



THE INDIAN ACHIEVER'S CLUB

40 UNDER 40

INDIAN ACHIEVERS

2021





We take this opportunity to Thank our Beloved Environment Minister **Hon. Shri Aditya Thackeray** for supporting us in our Dream Project of planting 75 lakh trees in Mumbai Metropolitan Region celebrating the 75th Year of Indian independence.

Thanks to the Forest Department of Maharashtra for facilitating our Plantation Drive and **The Rotary Club of Dahanu** to help us Plant trees.

All the Members at **The Indian Achiever's Club** together would join this initiative and we will continue to create many such opportunities which will enable non-members to participate in the Mega Plantation Drive.

We together shall ensure we fight Climate Change and make Mumbai a better place to live.

Please spread the message with your friends to plant trees online on **www.eplantations.in**

Special thanks to



Environment Minister
Hon. Shri Aditya Thackeray



Forest Department of Maharashtra



Dist : 3140

Rotary Club of Dahanu



ABOUT

Established in 1966 as Sahitya Bharti Trust, was then one of the biggest networking and socialising clubs in the city. The Trust was a collaborative effort by three aspiring entrepreneurs – Shri Shirish Mehta, Shri Jaivadan Takhtawala and Shri R.R Sheth, who translated the concept of networking clubs by having over 5000 members at once. The sole idea behind initiating this club was networking for businessmen and professionals to help them bring out better thoughts and strategies which in turn helped them to do better socially as well as professionally.

Today 54 years later, a team of like-minded new age entrepreneurs and professionals have come together giving a modern facelift to the networking club. This 2.0 version of the club is taking all the activities online, making available for it's members who are spread across various regions of India and abroad. The initiative is in its new avatar with a modern approach, while keeping the ideology of appreciating the achievers in the society. We call the organisation – The Indian Achiever's Club.

Chaired by Harsh Vaidya an ecopreneur by profession with over 15 years of experience in brand communication and entrepreneurship, the organisation has a managing committee which includes a team of highly experienced entrepreneurs, strategists, professionals and experts in the field of creativity.

The main purpose of the club is to recognize the efforts of achievers, who have sailed through numerous social baisses and today have established themselves in their respective fields. The club has come up with various initiatives which will bring the unsung achievers from around the country on a platform, where they can share their journey in front of the world.



TM

40 UNDER 40

INDIAN ACHIEVERS

2021

WINNERS

2021

THE INDIAN ACHIEVER'S CLUB

**AARTI PATIL**FOUNDER & MD
FOODFADKITCHEN
TRAVEL CHATTER**AMIT LOHANI**ENTREPRENEUR
MAX GROUP
OF COMPANIES**ANKITA SINGH**SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
& GLOBAL HEAD
CIGNEX**ANSHU AANAND**BUSINESS ADVISOR
ANSHU ANAND
& ADVISORS**DR. APARNA PANDYA**PERIODONTIST
& FACIAL
AESTHETICIAN**APOORVA MUDGAL**MUSICIAN
SUFİ SINGER**DHARA KAPADIA**ENTREPRENEUR
MANGO JUNCTION**ANURADHA**PROFESSIONAL
DHOL PLAYER**DHRUV TOSHWAL**CEO & FOUNDER
THE PANT PROJECT**ELISHA SAIGAL**

BRAND ARCHITECT

**FARZAN GHADIALY**INVESTMENT BANKER,
AUTHOR, MENTOR
& COLUMNIST**GURVINDER KAUR**DIRECTOR
JAIKARA (UK)**HITA PARIKH**FOUNDER & CEO
SILVER SPUN BRAND
SOLUTIONS**JASON FERNANDES**FINTECH
SPECIALIST**KAIZIN POONIWALA**

MEDIA PROFESSIONAL

**KRISTINE JAMES ZEDEK**ACTOR, EMCEE
& VOICING ARTIST**LEELAVATHI S GUPTÉ**ENTREPRENEUR
THE AFFAIR BY
PRAMILA & LEELA**MADHURIMA M**EMOTIONAL
EMPOWERMENT COACH**MANASI PAREKH**ACTRESS
& DIRECTOR
SOUL SUTRA**MAURVEE SHARMA**CO-FOUNDER
MUMS GARDENARY**MIKHIL MUSALE**CREATIVE DIRECTOR
& CO FOUNDER
CINEMAN PRODUCTIONS**PUSHKARAJ GAIKAR**RESTAURATEUR
MODAKAM**PREANKA ROY**CREATIVE DIRECTOR
- ADVERTISING**PRERNA MAKHARIA**JEWELLERY INFLUENCER
& FOUNDER
PET JEWELLERY**RABIAH BHATIA**FOUNDER
ED WEBSTUDIO
CHANNEL**SARAH TANTRAY**CO-FOUNDER
WILD WEST
INNOVATIONS**SHERRY MEHTA**CHEF & CCO
KANAK BY SHERRY**SHIVANI MAYEKAR**AESTHETIC
& COSMETIC DENTIST**SONAL BOTHRA**FOOD BLOGGER
FOODIEKLIX**SONAL SONAWANI**PSYCHOLOGIST
CEDAR**SONALI RAMAIYA**FOUNDER
ROARRR MEDIA**SONIA CHUGH**EDUCATION
& CHILD CARE
HAPPY MINDS
INTERNATIONAL**SWEETY JOSHI**FINE ARTIST
(PAINTER)**SUMEET PATIL**VISUAL ARTIST,
ART DIRECTOR,
SOCIAL ACTIVIST**TARANG ARORA**JEWELLERY DESIGNER
AMRAPALI JEWELS**VAISHALI RATHOD**

JOURNALIST

**VANDANA JAIN**

PRODUCER

**YASH SARDESAI**CEO
SRI LANKA LEGENDS**YATHARTH GAUTAM**DIRECTOR & CHIEF
MARKETING OFFICER
BIRLA OPEN MINDS**VIRAL SHAH**DIRECTOR, WRITER,
PRODUCER
& VOICE OVER ARTIST



AARTI PATIL

SERIAL ENTREPRENEUR

FOUNDER & MD, FOODFADKITCHEN

Founder & CEO of Foodfadkitchen which was started from scratch focusing on traditional cooking methods, has served more than 9,800+ customers

Gold Medalist" in Sales at Aviva India

"Role Model 2018" from Abs fitness and Wellness Clubs

Certified "Financial Modeler" (CFM)

Certified "Speaker" from XtraOrdinary Speakers Academy - Championship in Athletics & Sports

 www.foodfadkitchen.com



*Aarti has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

**WINNERS
2021**

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

A versatile ambitious entrepreneur prepped to take on challenging opportunity to build the business from scratch. I am a hard working person with a practical hands-on approach, who always works to achieve the best result by imposing my creativity, leadership role, dedication, knowledge, skills and experience to scale up a startup to reach higher levels and achieve organizational goals.

A self-made business woman who embarked my journey with F&B business and catering to 5000+ health conscious people creating awareness about food people consume on a daily basis, because for me every bite count and its should count to good health and Foodfadkitchen runs on these values and vision.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

Being a foodie at heart driven with a passion of helping people eat the best food that can make wonders and drive their bodies to full potential.



WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

The most satisfying part is to have an insatiable curiosity to sustain a serial entrepreneurship to start new businesses in different verticals to promote food, health & fitness, travel & tourism. The challenging part is not only to build businesses, but in the process to impact the world and help people & planet to trust and believe in themselves by not settling for anything less than the very best.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I believe I have a superpower of understanding human psychology, which has been an essential tool for my success.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

"Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think."

According to me the most crucial skills are Critical thinking, Leadership, People Management, Adaptability & Accountability are the key to succeed. You need to have a cultural understanding for positive interactions, better collaboration, and truly diversified conversations as it is highly essential for modern life.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I am an ardent animal lover and that is something I am irrationally passionate about!!

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

We both agree that the pandemic has affected the industry and the economy has taken a huge beating, however, it has drifted us to new avenues of online marketing which is the key parameter to create brand awareness for consumers.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

In view of the unorganized F&B sector raging a price war is very difficult to deliver traditional high quality food at competitive rates. The biggest challenge is to train and retain skilled labor to maintain consistency in our deliverables.



MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

One in a million gets a spark to start a business with minimal support and that's something you should elude and stay on course. In order to stand out and perceive your dream is something that you should relentlessly work for. So be the one in a million and never give up.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

Last but not the least since we have already imprinted our foot prints in food, health & fitness, travel & tourism. Moving forward, we are leaping into e-commerce, FMCG products and extend our vision globally.



AMIT LOHANI


ENTREPRENEUR

MAX GROUP OF COMPANIES

Leading Max Inc which represents the niche of Gourmet foods in India

Awarded the prestigious IVLP program from US

One of the founding directors of India's Apex Food chambers FIFI, member board at the Indo Italian Chamber of Commerce and part of various GOI committees.

 @amitlohani



Amit has pledged to grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

My forefathers migrated to India in 1947 from Sindh Pradesh of Pakistan and most of my family are in the fresh fruit business. However, my calling had limited interest in being involved in conventional business so, I carved my path out. Even though I am third generation entrepreneur in the food sector but, I diversified within the segment. I am Founder and Director of Max Inc., a leading importer and exporter of high value processed food items from India. I am also the founder and director for Forum of Indian Food Importers (FIFI), a not for profit apex chamber, which works towards establishing inroads for international food and beverage trade in India. Additionally, I am a member of the Government of India's Food Safety and Standard Authorities' committee member working on food regulatory ecosystem to facilitate investment and trade development in the country. Furthermore, I hold few more responsible positions representing international trade in India at numerous forums like a board member for Indo Italian Chamber of Commerce, member of FMCG committee at ASSOCHAM, jury member for annual Coca-Cola golden spoons awards, jury member of OSPITALITA ITALIANA RISTORANTI ITALIANI NEL MONDO, jury member for Annapurna world food India annual awards, and chairperson of India Food Delegation to name a few.

I am an alumnus of the U.S. Government's professional exchange program International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) and a recipient of the fellowship from the Fresno State University, California. I have also studied international trade and business at the University of Queensland, Australia, and the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi, India.



WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

This may sound platitudinous but, I truly believe in the work I do and I do not find it banal. Working in the food and beverage sector has so many related aspects that its indeed a roller coaster ride – the sheer excitement to be on this journey with an effort to manoeuvre oneself is quite enterprising. The F&B ecosystem is so interconnected and intermingled that the impact is far-reaching from the farmers to a procurement officer to a chef to a consumer to a retailer to a policymaker. With this sensitivity involved, I strive to stay ahead of the curve and not get disrupted by changes – as not only mine but, there are families that are directly or indirectly obstructed by any disruption if that happens in my organization. This entails upon a socio-economic responsibility, which keeps me happy and motivated.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

Food is the only essence of life, which transgresses boundaries and brings about a smile on everyone's face. My ardor for food has always kept me enriching my life and soul. It is an industry, which works with an added edge of passion binding people together. India's diverse palate has always played a crucial role to accept the global taste and remodelling it with our own Indian interpretation.

There is nothing to dislike in the industry nonetheless, this new influx of so-called "foodies" without an inherent understanding of ingredients or cuisines has made the industry susceptible giving negative connotation. Also, the consumer sensitivities are quite high as a result of which we see how some myths can have mammoth negative impact on those engaged in business. Recently attributing to fake reports in India that consuming poultry can cause Covid-19; the poultry sector has had to cull flocks, thereby reducing its demand for feed maize which, in turn, depressed the domestic maize price and had a continued ripple effect.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

On the face of it being an individual involved in the food and beverage business however, my profile only reflects a superficial facet of my work and personality without any comprehension of the multi-faceted layers. I am an avid traveller who loves to explore local culture through food stories and a social animal looking forward for enriching my life. Every travel tale has something special and I feel blessed to have had an opportunity to augment my personality and knowledge about socio-economic situations, culture, and civilizations through my escapades to over 100 countries. I am not a backpack traveller but, I am certainly a person who can stop at even the tiniest food joint in the middle of nowhere and does not shy away from trying any local food. Additionally, whenever I am traveling, I always look upon myself as a brand ambassador of India and think this is a self-imposed responsibility, we all should put upon ourselves. Philanthropy should be as discrete as this statement and to your inner self.



WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Definitely your timing or luck as many call it plays a crucial role coupled with passion and knowledge topped with a vision. Also, for any business person to be successful they need to be Indian street smart from where I see it's difficult to be an absolute socialist. Most of the life's lessons are not taught in any business school, one needs to have the ability to make mistakes, admit to the mistakes, be amendable with a continued strive to learn. Beneath the fancy dining images and travel postings, is a life that is assiduous requiring yourself to roll up your sleeves and be ready to get involved in every layer of the business to understand the intricacies. It is not entirely food or entrepreneurship but a perfect steadiness between the two. While these skills and relationships can be difficult to develop but, not impossible to achieve, we have seen numerous young entrepreneurs leaving a mark and building upon success stories for many to learn from.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

My irrational or rational passion outside of my work has been food and travel in that order. If I walk down the memory lane then I see my crazy love for food that led me into this line of work and it is invigorating to work into this segment every day. Having travelled 100's of kilometres to nosh on something I dreamt about or saw in a food blog has galvanized me. It is awesome, delicious, inventive, colorful, appealing, inspiring, educational, therapeutic, and so much more. Trust me it is not necessary that you find the crème da la crème only with a Michelin star chef but, many times they can be hiding somewhere in bylanes of any city or an ancient wall in a hole outlet. All I do is keep looking for these hidden gems across the globe and see the world through the lens of food that the locals eat. I have learned over a period of time that if you dream food then it can convert any unassuming gathering into a culinary delight and also feasting takes away the week-long stretch of business leaving you charged up for your next spree.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

This is a phase that had an impact on every walk of life no one can claim that they were immune to the global pandemic. COVID-19 has disrupted normal life and has enforced a substantial change in the policies, priorities, and activities of individuals, organizations, and governments all across the world and India is no exception to the same. These changes are proving to be a catalyst for changing consumer behavior, purchase decisions, hospitality and travel, adoption of new purchase routes, technology, innovation, and many more. Many sectors even within the food and beverage category, which was otherwise essential, have seen a catastrophic impact from a total collapse of sales to higher cess being imposed to many establishments shutting operations to job losses to massive growth in health categories to hyper localization. Disposable incomes and confidence are continuing to take a dramatic tumble and that we are seeing an impact of economic turmoil.



**FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD?
WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?**

Exposure is a big challenge, which fortunately is evolving with more technological advancements, however; the holistic sensory advancement is still deficient. Many restaurant operators and businesses end up taking a leap of faith based on their global exposure which numerous times is slightly ahead of the time and leads to limited or no acceptance from the consumers. It's a continuous effort to tweak the portfolios based on the evolving market dynamics and we get great pleasure in engaging with our end customers with an effort to grow with them, but everything comes at a cost and several times it's a heavy price we end up paying as businesses. This is not very encouraging for new entrepreneurs and often results in less inventive introductions with us continuing to remain a mass market.

Also, the agriculture, food, and beverage industry are recurrently perceived as an area that should stay away from capitalistic ideas. This reflection needs to advance and it is necessary to improvise the entire value chain to bring in a more all-inclusive approach. This is not a new narrative nonetheless, an extremely valuable one, which needs immediate intervention not only from the government but, from everyone involved in the value chain. When consumers are willing to pay the highest price for a hand-crafted piece of silk scarf then they should also appreciate the craftsmanship involved in this sector. Unfortunately, this is a huge drawback I see in my day to day interactions and I also fear with this many artisanal products might get lost in time.

Additionally, in a country like India we cannot afford food waste in any form. Consumer education is of utmost necessity in this aspect for example many times products are disposed off either by the sellers or the consumers with the translation of regulatory language like best before or use by. We are a country of 1.3 billion people with an extreme socio-economic divide with a staggering amount of balanced diet issues. It's heartbreaking to see that something which should be linked with food quality is mapped with the food safety and instead of reaching someone's plate lands up in a bin. Many advanced economies are running massive campaigns in this regard and I appeal to all stakeholders concerned to take serious steps in this regard to help prevent and reduce foodwastage.

**MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR
READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

Global pandemic situation is a classic example which has displayed that when most of the external elements were on standstill, food was the binding factor. By basic nature we humans are social beings and we need connecting points - the detox therapy around cooking was the epicenter of family events and also help people connect through social media channels.

An age-old business, which is as old as human civilization stood the test of time and has grown exponentially. Today I take great pride in the fact that the world wants to come to India and we are showcasing our tenacious values of being a melting pot and opening up to the global market trends while continuing to stay connected with its traditions. What motivates me every day is the joy of being a believer of this universal religion we call food, work for it, and be involved in erudition discussions around the same.



ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

Attributing to changing global trade outlook we are working to enhance our portfolio by multi folds and are working relentlessly to adapt to this unprecedented shift. Health will be the new mantra, which earlier used to get underlined by a few but, now would translate to a much larger chunk of the end audience. COVID -19 is working as a catalyst and we are expediting our outreach to achieve long term goals in shorter timelines. We are working on including healthier categories, free-range products, organic, ready to eat, convenience, snacking, and also cuisine driven products. We have seen a massive slowdown in impulse categories due to restricted travel, limited lunchtime economy, change in regulatory norms with social gatherings, etc. this is forcing us to re-visit certain product categories we have been working on in the pre-covid era. Also, as an organization in our entire outreach, we will continue to remain committed to food safety and food security too.



ANKITA SINGH

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
& GLOBAL HEAD AT CIGNEX

She has over 22 years of progressive experience in managing and leading various aspects of business domains of ITES

Ranked amongst Forbes India's Top 100 "Great People Manager" by GMI India two time 2019-2020 and 2020-2021

Successfully completed prestigious Harvard Business School online certification program "Sustainable Business Strategy"

Awarded "CHRO of the Year 2020, 2019, 2018 and 2017" "Women Personality of the Year 2019, 2018 and 2017 by Femina" and "Most Influential HR Leaders 2017" and many more

📷 @singhankita14



Ankita has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I hold Ph.D. in management and is a gold medalist in BBA as well as in MBA. I have completed HR and Business Strategy related executive management programs from IIM-A, ISBHyderabad, and XLRI. Recently, I have successfully completed prestigious Harvard Business School online certification program "Sustainable Business Strategy". I am a certified PPA (Thomas Profiling) practitioner.

I have over twenty one years of experience in managing and leading various aspects of human resources spanning across high paced business domains of ITES. In addition to performing all functions of HR, I oversees the administration, travel, and resource management departments. Just as is the case in any other professional area, it has a certain margin of error involved. Balancing the situation and redressing the grievances at the right time wins the game.



WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

Apart from my professional life, I actively partake in addressing and supporting the social causes. I work closely with various NGOs' dedicated towards uplifting children's education and development. I also am an avid traveler and a passionate photographer who loves to capture the world and its beautiful panoramas.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Empathy is a precursor to trust. It serves as a key door to increase engagement, collaboration, and productivity.

As an HR, or a leader, a strong talent mobility strategy is essentially required to continually expand the employee's skills and experiences. Additionally, the leaders should be helping them move fluidly throughout the organization while aligning their career growth, passions, and skills with the objectives of the organization is also essential. Also, this helps in improving the culture of continual learning to maintain a growth mindset for driving exponential results to all the stakeholders of the organization.



