty as traditional in-person activities of all forms came to a grinding halt due to the complete lockdown .

Fortunately, the foundation for digital engagement had already been laid in April 2020 , when BMA had initiated digital engagement under the banner of – Wednesday Wisdom Webinars and Friday Fundamentals. Initially designed as hybrid events (both physical and digital),

these platforms became the lifeline for member engagement once the pandemic rendered in-person meetings impossible. The lockdown turned out to be the catalyst for BMA's full-scale digital migration.

The next challenge was Mobilizing Leadership Support and Building Digital Continuity which mean that our team had to organise atleast 104 webinars over the next one year

It is here that I acknowledge the invaluable guidance of BMA's past presidents in shaping the new digital strategy. Their unstinting support made it possible to arrange a steady flow of high-calibre speakers and well-curated topics to sustain member interest and participation throughout the lockdown.

This truly was a transformational paradigm shift from Monthly Seminars & quarterly conferences to Weekly Webinars .Perhaps this was also the need of the hour.

Traditionally, BMA conducted major events like seminars and conferences once a month or a quarter.

However, even before the pandemic, Mumbai's growing traffic and infrastructure work (like metro construction) had already begun affecting attendance. Efforts had previously been made to decentralize activities by conducting events in Bandra, Thane, and Navi Mumbai, attempting to establish local chapters, but with limited success. Despite these initiatives, the pandemic disrupted all physical plans – effectively ending location-based activities.

But in this challenge lay the seed of transformation. The shift to digital wasn't just a necessity – it was a timely response to an existing logistical problem accelerated by the challenge of lockdown making physical events impossible. The lockdown, though devastating, revealed a new path forward. The adversity presented an opportunity to us and we the leadership team recognized that digital platforms were the only viable way to sustain learning and community engagement. This realization became the foundation of BMA's digital renaissance.

However, going completely online was no small feat. The first major hurdle was training the BMA secretariat, which had operated in a physical format for decades. This required mastering new tools – Zoom, email communications, and WhatsApp coordination – to organize and manage digital events efficiently.

Credit goes to our committee member Supriya Sachdeva, who led the digital training initiative with remarkable dedication. She taught staff and members how to plan, market, host, and manage online sessions, effectively transforming the organization's learning culture. Her efforts earned her the affectionate nickname "Supriya Teacher," symbolizing this new era of digital education.



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Sustaining member interest twice a week was a significant challenge. Yet, with splendid teamwork and commitment, our team exceeded all expectations – hosting 125 webinars against a target of 110. This achievement reflected not just efficiency, but a new sense of purpose and a path-breaking transformation in BMA's functioning. The webinars featured a wide range of distinguished speakers – from corporate leaders and academicians to spiritual gurus, scientists, musical artists, and sports professionals. Attendance, which started modestly at 20–40 participants, soon surged to 150–200 per session, proving that digital learning had struck a chord with the community. This signalled a cultural shift in how BMA members preferred to engage – digitally and intellectually.

The pandemic, while isolating, made people seek meaningful and intellectual engagement beyond television or social media. The Wednesday Wisdom and Friday Fundamentals series became a source of inspiration and enrichment for many. The entire archive remains available on BMA's YouTube channel, ensuring lasting access to this valuable content.

(<https://www.youtube.com/@BMABombayManagementAssociation>)

Another major challenge was retaining and renewing memberships in an environment where online events were offered and assumed to be always "FREE." The leadership team successfully conveyed to all members that the sustained digital operations still involved costs, gradually leading to a renewed interest in membership.

Additionally, with the help of past presidents like Shri Shailesh Haribhakti and Mr. R Ramakrishnan, sponsorships for webinars and conferences were secured – ensuring financial stability.

BMA's First Online HR Conference was in itself a Benchmark Initiative led by Shri Yogi Sriram which was held over three months. With 12 distinguished speakers including CEOs, CXOs, and HR leaders, the series explored the evolution of human resources into a truly human-centric function. This event set a new benchmark for online professional conferences in India.

If I were to distill one lesson from this long journey, it would be this:

Reflecting on this journey, my first learning was that transformation requires a leap of faith.

Though BMA began its digital journey hesitantly, it ended with 125 insightful webinars, an invaluable knowledge repository, and a digitally empowered membership.

It also taught me to work, connect, and build bridges digitally & this was itself a major growth experience. Organizing virtual seminars became both a challenge and a skill, marking a new chapter in leadership learning.

The most satisfying part was that all the above was noticed & appreciated by AIMA, our parent body and many their senior industry leaders & office bearers were part of our BMA Webinars.

