

3RD ANNIVERSARY

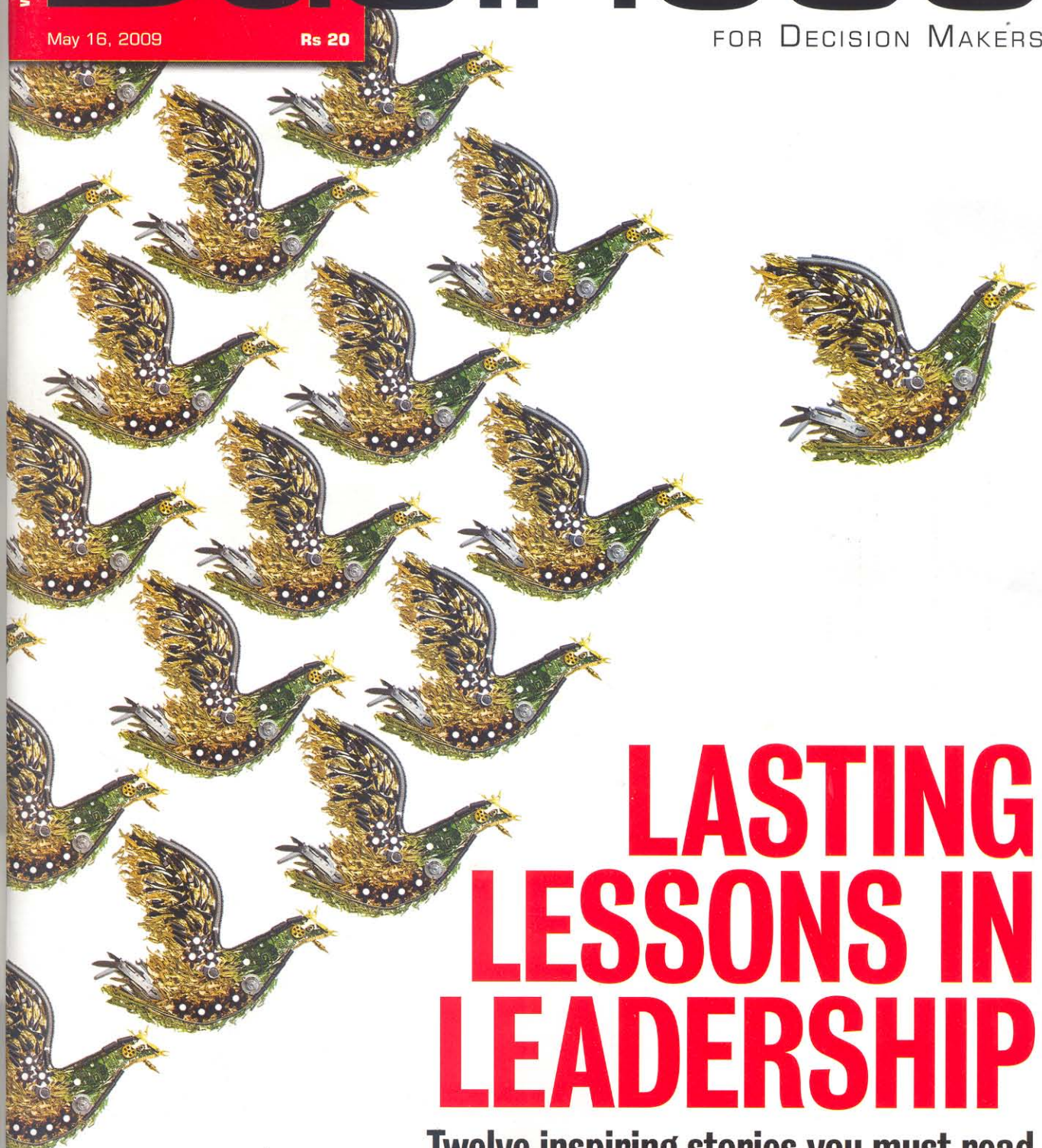
OUTLOOK

# Business

May 16, 2009

Rs 20

FOR DECISION MAKERS



Announcing the birth of a new species.

