

# **FiRE**SiDE

The House Magazine of the Thermax Group Volume 41 No. 3 July - September 2011



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Printed at  
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## Cover

This image uses the sparseness of grey tones to awaken our senses dulled by the riot of colours around us. Freed from the distractions of rainbow tints, we are invited to look again and really see – the texture of sand, the interplay of light and shade, the subtle shades that range between black and white. Elements we might miss at first gaze.

Shot in the Nubra valley of Ladakh, this visual is a homage to the luminous language of early photography and to a haunting landscape retaining its pristine grandeur.


(Photograph by : Devendra Gogate)

Back Cover  
**Thermax boilers  
for Cairn Energy**

## Comment

“ I want to stand as close to the edge as I can  
without going over.  
Out on the edge you see all the kinds of things  
you can't see from the center. ”

– Kurt Vonnegut

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# CONTENTS

2

## What's New ?

Thermax ties up with Amonix to generate power through CPV solar systems  
□ Introduces new products for community cooking and to retrofit ageing pollution control equipment □ Chinese coal mines go for eco-friendly cooling with Thermax chillers □ Thermax forms a partnership with Tecnochem of Italy for construction chemicals.

---

6

## Expressions

In her column, drawing lessons from a rogue trader's experience and the way a boarding school welcomes its new students, Meher Pudumjee focuses on organisational culture and the need for transparency.

---

8

## Up Close

In a chat with A. M. Roshan, Sulgkshana Sule from WWS Proposals talks about the need to see oneself as a professional and the importance of doing something with one's own head and hands.

---

10

## Round up/Limelight

Chemical division launches green chemicals □ Thermax plans to revitalise its business prospects in Africa □ Introduces Mobiserve for faster service □ New travelling grate with Lambion technology launched □ Women's day out at Tamhini □ Knowledge sharing on products with customers □ And achievements of employees and their children.

---

19

## Signposts

This excerpt from Phil Rosenzweig's book *The Halo Effect* explores how delusions make it difficult for us to understand the true nature of business success, and how explanations based on past financial performance often feed the busy manager's search for tidy plug-and-play solutions.

---

25

## Voices

Sekar narrates how thoughtful appeals based on little observed facts can find more generous responses from people □ Sharing his learning from 37 years in Thermax, Ramani writes about the importance of letting go □ And the editor reflects on oxymorons that play hide and seek with meaning.

---

28

## Slice-of-life

A site that documents the delightful turns of Indian English and other South Asian quirks of language □ A café that offers mid day meals and accepts whatever customers can afford, or their services □ And a poster on devices for self-

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# Thermax ties up with Amonix: To offer CPV solar systems for power generation



*At the press conference announcing the tie up: a game changing solar technology*

## WHAT'S NEW?

**T**hermax signed an agreement with Amonix, Inc. of USA in August 2011 to bring concentrated photovoltaic (CPV) technology for clean power generation to India. This partnership will offer turnkey solutions to customers in India – high performance solar power generation systems from Amonix and engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) expertise from Thermax.

Amonix is a world leader in the design and manufacture of CPV technology. Its CPV solar power systems make use of highly efficient solar cells originally developed for aerospace applications. The technology uses advanced optics to focus sunlight onto multijunction solar cells. Compared to conventional solar technologies, it requires no water, uses land more efficiently and thus generates more energy from a given area at low production costs.

M. S. Unnikrishnan, MD and CEO of Thermax, highlighting the technology leadership of Amonix said, "This technology will be a game changer in solar power generation because of its substantially high efficiency. India, with its higher solar incidence, is an ideal location for CPV technology."

Amonix systems can be deployed quickly. They offer 31% module efficiency and 29% system efficiency, significantly higher than competing solar technologies such as crystalline silicon and thin film.

Brian Robertson, Chief Executive Officer and a board director at Amonix, Inc. expressed his team's keenness to work with Thermax to enable developers to build efficient solar projects. "As an organization committed to designing and manufacturing high performance cost-effective CPV solar power systems, we are happy that our world-class technology will be supported by the strong delivery track record, supply chain and construction experience of Thermax," he said.

Concentrated photovoltaic technology will help to meet the goals of the Indian government's Solar Mission, an integral part of the initiative to respond to the global challenge of climate change. The first phase of the Mission aims to commission 1000MW of grid-connected solar power projects by 2013. The new solar technology can play a useful role in achieving these targets efficiently.



*An Amonix Solar CPV installation: more energy at low production costs*







*Installing the chiller : efficiency and versatility*

## Thermax chillers for Chinese coal mines

heat from two gas engines generating power. These two Deutz engines (1.4 MW each) use coal bed methane as fuel, and the chiller recovers heat from their exhaust and jacket hot water to deliver 860 TR at 5°C chilled water outlet temperature.

The chiller, first-of-its-kind in China, is designed to handle exhaust gases from the two engines together, without mixing them. The Thermax chiller working in tandem with an electrical system cools the mining area, underground offices and rest rooms.

Thermax has also supplied three chillers to Dingji coal mine. By mid 2012, it will be supplying nine more chillers to the same mining group. The chillers are being manufactured at the facility of Thermax Zhejiang Limited, near Shanghai.

**A**s China modernises its coal mines, Thermax chillers are playing a useful role with their energy-efficiency and versatility. Four of them have already been installed and nine more will be commissioned in a year's time.

In Huainan region's Panyi coalmine, approximately 400 km east of Shanghai, Thermax has installed a chiller to run on the waste

## SolPac 50: Tapping the sun for community cooking

**T**he Solar group unveiled a dish cooker to cater to the community cooking needs of hostels, industrial canteens, cafeterias, dharamshalas, ashrams and religious retreats.

SolPac 50, the solar cooker, has a parabolic dish mounted on a platform with a cooking vessel of approx. 30 litres capacity. It was tested at the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy's (MNRE) authorised test centre. SolPac has a thermal efficiency of 58%.

On clear days, the dish can hygienically cook rice, noodles, dal, vegetables and meat within an hour for 60-70 people in one batch. It can be easily assembled, and saves on fuel costs. For the buyer, investment is returned in less than a year.



*Solar cooker : hygienic fuel saver*

SolPac can also be useful for rural communities that don't have access to LPG or power.

Thermax has been expanding its solar energy applications to include comfort and process cooling, furnace oil heating, laundry, metal pre treatment and LPG vapourisation. Steam cooking, one such application, gets a boost with SolPac.

## **ComboFilter:** **Retrofits for greening industry**

**T**hermax has come up with ComboFilter, an innovative technology that can help ageing pollution control equipment meet stringent environment norms.

Several industrial units – cement, steel and power plants – had installed electrostatic precipitators (ESPs) for emission control. These systems had been designed for emission levels up to  $150 \text{ mg/Nm}^3$ . The revised norms from pollution control boards are at  $30 \text{ mg/Nm}^3$  and industries also have to deal with changes in process inputs, inferior quality coal and increase in capacity.

Installing a new ESP is costly and space could be a major constraint. Add to these, the costs of long shutdowns and production

loss. ComboFilter, the new technology from Thermax's Enviro division overcomes these problems by retrofitting old ESPs. Some of the ESP fields are converted to fabric filter thus combining the functions of an ESP and a bag filter.

The existing installation is fully used and no extra space or civil work is needed. And there is no need to modify gas inlet and ducting. Shutdowns are minimised to 45 days and dust emission is reduced to  $10 \text{ mg/nm}^3$ . For industries like cement, the product achieves futuristic environment norms and product recovery.

Thermax recently commissioned its first ComboFilter at a sponge iron plant with a 90 TPH AFBC boiler.



*ComboFilter at the client's site : innovative pollution control equipment*

# Thermax inks agreements for Construction Chemicals



**T**hermax has signed a technology transfer agreement for construction chemicals with Tecnochem Italiana SpA, a leading Italian company with an extensive range of state-of-the-art products. The agreement was signed by S. Ramachandran, Executive Vice President of Thermax and Francesco Rosignoli, Vice President of Tecnochem.

These specialty chemicals are used both in the pre and post construction phases to protect, repair and improve concrete. They will support the booming construction activity in India that demands sophisticated construction techniques and shorter time frames for large projects. Says S. Ramachandran, "The agreement will help us offer world class chemical technology for infrastructure development projects. This environment friendly technology enables efficient deployment of energy and water resources."

