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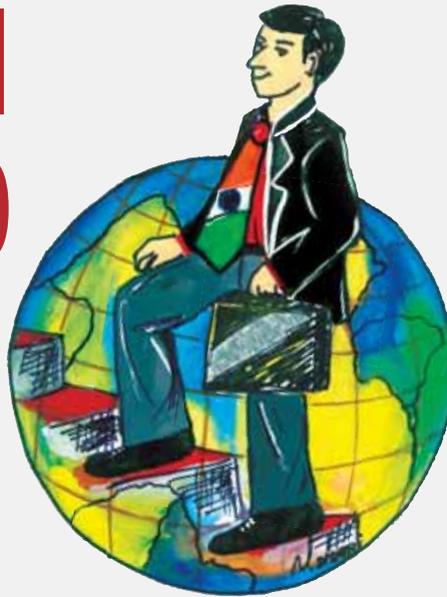
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The Global Indian CEO

The Indian CEO is truly getting global today, yet, execution and people skills remain his weak points



By **Benedict Paramanand**

The Indian CEO is finally coming out of his traditional mould and is today at ease managing chaos, turbulence and opportunities thrown at him by global markets. He is able to carry himself with rare confidence at international forums and is part of several international committees and boards.

A recent IBM CEO study of 1,000 odd global CEOs heralds the coming of Indian CEOs into the global arena. The study finds India Inc. to be most comfortable and in sync with rapid globalization of business compared with its peers in other emerging economies. It finds that Indian CEOs have beaten their peers in managing the uncertainties of the global economy by a comfortable margin.

The global CEO report credits Indian CEOs for a few recent innovative business models and products. BCCI, the cricket governing body, for instance, has developed a new business out of nowhere

with the Indian Premier League (IPL). Airtel and IBM continue to build upon the success of the innovative principle of utility computing while bottom-of-the-pyramid innovations are increasing by the day.

Bharti Group Chairman Sunil Mittal, who recently moderated a Confederation of Indian Industry CEO Forum discussion, recently said: "The combination of technology, demographics, expanding education, regulatory change, and a shift to a services-based economy have produced something genuinely new: a global platform for work and India is and can continue to benefit from in this global marketplace."

The MD and CEO of Ashok Leyland R Seshasayee, recently said that "the changing environment for Indian companies is like adapting from test cricket to 20:20 cricket. CEOs need to learn to take more risks outside India and make them count in quick time,"

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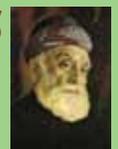
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Serious volunteering is in

Volunteering in India is finally becoming a serious business with companies recognizing its larger impact. This was evident at a recent Confederation of Indian Industry conference in Bangalore. Companies may soon compete with each other on how progressive they are about enabling volunteering.

Examples abound. The Tata companies know volunteering is something that provides meaning to people's work-life balance and have made it a part of their corporate sustainability domain. Today, the Tatas see the potential of employees acting as touch points between the company and the communities.

Intel is setting goals and targets for volunteering. This year, Intel plans to put in one million volunteer hours globally, of which 25,000 are expected to come from India. For every 20 hours volunteered, the NGO volunteered with gets a grant of \$80 from the Intel Foundation.



IBM has 10,000 employees volunteering in India. The volunteering initiative, which is kept separate from community relations department, is supported by web-based systems at IBM.

Growing corporate interest is strengthening the hands of the NGOs, who, for long, have suffered due to lack of volunteers to take their initiatives to the field. Dream a dream, for example, which works for life skill development of underprivileged children, has received 5,000 volunteer hours from 700 corporate volunteers last year, mostly from the IT sector in Bangalore. Janaagraha, an initiative in community participation in governance, is getting growing support from companies like Dell and Ernst and Young.

This is one trend that's surely set to catch on in the coming years as the quest for meaning in life becomes an increasingly important issue for employees and painting a human face for employers.

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What does it mean to be a global CEO



A global CEO is not simply one who goes after business opportunities beyond domestic shores. This new animal is sharp, adept with cultural diversities, can talk about the merit of inclusion, show deep sympathy for half the Indian population that earns below two dollars a day and look dead serious when told about the imperative of sustainable business models.

The 2008 IBM CEO study corroborates a 2005 study by the Hay Group for CII and FICCI on leadership capabilities and competencies of Indian CEOs. It found that Indian CEOs have a unique 'inner strength' and 'adaptive thinking' capabilities. However, like in many other areas, in management too, the study finds Indian CEOs having modest 'doing' capabilities. This could be a national trait written into the DNA of Indians. But with Execution (capital E intended), being the strong trait of successful global CEOs, Indians will be forced to catch up.

Another area where Indian CEOs need catching up is in genuine interest in people. Tharuma Rajah, co-author of the recently launched book *The Indian CEO*, says that "There is a dark side to their (Indian CEOs) strongly developed intellect and achievement drives – a relative absence of tuning into other people. At times they are so focused on entrepreneurship that they neglect the task of energizing their teams."

A Korn/Ferry International - IMA India Leadership Study, December 2007, finds that Indian business leaders are much more task-focused and intellectual and less social and participative. In other words, they are more hierarchical and less concerned about building consensus.

Despite their peculiar traits, Indian CEOs, like the CEOs of other Asian countries, will retain their individuality. In any case, it is easy to hire those who are good at execution, but the special traits people of different nationalities possess will continue to be their strength.

Way forward

The IBM CEO study finds that nearly all CEOs are adapting their business models and that two-thirds are implementing extensive innovations. More than 40 percent are changing their enterprise models to be more collaborative. They are moving aggressively towards global business designs, deeply changing capabilities and partnering more extensively.

CEOs are also moving beyond the cliché of globalization, and organizations of all sizes are reconfiguring to take advantage of global integration opportunities.

People skills are now just as much in focus as market factors, and environmental issues demand twice as much attention as they did in the past. "Suddenly everything is becoming important. And change can come from anywhere," the report observes.

CEOs have rated insufficient talent as the top barrier to global integration — even higher than regulatory and budgetary hurdles. They also described how technological advances are reshaping value chains, influencing products and services and changing how their companies interact with customers.

The global CEO today is a special person. He holds immense power to influence policies, governments and lives. However, power comes with greater responsibility. One hopes he lives up to it!

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Cutting attrition among women

Faced with a severe talent crunch, American companies are seriously coming up with attractive plans to minimize attrition among women employees. Johnson & Johnson's Crossing the Finish Line and Intel's Technical Leadership Pipelines Program for Women provide critical career development opportunities just before the break point. Cisco's Executive Talent Insertion Program is designed to bring in a significant number of new women as senior-level lateral hires.



