

## "DREAMZZ UNLIMITED": STORIES THAT INSPIRE



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It feels not so long ago I had started my professional journey in 2007 and all the memories are so fresh and when I look back, they make me smile each time I remember them. I thank CVOCA for giving me this opportunity to open some of the important chapters in book of my life and share some insight that might help the young and budding generation.

I have to say I was quite naïve to the professional and corporate world when I started and also a bit casual in my approach. During last 15 years I have learnt many things which has shaped my career and personality. I have worked in various functions like audit, So X, anti-corruption and antitrust laws, risk management, project management and business leadership roles, in India and abroad where I got a chance to work with various cultures as well. It opened new perspectives both professionally and as a person for me giving me wider scope of learning and expanding my horizons.

I abide by this mantra "Don't listen to outside noises and follow your gut instinct". Many a times we face with the situation where we must take important decisions, tricky decisions like choosing the line of study, making decision on career etc. In those situations, you will always find people giving advises and sometimes unsolicited advises. Some people could be very overpowering and over convincing. When I was taking decision to choose line of study after 10<sup>th</sup> I was clear that I want to go for commerce. I scored good and people expected that I should go in the science stream. There were lot of expectations from my friends and teachers for me to go in the science stream. However, I had full support from my family, and I was clear that I want to go for commerce. Similarly, while taking career decisions there were many people who had ridiculed my career choices at different stages. What I have learnt is to ignore people and ignore those outside noises. Sometimes we tend to overthink, I realized that we cannot decide if it is the right step or not that's when the mantra applies.

Have a buddy with whom you can share your thoughts. I don't mean a mentor or a coach but a buddy. When you have someone with whom you can share your thoughts and discuss what is in your mind it gives you more ideas and more clarity on your thought process. I have experienced that more you talk about some idea with someone you get more confident about what you are doing and how are you going to present it. I had a colleague with whom I used to travel every day and during those 30 mins we used to discuss various topics and that helped me immensely during those times.

Have a good team whom you can trust. As you grow in your career it is important to have a good team around you and more important to have team members whom you can trust. I realized that I cannot do everything on my own and I need to delegate more and empower the team. Trust factor becomes very critical while delegating and empowering. Another important aspect is the competence of the team members and I rate competence a notch higher than the experience a person carries. I have taken risks on selecting people based on their competence and not looking at their limited experience and so far, that has proved to be a success formula.

Change is good. One of the most challenging aspects of any professional life is accepting a change. There is a natural tendency to resist change. In my career I have seen and experienced few changes where I felt out of my comfort zone, and it was difficult to accept change in the beginning. However, during the process, I learnt that it is important to look for positives and understand the reasons behind those changes. Not accepting changes and continuing to challenge the change is probably going to waste more time, rather than learn from them.

Another challenging task is to bring change. As I said it is not easy to accept change and this is very important to keep in mind. To bring change we must deal with people who are going to experience that change. Hence most important aspect to bring change is communication... explain the reason behind the change and how it is going to help others. Lead from the front and walk the talk. Remember you were also there at that point in some time of your life. To implement change, it is important to showcase that you believe in that change set a tone from the top. And last thing according to me is take tough decision to implement it whether it is accepted by all or not. In certain situations, there will be people who are not ready to change, and we have to have clear discussions with these people and take the tough decisions.

As we grow, we go through many experiences and form perceptions, filters, and biases ... unconscious biases. These perceptions form our personality. These perceptions play critical role in our decision making. I believe, to grow as an individual it is important to understand our own biases and perceptions. It takes a conscious effort to realize our own perception and determination to overcome those biases. During my journey I have got many opportunities to work with people from different cultures across the globe, understanding the challenges in their lives and their cultural background also helped me clear many of my filters and grow as an individual.

Continuous learning is very important. The world around us is constantly changing and we need to adapt continuously to this changing world to keep pace and grow along as well as make a difference. As professionals we give lot of focus on learning and updating ourselves with latest laws and regulations. Many atimes we provide less priority to our soft skills like communication, presentation, story telling etc. In the corporate world these aspects play a significant role. Our knowledge and hard work can take us to a certain level, to go beyond that, soft skills are also very important.

Speak up and make your opinion count. I have realized over the years that it is very important to speak up what your opinion is – if you agree or disagree and the reason for it. For early professionals in the corporate world, you need to get yourself differentiated from others and let the leaders know that you have a thought process of your own and not follow blindly. Further this helps your leaders notice you and remember you when the performance evaluation takes place. In a leadership role it is even more critical to express your opinion and your thoughts. It is very important for your team to know your thought process and to form a strategic direction for the growth of your organization based on your lead and sense of direction.

Take up special projects over and above your normal work. For an example if there is a new tool being implemented in the company, get involved in the project team or implementation team. This could give you an exposure towards different aspects of the work which might be different from your regular job responsibility. Further it will also help you expand your network within the organization.

I would like to requote an interesting line “Dots start connecting when you look back and look where you are today! Trust the dots that you are designing today”. At the end of the day when we shut our laptop it is important to feel accomplished and have smile of satisfaction, which is the most important thing to keep you going. I follow this I hope it helps you too!