The new range of construction chemicals when added to cement and concrete reduces energy consumption, and improves the efficiency of the manufacturing process. They help in reducing the use of water, and substitute environmentally harmful additives like fly ash.

Tecnochem has over 30 years of experience in manufacturing and servicing high quality products for cement, minerals and construction sectors in 70 countries. "We see a huge potential for construction chemicals in India. We are confident our proven technology and partnership with Thermax will help address this market," states Francesco Rosignoli.

In a related development, Thermax has also inked a technology transfer agreement with Gruppo Chimico Dalton SpA. for certain intermediaries used in the manufacture of construction chemicals. Dalton, known for its high quality chemical products, exports to over 40 countries.



*Tecnochem and Thermax teams : addressing the infrastructure sector*

*Dr. Flavio Cambria, Group Director of Dalton with S. Ramachandran : transferring technology*



"These uncertain times also give us an opportunity to think through what is critical and important for Thermax and focus on getting it done... In a fiercely competitive world, a dynamic and sensitive culture can certainly give us that sustainable edge."

In this issue of *Fireside*, I'd like to talk about the culture of organisations and draw lessons from two recent encounters.

Last month, Phero and I had the unique opportunity to listen to a man, who through his actions bankrupted a 233 year old organisation and was sent to prison. I am referring to Nicholas (Nick) Leeson, the "rogue trader" who in the mid-1990s brought down Barings, the oldest investment bank in the United Kingdom. You may wonder why we would want to spend our time listening to such a person. The reason is that after serving a term in prison for his misdeeds and surviving cancer, Leeson has been reflecting on his past and sharing the lessons he learned. We were at one such event.

First, a quick overview of the scandal: from 1992, Leeson, who was Chief Trader in Singapore for Barings Futures, made speculative trades that at first made large profits for Barings and was rewarded with a handsome bonus. But once he started making losses, he used one of Barings' error accounts to book these losses; he increased his volume of trading, level of risk taking and thereby accumulated losses. As he handled both trade and backend operations, he was able to hide this from his superiors. By the end of 1992, these losses exceeded £2 million, which ballooned to £208 million by the end of 1994 and finally £827 million, when it finally collapsed in January 1996 with accumulated losses higher than its capital and reserves.

One would have expected a more cautious approach from a traditional organisation like Barings known for its stodgy culture. But that was not the case. Leeson was all of 25 when the bank sent him to Singapore to head its Futures business in 1992. Leeson was one of the very few in Barings who knew the nuances of this business. Therefore they depended on him to build this business and profit from the new venture.

Subsequent investigations have shown that systems and processes were lax and inadequate at Barings. There had been no Audit committee and when they did bring in an external auditor, the lack of knowledge on the subject was apparent, due to which the auditor depended on Leeson for many of the answers. The same was the case with people who reviewed him from London.

Checks and balances needed within the system were missing.

In his talk, Leeson spoke about the atmosphere of fear within the bank. Although it took risks, mistakes were frowned upon. If a mistake was made, employees would try and find ways to "cover up" for fear of reprimand or loss of jobs. There was little transparency in the organisation. When he started to lose money, he bought more financial assets to try and square off the loss that had been incurred. Unfortunately for him, the volatility of the Japanese markets, where he had a huge exposure compounded with the Kobe earthquake, sealed his fate and brought down the bank.

Leeson's criticism of his former bank has to be taken with a pinch of caution as he was instrumental in its fall. However, my aim here is to learn a few important lessons from his experience and share them with my readers. I have already written about the compelling need for proper systems and processes, checks and balances which by themselves can go a long way in creating an open organisation. However, I would also like to focus on the fear factor and the culture of transparency, critical for any organisation.

It is important that we create an ecosystem within Thermax wherein each of us is keen to make a difference and try out something new that will help us improve. It is equally important that in doing so, should something go wrong, we should also have the comfort of knowing there is a safety net. Such an environment can take us closer to what Rabindranath Tagore beautifully wove together in words – "where the mind is without fear and the head is held high".

People who make genuine mistakes while trying their best should not be made to feel small. The lapse cannot be used as a black mark against them for the rest of their careers. Perhaps, spoken to one-on-one, it may help them to reflect and correct themselves and grow with the organisation. It is only in such a conducive environment that people will experiment in order to raise the bar, stand by their decisions, speak up when things fail and make mid-course corrections. I was reflecting on my own style of handling the failure of others and realise I have a long way to go.

The Tata group of companies has an Innovation Award where they recognise employees who have tried their best, and yet not succeeded. Without tolerance for mistakes, everyone, as it often happens with government departments, will want to play safe. The result would be stagnation in a risk-averse atmosphere.

However, we must also realise that in a commercial organisation like ours, we have a responsibility to all our stakeholders. Therefore we must learn quickly from our mistakes and move on. As my grandfather, Mr. Bhatena used to say, make as many mistakes but never the same mistake twice.



The second instance is about our wonderful experience with the culture at a boarding school called Kodaikanal International School (KIS). Our son Zahaan who has just completed his Xth Std was keen to experience boarding life, so we decided on KIS. The school itself is like an oasis in the crowded hill station of Kodai. Clean and green, it is a place with a "soul." There is a buzz in the air, with students involved in something or the other at all times. Apart from academic excellence, a range of activities – sports and computers, basic Christianity and ethics, outings and giving back to society – provide the children a holistic education.

Entering the school for the orientation, new children and their parents felt that the school demonstrated that "we care". They corresponded with us promptly and efficiently before we reached Kodai, gave each of us our tags and a folder with all the information we needed. A student took us around the campus in groups and answered our questions. A senior student allocated, wrote to the new student prior to his arrival, to make a new student feel welcome and get to know at least one other person as they come into a new and strange environment.

After a three-day induction for the kids and parents, we were given access to a software programme that updates us on the happenings at the school. It enables parents to track the progress of children, see their grades, their disciplinary record, what they are being fed through the week, which outings they have signed up for and so on – conveying again, a sense of belonging.

Why do I talk about this process of welcome

in *Fireside*? It could help us reflect once again on whether we are creating a warm environment for our new recruits. Do we make them feel special and wanted? Are we constantly updating our induction training programme to make it meaningful in today's context? Perhaps we could assign a buddy for every engineer trainee so that they get to know at least one other person before entering Thermax. Planning such a welcome would also subconsciously help to create in us a sensitive and quietly efficient mindset. Let me leave this as something to reflect and act on.

We have so much going for us as an organisation. Many who have left Thermax speak very fondly of the culture we have created. At Dubai, we are touched by the number of former Thermax employees who have formed a club. They look forward to meeting us and are always there to help us. I meet our engineer trainees / new recruits within a few weeks of their joining. Each year I hear them say they are thrilled to have joined Thermax, and I jokingly say this is their honeymoon period. So we are obviously doing many things right to nurture our cherished values. How do we sustain the sense of freshness and excitement they feel and extend it to all our colleagues, suppliers and channel partners so that they feel proud of brand Thermax?

Today, there is so much turmoil in the world around us. Apart from the economic troubles of the US and Europe, we have our own soaring interest rates affecting the viability of projects especially in the capital goods sector. Add to it the corruption issues that dampen sentiment and future investment in the country. Plus, the Chinese and Koreans are already here with lower prices and faster delivery schedules. However, these uncertain times also give us an opportunity to think through what is critical and important for Thermax and focus on getting it done. It is our wake up call. In a fiercely competitive world, a dynamic and sensitive culture can certainly give us that sustainable edge.

My greetings to all of you for this festive season.

With best wishes,

**Meher Pudumjee**



**"Without tolerance for mistakes, everyone, as it often happens with Government departments, will want to play safe. The result would be stagnation in a risk-averse atmosphere."**

Sulakshana Sule,  
Divisional Manager at  
Water & Waste  
Solutions, chats with  
A.M.Roshan on how a  
professional attitude  
can help you get  
through regrets.

## “You should see yourself and then

In the Fireside interviews held over eight years and 34 quarterly issues, only two women have been featured – Anu and Meher. Before thoughts of editorial bias or organisational prejudice cross your mind, it is worthwhile to keep in mind a survey that CII conducted a few years ago, covering 149 member companies. It showed that on an average, medium and large companies had only 6% women on their rolls. Though focused recruiting has brought in more women, Thermax's situation reflects the survey findings.