A new research identifies a fight-or-flight moment (ages 35–40) when female attrition spikes dramatically. Around 35-40, women across science, engineering and technology experience a perfect storm. Career problems escalate and family pressures deepen at the same time. The losses are massive – fully 52% of women fall away. This is hugely painful, both for women who abandon hard-won credentials and for employers struggling with worsening labor shortages.

A new study—which Sylvia Ann Hewlett co-authored—published in the Harvard Business Review titled “The Athena Factor: Reversing the Brain Drain in Science, Engineering, and Technology”) demonstrates that over 40% of highly qualified scientists, engineers and technologists on the lower rungs of corporate career ladders are now female. In pharmaceuticals, high tech, petro-chemicals, and aerospace, young women are making impressive strides – and garnering rave performance reviews. More than half of these women drop out—pushed and shoved by macho work environments, serious isolation, and extreme job pressures. Some lessons in it for Indian companies as well !

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Lack of deep thinking hurting companies



One of the silent, yet looming threats to the corporate world today is the lack of deep thinking in decision making among most executives. In their new book, *Marketing Metaphoria*, Gerald and Lindsay Zaltman list a few things that are getting in the way of deep thinking. Among them are: (1) reluctance to take risk, especially when short-term performance is at stake, (2) the fear of disruption resulting from "thinking differently and deeply," (3) the potential psychological cost of changing one's mind resulting from deep thinking, and (4) the lack of information providing deep insights on which to base deep thinking.

The relevant question is: What are organizations doing to combat this threat? Can you blame it on managers alone? The authors say leadership is more responsible for such culture prevailing in the organization. They are usually so overwhelmed with the task at hand that they don't look for any creative solutions. The declining trend in managers to immerse themselves in the outside environment reduces their chance to be creative.

The reality of today's world of business means an executive is often in the realm of not-knowing or no longer being in control of a situation. In essence, they need the capacity to patiently work with uncertainty, half-knowledge, ambiguity and paradox-to think deeply and come out with innovation. Increasingly, managers tend to outsource deep thinking and even thinking with out-of-the-company specialists.

It is up to the leaders of companies to sponsor and develop the attitude towards thinking on the job

The "obvious" task of managers is to sense changes in the environment, make sense of those changes, decide on a course of action and then act on that decision. This seems very straightforward at the rational level. However, human emotions and organizational cultures make this obvious task anything but easy.

Managers tend to do that which is well rewarded, and in virtually all corporations, deep thought, introspection, questioning the status quo, or taking risks are not rewarded, and in fact, often punished. So most large corporations prosper through scale and size until they collapse or are acquired. The successful manager has prospered by being a good fit to the culture rather than by being an innovator and change agent.

Deep thinking requires a sense of ownership. Companies which manage to instil this have the best chance of prospering. It is in their own interest, anyway!

Are you Groundswelled yet?

If you are not hooked to the 'Groundswell' trend yet, you face the threat of becoming a dinosaur

Groundswell is a spontaneous movement of people using online tools to connect, take charge of their own experience and get what they need – information, support, ideas, products and bargaining power – from each other. It is essentially "a social trend in which people use technologies to get the things they need from each other, instead of from companies."

Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff of Forrester Research, in their book *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies* (Harvard University Press April 2008) spot the 'Groundswell Phenomenon', and outline immense potential for organizations to connect with their consumers.

Groundswell encompasses blogs and wikis, podcasts and YouTube, and consumers who rate products, buy and sell from each other, write their own news, and find their own deals. The authors say Groundswell as a trend is "global, unstoppable, and affects every industry.

The book offers thoughtful answers to some of the more important questions. How can you tell if a new technology has staying power? Why do people participate with social media? How do you energize your customers? When should you use blogs, social networks, and other media technologies?



This is not another book on social media or the power of social network. Instead, it gives a clear perspective on the 'whole' trend, with a clear set of strategic recommendations. With the backing of data and analysis from Forrester Research, the book becomes an essential read for anyone who depends on customers for their existence.

India appears to be slow on the uptake to groundswell as a trend and is clearly three to five years behind the developed markets in social computing. Perhaps with a lot of Indian companies high on the growth wave the urgency may not be there. However, reading this book might give them the wake up call. For consumers, the book helps to know how to get what they want and at the right value.

Ten Indian companies top reputation list

The media went berserk about the Tata's landing the sixth most respected company's accolade and failed to notice that nine other Indian companies have made it to the top 200. Of course, a leapfrog of 100 positions by the Tatas from last year is astounding, thanks to recent high profile M&As. The rankings are part of the "Global 200: The World's Best Corporate Reputations" list, compiled by US-based Reputation Institute (ReputationInstitute.com).



Interestingly, among the top five rankings on different parameters, Infosys gets fifth on citizenship, fourth on governance (Tata fifth) and fourth on products and services. On leadership Tatas get fourth (Infosys fifth).

Whatever the methodology used by the Reputation Institute, it is baffling how companies such as Apple, IBM and BMW lag so far behind considering that they have committed following.

List of Indian companies in the Global 200 list

Rank		86.53 (Best score Toyota)
6	Tata Group	82.84
14	Infosys	81.18
77	Maruti Udyog	74.38
107	SBI	72.40
131	Hindustan Lever India	71.13
147	Hero Honda	70.15
169	Bajaj India	69.22
186	ONGC	68.60
191	Mahindra & Mahindra	68.64
199	Indian Oil Corporation	68

Surprise!

Ranking of world's best known brands

Toyota (first); Apple – 63; Intel – 67; Dell – 82; BMW – 88; IBM – 108; Hitachi 109; Nike – 126; Microsoft 137; Motorola - 170; Nokia- 177; Airbus – 197. Nokia and Samsung showed the greatest decline in reputation.

In 2006, the Reputation Institute launched its inaugural list of the world's most respected companies. For this year's study, the institute surveyed more than 60,000 respondents during February and March. More than 150,000 separate company ratings were obtained to measure more than 1,000 companies in 27 countries. Respondents voted only on domestic companies. A standardized measurement system is used to rate the overall

health of 600 of the world's largest companies, based on annual revenue and a gross domestic product-weighted system.

Each company's overall Global Pulse score is based on what the Reputation Institute calls the seven dimensions of reputation: products and services, innovation, workplace, citizenship, governance, leadership and performance. The most influential dimensions are products and services and citizenship.

Role of luck in M&As

A new study on CEOs has found that many of them are overconfident about their own negotiating skills and overlook the element of luck in successful mergers, acquisitions, and other deals. Authored by Matthew T. Billett and Yiming Qian of the University of Iowa, the study, entitled "Are Overconfident CEOs Born or Made? Evidence of Self-Attribution Bias from Frequent Acquirers," discusses how behavioural biases control CEOs important managerial decisions.



The authors said that one of the most important decisions top managers have to make is whether they want to go ahead with mergers and acquisitions. And this decision is mainly based on financial metrics. However, they said that there is an increasing body of evidence that behavioural biases play an important role in managerial decision-making.