ANSHU AANAND

BUSINESS ADVISOR & PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER
ANSHU ANAND & ADVISORS

She specializes in cross functional analysis to chart a roadmap for companies to scale up their operations

REX KARMAVEER GLOBAL FELLOWSHIPS & Karmaveer Chakra award instituted with the UN

Keynote at World Peace Summit 2021 by Charles Walter's Society for Innovation & Research

Panellist on NEWX TV channel about How to get Business & Economy Back 2020

Featured in a documentary series "Heroes Invisibles" on Spanish National television

 @anshuaanandinsta



*Anshu has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I am just an inquisitive person who likes to keep learning and analysing various facets of life. I started working right after my 12th schooling. Started with a tech job for three years then fashion retail management for a year with consulting assignments on the side. Looking back, it was my inclination and natural ability of problem-solving that brought the right people to me who hired me, eventually. Then, it was about timing to realise the right business model that brings in added value for my clientele (in comparison to existing consulting companies) I am running a business advisory firm for companies at the growth stage.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO WORK?

I am fortunate to meet some incredible entrepreneurs and key stakeholders in the business fraternity and government bodies. The eagerness to grow their venture and make more impact motivates me to get my problem-solving hat on, gather my resources and people, to make a difference.



WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

We are in the business of constructive criticism. Acknowledgement of our inputs by our clientele is the most satisfying aspect of business advisory. The challenge is building a consistent streamline of income that helps us achieve speed and scale. We are working on that by creating 'plug and play' automation led services for MSME.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I am in the business of strategic thinking, logical approach and analysis. However, I credit most of my progress to Intuition. I try to strike a balance with my spiritual practices to cultivate intuition as an empowerment tool to use in daily life and critical times.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Critical Thinking is essential, unbiased analysis and evaluation of factual evidence. Its important to be an open-minded person. That comes with having a growth mindset. Just know that, your mind can be trained to be the best at anything. Your likes and dislikes, habits, skillsets, can be upgraded, you just have to train your mind to do so. On the contrary, people with fixed mindset tend to stay with the same habits and personality for several years. They don't grow out of their comfort zone.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

That got me thinking, having a humanitarian approach as a lifestyle. Spending my special days like birthday with less fortunate ones, packing my favorite meals to give it to someone in need on the way back home or spring cleaning my wardrobe to donate to charity every season. Besides, I must mention the most fulfilling is to be able to rescue animals like birds, squirrels, cats and dogs. They shower you with so much gratitude its unbelievable. The pigeons and squirrels I've rescued come find me after getting released from foster veterinary care.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Post pandemic, I can see clients with more focused approach to growing their business via diversifying to emerging lines of products and services. Technology as a tool for efficient operation isn't debatable anymore. Investors are more keen to look into Alternative Investment Funds, thats so important for a developing economy since the money is used to build other businesses rather than just sitting in the bank.



**FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD?
WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?**

What we are selling here cannot be seen or held in hands, that's the biggest challenge. How do you align with your clients' goals and create deliverables that helps him trust you to pay. For me personally, the challenge has been to find the clients, who have been men mostly, to just see me beyond my gender and age gap. The ones who would be ethical enough keep it strictly business and not expect any "special" favors.

**MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR
READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

Just keep moving forward with your goals. Remove the distractions from your life regularly, people who don't pay on time or help in your intellectual & spiritual growth. Value your energy and time, invest it since its a limited resource.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

I can see my ultimate vision and mission taking shape in near future. We are increasing our focus towards a Green Economy, Sustainable Business solutions and the application of deep technology. It's exciting to note that the world is moving in this direction at an exponential rate. I can foresee some drastic changes in the world within 5 years that will make Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption an essential topic to be incorporated by individuals, corporations and governments, similar to the paradigm shift in Digital Economy within one year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



DR. APARNA PANDYA

PERIODONTIST & FACIAL AESTHETICIAN

Healthpreneur, Philanthropist, International speaker, Panelist at several scientific sessions, Mentor & Leadership coach

Founder-Le Imperial Health Care & Director-Chaitali Polyclinic, Mumbai

Title holder- MRS India Vivacious2019

Executive editor -Feelings International magazine and multimedia limited

Jury for Mr & Miss Glamlook 2021

Social media influencer (Produced several videos for spreading corona awareness and dental awareness by providing authentic information on youtube,instagram and Facebook.)

 @draparnapandya



Aparna has pledged to grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I am Dr Aparna Pandya, a Periodontist and Facial aesthetician by profession and "smile crafter" by passion.

A large part of my day is spent treating my patients and educating them and thus my persona is of someone that enjoys bringing smiles on the faces of people around me.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO WORK?

The very thought of gratitude to be blessed as a person who can craft beautiful smiles in itself is very satisfying to me. The happiness and satisfaction I get from pain-free patients is immense and soul-rewarding. This very thought makes me wake up every morning (no alarms) and jump off my bed, and head towards work.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

Smile crafting is the best part of my work. What bothers me is the the lack of awareness in the society about the importance of oral care .



WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I may sound like an extrovert from my profile, but actually I am a perfect mixture of both introvert and extrovert.

As much as I love spending time with family and friends, I do enjoy a little me-time every now and then.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

One of the key qualities mandatory for succeeding as a dentist & healthpreneur is Leadership. Other skills that are inevitable are impeccable communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem solving, manual dexterity and most of all a love for continuous learning.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I am passionate about "adding value" into the lives of the people around me by reaching the masses and creating an impact in their lives. I am blessed with the "gift of gab", I use it to the fullest possible potential. I am the title holder of "MRS India Vivacious 2019", an International speaker, Mentor & Leadership coach, Author - REBOOT.zip (Best seller), Columnist - various national and international magazines, Radio jockey, TV anchor, Model, Social activist and environmentalist.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Dentistry is one of the many fields that have been struck hard during the pandemic. Clinics were forced to shut down due to the risks associated with the rampant pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted how dental care can be safely delivered in the short term, and likely will stimulate permanent changes in how dental care is delivered. In a recovering economy, cost reductions may foster a more independent scope of practice.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

The lack of proper awareness is the first and biggest problem dentistry is facing. The ignorant public blame the industry for being expensive when they could have prevented the problem in the first place.

The systemic impact of the oral conditions are still a dark place for the majority. Many diseases can be controlled if not prevented just by following some simple habits everyday.



MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

TIME is the only entity that you can never earn/replace/restore once lost. So beware how you decide to spend it.

And if you invest your time on adding value rather than utility you will be paid a heap-load!

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

Me and my team are currently working on a project "Global Youth Empowerment Drive"-to address the issues of youngsters during this pandemic and to continuously inspire, motivate and guide them during uncertain times like this. We are teaming up with schools, colleges, media and other institutions across the globe to make a difference.



APOORVA MUDGAL

MUSICIAN & ARCHITECT

A Hindustani-Sufi singer-songwriter whose work is inspired deeply by mysticism of Urdu-Punjabi Sufi poetry and ghazal

Top 25 all over India at the Khazana Artist Aloud Talent Hunt 2018 for Ghazal singing

📷 @apoorvamudgalmusic



Apoorva has pledged to grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

My name is Apoorva Mudgal and I'm a self-taught Hindustani/Sufi singer-songwriter. I grew up in Agra, India, in a middle-income household, where naturally my family encouraged pursuing a more 'stable' occupation over learning music. I graduated in Architecture from IIT Roorkee and moved to New York, United States for my first job opportunity. However, through college and even here, I would casually perform at open mics around the city and play with other musician friends, until one day I happened to witness a Qawwaalli recital by Ustad Fareed Ayaz and Abu Muhammed Qawwaal at the Asia Society, here in New York City. That one transcendental evening changed forever, the understanding of music for me. It elevated my perception of the art from a rather pleasurable to a more spiritual experience. Ever since, I began to dig out and learn more and more Sufi Kalaams, Ghazals and folk compositions in Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi and Persian. To learn the nuances of Hindustani gaayaki, I got myself a vocal coach and began doing 'Riyaz' regularly. This journey of artistic self-discovery has only been increasingly delightful, every single day since.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

'Riyaz'. That moment when everything around me is silent and I hum the 'Sa' or 'Ohm' in my natural tonic, over the Tanpura drone, is a unique moment where I feel completely aligned with the natural frequency of the cosmos. I have come to realize that without 'Riyaz', I do not know who I am anymore. At the same time, it is challenging to maintain consistently, the discipline of sitting down for practice twice a day, against all of life's cacophony in the background...



...The good days, when I'm able to achieve two honest and focussed sessions, are both deeply enriching and rare.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I try to be a Visual Designer on the side and love creating art and graphics. I can sketch, know a decent number of softwares and have worked as a UI designer in a previous life.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Given the person-to-person definition of 'succeeding' or 'making it here' could differ immensely – I still believe you DO need to care about making something that stays with YOU first. I would always want to be making art I personally am in love with, before sending it out into the world and getting caught up with pleasing those around me. As cliched as that sounds, it can be a huge challenge to actually live by this principle in a world of fast gratification that social media has brought upon us today.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Cooking and cleaning haha

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

What can be worse than no live gigs happening? One of the most beautiful reasons for going to a live performance is to experience the energy the performer and the onlooker both feel whilst being in the same room together as art is created in front of them. Performing virtually is great too but I hope you'd agree, it's not the same.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Every day, I realize a little more of how little the approval of those around me matters compared to my own. Every day, I unload some of this burden of criticism that I carry – for eg. how little I've done to make a name, how much those that started later have achieved, how much time has gone by, how little I'm producing, how old I am already and ratadadada. This is my ship and here I choose when to begin. I set the pace. I'm elated to be finding so much happiness in how much I'm GIVING to my art than how much I'm GETTING out of it, at this point. How wonderful it would be if we could think of our lives like that, no?

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

I'm currently writing songs for my debut EP. It would feature 4 original compositions and a cover song, though I shouldn't be divulging more at this point haha



DHARA KAPADIA

ENTREPRENEUR
MANGO JUNCTION

Setup her own start-up Mango Junction - for selling of natural mangoes in summer

 @dharakapadia2021



*Dhara has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

After pursuing my alternative medicine degree, I successfully completed M.Sc in Clinical Research from Cranfield University in the United Kingdom. I worked for a Multinational Organisation at Cambridge, and thereafter I moved back to India. I started a new journey as a homepreneur and my start-ups are - Mango Junction & Natural mango selling in summer and "Happiness is Homemade & Homemade sweets, treats and more.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO WORK?

Every morning I wake up with a smile on my face to welcome a new day. Furthermore, I get influenced by my motive to serve the best to society and nation. I reckon I have wonderful people to work with, and that gives me strength to discover new potentials in market.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

Every industry has their own pros and cons and health and food sectors are not an exception. Once you get involved into it, you will learn about difficulties on a path, and gradually you will grow to solve those problems. For me, to find out the right vendors to give sustainable supply of quality products with reasonable price was the most challenging part. On the other hand, I like to expand my business network, and my work has given me an immense opportunity to meet knowledgeable professionals of various fields.



WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I keep my life simple. I design my whole day where I get enough hours of sleep, nutritional meals and required exercise. Since Childhood, I am very much into sports and arts. I played numerous State and National levels volleyball competitions during school years. If I talk about visual and performing arts, I won several drawing and traditional garba dance competitions as well.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

One must be ready to work at ground level. During Summer, every day I lifted heavy mango boxes by myself and arranged them in store room. Moreover, handling customers & specific requirements when they come to buy homemade sweets/treats from us is essential. Listening to consumers queries, and to personalise products as per their needs is crucial to build strong relationships.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I believe 'Strong is the new pretty'. So, I keep my health-both physical and mental at paramount. I enjoy yoga, meditation, aerobics, zumba, kickboxing, cycling and gym workouts. Apart from that, I also write poems and do Henna art. In leisure time, I test my culinary skills and try new recipes, and sometimes I don't even have a name for a dish I cooked. I also like to support less fortunate children and adults by providing them study books, food, clothes. In Corona phase, we provided groceries and cooked meals to labourers and day-wage earners in my city.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Globally, the pandemic has detrimental effects on most of us personally and professionally. However, I believe that the phase will be over soon, and we will surely recover our business losses by working more and support each other to overcome this situation.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

Personally, I feel one has to be self-motivated and disciplined. New business development from home is a big challenge. I took ecommerce platform to attract more customers and increase client base. Furthermore, mouth to mouth publicity has also played a key role in my business expansion locally.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

"Walk alone". If you don't find a helping hand to support you, but you believe your instincts to achieve what you have dreamt of, just work with positive healthy mind and body, and I am sure that you will reach your destination.



ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

Firstly, I am going to be more active in social media marketing in India to launch new homemade products and Secondly, I will pursue continuing professional development programmes in fitness, food and nutrition field, with in focus to start fitness classes with healthy diet approach in near-term.



DHOLI ANURADHA

PROFESSIONAL DHOL PLAYER

Has played Dhol for Hrithik Roshan, Guru Randhawa, Arjun, Sukshinder Shinda, Jenny Johal and any more

 @dholianuradha



Anuradha has pledged to grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I grew up in the United States and taught myself how to play dhol. My mother taught me some basic dholki rhythms and I fell in love with beats and bass at the age of four. I obsessively studied the drum patterns in songs of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Anoop Jalota, Jagjit Singh, Sardool Sikandar, Malkit Singh, and Gurdas Mann (for example) and playing dhol became second nature and my true love. Since then, I have been fortunate to play dhol for Sukshinder Shinda, Hrithik Roshan, and several other artists.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

I truly love to celebrate life and find reasons to find enjoyment the small things that we all take for granted. Playing dhol let's me connect with others during their significant moments and I'll always know that I was a part of how they felt in those memories of happiness and excitement.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

One of the initial challenges I have disliked in the past occurred when navigating conversations with men who attempt to strong-arm performance rates, or terms of my event contracts.



Because I truly play dhol from my heart, I can genuinely and sincerely decline opportunities that don't support me as a musician.

I had to first decide what I prioritized, then how I would exchange my time as a dhol player for a justified rate, and then adhere to it without negation. Every Desi loves to bargain, but when you negotiate with someone who has put in hundreds — maybe thousands of hours to their craft, then asking for discounts or to play "for exposure" is disrespectful.

Eventually, I learned how to set expectations and create solutions for myself and others. When I couldn't, I just learned to say no. It's difficult to decline events because I would love to play dhol everywhere but sometimes, a girl has to say no.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I am an artist in every sense of the word so in addition to being an instrumentalist, I enjoy singing, writing, drawing, building, landscaping, etc. I am currently planning a geodesic dome greenhouse which I'd like to build in my backyard, but I have to teach myself everything as usual. Ask me about those details another day.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

I consider myself a Type A personality and do not mince words. To be successful in anything, you need to understand how and when to speak directly, and for me I find it very simple because I speak from my heart. I rest my head every night peacefully without having to keep up with lies, or wonder if I should've done something differently. Additionally, I don't regret my decisions because I don't operate out of obligation. As the saying goes: when you love what you do, it doesn't feel like work.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I have a psychology background and enjoy studying personalities, behaviors, and micro-expressions. Understanding the mind and how our brains correlate to our behaviors throughout every stage of life will forever intrigue me. Chess is an interesting way to read people.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

The pandemic pretty much cancelled my club events, concerts shows, and reduced the number of shaadi events throughout 2020 but 2021 is rising beautifully. Before the pandemic, I never thought about if playing dhol in public spaces meant potentially getting and now I have to consider these things because no one wants to cause problems for their families, or anyone for that matter.



MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

When you find something in life that allows you to achieve your flow state, don't let it go. Live in your element, learn everything about it, keep falling in love with it, and allow yourself to become stronger. Seek out a balance that does not guilt you for your passions, and does not sacrifice those needs unless it is on your terms. Teach others, and continue to remain a lifelong student of your craft.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

I'm currently teaching myself audio engineering and would like to release a 50-song project of dhol covers for song from around the world spanning multiple languages and genres. I am also planning to film a documentary to cast a spotlight on female dhol players who are pioneering the way for the next wave of girls and women to pick up the dhol or to pursue any passion that fulfills them.



DHRUV TOSHNIWAL

CEO & FOUNDER
THE PANT PROJECT

The Pant Project revolutionizes the retail of pants with their laser focus on 'fit, fabric and functionality'

@thepantproject



*Dhruv has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

The Pant Project was born out of my personal struggle to find a pair of well-fitted pants. I would often struggle to find in between sizes (I am a 35 waist), and custom inseam lengths (I like a 27 inseam), and knew that finding perfect sizing and fit was something many men had trouble with.. While studying my undergraduate at Wharton Business School in the USA, I was inspired by Bonobos, a brand that offered custom-made pants at prices similar to off the rack. When I moved back to India in 2017, I saw that many brands were offering custom-made shirts (e.g., Bombay Shirt Company) and nobody was focused on pants. I knew this was a problem that needed to be solved, and to date believe that custom-made direct to consumer retail is a space that has a lot of potential.

I didn't pursue further studies and don't have textile qualifications. I learned on the job and its business is in our blood as I am a third-generation entrepreneur from an established textile business family (Banswara Syntex). Before launching The Pant Project our team did a year of research and extensive trials to understand the fit problem that men typically face while buying pants – too baggy, too tight, in-between waist sizes, no room to accommodate athletic thighs, too high rise, no extra-long or extra short inseam length options, bulging pockets, no space for phone storage, not enough stretch in the fabric etc.

I used this research to launch The Pant Project in October 2020 and started a revolution to change the way men shop for their pants, setting the bar high and promising top quality tailoring, great fit, and free alterations.



WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

I wake up every morning at 4 am and start my day with a morning practice of Vipassana meditation. I'm inspired by the sunrise and like to get in my exercise (a round of golf, a run, or a game of cricket) before 8 am. I'm always down for a healthy (and large) breakfast and love my morning coffee. I'm in the office early, and love to use the time before noon for strategic work. It's when my brain works best. I am inspired by way too many things in life and am generally an extremely curious, often too curious person. If at all, I struggle to focus on only one idea and want to do it all, and that too all at the same time!

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

"This" industry is hard to define. While I am in the apparel business, and while our main manufacturing business at Banswara Syntex is related to making yarn, fabric, and garments for retail brands, along with my brother Udit Toshniwal, I have ventured into e-commerce and direct to consumer business. As an entrepreneur, one dons many hats, and I love having a dynamic role, love interacting with customers, and love that I am thrown new challenges every day. There is little that I don't like about the industry – maybe just the fact that there are way too many average brands out there, and that the industry is full of look-alikes and crowded spaces. We need more innovators that break the mold and more original brands that are from India for the world. With the pace at which new businesses are being launched, I am sure that will happen over the next decade.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I am a sports buff – I compete in an Olympic triathlon every year used to play competitive cricket and golf, and love watching live sporting events!

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Compassion and empathy are critical to success in the modern world. I'd like to be thought of as the nicest tough boss that anyone has had! I try to be someone who is kind, caring, generous, and competent all at the same time.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Way too many things! Electric vehicles, internet of things medical devices, yoga, meditation, edtech, performance marketing, finance, the outdoors, and sports of all kinds. Even though I am a very intuitive person, I do try to be as rational as possible about everything (including my passions).



HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Retail as an industry was flourishing before the pandemic, both online and offline. Ever since the Covid-19 pandemic struck, things started getting challenging for the traditional brick and mortar setup of businesses, as the government regulations asked front-of-the-house businesses to remain shuttered in a bid to curb the spread of the contagion through physical gathering. On the back of bleeding fixed costs and no revenues, offline stores have started to shut down and e-commerce has boomed. The convenience of shopping from home and the abundance of options available online have helped the e-commerce industry. We are bullish long term on increasing digital penetration and increasing purchasing power of Indians and very excited about the coming decade for direct to consumer brands in India (and from India for the world).

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

Fortunately, the pandemic has accelerated the transition to online shopping and made it easier to scale an e-commerce only business. The major challenges we have faced include:

Scaling production to meet demand. We did not anticipate so much demand for our project in our third month of operations! It has been a challenge to deliver 100s of pants a day since each pant is custom made and each parcel hand-packed and manually quality controlled. We are now scaling up our team to support even larger volumes!

