FiRESiDE

The House Magazine of the Thermax Group Volume 41 No. 4 Oct-Dec 2011

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Volume 41 No.4 October-December 2011

THERMAX

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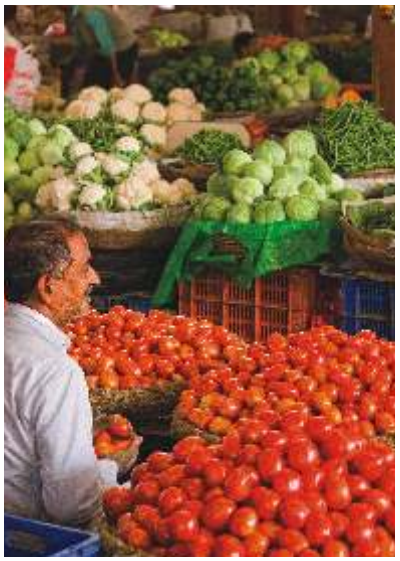
Printed at
Vyoma Graphics, Pune



Cover

Light on winter mornings gives a special glow to the vegetables that we use every day. With a sharpened awareness we see their textures and colours: a sensory delight even for the die hard meat eater, who is irked by the claims of their dietary superiority.

From the canvas of the still life artist, vegetables have moved into the arena of raging public debates. They rank high on infrastructure concerns about cold storages and power availability. Onions and tomatoes disrupt family budgets and are known to cause electoral swings. And mega corporations have bet their money on them.

Will the vendor and his wares be still around when the promised retail paradise arrives?

(Photo : Akshay Risbud)

Back Cover

Reliability
is the name of the game

Comment

"How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives."

– Annie Dillard

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ABCI MEMBER

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Towards cleaner skies: Thermax's air pollution control project in Egypt

Project in progress and the team : ready for bigger challenges

WHAT'S NEW?

Enviro, Thermax's business division that provides clean air solutions, recently commissioned its largest project to date at a cement plant in Egypt.

In this prestigious project with stringent requirements of quality and safety, the Enviro team had to bring down the emission levels at the plant to 20 mg/nm^3. It achieved this target by converting the existing electrostatic precipitators (ESPs) and filters to Thermax's state-of-the-art pulse jet fabric filters. The turnkey project included supply of new equipment, demolishing parts of existing ESPs and filters, constructing new foundations and installing new components in the cement plant.

The Thermax team led by K S Srinivasan (Srini to all, including the Egyptian client) successfully completed the entire work of demolishing the existing ESPs and installing the Thermax pulse jet fabric filters within 45 days of shutdown.

Over 2500 tons of equipment and material were used in the project. Shipment involved 200 containers and 2500 m^3 of break bulk

consignments. The project also saw erection of the largest single piece by Thermax – 185 tons raised to a height of 35 metres. At peak load, 250 workers and 30 supervisors were working at the site. The project complies with international safety norms including those prescribed by SGS and Bureau Veritas, appointed for safety consultancy and supervision.

Says Pravin Karve, Executive Vice President, "With this project successfully behind us, we are confident of taking on larger and more challenging projects."

Service on Wheels: faster response to customers

Thermax has launched a van to provide quick service to its clients. Introduced by the Services SBU (Cooling & Heating), this concept of mobile service will soon be a useful tool with the company's channel partners in different parts of the country.

Mohan Kulkarni from Energy Corporates, the Pune based channel partner, says the vehicle has attracted the attention of several industrial units. "Thanks to the possibility of quick response, we have been able to achieve a 37% increase in the number of annual maintenance contracts signed last year," he says.

Besides essential tools and spares, the van is equipped with an efficiency kit for steam traps, flue gas analyser, a filtration system for thermal oil heaters and a system to check water quality. These have made the van popular with small and medium enterprises that appreciate the importance of regular maintenance and high uptime for their equipment. It also has an LCD screen that helps Thermax channel partners provide onsite training to the operators at client industries.

Inaugurating the van's services, Thermax MD, M S Unnikrishnan, pointed out that the concept of mobile service is a model that should be replicated across the country. "The faster we respond, the closer we will stay to our customers."

The van equipped with efficiency kit : mobile service

A Thermax heating system in UAE : impressive client list

Thermax heaters lead the way in tank farm heating

Thermax has made significant inroads into the tank farm heating business of UAE and countries in the Middle East. Over the last 12 years it has steadily won clients with its thermal oil heater based systems.

In tank farms, heaters keep viscous crude and its derivatives warm for easier flow and transportation. Oil firms in the region had been using steam boilers. Demonstrating the comparative advantages of thermal oil heating systems for tank farm applications – like doing away with water treatment systems and related maintenance – the Thermax team was able to persuade clients to make the shift from traditional steam based heating.

Says Pradip Mittal, "From the beginning, we focused on consultative selling which meant that we were able to present options and help the clients choose what was right for them."

Today, the Process Heating business of Thermax has 200 installations in the region and an impressive client list that includes Vopak Horizon Fujairah Limited, Sharjah Oil Refining (UAE), Qatar Petroleum, BP Salalah Tank Terminals (Oman) and Shell Middle East.

Solar cooking for Ladakh school children

In November, Thermax commissioned a solar steam cooking system at Ladakh's Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya. The system cooks rice, dal and vegetables for the school's 600 students, besides providing them with hot water.

The system consisting of five dishes of 16 sq. metres, 50 kg/hr boiler, water softner and steam utensils has been supplied and installed as per the specifications of the Ladakh Renewable Energy Development Agency. The project involved design, manufacture and integration of a system capable of generating maximum steam at temperatures of 30°C.

Thermax has trained two operators identified by the school to run and maintain solar, thermal and water treatment systems used in the project.

Solar dishes and allied equipment: serving 600 students

The project, completed at an altitude of 12,000 feet above sea level had its set of challenges including subzero temperatures and low levels of oxygen. Thermax's Chandigarh based channel partner, Micromeg did the civil work and construction under the supervision of the Thermax site engineer, Sumanth.

This project has been completed as a demonstration project sanctioned by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

Powering Indian Navy submarines

At the RTIC facility : power from fuel cells

Thermax will be supporting the Indian Navy to generate power for its submarines from fuel cells. In November, a facility to manufacture fuel cell stacks for the Navy was inaugurated at the company's Research Technology and Innovation Centre (RTIC).

A naval submarine needs about 330 kW of electricity. Considering the decentralised nature of energy needed for the vessel, plus other factors like higher power density and low noise levels, the Naval Materials Research Laboratory (NMRL) opted for fuel cells already used in space applications. Fuel cells are also clean energy generators as they leave only water as a by-product.

NMRL, an arm of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) will be transferring the required technology on fuel cells to Thermax, its chosen industry partner, to provide a suitable manufacturing platform. In the first phase, the Thermax facility will manufacture a 'qualification' order of 24 fuel cell stacks of 3 kW each for the Navy. Successful execution of the project is expected to bring in more business for similar applications.

The inauguration of the manufacturing facility for fuel cells was attended by Dr. R S Hastak, Director and other dignitaries from NMRL.

A Graver water installation : water treatment in mega power plants

Thermax ties up with Graver Water: technology for condensate polishing in power plants

Thermax has signed a licentiate agreement for condensate polishing water treatment systems for power generation facilities with Graver Water Systems LLC, USA, a member of the Marmon Group and a Berkshire Hathaway company. The agreement was signed by S Ramachandran, Executive Vice President of Thermax and Michael O'Brien, President of Graver Water Systems.

The technology transfer will help Thermax position itself effectively to serve the water treatment needs of the mega thermal power plants planned to meet India's energy demands. Condensate polishing is an important part of water treatment for power generation stations that reuse their boiler condensate.

Graver Water Systems is one of the world's leading water treatment companies and has installations in countries around the world. It offers an extensive range of equipment and control systems for utility, industrial, commercial and municipal applications.

"Let us remember that creativity and passion cannot be extorted out of people. The real challenge is in creating an environment that triggers and facilitates creative collaboration."

Recently, I was invited for a talk by the Kerala Management Association. The topic chosen – Resurgence through Innovation – was most relevant. At the conference I also had the pleasure of listening to Subroto Bagchi of Mindtree Consulting and Martin Sutherland from People Tree.