The pandemic taught everyone to work remotely, think virtually, and lead adaptively. One profound insight from this period was that leadership lessons come from all walks of life – not just corporate boardrooms. Speakers from education, science, spirituality, and the arts offered deep life lessons and inspiration, enriching BMA's intellectual diversity.

I take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues in the Managing Committee for the year 2020-2021 for their splendid support and the entire secretariat for going beyond call of duty.

All the above would not have been possible without the constant support, guidance and encouragement by all our past presidents who stood behind us a solid support system. Last but not the least, my deep gratitude to all members who recognised the value of our efforts and attended over a 125 webinars and gave us enthralling feedback that only prompted us to set higher benchmarks.

I shall always remain indebted to hundreds of you who sent messages of appreciation & praise in recognition of our efforts at the conclusion of our term.

The journey was INDEED mutually enriching & It's a humbling feeling that I will always be remembered as BMA's only digital president; This period would forever be remembered as the only tenure in BMA's history where the president both assumed and handed over charge online – a symbolic milestone of resilience, reinvention & digital transformation.

"Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." – Ralph Waldo Emerson



MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

President - 2021 - 22

THE JOURNEY THAT MADE ME



Dr. Kavita Laghate

Director

Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management
Studies

Leadership in academics is inherently locational and situational. The moment one steps into a classroom, one assumes the role of a leader—guiding minds, shaping perspectives, and inspiring curiosity. As one progresses through an academic career, this leadership gradually evolves, expanding beyond the classroom to administrative, institutional, and community levels.

Leadership then becomes a matter of context—emerging from circumstances, projects, and the needs of people around you.

My own journey began in much the same way. Standing before a class for the first time was both humbling and empowering. The attentive faces of students listening to me instilled a sense of confidence and purpose. Those early experiences laid the foundation for my professional identity and strengthened my resolve to learn, grow, and contribute more meaningfully.

I was fortunate to receive excellent mentoring in my formative years—both as a teacher and later as an administrator. Much of the credit for my professional ethos goes to my upbringing. My parents and grandparents were my first teachers. Their dedication to their professions and their integrity in everyday life left a lasting impression on me. From them, I learned the value of commitment, humility, and respect for one's duties.

A principle I have always upheld is never to say no to any task entrusted to me. Whatever the responsibility, I have always strived to give my fullest. My background in statistics has shaped my approach to thinking—systematic, logical, and data-driven. It has also reinforced the importance of time: punctuality, discipline, and making every moment count are values I absorbed early and have tried to live by ever since.

Over the years, I have also learned that there are no absolute right or wrong answers. Every individual's opinion stems from their unique experience and perspective. This realization taught me to listen with empathy, to be accommodative, and to respect diversity in thought and approach. It is this openness that has helped me work harmoniously with teams and colleagues across different projects.

My professional journey has been enriched by several significant projects that brought deep learning, joy, and satisfaction. Leading teams and taking responsibility for outcomes has always been my preferred way of working. Many collaborators joined along the way, and together we managed to pull off large, complex initiatives –like pulling the grand Jagannath Rath–through collective effort, faith, and perseverance.

My ambitions have never been centered on personal recognition, but rather on meaningful contribution. I have always sought to identify what can be done for the betterment of society and the institutions I serve. I firmly believe that encouragement leads to action, action produces results, and results create impact. This belief has motivated me to welcome every proposal and initiative—whether from within JBIMS or elsewhere—with an open mind, if it serves a greater collective cause, ethically intended and served a constructive purpose.

During my tenure as President of the Bombay Management Association (BMA), our team set objectives aligned with academic and managerial excellence. Coming from an academic background, I ensured that our goals reflected learning, innovation, and knowledge sharing. Every activity I was part of gave me immense satisfaction. Dedication, determination, and a deep sense of duty have been guiding principles throughout my professional journey.



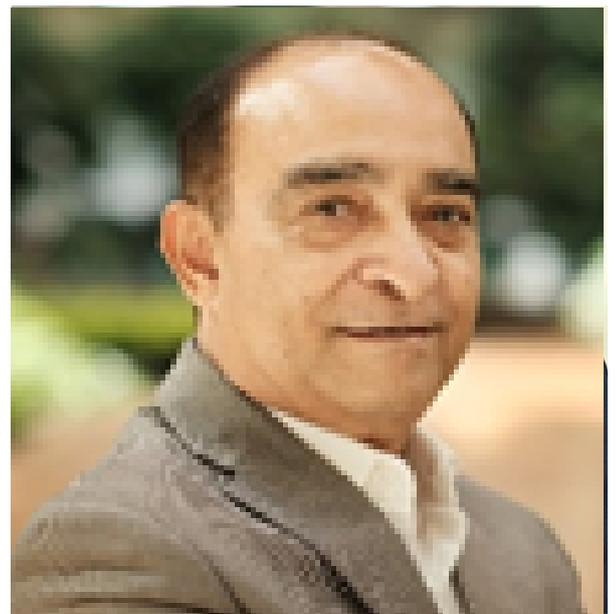
Spirituality, too, has been a constant source of strength. The daily recitation of the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, a tradition in my family, has nurtured resilience and calmness within me. It has taught me to view work as karma—a sacred duty performed with devotion and without attachment to outcomes.

