

## "DREAMZZ UNLIMITED": STORIES THAT INSPIRE



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### My professional journey – key attributes

Looking back at past 25 years of my professional journey, I have grown and learned so much, I never thought that I would accomplish my professional and personal dreams so well. During this exciting journey, certain things are done right and certain ones are done wrong – indeed lessons learnt for life. At this juncture, I find it important to look back and reflect so that our young professionals can pick something relevant and apply in their professional lives.

I would like to share **five** of these lessons along with my real-life experiences –

#### 1. Take Decisions

I learnt this very early in my life, in fact in school days. I was contracted with a life-threatening disease in class IX and two long years went in surgeries, treatment, and recovery. A month ahead of my Xth board exams, I had to undergo second surgery. My parents, friends and principal advised me to skip the March exam and appear in October. Against everyone's' advise, I took decision not to waste six months and appear for March exam. It involved lot of hard work and grit – and outcome was merit rank with flying colors.

We often fear taking bold decisions and keep suffering. I have made it a point to make the decisions, albeit informed ones, and own the consequences – and have never regretted irrespective of any outcome.

#### 2. Build a personal brand

As we go with flow in our professional lives, we do not focus enough on building our personal brand – what are our values, what I stand for, what are my strengths, what problem can I resolve better and quicker than others, are some of key points to ponder on. Each of us are unique and have innate ability to make the difference – and that is what we ought to be known for – the personal brand. Since my college days, I was fortunate enough to begin my inner journey and be utterly clear about these attributes. It helped me in making right choices early on and shape up my professional career in the way I always wanted. After qualifying as chartered accountant in 1997, I joined job with one of the big4 firms, and also simultaneously started my practice – it was allowed then. Within a year, I observed that whilst I was earning more money in personal practice, the job would give me a wider canvas to do what I always wanted to do. Within two days I made the decision to shut down the practice and focus on the job. It helped me put my full energy in one direction rather than riding on two horses and I started growing immensely fast in the ladder of the firm as firm was also growing exponentially. In the process, I concentrated on building my personal brand with my colleagues, seniors and clients – a consistent one. This has helped me immensely in building eminence and recognition in the professional world and marketplace at large.

### 3. **Balance is the key**

It is immensely important to strike a right balance as one undertakes professional journey. I call it – QRC rule i.e. Quality, Risk and Commercial. There have been many occasions where this rule has proven to be profoundly relevant and helped me make a right choice. I distinctly remember an occasion where a client (a large conglomerate) wanted my service and was ready to pay any fee. On risk front, it didn't make sense luring commercial offer was. I politely turned down the request, and future events proved my decision to be appropriate at that time.

### 4. **Focus on essentials**

As a professional, time is an invaluable resource we have. Unless the time is spent on essentials, it gets royally wasted. I learnt technique of time management early in life – deciding what I need to do and what can be delegated. This is a journey and there is always a scope of improvement. I maintain daily journal for last 32 years, and amongst other things, jolt down what I could have done in less time or delegated. There was a time I used to work for 12-14 hours a day with one holiday (Sunday) in a month. Over a period, as my work increased, due to effective time management, I don't work for more than 7-8 hours a day and take almost all weekends, 3-4 vacations and 5-6 staycations in a year. This helps me rejuvenate, build next line of leadership, and focus on what is strategic and requires my time.

### 5. **Learn to say NO**

There was time I picked everything that came my way. I realised over a period that this habit was draining my energy and resources, and I was often failing in my commitments. I decided to take up the commitments which added value and learnt to say NO. This may sound harsh initially; however, ultimately, this has gained me better respect and quality of work. We must make conscious choices based on our set parameters and stay consistent with the same - you can never go wrong.

I have attempted to articulate above five essentials for being a successful professional which have helped along my journey so far.