Shipping all over India, including non-serviceable and remote pin code. Of course the infrastructure of shipping, warehousing, and third-party logistics is improving fast in this country, yet there are still some orders from the corners of India that we have had to find innovative ways to deliver the package to the last mile.

Guiding clients on how to measure, and on getting right measurements the first time. Our stylists have set up virtual appointments to help clients measure themselves, and we created a size guide and size recommendation engine to suggest to clients their ideal waist size and inseam length. We have also created graphics to explain the benefit of different fits (slim fit, tapered fit, and relaxed fit) and what sort of body types they are suited for. This has been a learning process, and part of the digital communication journey.

Fraud orders and fake COD orders. Like any online company, we receive our share of orders where clients confirm to receive as COD and then refuse to accept the pant on delivery, and we are stuck with the inventory which is custom made for them. This is part of the cost of doing business, as a young entrepreneur I just hope the Indian consumer is more and more aware of the impact of such costs on startups.



Learning digital marketing and improving our performance marketing on Facebook, Instagram and Google. Content creation and storytelling is such a key part of brand building, and it has been a whole new learning experience for us to try to communicate the touch, feel, and depth of product experience to our clients over the internet.

We are sure we will continue to face many challenges online, and are ready to embrace them.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

I'm not huge on motivational advice. Motivation is fleeting. Find your why, and go for it, with everything. I try to find wisdom in ancient texts like the Bhagavad Gita and focus on your thoughts and actions, the rest (results) will follow (in due course of time).

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

The Pant Project has ambitious plans to become India's #1 Direct to Consumer Clothing Brand, and to become the world's leading new-age E-Tailor. We want to grow to serve over 1 million Indian customers in our first two years of operation and to achieve an annual sales run-rate of over 100 crore rupees. We would also like to do many events that engage with clients, experiment with pop-up shops, and potentially grow to have an omnichannel strategy of a mix of physical brick & mortar experience centers along with digital as our primary sales channel.

We have started with a focused offering of custom-made pants for men, and over time, would like to grow our range of products to include an entire wardrobe solution, potentially including custom-made shorts, t-shirts, belts, shoes, socks etc.

In the long term, we would also like to expand our global focus, and expand in overseas markets to become a truly global brand, from India for the world.

We want to be known as India's #1 clothing brand, and to have changed the face of direct-to-consumer retail so that many clients are satisfied with having found the perfect solution for their clothing needs, and so that many young entrepreneurs are inspired to launch brands of their own.



ELISHA SAIGAL

BRAND ARCHITECT

The brand strategist behind several homegrown brands in India and responsible for pivoting international brands positioning in India. Like Sula Vineyards, FILA, Qua Natural mineral water and many more

Listed in Vogue 100 influential Indians

Recognized among LuxeBook 50 Power Women

SheThePeople Leadership and Branding

 @elisha_saigal



*Elisha has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

To me concept, strategy and execution are most critical for any brand's success. At 17, I took up my first internship at Bathfitt, a sanitaryware showroom for sales and window display, window display led me to my second internship at Design Temple. It is here that I understood aesthetic and the importance of design in every aspect of business, the project I worked on, won the best booth design in Australia and that led to the founder offering me a part time job with college. I did this for a year and I enjoyed it a lot. At this point, I wanted to be sure of what I would be doing 10 years from now, so I could pick courses or was BMM from KC College enough. I then went on to work with a PR relations firm for 5 years. And decided to embark on my entrepreneurial journey in December 2007. Hard work pays off, because the minute people heard I was starting, I had brands reaching out. Our first client was Henry Tham, we went on to launch all their products uptoil Foo [over 10 years], and our first fashion clients were Varuna D Jani, Satya Paul & Mod'Art International. It is the concept of wanting to make it on my own, that enabled me to create the strategy for it and work towards my entrepreneurial journey.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

I believe people always remember how you make them feel, drawing inspiration from that, the most exciting part of work, is the ability to create and build ICONIC homegrown brands, reshape the legacy of international brands in India and assist in launch strategies of brands looking to enter India. It is the feeling of creating a legacy of ICONIC brands, that gets me out of bed every morning.



WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Research, well read, solution oriented and resourceful

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Reading, travelling solo and yoga.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

The pandemic has been the best CEO, CFO, Business Consultant, mentor and more. It has enabled positive change and removed redundancy.

**FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD?
WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?**

The sector looks very glamorous from the outside, but there is a lot of hard work and real time thinking that is needed. Often people are unable to cope with the hard work that makes the job look easy.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Never lose the sight of the goal. The strategies to get there might evolve, but your goal remains unchanged.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

You will be seeing a lot more brand and campaign strategies coming out of El Sol Strategic Consultants ranging from FMCG, Education, Lifestyle, Technology and Technology first businesses.



FARZAN GHADIALLY

INVESTMENT BANKER , AUTHOR , MENTOR
& COLUMNIST

Helps young aspirational entrepreneurs in India raise capital via public as well as private markets and guide HNI and UHNI investors invest wealth across asset classes in India & overseas

Appointed as a Mentor of change under the Niti Aayog

Appointed as the mentor with Atal Incubation Centre Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini Foundation

Mentor with incubation cell IIM Sirmaur

📷 @farzan_ghadi ally



*Farzan has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

Farzan Ghadi ally is the Senator - India for the World Business Angles Forum (WBAF), an affiliated partner of the G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPII). As a Senator his role includes helping the start-up / early stage companies along with SMEs to rise to a global scale leveraging the WBAF network across 111 countries around the globe.

He is also a mentor with the Atal Incubation Centre a leading Incubation Centre supported by the Government of India. He is on the mentor board of the Incubation at IIM Sirmaur. By profession he is an Investment Banker and has a rich experience in the financial services industry in India and overseas. He is a member of the prestigious MDRT (Million Dollar Round Table) club and has been a TOT (Top of the Table) and COT (Court of the Table) two of the highest accolades for financial advisors. He has been a speaker at many international and national conferences on personal finance, private equity and family office.

He is the author of two books "Investing in Turbulent Times" and "Investing in the Turbulent Decade That Was & Beyond". He writes in leading financial newspapers including the Mid-Day where his column features every Monday in the finance section.

He is a visiting faculty in leading management colleges like S.P. Jain, NMIMS, Welingkar etc.



He is the chair for Innovation & Entrepreneurship as well as special projects at Young Indians (YI) a part of CII. He works closely with many foundations and large corporates on the CSR funding and sustainability eco system with a sole aim for inclusive growth which would help India transform from a developing to a developed nation.



GURVINDER KAUR

CELEBRITY CHEF
& INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL ACTIVIST
DIRECTOR, JAIKARA (UK)

She setup her start up brand called NEKKI Officials in 2020 to empower Women tailors who suffered the most in the pandemic who were struggling for their basic necessities for their families & managed to help more than 30 Women tailors..

Got featured in many Cookery shows including Colors TV UK

Acknowledged by Haryana Government for Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao

First Asian who raised awareness about Menstrual hygiene and Period Poverty in UK Parliament

Raising awareness about Menstrual hygiene since 7 yrs

Instagram icon @chef.gurvinderk



*Gurvinder has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

My name is Gurvinder Kaur. I'm an International Social Activist, I was invited in the UK Parliament twice in 2018 on a UN Social day and got a chance to give a speech and address the Member of Parliament and UN Secretaries about the alarming issue of Period Poverty around the globe. There, I got lot of appreciation and acknowledgment for my Social work in India.

Along with that I'm a Director (India) of a UK based NGO called JAIKARA ORG, working closely on Taboo issue like Mental Health, Menstrual hygiene etc.

Recently I have curated a Leisure Wear Brand named NEKKI OFFICIALS where we support & empower Women Tailors to have a better livelihood and a sustainable earnings. We aim to spread happiness through our Garments & goodness (NEKKI) through our small act of kindness while touching many lives of our Wonder Women NEKKI Team.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

Honestly, the zeal that my Women Tailor Team carries makes me wonder how blessed we are with all the amenities around us and we sometimes we still creep about every little thing which we don't have.



And these beautiful people are so happy with small things, even sometimes a review from our Clients make the happiest for the rest of the Day.

So they motivate and encourage me to do more and more so that we grow together while holding hands together.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

The thing which I love the most is that "the creativity has no boundaries or limitations". Most importantly our brand is a Leisure wear which is very close my heart, since I always promoted "SELF LOVE - SELF CARE" nothing is more vital than that. If you're happy from inside then only you can Take care of your loved ones.

There is nothing which I don't like but the Online store doesn't have any working hours so our Clients expect us to reply to their messages any time of the day, which is sometimes very challenging.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

That I love learning ... anything, anytime and from anyone. I love to observe people and learn various things they know like recently I learned hand embroidery on a fabric from one of our youngest team member.

That I love adventure, travelling, driving and spending time on the beach just love the me time which I hardly get these days.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

The most challenging thing would be the Time management since Online store has lot of demand as your Social handles has to be updated most of the times. The collection has to be trendy yet elegant. The demand and supply of the fabric has go hand in hand.

Therefore, managing Social and Personal profiles together has been quite crucial.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Cooking is something that I love the most. I have done couple of TV shows on Colors TV UK, PTC channel, Living Foods etc, also have shared TV screen with many Celebrity Chefs including Sarah Todd, Chef Rakhee Vaswani, Ranveer Singh, Chef Harpal, Saransh Goila.



HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

The clothing industry has been effected the most or I would say the Labours are effected the most due to the pandemic since they were challenged to survive without work and food in their houses. That was one of the major reason why we started NEKKI OFFICIALS.

During my visit in Delhi during pandemic, I met with a group of Women Tailors on road asking for work in each house. As they didn't had any grocery in their houses which made them come out on streets to ask for work for their bread and butter.

Post pandemic the situation is still not that good but it's improving day by day. The ladies are happy to have enough work which sitting at the comfort of their homes and taking care of their kids too.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

The major problem in Online business is the delivery. We completely rely on the courier services and sometimes they do messed up some of our important Orders, especially when it's somebody's Birthday or a special occasion and they have curated their Personalised garments then we have lot of pressure to deliver them on time.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Believe in YOU that's the most beautiful thing you could do in your life. Understand your intuitions, they always guide you through the right path.

The happiness which you have been searing around is actually right there in front of you, just try "A SMALL ACT OF KINDNESS A DAY" and your Life will change forever. Spread happiness but don't forget to stay happy from within.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

Our vision is to make NEKKI Officials an International brand where we can empower the Women Tailors globally and could show the World the real power of women who support each other and grow together.




HITA PARIKH

RADIO JOCKEY

FOUNDER & CEO, SILVER SPUN BRAND SOLUTIONS

Silver Spun is one of the youngest and fastest growing PR firms in India

 @silverspunbrandsolutions



*Hita has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I have been a Mumbaikar all 36 years of my life or rather a South Mumbaikar and commuting beyond Bandra seemed like a never ending battle until I started my first job at Big 92.7 Fm. During my early years, I was schooled at Queen Mary High School, followed by a degree in commerce from HR College of Commerce & Economics. After my "cocooned" life till graduation, my first tryst with destiny was getting a Degree in Business Management from Mumbai University and getting placed with Big 92.7 Fm. I always aspired to build a career in the field of Media & Broadcasting and this opportunity was a dream come true.

Five years into being a media professional (hopping jobs in pursuit to find that perfectly satisfying job) I realised that doing a 9to9 job is not my calling. A thought that kept disturbing me throughout was why should I make a million bucks for my employer and settle down for a salary instead which was peanuts in comparison? That's when I realised it's time to stop dreaming big and to take the plunge. I quit my job in the year 2013 and took a break for a year and a half. Finally, the big break came in 2014.

I aspired to start an Integrated Marketing & Communications firm and expressed this to a close friend from college. He insisted I attend his exhibition where he would put me in touch with a few clients and I could pitch in for some strategic Marketing initiatives.



With a lot of efforts, I managed to bag my first project. It was setting up leads for a mobile accessory brand through tele-communication which of course, had nothing to do with PR. I took it up thinking that I need to start somewhere. The next big break came, in the same year, when another friend recommended that I pitch in for representation for a newly opened eggless waffles store. At that time I didn't have anything that would support my pitch. No brand name, no logo, no office, no staff, nothing at all. However the only thing I had was CONFIDENCE and with that confidence I managed to win the account. Since then there has been no looking back! From one to many to multiple projects.

I started my entrepreneurial journey as a lone soldier who had converted her living room into a makeshift office. As and when business grew, I hired interns (some of them are now working full time with me) and the team expanded from one to two to three... I realised the time had come to invest in an office space. Finally in the year 2017 I found an investor who was willing to invest in my business venture. He invested in an office space at A/C Market Tardeo which could easily accommodate 10 people. The investor is none other than my Father. :) An investment which is an expensive one but still priceless!

That's when the real journey started, the real spin, the Silver Spin.. 3 years working full time with a team, today the business has grown 500 times, serviced more than 100plus clients and I can proudly say that we are one of the known agencies in the city.)

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

Hunger! I wake up hungry, hungry to achieve more. Each new day is a new start, a new idea that has to be implemented, a new strategy that has to be spun to reach new heights. I feel every successful deal you concluded or every successful execution of a campaign is a "two second fame". You need to restart each day, each time.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

When a campaign is executed well and we have completed all the deliverables, it is immensely satisfying. If it doesn't go in that direction then it is certainly challenging. Our business depends on our relations with the media industry. We are dependent on that and to strike a balance between the client and the media is challenging. Hence each day is as much challenging as satisfying.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I think if one can read between the lines then they know me beyond my profile, and much beyond the CEO of Silver Spun.



WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Communication! You need to communicate not only correctly but also the manner in which you communicate is important. Imagine having a situation where a feature story for a client has gone wrong? How do you tell the journo that his story is not upto the client's expectation? On the other hand how do you pacify your client? This situation multiplied manifold in a regular day scenario.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

There are many faces to my personality. I love occult sciences. I have studied numerology, a little bit about vedic astrology and at the moment I am studying KP astrology. I love cooking too. I feel its therapeutic, at times. Not many know that I am compiling a book of my recipes which I curated during the lock down. Hope it sees the light of the day soon May be then you can prefix Author/to my name apart from Publicist.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Pretty bad. A lot of journalists have lost their jobs owing to the newspapers and other media shutting down. A lot of PR agencies are out of business and have fired their staff. However it's getting a lot better now..there is a lot of improvement.

**FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD?
WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?**

I don't see any major issues.. maybe some operational issues. Thankfully, I personally didn't face any major challenges in the last 6 years.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Believe in yourself. Focus. Work Hard. Persevere. This is not just so called "gyaan". If you actually apply these principles in the same order, you will definitely have a high probability of success. Firstly believe in yourself that you can do it, next focus on the plan you have set to achieve, work hard towards achieving your goals and persevere till you don't succeed.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

Silver Spun Brand Solutions, as the name suggests, is a platform that aims to provide all the Marketing & Branding solutions that a brand requires ie PR, Social Media, Design, Content & Alliances . While we already have a hold on our PR & Social Media verticals the other verticals will start eventually.



JASON FERNANDES

FINTECH SPECIALIST

A blockchain speaker and crypto analyst

Featured on FirstPost 9 months alongside celebrities and specialists, hosted by Maria Goretti

Curated campaigns for prestigious brands like Hyatt Regency, Nickelodeon, Phoenix Market City, Palladium

📷 @thejasonfernandes



Jason has pledged to grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I am an entrepreneur, blockchain speaker and crypto analyst. As a teenager I founded the internet portal ZeoCities.com, non-profit LDKids.org and wrote for CHIP Magazine. Later, while studying at the University of Texas, Austin, I co-invented the world's first legal Internet-based DVR, RecordTV and was part of the founding team at Perceptivel (a company that developed ECRM software for Fortune 500 clients).

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO WORK?

My broad motivation would be having the greatest positive impact for the maximum amount of people. Right now that would definitely mean banking the unbanked/underbanked. India is the second largest unbanked country in the world and the banking sector here is ripe for disruptive innovation. There is also a deep inequity in the developing world that is perpetuated by the downtrodden not having access to basic banking services and I think this is a problem that could find its solution in technology.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

Working in the blockchain/cryptocurrency industry puts me at the cutting edge of global revolution that is decentralizing finance and democratizing innovation. Blockchain has the potential to be truly transformative technology and I've seen this once before, during the rise of the internet. While I active professionally at the time, I was ill-positioned to play as integral a part as I would have liked. What really drives me, is Blockchain's ability to eliminate middlemen in several industries leading to potentially greater efficiency, transparency and could even lead to the elimination of corruption.



WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

Given my work and interests thus far, most people assume I graduated with some sort of technical degree however in actuality I am somewhat of a politics junkie. While at college at the University of Texas at Austin, I majored in Government with a minor in Business. Moving to the United States just before 9/11 and having lived there during the Bush and Obama administration, deeply shaped my perspective and influenced my path in college. I developed an abiding interest in the wheels of government both in the United States but also internationally. Perhaps the seeds were sown early on, through constant exposure to classic British comedy like Yes, Minister. A few years into college, I realized I was quite passionate about government and particularly the exercise of democracy as a concept- indeed, that was the subject of my final year college thesis. One of the topics I studied was about how, in a healthy society, the proliferation of democratic principles was paramount and I think that's why the concept of Blockchain/Cryptocurrency and Bitcoin appealed to me so much. I truly believe that blockchain and decentralized finance could be the most liberating and consequential technological innovation of the 21st century.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

I think If you are an entrepreneur or even work at a senior level within a company, a very important skill is being able to distil a vision down to an actionable plan that can be executed by you or your team. Another is having the flexibility and confidence to tackle situations and challenges that you may have not encountered before. One of the best learning experiences I had was when I was working on one of my earliest projects and taking on something that I knew nothing about- hardware development. I had never developed hardware before and with my previous company SmartKlock I really didn't know where to begin. Trying to figure out what it takes to make an idea into a prototype and a prototype into a production ready product was extremely rewarding. I was fortunate to have a team at the time that was dedicated to the mission and curious- some of the worlds greatest discoveries have arisen out of idle curiosity.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Well, I have a lifelong fascination with the UFOs phenomenon . In fact, one of the earliest things I did professionally was release a program called The UFO Story on CHIP Magazine's free accompanying CD, the program was installed more than half a million times and did prove to be quite popular briefly affording me with 15 minutes of fame among UFO enthusiasts. Recently, however the US government has all but admitted the existence of these sorts of craft even going into some detail about materials recovered from them so I do feel a bit vindicated. I am at my core, a technologist and so when one considers the exotic technology accessible to those researching these advanced craft, blockchain, IOT web streaming and the like can seem quaint in comparison.



HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

While the pandemic hit all industries hard at first, (cryptocurrency markets for example were deeply depressed) generally speaking the pandemic has been good for the industry. Cryptocurrency is a 24/7 market and so it does tend to benefit when people spend more time at home. In fact, I would suggest that the phenomenal rise of Bitcoin this year has been due in no small part to the pandemic and people being at home more to trade.

**FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD?
WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?**

By far the greatest challenge has been the uncertain regulatory environment. For many years the industry operated under a cloud of uncertainty due to an RBI banking ban. Soon after that was overturned in the supreme court however, did we begin hearing indications of a possible legislative blanket ban. While discussions remain ongoing, due to the uncertainty, finding and retaining talent in the industry can be difficult. Its my hope that cooler heads prevail and we see some positive regulation that encourages the good players while eliminating the bad ones.

**MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR
READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

Well, while I love the way my life has worked out for me so far, I would not quite recommend my path as a working model for others. It sounds trite but I don't think you can go wrong if you come from a place where you are following your passion. I also think its important to remember, that one can have many passions and in these situations its ok to go for the one that you find most rewarding and not necessarily the one people around you may expect of you.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

In the fintech industry its hard to predict how the future particularly with the regulatory uncertainty we see today. Broadly speaking I think the kind of innovation most likely to have a positive effect on society's poor are in the areas of social and financial inclusion and these are areas I see as my mission in the coming years.