I find genuine joy in work. Long hours have never deterred me; in fact, working hands-on often brings clarity, conviction, and a sense of completeness. Observing former presidents and stalwarts of the Bombay Management Association, I have always admired how the institution upholds the spirit of professional growth, collaboration, and ethical leadership. To have contributed to this legacy has been one of the most fulfilling aspects of my journey.

In retrospect, my journey has been a blend of learning, service, and inner growth. It is a journey shaped by mentors, family values, teamwork, and faith—a journey that continues to inspire me to strive for excellence while remaining grounded in humility.

MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

President - 2022-23



Mr Rajesh Sharma

CEO

Urihk Pharmaceuticals Pvt. Ltd.,

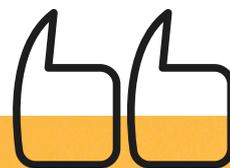
PEOPLE- CENTRIC EXCELLENCE

I am currently the CEO of Urihk Pharmaceuticals Pvt. Ltd., and an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), Delhi. My professional journey spans over four decades, with more than 35 years in leadership roles at prominent Indian multinational pharmaceutical companies such as Ranbaxy and Wockhardt. Along the way, I have had the privilege of leading cross-geography teams, transforming businesses, and engaging people to achieve sustainable growth.

Early in my career, I faced one of my first defining challenges: managing a team that was demotivated due to organizational changes. It was then I realized that leadership is about more than managing operations—it is about inspiring people and creating meaning in their work. That experience taught me that even small gestures of acknowledgment or clear communication could dramatically shift morale.

This insight sparked my curiosity about human behavior and motivated me to pursue advanced leadership and coaching certifications, including Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder Centered Coaching and the Oxford Advanced Management and Leadership Programme at the University of Oxford. These experiences broadened my perspective and reinforced my belief that effective leadership must combine strategy with empathy.

Throughout my career, I have worn many hats: business strategist, operational leader, and mentor. I have focused on aligning business planning, marketing, regulatory, and commercial functions to optimize performance.



A good leader leads the people from above them. A great leader leads the people from within them."

– M.D. Arnold



I have initiated ventures into new therapies and business segments, set up high-performing teams, and streamlined operations to maintain competitiveness. I recall a particularly intense project early in my leadership journey—integrating two cross-functional teams after a merger—which required patience, trust-building, and transparent communication. The success of that project was a turning point for me, teaching me the importance of resilience, adaptability, and listening deeply to people.

Leadership, for me, is deeply personal. I have co-created professional development programs for high-potential employees, coached teams, and spent time mentoring individuals to help them discover their strengths. There is a unique satisfaction in seeing someone I have mentored excel and contribute meaningfully to the organization.

I remember one young manager, initially struggling to find his footing, who, over two years of guidance and coaching, became a key leader in the team—an outcome that remains one of the most rewarding moments of my career. Moments like these constantly remind me that investing in people is as important as investing in business strategies



Serving as the President of the Bombay Management Association (2022–23) was another milestone. It allowed me to give back to the management community, engage with fellow leaders, and share insights accumulated over decades. That role reinforced my belief that leadership is a continuous journey of learning, sharing, and growing together, and that influence is most powerful when it is used to empower others.

I thrive in fast-paced, complex environments, balancing attention to detail with strategic vision. Over the years, I have learned that success is not just about achieving business goals—it is about fostering collaboration, inspiring teams, and creating lasting impact. Being a risk-taker, an initiator, and a guide for others has shaped the way I approach challenges and opportunities alike. I have learned that sometimes the boldest decisions—like entering a new therapy area or revamping a legacy process—bring the greatest rewards when coupled with careful planning and human-centric leadership.

Today, as I lead Urihk Pharmaceuticals, my focus remains unchanged: to transform businesses, enable leaders, and foster environments where people and organizations can thrive together.