Professors Billett and Zian based their results on a sample of public acquisitions between 1985 and 2002. In their study, they focussed on one such bias – managerial overconfidence – and found evidence suggesting that CEOs develop overconfidence through 'self-attribution bias' when making merger and acquisition decisions. Usually, those subject to self-attribution bias overcredit their role in bringing about good outcomes and underestimate the role of luck.

Another finding which was consistent with this was that CEOs seems to overly attribute their role in successful deals, which makes them go for more deals even though these subsequent deals are value destructive. Evidence was also found that CEOs alter their stock holdings prior to deals in a pattern consistent with overconfidence in the outcome of these subsequent deals. The finds are published in a recent issue of *Management Science*.

However, the authors advised that CEOs should be particularly alert and disciplined while dealing with acquisitions even when they have succeeded previously. Also, Boards and other stakeholders should make certain that any proposed deal is evaluated on its own merits and not on the basis of prior CEO success in mergers and acquisitions.

Leverage employee mobility

Smart companies don't stop employees from leaving; instead they use their social network to gain competitive advantage

Attrition is a big problem today. The traditional solution to curb attrition has been to focus on strengthening employee-retention programs. But although such efforts might produce limited gains, they do not address the broader issues driving employee mobility.

Instead, a more innovative approach is emerging. A recent research suggests that companies might benefit from developing new strategies that, instead of focusing on suppressing employee mobility, actively seek to exploit the potential opportunities it creates. "For such approaches to succeed, however, managers must rethink some of their basic assumptions about the war for talent," say Deepak Somaya, assistant professor of strategy at the College of Business, University of Illinois and Ian O. Williamson, associate professor of Management at the Melbourne Business School.

In a provocative article in *Sloan Management Review* (May 2008), the authors say that in the past, employee mobility was framed as a win-or-lose scenario: A company wins if it keeps its employees and loses if they leave. Turnover hurts businesses because of the increased administrative expenses associated with recruiting, hiring and training replacements. These costs have been estimated to be 100%-150% of the salary of a high-performing employee with unique skills.

But dwelling on the loss would only prevent company executives from seeing the potential opportunities created by the social capital embedded in their relationships with the departing employees. Social capital is defined as the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through and derived from relationships.

When employees move between companies they often maintain contact with former colleagues. Because of the

trust and comfort embedded in these ties, employee mobility can create a conduit for information, allowing knowledge to flow between organizations

These relationships can also serve as the basis for future business dealings between companies. In addition, because mobile individuals possess knowledge about the capabilities, work practices and processes of their former employers, they can



make inter-organizational endeavors more efficient. "Thus, the social capital created by the movement of employees across companies can be a key source of competitive advantage," the authors said.

An implicit assumption of the "war for talent" perspective is that departing workers are lost to competitors. Yet employees also leave to join existing and potential "cooperators," such as customer companies, suppliers and partners, and such movement can facilitate the creation and strengthening of business relationships with those organizations. The lesson is clear: Employee mobility isn't a simple win-or-lose scenario. Although a company might lose the human capital of former employees, it can retain access to the social capital it shares with them. Depending on the types of organizations former employees join, this social capital can have substantial value, significantly increasing a company's performance.

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VOLUNTEERING PAYS

A Bangalore-based NGO is making volunteering both purposeful and fun



By Namrata Agarwal

It is 7 a.m. on a bright Bangalore Sunday morning and over 15 young people in their early 20s are on their way to take a bunch of children from the Adugodi slum to the Planetarium for a learning and fun trip. This has become an increasingly common sight at many NGOs working with children from vulnerable backgrounds in Bangalore. During the week, these same young people work in leading corporates, draw 6-digit salaries and have access to the best of a new, vibrant and successful India.



On most weekends, they have no qualms about walking the litter strewn streets to a slum to meet eager, bright-eyed smiling faces of children who wait for the “uncles” and “aunties” to get them ready to take on the world empowered with

education. This is the new face of volunteering and a constant sight at Dream a Dream – an NGO working with children from vulnerable backgrounds.

At Dream a Dream, we believe that for any positive impact to happen in our society, active engagement of the community is critical. The way we chose to accomplish this is by involving volunteers from all walks of life and hence volunteering is ingrained in our mission statement.

Today we work with over 700 community volunteers. They not only build and run programs with children, but also contribute to various areas like raising awareness about the organization, raise funds, help in internal processes, build IT systems, train Dream a Dream staff, write newsletters, organize events, help in organization building and more.

With the growing economy, the cry for sustainable development is growing stronger. The surest way to integrate this is to engage employees and have them volunteer.

The challenge for a corporate is to consolidate and provide a unified channel through which information can flow and volunteering efforts can be measured. The benefits for doing it will far outweigh the efforts involved.

Helps fight attrition

In the ever raging war for talent and retaining it, volunteering is proving to be a handy tool for retention. A survey conducted in 2006 showed that 90 out of the Fortune 500 companies had active long term employee volunteering programs. Research has proved that on an average 4 out of every 5 corporates believe that volunteering increases employee morale, productivity, build teamwork and enhances skills like leadership and problem solving.

Ask the volunteers at Dream a Dream and they will tell you how it has boost their confidence and communication skills. Skills built while organizing projects have also helped them manage work better.

The benefits corporates reap are not far behind. Varying figures have been projected, but on an average 70% of corporates believe that apart from employee benefits, volunteering also enhances the image of the corporate and aids in employee recruitment. Corporates are increasingly using employee volunteering in public relations activities to increase awareness of the company, its products and its social contributions. It is only a matter of time when the impact of all these benefits are quantified and reported as direct contribution to the bottom line.

New strategies are being tried to make employee volunteering successful. Three tenets that need to be kept in mind - Information of options available; keeping communication channels open – both at the corporate and the charity, and, providing flexibility.

Corporates are increasingly using employee volunteering in PR activities. It is only a matter of time when the impact of all these benefits are quantified and reported as direct contribution to the bottom line

Giving time off to volunteer, donating to charities that employees volunteer with, recognition and rewards, providing organizational assistance, promoting volunteering in teams, and with families are a few options that are being explored to further promote volunteering.

Like everything else there are challenges in implementing effective volunteer programs. However, the need for people to support causes is more than ever. With enhanced pay-scales, the urge in people to do their bit for their society is on the rise. The search for meaning in life has lead people to look outside their comfort zones of air conditioned offices. The question is – do people know where and how to give back? A staggering 95% of volunteers, when they join Dream a Dream, say “I want to do something to contribute. I don’t know what and how.”

We believe every individual has the power to positively impact one other life. We believe all of us are and can be active changemakers. We believe it is the responsibility of NGOs and corporates to guide every individual as best as we can so that volunteering becomes a way of life.