When I drop in at her Water and Waste Solutions (WWS) office in Sai Chambers to plan this interview, Sulakshana Sule is in the middle of hectic activity, juggling phone calls, discussing with a colleague the important points for an email that had to be sent just then. She requests me to wait. Heading the proposals group for industrial projects at WWS, she oversees multiple documents that are sent, any given day, to business houses.

We meet the next day at the corporate office, away from the phones.

Sulakshana remembers that in the 1980s when she did her mechanical engineering course at the Government Polytechnic there were only three women among the batch of 180. Today, she is happy to see many more women when she is on her campus recruitment trips. “They are so confident and bold today. Those days, we knew our subject, but were not trained on group discussions and such other things.”

She wanted to follow her elder sister, who went to study medicine. But unfortunately, she narrowly missed the selection process. “But I was good at Mathematics too. Once I joined engineering, I never felt discouraged and decided to concentrate on what I had chosen.”

One of the big regrets of her life is that she couldn't go for a B. Tech course at the Kansas State University where she qualified through a scholarship from the India Foundation. “That was a different time and my father said no.

Today I tell youngsters not to discontinue higher studies, planning it for some later stage.” Her own daughter, Pallavi, after completing engineering is pursuing an MBA in Finance.

After completing her course, she worked briefly with Western India, moving on to Ion Exchange. She was the first lady engineer, taken in after a series of interviews and an assurance that she would continue with interest. “At the time of interview I was expecting our first child and naturally I had told them I would soon be going on maternity leave. For those who recruited me then, I guess it was an act of faith,” she clarifies. Sulakshana would remain with Ion Exchange for over nine years, earning appreciation for her work.

There are many accomplished women who wouldn't want their 'gender' tagged to their work; who would like to be known as painters, scientists or filmmakers. I ask her if she finds it patronising the way 'women professionals' are discussed today.

“I am glad that I haven't been disadvantaged or helped as a woman, at Thermax.” She is crisp in capturing the sense of appropriateness that affects a woman at the work place. “I am glad I have not been asked to travel to remote Bihar or Jharkhand. On my part, I too haven't brought up my personal inconvenience or family issues when I am asked to travel from Pune to any place.” She feels that as long as one gets a safe place to stay, there shouldn't be any reservations on travel. The Thermax guest houses are a big comfort for her, as it is good to be among colleagues and friends at a place away from home.

Besides travel that helped her meet a whole range of customers, the varied responsibilities entrusted to her at Thermax broadened her vistas. “This place has given me the opportunity to develop myself as a professional. One needs a conducive atmosphere and the freedom to be independent. These I have experienced here,” she says.

Professionalism is a word Sulakshana uses frequently in the middle of our conversation. She remembers her early years in Thermax when, on some evenings she would go home, feed her children and come back to complete some proposal, with her colleagues, that had to be submitted the next day. She says that her colleagues were considerate and she is

UP CLOSE

# If as a professional first, a woman"

also particular that she should not take them for granted. "You should see yourself as a professional first and then a woman," is the thought she would like to leave with the women who constitute 30% of her team.

On a reflective note she says that in her young days, or today, for a woman to succeed as a professional, "support from one's own family is most important." She talks about her husband, Rajiv, a dermatologist who looks after the study needs of their son, Soumitra who is in Class 12. "He has always been considerate about my assignments and my timings," she says. Sulakshana is grateful for the moral values she inherited from her parents and acknowledges the vital role played by her mother who has always stood behind her, throughout her career.

While she is impressed by the confidence and boldness of the young lot, Sulakshana is also wary of their tendency to rely entirely on automation. She says that unless one is aware of contexts, it is easy to feel lost when a new situation emerges. "After all, water in Bhubaneswar is different from what you get in Pune." She remembers that in her young days, they were encouraged to keep a technical diary. "Doing something with one's own head and hands gives a thoroughness that cannot be substituted by fast work on a computer." It also adds to one's competence and sense of confidence, she explains.

Sulakshana is upbeat about the prospects of Thermax's water business. Having seen the ups and downs of this business in the 13 years

of her Thermax career, she explains the recent business upsurge of WWS as a direct outcome of focused leadership. "Our people and internal infrastructure have not changed. It is the same team. The difference is in the 'can do' confidence that translates to growth. Thanks to our focus, today Thermax is a name to reckon with in the water business."

She says the market for the water business is growing. The real challenge is to motivate and hold our teams together. "For a team like mine where there is a fair share of young people, it is important that I give them challenging and interesting assignments." And there is nothing that can be more beneficial to a young professional than quality time spent with the seniors, she adds.

How does Sulakshana unwind after a tiring day of stiff deadlines at office and demanding family responsibilities? "By seeking solace in God and music", she says. She speaks of another regret of hers, that she didn't study music. "My father used to sing, write poems. It is a loss I didn't invest time in practising music." She opts for the next best course – listening to music. "I like the music of the Burmans, SD and RD. *Is mod se jaate hain* from the film *Aandhi* remains my all-time favourite song", she says happily, the regretful thoughts of an earlier minute already gone...

**"Doing something with one's own head and hands gives a thoroughness that cannot be substituted by fast work on a computer."**





## Green chemistry: assured **plant efficiency** and **clean reputation**

The Chemical division recently launched a range of environment friendly chemicals under the Maxgreen brand. The new green chemicals are offered as replacement for conventional performance chemicals used in industrial heating and cooling applications. While treating corrosion and deposition that adversely affect machine performance, they have the added advantage of being non toxic and biodegradable.

Maxgreen is an example of 'green chemistry', promoting products and processes that reduce or eliminate the use of hazardous substances. It has many eco-friendly advantages: eliminates the cost of sludge disposal, provides protection from corrosion and scaling, conserves water, provides more efficient heat transfer and offers simple and easy operator control. As a result, industry can benefit from longer equipment life, reduced down time and utility cost, and increased plant efficiency.

The reputation of being an environment conscious company is another positive by-product.



## ROUND UP

### Donating blood from a construction site



*At the camp : making every drop count. (inset) Abhijit Dutta.*

A blood donation camp at a construction site sounds unlikely. But an event organised at the captive power plant that Thermax is building for IMFA near Cuttack in Orissa demonstrated that every drop counts. Thermax employees and staff from major contractors and subcontractors donated blood to the Red Cross. They were assisted by a team from

the Cuttack Medical College.

Thermax's Abhijit Dutta, head of civil construction at the site took the lead in organising the camp. A frequent donor himself, his initiative helped many first timers get over their initial reluctance. The camp created a spirit of togetherness among everyone at the site.

## African business calling: Thermax at the India Show



*Partha (left)  
with the  
dignitaries :  
prospects for  
collaboration*

**T**hermax participated in The India Show, organised by CII in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The show was a curtain raiser to the Indo-Africa Summit attended by the Prime Minister of India and Heads of other African nations.

Thermax's business teams presented an overview of their products and solutions at the exhibition. At the conference, Partha Banik, Corporate Regional Manager of Thermax presented a paper on 'African Infrastructure Development: Prospects for Collaboration.'

Union Ministers S.M. Krishna and Anand Sharma, visited the Thermax stall along with senior government officials from South Africa, Senegal, Namibia and Ethiopia.

Thermax at Pharma Tech Expo 2011: Thermax was among the 100 participants at another event, showcasing its products and R & D excellence in supporting the pharma sector of the country.

## Faster service Through Mobiserve



*A Mobiserve message :  
reliable service*

**T**hermax's Service SBU for Cooling and Heating recently launched Mobiserve, a cell phone based service call management system.

A service call from a customer is assigned to a particular service engineer through an SMS. A call acknowledgement is sent to the customer and service engineer with the complaint details. After visiting the site, the service engineer updates the complaint status through his cell phone with details of the problems, corrective action and resolution. Resolution details are then sent to the customer through an SMS.

Mobiserve links the service engineers of the SBU with customers throughout the country. This service tool is a useful initiative in the engineering industry. It can extend Thermax's customer support through reliable service. The team is at work enhancing the effectiveness of the service through further upgrades.

## Engaging with the Customer

**F**orty Thermax customers from India and abroad attended a training program organised on steam engineering systems. At the session held at EERC, Chinchwad, the Services SBU (C&H) team took the participants through the basics of steam, steam utilisation and condensate systems.

