



I BELIEVE IN ACTION AND EXPLORATION

What is the maxim that you adhere to professionally?

The maxim by Rabindranath Tagore - "You can't cross the river simply by staring at the water" resonates deep inside me. I firmly believe in action and exploration.

Tell us about three accomplishments in your career that have given you most satisfaction.

I have to mention my advertising years at HTA (now JWT), where I learned and unlearned a lot about consumer insights on brands such as Nestle

and Pepsi. My longest and ongoing strong tenure at Jaquar Group has been the most satisfying professionally. I have contributed to the complete metamorphosis of the brand from a home-grown bath fittings brand to one of the fastest-growing complete bathroom solutions in the world. This journey has been fulfilling both strategically and executing things at breakneck speed.

Over the years, who has inspired you in your quest for excellence?

It's not about a particular person but, many

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Head of Communications and Marketing, Jaquar Group

seniors and colleagues at different points in time. In fact, the credit for a lot of my professional accomplishments goes to my teams, since I am a strong believer of reverse mentoring. My all-time inspirational figure is management guru Sumantra Ghoshal, from whom I have imbibed a lot of insights on change management.

What do you think makes businesses successful?

In our mundane routines, we are all looking for surprises. The key is that to offer surprises, you need to be in contrast with your industry and have something inimitable. Secondly, the conviction in what you are offering is a must because nothing lasts without truth and a little faith.

Comment on India's socio-economic dynamics from a marketing perspective.

Talking about the sanitary ware and lighting industry, the Indian market offers a lot of scope for experimentation since different cultures and influence of the West exist together, creating very varied demands. Considering India's rich history, luxury is an automatic aspiration for many. Also, with ever growing stress and reducing private space, people have started to give more importance to the impression, aesthetics and

comfort of a bathing space and are investing relatively more.

What is the key to achieving a fulfilling work-life balance?

The first step towards striking work-life balance is figuring out what you want to do apart from your work. Once you know that, you are halfway there. Secondly, give your full attention to whatever you are doing and be strict about following the number of hours you allot to work and play.

Apart from work, what drives your passion?

I am grateful for what life has given me and I seek to return it to my surroundings and I constantly thrive to figure out ways to accomplish the same. The responsibility I feel towards Jaquar Group and my industry is what keeps me passionate.

One life advice for people who are just starting out in their careers.

As a child, one wants to figure out the answers to all the whys and why-nots, but as we grow up, we start to feel it is redundant and operate reflexively in our regular routines. My advice is, never lose that curiosity. Never give up on challenging the existing and more so, challenging yourself.

Sandeep Shukla, Head for Communications & Marketing at the Jaquar Group, has a rich experience in managing and building brands with reputed organisations. A focused and dedicated strategist and implementer, he is responsible for the overall branding and marketing initiatives at Jaquar to help establish it as a global leader in complete bathing solutions.