Namrata works with Dream A Dream. www.dreamadream.org

Serious game + serious entertainment

The just-concluded Indian Premier League's success can be attributed to many innovations. Bhupendra Sharma and Madhujit Venkatakrishna take a close look

What qualifies to be a good innovation are a few things: It must have a significant impact on the receivers; Must involve creation of new partners and capabilities; Should be able to change the previous perception and must be able to get new users/viewers.

The first round of the phenomenally successful Indian Premier League (IPL) qualifies pretty much on all the above parameters and should be regarded as a true innovation story.

Cricket has never been a global sport and to play a World Cup is a misnomer. Not anymore. With IPL cricket has seen a new format come alive that can be commercialized, popularized and packaged to provide primarily entertainment. Cricket for a long time has been a game to showcase skills only for connoisseurs of the game (Test Cricket), but now for the first time IPL has made it "entertainment" and has completely done away with the concept of market segmentation.

The 50-50 game was an orbit shift from the 5-day test cricket and T20 is the next orbit. What it has essentially done is pick up the core elements of the game; people like to see runs being scored-more specifically boundaries, wickets being taken and some good fielding. T20 has packed these core elements such that each ball bowled (120 balls) evokes excitement.

IPL has managed to pull in a huge number of women - almost 66% increase in the number of women inside the grounds - because it is an entertainment and they need not understand the game's technicalities

Maximum entertainment

With people's concentration levels going down and patience running out, the mindset is "How can I get maximum entertainment in the least possible time?" This is the perfect answer- 240 balls, 325 runs, 12-15 wickets all in 180 minutes It's a test of accuracy, attention to detail, strategy to control the rampaging batsmen batters, consistency to win matches continuously. Overall, every concept of the productization of the fast-paced modern world applies to the T-20 series as well. Add cheerleaders, music concerts, dance and you have a complete entertainment package for all ages.

Cricket has moved away from being a gentleman's game to one of fierce competition like soccer - it is this aggressive competition

that evokes people's fan following. With IPL, for the first time, cities have started to own up and get themselves attached to their teams.

In spite of the popularity of cricket in India, it was never a preferred route for parents to see their children grow - but with the current amounts of money everything has changed. E.g.:



Saurav Ganguly - Shahrukh Khan

B. Akhil who was a salesman for HDFC has now been given an opportunity to make \$30,000 in 44 days. And look at the number of local talent that has sprung up making it such a good career prospect? It has made international selection more transparent. Shaun Marsh, Shane Watson, M S Goni, Yousuf Pathan, Suresh Raina etc.

Another innovation is in the understanding of the core value- "Provide Entertainment" by bringing together the two biggest entertainers in India- Bollywood and Cricket - Celebrity sponsors, owners making it an experience rather than a game.

Positioning the matches during primetime slots (8-11) the peak TV viewing time in India and attracting the population, which usually gets left out during that time - the male population, which generally abstains from the TV (except for may be news). More than 99 million of the 135 million TV viewers watched this and this was broadcast to over 100 countries, making it a truly global event almost as big as the EPL

It has managed to pull in a huge number of women - almost 66% increase in the number of women inside the grounds - because it is entertainment and they need not understand the game's technicalities as was the case with the 2 other formats- Test and 50-50.

Companies that were previously not very well known can use this platform- GMR, Jaypee, Deccan Chronicle - not every Indian knew them, but now they have come a long way.

In the ensuing IPL seasons some rough edges will get smoothed and we can hope for bigger entertainment and perhaps more innovation.

How green are IT users?



Ranganath Iyengar lists a few ways how IT companies can become more energy efficient



Data storage has become highly inefficient with over allocation of storage space which is often under utilized

It has become all pervasive and used by all industries, IT is a core activity right down to small towns and villages. If you think only petrol and diesel impact the carbon footprint, think again – so does IT! As per Gartner, IT is responsible for 2% of all carbon releases and it is coming from many sources – fast memory in particular is getting to be a high energy item. As we pack features and miniaturize devices, we also make them consume and release more energy which is detrimental twice over especially considering the number of computing devices and gadgets that we use every day!

Some examples to understand the enormity of the problem - a recent article in Dataquest dedicated to Green data centers had the following facts - As per VMWare, Energy costs are 10% of the IT budget and can rise to 50% if radical measures are not taken. As per Emerson Network Power, the energy usage is split evenly between computing (52%) and overheads (48%). Since racks are getting denser with more powerful servers, cooling challenges of data centers are increasing. As per IBM, data centers across the world are reported to consume 40 W/hrs of electricity each year, producing an estimated 17.2 bn tonnes of CO₂ emissions.

According to IDC estimates, un-utilized server capacity equates to approximately \$140 bn, or more than 20 mn servers. Also, the fact that at 4 tonnes of carbon dioxide emitted annually per server, these un-utilized servers produce a total of more than 80 mn tonnes of CO₂ per year. Data storage has become highly inefficient with over allocation of storage space which is often under utilized.

We toss out toner cartridges', CDs etc into the dustbin without a second thought and so are many other such gadgets

and consumer electronics (several of which are PC compatible devices today). How much are we really aware of our actions?

What needs to be done?

Virtualization is given as one of the answers which can help consolidate IT infrastructure and help reduce redundancy and hence save energy. Virtual machine based computing environments (e.g. VMWare) also help reduce electricity significantly since the need for multiple machines goes down significantly. However, without virtualizing network and storage in addition to servers, the full benefits would not be achieved.

Other simpler aspects include partial upgrades of equipment rather than junking equipment frequently since such equipment are not easy to dispose and recycle. Today tropicalized equipment are available which require lesser cooling which is also a viable option. In most offices, even switching off monitors and CPUs at the end of a workday can help save a lot of energy and reduce the need for extended cooling.

Other aspects such as de-duplication of data (solutions from Quantum) also help optimize storage space significantly. Tape cartridges may not be fashionable - but are still very cost effective, easy to use, store data for long periods and can be stored in a vault using no energy as against an extensive and expensive online storage system since a lot of the data would never get used for years.

Even simpler is to allocate only one machine per user – a lot of offices allow people to have multiple machines sitting on their desks which are never turned off although only one of the machines would be used at a time. On the hardware side, energy efficient microprocessors from companies like Sun are catching on quickly as are efficient computing platforms like Dtrace.

Spanson and Virident are two companies that are focusing on rolling out applications and hardware using EcoRAM which is a new type of energy efficient flash memory with as much computing power as is offered by a server rack using DRAM with a 50% reduction in TCO over a 3 year period.

There are also 'energy efficient' operating systems and Linux has been officially tested as the most energy efficient one followed by Windows Server. Vista is more energy efficient than XP. So, if you want to start going green, try going to www.epeat.net first before you buy your next computer.

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Where is the ecosystem for innovation?