This knowledge sharing program is designed to help customers improve performance and reduce costs on their equipment through latest engineering techniques.

*Participants at one of the meets :  
knowledge sharing*



Similar customer engagement sessions were held in other regions. In Kochi, participants could get familiar with efficiency improving products and services from Thermax. Another meet in Baddi, Himachal Pradesh brought customers from pharma and textile companies face to face with Thermax teams.

*Planting  
saplings at  
the factory :  
a green step*



**O**n 5th June Thermax's Savli plant in Gujarat celebrated World Environment Day. In its fourth successive year, and in keeping with their 'Save the trees, save the environment' theme, Thermax staff along with the Rotary Club of Baroda planted 200 trees in the factory premises.



## Savli focuses on environment and health

In another initiative, the health centre at the factory has begun weekly distribution of Chloroquine tablets to employees as a preventive measure against malaria. Based on the WHO (World Health Organization) guidelines, the Savli plant is working to take care of employees' health to make them productive and happy.

## Knowledge Empowered Customers



*Bonding  
with Shellmax  
users : Better  
understanding  
of products.*

The Channel Management Group conducted a two day training program for customers of Shellmax boilers in Pune. The program included discussions on boiler basics, construction and accessories, water treatment, safety controls and condensate recovery systems, and later, a factory visit.

At the session were 17 teams such as Toyota Kirloskar Motors, Oberoi Hotels and Resorts, Nestlé India, TechNova Imaging System, Apollo Tyres, Aventis Pharma and Texport Syndicate. New customer requirements generated during the program were recorded and similar training programmes are being rolled out for other products.

## Prize winning paper from Thermax IPPTA Seminar



*Vivek at the  
seminar :  
technologies  
for paper  
industry*

Vivek from the Chemical division presented a paper at the Indian pulp and paper technical association's (IPPTA) zonal seminar held at Lucknow. The topic he presented was 'De-inking of paper – Novel technologies and methodologies'.

The paper, jointly written with Sameer Rajee, also of Thermax Chemicals has also been published in the official international journal

of IPPTA. The authors won a cheque and a trophy that proudly stands on display in the Chemical division's office in Pune.

300 professionals from the paper industry attended the seminar which included researchers, production heads, suppliers and quality control personnel. V.N. Gangi, principal secretary to the U.P. government for industrial development and information technology was the chief guest.

## Lambion combustion technology launched

The waste-to-energy technology based on the transfer license agreement that Thermax signed with Lambion Energy Solutions (Germany) in May 2010 is now ready to support Indian customers. On 16th September, 2011, the Heating Division launched the Thermax-Lambion reciprocating grate at a function presided by M.S. Unnikrishnan, MD and CEO.

With the launch, Thermax fills a void in the market, addressing the long felt need for boilers that can burn difficult biomass – poor fuel with low density and calorific value,

*Unny with the beating team : a reciprocating grate to respond to market needs*



high moisture level and ash. Boilers equipped with the grate will facilitate the efficient burning of multiple fuels, promising clients higher equipment reliability and longer life. The Lambion technology optimises combustion to reduce emission, increase efficiency, and reduce slagging and fouling.

The Lambion grate's fuel flexibility could deal with inconsistent supply and seasonal variation of fuel. Says V. Radhakrishnan, the Heating Chief, "We have several enquiries and look forward to doing robust business in the coming months."

## Nitin takes over as Chemical & Water Service Chief



Nitin Umrani has recently joined Thermax as the SBU chief for Chemical & Water Solutions & Services.

Nitin's 29 years of experience spans companies like Premier Automobiles, L&T, ITW Signode India, Kirloskar Brothers and DGP Windsor India. He was General Manager-Marketing with Fouress Engineering India Ltd., Mumbai, before he took up the Thermax assignment.

A mechanical engineer from the Government College of Engineering, Karad, Nitin has also attended courses in sales, projects and strategic initiatives from several reputed institutes.

He enjoys boating, brisk walking, cricket and travelling the country side.

Nitin is married to Bhavana who works for a bank. His daughter, Shefali studies biomedical engineering and son, Chinkle works as an electronics engineer.

*Fireside* welcomes Nitin to Thermax, and wishes him a mutually rewarding career with us.

## Time out for women



*Picnicing at  
Tambini :  
getting away*

**T**here are times a woman needs to put aside everyone else's needs, focus on herself and perhaps, climb up a waterfall in heavy rain. 45 ladies from Thermax got together to do just that.

The women resourcefully organised a day trip to Tambini on the Sahyadri range, 70 kms from Pune. The picnic was a day well spent amidst verdant hills and each other's company. There was dancing to Bollywood

tracks, a nature walk and piping savoury snacks. The highlight, of course, was the climb up the swollen hill stream to the waterfall. The team enthusiastically braved the heavy showers, slippery stones and overgrown foliage to make it to the top of the hill for a breathtaking view of the cascading waterfall. It was worth every bruise and aching bone.

## Award for Power O&M team at MCL



*The winning  
Thermax team :  
laurels for plant  
safety and  
housekeeping*

**A**t Madras Cement Limited (MCL), Jayanthipuram, the Thermax power O&M team won second place for 'Plant safety and housekeeping' from the Deputy Director and regional inspector of factories, Andhra Pradesh. The MCL audit teams assessed safety conditions for men and machinery, personal protective equipment

and presentability of the location before announcing the winners at the safety week celebrations.

The 36 MW Jayanthipuram plant is one of five repeat orders bagged by Thermax from MCL. The combined 157 MW projects include long term O&M contracts that have been extended.

## Cool aid solutions to the polymer industry



*Anupam  
Maheshwari (left)  
and the Thermax  
chiller : improved  
heat recovery*

**T**hermax's cooling SBU recently supplied a unique continuous polymerisation vapour absorption chiller to Ester Industries, a polyester textile manufacturer in North India.

Continuous polymerization (CP) is a process where more than 80% of polyester is produced. In a CP plant, raw material is constantly fed into the reactor and polymer is continuously removed. At Ester, vapour generated during the process is directly taken to the Thermax chiller instead of the conventional heat exchanger to recover heat. The chilled water generated is used to cool the fibre. The improved heat recovery has reduced operational cost and carbon footprint.

Says Anupam Maheshwari, Head of Engineering Services at Ester, "Thermax chiller has been performing satisfactorily. Other companies are enquiring about the performance of the machine and its energy conservation."

## Adding innovation to maintenance

**T**hermax is looking after the Operation & Maintenance of a Demineralisation (DM) plant at Sterlite Industries' refinery unit in Tuticorin. The plant had earlier been built and commissioned by Thermax's Chemical and Water Services (CWSS) team in 2007.

Sterlite had earlier entrusted a local service provider with the O&M contract. Frequent quality and manpower issues persuaded the



*Sasikaran accepting the award :  
consistent service*

company to turn to the CWSS. Today, Sterlite is happy with the consistent service and output that the Thermax team ensures, plus the on-going safety and technical training it conducts.

Facility Manager Sasikumar from Thermax's plant maintenance team implemented an innovative plan to increase outlet water from the DM plant. He won a cash award from Sterlite for this work.





*Prachi  
Pendse*

## Merit lister, Prachi

**P**rachi, a 5th standard student from SPM English School was a merit lister in Pune in the Middle School Scholarship examination conducted by Maharashtra State Council of Examinations in March 2011. Prachi enjoys classical music, painting and aspires to be a scientist. She is the daughter of Pradnya and Vishwas Pendse from Heating.

## Revati, academic achiever

**E**leven year old Revati stood sixth in the state level merit list of Maharashtra State Fourth Standard Scholarship Exam - 2011. She also secured the 16th national rank in the examination conducted by the Institution for Promotion of Mathematics. Revati, who also enjoys dancing and drawing, is the daughter of Rupali and Satyawani Sawant from Cooling.



*Revati  
Sawant*

## Math whizzes, Navani and Anshul

**S**ixth standard student Navani Niharika stood 24th in the all India rank and 3rd in the state rank in the National Science Talent Search examination (NSTSE) conducted by Unified Council. She is among the list of achievers for the NSTSE examination. She also bagged the 17th rank in the scholarship examination conducted by the Institute for Promotion of Mathematics. Her brother, second standard student Anshul Arnav is also among top 100 rankers in Maharashtra for NSTSE. They are the children of Bharti and R. S. Jha from Heating.