Some of you may recall that this is the very topic I had discussed early 2009 in this column. Why do I bring it up yet again? The answer is simple. I am convinced that it is only through innovation that we will maintain a leadership position in whatever we do. A volatile external environment, complexities of a fast growing organisation, rising expectations of customers and competitors gnawing at our market share – such an unpredictable context offers us ample opportunities.

What does the word innovation really mean? It comes from the Latin word 'innovatus' which means to change or renew. In India, we are familiar with the word 'jugaad' which refers to quick fixes, here-and-now solutions to problems. A site engineer making use of an alternate pump until the old one is fixed or plugging the oil leak in a car with soap till you get to the nearest workshop are examples of 'jugaad' in action.

However, inside organisations, innovation needs to be a disciplined process, delivered over multiple time frames. Often, when we think of innovation, we think of 'product innovation' and there are umpteen examples. However, reinvention and renewal of business processes, distribution, value chains, business models and innovation in management are becoming the order of the day. Starting our Service Franchisee model in the 1980s to get closer to the customer or the Mundra port assembly facility that we organized a few years ago to overcome logistics problems in our country are examples of innovation in our own company. The changes brought in by the Internet and connectivity in the last 10 – 15 years and a shift in global economic practices are also challenging us to question the way we manage our organisations.

Reflecting over the word 'resurgence' I thought it could be seen in two ways. Until now, organisational products and services have catered mainly to the middle and upper middle classes. Today, we are beginning to realise there is an entirely new market emerging for the poorer 70% of our population, who live mainly in rural India. They need not just low cost, but ultra low cost products, as Dr Mashelkar keeps pointing out. We therefore need to create more (more products, productivity, solutions) from less (less resources, be it capital, fuel or water) for many more people. Can these new customers be made an integral part of the enterprise, thereby shifting our mindset from "doing well and doing good" to "doing well by doing good"?

Resurgence also includes today's new breed of tech savvy youngsters who will be the next generation of employees, customers, vendors and business partners. Many of them believe that their contribution should be judged on what they do, rather than on any degree or title. This new generation is changing the way we manage our organisations. Earlier, the question was how to get people to serve the goals of an organisation. Today, we need to ask ourselves, how do we achieve our purpose by creating organisations that bring out the best in people's creativity and passion? In many companies, innovation is probably happening all over the place; but organisational barriers prevent the adoption of innovation. Let us remember that creativity and passion cannot be extorted out of people. The real challenge is in creating an environment that triggers and facilitates creative collaboration.

Mr. Bagchi spoke about a study conducted by Harvard and Stanford professors, wherein they observed that all children till the age of five had 'genius' in them; thereafter it slowly disappeared. Why should this happen? As we grow older, we get rapped on the knuckles for doing anything society thinks is out of place, reducing our desire to take risks, making us afraid of failure. Innovation calls for trial and error, courage to take chances and go into the unknown where outcomes could be uncertain.

Nature is our best source of dazzling innovations. Today, many companies are using the science of biomimicry to study nature and apply it to life. Matsura of Japan studies the quick and agile movement of the deer to help Yamaha design its bikes. Solar panel makers are studying the way leaves use sunlight so efficiently for

photosynthesis. Nature helps innovators to learn the supreme lesson of simplicity which means that innovation is about cutting through clutter.

Innovation is also about freeing ourselves from the clutches of convention – it's about challenges that force us to think differently. Conventionally, we at Thermax assumed that only engineers could service our equipment. However, with the rising cost and aspiration of talent, we started the Thermax graduate programme wherein B.Sc. students are given customised training to enable them to operate Thermax products.

When Nokia wanted to make a low cost phone for emerging markets, they had to understand their predominantly illiterate target audience. Ethnography, with its study of customs and characteristics of cultures, helped Nokia to come up with its iconic menu of images. While a phone may be just another gadget for people like us, it is possibly the most expensive item for the poor: therefore, the need to make it durable and affordable.

Such leaps of creativity can only come from people who have made innovative thinking a habit – dreaming about making something faster, cheaper, more efficient, safer or needing less maintenance. Such thinking is a 24X7 process and certainly not an on-off button. How do we foster such mindsets in organisations?

Twentieth century companies driven by hierarchies and dependent on labour and capital inputs may not be the companies of tomorrow. In today's changed context, how does an organisation facilitate collaboration and wealth creation by talented employees? How do we create organisations that are highly engaging – where people want to bring out their best each time, every time? How do we tap into the imagination of every employee, everyday?

Some of the questions we may ask ourselves: how much has the company invested in nurturing innovation? If one comes up with an idea, how much bureaucracy does one have to go through to get 10% of their time and a nominal amount (sort of a seed fund) allocated to test that innovative idea? If it is too laborious and bureaucratic a process, it's not worth the effort. Is compensation linked to ones or ones' team's innovation? Usually, when we try and answer some of these questions, we realize that there is a substantial gap between intent and reality.

Thermax has always prided itself for being an innovative company. I guess that comes from the culture of intrepreneurship, independence, empowerment and a strong bedrock of values germinated and carefully nurtured within the organisation over forty years. However, today, as we have grown into a much larger organisation, let us ask ourselves – is there a fear that has crept into the system? Do we give our people the space, time and resources to meet challenges, try out new ideas? Of course they may fail, but unless we try, how would we even know that there is a possibility of success? Often, the process of trial is itself a powerful learning.

The culture of an organization can either foster or kill innovation. How transparent are we in communicating with our people? Are we open to being questioned by youngsters or are we stuck in hierarchies? Do we include ideas of those who may appear to be remote contributors? Apart from geographical, religious, gender and ethnic diversity, do we value and respect cognitive diversity? Are we comfortable with those that think differently or do we see them as rebels who need to be weeded out? How do we integrate and manage a pot pourri of ideas, beliefs and strengths within and around our organization?

I would urge each of us to reflect on what it would take for us to be a truly innovative company. Innovation certainly cannot be relegated exclusively to a department called R&D, just as managing people cannot be assigned only to the Human Resource function.

It finally boils down to connecting with the core of people's purpose, passion and imagination. It's all about creating the extraordinary from the ordinary.

Wish you all a very Joyous, Healthy and Innovative New Year.

Warm Regards,

Meher Pudumjee

"Today, as we have grown into a much larger organisation, let us ask ourselves – is there a fear that has crept into the system? Do we give our people the space, time and resources to meet challenges, try out new ideas?"

ROUNDUP

All coal, no dust at Alok Industries

En route to Alok : a track record of success

The Heating division (C&H) is executing its largest ever project for Alok Industries, that besides augmenting capacity will help its Mumbai based unit to switch fuel from natural gas to coal. Though using solid fuel, the project will ensure that the entire manufacturing plant will operate in a dust-free environment.

Thermax will supply three coal fired bi-drum boilers, three thermal oil heaters, and balance of plant which includes a specially designed dust extraction system and storage silos for the imported coal. The project will be executed on a turnkey basis by the second half of 2012.

The new order comes in the wake of the successful execution of a thermal oil vapouriser heating system at Alok's Silvassa plant in September 2011.

Systems for improving output from condensers and heat exchangers

ATCS System : preventing expensive downtime

The Service SBU of Thermax's C&H Group has successfully retrofitted and commissioned two automatic tube cleaning systems (ATCS) at Fourrts Laboratories, Chennai and Glenmark Generics, Ankleshwar.

ATCS technology provides a comprehensive, cost-effective and online fouling mitigation solution for condensers and heat exchangers. The two installations follow the recent tie-up with CQM Ltd., Israel, that Thermax had signed earlier this year (covered in the January 2011 *Fireside* issue) to market ATCS.

The cleaning system is used for condenser tube cleaning in vapour absorption chillers, power plants, and shell and tube heat exchangers for industrial processes. Condensers, as basic heat exchangers, face the problem of fouling, which result in deposits on heat transfer surfaces. The deposits decrease performance and productivity. The ATCS technology keeps heat exchangers clean by running sponge balls through the tubes, eliminating deposits. The fully automatic online cleaning system, equipped with a PLC controller, prevents shutdowns and expensive downtime.