It appears that Indian businesses are beginning to warm up to the threats, opportunities and challenges posed by innovation. Fast-paced globalization in the last five years has indeed shaken Indian companies into considering innovation as an imperative. Of course, there are a few early learners who are already playing the ball.

The Confederation of Indian Industry's annual Innovation Summits have played a vital role in creating a platform for business leaders to learn, network and get inspired. It is a valiant effort at building an innovation ecosystem that is nearly non-existent in India.

There may be sparks of innovation here and there, but for a country that prides itself with several firsts, the efforts at building a lasting and dynamic innovation ecosystem is yet to start seriously.

The first place to begin is deregulating the higher education system and encouraging universities to become idea homes. They need to be networked robustly among themselves and with the industry. There is also a big need for massive increase in early-stage funding so that good ideas are not starved.

Indians are natural innovators; what they need is an ecosystem that supports them. This message came out clear at the roundtable titled 'Innovation in the 21st Century: Opportunities and Challenges for India' at the fourth CII Innovation Summit held in June 08. Prof. S. Sadagopan, Director, IIIT chaired the session. **The panelists included Dr. Vijay Chandru, Chairman, Co-founder & CEO, Strand Life Sciences; Dr. Rekha Shetty, author and MD of Farstar Distribution Network; Rajiv Mody, Chairman and CEO, Sasken Communication Technologies; Chetan Maini, Deputy Chairman & CTO, REVA Electric Car Company**

and Pradeep Tagare, Director, Intel Cap India Technology Fund. Here are some excerpts:

Go-to-market capability vital

Vijay Chandru

The challenge for India is how to bring complex technologies and products to the market. Since innovation affects large number of lives, it can happen only when there is an effective ecosystem.

Today, many places in India have incubators and other infrastructure, but the real challenge is commercialization of ideas and inventions. There is also the challenge of scarce resources considering that organizations are constantly worried about top lines and bottom lines and the stock markets are unforgiving. This does act as a damper to innovations.

And for those who develop products for the masses, process innovation is a big challenge. Product innovation without keeping the customer needs in mind is difficult to achieve.

Taking products to the market often has to be done by the innovator himself.

Build culture of innovation first

Rekha Shetty

When we are talking about innovation, we are talking about transformation. Organizations can transform only when they create a culture for innovation to flourish. It can happen when every one has the permission to play. Innovation does not happen on its own. The mathematics of innovation has to be worked out well.



Picture courtesy
CANON

If a company wants long-term and consistent innovation, it has to put in place an open culture, have dynamic tools in place where everybody talks the same language. A company is one where sparks of ideas are given a chance to succeed. As Michael Angelo said “In every block of marble lies a statue waiting to be liberated.”

Innovation happens when everyone in the organization is respectful – a belief that everyone, including the helper, can come up with brilliant ideas.

Benchmarking kills innovation

Rajiv Mody

To sustain an organization there is no alternative but to continuously innovate. This requires a certain level of thinking at the corporate level. Corporates have to fear that if they don't innovate, they will perish.

Culture has to form the basis for a lot of decision making which ultimately leads to a single-minded focus of innovation. This requires commitment from the top and also sufficient resource allocation. Resources in terms of not only funding but also talent.

The next important thing is to recognize the value of being innovative and protecting innovation. India has been poor at protecting whatever it has created. It's important to ensure protection of the value on a sustained, long-term basis. In my opinion, it is absolutely critical. Unless we bring about a cultural change to ensure that we protect, we will be left with nothing.

From the corporate culture perspective there should be different standards for the areas which are focused on innovation for the next generation. Organizations fall into the trap of applying standard methods and find it difficult to come up with appropriate matrix to analyze whether they are headed in the right direction. There should also be different ways to know whether the money spent is showing results.

Ultimately, the path of innovation requires a lot of patience, a lot of focus, requires a lot of hard work and more fundamentally an ecosystem to be able to test the ideas very quickly and question whether the solutions we have is what the market needs.

India is definitely at the threshold where a lot of interesting things are happening and Bangalore is well-suited to provide a conducive eco-system for innovation.

About universities contributing to our innovation eco-system, we still have a long way to go. There is need for greater participation, openness and willingness to take commercial risks. There is enough and more talent to bring about transformation right in our back yard.

About management practices and processes, I'd like to emphasize the ability to know when to move from R&D aspects to scaling aspects. This is because scaling requires transformation because practices used in the R&D environment will help scale to build successful businesses. Building business requires rigor in processes, delivery on time and customer satisfaction among others.

Diversity in Innovation team vital

Chetan Maini

What's worked very well for us at the initial stage of innovation is a fair amount of freedom, a broader picture of where one wants to go and details worked out about the process. The business plan came much later when the product was ready. What it means is innovation should allow companies to play around and worry about business aspects at a later stage. Innovation is often driven by constraints.

The second thing that's worked for us is asking questions several times to get the answer and creating that culture within the organization.

The other challenge is how to innovate marketing and technology together. The key is to get marketing and technology guys together. It's imperative not to restrict innovation to the R&D folks. It is important to bring people who work in different fields together.

In India we should explore the idea of non-competitive industries coming together. For example, marketing, design and R&D companies can come together to jointly drive certain innovations. This will have tremendous potential.

The challenge is how do we showcase much more than what we have by collaborating ?

Complement business model

Pradeep Tagare

Innovation, at the end of the day, has to be funded. The challenge is how to develop a vibrant ecosystem for early stage innovation. For India, it is important that entrepreneurs are seen to be making money through innovation so that others get encouraged to pursue their ideas.

It is high time corporate India came forward to encourage innovation in a big way, but I don't see this happening at least in the technology space now. It is high time innovative companies come up with products and services innovations that complement their business model. If we don't do that it will be a long, long time before we get to see innovative products and services coming out of India.

Be talent centric!

Talent centrism™ is just not about having an eye for talent but making talent the heart of one's existence

I was lucky to have started my career with an organization which I later on came to realize was out-and-out a talent-centric™ one. Way back, in 1983, when I barged into the Eastern Region office of CMC Limited at Kolkata, to land a job, as a fresher I had no relevant skill or experience to fit into a job profile. And yet, like many others in CMC, I was appointed based on a certain potential effectiveness that my inherent talents seemed to indicate. It was about getting the right job for the right person and not the much clichéd other way round. No wonder, till date, it still remains the one of the most respected, talked about and fondly remembered organization in the industry, especially when it comes to its people practices.



The bottom line here is committing to an incremental development of each individual and deriving exponential performance in the process

In those days it was considered as a thought-leading differentiating practice. Today, to be able to sustain, grow and evolve amidst this dearth of employable and scalable talent, being talent-centric™ is no more a choice. It is an organizational imperative.

Talent centrism™ is just not about having an eye for talent but making talent the heart of ones existence. It envisages certain radical shifts in mindsets.