KAIZIN POONIWALA

MEDIA PROFESSIONAL

Leading the on air promos team for a reputed English movie channel

Awarded for promos that won at Promax Asia & Promax India

📷 @kaizinp



Kaizin has pledged to grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

Beauty lies in simplicity. That's how I enjoy spending time in nature, the only source that keeps us energised & revitalized. Coming from a creative background, it's all about exploring opportunities & breaking boundaries as an artist. Being in the media industry for over a decade has been a great experience where I've met such innovative & enthusiastic people. My career path led me from one milestone to another, right from being a visualizer in an ad agency to leading a team at one of our most entertaining Indian television network in India.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO WORK?

No matter what, the show must go on. No matter how tough it gets, you still continue doing what you have to do. Every day is not the same at work & the pandemic was a great reminder, just like that every project has to be dealt with in a different way. What motivates me is the thought of bringing about a change in our creative approach, coming up with fun & quick solutions to make things work & to overcome every hurdle that will only push us forward.



WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

Personally, every challenge has introduced me to bigger and better possibilities. Reaching out to our audience & engaging them with the kind of content that they really enjoy watching is essential. Most satisfying part is when all the hard work pays off by getting appreciated with maximum viewership from our fans & viewers.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I enjoy being adventurous, knowingly or unknowingly I end up taking the road less travelled. It's important for me to keep moving & explore possibilities before I turn stagnant in certain areas of my life.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

You need to be creative, experimental & resilient with your attitude to succeed & create some outstanding work in this career.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Designing or illustrating on any medium is what keeps my creative juices flowing. It's one of the best ways to connect with myself. I thoroughly enjoy getting the adrenaline kick when I am traveling on my motorbike, we both love to discover unknown terrains and culture with a whole lot of adventure.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

A lot of shifts have been visible due to the pandemic, the economy has taken a massive hit, but everyone has worked day & night to bring about consistency in the industry, by being supportive so that our daily work doesn't get affected. Although upcoming shows & other production work was put on hold due to a complete lockdown which made an impact on the network's development plans.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

Taking care of your mental & physical health is extremely important, only then you will be able to excel in your career. Working from home was quite a challenge, also adapting different ways to connect with the teams and coordinating with people virtually gave me great insight of how technology is our only hope if only we use it the right way. Irrespective of all the situations that were faced, we managed to work efficiently. It's about time we upgrade our technical skills by introducing & learning new ways of working with technology, that's highly accessible knowing how we need to manage our new work structure.



MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Let your work speak for itself because you will reap the fruits of your hard work that will get noticed sooner or later & nothing's impossible if you believe in what you do.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS


Follow your passion, that will help others grow with you. I look forward to mentoring and teaching in special art institutes & universities. I am super excited about exploring & testing different methods and mediums to display designs that are distinctive through fashion or entertainment, the list can go on because the possibilities are limitless.



KRISTINE JAMES ZEDEK

ACTOR, EMCEE, VOICING ARTIST, LIFESTYLE
INFLUENCER & COMMUNICATION MENTOR

A media professional with a bouquet of selective work to her credit, that includes Tv Commercials, Short Films, a Feature Film and Music Videos

 www.kristinezedek.com



*Kristine has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I'm Zedek... Kristine Zedek! That's how I'd like to introduce myself...a female James Bond version of how I say my name! Ha ha! As you can already see, I'm someone who loves to break the ice and have a good laugh while I'm at it!

There was a time I belonged to the corporate world when I used to live in Dubai but soon decided to follow my instincts and landed up in this amazing city of Mumbai where it was a place where I knew I could make my dreams a reality.

With no media background whatsoever, I decided to step into the world of acting and worked my way through from scratch. All I knew was that I didn't want to leave any room for regret or blame and hence set out on my own path to self-discovery and figuring it all out myself!

Today I'm an Actor, Emcee, Voicing Artist, a Lifestyle Influencer and a Communication Mentor...all in all I'm a Media Personality!

People always wonder why I'm always so happy and on a high! Though it feels like a secret or a mystery, it's all actually the simple things that I follow that keep me and my spirits always high. In fact, because of this very mystery, I'm now known as THE HAPPINESS MYSTIQUE! I keep doing what I love and what makes me happy because I feel it's total injustice if one cannot make the most of their gifted talents or life. I still am discovering myself and that by far has been the best part about this journey of mine till date!



WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

What motivates me is life in itself as it's the most exciting and yet unexpected experience one can have. I wake up every day like a lark because I can't wait for life to surprise me! I do have my days planned and yet there's room for the unexpected as well!

I mostly find myself creating something or the other. In fact one thing I truly look forward to is one of my daily mini projects. I create a mini audio visual podcast every single day, which is a compilation of a video message backed by my audio message giving my perspective to how I view life. These are all inspirational and motivational messages. I've been doing this ever since the pandemic had started and haven't stopped since! You can view them on my Youtube channel @kristinezedek under KZ's Daily Musings.

The other project I'm currently working on is my upcoming online course called Mission Communication. It's all about the joy of effective communication that can help rebuild the human connect for people to have better relationships. This is one course to look out for because I know it's going to help transform lives and relationships!

So all in all, my day usually comprises of educating myself and also helping people with awareness that can take them to the next level of their lives. It gives me immense joy to see people happy happy and smiling.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE AND NOT LIKE ABOUT WORKING IN THIS INDUSTRY?

As an Actor, Emcee and Voice Artist the opportunity to have a brand new experience every single day is the most exciting feeling. No two projects are ever alike and that's why gives me a high in life! Also getting to interact with people is what makes me truly happy because I feel I always have something to learn from everyone.

The challenging aspect is of course the competition that cuts the budgets. That is really heartbreaking.

Now as a Communication Trainer and Mentor, I'm in a much better position to be in control of the work that I do. Here I am my own Boss and get the privilege to help people in whatever way I can to make their lives brighter!

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I would say, don't let anyone tell you that you are capable of doing only one thing. If you're good at doing 10 different things, just do it as long as it makes you happy. The purpose of life is to be happy, not keep dimming your sunshine because of what others think! I always and always believe in following my heart / intuition and instincts and making it smile. That leaves me with no regrets and just knowing I did it my way!



WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

It's crucial to know your values and principles. If your foundation and basics are not in place, it's easy to get swayed into what others throw upon you. Also having an open mind to learning and looking at the bright side to all that happens with you, can take you a long way. Rejection and failure is a part of making you tougher and one can learn so much from just that alone. And above all, one needs to feel secure about oneself. If you're insecure, then that's the first step to losing yourself!

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I'm passionate about helping people understand what is it that they need to tap into themselves that's going to change everything about their lives and relationships. I help them also express themselves better through the Art of Communication. Hence I created an online course called Mission Communication which is going to be launched shortly. I'm super excited about this!

I'm equally passionate about Conscious Living and being in touch with Nature. I believe that Nature is the answer to everything...right from what we consume, our health to our state of mind. Living consciously is what can change it all for our well-being, be it mentally, emotionally, physically or spiritually.

I also love life so much that I enjoy connecting with nature and find myself often talking to crows (who now talk back to me as well), birds, and all kinds of animals. I also tend to just start singing and dancing out of the blue. Reading books and watching info on evolving oneself is something that I'm hooked on!

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Initially before the pandemic, everything was going as usual...the craziness of it all. During the pandemic, everything came to a halt which meant no income. I was lucky to start getting online events as an Emcee/Anchor and also do voice overs. The acting work had to wait!

Post lockdown, everything has picked up. Now everyone is valuing work so much more as work is now picking up. Yes...the budgets still are a challenge but I'm still happy to be doing all that I do!

**FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD?
WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?**

Making a mark for oneself in an ocean of talent is always a challenge. We're flooded with so many talents from world over and each one comes in here thinking it's a glamorous world where all one needs to do is look their best. But it's way beyond the superficial outlook and it's more of having a warrior mindset to work hard and stay focused to make your dreams come true.



MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

I would like to say, life is the biggest teacher we have and one should always keep an open mind to learning new perspectives to life. Also self-love is the only truth that can take you places. When you're confident about who you are, that's the only weapon to shield, protect and also take you forward in life!

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

I know I'm not going to just stop at doing what I'm currently doing. I still have so much more to tick off from my bucket list, achieve more and keep recreating myself to be a better version of myself. You will definitely be seeing more of me in even more new avataars!


Just like I started this interview James Bond style, I'd like to end it with one the Bond movie title that's apt for what I believe it... "The world is not enough"!



LEELAVATHI SALIAN GUPTA

ENTREPRENEUR

She runs 2 brands from her home kitchen - The Affair by Pramila & Leela and Energy Balls. that specialize in South Indian cuisine, Maharashtrian cuisine and energy balls

 @lee_gupte



Leelavathi has pledged to grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I have over 15 years of work experience, primarily in Sales and marketing. I have been in diverse areas over this tenure such as Advertising, Public Relations, Marketing, Events, Exhibition etc. I have also been associated with Groupon India, as the Head of Food and Beverage for Mumbai.

Currently, I own a company called Vibrant-India where I help international brands launch themselves in India. I take care of them completely, right from the legalities to Business growth.

Alongside Vibrant-India, I happened to start my food venture - The Affair by Pramila & Leela. It had its birth in the COVID period. My father has had 2 restaurants and 15 food stalls spread across the city of Mumbai. However, because of his growing age, health issues, and added tensions because of the pandemic, things started losing momentum. And that is when I took the game in my hand. The food business is not just a business to us, but more of our passion for healthy food and a legacy to provide which I did not want to die.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

I love feeding people with innovative and healthy food recipes and that is what makes me get up every morning. like feeding people, innovating with food, creating their own version of food, curating healthy food recipes; serving healthy food at a reasonable price.



WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

To me, the most satisfying thing about my occupation is to provide newer and healthier delicacies to my customers matching their taste buds. As far as the challenges are concerned, I would say, I have been highly fortunate and blessed for not really encountering anything which I can think of as a challenge. Since the beginning, the response to my business has been unbelievably great.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I love experimenting with recipes and creating my own versions of food.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

I think the most crucial skill to be successful in this industry is to possess knowledge of taste. If you have that and the zeal to curate food as if you are a customer, you are successful.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Outside work, I love dancing.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Pandemic has certainly brought a lot of changes. Industry has definitely gone for a toss. The biggest effect that I see of the pandemic is growing demand for home chefs and home kitchens.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

Since I am working from home, there is no challenge. Also, since I hail from a background where we have had food ventures as our family business and my personal experience in the food industry, I never really encountered any challenge so far. But I feel there would be a bit of challenges coming our way once the world gets back to normal, and everything opens and people start rushing back to the restaurants.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Just keep experimenting and curate the food that you would love to have outside!



ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

As of now, we have two immediate plans:

Convert the Affair into a franchise

Start a private label for my energy balls which have received very good response from our customers



MADHURIMA MAZUMDAR

EMOTIONAL EMPOWERMENT COACH
& SPIRITUAL HEALER

Facilitates Past Life Regression sessions, Chakra healing and cleansing, Access Bars, Inner Child Healing, Emotional Counselling and Coaching

Stree Astitva Award for Emerging Entrepreneur in 2017 by All Ladies League

Business Diva Award by WEF in 2017

Circle leader of Lean In Mumbai for women facing domestic abuse and survivors

Council member of WICCI Maharashtra for Diversity and Inclusion

Has been featured in Mumbai Mirror for Sunshine Festival in 2020 and in Candy Magazine for the podcast "The First Times " In Jan 2021.

 @sunshineinitiatives



*Madhurima has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I am a Healer, Therapist and an Emotional Empowerment Coach working with individuals and groups to enhance their potential and enable them to stay aligned to their pure consciousness.

I facilitate Past Life Regression sessions, Chakra healing and cleansing, Access Bars, Inner Child Healing, Emotional Counselling and Coaching as a part of the healing services at an individual level.

Sunshine In You Initiatives is my brand which was created in the year 2015 with the pure intention of reaching out to a larger audience via social media and otherwise with all the healing services. Under the banner of Sunshine in you Initiatives i organise and curate holistic events which connects with all age groups and genders focusing on awakening the inner joy and happiness. Some of them being Lets Talk (a monthly meet up where we come and express ourselves), Sunshine Festival (annual event to bring forward people from various walks of life on a common path), Forest Bathing (a unique experience of reconnecting with Mother Earth), Self Love sessions, Letting go of the past and being in Gratitude, Inner child healing, connecting with emotions with Playback Theatre events, Colour Therapy and many more.

I am also Lean In Mumbai Circle leader for a circle that empowers survivors of domestic abuse and in association with professionals and organisations that support survivors help them to reclaim their power.



I am also Lean In Mumbai Circle leader for a circle that empowers survivors of domestic abuse and in association with professionals and organisations that support survivors help them to reclaim their power.

I am also a Council Member of Lifestyle & Fitness in WICCI where I am heading Diversity & Inclusion initiatives for Maharashtra.

After working with various MNC for 10 years in Sales & Events across industries like Hospitality, Banking & Media I chose to follow my heart and took a career break and followed my dreams of connecting with my inner being and understanding my purpose of life and give back to the world.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

I love what I do and this is my dream job to learn, unlearn, travel ,meet new people, create new initiatives and express my thoughts & emotions every single day and encourage each and every person I come across to do the same through my workshops, initiatives, communities & groups.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

I find the sheer joy of touching so many lives in so many ways and sharing the spiritual awareness I have with them every single day very very satisfying and enriching. Empowering someone emotionally gives a lot of inner power to an individual which we lose in the journey of our human lives due to societal conditioning.

As far as challenges are concerned, I feel the entire concept of mental & emotional well being as a area of importance is missing majorly in our Indian society and that creates a block while people are facing emotional issues and they hesitate to meet a coach or therapist.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I live by living each moment of my life as a blessing and celebration...be it situations I like or situations I dont like, I trust God and I know I am Gods favourite child so everything and everyone is a contribution to me and my life. Everything and everyone I come across is a contribution to me and my journey as a human, so I surrender to the universe and keep moving on!

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

As per me, I feel to serve humanity it comes from within a pure intention and love than any skill set to be a Healer and Emotional Coach. We all have the power of love, compassion, positivity, gratitude and living in the present moment already there within us.



Due to our upbringing, conditioning and various human experiences we tend to lose that connect and forget who we are as an existence beyond the human identity. Hence we have different people with different spiritual awareness & consciousness. As far as learning different spiritual modalities or trainings are concerned one can learn as many modalities they wish to based on what connects to them and create their own path.

So, like I earlier said, we are all operating from different levels of spiritual awareness and consciousness continuously evolving in our life journey. So if I make it simple one needs to have the pure intention to serve and treat everyone with love which starts with serving and loving oneself first beyond judgements and point of views.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I am very fond of being in Mother Nature in silence, travelling to new places and exploring the local lifestyle, spending time with my child and also other children having lots of fun.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Thanks to lockdown and everyone being home 24/7 people started spending more time with themselves and family members and realised a lot of things about themselves, their lives and their relationships. This awareness gave rise to increase in cases of depression, emotional issues, relationship issues and the worms were spilling out of the cans!

So more and more people started reaching out for help and connected with therapists, coaches, healers all over and it has been good professionally rather than being the opposite.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

In terms of financial compensation when you begin your journey in spiritual world as a Healer or Coach may be a little slow as it takes time to build the trust and create your client base who will seek your guidance. However with time it definitely accelerates but I personally feel, being a Healer / Therapist is more about service and its unfair to compare the financial compensations with a professional working for a MNC.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Live, Laugh, Love and Celebrate Life as this moment will not come back again!



ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

The vision, mission and dream for me and Sunshine in you Initiatives is to reach out to maximum people from all walks of life and curate innovative events that talks about mental and emotional wellness and enable people to come and express themselves and connect with like minded people. All the initiatives are focused on Inner Joy, Self Love, Self Acceptance and Expression of emotions as a choice and being emotionally empowered!

So there will be more festivals , curated holistic events & initiatives as far as my professional and social roles stand. However my dream is to start my own fun school (a new age school) for children very soon where they learn life skills, emotional skills, spend time in nature, stay away from internet and technology, spend time to know themselves, celebrate life and be emotionally empowered!



MANASI PAREKH

ACTRESS, SINGER, PRODUCER,
& CONTENT CREATOR

DIRECTOR - SOUL SUTRA

She has acted in several popular Indian television and also produces digital content and documentaries under her production house 'Soul Sutra'

Her character Maya was very popular and got her the Indian Television Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Comedy)

won the music reality show Star ya Rockstar on Zee TV

📷 @manasi_parekh



*Manasi has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

Manasi Parekh Gohil is an actress, singer, producer, and content creator. The star rose to fame with her several popular TV shows and is one of the adorable actresses who is also known for her style statement. Manasi enjoys a huge fan following overseas and thus the actress is very much active on social media.

In a recent Instagram story, Manasi is seen posing by a swimming pool. The beautiful actress looks cool in a casual white tee and denim with a chic pair of sunglasses. She wore a simple matching flip-flop with that and accessorized her outfit with a beautiful smile. She looked very simple yet elegant

She feels blessed that her journey into motherhood went as planned. She and her husband, musician Parthiv Gohil, were too busy to have a child immediately after marriage. She says, "We always wanted a child, but since we were trying to establish our careers, we decided to plan a baby after a few years. I also knew that having a baby meant we had to put everything aside for a while and attend to her." When the actress finally became a mother one-and-a-half years ago, she was fully prepared for it. "Nirvi is 17 months now. My husband Parthiv also shares responsibilities. It is easier to have a child in India as you have your parents around. Nirvi became the most important part of our lives and everything else was insignificant. I enjoy being a hands-on mother."



Though Nirvi is an infant, the actress feels that it is important to inculcate the right values in her. She says, "Children these days are intelligent. You don't need to teach them anything. They grasp many things

that you say or do in front of them, so you have to be very careful. I can never say a cuss word in front of her. She happily accompanies us to the many concerts across the country and the world."

Nirvi seems to be gaining from all those trips with her parents to the concerts. "She has picked up many things about music from Parthiv and me in the last few months," informs Manasi. "We have stopped doing many things that we did earlier, but we love my time with her. I also don't like to be controlling or possessive about her. I just let her be and grow the way she wants. The time when we grew up with our parents was way different from what we share now with our children, so one has to be careful about many things. I love the time I spend with her and though I keep busy with small projects, it's a conscious decision to not be away from her for long hours because being a mother brings happiness that is cherished forever," she adds.

Manasi made her debut in acting with the serial *Kitni Mast Hai Zindagi* in 2004 but became popular in Star One's *India Calling* in 2005. She won Zee TV's singing reality show *Star Ya Rockstar*. Manasi appeared in Star Plus' prime time show *Gulaal*. She was also seen in shows like 9X's *Remote Control* and Star One's *Laughter Ke Phatke*. She appeared in the Tamil romance film *Leelai* alongside actor Shiv Panditt, which was released in April 2012. Manasi made her Hindi debut with *Yeh Kaisi Life* which premiered at the IFFI Festival in Goa. A trained classical singer, Gohil has provided vocals for films such as Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Devdas*.

In 2019, she made her debut as a producer through the Gujarati webseries *Do Not Disturb*. In 2020, she debuted in Gujarati cinema with *Golkeri*.