Top Award for Meher's Fireside column

Vilas from Corporate Communications accepting the award on behalf of Meher : winning expressions

Meher Pudumjee's popular column 'Expressions' in *Fireside* won the top award from the Association of Business Communications of India (ABCI) in the special column category. The *Fireside* column competed with 47 other magazines from across the industry to bag Gold at the 51st Annual Awards function of ABCI in Mumbai.

The ABCI Annual Awards promote excellence in all areas of business communication with the aim of recognising the best corporate communication practices in India.

Safety innovation award for Thermax factory

Chandrakant and Saheblal with the award : novel HSE initiatives

Thermax Chinchwad factory bagged the Safety Innovation Award 2011 organized by the Institution of Engineers, Delhi, for its innovative health, safety and environment (HSE) initiatives.

Chandrakant Darawade and Saheblal Shaikh from corporate Health, Safety and Environment accepted the award on behalf of Thermax. Other participating organisations included Hindalco, NTPC, Tata Motors, BHEL, Mahindra & Mahindra, SAIL, IOC, and Reliance Industries.

Thermax video network : improving communication across geographies

Video conferencing knits together Thermax offices

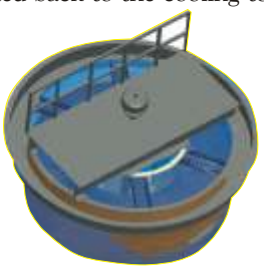
Thermax launched the video conferencing (VC) facility, which connects 22 conference venues in 17 locations across the globe. Unny inaugurated the VC facility on 11th November at the Mumbai office, with other offices simultaneously hooked on. The network will now carry high definition (HD) video across geographies. Thermax staff can make use of this dedicated network without disturbing data transmission.

During the inauguration, Unny complimented the Business Technology Group (BTG) and urged everyone to make use of the facility, nationally and internationally. He expects it "to improve the quality of our communication and as a green initiative, bring down travel costs."

WWS bags order for Hindalco

WWS Industrial project group will be supplying a complete water management system for Hindalco Industries Ltd. Hindalco awarded this order for its Mahan Aluminium Smelter project in Madhya Pradesh. The scope of work includes water treatment for power and cooling operations, and an effluent treatment plant (ETP) for its smelter and captive power plant. The plants will be completed on a turnkey basis in the second quarter of 2012.

The project complex boasts of a 359 ktpa (kilo tonnes per annum) aluminum smelter and a 900 MW captive thermal power plant. Thermax's ETP will treat the fluorides found in smelter effluent and the treated effluent will be recycled back to the cooling tower.



At the outbound training : business managers in the making

Bonding over chai and management insights

Forty employees successfully completed an Executive Post Graduate Diploma in Business Management in July, conducted in association with Symbiosis Institute of Business Management. Employees who have completed one year with Thermax are eligible and are selected on merit.

The participants juggled the challenges of managing office and course work. They fondly remember the role plays, the outbound team building programme and the time spent together over EERC tea and lunches.

PHOTONEWS

Thermax won the CNBC TV-18 India Award for the 'Most Promising Entrant to the Big League'. M S Unnikrishnan, MD and CEO received the Award from the Union Finance Minister, Pranab Mukherjee on 17th January, 2012.

Laurels at Tata Crucible

Aanand and Jay : quizzing pros

Which is the most visited paid monument in the world? Why were only 241 pens manufactured by Mont Blanc for its special Gandhi series?

Thermx's Aanand Ladgaonkar and Jay Gandhi from the Savli plant, Vadodara competed with 50 other teams to bag runner up position in the Tata Crucible Corporate quiz. Conducted at IIM Ahmedabad, the Thermax duo battled wits, general knowledge and trivia with other regional finalists from Triton Communications, Reckitt Benckiser, Citibank, Can Immigration and Shree Hans Alloys, who were the regional winners.

This is the second consecutive year that Thermax has bagged runner up position.

Subas Ghatwai and Keshav Gholve : pledging improved productivity

Wage settlement signed at Chinchwad factory

The 11th wage settlement was signed at Thermax's Chinchwad factory in July 2011. The settlement gives workmen a substantial raise in their emoluments along with productivity-linked incentive.

Thermax Kamgar Sanghatana, the worker's union has pledged to improve safety and productivity, thus playing a vital role in the company's future growth.

Sports Day at China

Participants at the sports meet : energising event

Thermax (Zhejiang) Cooling & Heating Co. Ltd., the three year old Chinese subsidiary, celebrated its first sports day on October 27th. Nearly 40 people participated in different sports categories, including the100 meter dash, table tennis and basketball.

The event began with two rounds of warm up running. It was a thrilling experience for the entire team, sweating sportspersons competing like sturdy steeds and excited colleagues cheering them on. In the end, the winners walked away proudly with cash prizes and medals, and employees got an opportunity to test their skills. Says Ashish Vaishnav, "The event certainly energised us and brought us closer."

Picnic at Varasgaon

The Thermax SPX Energy Technologies Ltd. (TSETL) team retreated to the Varasgaon lake to enjoy a break and welcome winter. Surya Shibir in the Sahyadri range played host to their team building games, adventure sports, a competitive game of cricket and a sumptuous traditional Maharashtrian lunch.

Fun and games at TSETL picnic : winter break

Crickomania
at Thermax

The winning men and women's teams : professionally organised

Cooling Champs and Desi Girls trumped all other men and women teams to win Crickomania, Thermax's annual inter departmental cricket tournament. Power Rangers and Corporate Challengers were the runners up teams respectively in the men and women categories.

62 teams across Thermax divisions took to the stumps in the eighth year of the tournament that spread over three weekends. Pooja Sawant (Desi Girls) won best all-rounder among the women players, Asif Makubhai (Cooling Champs) won best all-rounder among the men. Pradeep Karnawat (Eco Warriors) was the best batsman and Rahul Nikam (Cooling Champs) was the best bowler.

Professionally organised and managed by a group of Thermax cricket enthusiasts each year, the tournament is an eagerly awaited event.

A great Sunday in Malaysia

Thermax Kuala Lumpur : cricket on weekends

The two year old Thermax Kuala Lumpur (KL) Indian cricket club in Malaysia is making weekends exciting for game lovers and their families. In September, the club played an exciting match with Recron, a Reliance group company. Recron gave KL Indian Cricket club a tough fight, but the day belonged to the Thermax team. The KL team benefited from Bhargav's captaincy and a top score from Dalpat Singh. The Recron President gave away prizes to the winning team.

Kaustubh from the Thermax side summed it up, "Thanks to Recron, we had a great match. Hope to see many more such Sundays."

Runners up at a corporate **football tournament**

Thermax claimed the runner up position in the Pune edition of the National Corporate Futsal, a five city corporate football tournament. 16 teams participated in the regional tournament organized by Kingfisher and held at the Go Sports Academy in Pune.

Thermax played four matches, and entered the finals after beating Bhoruka Logistics in the semis. In the final match, the team lost to Wipro.

The team had made time for diligent practice after office hours and on weekends.

The Thermax team : nimble footwork

Letting the **outdoors win**

Menon receiving the award : best maintained garden

The Chinchwad Factory won prizes in the 44th annual flower and vegetable show and gardening competition organised by Poona Women's Council(PWC) in October 2011. Thermax bagged three first prizes and trophies for its well maintained gardens and lawn.

At the PWC awards ceremony R B Menon of Facilities Management Group accepted the prizes on behalf of Thermax from Maj. General Ajay Saxena, Pune Sub Area Commander.

Going the **extra mile** for **the girl child**

The Thermax contingent at the marathon : fifth year running

For the fifth successive year, Thermax employees with spouses and kids in tow, participated in the 26th Pune International Marathon in December 2011. This year's theme – Save the girl child and her future – attempted to draw attention to India's plummeting sex ratio and condemn the practice of female foeticide.

The Thermax contingent participated in the 3.5 km charity run. Students of the centres and schools associated with Thermax also participated in the 10 km run, with three finishing in the top 25.

Thermax –Zamil partnership
for water business

***Thermax and Zamil teams : synergy in the Middle East and Shafi* (inset)**

Thermax has tied up with Zamil Group, the Saudi Arabia based investment major to address the water and wastewater treatment market in the Middle East.