*Navani Jha*



*Anshul Jha*

## Lion heart, Ayan

**A**yan Paul, a Class VII student of St. Xavier's Institution, Panihati, was one of the recipients of the Telegraph School Awards for Excellence, 2011 in Kolkata. He won the Surrendra Paul Memorial Award for Courage in the face of a debilitating illness.

Ayan suffers from Guillain Barre Syndrome, a disorder that strikes the nervous system. The 12-year-old insisted on climbing the four steps to the stage to accept his award. Ayan is the son of Soma and Shanti Paul, a Chemical and Water division site engineer.



*Ayan Paul*

## He's Dr. Sudhanshu now



*Sudhanshu  
Agrawal*

**S**udhanshu Agrawal from the Chemical division based in the Delhi regional office, was awarded a Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in March 2011 by M.J.P. Rohilkhand University, Bareilly (UP). His research topic was "Studies on the toxicity of certain chemicals Lindane, Malathion and Methyl amine on water and aquatic fauna." He has been with Thermax since 2008.

## Arun is a material and logistics pro

**A**run Patil scored a first class in the Post Graduate Diploma in Material & Logistics Management from the Pune University in July 2011. Arun has been with Thermax since 2006 and currently works with B & H division in Material (Stores & Shipping).



*Arun Patil*

# THE HALO EFFECT

*Phil Rosenzweig's insightful book, The Halo Effect looks at the delusions that influence and shape business thinking. These delusions distort the perspectives of the corporate world and of the business press and academic research as well. Using a variety of examples from recent decades, Rosenzweig explains why explanations of business success remain elusive. An excerpt from the book on the first of the delusions...*



SIGNPOSTS

**F**or all the secrets and formulas, for all the self-proclaimed thought leadership, success in business is as elusive as ever. It's probably more elusive than ever, with increasingly global competition and technology change moving at faster and faster rates – which might explain why we're tempted by promises of breakthroughs and secrets and quick fixes in the first place. Desperate circumstances push us to look for miracle cures.

In part it's a marriage of convenience. Managers are busy people, under enormous pressure to deliver higher revenues, greater profits, and ever larger returns for shareholders. They naturally search for ready-made answers, for tidy plug-and-play solutions that might give them a leg up on their rivals. And the people who write

business books – consultants and business school professors and strategy gurus – are happy to oblige.

But there's more going on than just laziness or greed. Many thoughtful people work very hard to pinpoint the reasons for company success. If they have trouble finding definitive answers, we ought to ask why. Why is it so hard to determine the factors that lead to high performance? Why is it that even clever minds that earnestly want to uncover the secrets of success don't find solid answers – even when they gather huge amounts of data about hundreds of companies over many years? Is there something about the way we ask the question, or the way we go about trying to find answers, that keeps us from getting it right?

Our thinking about business is shaped by a number of delusions. The delusions I describe here are promises that you can achieve great success if you just do one thing or another, but they're fundamentally flawed.

## Halos All Around Us

During World War I, an American psychologist named Edward Thorndike was conducting research into the ways that superiors rate their subordinates. In one study, he asked army officers to rate their soldiers on a variety of features: intelligence, physique, leadership, character, and so on. He was struck by the results. Some men were thought to be "superior soldiers" and were rated highly at just about everything, while others were thought to be subpar across the board. It was as if officers figured that a soldier who was handsome and had

good posture should also be able to shoot straight, polish his shoes well, and play the harmonica, too. Thorndike called it the Halo Effect.

There are a few kinds of Halo Effect. One refers to what Thorndike observed, a tendency to make

inferences about specific traits on the basis of a general impression. It's difficult for most people to independently measure separate features; there's a common tendency to blend them together. The Halo Effect is a way for the mind to create and maintain a coherent and consistent picture, to reduce cognitive dissonance. Here's a recent example: In the autumn of 2001, after the September 11 attacks, George W. Bush's overall approval rating rose sharply. No surprise there, as the American public closed ranks behind its president. But the number of Americans who approved of President Bush's handling of the economy also rose—from 47 percent to 60 percent. Now, whether or not you like Bush's economic policies, there's no reason to believe that his handling of the economy was suddenly better

in the weeks after September 11. But it's hard to keep these things separate: General approval of the president carried over to approval of a specific policy. The American public conferred a Halo on its president and made favorable attributions across the board. After all, it's uncomfortable for many people to believe that their president might be good on issues of national security but ineffective on the economy—it's far easier to think he's about the same for both. And what goes up can also come down. By October 2005, with public support for the Iraq War fading and in the wake of Hurricane Katrina's devastation, President Bush's overall approval rating sank to 37 percent, down from 41 percent in August 2005. Interestingly, Americans also gave the president lower marks on every specific question in the poll...

This sort of Halo Effect shows up in many places. One of the companies I work with gets thousands of calls every day to its customer support center. Sometimes the problems can be solved right away, but often the service representative has to look into the matter and call back later. When the company subsequently surveyed its customers to see how satisfied they had been with the support center, customers whose problem had been solved right away rated the service representative as more knowledgeable than did customers whose problem had not been solved. That's not surprising, since it's reasonable to infer that a quick solution came from a well-informed rep. But here's what's more intriguing: 58 percent of customers whose problem had been solved right away remembered that their call had been answered "immediately" or "very quickly," while only 4 percent remembered having been kept waiting "too long." Meanwhile, of those customers whose problem had not been solved right away, only 36 percent remembered their call had been answered "immediately" or "very quickly," while 18 percent recalled they had waited "too long." In fact, the company had an automated answering system and there was no difference in waiting time between the two groups. Rather, an overall impression about customer service created a powerful Halo Effect that shaped perceptions about waiting time.

Financial performance looks to be accurate and objective. Numbers don't lie, we like to say—which is why Enron, Tyco, and a handful of other recent scandals shake our confidence so deeply. We routinely trust financial performance figures. And it's natural that on the basis of this performance data, people make attributions about other things that are less tangible and objective.

# THE HALO EFFECT

But the Halo Effect is also a sort of rule of thumb that people use to make guesses about things that are hard to assess directly. For example, we may not know if a new product is good, but if it comes from a well-known company with an excellent reputation, we might reasonably infer it should be of good quality. That's what brand building is about: creating Halos so that consumers are more likely to think favorably of a product or service.

Now consider companies. What's the most relevant and tangible information we often have about a company? Financial performance, of course. Whether the company is profitable. Whether sales are growing. Whether the price of its stock is on the rise. Financial performance looks to be accurate and objective. Numbers don't lie, we like to say – which is why Enron, Tyco, and a handful of other recent scandals shake our confidence so deeply. We routinely trust financial performance figures. And it's natural that on the basis of this performance data, people make attributions about other things that are less tangible and objective. As long as Cisco was growing and profitable and setting records for its share price, managers and journalists and professors inferred that it had a wonderful ability to listen to its customers, a cohesive corporate culture, and a brilliant strategy. And when the bubble burst, observers were quick to make the opposite attribution. It all made sense. Journalistic hyperbole? To some extent, sure. But more importantly, a natural human tendency to make attributions based on cues that we think are reliable.

## Halos in the Business World

Financial information is far from the only data on which people make attributions. Barry Staw, then at the University of Illinois and later at the University of California, conducted an experiment in which groups of participants were asked to estimate company's future sales and earnings per share based on a set of financial data. Afterward, he told some of the groups they had performed well, making accurate estimates of sales and earnings per share, and told other groups they had performed poorly – but Staw

did so, completely at random. In fact, the "high-performing groups" and the "low-performing groups" had done equally well in their financial calculations; the only difference was what Staw told them about their performance. Then he asked the participants to rate how well their groups had done on a range of issues. The results? When told they had performed well, people described their groups as having been highly cohesive, with better communication, more openness to change, and superior motivation. When told they had performed poorly, they recalled a lack of cohesion, poor communication, and low motivation. Staw concluded that people attribute one set of characteristics to groups they believe are effective, and a very different set of characteristics to groups they believe are ineffective. That's the Halo Effect in action.