The fundamental mindset it envisages is moving from delivering some-how to making world-class delivery happen by providing space for nurturance and growth of talents.

Talent centrism™ is a definite departure from the classical resource-centric delivery model. The bottom line here is committing to an incremental development of each individual and deriving exponential performance in the process. It is a symbiotic and organic process much like the bee, in the process of being nourished to stay alive, becomes 'incidentally' instrumental in the procreation of flora.

In nature, growth is heliotropic – everything grows in the direction of the sun. As human beings, we also grow towards the sun. That Sun – *Tat Savitu* – that is inside us is our talents, strengths and abilities. And like in every other sphere of life, nature has in its own way proved its invincible power, it also



By Indraneel Mukerjee

makes its presence felt both when we proactively take the 'green' approach' of talent-centricism™ to people engagement as well as, when we, in all our learned arrogance, resort to 'best practices' of human 'resource' management. In the former, it makes an organization a talent-magnet (like some of the TATA organizations,) and in the latter, like most organizations surviving QSQT (quarter-se-quarter-tak), it makes resource crunch a standard feature.

To spot Talent centrism™ in any organization, here are ten indicators

- * Each individual is supported to be more productive, more focused, more fulfilled than he was yesterday.
- * Human diversity is celebrated, not eliminated by forcing people to become more like one another.
- * Employees are recognized for being fascinating individuals; for being wired in a unique manner. Individuals are helped to become more of who they are.
- * Performance management systems are built around upholding and reveling in the strengths rather than focus on the weaknesses.
- * A conscious organization-wide practice of viewing what may be perceived as weakness in the others, in an appreciative frame and uncovering potential effectiveness of applying the same as talent in a given context.
- * Nurturing to understand, sharpen and amplify the unique talents of individuals and giving them the confidence to be different.
- * Strategic investment in creating a talent centric culture and projecting a greater yield because of its multiplicative effect.
- * Finding roles that suit the talents.
- * Talents are not rare. A worker who finds a role that suits his or her talents is rare.
- * A unique positioning in the market place created by a team advantage built by synergizing unique individual strengths.

Gone are the days of hiring 'skilled' resources to be pipelined as testers graduating into coders, developers, architects and analysts, with experience. If there is intent to transform your organization in being talent-centric™, let's start at the very beginning. Let's start with radically transforming resourcing to embrace the principles of talent acquisition.

Indraneel Mukerjee, Founder & Managing Director, iProdigy Learning Services Private Limited <http://www.iprodigy.net>, Email: Indraneel@iprodigy.net

The Tata Way

The Tata Group sees sustainable value creation as a business strategy and is busy institutionalizing it

By Sangeeta Mansur

Tata companies today are in the news for big ticket acquisitions of global companies and brands. Yet, the group has not lost its fulcrum, and remains a pioneer in its thinking on how future organizations are run and managed.

Decades before terms such as ‘Sustainability’ and ‘CSR’ became fashionable, the founder of the Tata Group, Jamsetji Tata was crystal clear when he said: “In a free enterprise, the community is not just another stakeholder in business, but is in fact the very purpose of its existence.”

While community-centric corporate philosophy was indeed spoken about and practiced all these years, the Group is now making the inherent sustainability element more explicit, and evolving policies and systems to institutionalize it. In fact, corporate sustainability is boldly acknowledged as business strategy by the Tatas now. Dr. J.J.Irani, Director, Tata Sons, is, in fact, insisting that sustainability professionals in the Tata companies should be seen as business strategists. What’s more, sustainability is turning into a serious career option here.

Understandably, the much-used phrase ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ (CSR) is passé at the Tatas. It’s ‘Corporate Sustainability’ from now on. What this means is Tatas are broadening their agenda beyond communities, to include the environment and bio-diversity. For a conglomerate that’s got its feet soiled in carbon intensive industries such as steel, chemicals and automobiles, this would surely mean a highly challenging commitment to sustain. For the Tatas now, ‘the business of business is sustainable value creation’ and they are busy institutionalizing it across the Group.

The transformation

All this while, the Tatas have co-ordinated their CSR efforts at the Group level through Tata Council of Community Initiatives (TCCI), and gone about building CSR capacities through several initiatives across the Group. They’ve made CSR agenda a part of KRA’s for their managers and integrated CSR with business excellence.

‘Corporate Sustainability is being now institutionalized more systematically by evolving comprehensive frameworks, by motivating employees and deploying self assessment tools to excel’, says Anant Nadkarni, VP, Group Corporate Sustainability, TCCI.

This was evident at a recent workout involving senior executives of the Group companies at Lonavala. Yours truly had



“In a free enterprise, the community is not just another stakeholder in business, but is in fact the very purpose of its existence.”

Jamsetji Tata

a close peek at the workout that was spread across three days and was impressed with the commitment that was apparent.

The issues discussed at this workout indicate a fair level of maturity in their thinking. Apart from experience sharing and networking, the workout discussed various themes and sought convergence on them. The broad issues were: What are the corporate sustainability-related demands or requirements to be met; what are the gaps; How to identify and train sustainability leaders; How should the organization support sustainability leadership; How can they structure and use regional groups to build synergy while deploying sustainability; How will Tata Corporate Sustainability leadership drive volunteering; What does it take to create deep engagements in volunteering; How to give recognition to volunteers and how to measure performance and success of volunteering?

Given the increasing size and complexity of the Group and their commitment to sustainability throughout their history, the systems approach to sustainability is essential. Given the enormity of the challenge, however, the pace of the process may need to be stepped up from here.

Dr. Irani is said to be leading a focused initiative in the Group that’s going to look into policies and practices affecting climate change. It’s surprising why this was not done much earlier when some global businesses have gone steps ahead in this direction.

Knowing the Tatas, they do take their time to contemplate, prepare, and build both capacity and consensus within, before actually jumping into action. Haste is not in Tata’s lexicon.

Beyond programming

Business analysts today need to be good at soft skills and possess sharp insight on business to be effective



by Nilesh A. Raje

Most of us would agree that every project has requirements. Every time a new software application is being developed there is always a 'Business Analyst' (BA) from the project team who performs the role of requirements gathering for every software project. While some requirements are crucial to the application others are considered to be gold-plated luxuries.



The technical discussion coupled with absence of soft skills and business acumen can dilute the interest levels of the customer and result in total disconnect.

How do we determine that the approach being adopted to gather the requirements is accepted as a good practice? What makes an individual a successful BA who not only understands the business problems but also models a solution which can be effectively leveraged through the use of technology?

How can one be assured that a BA is given the power of execution to get the things delivered with a benchmark of quality and within the defined timeframes? Here are some of key pointers which are essential for business analysis.

Who gathers project requirements

While determining the project requirements one needs to identify at the beginning of the project who would be taking the ownership for capturing the project requirements.