Zamil has diverse interests in the industrial and service sectors in the region. Thermax would work with the Group's Zamil Operation and Maintenance Company (ZOMCO) which provides services for the water and recycle sector. Thermax's products, services and O&M experience will complement Zamil's portfolio.

Shafi Ahmed, who earlier looked after cooling business in Saudi Arabia will be Thermax's point man as it partners with Zamil in one of the biggest water markets of the world.

A **new office** and **transit house**

Snapshots of the new office and transit house : well connected and convenient

Thermax's New Delhi office was inaugurated in November at Best Sky Tower in Pitampura, New Delhi by M S Unnikrishnan. The 14,000 sq ft office is designed to make use of maximum natural light at workstations. It is situated on the main ring road of North Delhi and well connected to the metro rail.

At Chennai, Thermax also introduced a new transit house, conveniently located at Thyagaraya Nagar.

Scenes from the Danstoker World : Thermax's vibrant presence in Europe

Danstoker : the Thermax Group company based in Denmark has a 75 year tradition in energy efficient products for international markets. A leader in biomass boiler technology, the company is also a specialist in boilers for co-generation and CHP applications. Glimpses of Danstoker's people at work and at social gatherings, plus some of the company's installations.

Danstoker boilers – using biomass, oil & gas, waste heat and exhaust gas as fuel – support an array of industries in Europe. They also provide district heating at many places.

On Mardi Gras (Pancake Day), children and grandchildren of employees gather for a traditional feast. A summer gathering in a forest is a chance to get know more about one another and to experience adventure. Every year, employees compete in a bowling tournament. And just before Christmas, everyone gathers around for a festive lunch.

The design and manufacturing teams that work behind Danstoker's heating equipment supplied to its international clients. Leif Merrild *(photo bottom far right),* the oldest employee and a representative of the Workers' Council has been with the company for over 45 years.

FOCUS

LIMELIGHT

Junior Grandmaster, Pushkar

Pushkar

Pushkar, a fourth standard student of City International School won a scholarship and the 1st prize in a tournament organized by the Pune District Chess Association (PDCA). He also ranked second in the rapid chess tournament organized by PDCA later that day. Pushkar enjoys drawing, swimming and playing the synthesizer. He is the son of Sadhana and Dr. Upendra Adhyapak from RTIC.

All rounder, Anish

Anish Thuse, a third year student of College of Engineering, Pune, won runner up position as a member of the Waterpolo team in the National Level Inter-Engineering Sports Meet at MIT, Pune. An active member of COEP's water polo team, Anish is also learning classical music and plays the harmonium. He is the son of Kshitija and Kiran Thuse from TECCL.

Anish

Outstanding performer, Amarjeet

Amarjeet

Amarjeet Pawar was ranked 37 in the country in IPCE (Integrated Professional Competence Examination), conducted by The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India in May 2011.

Amarjeet, who is currently pursuing BCom from BMCC, Pune, had also received the Dhirubhai Ambani Undergraduate Scholarship for outstanding performance in the HSC examination. He is the son of Bharati and Gorakshanath Pawar from C&H division.

Pallavi helps the elderly

Pallavi Desai from WWS Proposal received an appreciation certificate for her charitable work with Athashri Foundation where she has been volunteering for the past year. Athashri is an organisation involved in physically and psychologically assisting senior citizens.

Pallavi, who joined Thermax in 1996, reads newspapers to them, plays cards, carrom and accompanies them on walks.

Pallavi

Prateek is a Gold Medalist

Prateek

Prateek Banerjee was awarded a Gold Medal and a certificate by the Governor of West Bengal and Vice Chancellor of West Bengal University of Technology for securing the highest cumulative grade in his stream. He graduated in Power Engineering from the National Power Training Institute, Durgapur. Prateek joined Thermax as GET in 2011 and works with the marketing team of Power division. He loves reading, music and surfing the net.

Mitalee writes for an HR journal

Mitalee

Mitalee Sirwani has to her credit an article on skill development of blue collared employees in the book, 'Business Excellence through Innovative HR Practices'. The book is published by Excel Books and it targets academicians, students, consultants and industry professionals.

Mitalee has been with Thermax since 2010 in the Learning and Development team. She is also a trained Bharatnatyam dancer.

Dewang completes MBA in Marketing

Dewang

Dewang Pandya of B&H completed his MBA in Marketing from The Maharaja Sayajirao University, Vadodara through the Executive Program. Dewang has been working with Thermax since 2007 and is a seasoned hockey player too.

Amol obtains a master's degree

Amol

Amol Patil from B&H Proposals completed his Masters Degree in Heat & Power Engineering with First class from University of Pune. He also completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Piping Design at MIT, Pune. Amol, who joined Thermax as a GET in 2007, enjoys travelling and sightseeing.

UP CLOSE

Today's young people and they h

Shekhar Kashalikar, Head of Cooling SBU shares with A M Roshan his observations on the changed work place and how we need to help new people practise the key facets of Thermax culture.

Shekhar believes it was the college hostel that shaped his life, defining his educational choices and giving him the ease to adapt to new situations. After spending the first 10 years of his schooling at native Sawantwadi on the Maharashtra-Goa border, he did his 11th and 12th classes at Pune, followed by the Mechanical Engineering course at the city's College of Engineering (COEP). Those six years of hostel life "made me independent and comfortable with people from cultures and traditions different from mine," he explains. I ask him if he didn't consider Information Technology when he began his engineering course. "I opted for mechanical because of friends who were going there," he says.

Shekhar joined Thermax in 1992 as a trainee engineer, and he has been with the company barring a two and a half year stint, in between, with a Caterpillar subsidiary. Posted at Hyderabad, he spent an initial year with the Heat Recovery Division, and was then placed in the Cooling Division. He had an eventful time at Hyderabad, selling heat recovery boilers. He would also learn the finer points of heat recovery, a technology that drives vapour absorption chillers, an area in which he was to gain considerable experience. At the Thermax Hyderabad office, it was a young crowd in their '20s and Shekhar says he got the best company overview in the Saturday sessions they had – "one of the best unplanned induction sessions one could ask for." He also remembers some memorable client visits, especially to the ITC Chirala unit on the Hyderabad-Chennai route. "Those days, if you were making an unannounced trip, from the railway station to the ITC office, you had to depend on bullock carts or cycle rickshaws."

It was at Hyderabad that Shekhar picked up the nuances of technology selling that involved the gradual shift of client preferences to new technologies. He remembers that his experience at NTPC had been particularly instructive. He sold Thermax's first chiller to the power major but it took over seven months after the tenders were opened. It was worth the wait because NTPC would install absorption chillers in all their plants, 70 % of them coming from Thermax. "That experience helped me look at sales from a long term perspective, not as a quick assignment where one talks, sells and moves out," he says.

Mid-1995 onwards till 2001, Shekhar was involved in developing the cooling business in overseas markets. Initially posted at Indonesia, he appointed distributors for better reach and trebled the revenues from this market before the meltdown of South East Asian financial markets. Back in Pune by 1997, he focused on business development in the South American markets of Argentina and Brazil. This was followed by two years in Thailand, looking after the entire South East Asia operations. Movement came to be a constant motif of Shekhar's life: "I have never renewed my house lease more than twice at any one place."

With marriage came the decision to be back in India. Two years as Business Manager in Hyderabad, and another two years of All-India experience as the Sales Chief of the Cooling Business, Shekhar hit a career plateau. "I wanted to do something that took me beyond Sales." The opportunity came up as an assignment in the gas turbine subsidiary of Caterpillar. There, he gained insights into the power business and EPC. A small group did entire projects and Shekhar could get hands-on experience. "We had to do everything ourselves and it was a time of fast learning. Life there helped me change course."

As he watched some of his colleagues settling to the same work year after year, he again felt the need for change. "Like them, I too could have earned much more, but felt I needed to try something else, take up some new responsibility," Shekhar tries to explain. He felt that compensation will come his way in the latter part of his career. Unny offered him the job of developing the small power plant business and he was back in Thermax

know what they want
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as its SBU Head. A successful phase there and again moving on, he came full circle as the Head of Thermax's Cooling Business.