## LASTING LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

Twelve inspiring stories you must read  
in these difficult times.

# LEADING FROM THE FRONT

It is said that true leaders are born in times of crises. And so it is with the current times. Leadership mettle is being truly tested. Eleven CEOs share their leadership philosophy and insights on leading in trying times.

## MY LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

**NAINA LAL KIDWAI**, Group General Manager and Country Head, HSBC India

## 'You Are The Company Culture'

The ability to change is important, especially in volatile times. A right team—both leadership and those down the line—is essential. Team members should be smart and should have faith in the top leadership, and should be willing to change as required.

## MY LESSONS FROM THIS DOWNTURN

Leadership is tested most when one has to shut down or scale back certain businesses and grow in others. How these changes are made is important. Another lesson is that when the going is good, brace for the bad times. There are areas that need constant attention such as operational improvement, cash reserves and, most importantly, leadership. If leaders are perceived to be satisfied or complacent, it will rub off on the organisational culture. But if there is a clear message of urgency, there will be a more prepared management.

## MY TIP FOR YOUNG LEADERS

It's never too old to learn or retool. It's about listening, learning, adapting and remembering that one cannot achieve success on one's own.



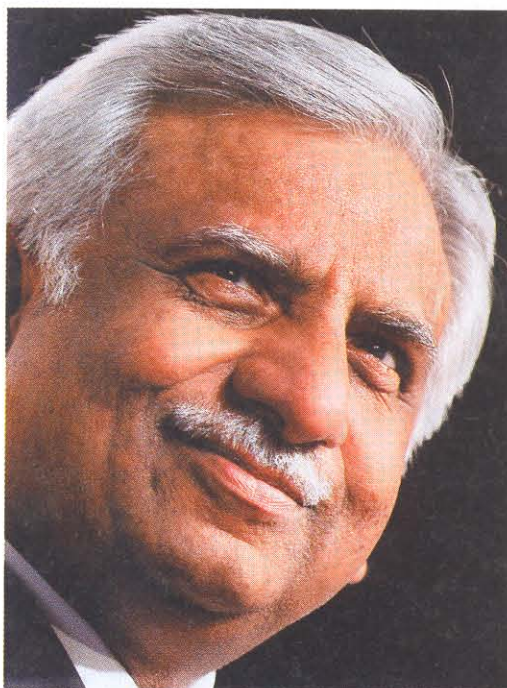
**S GOPALAKRISHNAN**, Chief Executive Officer,  
Infosys Technologies

## ‘Earn The Respect Of Stakeholders’

We want to earn stakeholder respect. So, our leadership philosophy is built around universal tenets such as being visionary and a role model, having strong value systems, showing imagination, and making correct and quick decisions.

Such times affect employees' career prospects, though only for a short term. We need to reassure them that their prospects are safe in the medium- to long-term. The industry will continue to grow over the long-term. In this downturn, we have learnt the importance of communicating more.

Never give up when you face failures. You must have faith in your vision and be ready to take on any challenge. Success will follow, sooner or later.



**NARESH GOYAL**, Chairman,  
Jet Airways

## ‘Get The Best In The Business’

It is important to get the best professional expertise and experience in the business, and to harness this talent. Equally crucial is building morale, providing training and leadership to the entire workforce, particularly the frontline staff.

This has been a very challenging phase for all industries worldwide and for the aviation industry in particular. We have evaluated and implemented measures to overcome this situation, and come out stronger and resilient. My role has been to provide the focus and support to my team and to encourage them to think laterally.

Look at adversity as an opportunity. Never give in.



**DHEERAJ HINDUJA**, President, Hinduja Group

## 'One Should Live Within One's Means'

It revolves around three things: getting the right team, setting goals and motivating people.

### MY LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

There are leadership challenges in terms of downsizing and realigning strategy. During good times, the focus is on growth, especially acquisitions. Cost is forgotten. I have seen companies suffer because they acquired too much in their aggressive pursuit of growth. One should live within one's means.