MAURVEE SHARMA

BRAND MARKETER & ENTREPRENEUR
CO-FOUNDER & CREATIVE DIRECTOR AT
MUMS GARDENARY

Recognized as the Co-Founder of an FMCG Startup under 25 - Mums Gardenary, all 100% natural and sustainable brand

 @maurvee



*Maurvee has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I am a recent MA graduate in Brand Management, with my previous education being in Business Administration (Media Management). I have been fond of the cultural arts for many years now and wanted to pursue my career belonging in a similar field. Though over the years through my family work background, I developed a liking towards the Food & Beverage industry and thus decided to combine these two fields into one and create myself a path where I see myself as an entrepreneur and a brand marketer. So basically I am an Indian living abroad, who's professionally as well as personally culturally bound and works in creating and promoting Indian goods along with branding for independent and well known global brands.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

I admire the satisfaction people get through my work, and the sustainable approach that I am trying to bring in. It also solves the purposes of many, and that motivates me to do better each time.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

Being culturally creatively is something I find both most satisfying and challenging.



WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I'd have to say that would be my inclination towards traditional cultural things that I like to incorporate in my work as well as in my personal life. I like to be grounded to my roots because I feel they make me the person I am and differentiate me from others.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

One needs to be eternally creative, patient and full of passion to be willing to take risks. To also be worldly so that it will balance the passionate streak in you.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

That has to be dancing, I have been dancing ever since I was 3 or 4 years old and since then have grown up learning different styles and forms. I have been fortunate enough to perform and represent India in Berlin. I am also a socially conscious individual and believe in helping the society by every means, be it helping the elderly, or supporting women and men issues, or preserving the environment.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Well my work/career belongs in two industries, and as far as both of them are concerned, they economically faced a huge crack. While the Marketing industry was slowly recovering and saw different ways to grow as it depends on other industries, so it was active and ongoing, the Food and Beverage industry on the other hand was a necessity based service that was suddenly on pause. The demand remained but the means of provision got divided and that affected the workers the most. But the positive side to both industries is that with the current technology we have, it was able to adapt and come out stronger. As the world switched to online services, Ads/Marketing was needed by every organisation and individual, and the F&B services all resumed with few changes in their approach.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

Since both my industries are highly populated with well deserving individuals, it's got quite competitive. The technology we live and use today has made it accessible and possible for everyone to be an entrepreneur or a marketing individual, so it's given, to be the best and strive for a wholesome yet precision based knowledge of your work.



MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

I would like to encourage everyone to be true to their personality and nature, that will take you a long way, and to believe in your gut. We live in a competitive world with most of the people hardly satisfied in the work they do, so in these times only your true passion and love towards your work will take you ahead. Your work should be your lifestyle not just a small part of your life.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

I am currently working on my family startup called Mums Gardenary which is an FMCG venture based in Mumbai, along with working for Leverage Media, a media agency based in Berlin. At Mums Gardenary, we curate products that are 100% natural, have sustainable packaging, and encourage the use of local Indian ways of lifestyle, I have plans to make it commercial and expand it internationally. I have also started my own blog page which is called Culture Kudi, where I bring the offbeat, unconventional and unexplored Indian Culture to you and plan to host events that are alike.



MIKHIL MUSALE

FILM MAKER

CREATIVE DIRECTOR & CO FOUNDER AT
CINEMAN PRODUCTIONS LTD

His first film Wrong Side Raju, a gujarati film received a national award in gujarat film category after almost 2 decades made by a gujarati maker

Was a part of the India's Entry to Oscar's this year in 2017 as a jury member which selected 'Newton' as an official entry

He was felicitated by 'President of India' on 4th May 2017 at Vigyan Bhavan, Delhi followed by PM 'Narendra Modi' on 5th May

Was also acknowledged & felicitated by Chief Minister of Gujarat 'Shri Vijay Rupani', 'Shri Uddhav Thackeray' in Mumbai & Mayor of Ahmedabad 'Shri Gautam Shah'. The film happened to travel at more than 17 film festivals

 @mikhilmusale88



*Mikhil has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

**WINNERS
2021**

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I am a Maharashtrian, born & brought up in Ahmedabad among very few director's whose regional debut film "Wrong Side Raju" has won a National Award for Best Gujarati Film in 2017.

I was also part of the India's Entry to Oscar's this year in 2017 as a jury member which selected 'Newton' as an official entry

I was felicitated by 'President of India' on 4th May 2017 at Vigyan Bhavan, Delhi followed by PM 'Narendra Modi' on 5th May. He was also acknowledged & felicitated by Chief Minister of Gujarat 'Shri Vijay Rupani', 'Shri Uddhav Thackeray' in Mumbai & Mayor of Ahmedabad 'Shri Gautam Shah'.

I have also been the Creative Director & co founder of the production house "CineMan Productions Ltd" who has produced game changer gujarati films like 'Kevi Rite Jaish' & 'Bey Yaar' from 2010 to 2016

I have also been an Ad Film Maker & has directed more than 30 Television Commercials uptil now.

My second film was "Made in China" starring Rajkumar Rao, Boman Irani, Mouni Roy, Sumeet Vyas & Manoj Joshi. Film is being produced by Maddock Films was released on 25th Oct 2019.



WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

I think I have been an engineering graduate turn into an entrepreneur/ film maker. I knew what I have chosen as a profession is going to be a lot turbulent but I realised when you enjoy your work, work becomes your life & when you stop waiting for weekends that means you love your work. Infact I dint find my work as work & its fun because I love what I do. Ofcourse the job is too stressful & hardworking but at the end of the day when the audience sees your product on a big screen everything pays off. As we say, we live for that Friday morning to get the film released.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

Apart from a film director, I also co-write my own scripts. And process of writing films is quite exhausting but very gratifying too. Its quite a lonly process to sit on a laptop & get your scenes right when you see the world is moving so fast around you. But the process of writing my own films, my work, my characters also helps to me to create an universe better & eventually helps me to direct the film better. But its the most challenging & satisfying part.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I am interested in many aspects of life apart from just making flms. I am a avid dog lover & I have recently started exploring cooking where I love to call my closed one at home to cook food for them.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

At the end of the day whatever you pretend or wish to be it's the skill, hardwork & passion which matters the most in terms of longevity where survival becomes the biggest aspect to swim through turbulent times especially.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I think it may find little stupid but observing people is something I love to do because storytelling is dealing with human behavior & it also helps to direct actors especially.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

I think films, events & few other industries were probably affected much more than others. It took us a lot more time & we are still juggling to come out of it. I think personally people have become more emphatic, more sensitive & they have understood the value of good life.



**FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD?
WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?**

I think first & foremost career in commercial art form doesn't really require a degree or an educational qualification. And I also feel especially in our country anything non-academic will have more hustle & pressure, as the penetration rate is very low. So there are huge number of people many of them are not self-aware & wanting to get into this industry with an incorrect, rosy picture about the industry.

The biggest challenge I was facing was the one which everybody faces. How do I get a chance to make my first feature film. Ofcourse I took a different route eventually to reach where I wanted.

**MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR
READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

Rehearsal, practice, reading, learning, adopting all these are very under-rated qualities of people who wish to get into films. I think you need to work on your skill everyday, educate yourself, motivate yourself before getting into the industry & foremost not playing a victim card. No one is responsible for your career option except yourself.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

I have been associated with 2 Gujarati films, ran a production house for 6 hours & directed 2 feature films. I want to back & produce content now, soon start my own boutique production house & ofcourse there are plans of some really ambitious films. Let's see where destiny takes me to




PUSHKARAJ GAIKAR

RESTAURATEUR

MODAKAM

Owens and runs Modakam - a popular restaurant in Mumbai that serves specialty dishes

 @modakam



*Pushkaraj has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I am a restaurateur by profession and I love everything that revolves around food. I fill myself with different kinds of knowledge I could get by being part of different social groups and as well as travel.

Based on the story written by Rashmi Bansal in her book "Connect the dots", I decided to find my own dots. I found my first dot in my Masters in Management degree which gave me an opportunity to work in the Corporate World where I was working in Senior Profiles in Marketing. I found my second dot when I realized my purpose lies in entrepreneurship. During this period I was constantly brainstorming ideas and collating thoughts which I gathered from day to day interactions.

The third dot was not easy to find, it took me a decade of experience after working in corporate world to discover 'an Idea'.

Having an idea is just the start, it requires tremendous effort, planning, execution and dedication to action out the idea. Not many people make it till the execution because the mind which helps you to generate one, the same mind makes you fear it! The fear of losing!

My idea was to build my own restaurant company.

It's been 4 years now in business and the passion has been growing on me just like a bougainvillea. I keep watering it with the best I can. ..



..The biggest strength I have today is my people who work with me, my family and my friends. Restaurants simply can't operate with the right people. We have given employment to more than 100 families and I feel very proud about it.

Your employees, your internal and external customers who help you drive your business daily are the fuel to drive your business. You need to keep fuelling them all to move forward. You also need to be self motivated and self driven as an entrepreneur and hence you need to fuel your own self.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

The zeal of progressing in what I do and my daily targets to accomplish my goals make me wake up every morning. This industry is very challenging, there are new issues and tasks everyday which need to be handled and resolved then and there. If you don't wake up on time, you will lose significant opportunities in business and chances of fixing issues in time.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

This is a people dependent business. You can't do it alone. You have to build the right team. Sometimes it is very difficult and challenging to get the right people. Restaurant business is like making a movie but in a day. One dish gets prepared by 8 people in the process. One cuts the vegetable, one makes the curry, one makes the main dish, one garnishes it before getting served, one serves it and one washes the plates and it goes on. When all these processes are in place everyday I feel that the day is very fulfilling.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

Well as a kid I have always been very shy and an introvert. I had to develop the confidence with time to do anything in public and break the barrier. Well not many people know that I am a good dancer now. I love dancing on Bollywood songs. My close friends start cheering me up whenever my favourite songs are played in parties.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

You need to be good with people with whom you work with. You have to be a people person especially when you work with a big workforce, people look up to you. You need to set examples and have to lead from behind giving motivational push and encouragement for better productivity. In the end what matters is that if your employees are happy only then you are happy.



WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I am extremely passionate about travelling, meeting new people and making new friends. As a family we never travelled much because my father used to be always busy with his work commitments. After growing up when I started earning, I decided that I will travel the world which I ensure in the form of holiday travel with my family.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

We believe that our industry has been affected the most. We have been trying to stay afloat but the impact on business is very high resulting us to take one of the most difficult decisions. Pre-pandemic life was so much better, everyone was happy, restaurants were full and our customers could visit their favourite food joints. I hope the pandemic dark cloud is blown away soon and life comes back to normal.

**FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD?
WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?**

Well If you don't see problems as problems they become your challenges. Challenges are a better way to look at problems. My work has taught me to work in all directions so I accept whatever comes my way and I try to solve it with a positivity. My work has new challenges everyday, they could be at operations, marketing or in the administration. I believe in keeping my challenges close to me watching them from above with a bird's eye.

Currently this pandemic is the biggest challenge I have faced so far and I hope we come out of it at the earliest.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

From my experience, I believe that karma is the biggest teacher. One should always have a do good, feel good attitude. If you want to reach somewhere you have to start today, start right now! If you have an idea, action it ! If you start respecting what others are doing, you will also be appreciated !!

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

I want to start a travel & food show with my friends where I would like to invite a different set of people to cook great food with me by sharing each others' stories and about people whom we have met in different paths and journeys of life. I have been wanting to do this for a long time and it is added to my bucket list of to do things. My work will definitely support me to do what I wish !



PREANKA ROY

CREATIVE DIRECTOR - ADVERTISING

Ideation, brand building, copywriting and strategy building, also is a photographer since 2 decades and has been a musician professionally

 @leela.writes



*Preanka has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I've trained in Latin Percussion and drumming for over a decade and have performed as a live musician at every prominent venue in the city. Besides I've had a roller coaster of a career! Worked odd jobs to pay bills soon after college, in an attempt to continue to play music. Live gigs happened but I also worked as a Radio Jockey, TV presenter, freelance photographer, music journalist, voice over artist, model, theatre actor, school teacher and music instructor. I finally landed as a copywriter in an advertising agency and learned the craft over the years. I presently serve as the Creative Head at the same agency.

I grew up in Kolkata (West Bengal) in a household where nothing was Bengali. My father was born and raised in a different country. While I was still a child he introduced me to Rock n Roll and Buddhism at once. My mother pushed me to sing and learn music at an early age, soon after she recognised my pull for rhythm. She struggled hard to have me train in a classical dance form, in traditional music and then western music and finally drums. I owe everything to her.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

Another chance to better myself. Each day is an opportunity to offer something never-seen-before to the world. I'm driven to play music till my last breath. My daily schedule involves yoga and playing an instrument (drums or otherwise).



WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

About the music industry in India? I love the fact that we have more women musicians pouring in. The numbers are rising steadily and that's heartwarming. But there's plenty of room for improvement. I've been blessed with supportive band mates and they didn't let me feel I was working in a male-dominated industry. But not every girl maybe as lucky. I wish more boys/men grow an attitude of acceptance and appreciation. A musician is a musician, regardless of the gender. Let's look at the music, not at the player.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

That I'm a yogi.

I am often asked if sex-drugs-n-Rock-n-roll is my way of life, given that I'm a drummer in a band. But honestly I've never understood how a musician can be any less disciplined than an athlete or a yogi. We practice as much, if not more. So yes, even after 20 years of Rock n Roll, I haven't had the need to fit in or smoke weed or consume alcohol, to keep up a reputation.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Grit. To stand your ground. Speaking strictly for myself, I've learned the need to stay disciplined and focused. Money or no money, Record labels or no, a normal family life or no...whatever it takes, you should be able to get past all that without taking your eyes off the target. Lock it and live it till your last. Don't let anyone convince you otherwise.. never a Plan B. By default Plan A will succeed.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Making Mandalas and Zentangling. I have been training in psychology and therapy. I hope to offer Sound Therapy to children with special needs and the aged. Drumming and brain development are deeply interrelated.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Freelance musicians have suffered greatly. Venues in my city had shut down. Thanks to online concerts the scene is picking up but it'll take a while for sure.



**FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD?
WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?**

The biggest challenge has been to convince people to look at me neutrally. A girl on the drums is more than just sex appeal. She isn't getting popular just because she's the odd one out. That she can have talent and be better than tonnes of boys, is a fair possibility. I've had to fight my way up. To convince people to let me do my thing. Sly Club managers, prejudiced male colleagues to chauvinists in the audience...it's been fun proving them wrong.

**MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR
READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

I would want to earnestly request you, the reader, to encourage your sister, niece, daughter, friend, fiancé or any woman you know. Let them do what they do. Be by them, walk next to them but know they are quite capable of walking their own path.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

I dream of starting a school or institute that offers sound therapy and healing methods to children with special needs as well as the aged. My plan is to offer services online initially, and carry it over to the offline space eventually.



PRERNA MAKHARIA

ENTREPRENEUR & JEWELLERY INFLUENCER
FOUNDER, PET JEWELLERY

India's first jewellery influencer with 18 yrs experience in the gems & jewellery industry and is founder of India's first bespoke jewellery brand for pets

Times of India has covered Pet Jewellery in 6 cities in India

Has a 4 episode solo jewellery styling series with Tata Sky TV

Hosted a book signing for the iconic jewellery brand Cartier with the descendant of the Cartier family

 @styleprer



*Purnaa has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

During my university days, I wanted to pursue character animation. The opportunities back in 2000 were limited and I did not want to move to the US to pursue it. Being a marwari, I had grown up seeing some of the best jewellery and was always fascinated with it. Having an inclination towards jewellery and art, this was something that would come naturally to me.

In 2002 & 2003 I pursued formal training in jewellery designing, manufacturing, gemology and diamond grading from GIA, GII and SNTD. Started my career with jewellery designing and manufacturing under my own brand Purnaa Makharia until 2008. Post this I joined Tara Jewellers where I headed jewellery product development and merchandising for a retail chain of 50 stores.

During this I curated a collection under my own name for Tara Jewellers and we did trunk shows across 10 cities back to back with extensive media coverage.

I also showcased my jewellery at the India International Jewellery Week (IIJW). In 2013, during the 10th anniversary issue of Swarovski's Gem Vision book, my jewellery was selected among top 3 from India on a global platform.

While designing and manufacturing jewellery, the world of styling jewellery always fascinated me and how the jewellery looked on wearing was equally important. That's when I thought of taking this online and extending my knowledge to the world.



Whenever I would search for jewellery influencers in India, none would show up apart from international ones. This gave me the opportunity and the first mover advantage to become India's first jewellery influencer. The initial 2 years was a struggle as the jewellery industry had no idea what influencing was all about. They would ask questions like "will this come in a magazine, newspaper etc" they had no idea of the potential an online reach will give them.

I have worked very hard to carve this niche of my own. In this journey I have worked with the best of brands like Cartier, Rolex, De Beers, Chanel etc. India's largest OTT platform Tata Sky, Radio Mirchi etc. Won many awards and accolades for my work.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

The zest to achieve my goals. I enjoy what I do and until I have a crazy hectic day, it doesn't give me satisfaction. It's not about how many hours I put into work but about assessing how much I achieved at the end of each day.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

When I started my career in jewellery designing and manufacturing, there were challenges to begin a startup, my mother taught me to never give up and constantly boosted my moral.

Later when i joint a corporate, it had its own set of challenges but every day was a learning and perhaps that's why I am where I am today.

When I started jewellery influencing, the indian jewellery industry wasn't ready for this concept, rather most of them did not even know what jewellery influencing is all about. It took me lots of patience and the urge to not give up, make a mark as an influencer. With all due respect, what I feel disheartened about is people in our country do not respect the work of home grown entrepreneurs or brands and constantly look up to international ones for their endeavours even though they have to at times pay more than double the amount.

What's satisfying is my patience and the urge to never give up. My mentor would always tell me - "Prernaa always be ahead of the game." and that's something that has been etched in my mind.

I don't shy away from taking risks and maybe that helps me with the first mover advantage in most of my projects. It's not always about the money, at the end of the day I should feel happy and enjoy what I am doing. Success doesn't enamour me and failure doesn't let me down. I am like that turtle from the hare and turtle story who likes to try until I succeed.



WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

There is a saying in hindi "haathi ke daath khane ke aur dikhane ke aur hote hai" which means that my profile may be very glamorous due to what it looks like on the screen but what one doesn't know is that effort and hard work to put that together.

Eg. All the glamorous jewellery looks you see on my profile, there are times I wake up at 3 or 4am to get ready for a shoot at 6am to which the audience only sees the end result of that shoot.

As outgoing and modern my work profile demands me to be, I am a very private person when it comes to my personal and family life. Eg. I did not even have an instagram account till I turned into an influencer.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Being patient is very important. Don't be let down by failures, they help you learn.

There will be good days and bad days. On a bad day, if you are not upto working, it's absolutely ok. Take that break but make sure that the next day you get kicking.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

There is no such thing that I do not enjoy.

Talking about things that I am passionate about is traveling, adventure sports, watching sports and playing it. These give me a high.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

When the lockdown was announced, the gems and jewellery industry in India was affected big time. Gold and Silver were rocketing at their all time high. Luxury sector was affected in a big way.

However I must say that this also gave the opportunity to the industry to become digitally savvy. People who had never done digital and online meetings were operating businesses online, showcasing and selling jewellery through video calls.

Things began to change around August when consumers slowly started moving out and seeking appointments with jewellers. The wedding season of October to December has been very busy with bridal jewellery orders flocking. It gave the jewellers a relief as they made great sales which they weren't hoping.



However when it comes to online marketing, things have changed for good during the lockdown as jewellery shows were being held online virtually and many brands have re-worked on their social media and digital spends.

**FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD?
WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?**

When I started jewellery influencing the concept of jewellery influencing was alien and I struggled in the initial 2 years to make people understand its concept, while luxury and lifestyle influencing was flourishing.

**MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR
READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

Don't shy away from taking risks
Be patient, be experimental
Keep innovating

The path I chose has been a self made one without any family background in the gems and jewellery industry, however I was determined and passionate to carve a niche for myself. I am proud to represent India on a global platform being the first jewellery influencer from our country.