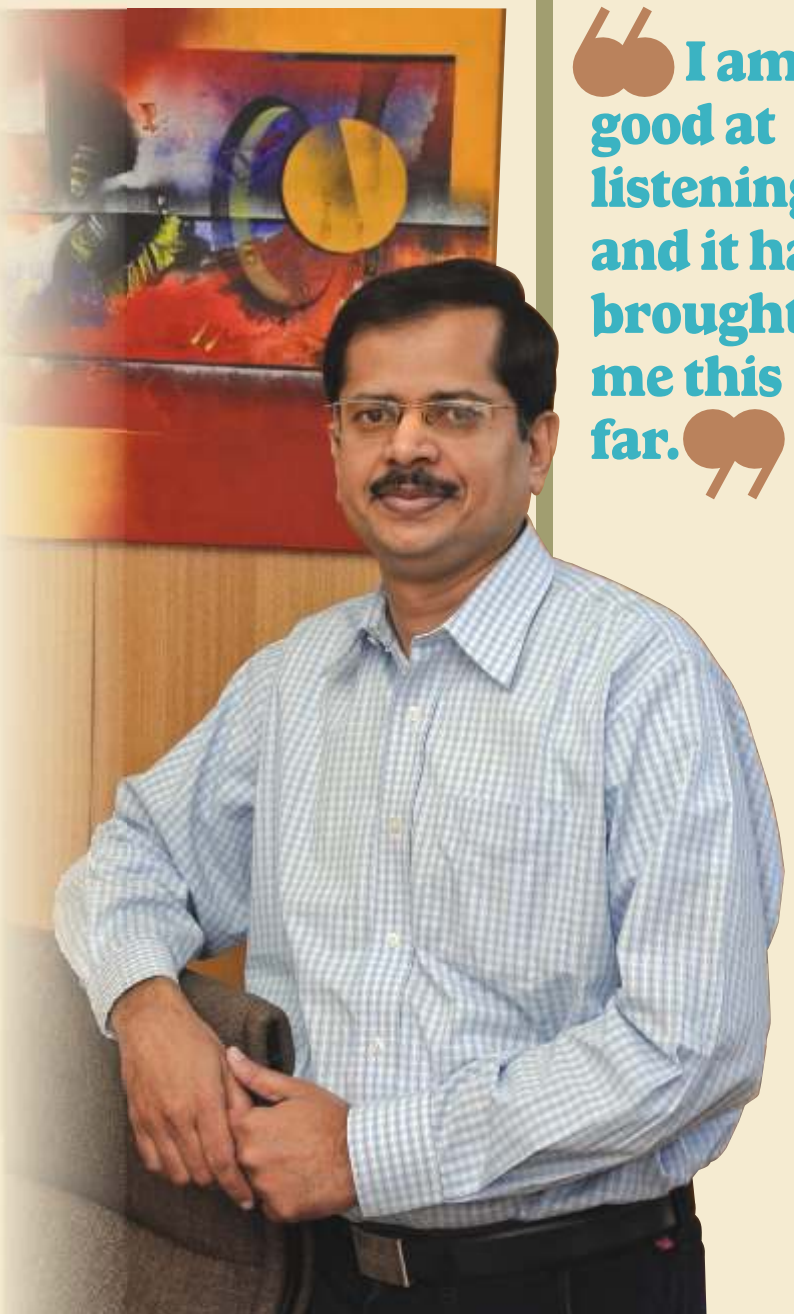
"This second innings in Thermax has been really good. Vendor development to manufacturing, it has made me more multidimensional." Shekhar feels that irrespective of Chinese competition, Thermax can be the Number One in absorption cooling business by 2015-16. "In global markets our English speaking and trained people have the edge. Our ability to combine industry knowledge and cooling expertise is helping us make inroads in China itself." Is there a mismatch between Thermax's global aspirations and its performance after several years in some markets? "Localisation could be the answer and it need not mean only manufacturing. I think we are already taking the right steps here."

I ask Shekhar the single most important trait that has helped him. "I am good at listening," he says immediately, "and it has brought me up this far." So, what's he hearing from today's changed work environment? "When I began my career, I could not have imagined someone saying 'no' to a new posting because he does not want to be away from his girl friend. Today's young people know what they want and they have options." He says this is something we have to accept and reflect on, when we draw up our organisational plans.

He feels that lateral recruitments at various levels are also a fact of life and they need not threaten Thermax's culture. "I think operational freedom, taking up responsibilities far beyond one's designation and the independence to move across divisions are some of the defining features of Thermax's work culture. As long as we can retain those qualities and help new people practise them, there is no need to worry."

Accepting change seems to be a message that crops up in our conversation. He speaks longingly about the many train journeys in the early part of his career. They gave him time to read and to think. "Though I don't read that frequently, I do manage to catch up on reading a variety of material – from newspapers and business reports to fiction." He says circumstances have played an important part in his life. He is grateful to his parents and his wife Monika for "letting me go" and be with the flow.

As we wind up our conversation, I ask Shekhar if he is renewing his "lease" on this recent phase of his life. Nearly three years in the present role, isn't it time to move? "I am prepared to go where life takes me," he says cheerfully with his enigmatic frankness.



"I am good at listening and it has brought me this far."

In praise of working with one's own hands

In his fascinating 2009 book, Shop Class as Soulcraft, *Mathew B Crawford, philosopher and motorcycle mechanic, examines our growing lack of connection to the material world. Arguing that the physical work of an electrician or a mechanic can sometimes be more intellectually demanding than the abstracted work that happens in corporate offices, he makes us rethink work that makes or mars us.*

Anyone looking for a good used machine tool should talk to Noel Dempsey, a dealer in Richmond, Virginia. Noel's bustling warehouse is full of metal lathes, milling machines, and table saws, and it turns out that much of it once resided in schools. EBay is awash in such equipment, also from schools. Most of this stuff has been kicking around the secondhand market for about fifteen years. High-school shop-class programs were widely dismantled in the 1990s as educators prepared students to become "knowledge workers."

The disappearance of tools from our common education is the first step toward a wider ignorance of the world of artifacts we inhabit. And, in fact, an engineering culture has developed in recent years in which the object is to "hide the works," rendering many of the devices we depend on every day unintelligible to direct inspection. Lift the hood on some cars now (especially German ones), and …there is another hood

under the hood. This creeping concealedness takes various forms. The fasteners holding small appliances together often require esoteric screwdrivers not commonly available, apparently to prevent the curious or the angry from interrogating the innards. By way of contrast, older readers will recall that until recent decades, Sears catalogues included blown-up parts diagrams and conceptual schematics for all appliances and many other mechanical goods. It was simply taken for granted that such information would be demanded by the consumer.

A decline in tool use would seem to betoken a shift in our relationship to our own stuff more passive and more dependent. What ordinary people once made, they buy; and what they once fixed for themselves, they replace entirely or hire an expert to repair, whose expert fix often involves replacing an entire system because some minute component has failed.

I would like to speak up for an ideal that is timeless but finds little accommodation today: manual competence, and the stance it entails toward the built, material world. Neither as workers nor as consumers are we much called upon to exercise such competence, most of us anyway, and merely to recommend its cultivation is to risk the scorn of those who take themselves to be the most hardheaded: the hardheaded economist will point out the "opportunity costs" of spending one's time making what can he bought and the hardheaded educator will say that it is irresponsible to educate the young for the trades, which are somehow identified as jobs of the past.

Around 1985, articles began to appear in education journals with such titles as "The Soaring Technology Revolution" and "Preparing Kids for High-Tech and the Global Future." The imperative of the last 20 years to round up every warm body and send it to college, then to the cubicle, was tied to a vision of the future in which we somehow take leave of material reality and glide about in a pure information economy. This has not come to pass. To begin with, such work often feels more enervating than gliding. More fundamentally, now as ever, somebody has to actually do things: fix our cars, unclog our toilets, build our houses.

If the goal is to earn a living, then, maybe it isn't really true that 18-year-olds need to be imparted with a sense of panic about getting into college (though they certainly need to learn). Some people are hustled off to college, then to the cubicle, against their own inclinations and natural bents, when they would rather be learning to build things or fix things.

A gifted young person who chooses to become a mechanic rather than to accumulate academic credentials is viewed as eccentric, if not self-destructive. There is a pervasive anxiety among parents that there is only one track to success for their children. It runs through a series of gates controlled by prestigious institutions.