Today, many software developers do perform the role of a BA. The technical discussion coupled with absence of soft skills and business acumen can dilute the interest levels of the customer and result in total disconnect. It is important for a BA to master the basics of interviewing techniques for gathering project requirements. Formal training and exposure to business analysis are a given.

Typically, a BA will have to review existing project reference material and supporting documents to understand current systems, processes, drawbacks or deficiencies in the existing systems. A BA should also be cognizant of the various stakeholders associated with the project coupled with their roles and responsibilities and interview the stakeholders to get more information.

BA should communicate to the customer in the early stages of the project the standard templates and requirement management tools they would adhere to in order to document the requirements specifications. The best approach would be to adhere to a standard template for documenting the software requirements. Some examples of requirement management tools are: Requisite Pro, Caliber-RM, Telelogic.

A project milestone

It is imperative that every project participant understands what Requirements Sign-off means, and its associated impact on the project. Requirements sign-off means a formal agreement with the project stakeholders, stating that the contents of the requirements document, as drafted, are complete to the final projections and that there are no open issues left to be addressed later.

Should there be queries or concerns towards any aspect of the planned project activity it is appropriate that one defines a clear process in identifying the key points of contact in the project engagement with proper escalation mechanism. The steering committee identified is responsible to advise on strategic direction, oversee planning and implementation and resolve open issues to manage requirements change. Proper protocols must be set to establish a process through which requirements changes are reviewed, analyzed and resolved. New changes must be mapped to the project objective. If the requirement does not map it either means the requirements are missing or they fall out of scope.

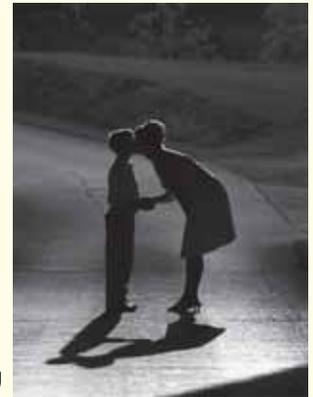
Industry certifications

The International Institute of Business Analysis (IIBA) is an independent non-profit professional association serving today the growing field of Business Analysis. The IIBA has created the Certified Business Analysis Professional certification (CBAP) which would not only strengthens one's conceptual base but would also leverage one's existing career opportunities in today's world of emerging and competitive markets. The Business Analysis Body of Knowledge (BABOK) also gives the necessary knowledge of the skills necessary to be an effective Business Analyst.

Nilesh A. Raje, a Sr. Business Analyst with SYSTIME Computer Systems Ltd. (www.SYSTIME.net)

GO KISS THE WORLD

By *Benedict Paramanand*



Subroto Bagchi's
success mantra for
Indian professionals -
“a sense of contentment,
constant wonder,
connectedness to a
larger whole and
learning from
unusual sources.”

The resurgent India has given Indian professionals optimism and a tad of arrogance as well. Nothing wrong with that! While the new-found wealth is always welcome, the challenge before the professionals – young and not-so-young – is to find a sense of direction, purpose and some guiding principles to lead them as they head into the chaotic, unforgiving and demanding world.

Subroto Bagchi, who now calls himself a ‘Gardener’ at IT services company, MindTree, is shaping himself as a master coach and mentor. In his second book *Go Kiss the World: Life Lessons for the Young Professional* (Penguin Portfolio June 08) through personal anecdotes, he brings lessons on working and living, energizing ordinary people to lead extraordinary lives. Bagchi urges Indian professionals **to recognize and develop their inner strengths, thereby helping them realize their own, unique potential.**

For those who constantly worry about building careers and successful businesses, Bagchi has this to say: “Our lives are like rivers – the source seldom reveals the confluence. Does a river fret over the long journey and about its end just as it is about to spurt? It simply does not do that, caring instead to flow, to begin its journey, and on its way builds a beneficial relationship with anyone who comes in contact with her.”

To those who insist on clear definition of their role in a job and a corner office, preferably next to the CEO, instead Bagchi tells them to ask: “Give me the challenge of a tough, dirty, and strategic role that no one is willing to take... when your outlook changes from ‘what is good for me’ to ‘Where is the organization hurting and how can I make a difference,’ your professional

landscape changes.” He believes that “if you are good at your job, your position in the hierarchy does not matter in the long run.”

Bagchi is worried that today’s professionals are confused about the word ‘success.’ To them Bagchi recounts his father’s principles from whom he learnt that **“Success is your ability to rise above your discomfort, whatever be your current state of wealth... Success is not about building material comforts...”**

Sense of history

To CEOs who are nervous about getting the right person for the right job, Bagchi narrates the instance of why Azim Premji picked him for a challenging job (to lead the quality initiative at Wipro) for which he was not technically qualified. Premji told him that he wanted someone ‘with a sense of history’.

“Many of us excel as first-rate line managers. Then comes an assignment that calls not just for functional expertise, it requires the capability to make an impact without necessarily having the authority. Such assignments require bringing about change in people’s ways of doing things; to achieve this you need someone who has a sense of history.”

From Premji Bagchi also learnt that “a leader’s job is to focus on what is delivered, not on what a person’s quirks are. Competence to do a job has far greater weightage than personal reverence.”

Bagchi urges small town Indians who have made it big to retain their values of ‘innocence and intimacy’ because only these qualities will come to their rescue when confronted with a demanding and often chaotic world.

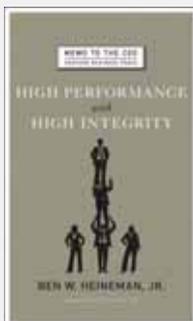
ManagementNext bookshelf

High Performance with High Integrity

by Ben W. Heineman Jr., Harvard Business School Press, May 2008

In *High Performance with High Integrity*, Ben Heineman argues that there is only one way for companies to avoid ethical failures: CEOs must create a culture of integrity through exemplary leadership, transparency, incentives, and processes, not just rules and penalties. Heineman, GE's chief legal officer and a member of both Jack Welch's and Jeff Immelt's senior management teams for nearly twenty years, reveals crucial "performance with integrity" principles and practices that you can begin applying immediately, and shows how you can drive performance by integrating integrity systems and processes deep into company operations.

Concise and insightful, this book provides a much-needed corporate blueprint for doing well while doing good in the high pressure global economy.

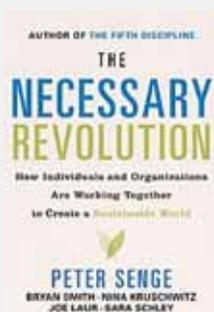


The Necessary Revolution: How Individuals and Organizations Are Working Together to Create a Sustainable World

by Peter M. Senge, Bryan Smith, Sara Schley, Joe Laur, Currency, June 2008

A revolution is underway in today's organizations. As Peter Senge and his co-authors reveal in *The Necessary Revolution*, companies around the world are boldly leading the change from dead-end "business as usual" tactics to transformative strategies that are essential for creating a flourishing, sustainable world.