My journey has taught me that leadership is not about titles or accolades—it is about empowering others, creating meaning in their work, and building organizations that endure. I am deeply grateful for the experiences, mentors, and teams that have enriched my journey, and I continue to be passionate about helping others realize their potential while achieving excellence together.

MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

President - 2023-24



Dr. Kiran Yadav

CHAIRMAN & MD
Success TryAngles

LESSONS THAT SHAPED ME

Life has always been very kind to me. I have never been compelled to prove myself. Hence, the concept of leadership to me has been more of a follower than being an outstanding person. I have always been a part of the crowd, more inclusive than exclusive, a cog in the wheel rather than the charming churner of change. I find it difficult to classify myself as anything but a genuine team member.

Never ever have I felt that - "Leadership" - this is it! In any absolute terms. In fact, I have realized that in the concept that we firmly believe today may be totally irrelevant and completely contrary tomorrow. Everything is relative. Hence, as a spec of dust in the motion of time we need to focus on our own contribution however insignificant it is in the universal horizon. Every DNA has its own uniqueness that counts.

I have had a long journey of over four decades of active work experience in varied roles and responsibilities across sectors. However in this article I will try to focus on my brief journey as the President BMA (2023-24). When I took over as BMA President in August 2023, the world had just rediscovered itself. There were new Norms. Learning had become mostly digital, free and online. There were a plethora of webinars, workshops offered by various organisations for free. Attendance from participants who were spoilt for choice was the challenge.

Work from Home was the prevalent system across most industry sectors. Venturing out to attend physical sessions was the least preferred option, let alone paying for such participation. The corporates were reeling under the recovery of the COVID impact. CSR funds were difficult to find. Online attendance was itself dwindling, membership was questioning benefits, sponsorships, donations were getting rarer.

BMA having newly received its certification as a Charitable Organization from the Charity Commissioner was required to essentially conduct its activities on a Non-Profit basis providing details of every income and expenditure Any activity expense that could not be justified as directly related to BMA's main objective would be subjected to strict audits and departmental interpretations for tax and compliance liabilities.

Given that most BMA activities first required investment before earning revenues, this was a challenging task. Not for Profit does not automatically imply No Surplus or For Loss. The hard-earned reserves of all my predecessors and previous Presidents needed to be protected and multiplied.

The situation I presume is not much different from what every previous President and their teams have faced in the last fifty years or for that matter any incoming President and Executive Committee are expected to encounter in the future. In fact at the ensuing rate of change the situations will be far more complex to address.

It was thus time for introspection. The relevance of BMA and its offerings needed reevaluation. Need was to identify at least one key area to focus efforts and bring meaningful unique service to BMA members and they society we serve.

With the help of Past Presidents, members, BMA Secretariat, well-wishers and influencers at large it was identified that one major area of opportunity was "To engage with Management Institutes and partner them in their struggle for progress". Thus evolved the concept and launch of "BMA Centre of Excellence" @ 5 Management Institutes. BMA's rich bank of corporate experts worked alongside faculty, students and alumni to create a platform for engagement with industry and student learning through seminars, workshops, mentoring for economic revival, entrepreneurship, innovation, agrotourism and leadership. It created excitement and overwhelming attendance across campuses.

For the first time in BMA's history, students researched and presented nomination files of 200+ business leaders for the consideration of Dr R A Mashelkar (The Chief Jury) and his team to pick the best for award and recognition at the hands of The Hon. Governor of Maharashtra at the BMA Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. Youth are the Future! The motive of inducting young MBAs into the BMA fold as stakeholders that will drive it was achieved. It worked. Grateful to BMA for the opportunity!

Lessons learnt:

Apart from the regular activities that BMA does, each year it is important to focus on at least one unique initiative that will fuel the growth and sustenance of BMA.

My recommendation to students:

Focus on one task at a time. You always have a Choice!

Given any circumstances ultimately you are responsible and accountable to yourself. Knowing facts and accepting them is a good start to solving a problem as long as you are not a part of it.

Credit and blame are incidental and irrelevant to good decision making.

Don't stress over trivial. In life is there anything but trivial?

Success is a coincidence. Would you play if you knew the results?

Enjoy the game. Be true to your team. Win you will!

As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others."