For fifty years now we've been assured that we are headed for a "postindustrial society." While manufacturing jobs have certainly left our shores to a disturbing degree, the manual trades have not. If you need a deck built, or your car fixed, the Chinese are of no help. Because they are in China. And in fact there are chronic labor shortages in both construction and auto repair. Yet the trades and manufacturing have long been lumped together in the mind of the pundit class as "blue collar," and their requiem is intoned.

This seems to be a moment when the useful arts have an especially compelling economic

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rationale. A car mechanics' trade association reports that repair shops have seen their business jump significantly in the current recession: people aren't buying new cars; they are fixing the ones they have. The current downturn is likely to pass eventually. But there are also systemic changes in the economy, arising from information technology, that have the surprising effect of making the manual trades – plumbing, electrical work, car repair – more attractive as careers. The Princeton economist Alan Blinder argues that the crucial distinction in the emerging labor market is not between those with more or less education, but between those whose services can be delivered over a wire and those who must do their work in person or on site. The latter will find their livelihoods more secure against outsourcing to distant countries. As Blinder puts it, "You can't hammer a nail over the Internet."

> Everyone is rightly concerned about economic growth on the one hand or unemployment and wages on the other, but the character of work doesn't figure much in political debate. Yet, work forms us and deforms us, with broad public consequences.

The trades suffer from low prestige, and I believe this is based on a simple mistake. Because the work is dirty, many people assume it is also stupid. This is not my experience. I have a small business as a motorcycle mechanic in Richmond, Virginia, which I started in 2002. I work on Japanese and European motorcycles, mostly older bikes with some "vintage" cachet that makes people willing to spend money on them. I have found the satisfactions of the work to be very much bound up with the intellectual challenges it presents. And yet my decision to go into this line of work is a choice that seems to perplex many people.

After finishing a Ph.D. in political philosophy at the University of Chicago in 2000, I managed to stay on with a one-year postdoctoral fellowship at the university's Committee on Social Thought. The academic job market was utterly bleak. In a state of professional panic, I retreated to a makeshift workshop I set up in the basement of an apartment building, where I spent the winter tearing down an old Honda motorcycle and rebuilding it. The physicality of it, and the clear specificity of what the project required of me, was a balm.

As it happened, in the spring I landed a job as executive director of a policy organization in Washington. This felt like a coup. But certain perversities became apparent as I settled into the job. It sometimes required me to reason backward, from desired conclusion to suitable premise. The organization had taken certain positions, and there were some facts it was more fond of than others. As its figurehead, I was making arguments I didn't fully buy myself. Further, my boss seemed intent on retraining me according to a certain cognitive style – that of the corporate world, from which he had recently come. This style demanded that I project an image of rationality but not indulge too much in actual reasoning. As I sat in my office, (the image of) an independent tradesman kept coming back to me: someone who really knows what he is doing, losing himself in work that is genuinely useful and has a certain integrity

to it. He also seemed to be having a lot of fun.

After five months at the think tank, I'd saved enough money to buy some tools I needed, and I quit and went into business fixing bikes. The business goes up and down; when it is down I have supplemented it with writing. The work is sometimes frustrating, but it is never irrational.

And it frequently requires complex thinking. In fixing motorcycles you come up with several imagined trains of cause and effect for manifest symptoms, and you judge their likelihood before tearing anything down. This imagining relies on a mental library that you develop. An internal combustion engine can work in any number of ways, and different manufacturers have tried different approaches. Each has its own proclivities for failure. You also develop a library of sounds and smells and feels. For example, the backfire of a too-lean fuel mixture is subtly different from an ignition backfire.

As in any learned profession, you just have to know a lot. If the motorcycle is 30 years old, from an obscure maker that went out of business 20 years ago, its tendencies are known mostly through lore. It would probably be impossible to do such work in isolation, without access to a collective historical memory; you have to be embedded in a community of mechanic-antiquarians. These relationships are maintained by telephone, in a network of reciprocal favors that spans the country.

There probably aren't many jobs that can be reduced to rule-following and still be done well. Mechanics face something like this problem in the factory service manuals that we use. These manuals tell you to be systematic in eliminating variables, presenting an idealized image of diagnostic work. But they never take into account the risks of working on old machines. So you put the manual away and consider the facts before you. You do this because ultimately you are responsible to the motorcycle and its owner, not to some procedure.

Some diagnostic situations contain a lot of variables. Any given symptom may have several possible causes, and further, these causes may interact with one another and therefore be difficult to isolate. In deciding how to proceed, there often comes a point where you have to step back and get a larger gestalt. Have a cigarette and walk around the lift. The gap between theory and practice stretches out in front of you, and this is where it gets interesting. What you need now is the kind of judgment that arises only from experience; hunches rather than rules. For me, at least, there is more real thinking going on in the bike shop than there was in the think tank.

With stakes that are often high and immediate, the manual trades elicit heedful absorption in work. They are punctuated by moments of pleasure that take place against a darker backdrop: a keen awareness of catastrophe as an always-present possibility. The core experience is one of individual responsibility, supported by face-to-face interactions between tradesman and customer.

Contrast the experience of being a middle manager. The sociologist Robert Jackall spent years inhabiting the world of corporate managers, conducting interviews, and he poignantly describes the “moral maze” they feel trapped in. Like the mechanic, the manager faces the possibility of disaster at any time. But in his case these disasters feel arbitrary; they are typically a result of corporate restructurings, not of physics. A manager has to make many decisions for which he is accountable. Unlike an entrepreneur with his own business, however, his decisions can be reversed at any time by someone higher up the food chain (and

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there is always someone higher up the food chain). It's important for your career that these reversals not look like defeats, and more generally you have to spend a lot of time managing what others think of you. Survival depends on a crucial insight: you can't back down from an argument that you initially made in straightforward language, with moral conviction, without seeming to lose your integrity. So managers learn the art of provisional thinking and feeling, expressed in corporate double-speak, and cultivate a lack of commitment to their own actions. Nothing is set in concrete the way it is when you are, for example, pouring concrete. Those who work on the lower rungs of the information-age office hierarchy face their own kinds of unreality, as I learned some time ago.

> The gap between theory and practice stretches out in front of you, and this is where it gets interesting. What you need now is the kind of judgment that arises only from experience; hunches rather than rules. For me, at least, there is more real thinking going on in the bike shop than there was in the think tank.

After earning a master's degree in the early 1990s, I had a hard time finding work but eventually landed a job in writing brief summaries of academic journal articles, which were then sold on CD-ROMs to subscribing libraries. When I got the phone call offering me the job, I was excited. As I was shown to my cubicle, I felt a real sense of being honored. It seemed more than spacious enough. It was my desk, where I would think my thoughts – my unique contribution to a common enterprise, in a real company with hundreds of employees. The regularity of the cubicles made me feel I had found a place in the order of things. I was to be a knowledge worker.

But the feel of the job changed on my first day. The company had gotten its start by providing libraries with a subject index of popular magazines like Sports Illustrated. Through a series of mergers and acquisitions, it now found itself offering not just indexes but also abstracts (that is, summaries), and of a very different kind of material: scholarly works in the physical and biological sciences, humanities, social sciences and law. Some of this stuff was simply incomprehensible to anyone but an expert in the particular field covered by the journal. I was reading articles in Classical Philology where practically every other word was in Greek. Some of the scientific journals were no less mysterious. In some of the titles I was assigned, articles began with an abstract written by the author. But even in such cases I was to write my own. The reason offered was that unless I did so, there would be no “value added” by our product. It was hard to believe I was going to add anything other than error and confusion to such material. But then, I hadn't yet been trained.

My job was structured on the supposition that in writing an abstract of an article there is a method that merely needs to be applied, and that this can be done without understanding the text. I was actually told this by the trainer, Monica, as she stood before a whiteboard, diagramming an abstract. Monica seemed a perfectly sensible person and gave no outward signs of suffering delusions. She didn't insist too much on what she was telling us, and it became clear she was in a position similar to that of a veteran Soviet bureaucrat

who must work on two levels at once: reality and official ideology. The official ideology was a bit like the factory service manuals I mentioned before, the ones that offer procedures that mechanics often have to ignore in order to do their jobs.