The slowdown gives us time to look at the basics again. The key is to not lose sight of long-term goals. Another challenge is keeping people motivated. The slowdown has been sudden and severe, and it's necessary to keep employee morale up by constantly communicating with them.

### MY LESSONS FROM THIS DOWNTURN

### MY TIP FOR YOUNG LEADERS

Believe in yourself. Only if you have the conviction and self-belief will you be able to pass it on to others.



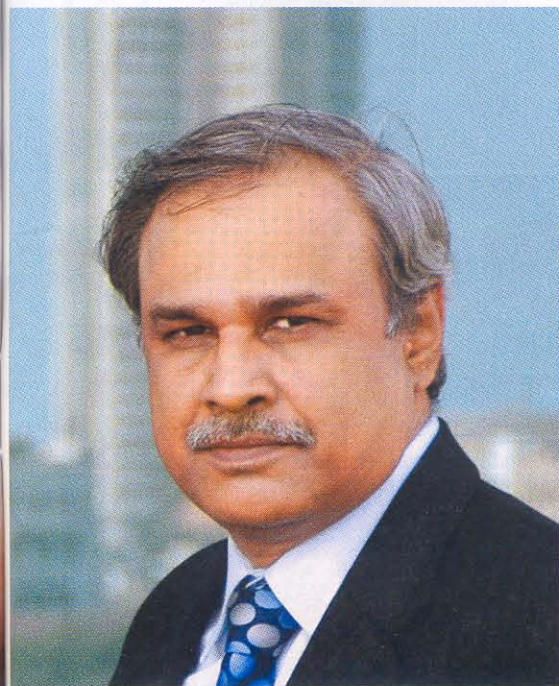
**MOON B SHIN**, Managing Director, LG Electronics

## 'Be Fair, Be Transparent'

A company can attain or retain leadership only if it creates a good talent pool. That means nurturing employees by providing them unparalleled development opportunities, by kindling their spirit of creativity and passion.

In times like these, leadership becomes more critical than at any other time. A fair and transparent management and trade are essential to building a strong company. Transparency ensures you have the confidence of your employees, stakeholders and customers even in the most difficult of times.

Be loyal to the company and grow with it. You will share the company's passion to achieve goals and get its continuous support to fulfil your goals.



**SUMIT BANERJEE,**  
Managing Director, ACC

## 'Accept Failures As Learnings'

It's more philosophical than clinical. The culture and capability of an organisation drive its growth. So, I'm not much driven by numbers. Rather, I believe in building organisations and transforming cultures. The numbers fall in place in good times.

In tough times, one tends to take all those grammatically correct steps: solely reining in costs, conserving cash, etc. This approach is myopic, as each upheaval brings about corresponding changes in the market dynamics and structure. Leaders will not be able to sustain profitable growth unless they retain the balance between short-term and long-term objectives. This downturn will teach us a few lessons, but we would have learnt them only when our strategies and actions succeed or fail. Let us wait for the outcomes.

Accept failures as learning opportunities. Today, everyone has developed low tolerance for failures. This is bad news for learning and personal growth.



**HIROSHI NAKAGAWA,**  
Managing Director, Toyota Kirloskar Motors

## 'Involve All Employees'

It's all about teamwork and communication. The leadership should motivate employees and show them the right direction. Leadership becomes meaningful only when it involves all members of an organisation.

Teamwork pays. When the slowdown started, we were told that the impact would be much less on India. But the market started sinking. Our stocks were piling up. With the full backing of the marketing and production team, I decided to lower production and improve marketing. We also created special holidays in line with lower production and gave our employees opportunities to engage in various *kaizen* (continuous improvement) activities. These concerted efforts helped us regain normalcy in just three months. I have also learnt the importance of being fast and dynamic. How fast one can translate a decision into action is vital.

Understanding the team helps in making the right judgement, which is essential to be a good leader.



**R SESHASAYEE**, Managing Director,  
Ashok Leyland

## 'Wisdom Is Nobody's Preserve'

If a leader can get his team to think in alignment, and share and own a common goal, then no challenge is insurmountable. To achieve this, the leader must have a clear vision, which he passes on to team members.