— Bill Gates



MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

PEOPLE- CENTRIC EXCELLENCE

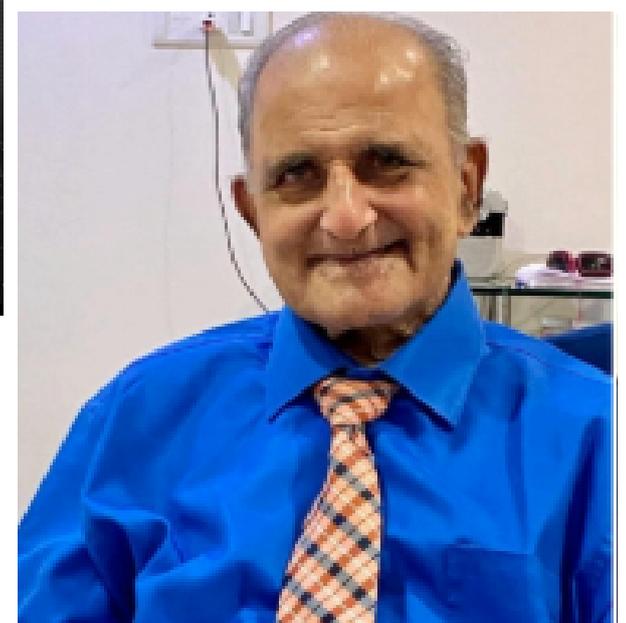
Leadership, to me, has never been about position or authority – it has been about purpose, perseverance, and the ability to inspire trust. Over the years, my journey as a professional, mentor, and institution-builder has been guided by this simple yet powerful philosophy. When I began my career as a Company Secretary, the profession was still in its formative years. Corporate India was evolving, and governance frameworks were gaining prominence.

Establishing Pramod S. Shah & Associates in Mumbai provided me the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to this evolution – serving clients across diverse sectors while upholding the highest standards of professional integrity.

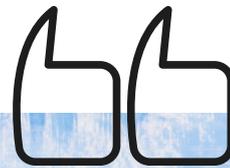
Over the years, the firm has grown into a trusted name in secretarial audits, regulatory compliance, governance advisory, and corporate consultancy, catering to both domestic and international clients.

My association with the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) has been one of the most fulfilling chapters of my journey. Serving as Chairman of the Western India Regional Council (WIRC) and later as a Central Council Member for three consecutive terms gave me the platform to strengthen the professional ecosystem, mentor young company secretaries, and shape governance initiatives at both regional and national levels.

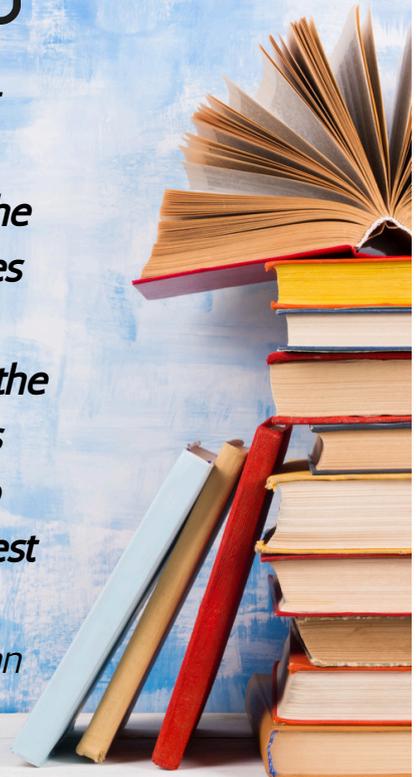
President - 2024 - 25



CS Pramod S. Shah
Founder Partner
Pramod S. Shah & Associates,



"The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things." – Ronald Reagan



A defining milestone was being one of the Founder and Managing Committee Members of the Centre for Corporate Governance, Research and Training (CCGRT) – an initiative aimed at promoting governance research, thought leadership, and professional excellence.

Through these experiences, I've learned that leadership is about service – to one's profession, to one's community, and to the values one stands for. My engagements with the Bombay Management Association (BMA) and Lions Clubs International have further deepened this conviction, emphasizing empathy, teamwork, and the responsible stewardship of resources.

Every challenge has been a lesson in patience and resilience. I have learned that true leadership lies in listening, mentoring, and empowering others to reach their potential. A leader's success is reflected not in individual achievements but in the collective growth of those they nurture. I take pride in having mentored several young professionals who today hold responsible positions in corporates and practice. Their progress reaffirms my belief that leadership is about multiplying impact.

If I were to summarize my leadership lessons, they would be: lead by example, build teams and systems, stay ahead of change, and remain true to one's values. Institutions outlast individuals, and the true measure of leadership lies in creating structures and cultures that enable others to grow.

As I reflect on my journey, I remain deeply grateful for the trust and support of my colleagues and peers. I believe the role of the Company Secretary today is more vital than ever – as the conscience keeper of corporate India. My journey continues with the same purpose that began it: to contribute, to mentor, and to build institutions that will continue to inspire excellence long after we are gone.