My starting quota, after finishing a week of training, was 15 articles per day. By my 11th month at the company, my quota was up to 28 articles per day (this was the normal, scheduled increase). I was always sleepy while at work, and I think this exhaustion was because I felt trapped in a contradiction: the fast pace demanded complete focus on the task, yet that pace also made any real concentration impossible. I had to actively suppress my own ability to think, because the more you think, the more the inadequacies in your understanding of an author's argument come into focus. This can only slow you down. To not do justice to an author who had poured himself into the subject at hand felt like violence against what was best in myself.

The quota demanded, then, not just dumbing down but also a bit of moral re-education, the opposite of the kind that occurs in the heedful absorption of mechanical work. I had to suppress my sense of responsibility to the article itself, and to others – to the author, to begin with, as well as to the hapless users of the database, who might naïvely suppose that my abstract reflected the author's work. Such detachment was made easy by the fact there was no immediate consequence for me; I could write any nonsense whatever.

Now, it is probably true that every job entails some kind of mutilation. I used to work as an electrician and had my own business doing it for a while. As an electrician you breathe a lot of unknown dust in crawl spaces, your knees get bruised, your neck gets strained from looking up at the ceiling while installing lights or ceiling fans and you get shocked regularly, sometimes while on a ladder. Your hands are sliced up from twisting wires together, handling junction boxes made out of stamped sheet metal and cutting metal conduit with a hacksaw. But none of this damage touches the best part of yourself.

How was it that I, once a proudly self-employed electrician, had ended up among these walking wounded, a "knowledge worker" at a salary of $23,000? I had a master's degree, and it needed to be used. The escalating demand for academic credentials in the job market gives the impression of an ever-more-knowledgeable society, whose members perform cognitive feats their unschooled parents could scarcely conceive of. On paper, my abstracting job, multiplied a millionfold, is precisely what puts the futurologist in a rapture: we are getting to be so smart! Yet my M.A. obscures a more real stupidification of the work I secured with that credential, and a wage to match. When I first got the degree, I felt as if I had been inducted to a certain order of society. But despite the beautiful ties I wore, it turned out to be a more proletarian existence than I had known as an electrician. In that job I had made quite a bit more money. I also felt free and active, rather than confined and stultified.

A good job requires a field of action where you can put your best capacities to work and see an effect in the world. Academic credentials do not guarantee this.

Nor can big business or big government – those idols of the right and the left – reliably secure such work for us. Everyone is rightly concerned about economic

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growth on the one hand or unemployment and wages on the other, but the character of work doesn't figure much in political debate. Labor unions address important concerns like workplace safety and family leave, and management looks for greater efficiency, but on the nature of the job itself, the dominant political and economic paradigms are mute. Yet, work forms us and deforms us, with broad public consequences.

The visceral experience of failure seems to have been edited out of the career trajectories of gifted students. It stands to reason, then, that those who end up making big decisions that affect all of us don't seem to have much sense of their own fallibility, and of how badly things can go wrong even with the best of intentions. .. In the boardrooms of Wall Street and the corridors of Pennsylvania Avenue, I don't think you'll see a yellow sign that says "Think Safety!" as you do on job sites and in many repair shops, no doubt because those who sit on the swivel chairs tend to live remote from the consequences of the decisions they make. Why not encourage gifted students to learn a trade, if only in the summers, so that their fingers will be crushed once or twice before they go on to run the country?

> As an electrician you breathe a lot of unknown dust in crawl spaces, your knees get bruised. Your hands are sliced up from twisting wires together, handling junction boxes made out of stamped sheet metal. But none of this damage touches the best part of yourself.

There is good reason to suppose that responsibility has to be installed in the foundation of your mental equipment – at the level of perception and habit. There is an ethic of paying attention that develops in the trades through hard experience. It inflects your perception of the world and your habitual responses to it. This is due to the immediate feedback you get from material objects and to the fact that the work is typically situated in face-to-face interactions between tradesman and customer.

An economy that is more entrepreneurial, less managerial, would be less subject to the kind of distortions that occur when corporate managers' compensation is tied to the short-term profit of distant shareholders. For most entrepreneurs, profit is at once a more capacious and a more concrete thing than this. It is a calculation in which the intrinsic satisfactions of work count – not least, the exercise of your own powers of reason.

Ultimately it is enlightened self-interest, then, not a harangue about humility or public-spiritedness that will compel us to take a fresh look at the trades. The good life comes in a variety of forms. This variety has become difficult to see; our field of aspiration has narrowed into certain channels. But the current perplexity in the economy seems to be softening our gaze. Our peripheral vision is perhaps recovering, allowing us to consider the full range of lives worth choosing. For anyone who feels ill suited by disposition to spend his days sitting in an office, the question of what a good job looks like is now wide open.

[Excerpted from the book, Shop Class as Soulcraft, *and the New York Times Magazine (May 21, 2009) extract,* The Case for Working with your Hands.*]*

How I overcame fear and learned public speaking

Public speaking? It's not my cup of tea; it requires courage to speak in front of a crowd or an audience and I will never be able to do it in my life. That was my perception about myself throughout my school and college days.

But when I joined Thermax (Wanson India in those days), a few opportunities came up where I could drive my points through while interacting with customers. They gave me some confidence to speak in public. There was this technical training programme for customers, which was to be conducted in Bengali. I was confident as I knew the language and it was all about sharing the knowledge I already possessed through years of field experience. The session was a success and it boosted my confidence.

I realised that I got nervous only when I was called to speak. I had played cricket for my school, batting in the No.3 position. Sometimes when the opening pair fell cheaply, I had to shore up our innings. I had done this quite effectively for my team, once even playing a match winning inning in the finals of the interschool tournament. It happened before a big crowd. Then, how is it that standing before a smaller audience, I felt so uneasy? My hands went cold, mouth was dry, and I just wanted to disappear from public view.

Then I was posted at our Dubai office. There was a switch in my role from Field Service to Sales.

The new job profile called for superior communication skills. Over a beer, one of our former Sales Engineers, Pratap told me that he was a member of the Toastmasters. He explained that at their meetings, one can hone communication and leadership skills. I thought that would be the right place for me to acquire public speaking skills.

At Toastmasters, my mentor's advice to get over my fear: stand before them, confidently looking into their eyes, as if they all owe you money which they borrowed from you. Imagine that you are asking them when they will return it. This suggestion worked well, for me at least. I also learned other techniques like attention grabbing openings, transition to the main topic keeping thoughts in line with the objectives of the speech, relevant personal examples and finally a conclusive end. From those practice sessions, I have immensely benefited – both personally and professionally.

As the sessions progressed, I gained in confidence. Memories of those cricket matches also helped, especially the applause for a good stroke. An audience may not be as expressive as a stadium crowd. Still, they have their ways of telling you what they think of your performance. When they accept your point of view, they nod in agreement. When they are with you, everyone is attentive, no movement at all. You bring in light humour and they break into laughter. When they are bored, they shift in their chairs and you lose their attention. I learned how important it is to know your audience and you need to sustain their interest, like a batsman cracking an occasional four or a six.

My training at the Toastmasters helped me when I represented Thermax in a CII delegation that visited Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar. Most other members were either CEOs or Directors of companies. During my speech in front of an illustrious gathering, I delivered a five minute speech with precision and clarity. It was a great experience, when at the end of my talk, several of the dignitaries complimented me for a short and effective speech. 'Effective' because they not only understood, but remembered what I said.

Today, I am glad for the good fortune of training in public speaking as it helped me to become an effective communicator, competent leader and a qualified judge for speech contests. The experience has widened my horizons. I am glad to say that public speaking is now my cup of tea.

– V M Raut
Technical Services
(C&H- Heating)

The accidental marathon man

I am an avid marathon runner and recently participated in an Ultra Run at Bhati Lakes, Delhi. An Ultra run goes beyond the 42 km limit of the conventional marathon. My run began at 6 am on Saturday, 22nd October, 2011 over a trail on the outskirts of Delhi, made up of stone quarries, sand, thorny bushes and undulated terrain with many pot holes. It ended the next day at 9.27 am and I won, after running for almost 28 hours and covering 160 km.