Jewellery always holds an emotional value, trends may come and go but memories and sentiments remain forever.

Be a trendsetter, not a follower!

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

All I can say is there is lots coming up, so stay tuned on my Instagram and Facebook to know more!



RABIAH BHATIA

FOUNDER, DIRECTOR, CEO
AT ED WEBSTUDIO CHANNEL

She is a Spoken English Trainer Certified with British Council, Experienced Senior Brand & Communications Professional, Mentor, HR Professional & Recruiter with a demonstrated history of working in the various domains and reputed schools

Awardee of Rex Karmaveer Fellowship Global & Rex Karmaveer Bronze Awards

Teacher Trainer Award by Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam International Educator's Honor award 2020

Awardee of GURUPNISHAD SAMMAN by Charles Walter's Society for Innovation & Research

Has been declared as International Ambassador of Peace by WorldLiteraryForum for Peace and Human Rights

 @rabiah.bhatia.31



*Rabiah has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

A Spoken English Trainer Certified with British Council, Experienced Senior Brand & Communications Professional, Mentor, HR Professional & Recruiter with a demonstrated history of working in the various domains and reputed schools such as Pathways Group of Schools, Sahaj International, Ramagya Group, National Victor Public School, and Wonderland School. Having spent 18 years as a working professional, I have had an enriching experience of working on and understanding varied industries & would like to proceed further on this path and work on more projects that will give me a chance to employ this knowledge to achieve good results and also give me an opportunity to explore new avenues. Expertise in Operations Management, Brand Management & Communication Expert, Collateral Management (Content), Training, Customer Service & HR Operations, policies & procedures and Performance management.

I won't say that I am talented however, I am equipped with few things which I feel I should use for the sake of the improvement of society as well as to make each person understand that their happiness lies in their own hands.

At the back of our minds there was a lingering thought on how the "stay @ home" could be utilized, so I thought of doing something creative to motivate & encourage others, be it Teachers, Students, Educators, Young Professionals and so on and help them to succeed during the crisis.



WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

My passion is to create a peaceful society, spread happiness. My passion is to opening children's eyes to the wonder of the world around them and to their role as guardians of their environment. This Pandemic has brought in a lot of unprecedented anxiety among most of us... but it has also created unstoppable warriors amongst us.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

As a leader, I believe in fostering every child, every human being in a free and unconstrained atmosphere. It is important to make sure that they feel relaxed and don't overdo it. We want to cultivate them to be self-motivated and independent. Let us try not to raise them into perfect bonsai trees, but rather strong towering that grow freely in nature, deeply rooted in the earth and reaching for the sky.



SARAH TANTRAY

CO-FOUNDER, WILD WEST INNOVATIONS

Her eco-tech company has so far installed 300 ReBot's (reverse vending machines) in India, Employed People, Promoted the Concept of Circular Economy, Created Awareness around Recycling, Saved Energy, Educated School/College Children about Recycling

Won the Asif Bhamla's Green Warrior Award

 @sarahtantray



Sarah has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I am Sarah Tantray, Co-Founder of Wild West Innovations, a start-up based out of Mumbai. I was born in Kashmir and moved to Mumbai for my education in 2006, the same year my Father was shot dead. At that time I was only 14 years old, so after attending my Father's funeral within 10 days I was back to Mumbai to give my exams.

It was only possible for me to do that because of my sister's courage and love, she took up all the responsibilities and helped me continue my education here. I graduated in BMM (Bachelor's in Mass Media) from Sophia College and post that started working immediately.

After, a year I decided to get back to education and started my Master's in Film Studies from Mumbai University. While studying, I was working part time and joined another organization related to CSR, it was during this time that I along with my Partner came up with this Idea. So, in 2016 we Founded 'Wild West Innovations' and since then have installed around 250 'ReBots' across the Country.



WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO WORK?

We live in a world where we have finite natural resources and an ever-growing population. To meet growing demands of humans, we need to think out of box and come up with solutions which don't put further pressure on our depleting resources. As an organization, we are a big part of Circular-Economy, so being able to re-use and recycle waste into new products is something which motivates me. Knowing that our work is making a difference is something that keeps me going. At some point, the future generations will be grateful to start-ups like ours who are working in Eco field.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

Our Industry is an unorganised sector and people treat it as a non-essential service. So, working on a project like ours is very challenging. Most people don't understand the concept and even the Governments are not doing enough to promote projects related to Recycling compared to other countries.

At the same time, what I find most satisfying is when children interact with us and there is so much enthusiasm and knowledge that they possess about our Industry. So, working with these children is an absolute bliss.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

The most interesting thing about me that you probably wouldn't get to know from my profile is that I love spontaneity in everyday life. I like to make sudden plans and go with the flow. I don't believe much in planning and believe life is to be lived on a bit of faith rather than our understanding. If I wasn't in Bombay then I would be skiing in the mountains probably.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

One needs to be extremely patient and believe in what they are doing. You need enough conviction and perseverance. Also, staying updated about the latest technology related to our field is important.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I am a movie buff, I absolutely love movies, travel and fitness. Different cultures and languages fascinate me.



HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Pre-pandemic lot of things were moving in the right direction, for example the Government came up with EPR (Extended Producer's Responsibility) which would really give a boost to our Industry. Unfortunately, post-pandemic everything has slowed down and we have start from the scratch. Things are lot of more difficult now.

**FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD?
WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?**

The biggest challenge so far is that our Industry is an unorganised sector and there is not enough awareness among people. They don't realise that this is our future, what we call waste today is going to be our resources in the future.

Not being taken seriously is the biggest challenge that I have faced working in this field.

**MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR
READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

I would say that our future depends on Recycling, if you have an idea or are passionate about environment you should follow it. There is going to be lot of demand in future for Ecopreneurs.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

We are currently working on moving to other types of plastic waste, so we want to be known for providing 'One Stop Recycling Solution's' out there. So, far we have been only known in the PET field. Personally, I would like to work with International Organizations and expand our service globally.



SHERRY MEHTA

CHEF

CCO AT KANAK BY SHERRY

Pioneer to showcase Himachali / United Punjab cuisine in the country through pop-ups

1 runner up at grilled tv show on fox life

Known as the pop-up queen of the county

Miss Shimla 2005 with Miss beautiful skin and Miss photogenic

📷 @agirlfromthehills



Sherry has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

Chef Sherry is one of the most sought after home-chefs in India. Known for her Undivided Punjab and Himachali food festivals, she has built a rock solid reputation among foodies and critics alike. Authenticity, passion and perfection are the key ingredients in her success story. Apart from being a revered home-chef she has donned many hats in her 8 year long career such as a caterer, a food expert, 1st runner up on Fox Life India's food reality show - Grilled and has even adorned the Miss Shimla crown in 2005. In the beginning of 2020, she attained biggest milestone in her career when she curated a Celebratory Republic Day Dinner for 1200 dignitaries from the Indian High Commission in Dhaka. Now, she is ready to cook up a storm in her new venture Kanak by Sherry launched on 5th of March delivering all across Mumbai.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO WORK?

Food, everything revolving around food.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

The smile on my diners face is the most satisfying thing I receive in this career.

The challenges of a food entrepreneur as a woman is predominantly a part of our day to day life.



WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

The heritage and the depth of of my culture, the diversity of my cuisine which I am trying to out on the platter.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Focus on the right goals and be clear about your food. I am the person I need to be.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

My OCD for cleanliness

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

This time has definitely been quite challenging. Volumes have gone down. Challenges with profitability, procurement of the right material, Hiring staff as people are still scared to go out and work. But I'm sure we still overcome with the present situation.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

As a chef, keeping everything in order does get challenging. Well where we try to bring the best on the table for our diners I believe the only problems which we face are getting good staff and sustainable delivery models.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

The woods are lovely, dark and deep and have some promises to keep.
Miles to go before I sleep
Miles to go before I sleep

I strongly believe in this and will just say that take baby steps to your goals, don't rush to be in the crowd, but stand alone and make your mark.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

Let Himachali and Undivided Cuisine make their identity in the country and beyond.



SHIVANI MAYEKAR

AESTHETIC & COSMETIC DENTIST
DR.MAYEKARS DENTAL CLINIC

She is a trusted dentist and has had many happy patients from all walks of life in her 12 years of journey



*Shivani has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I am a practising Aesthetic & Cosmetic Dentist for the last 12 years at Dr.Mayekars Dental Clinic. I graduated in year 2008 from D.Y. Patil College, then did a PG course in Aesthetic Cosmetic Dentistry from Buffalo University New York.

Working with Dr.Sandesh Mayekar has moulded & shaped me as a passionate, hardworking doctor who is in sync with the latest technology and needs of the Dental Field as well as treating your patient to be Next to God.

I have been the Dentist for the T.V show Band Baaja Bride by Sabyasachi and groomed and shaped Smiles for many Brides and Grooms on the show.

Have done paper presentations and given various lectures in the Dental Community at national and international fronts.

Working last 12years now has allowed me to treat patients from various social status and taught me a new lesson each time.



Be it Mr Godrej or Mr Kumarmangalam Birla or Shah Rukh Khan, Hrithik Roshan, Tiger Shroff, Saif Ali Khan or Kareena, Sushmita Sen to our CM Mr. Uddhav Thackrey Raj Thackrey Mr. Phadnavis to Hardik Pandya Yusuf Pathan to a regular middle class patient to a deaf dumb child or a househelp family, have treated them all with the same discipline and dedication.

And look forward to giving each and every patient of mine a beautiful smile and healthy oral hygiene in the future as well.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

The fact that I can make each and every patient of mine smile after every treatment and relieve them of any pain or discomfort is the most rewarding feeling and motivation that makes me want to get up and get to work with more vigour each new morning.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

The most challenging part is convincing today's Google patients who have their notions set, about the work that needs to be done in his or her mouth and reframing their mindset that's already set due to the easy access to all queries online.

And the satisfying part too is the same when I can convince the same Google patient to do the correct conservative treatment he or she needs and also convince the financial part behind it as well.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

Well you would be glad to know I am a National Badminton Champion in Singles as well as Doubles U13/ U19 age group. Have played with Jwala Gutta, Aparna Popat, Saina Nehwal in my Schooldays. Have been playing since I was 7yrs old till now. Have been a State Level, District level Winner as well as represented my School(IE S) College(Ruparel) and D.Y. Patil University all years and have been the Champion numerous times.

Even in Dental college have been the winner all years. So yes I have this Sports history to me.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

To succeed in your career or your everyday life I feel u just need to be a "Genuine" & "Happy" person so u can make others happy as well as urself.

Being honest happy dedicated genuine passionate in what u do always gives the bestest positive happy results in daily life be it Smallest to Biggest achievement, is my mantra.



WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

As I said I am a complete Athletic and Badminton passionate a Doctor. Also since last 1 year I have been a keen Nature Photography enthusiast, I click Birds and another unique aspect of photography that's MacroPhotography where I click Insects and all small macro objects which includes Teeth as well.

Recently I was awarded the 1st Prize for my MacroPhotography Picture of a Jumping Spider by the "Government Dental College" on occasion of the 'World Photography Day' attaching few of my photographs clicked.

Also I am a big time Foodie. I write food blogs for Zomato and love to try new places for unique food experiences.

Also lastly a Passionate Bollywood lover to the Core.. Movies Music Dance is Life.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

The entire World is affected by the pandemic so yes even Dental field was as first and foremost we as dentists needed to jot down our own safety protocols of our practise.

Because we were the 1st in line of contact with the patient and the mouth of the patient and the fluids and splatter.

So few months went in doing that and also people in general were scared to venture out in general, so a dentist definitely wasn't on their radar unless anyone had immense pain or dental emergency.

But few months down as our safety protocols were set we were back in the work mode and since practise has been smooth without any mishap and the patient flow has never been better.. Touchwood.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

The biggest challenge we face is our "Own Safety" in our profession due to the ongoing Pandemic. We being in the immediate line of contact with the mouth and fluids we have to take utter care as we work and whom we work on.

A thorough patient history has to be taken with O2 level and Body temperature checks every time we see a new case... so overall the patient chairtime has increased but overall we have got in the groove now.



MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Definitely I would tell everyone to be Happy Positive Passionate Determined Focused Hardworking and Live Life to the Fullest and that, This Too Shall Pass.

We have endured the worst phase ever imagined in our Lifetime as Millennials. And we have beat the Covid 19 and emerged winners so we have definitely come a long way and from here there is only an Upward way to go.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

Our charity Dental Check ups for BMC Schools in collaboration with Aditya Thackrey where v have our one of a kind - in house Dental Van that visits the schools all over to do the checkup of under priviledged kids.

Also we conduct free Rotary Dental Treatments for all. We have setup the one of a kind Dental Implant Specialty Clinic where under one roof we can place multiple company implants as per the patients budget and not just one particular system.. It was recently inaugurated by Mrs. Rajashri Birla.

And most important - upgrading ourselves with the latest World Class technology material and techniques in Dentistry to treat our patients better and better is and always our past present and future goal.



SONAL BOTHRA

FOOD BLOGGER & TRAVEL INFLUENCER
FOODIEKLIX

A connoisseur food reviewer across India & abroad

📷 @foodieklix



*Sonal has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

A food lover and a critic is what I would call myself, but to know that this was my soul n sole desire, it took me long. From an avid banker to someone who spent a decade in men's fashion, looking and relating fashion to food and all that existed to food, Finally taking up food blogging as my passionate profession because that's where I always belonged.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

The ever evolving me and my contemporaries looking up to my work motivates me. The beauty about food and travel blogging is one learns and creates something better each day, As this is a passionate profession and when I receive accolades from people of my industry of it quadruples my desires to get better.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

Everything about my work is beautiful and soul stirring, and yes, the trust that the food & hospitality industry bestows in me for my knowledge, content and experience is extremely gratifying. To choose the most outstanding ones from all my lovely associations is most challenging.



WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

One Interesting thing anyone would miss from my profile to know is that am avidly involved in men's fashion industry for over a decade.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Continuous learning & Perseverance is the Key to succeed.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Travel, travel and more travel.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

The impact on most sought industry is unexplainable but the undying need for the same has helped in reviving the food and hotel industry to a certain extent.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

Creating great content is a challenge & still you find quantity ruling over quality is a shortcoming.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

The age old adage "Nothings Impossible" if there is passion and urge to excel, is all that's needed for excellence in any industry.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

Future plans are to create more video content across the globe focusing & supporting small business.



SONAL SONAWANI

PSYCHOLOGIST
CEDAR

She runs an organization called CEDAR, which specialises in depression, anxiety and relationship issues and suicide prevention

Awarded as Star Counselor by Academy for Counseling & Education by Ms. Salma Prabhu

have contributed to several media channels by giving inputs on important social matters that have brought about a change in the mind set of people. Thereby I have been recognised by a state newspaper by dedicating an entire page interview given by me.

Spoken on large platforms to spread awareness about mental health including, national seminars, First cry parenting, Uddeshya Mumbai, etc.

Was appointed as mental health ambassador by ICICI Prudential Life and is currently working alongside Aawaz.com, one of the largest podcast in India, by creating and hosting episodes on suicide prevention

Instagram icon @sonalsonawani



*Sonal has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

**WINNERS
2021**

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I have been brought up in a household, where books are your best friends. My father, being a renowned author, historian and social activist along with being an entrepreneur instilled values of living a balanced life, filled with knowledge, power, literature as well as the ability to materialise any hobby. My mother, an extremely loving and caring person has always taught us the value of unconditional love and empathy. She is a counselor without learning counselling skills. She has always listened to me patiently and has been a rock solid support throughout. I was in 10th standard when I was supposed to make a career decision. All my friends back then were opting for engineering or medicine or architecture. My school had incorporated career counselling in our last year there, and my aptitude test results were great. I was told basically that I could do anything I wanted. I was always a bright student, and a favourite of many teachers. They all urged me to study engineering followed by an MBA, a typical route. It suited me well as well, because my father owned a software company back then, and I was destined to run it. I was certain that I would study computers and then go for a degree in management. My father, on the other hand, was against me taking the generic route. He introduced me to a whole new world of economics, psychology, philosophy, marine life, astronomy, etc by bringing home a bulk of books on each subject. He would always tell me that the world needs people in unexplored areas. I started reading these books and was always fascinated by these arenas. What really shaped my career decision was a very unfortunate incident. My maternal uncle, who I was closest to amongst all relatives, died by suicide a few months before my board exams.



I couldn't believe what had happened. He was always so jovial and full of life. When I heard that he was seeking treatment for depression and was heavily medicated towards the end, I was heart broken. I could never imagine my uncle being in depression. This is what made me take a firm resolution. I wanted to study psychology to help people like my uncle. I was certain I did not want to become a psychiatrist in India. I couldn't keep thinking throughout my 10th that I wish he had someone he could speak to. Someone who could identify why he is going through what he is going through and could help him relieve his pain. I learnt a very important lesson that month. Each and every person around us, each and every smiling face, has faced suffering. You never know who might be suffering in the moment you are speaking with them. Who is thinking of ending their life while we are speaking with them. If I can just do my bit, and know a little bit more about human behaviour, I can help save a life. This is how I decided to study psychology and I began my career.

I completed my studies as one of the top in the university, from Fergusson College, Pune. Immediately I got to work after my Masters. I started off as a remedial educator & psychologist in Academy for Counselling & Education (ACE). I went through training simultaneously. I started working with children who had learning disabilities like dyslexia & dysgraphia, ADHD, Autism, slow learners. A lot of work with these children was to build their skill levels rather than help them with their studies. A child is unable to read because the neural processes required for reading are not as developed. So, our job was to help each and every child who came to us, develop these skill sets through play and fun. During this time, I was involved in a lot of research, and we were on the verge of developing a standardised model to help these kids across all our centres in Mumbai and Pune. The reason being, each and every remedial educator was working differently with each child, and developing IEPs (Individualised Education Plans) as per their own experience. This led to differing progress in multiple children. When we saw that this is the state everywhere else in schools as well, owing to the fact that Remedial education training in India is still in its nascent stages, and most remedial educators end up teaching school syllabus, we decided to take up this herculean challenge of trying to standardise the process. I was then designated as Head for Training, research & Development, when I was merely 25 years old. The work on this project had already started a year ago, and I was one of the people leading this project. Post my promotion, this project became my baby, and we successfully developed a software that can reach a diagnosis in 5 minutes along with an IEP designed for the child. The IEP would then keep changing based on the new model's monitoring process, and the remedial educator would be provided with all the necessary equipment as a part of the IEP. This made the job of each educator so easy, and therefore, the educator could focus more on the emotional development of each child, as the IEP and identification was taken care of. Today, thousands of children are benefitting from this model and the reason I speak so proudly about this, is because for the first time, an Indian organisation had linked psychology with technology and created something that would change thousands of lives. This was one of my biggest achievements and this project took 3 years of my life's dedication.

At ACE, I designed several training programs, and trained thousands of individuals in remedial education, counselling, psychometric testing, psychotherapy. I personally would do all of this and conduct at least 3-4 sessions with my clients each day. I used to literally be in office for 14-15 hours each day! My schedule hasn't changed much since!



In 2016, I was going through a rough time personally. I did not think that having depression in my genes, could also lead me towards the same path. Being a psychologist doesn't stop you from being human. And this was the time, when I attempted suicide twice. My work started getting affected, but luckily the founders at ACE were highly empathetic. They helped me in every way possible. It took me almost 6 months to get back to normalcy, but a part of me never became the way it was before. This is the time, everything shifted for me. I realised that my life calling was not where I already was. I wanted to dedicate my resources to suicide prevention. Having been there, I knew exactly how it feels. This is when I quit ACE, and I started my own organisation called CEDAR in August 2017. CEDAR stands for Center for Depression Anxiety Relationships—most common causes of suicide. CEDAR was launched with literally INR 400/- in my bank account, and it has reached a stage today, where we are completely self sufficient and helping even more people than before. The struggle in starting a new organisation in a different city, with no money and little help, is a story for another time.