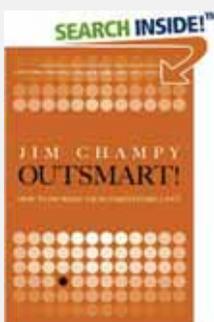
Brimming with inspiring stories from individuals and organizations tackling social and environmental problems around the globe, *The Necessary Revolution* reveals how ordinary people at every level are transforming their businesses and communities.



Outsmart!: How to Do What Your Competitors Can't

by Jim Champy, FT Press, March 2008

Jim Champy revolutionized business with *Reengineering the Corporation*. Now, in *Outsmart!* he's doing it again. This concise, fast-paced book shows how you can achieve breakthrough growth by consistently outsmarting your competition. Champy reveals the surprising, counterintuitive lessons learned by companies that have achieved

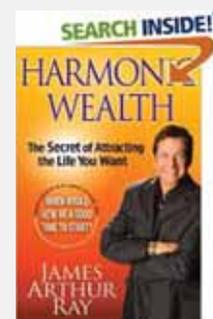


super-high growth for at least three straight years. Drawing on the strategies of some of today's best "high velocity" companies, he identifies eight powerful ways to compete in even the roughest marketplace. You'll discover how to find distinctive market positions and sustainable advantages in products, services, delivery methods, and unexpected customers with unexpected needs.

Harmonic Wealth: The Secret of Attracting the Life You Want

by James Arthur Ray (Author), Linda Sivertsen (Collaborator), Hyperion, April 2008

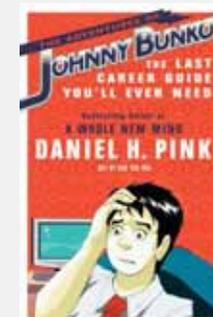
The result of more than twenty years of study and practical application by World Thought Leader and featured expert for *The Secret*, James Ray's *Harmonic Wealth* is based on extensive study of ancient wisdom traditions, cutting-edge findings in quantum physics and other scientific fields, not to mention years of hands-on, hard-won experience. Let this sought-after teacher show you what he's discovered about the secrets of attracting more than you've ever thought possible.



The Adventures of Johnny Bunko: The Last Career Guide You'll Ever Need

by Daniel H. Pink (Author), Rob Ten Pas (Illustrator), Riverhead Trade, April 2008

There's never been a career guide like *The Adventures of Johnny Bunko: The Last Career Guide You'll Ever Need*. Told in *manga*—the Japanese comic book format that's an international sensation, it's the fully illustrated story of a young Everyman just out of college who lands his first job. Johnny Bunko is new to the Boggs Corp., and he stumbles through his early months as a working stiff until a crisis prompts him to rethink his approach. Step by step he builds a career, illustrating as he does the six core lessons of finding, keeping, and flourishing in satisfying work. A groundbreaking guide to surviving and flourishing in any career, *The Adventures of Johnny Bunko* is smart, engaging and insightful, and offers practical advice for anyone looking for a lifetime of rewarding work.



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Maverick IAS officer

This is an incredible story that can happen only in India. In three years, the district collector of Indore, Vivek Aggarwal, has put in place a world-class public transport system. The system, with active support from all stakeholders, including the district magistrate, police, private bus operators and 2.5 million people, is a remarkable example of leadership and public-private partnership.

Here's the twist in the story. The IAS fraternity of the Madhya Pradesh government threatened to hold a departmental inquiry against Vivek Aggarwal for not following the 'rules'. They had to quickly drop it when the PMO announced a special award for him recently. What takes the cake is that the state government is yet to approve the project even when it is already running full steam.

Oral history of the Internet

Fifty years ago, in response to the surprise Soviet launch of the Sputnik, the U.S. military set up the Advanced Research Projects Agency. It would become the cradle of connectivity, spawning the era of Google and YouTube, of Amazon and Facebook. Each breakthrough—network protocols, hypertext, the World Wide Web, the browser—inspired another as narrow-tied engineers, long-haired hackers, and other visionaries built the foundation for a world-changing technology.

This year also marks the 15th anniversary of the launch of Mosaic, the first widely used browser, which brought the Internet into the hands of ordinary people.

To observe this year's twin anniversaries, *Vanity Fair* set out to do something that has never been done: to **compile an oral history**, speaking with scores of people involved in every stage of the Internet's development, from the 1950s onward. From more than 100 hours of interviews they have distilled and edited their words into a concise narrative of the past half-century—a history of the Internet in the words of the people who made it. Great job!

Green noise

The Green Movement, despite its good intentions, is getting on the nerves of a lot of people. A lot of information in the public domain is so overwhelming and sometimes so contradictory that it's confounding average consumers who are getting tired trying to research the best way out.



For instance, a simple thing like choosing your salad has become a complicated exercise. Should you choose organic vegetables that are flown from far away places with many food miles in between drinking up petrol for transportation or should

you eat the vegetables that are not organic but are grown in a nearby farm with a short food mile - becomes a dilemma of a green conscience! The other danger is 'Green fatigue.' The two have the potential to kill a much-needed movement.

Oil price hike promotes healthy habits

The steep oil price hike could be a blessing in disguise. The world over people are talking about car pools, public transport, promotion of biking, reducing commute etc. Companies which were hesitant to promote telecommuting and video-conferencing are being forced to consider it seriously.

Consumers are already factoring the transport distance into their job decisions. They are also altering their lifestyle to reduce their gas usage. Many are also seeking new jobs that reduced their transport costs and time.

If India, like the U.S., offered oil at market rates, this trend will be much more pronounced than it is now.

Reverse migration of Gulf labor

It is said that money and capital move where the best rewards are. With rising salaries and the construction boom on in India, Indian real estate promoters are now willing to offer Indian construction workers, carpenters and plumbers similar wages and amenities, perhaps even better, than those provided by Gulf companies. A DLF spokesperson is reported saying that his company is finalizing such plans. This trend had already begun with executives moving back to India from the Gulf countries three years ago.

It's high time Indian labor earned well and with dignity.

Why Simputer failed

Vijay Chandru, one of the founders of Simputer (computer for the masses), believes that the Indian innovation eco-system was not supportive enough for it to succeed. While the product was great, its go-to-market strategy did not work.

Its retail strategy did not work either.

When Simputer was conceived in 2001 the telecom revolution had not happened. It was still difficult to get a phone connection. By the time Simputer was launched in 2003-2004, (with good support from the media), it was pretty much clear that a handheld without a cell phone in it, didn't have much of a chance. Could it have been reengineered quickly?

Were the promoters caught on the wrong foot?



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