In crunch times, the leadership has to balance the expectations of different stakeholder groups—to make each group accept a change-of-rule as fair. At this point, a company's past record is crucial for its credibility. An equally big leadership challenge is to get the team to keep their chins up. Experienced employees are familiar with such short-term falls, but the new ones need focused attention as they have not seen such crises before. Focused and constant communication is the answer. Also, our ability to survive adversity is also like our ability to aim high and surpass past achievements. These are the two sides of our adaptive instinct.

Listen to the team, in good times and bad. After all, wisdom is nobody's preserve.



**SIDDHARTHA LAL**, Chief Executive Officer,  
VE Commercial Vehicles

## 'Keep It Simple, Stay Focused'

A leader is expected to be a lot of things, but it boils down to this: being simple, keeping things in their element and having a sharp focus on what is to be done. Building a strong team and a good communication chain are important.

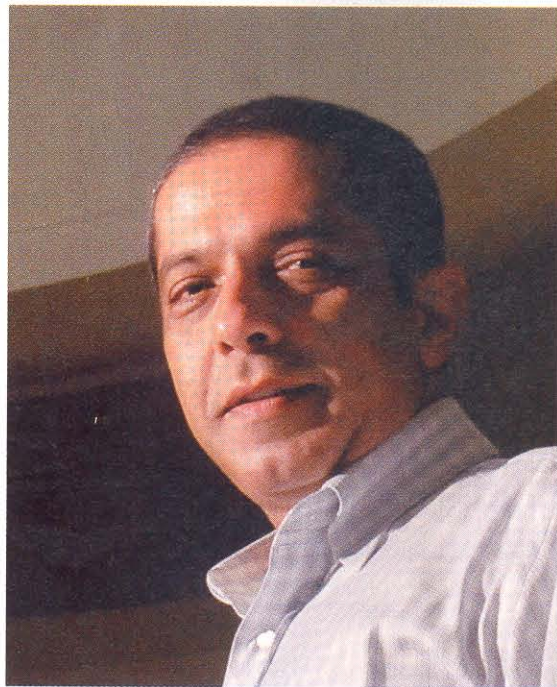
Beating the slowdown is all about speed and patience. In such times, avoid the herd mentality and stay true to one's philosophy. Good times do not mean splurging or taking on debt. Every move should have a good reason. Companies should be able to quickly catch and decode market signals. Not long ago, there was euphoria, as if there would be no downturn. But commercial vehicles is a cyclical business, and it had to go down. We should have balanced things during the good times. Now, we should build a strong cache and pipeline of products.

Learn to keep things simple and straightforward, while being a team player.

### MY LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

### MY LESSONS FROM THIS DOWNTURN

### MY TIP FOR YOUNG LEADERS



**ATUL PUNJ**, Chairman,  
Punj Lloyd

## 'Align Employees With Leadership'

Ensure that every employee shares the leadership's vision, strategy and goals. That means promoting an ethical and competitive work environment, developing trust among employees and empowering the workforce.

We have learnt to keep our key differentiators intact, namely ensuring timely execution of projects, maintaining client relations and keeping employees motivated. A crisis is also an opportunity. This crisis, for example, has lowered the availability of funds. At the same time, falling oil prices brought down the project size of oil and gas companies, giving Indian infrastructure companies a chance to bid for global contracts, at more reasonable prices than before.

Learn to adapt quickly to the changing market environment and be flexible enough to meet new challenges.



**ONKAR S KANWAR**, Chairman  
and Managing Director, Apollo Tyres

## 'Always Focus On Basics'

Leaders have to be enablers and motivators, and ensure their team has the right mix of skills, training, attitude and resources to achieve the company's goals and aspirations. If a leader performs, so does the team.

A company should be able to adapt to the changing needs of customers and the industry. The prime principle here is to always focus on the basics, in a boom or otherwise, and ignore the irrationality of other players around. If a company manages to do the right things at the right time in the right way, it will win in the long-term.

Be 'doers'—till you execute, you won't fail or succeed, and learn essential lessons. Be open to change—a success formula is never eternal.