Today we have 10 counsellors and many more as volunteers who are dedicated towards the same goal. We as an organisation do a lot of pro bono work to help people in difficult times. I never left remedial education. Before the lockdown, I would go to Kothrud and do remedial teaching for children who cannot afford remedial services of well known private institutions, with the help of a Doctor, who lent me their clinic premises to do this work. Our organisation, post lockdown provided free counselling services to people all across the country to deal with COVID related anxiety and through this program, we helped thousands of people who could not otherwise afford mental health services.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

There are many things about my work that motivate me. I conduct almost 7-8 sessions every single day. It is slightly more than a psychologist is prescribed to work. However, I work with some really critical cases of depression and couples who are on the verge of separation. I work with a lot of families who have been struggling with disputes, conflicts and depression. Each and every session, for me, is goal oriented. The thought of each client's progress in the last session and to work on an aspect of his/her personality or thought process or emotional journey, and to see it working for them is what takes me through the day. When I see something shifting in my client's consciousness, and they also see the subtle changes that are being brought about in their lives, is my primary motivator.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

What I find most satisfying in my work is the changes that I help bring about in people's perspectives. When the same person, who is struggling with anxious thoughts and suicidal thoughts, learns to help themselves, and becomes empowered to deal with their emotions and life circumstances, and when they reach a point where they do not need my help as frequently, I find it satisfying. The most challenging part, however, is the emotional burnout that it leads to. If I do not work on myself simultaneously, or meditate often, it can make the line between empathy and sympathy blurry, often leading to personal frustration. No matter the experience, the human element in me, overpowers the psychologist in me, sometimes.



These are the times, when, to keep going on becomes slightly tough and I have to keep looking at motivators constantly. As this is work, where the results are not as tangible as you may want to see, you can often get demotivated and burnt out.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I am a trained classical singer and an artist as well. This is something I have never mentioned in my profile. However, I go to my music classes regularly, and I practice the part taught to me during the week, with as much dedication. I paint once every 3 months, whether it is on the canvas or on the wall!! Along with this, I am fascinated with mythology and history. I read a lot of material related to these subjects and I find a lot of life lessons from both. There is just so much to learn. I am also a basketball player and enjoy working on my fitness. Sports is an amazing way to combine the body and the mind. It helps me stay connected and united with myself.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

To succeed in my career path, the most important thing is EMPATHY. It is often a part of personality rather than a skill set, I have realised over the years. Other than empathy, excellent listening skills, analytical skills and articulation is extremely important. Analytical skills are very important, because as you are listening, you are also observing, and constantly questioning "why did he/she say this or use these particular words or where is this emotion coming from?". There are several models of personality and therapy that are not generic. You need to be highly aware and pick and choose a combination which can work best for each and every client. The ability to switch seamlessly from one client to the next is extremely important or you may carry the analysis of the previous session into the next one. Articulation and usage of the right words and language is again very important. You cannot be the reason of another trigger in your client due to wrong words. You are a good psychologist when you understand that a single word from your mouth can either relieve a person or trigger them.

You need to be a person who is kind yet assertive; calm yet strong; patient yet goal oriented; having good self esteem yet aware of ones flaws; somebody who keeps working on themselves yet in acceptance of their own self. Working in this field requires a lot of dedication. You need to know exactly why you are doing what you are doing. You cannot take the troubles of your clients to bed with you. You need to know when to let go and disconnect cords with people. I have seen many counsellors leaving their jobs or practice because of these reasons. It is not anyone's fault. However, being a psychologist means that you will need to have a lot of clarity in your purpose, otherwise it can become easily demotivating.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I believe all passions are irrational. However, personally, I am passionate about writing horror stories and watching horror films!



I know this is so completely out of character and a lot of people around me do not believe me when I tell them this, because they always expect a psychologist to be very positive!! However, I have no rationale for this and no words can explain this particular hobby. All my short stories are horror or thriller genre, and there must not be a single horror or thriller or supernatural film or series that I must not have watched.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

For obvious reasons, the mental health industry has picked up quite well post pandemic. The pandemic triggered a lot of fears and anxieties in people. Social isolation and lack of freedom and control due to the lockdown led a lot of people to seek mental health services without attending to the stigma of it all. Pre-pandemic, there were a couple of challenges owing to the stigma associated with visiting a psychologist or a psychiatrist. The only cases we would get pre pandemic were critical, severe, and the prognosis would be slightly difficult. However, post pandemic, a lot of work started at initial stages of anxiety and depression in people. As far as clinical cases are concerned, the pandemic situation did not help as much, because physical in person sessions ceased, and most people with severe OCD, psychosis, bipolar, etc. paused treatment, as they were not comfortable speaking from their homes. So, the pandemic had a mixed impact on this industry.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

Specifically in India, the biggest challenge is a shortage of trained and licensed staff. The rules are not very rigid or strict in India when it comes to mental health and has led to a lot of crisis due to wrong diagnosis or treatment. Therefore, the biggest challenge that I was facing as a founder of an organisation was training the workforce, and retaining them. Other than that, a personal challenge that I have faced in this industry is retaining clients, who need long term treatment. As mental health services are expensive, and most people cannot afford the same for a longer duration, it becomes very difficult to ensure completion of therapy. Making it affordable for the masses, means there is a huge personal loss that as a professional you need to endure. Simply because, unlike other professionals, the time investment and energy investment is much more. Even NGOs cannot afford to keep on too many counsellors, as each session duration in itself is 45-60 minutes. Also, if a client does not turn up for a session, it is not only a loss to the professional, but the time cannot even be given to someone else who needs it more. From a more global perspective, mental health services, aren't even taken seriously by most people. Therefore, efficacy of therapy becomes an issue. The biggest challenge I faced was when clients start feeling better and discontinue therapy, only to relapse further on, and then deeming therapy as ineffective, which in turn discourages others to take on therapy.



MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

I strongly believe in keeping my INTENTION in check. Whichever industry you belong to, when you know why you are doing what you are doing, you will have a greater impact in your own life along with others. Whether you are employed, self employed or an employer, being sure of your intention is the key to change.

Getting comfortable has never proven beneficial to anyone. Keep testing your limits. Whenever you get complacent, understand that you have now the space to explore more. There is so much more in life than we can even imagine. Change is going to be uncomfortable, however, it is a fact of life. It is alright if you do not have a singular purpose in life. You can always keep exploring multiple things, and have several avenues open for yourself. There is no one thing that needs to keep you going. You can wake up to a new morning every single day. A lot of times, we get disappointed in our failures, and overjoyed by our successes. However, a failure and success can exist only when we have singularity of purpose. When you treat a failure as an opportunity, you will realise that you have the choice of multiple possibilities, and several doors are open for you. What you do with that choice is completely up to you. There was a point in my life when I didn't feel like going on. It felt as though all doors are shut and there is no other option left. However, I am a living example of how things can turn around. Life is about learning. Keep on learning. When we are learning, the process of failure and success becomes combined and acceptable. There is lesser disappointment and even lesser expectations.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

I am planning on multiple projects currently. One of the key projects is a series of books on mental health, combining mythology with psychology and some fiction novels. Other than that, I plan on starting a suicide prevention helpline associated with technology on your fingertips, where you will be provided instant help when you need it. This is already work in progress, and we hope to launch soon. I am also planning on building an institute only for studies in psychology, where maximum branches of psychology can be taught by experienced people under one roof in India.

I have tried to answer all questions as much as I could. There is much more to express, however, do let me know if you wish me to clarify anything further on. Once again, I thank you for this opportunity!



SONALI RAMAIYA

PUBLIC RELATIONS

FOUNDER, ROARRR MEDIA

Narrated growth stories of more than 200 brands in top notch media publications and channel

Awarded for great PR strategy and execution by We Expedition, BNI Global

📷 @roarrmediapr



Somali has pledged to grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I am a Publicist with 11 years of experience and the Founder of Roarr Media & Public Relations, a Digital PR agency. I ventured into entrepreneurship at the age of 27.

Communication was always the most fascinating subject for me. I was that student who always got excited about essay writing and elocution and did well in content creation. Creativity has been innate and that led me to explore the world of PR. An MBA in Marketing, I have always been enticed by branding, marketing, advertising and communication.

My last job was at a Business Consulting firm called Acumen, where I worked as Head-Corporate Communication. In this role, I learnt about businesses and entrepreneurship as I wrote on behalf of the company and their spokesperson. The thought of skill with will provoked me to start my own company in the year 2014.

Since its inception, the company has been exploring new platforms for publicity and promotion of brands in the SME space and individuals with expertise in spheres like education, business, health, IT and more. During the pandemic, we identified the need for upgrading our skillsets and started a new wing- Roarr Digital. We aim to grow as a 360 degree marketing services agency in the near future.

Further, during the lockdown, in my quest to encourage Manufacturing in India, I started shudh-desi.com, where only Indian- made products can be listed.



WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO WORK?

With PR, I get the power to make heroes out of thinkers, achievers, entrepreneurs by being able to narrate their story through the Nation's most powerful asset- the media. PR has been an ever evolving profession and everyday there is new learning in store as we communicate, carve stories and get them featured. It's a constant process of learning as we work with clients in different industry segments and study their businesses, cultures, trends, etc.

With Digital platforms coming to the fore, the quest is to keep upgrading our knowledge and skills to match up to the ever changing nature of the digital world.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

The best part in PR is that there are immense possibilities to get a personality or brand to be famous with the right strategy, timing and skills used. PR is a communicator's job and involves extensive relationship building with the media and trade bodies, influencers. Human relations are invaluable and I feel that is how PR adds to my personal growth, with connections.

One challenge that we face in PR is that results are dependant highly on the discretion of the media and there can be no predictions or commitments made, in terms of the scope of deliverables.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I am a people's person, very passionate about social media. I love to socialise and make new connections in real life too.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

As mentioned above, communication skills- verbal and written are the most important in this field. You also need to be an extrovert and should have a knack to break ice with people. You need to be agile and know about the trends and be on the go to tap stories. One should be open to change and adaptability is very crucial now, as we witnessed an entire transition from offline to online during the pandemic.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I have a lot of affection towards animals and I wish to do significant work in giving the stray animals a better life. I also am actively involved in topics concerning environment protection and do my best to reduce pollution and harm to the habitat.



HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Pre- pandemic we witnessed a boom in the business as more and more startups and SMEs approached us for their marketing. There was increased awareness about the need and power of PR for business growth. However, the pandemic brought all PR activities to a standstill. We continued to work, owing to sectors like healthcare, e-commerce and logistics, which were doing well during the lockdown.

Currently, as we see a slowdown in the spread of the pandemic, we are witnessing a good demand for marketing and PR of brands who have not been publicising their work for the past year. With events opening up, there will be great demand for PR and Digital Marketing going further. Brands are investing in getting back their visibility quotient with innovative strategies and health and Pandemic oriented communication messages.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

Apart from dependence on media for the end result, i.e. coverage, there is no challenge as such. I rather feel privileged to be working in an industry which can be fully functional in the remote working mode and offers flexibility of time and travel, especially to women working in this field.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

The pandemic has reiterated the concept of 'Survival of the fittest'. Whoever could adapt themselves to the changing climate of the pandemic, could survive the tough times. So it is extremely important to keep upgrading ourselves, utilising past experiences and knowledge. It is crucial to be your own source of motivation and keep doing and hustling hard. The hustle defines our stories.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

In the near future, I envisage establishing our company- Roarr Media & Public Relations as a 360 degree marketing agency providing solutions from branding to promotion and strategy to execution and business development.

Our work is in progress to develop and grow shud-desi as a renowned brand in the e-commerce space, post its launch.

I also look forward to venture into education and contribute towards skill development of our population.



SONIA CHUGH

EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE
HAPPY MINDS INTERNATIONAL

More than 250 infants have grown up at HMI & more than 5000 daycare and preschoolers have enrolled in HMI in the tenure of 8 years

Received Times of India Education Icon award in 2021

Receiving Top rankings for all the branches of Happy Minds from Times of India, Education World, Education Today, Silicon India and many others from multiple years

📷 @roarrmediapr



*Sonia has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I worked in Wall Street with the likes of JP Morgan and Goldman Sachs and carrying a degree of Masters in Computer Application. While searching for good childcare options in India, nothing I came across to satisfy the need. I completed an Early Child Care certification from Texas, USA, and a Certificate from Early Education Leadership from Harvard University Graduate school of education.

I decided to start Happy Minds International with the aim of reaching the highest international standards of early child care and preschool, right here.

More than 4000 daycares and preschoolers have enrolled at HMI in the tenure of approx. 8 years.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO WORK?

Seeing kids growing beautifully, helping parents, and empowering the team is what motivates me the most.

I have always worked in a varied Team and always believed in the magnitude of achievement possible with teamwork.



WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

The most satisfying is when the new mother continues her work peacefully after maternity leave!

9 years ago when we started, the most challenging part was to explain the importance of quality child care and preschool in the early years itself. While awareness is gradually increasing, but it continues to be a challenge in tier II and tier III cities.

As a leader, it is imperative that you trust your team members and support them. It is also important to create synergy from their capabilities. Building the right team that is aligned with philosophy is a challenging task.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

If you know about my profile, I am an engineer by profession who worked equally 9 years in Technology in India as well as abroad. I am a workaholic. Being from diverse backgrounds, I could see this industry from 3rd person point of view. From the very first day, I could align and understand the parents' point of view hence I always focus on parents' feedback, which I call a 'Free Cookie'. I intervene and connect with parents frequently, as a constant learning experience as well as to empower them with enough knowledge.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

It takes commitment, perseverance, intelligence, and hard work.

You have to be agile, willing to change with the times, pay attention to your market, adapt when necessary, and be emotionally very strong.

I'm a natural problem solver. I find it rewarding to dig deep and uncover solutions to challenges. It's something I've always excelled at and something I enjoy. Much of product development is about finding innovative solutions to challenging issues, which is what drew me to this career path in the first place.

'What does not kill you, makes us strong' challenges bring experiences!

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I have a few interests like traveling and trekking outside the city during the weekend but lately, I've been spending quite a bit of time volunteering myself in community and social work.



HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

The global pandemic has made this an exceptionally difficult time for the child care industry. Most of the daycare and preschools declared closure and left the industry. With this, women globally at greater risk of losing their jobs as they are picking up more of the extra chores and childcare during the pandemic.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

The biggest challenge I have faced is recruiting the right talent. There is no clear path for getting into the childcare industry and training for the job. Thus mostly we have to hire from diverse backgrounds and train our employees from scratch.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Have faith in yourself and follow your passion, success will follow.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

We are among the best quality childcare providers in India and I plan to take HMI to be one of the largest daycare providers in India as well in the next 3 years.



SWEETY JOSHI

FINE ARTIST (PAINTER)

She works with papers and is inspired by the nourishing quality of fire. Fire, for her, is a transformative principle coffer of nature and details the method of her art by associating the act of burning to a transformative, progressive and positivist act

She uses burnt dots on paper to imply the different aspects of her personal travails through life. She takes inspiration from the eternally unfolding colours in a flame and injects it into her art by using different folding and rolling techniques of coloured papers that are burnt

Subsequently she kept on refining her own visual and conceptual vocabulary that emerged through her obsession with mixed media and environmental work

In these 5 years she has done lot of experiments in digital media as well. During Corona Period, she helped many migrant workers and since past many years she has been participating in many charity art events

 @sweetyjoshi1707



Sweety has pledged to grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I came from a very humble and cultured family. Throughout my childhood I got exposed to art in different forms. I developed a penchant for paintings at a very young age. I decided to satisfy my desire and completed my fine arts in 2005 and ever since then I have been working as a freelance artist. While pursuing my passion I got prestigious awards like "BOMBAY ART SOCIETY - received from CM of Maharashtra " and since 2005 my work has taken me to various national and international art residencies and I have participated in major Biennale like KOCHI MUZIRIS BIENNALE , INDIA in 2014 & CANARY ISLAND BIENNALE , SPAIN in 2015 and in 2020 Geumgang Nature Art Biennale, South Korea.

I am blessed to host groups as well as solo shows in prestigious galleries located in India as well as abroad. In the recent past I have displayed 40 ft. large painting in my solo show. Currently I am working from Mumbai.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

Being praised for a job well done and believing in the work I do, motivates me to get out of bed in the morning. I like knowing that I'm appreciated, because I give every artwork my all.

For me my artwork is my child. Like any other mother, I nurture my work. I spent days and months on a single artwork. During that time each day comes with a motivation to do better. and I also like knowing that the work I'm doing is producing results that matter to people everywhere.



WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I feel freedom of creative process is the most satisfying thing about this career.

I am a strong believer of free spirit, I have been brought up with an ultimate sense of freedom, that is reflected in choosing a career of my desire. I feel very blessed to be an artist. Because as an artist I feel gifted to express myself in any form. I don't get intimidated by boundaries.

As an artist, the challenging thing is to be noble in your work. Being open to new inspirations. Because there are infinite inspirations around, you just need to have an eye for it. Here the challenge is not getting too attached to a single inspiration. I feel I get too attached to one inspiration. Once I set my mind on one inspiration, I want to dig down and solve the mystery. I want to discover that inspiration to see where it leads to. Although this process seems captivating, maintaining the balance is important. Challenge is to decide how much you want to invest in inspiration because there is always a question of what if I could do better with another inspiration.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

I am passionate about my work. My subconscious is always looking for inspiration in any raw unfiltered form. Even when I am not actually creating something, in my mind I am always in that creative process. I think as an artist there is no escape from the process. That subconscious of me is like an inactive volcano waiting to erupt with creativity. I am outwardly introverted in that manner.

**WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER?
WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?**

Like any creative field, being an artist means being able to take constructive criticism well, regardless of if it comes from your peers. Art is an incredibly subjective field, and everyone will have an opinion on your work. Here having patience helps in a long run.

Even though much of your time as an artist will be spent alone working on your various pieces, it's still incredibly important to have interpersonal skills, especially when talking to people who are viewing your art and potentially leasing or buying it for their own collections elsewhere. Having a person's person is equally important.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I am passionate about life. As an artist being devoted comes naturally to me. I enjoy good music. I am also an avid reader of literature. I have a zest for traveling. Exploring places boosts my artistic mind. I believe there is nothing more truly artistic than to love or to appreciate nature.



HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Arts and culture have experienced significant economic setbacks from COVID-19. Across the spectrum of artistic and creative endeavours, restrictions on gatherings, changes in consumer behaviour (voluntary or otherwise), and severe unemployment have taken a devastating toll on the sector. The full scope and scale of the impact can be hard to discern, in part because of the size and diversity of the industries and occupations that constitute arts and culture. However, there is one positive side to all of this. Artists are inclined to enhance their creativity in order to express in the digital form. I can see art galleries conducting virtual exhibitions. On top of that I have explored abstract art in digital form. I find this form very captivating and truly an evaluation of abstract art. I am able to see much more potential in this form of art.

**FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD?
WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?**

Networking plays a major part in my field. Right now me and my fellow colleagues use social networking sites like Facebook or Instagram to convey about our work or in general to keep the art world updated about our progress. We also get inspired by seeing each other's posts on social media.

When it comes to economic gain, networking is crucial here as well. I feel the need to have a dedicated platform for artists. In other words I would say, We need a platform where we can share our inspirations and showcase our work to relevant audiences. Moreover we need a platform where every artist in the field can connect globally irrespective of whether you are connected by any mutual acquaintance or not.

**MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR
READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

From my experience, I would say be your own inspiration. Be honest in your work. Don't get afraid to explore and experiment. You have the power to change and transform your pain, your emotions into something beautiful which the world would cherish forever. So always believe in your potential.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

I am looking forward to some travel plans this year. Down the line I will be catching up on pending exhibition work.



SUMEET PATIL

VISUAL ARTIST, ART DIRECTOR,
SOCIAL ACTIVIST

A recipient of over 600 international, national and state level awards that have recognised him for his creativity & his artistic talent

Since 2016, he holds a record in the Limca Book of Records for making 108 eco-friendly Ganesha idols in 60 minutes with 25 physically challenged individuals

President award winner 2004; Balshree president award

 @sumeet.patil.crow



*Sumeet has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I'm a simple artist who has been in love with art and would take anything to let the art speak for anyone who is interested for it. Speaking about career path I have been working with specially abled children at different schools, teaching them to draw & paint, making artistic movies, taking projects with divyang (PWD's) students which has been taken note by Limca record, the work has fetched many around 600 awarded internationally, nationally & at different levels.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO WORK?

Art, art & only art.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

People go hook & crook to get what they want, that's cut throat competition. Competition should be healthy. Everyone is a creator, so creativity should be accepted whosoever it maybe.



WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I love cooking & serving to all the ones who come at my place.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

There is no as such a mantra to be successful, but all you can do is keep on working continuously with concentration, dedication, hard work and above all be respectful to everyone.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I love politics but I'll never be a part of it.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Economically it has been the artists. Since without artist the industry could never run then and not even in future. Pre & Post pandemic it's the artist that are affected.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

Problem isn't a word it's an illusion. Since every problem comes with its solution. Maybe a problem to you isn't a one for others. You see, they (problems) are much needed for one to grow & be successful in one's life. Since you can't improve, learn without facing them.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Art is altogether a different aspect. It needs concentration but also your way of perspective towards things makes changes. For example you observe a plant. It grows, sometimes its leaves are different, sometimes its fruits, its flowers, its fragrance, its shades of colours. Everything isn't same at particular given time. It changes. Your perspective towards makes it all. Be childish, be artistic.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

It's my dream that one day every single individual (visually impaired) gets to paint his/her imaginations on the canvas with the Colour Therapy. All our hardships of 15 years and still going will be satisfied.



TARANG ARORA

JEWELLERY DESIGNER

AMRAPALI JEWELS

He is one of the second generation powerhouse behind the current avatar of Amrapali Jewels who has redefined luxury in the modern context while still staying true to Indian roots

 @tarun_arora



Tarang has pledged to grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I have studied jewellery designing and gemology.

My design approach is explorative, I love experimenting and usually like to make different and one of a kind pieces and I am actively involved in cutting gemstones too.

I was born in a family where I saw my dad and uncle trying to establish a business with Indian art and crafts, so jewellery or the artistic instinct is something I would say was in my blood and my entire life has and still revolves around Indian art, craft & jewellery.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

It's like a child going to playground every morning, I think that's what it is, getting up and one gets to play with all these colorful gems and bring out the creative being in you.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

Creating a piece which I feel only selective people understand and to be able to find the perfect client for the same, someone who shares the same passion.



WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I am an easy going person and very chilled but if I get determine to achieve something or do something I really give my 100%, I start breathing, eating and living the mission which gets stuck in my mind.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Skills to identify and appreciate the craftsmanship, to be able to present it to make it relevant to the modern world or current times. One needs to be patient, I sometimes cut the same shape in the same stone atleast 4-5-6 times to get the perfect color and perfect size that fits in, in what I want to make.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Working out, traveling and photography.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Luxury industry is the first to get effected and last to recover. We are yet to recover and I hope 2021 is the year for recovery. But pandemic has also made the digital transition for our industry what looked like a 5 year journey to a 1 year journey now. Everyone is exploring tech, it is very exciting to see what the future holds.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

I think the cost of precious metal, also lack of appreciation / consideration for art which we are trying to protect.

Biggest challenge is I think running a company or an industry in our country, government needs to ease out business policies and give more push to cottage industries such as ours.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

I think 2020 has taught us to all to go with the flow, respect nature in all forms and practice sustainability.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS


Plan is to keep the Indian heritage of jewellery making alive, keep it going and present it to the world in whatever ways we can.



VAISHALI RATHOD

JOURNALIST

She interviews entertainment celebrities, composes feature-length articles on them & coverage of entertainment industry events

 @Ms.rathod25_official



Vaishali has pledged to grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I am an entertainment journalist. Likewise every student after completing mass communication I joined print media. Today I have accomplished my position as noted journalist covering Gujarati entertainment industry.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

The never ending rush for getting new stories keeps me on my feet every morning.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

The fact that I love about the industry is that you meet your idols in real life owing to your hard work & commitment. The fact that deters me is the sensationalism of the news. I detest that and I wish to be a genuine scribe for my entire career.



WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I belong to an entertainment field but I tend to maintain low key on my every private affairs. I am not a big party person which I know sounds very strange.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

For every work one has to be passionate about the job. Apart from that stay honest to your task and you must be a go-getter if you want to be in the race of getting first hand on the story break out.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I love being at home post work & take care of my family. I am passionate about bringing happiness on my parents' face.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Things have become more virtual and the economy is not impacted in a big manner. The work is going on and we are bringing news irrespective of anything as the media is touted as one of the pillars of democracy.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

Problems one faces in the industry is cut throat competition. Well but that's a blessing in disguise. Competition keeps you on the toes.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

I love the readers to the core. They encourage us to bring more stories. They appreciate our work and the thought of breaking new stories, bringing juicy information and entertaining them keeps us going on.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

My future plan is to keep working hard and giving you the best of the pieces from the entertainment gallery.




VANDANA JAIN

PRODUCER

She is known for her work on Surveillance (2008), Balwinder Singh Famous Ho Gaya (2014) and Dolan's Cadillac (2009)

Karnataka State Advisory Committee Member of All India Mahila Empowerment Party (AIMEP)

 @VandanaJainOfficial



Vandana has pledged to grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

Well it's a long journey and a roller coaster ride for me but a journey worth to cherish. My production made a news as it was one of a kind n first to feature singers as actors in a movie. I have plans of producing further if I come across a good script. Have also diversified my career into construction and also have taken social work as it's always been my passion.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

My passion & commitment to what I do always motivates me to work. I always have faith in the supreme power and being a independent business woman my source of inspiration is myself

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

The different kind of people I meet and get to learn from them is satisfying but most challenging is the hectic days I have to run through which sometimes leads to skip my daily routine of workout.



WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I am a very straight forward person. I like to be very frank when it comes to communicating which sometimes is not well digested by few. But I believe in this theory.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

consistency & patience is very essential. You need to strong by will & should be able to analyse the risk factor.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I am very passionate about nature. Gazing the sky full of stars and blue sea is a form of Nirvana for me. I love going on nature trails in the greens and mountains. Apart from this social work keeps me occupied

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Well it's a long journey and a roller coaster ride for me but a journey worth to cherish. My production made a news as it was one of a kind n first to feature singers as actors in a movie. I have plans of producing further if I come across a good script. Have also diversified my career into construction and also have taken social work as it's always been my passion.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

I have taken a break from the industry as it is little uncertain about the fluctuations and shall restart only when things are back to normal.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Yes definitely. I would say have faith in yourself. The world will only believe you when you believe in yourself. Most importantly have patience and be passionate about whatever you do and never give up.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

My future plans in this field would depend upon the type of work or script I come across. I mean I love challenges in life so would take up a good project if I come across. Apart from this I am also keen on working in the interest of my state in social & political field.



YASH SARDESAI

CEO
SRI LANKA LEGENDS



*Yash has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2020

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

Just like many other young Indian boys, I grew up watching cricket on television. If I wasn't around the television, I would listen to cricket commentary on the radio. Watching my favourite legends like Sanath Jayasuriya, Sachin Tendulkar, Brian Lara and others play was fascinating. I always wanted to watch the game up close and play a bigger role in Indian cricket.

I am now the CEO of Sri Lanka Legends, a cricket team participating in the Road Safety World Series.

In addition to this, I am a developer in Mumbai and I'm happy that I have helped many people realise their dreams of buying their own homes. In the years to come, I wish to add more happiness to the lives of people by making their lives comfortable by helping them buy their dream homes.

From my career trajectory, I have learned that if you work hard enough, dreams do come true. Dream big and keep working hard towards your dream, one day it will all truly manifest.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

I am deeply passionate about cricket. I wake up every morning thinking about what my team is doing and where we are all headed as a collective. I think if you really find meaning in your work then you are motivated to wake up each morning. It is about finding a balance and an "Ikigai" in your life.



WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

I find the idea of “possibility” very satisfying. Growing up, I wanted to be a part of cricket and grow on the professional front too. I saw my favourite cricket legends play on screen and I was fascinated. As the CEO of Sri Lanka Legends, I firmly believe that anything is possible if intentions are honest. I watched my team play in the Road Safety World Series 2021 where they emerged as runners-up and I must say, it was an extremely satisfying experience. On one of the days, when there was no match scheduled, I cooked for all the players in my team. The experience taught me more about myself and made me feel rooted.

The most satisfying part of my professional life is adding happiness to the lives of the common man. I am privileged that I get to do this, through my cricket team when they perform on the field and also as a developer when families thank me for being an integral part of their dreams. It gives me immense satisfaction to see the smiles on the faces of people when they feel the keys of their own homes in their hands and also when their favorite team wins. It's an incredible feeling!

The most challenging though are the pressure situations, both in cricket and in business. But over a period of time, I have realised that I can control only the controllables, hence I keep my cool and just focus on the basics, it works wonderfully well! Though I am the CEO of Sri Lanka Legends, my heart always beats for Team India!

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

An interesting fact about me is that I like cooking. I only cook occasionally when I find time. It's more of a hobby. I think the different flavours of food really have the power to take you back to your roots. I am a huge fan of Maharashtrian cuisine and like exploring traditional Maharashtrian dishes. I also love travelling and seeing new places. I think cultural immersion is enriching. The reason I connect well with people is because I am curious about different cultures, lifestyles and ideas that people have.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

The most important skill is that you need to be a people's person. You need to understand people deeply to be able to lead them. Since I am the CEO, I am working with multiple people every day. Ensuring that people in my team are working towards a common mission and vision is really important. Moreover, I think a high emotional intelligence can help in every career. Understanding the preferences and personalities of people always helps when you need to work in groups. I respect the qualities of emotional intelligence in people when I am working with them as well.



WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I am very passionate about my family and I believe that they are my backbone. I really value my family because they are very supportive and stand by me. Moreover, I believe that it is essential to stay connected to your roots. Family keeps you humble and rooted. You can truly be yourself around your family.

I am also very passionate about taking up social causes and raising more awareness about them. Road Safety is one such cause which I am passionate about and I want to spread more awareness about the same.

**FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD?
WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?**

There are no problems that I see as such. I believe that if you are strong willed, you don't face challenges, but the challenges face you. I enjoy my work thoroughly and take it a day at a time. Each day at work is Day 1 and there is a lot to learn from everyone at work.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Cricket overall was deeply affected during the pandemic. The Road Safety World Series was paused last year because of COVID. It took almost a year for the series to resume because of COVID safety regulations. The series had to be moved from Mumbai to Raipur. The number of people allowed in stadiums is also lower this year. However, because many passionate cricket enthusiasts are working from home, the viewership of cricket has increased worldwide.

**MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR
READERS AS A RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

I grew up loving cricket and now I am interacting with my favourite players from childhood on a daily basis. As CEO of Sri Lanka Legends, I believe that if you work hard enough, all dreams you have in your childhood can manifest. I think that being humble and kind goes a long way. Moreover, I think that you should never give up on your dreams because each dream has the power to come true.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

I don't believe in making plans for the future because I feel that life has plans for each one of us. I know that I would like to learn something new every day in my life. When I set goals for myself, they centre around contributing to society and learning more about topics which pique my curiosity. I also want to work on social issues in Maharashtra and contribute towards raising awareness about them. Road Safety is one issue which I am very passionate about. The Road Safety World Series was even more special because I got the opportunity to be a part of a social cause. I have always wanted to spread more awareness about road safety.



YATHARTH GAUTAM

DIRECTOR & CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER
BIRLA OPEN MINDS

Helped chart strategic inroads for Birla Open Minds as a brand and is also instrumental in the brand's Pan-India expansion

A firm believer in the motto of *Dictum meum pactum*, he adheres to the principle of performing what he says he will do

CSR Projects undertaken include Teacher Training at Anganwadis

📷 @birlaopenminds 🌐 www.birlaopenminds.com



Yatharth has pledged to grow trees and help protect our mother earth

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

I began my career in the field of physical commodity trading with one of the world's largest independent steel traders based out of London, UK immediately after completing my Undergraduate degree there. Having always had a keen interest and affinity towards relationship management, client servicing and of-course sales and marketing; it was the right platform for me to begin my career path. I've been through the grind of getting coffees for senior traders, running around the photocopier frantically, doing the odd bank errands for the finance department; and today I realise that those aspects of the job were critical in developing key skill sets that have not only elevated my capabilities professionally, but have further added to my personal growth over the years. What seemed like mundane and odd tasks given by my seniors had a larger meaning to it all.

I worked my way up from a trainee trader to a trader, handling the European markets along with Africa and eventually started handling my own book for South Asia. Cross-cultural management and interactions were always a driving force for me as my job gave me platforms to interact and negotiate with individuals of different countries around the globe.

Once I decided to pursue my MBA in International Marketing from EU Business School, Barcelona; I went in with the mindset that this would open more doors for me to possibly get my foot into other industries which though mutually exclusive, would benefit from my experience and skill sets developed over the years, and that's how I landed up getting into the Education Industry.



Today as the Director and Chief Marketing Officer, I am responsible for ensuring that not only our operational schools function in an efficient manner and impart quality education to students across India, but also make good returns for our investors and in turn for the company. I also look into the expansion of the brand Pan India with a very talented team of individuals without whom it would have been an uphill task to achieve 80 percent growth rates consistently over the past years till date. Today, Birla Open Minds proudly has reached over 120 cities across the length and breadth of India.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

The aspect of providing a solution, in this case, schools; across the nation and plugging the gap present in the system, effectively is a huge motivator. At the core of what I do in the company, the aspects that have driven me since my University days are still enforced on a daily basis and that; I believe is the biggest single reason that makes me want to get up every morning.

WHAT PART OF YOUR OCCUPATION DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MOST SATISFYING AND MOST CHALLENGING?

I tend to look at this from a perspective where overcoming challenges is always the most satisfying feeling an individual can achieve. Education and more importantly the right approach to education is the most challenging aspect of my occupation. Investors want to set up schools, however often are misinformed about the processes and the gestation period of the project. Some look at it purely from a business aspect and some purely from a social service one; and finding the right mix of the two is the most challenging aspect of my occupation.

WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I am highly meticulous in my approach towards everything. I still believe in writing down notes and following through on them, adhering to my calendar appointments set up, planning ahead and ensuring I have zero emails by the end of the week!

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

You have to keep an open mind and the passion has to shine through in each interaction you have. Being able to think quickly and swiftly on your feet, stepping up and making decisions is not the only skill set you require; one must take accountability and responsibility of the same.

You need to be someone who follows through on what is committed and ensures that there is constant support being provided over and above the dotted lines on a contract.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Music and Football tend to resonate with me at a passionate level outside of work. I am not into any specific form of music and tend to listen to songs in various languages which use melodies that not only soothe and rejuvenate me but also introduce me to instruments and sounds that transcend boundaries.



HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Unfortunately, the education sector is hit pretty hard post-pandemic and is yet to see an uptick in investments; which are subdued owing to the uncertainty in the market. Whilst we would certainly not want to risk children and teachers to the virus, state government norms being different from state to state have hampered growth and certainly taken investors back minimum 2 years on their investments made. I do hope that they receive more aid to ensure existing and new edupreneurs are not discouraged by the sector.

Pre-pandemic, we would sign up close to 20-30 schools, and the number has come down to roughly 10-15 now with no clear operational dates.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

I think when it comes to marketing, the problem I see and the biggest challenge I face is setting realistic expectations and educating people that marketing is in itself a broad term that is loosely thrown around and often held responsible for aspects that it should not. Sales is a different vertical and is often mixed with marketing and even in marketing, you have various sub-sets of marketing that need to be clearly outlined and planned in accordance to your goals. To truly achieve an Omni channel marketing model, one needs to intricately understand the nuances of marketing as a whole.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

I think being realistic in your approach and planning ahead are important aspects that individuals need to keep as their anchors. Don't become a "yes" man or woman, analyse aspects from a viewpoint others would probably miss analysing from and don't give up! Perseverance is surprisingly more beneficial than you can imagine it to be.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

I avoid talking about future plans as they are constantly being built upon, however the priority right now is for me to ensure that all our investors and stakeholders like the children in our schools, their parents, staff recover from this downturn and roadblock brought upon by Covid, and come out stronger and with a smile on their faces that goes ear to ear!



VIRAL SHAH

DIRECTOR, WRITER, PRODUCER
& VOICE OVER ARTIST

His latest feature Film Golkeri won the best film of the year in popular films category and holds a record to be the fastest and highest gross opener on Box Office

Golkeri, won the best feature film of 2020 in two award festivals and also Viral was nominated for best director for the same

📷 @viral2886



*Viral has pledged to
grow trees and help protect our mother earth*

WINNERS
2021

Q & A

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR?

Starting my career as an actor in India's One of the first daily soap Ek mahal ho Sapano ka, I acted from 4th standard until graduation. Being active in theatre in college days, writing came naturally to me. Post graduation I decided to explore the 'behind the camera' side of entertainment industry and wrote 4-5 popular tv shows between 2010-2016 and in 2016 started my own production house called 'The Creative Tribe' where I produce ad films and digital content. Along with writing I began giving voices for cartoons, radio commercials and English films dubbed in Hindi and I continue being a VO artist till date doing some popular cartoon shows like golmaal and Simmba junior and Netflix shows. I directed my first feature film in 2017 and second in 2019. Now the plan is to direct as well as produce them.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP EVERY MORNING?

An opportunity to explore a new side of yourself. No fear of monotonous life and an opportunity serve to the purpose of your existence.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE AND NOT LIKE ABOUT WORKING IN THIS INDUSTRY?

I like unpredictability, healthy competition and freedom to creatively tell your story. What I don't like is absurd working hours.



WHAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOU THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN FROM YOUR PROFILE ALONE?

I love learning new things. After graduation I went to learn how to fly planes and have a pilot's license. Also, I am a people's person. I love making people happy.

WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THIS CAREER? WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Patience and perseverance.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE IRRATIONALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I am passionate about traveling and board games. I am passionate about spreading education and basic awareness to every individual in this country.

HOW IS THIS INDUSTRY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMY PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC?

Post pandemic digital medium has boomed but it has badly hit theatrical medium. And I feel major steps should be taken to revive cinema halls and content for cinema halls.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS YOU SEE WORKING IN THIS FIELD? WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU WERE FACING?

Working in this field is a blessing and I don't even want to imagine myself in any other field. The biggest challenge has been cutting through the clutter in content creation and that shall remain forever. Evolution is constant.

MOVING FORWARD, DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR READERS AS RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

I would only tell the readers to work towards their dream and not wait for miracles to happen on their own. Also, as a company we are trying to be Eco-friendly as much as possible because environmental degradation is real and we need to leave a cleaner and a better earth for generations to come.

ON THE LAST NOTE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT ON YOUR FUTURE PLANS

My plan is to tell stories and entertain people. That is the purpose of my life. And I shall continue doing so in any form of medium I can and strive to make this world a happy place in whichever little possible way I can.