Once people – whether outside observers or participants – believe the outcome is good, they tend to make positive attributions about the decision process; and when they believe that outcome is poor, they tend to make positive attributions about the decision process; and when they believe the outcome is poor, they tend to make negative attributions. Why? Because it's hard to know in objective terms exactly what constitutes good communication or optimal cohesion or appropriate role clarity, so people tend to make attributions based on other data that they believe are reliable. Performance is a cue by which people attribute characteristics to groups and to organizations.

Some people doubted whether an experiment that put strangers together for just thirty minutes could accurately capture the perceptions of work groups. A team led by H. Kirk Downey at the University of Oklahoma therefore replicated Staw's study, using the exact same set of financial problems, but with groups of people who had a prior history of working together, and giving them considerably more time to make their calculations. Again, groups were told – at random – that they had performed well or poorly. The results were virtually the same as in Staw's experiment. All because of the randomly assigned description of performance – nothing more.

## Halos on the People and for the People

The Halo Effect shapes many things, including the attributions we make about an organization's people. It's widely believed that companies that manage their human resources well will outperform those that don't. That was, after all, the idea behind O'Reilly and Pfeffer's book, *Hidden Value: How Great Companies Achieve Extraordinary Results with Ordinary People*. It makes good sense. A company that does an effective job of attracting people, provides them with an environment where they can be productive and creative, and motivates them to work hard for the common good, ought to do well. How could it be otherwise? But watch out for the Halo Effect. If we're not careful, any

successful company can attribute its good results to its people.

Here's a memorable example. In 1983, *Fortune* published its first survey of America's Most Admired Companies. The winner was IBM.

The following year,

in 1984, IBM topped the list again. When asked to describe IBM's strengths, CEO John Opel gave credit to his company's people: "The fundamental thing is that the people who work in the company make it a good company. That's really the secret: the people. It's our good fortune to have superior people who work hard and support each other. They have adapted to our basic set of beliefs – the standard we expect of one another – and follow those standards in dealing with one another and with people outside the company."

That's the way it looked in 1984, and of course it seemed reasonable. Every day, John Opel came to work and found himself surrounded by smart, creative, hardworking people. It was only natural to think that IBM's great people were responsible for its success. But during those same years, IBM

failed to see the growing commoditization of its main business lines – mainframe computer systems and minicomputers. By the end of the 1980s, IBM was slipping badly; and by 1992, it was awash in red ink. Opel's successor, John Akers, was replaced. How did observers explain IBM's poor performance? By pointing the finger at its people and company culture, of course. In *Big Blues: The Unmaking of IBM*, Wall Street Journal reporter Paul Carroll criticized the company's "button-down culture," its "rigid bureaucracy," and its "complacent executives." The same people who were praised in 1984 now were blamed for the decline of a great industrial enterprise. Had they suddenly changed their ways? Probably not. Had the CEO been blind about his people – had they been complacent and rigid all along? I don't think so. John Opel was probably entirely honest when he sensed that he was surrounded by hardworking, excellent people. And they were well-suited for IBM of the 1960s and 1970s. But when the industry changed and IBM missed the turn in the road, its people were on the receiving end of a very different attribution.

## Halos on our Leaders

Perhaps nothing lends itself to the Halo Effect more than leadership. Good leaders are often said to have a handful of important qualities: clear vision, effective communication skills, self-confidence, personal charm, and more. Most people would agree these are elements of good leadership. But defining them is a different matter altogether, since several of these qualities tend to be in the eye of the beholder – which is affected by company performance. While ABB was successful, people said that Percy Barnevik had a clear vision, excellent communication skills, impressive self-confidence, and great charm; and when ABB's fortunes turned, the very same man was demonized as arrogant, too controlling, and abrasive.

Bill George, former CEO of Medtronic, advanced a similar list about leadership in his 2003 book, *Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value*. George wrote that outstanding leaders share a handful of qualities, including steadfast courage, clear vision, personal

Managers are busy people, under enormous pressure to deliver higher revenues, greater profits, and ever larger returns for shareholders. They naturally search for ready-made answers, for tidy plug-and-play solutions that might give them a leg up on their rivals. And the people who write business books – consultants and business school professors and strategy gurus – are happy to oblige.

integrity, and outstanding character. They are authentic leaders. Not surprisingly, all the examples came from successful companies. George also mentioned a handful of failed companies, and their leaders were always inauthentic. Well, you can always find good things to say about leaders at successful companies, and you can always find reasons to criticize leaders of failing firms. A critical reader ought to ask if any successful companies have inauthentic leaders, and if any unsuccessful companies are run by authentic leaders, because if not, it's quite possible we're just throwing around Halos. And very predictably – at least for a book written in 2003 – listed among the inauthentic leaders was none other than Percy Barnevik.

George further explained that a quality of authentic leaders is "a burning passion for their missions" and "a laserlike focus on overcoming barriers." A prominent example? Microsoft's Bill Gates, who "believed so passionately in Microsoft's mission of unifying computing with an integrated set of software that he was willing to fight the U.S. Government with all his might to keep from being broken up." It was easy to applaud Gates's persistence in 2003, when it was clear that Microsoft would not be split apart. But just two years earlier, in 2001, things had looked very different. Microsoft had been found guilty of predatory behavior – hardly something that one normally associates with authentic leadership – and ordered to be broken up by Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson. Gates had been roundly criticized for stubbornly leading his company into an unnecessary and destructive confrontation with the U.S. government, something that could have been avoided with a bit of foresight and diplomacy.

So which was Mr. Gates, authentic or foolhardy? The attributions we made depended on the company's fortunes.

None of this should be very surprising. A serious scholar of leadership, the late James Meindl at SUNY Buffalo concluded after a series of insightful studies that we have no satisfactory theory of effective leadership that is independent of performance. We think we know what good leadership that is independent of performance... Show me a company that delivers high performance, and

I can always find something positive to say about the person in charge – about the clarity of his or her vision, about good communication skills, sound judgment, and integrity. Show me a company that has fallen on hard times, and I can always find some reason to explain why the leader failed.

## Halos in our Surveys

The Halo Effect shapes how individuals think about decision processes, an organization's people, and leadership – and it doesn't go away when we conduct large-scale surveys, either. Quite the contrary: If we're not careful, surveys might be little more than large collections of Halos, much as we saw regarding the assessments of President Bush. Consider Fortune magazine's annual ranking of the World's Most Admired Companies, the one mentioned earlier that named IBM as Most Admired in 1983 and 1984. Every year, Fortune asks thousands of business executives and industry analysts to evaluate hundreds of companies in eight categories: quality of management, quality of products and services, value as a long-term investment, innovativeness, soundness of financial position, ability to attract, develop, and retain talented people, responsibility to the community and environment, and wise use of corporate assets. Mix the answers together and you get the World's Most Admired Companies in each of these categories – as well as the overall winner. It's an impressive effort, and it produces an eye-catching cover story every year. Over the years, Fortune has named not just IBM, but luminaries like General Electric, Wal-Mart, and Dell – a very impressive bunch.

But when some researchers took a closer look, they found that Fortune's Most Admired ratings were heavily influenced by a Halo Effect. Two different studies showed that a company's financial performance explained between 42 percent and 53 percent of the variance of the overall rating. In other words, when a company posts high profits and its stock price is moving upward, the people who fill out Fortune's survey tend to infer that its products and services are of a high quality, that it is innovative and well managed, that it is good at retaining people, and so forth. Cisco offers a case in point. In 1997, the same year Cisco leapt onto the



cover of leading business magazines, it made its first appearance on Fortune's Most Admired list, entering the charts at number fourteen. Then it rocketed upward, reaching number four in 1999 before topping out at number three in 2000. It's no surprise that Cisco rated high for investment value – its stock value was, after all, going stratospheric. But Cisco was rated high for lots of other things, too: quality of management, innovativeness, quality of people, and more. When the tech bubble burst and Cisco's stock fell, in 2001, Cisco's rating as an investment value quite naturally fell. But with the Halo of financial performance tarnished, its ratings fell across the board. Cisco was now less admired for innovativeness, for people, the whole works. Its overall rating dropped to number fifteen in 2001, then twenty-two in 2002 and twenty-eight in 2003.

