

# "DON'T MANAGE! INFLUENCE!"

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REVEALS WHY INFLUENCING  
PEOPLE, LISTENING TO  
STAKEHOLDERS, BELIEVING IN  
THE POWER OF DIGITAL AND  
RELENTLESS INNOVATION ARE  
THE KEYS TO LEADERSHIP**



**Q** How did you initiate your career?

**A.** I started my human resources career with ICICI Infotech as the Vice President – Human Resources. The role happened because of the convergence of three areas of my competence; namely, financial services & core banking domain, IT understanding and HR qualification. Prior to this role, I was a corporate Banker, SAP functional consultant and systems analyst with more than 14 years of cumulative work experience.

**Q. Why did you choose HR as your professional field?**

**A.** I believe I have a mind which is business centric and a heart which is passionate about people. HR draws the best of me in every single aspect, right from customer value creation, business process, innovation, culture building, people-digital connect, to leadership building, talent designing and more. The field is absolutely challenging and demanding but exciting too, when you know and believe the significant impact one can create on people and also on the enterprise value.

**Q. Describe the initial years of your career and how they formed your initial thoughts and perspectives.**

**A.** The initial years of my life were around fitting into a role which gave me my source of income, stability and a career growth. Hence, I built my skills and capabilities around that.

The challenges I enjoyed most were complexities and new learnings which were

steep in the formative stages. I belonged to a culture where failures were accepted but inaction was not.

Speed was essential and my initial years taught me every single dimension of team playing / dynamics. I enjoyed camaraderie, being part of winning teams and accepting steep challenges where “not possible” was never used as a word ever. The lessons learnt were never give up, hard work, resilience, perseverance, sincerity, focus, focus, timeliness, quality and outcome.

**Q. What might be described as the best moment of your HR career?**

**A.** The ‘Aha!’ moment in my long HR career was to stand in front of a customer (a large Fortune 50 company) and winning a deal for my company. It is not often you get to depose in front of a large client team and follow that through with a large deal. They were validating an RFP of USD 100 mn; it was intended to be a multi-year deal.

The sales and client account team had done their initial best in this deal with the customer. The customer shortlisted three partners which included my company. On the day of the meeting, it was a gruelling five hour session going through every bit of the people area in great detail.

They not only sought details but required

clear insights and foresights as to how their account would be safe in our hands and grow over years.

Capability building, predictive attrition management, customer engagement scores, delivering performance, crisis handling, credentials of people deployed, were all aspects which had to be explained to them well and they made massive notes and challenged at every stage.

I had done good pre-work and having had competitive intelligence of the other two shortlists, I knew we had to put our best foot forward with no margin for errors / replay in giving trust and confidence to the customer in every single area of HR.

It was a flawless execution on every count, (my business guys were floored and my CEO thought I should move into a large customer focus role after this show) and all my senses were put to complete test in this example.

And finally! We won this contract. The customer attributed the win to our people differentiation and pointed out that it was the HR leader who made the difference in their decision making process; this was like a dream come true of having lived up to everyone’s expectations. Loved every bit of this journey as I got to play a full customer facing role and contributed big time in a large win. Indeed, this was a defining moment.

**Q. How has the above described experience transformed you personally and professionally.**

**A.** Personally, I am multi-skilled after this experience and professionally I learnt how large teams can collaborate and bring varied skills together to work and deliver to a customer the “wow” factor and experience.

**Q. Some key guidance and advice you would like to suggest to HR practitioners to enable them too, to have their best moments.**

**A.** Influence and coach people, don’t manage them. Listen well to all your stakeholders. Use the power of digital and innovation to deliver solutions. And of course, connect to treat people with sincerity and care all the time. Carry the stakeholders in this journey of growth and build a sustainable institution with the highest set of values.