And there's more. In 1984, an organization called the Great Places to Work Institute made a big splash with a book called *The 100 Best Companies to Work for in America*. Every year since then, it

has compiled the Best Companies to Work For index. Based on these findings, the International Herald Tribune claimed that being a Great Place to Work leads to high performance, noting that the companies on the 1998 list had a total market return (share price plus reinvested dividends) over the next five years of 9.56 percent, compared with a return of 3.81 percent for all the companies on the Standard & Poor 500. The inference was clear: Companies that care about creating a great place to work will attract good people and help them be more productive, leading to superior performance. It all makes good sense. But how did the institute determine what's a great place to work? Simple, they asked employees. Employees were asked to rate their companies on two attributes: trust and culture. The trust index had five elements: credibility, respect, fairness, pride, and

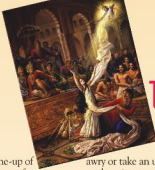
camaraderie. Credibility, in turn, was measured by responses to statements like this: Management keeps me informed about important issues and changes. People around here are given a lot of responsibility. High agreement meant high credibility, which meant a Great Place to Work. Respect was measured by asking for responses to questions like this: Management involves people in decisions that affect their jobs or work environment. I am offered training and development to further myself professionally. Again, high agreement meant respect, which was associated with being a Great Place to Work...

At first glance, this all looks plausible, but it's undermined by the Halo Effect. Companies that are profitable, prosperous, and growing fast will often be perceived as desirable places to work. Again, look at Cisco. It debuted on the charts in 1998 at number twenty-five, then climbed to twenty-third place in 1999. In 2000, when Cisco was briefly the most valuable company in the world, it shot up to third place, where it stayed for two years. Once the layoffs hit and the stock price tanked, how was Cisco rated as a Great Place to Work? It fell to fifteen in 2002, then to twenty-four, and finally twenty-eight in 2004 – not exactly tracking performance, but pretty close. Did Cisco become a worse place to work after 2000? Yes, if we think in terms of employee morale and the chance to get rich. But that's a reflection of performance, not a cause of it. If you don't believe the Fortune and Best Places lists are shaded by the Halo Effect, you have to believe that the people who filled out the surveys are not affected by the same tendency found in participants of Barry Staw's experiment or by journalists at Business week, Fortune and other news publications, which would seem doubtful.

The Halo Effect isn't the only delusion that distorts our thinking about business. We will come across more. But in many ways, it is the most basic delusion of them all. It is a flaw weakening the quality of our data and often diminishing our capability to think clearly about the factors that shape company performance.

— Excerpted from *The Halo Effect... and the Eight Other Delusions That Deceive Managers* by Phil Rosenzweig

Show me a company that delivers high performance, and I can always find something positive to say about the person in charge – about the clarity of his or her vision, about good communication skills, sound judgment, and integrity. Show me a company that has fallen on hard times, and I can always find some reason to explain why the leader failed.



## True Freedom is in Letting Go

In the Mahabharata, a vast line-up of Maharathis present in the court of Dhritharashtra couldn't rescue Draupadi from public dishonour and disgrace. Holding on desperately to her 'pallu' she finally cried out to Krishna for rescue. Said Krishna, "My child, please let go; only then can I rescue". Let go, she did, and there was magic! Take pallu as a metaphor.

Emperor Alexander left behind an unusual instruction for his own funeral: "Bury my body with arms outstretched... palms open." His message was, "I conquered most of the world and amassed immense wealth, yet my physicians could not save me and I leave this world empty handed."

In 1989 as Business Head of the erstwhile Heat Recovery Division, I learned an invaluable lesson about people development from Mr. Aga. "Don't hire a dog and also do the barking – it is a lose-lose leadership style. Learn to let go", he said. That advice has stood in me good stead.

Body cell regeneration is nature's way of letting go. So is spring cleaning. Delegation is also letting go. The message everywhere is clear – holding on is bondage and pain; letting go is freedom and happiness.

This September, as I complete 37 years in this venerable institution, I thought of sharing some of my learnings and one of them is about letting go.

Philosophers have for long eulogised its virtues. But, over time, as humanity spiraled down to an insanely gross society, human conduct descended from freedom to bondage, from letting go to hanging on and from happiness to pain. Ironically, we seem to love the pain. Remember, not long ago, there existed an Indian custom of Vairaprastha, which metaphorically meant, after a certain age I 'let go' of my interest in the material world, leaving it to the next generation and I pursue a 'higher' purpose in life.

Many things happen with 'letting go'. Foremost, it removes the fear factor and fosters love. In addition it encourages team work, empowerment, delegation and fresh thinking – all leading to collective growth.

Firstly, it is all about enjoying the journey as much as the destination. In life we make plans all the time – business plans, personal plans, investment plans, children's plans, even daily and hourly plans. This is a necessary part of life. Now ask yourself, what if these plans go

awry or take an unexpected twist? Will it ruin my happiness or can I shake off the dust and move on? That depends on what has been my outlook on life or my mindset. If I have been 'destination' obsessed or as modern management says 'result oriented', there will be pain. But if I have been 'journey' focused, there will be a natural innate calm. Results depend on a whole lot of things many of which are not within my control, because the 'world stage' where we play our roles has its own incredibly accurate delivery mechanism. What is in our control is the present moment of the 'journey'. So just focus on that one moment, by remaining in the present – and let go of the future and the past. Apply this rule to any situation – an important decision you need to take, an instruction you need to follow, an interview you have to attend, a travel you need to undertake or even something as basic as a debate with your colleague, spouse or boss. Letting go will work like a charm and a win-win will emerge – in a natural way.

Secondly, letting go is about shedding your ego – a word much talked about but least understood. Very simply, ego is "I am ok; you are not". Ego spoils the journey because the attitude is all about 'I' – I should have got the credit; my opinion was not considered; my name will be tarnished; I will be humiliated; that job was mine... As Alexander realized nothing is I, me or mine. Change the I-centered way of thinking to that of a 'trustee'. Quintessentially a trustee is not the owner; he is only keeping something in trust. Then whatever the outcome, good or bad, goes to the owner and not to the trustee. Try this rule and you will experience yourself flying – accomplishing much more with a lot less, with greater accuracy, without feeling exhausted, and empowering your team in the process. Ego makes us control freaks.

Thirdly, letting go is about shedding fear – fear of finding yourself redundant or unwanted. The truth, my dear friends, is exactly the opposite – you are in demand only when you let go, like the proverbial shadow – you keep chasing it when it is in front of you; turn your back on it and the shadow chases you.

And lastly, when you are up against the wall and desperately need a helping hand, learn to 'let go' because, as in the case of Draupadi, 'divine rescue' is possible only when you allow elbow room!

Let go... Be Happy!

## VOICES



**R. V. Ramani**  
Power Division

## One teaspoon less of sugar



**N**ormally, people have good intentions to help but something stops them from acting on their intentions. In such cases, I have realised that trying a different approach to motivate them can greatly help. One such approach is to remind people of the little things they take for granted. I'd like to share some of my experiences appealing to people to open their hearts, and their purses, to the lesser fortunate.

I am a managing committee member of the 10 year old Pune City Tamil Sangam, an organisation that promotes Tamil culture, assists poor children in their education and supports old age homes. We take our role very seriously and it sometimes involves gathering funds for our service activities. One of them was collecting money to pay the annual fees for needy children of SVS School, Khadki.

We had spread the message through word of mouth among members of the group. There was a commitment to pay the fees for 25 children but the response was not encouraging; we sent out a mail to them. It read,

"At the airport, a McDonald's outlet, various eating joints in Pune, Udipi hotels and even the smallest of Amruta tulyas, a cup of tea can cost anything between Rs. 5 to Rs. 50, depending on where you drink it. Having it at home could cost nothing less than Rs.2 per cup, as your spouse doesn't give you a bill for it – but your credit card does gets swapped periodically in lieu of all the affection showered on you! "

We went on to repeat that the annual educational support for an underprivileged child is Rs.1500, the cost of a few cups of tea over a span of a few months. Simple math showed that sacrificing one cup of tea everyday could keep a child in school from the 1st to the 10th standard. Wasn't sacrificing a cup of tea worth shaping the future of a child!

The response to this 10.24 PM email was very good. Ganesh Natarajan, Chairman of

Zensar Technologies confirmed his sponsorship by 10.42 PM and his cheque reached two days later. Many followed.

A cultural program was organized on 4th September at Nehru Hall to promote the activities of the group. During the interval we requested one of the children who received financial help to come on stage. He signed a tea cup with, "Your gesture – Our future" and handed one to each of the donors. The audience was thrilled and many more came forward to extend their help.

Last year, we wanted to help the 70 odd inmates of an old age home in Panvel with groceries. At one of our meetings, we showed the members a simple slide with just two numbers:

2409 and 1095

Then we showed them another slide with these figures:

$365 \times 150 \times 44 = 2409000$

$365 \times 150 \times 20 = 1095000$

365 denote the days in a year and 150 is the number of members present. 44 grams denotes the weight of one handful of raw rice and 20 grams denotes of weight of just one teaspoon of sugar.

Going by this simple math, if each member could sacrifice a handful of rice and a teaspoon of sugar from their daily consumption for a year, we would have 2.5 tons of rice and 1.1 tons of sugar, more than enough to help the old age home. This explanation conveyed how fortunate we are to lead a cushy lifestyle. It reminded us that even with our limited resources little things can go a long way in helping others who have far less than we do. The power of facts also did the trick. We received enough rice, dal, sugar, oil in kind and cash to support the old age home at Panvel.

Yes, most people are generous. It is only that sometimes you have to present an idea differently and put the situation into perspective, to convert the generous intention into a generous action.



**S. Sekar**  
MD's office

**G**andhigiri, the phrase from writer-director Raju Hirani fuses contrasting concepts: a Mumbai don as a Gandhian; and the Mahatma leading us on to words like dadagiri and goondagiri. Both the phrase and the Gandhian avatar of Munnabhai himself are oxymorons: essentially a contradiction in terms. Like 'true lies', 'amicable divorce' or 'living dead.'

It was in Dehradun in the mid '80s, at the beginning of my corporate life, that I had an early encounter with oxymorons. When I complained about the rip-off rates a mechanic charged for my two wheeler, a senior Punjabi colleague comforted me saying he is yet to come across an honest mechanic. The sense of absence conveyed by "honest mechanic" alerted me to a new stock of situations and words.

Though oxymoronic, Munnabhai in Mahatma's footsteps fascinates us – especially when the search for Gandhi in today's India is like looking for God at the stock exchange. Is it the yearning for something rare or absent that inspires oxymorons? Not always. They spring from many sources. Sometimes, from the urge to announce that the emperor has no clothes. Look at these classic examples:

Military intelligence. Government work. Business ethics.

There, you have three powerful institutions made to look absurd. Sitting ducks before the human wish to question humbug, to thrust a pin on inflated egos. Again, our attention is invited to desirable attributes (intelligence, ethics, etc.) by underlining their absence.

Many oxymorons are created by the lazy or careless use of language. When you nod vigorously and say 'almost exactly' or stand aghast 'absolutely unsure' when you hear someone is 'almost pregnant' you add to a growing list of oxymorons. And when you are asked to give an accurate estimate, or an objective opinion, you are clearly confused. In such situations, helpful advice could come your way telling you to act natural. If you have noticed the oxymorons littered across the last two sentences, it gives a fair idea that many of

us are willing contributors.

Sometimes oxymorons, like black humour, could be a way of coping with helplessness or the stress of change. In a world simmering in conflicts, 'United Nations' becomes just a name for an impossible wish. In this age of downsizing, any talk of 'job security' is like carrying a comb for self protection in a war zone. Recently, 'affordable housing' moved into the realm of fairy tales that middle class adults like to cling to.

Modern warfare, business and advertising have created styles of communication that say a lot without conveying anything much. Thus you have expressions like negative growth, mandatory option, clean coal and standard deviation. Here, words are not used to clarify and illuminate, but to fog and cloud meaning. In the wonderland of military and diplomatic jargon, we don't raise our eyebrows anymore when we hear about friendly fire or a just war.

Advertisers and product sellers promote 'fresh frozen' stuff and diet ice creams. Today's world has 'new and improved' products, artificial grass, plastic glass. No longer content with life around us, many of us are logged into virtual reality. And seem to agree with Andy Warhol's line that 'I am a deeply superficial person.'

As a society, we are attuned to live with dissonance. Many years ago, the way we continue with the contradictory pulls and pressures of our national life prompted J.K.Galbraith to call India a "functioning anarchy" – again a concept that asks you to juggle two opposing ideas at the same time. Look at Hinglish, the accepted lingo of much of urban India and advertisers who track their preferences. While English borrowed words from all over the world, we chutnified two languages, English and Hindi, that were expected to retain their caste purity. Out of necessity or inclination, we celebrate contradictions.

Are we a nation of wise fools?

## **Gandhigiri and other Oxymorons**

A. M. Roshan

# samosapedia and our English

## SLICE OF LIFE

**Y**our neighbours have blamed you for "eating their head." Your colleague is looking for a "convented, homely girl." Your friend wants you to come to his "passing out" ceremony.

A glimpse of the breadth of influences in contemporary Indian English can be found at the delightfully-named Samosapedia. The website modestly describes itself as "the definitive guide to South Asian lingo." Over 2,500 words and phrases have been added since its launch in June 2011.

Samosapedia is fun and fascinating: A "chaddi buddy" (literally: underwear friend) is someone you've known since childhood; "kabab mein haddi" (lit: a bone in the kebab) is a third wheel with better imagery. Some phrases come from regions, sub-cultures and even neighbourhoods. "Talking-shalking" highlights the Punjabi fondness for

rhyme. "Sandra from Bandra" is a stereotype from a predominantly Catholic suburb of Mumbai.

The entries offer an insight into India's changing culture. "Love-cum-arranged marriage" happens where parents set you up on a date hoping affection will blossom into nuptials, letting them brag of their traditional values and you of your progressive ways.

At work, while meetings get postponed all over the world, only in South Asia do they get "preponed". Your colleague is a 'tubelight' when like a flickering fluorescent bulb, he is slow to see the light. And when you pay the ultimate tribute to native genius and lateral thinking, when there's a will and a way, it's 'jugaad'.

*Sourced from  
The Economist  
and The Huffington Post*

## Eat with dignity

**I**nside the pleasingly aromatic SAME Cafe in Denver, the spirit of generosity is instantly apparent: A slotted donation box stands in place of a cash register. Customers here pay only what they can afford, no questions asked. A risky business plan, perhaps, but SAME (it stands for So All May Eat) Cafe has an unassailable mission: Open only at midday, the restaurant provides needy residents with nutritious, delicious lunches six days a week. Diners unable to pay for their meals can instead volunteer as servers, dishwashers, and prep cooks or offer other maintenance services.

'It's based on trust, and it's working,' says co-owner Brad Birky, who started the cafe with his wife, Libby, in 2006. As veteran volunteers at soup kitchens, the Birkys lamented the often unhealthy meals they served there.

...The luncheonette now averages 65 to 70 customers (and eight volunteers) a day. And the spirit of generosity behind the enterprise appears to be infectious. In early 2007, one volunteer who had shoveled snow for his meals during the long winter bid farewell to his benefactors. 'He said he was going to New Orleans to help with the hurricane cleanup,'... 'Everyone deserves to eat with dignity,' says Brad Birky."



*From the Reader's Digest*

And this visual about changing times:

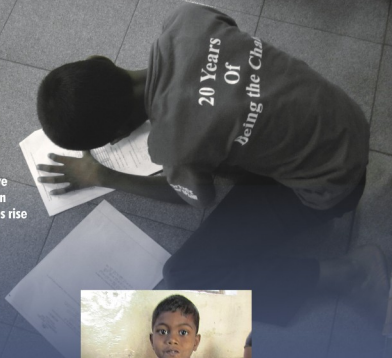


*Source : GraphJam.com*

# I am the Change

For these enthusiastic children, the world is their classroom. They gain a valuable education, beyond a strict syllabus or regimented exams. Through fun and creative learning methods, the Akanksha Foundation helps these children from low income homes rise above their circumstances. The bright eyed young learners don't just hope for change; they're convinced they *are* the change.

Thermax and Akanksha's decade old partnership supports two study centres and trains teachers of the Thermax managed municipal school.



# Thermax boilers installed at Cairn Energy's Mangala Process Terminal in Barmer.

The terminal processes crude from all the Cairn oil fields in Rajasthan.

The five 115 ton per hour boilers (41.5 bar, 371°C) use natural gas and light diesel oil to generate steam for its captive power plant.

The project employs four 12MW steam turbine generators and three 2MW emergency diesel generators, and does not depend on any other power source.