In 2007, I was in Mumbai on work when I heard of the Mumbai marathon. I was never a runner and it was pure chance that made me join the run. A novice, unprepared for the event, I ran in leather shoes and suffered a painful cramp for the next 10 days. Though I began on the wrong foot I was hooked to the sport and began to take it more seriously.

I wake up at 5 am and run for about 16 km (90 minutes) on city roads whenever my schedule permits me. My typical route is from my home in Aundh to Balewadi stadium or sometimes Sai Chambers where I work, and back to Aundh! Since my job profile includes extensive travel, I have my practice runs at Delhi, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai and also during a recent trip to Amsterdam. I'm at my desk at the scheduled time even after the most rigorous workout.

Running is a passion for me. It is the best way to burn calories by only investing time and energy. My brothers and younger sister also participate with me in Half Marathons. My mother is the moral support behind all my achievements. I'm also inspired by Anil Ambani, who, though a business tycoon runs the Mumbai half marathon faster than me.

I've participated in many marathons – three years at Bangalore's Open 10 km with a personal best of 50 minutes 50 seconds; half and full marathons in Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Vadodara, Hyderabad and Mysore. While practising for the Bhati Lakes Ultra, I've covered 135 km in 24 hours around Pune city.

At the Bhati Lakes Ultra, we had to run 10 km from the main station to the aid tents where a report card recorded our time, and we could stop to rest, for food or water. Then back to the main station where a medical team tested us for cramps, blood pressure and sudden weight loss. After 40 kms, I suddenly felt an internal resistance. I wanted to take a break because I had never crossed the 40 km limit before. A well wisher advised against it saying that if I stopped, I'd never be able to resume my tempo.

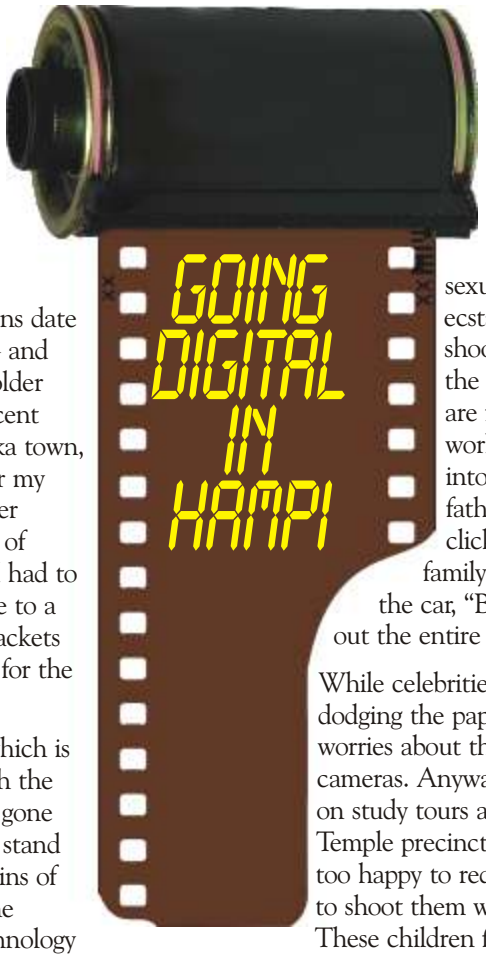
With renewed vigour, I aimed to finish the race in 24 hours and if necessary, stretch it to maximum 32. I ran at a moderate pace and tried to capitalize on my strengths. I'm a better walker than a runner. I could therefore walk in pitch darkness all through the 22nd night. I covered a good distance in spite of the biting cold during the night and the scorching heat during the day. I am well conversant with rough terrain thanks to my regular treks to the various forts near Pune. Without any weight loss, I won the ultra race with a margin of 30 km between the second runner and me.

Everyone was surprised to find a winner in an unknown face and name. I was elated although I missed the earlier track record by merely two minutes.

The next run is in Kerala in January. It is a five-stage event where one has to cover 195 km in five days. The challenge lies in the elevated hilly terrain in Munnar and you have to qualify for each stage by completing the run within a cutoff of 10 hours.

It does seem like a daunting task; but I have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Especially since I never planned to be a marathon runner.

– B. D. Rajput
(WWS)



Hampi's stunning Vijayanagara ruins date back to the 14th and 16th centuries. But I felt older than them, when on a recent trip to this small Karnataka town, I tried to get a film roll for my Minolta SLR camera. After braving the amused looks of inner town shopkeepers, I had to take a 4 km. rickshaw ride to a shop where a few dusty packets of Kodak 400 film waited for the last buyers.

Why single out Hampi, which is only marching in step with the rest of the world that has gone digital? It is instructive to stand in the middle of the remains of an empire and think of the fading away of film, a technology that is of recent vintage. Small consolation to think that you may have used the very last of the rolls from Kodak, the pioneer of colour film that recently filed for bankruptcy. In a world where a phone maker, Nokia, is the biggest camera supplier, the writing on the wall had been clear. At Hampi, I must have looked as quaint as Krishna Deva Raya in his regal paraphernalia.

Unlike some true camera artists, I cannot hide behind arguments that digital can never really match the aesthetic results of shooting with film, or say with a sneer that these days, anyone with a cell phone can strut around as a photographer. I must admit that an occasional handling of a film camera has not made me a camera pro. Like most people, I too point and shoot and it is chance that determines the outcome. It cannot be artistic reasons that make me stick around with the film camera. The same instinct that drives some people to use ink pens and umbrellas with curving handles must be at work – reluctance to let go of the old, plus a lingering regard for some formal elements of life.

Today, everyone is recording everything. Flowers, children, pets, food, weddings, picnics, get aways, the first kiss, latest pink slip, the swan neck of the young bride, eightieth birthday party, shopping nirvana, sexual escapades, despair, ecstacy, photos of people shooting photos, death on the highway – our cameras are forever taking in the world, even as we retreat into virtual bubbles. Like the father on a holiday furiously clicking away and telling his family to hurry up and get into the car, "Back home, we can check out the entire Yellowstone Park."

While celebrities are learning the art of dodging the paparazzi, there are also worries about those invasive candid cameras. Anyway, the school children on study tours at the Viroopaksha Temple precincts in Hampi were only too happy to request people with camera to shoot them with their best friends. These children from smaller towns didn't have cell phones or the swaggering self confidence of the standard metro brats. They were plain happy to pose before cameras and a little disappointed when I had to tell them they cannot see their pictures immediately. Maybe, a good enough reason for me to go digital – who can resist the pleasures of being a Santa dispensing gilt edged images?

Centuries later, when visitors with their gizmos and other objects of desire come calling at our haunts, what will they find? Difficult to think of monumental structures, like the ones our warring kings or the colonising Brits left behind. Statues and flex boards of our politicos? Hoardings of our star products? Equally depressing to think that it could be malls and offices that speak for our age.

However, we can be sure of one thing: ours will be the most visually documented time until now. Doubtful if my photo albums will weather tsunamis and earthquakes, and the relentless advance of dust. But those tons of digital images stored in *Flickr* and other photo sites could still stay up there in the cloud, showing us in our everyday avatars. Archaeologists of those days might not dig down but might sift through screens, each a trapdoor opening into the lives of a tribe who couldn't take enough pictures of themselves.

– A. M. Roshan

Beer Monks

The Trappist Abbey of St Sixtus of Westvleteren, at Belgium's border with France is a place of pilgrimage for beer lovers. The abbey and its most famous brew, Westvleteren 12 – a dark, strong ale – have taken first or second place in an annual poll of beer enthusiasts' favourite tipples by RateBeer.com, a widely trusted reviewing website, for the whole decade that the survey has been running.

Visit the abbey and you can drink it to your heart's content, or your head's. But it is hard to buy elsewhere. The monks tightly ration takeaway sales of the tiny quantities they produce. The abbey's website gives details when buyers may call with an order. If they are lucky and get through, they will be allotted a time to arrive at St.Sixtus and purchase two cases in return for a solemn undertaking that the beer will not find its way to a third party.

Evidently some people are prepared to lie to a monk for the sake of beer. Cases on sale at $53 at the abbey, turn up on online beer-sellers for as much as $800.

– From the Economist

SLICE OF LIFE

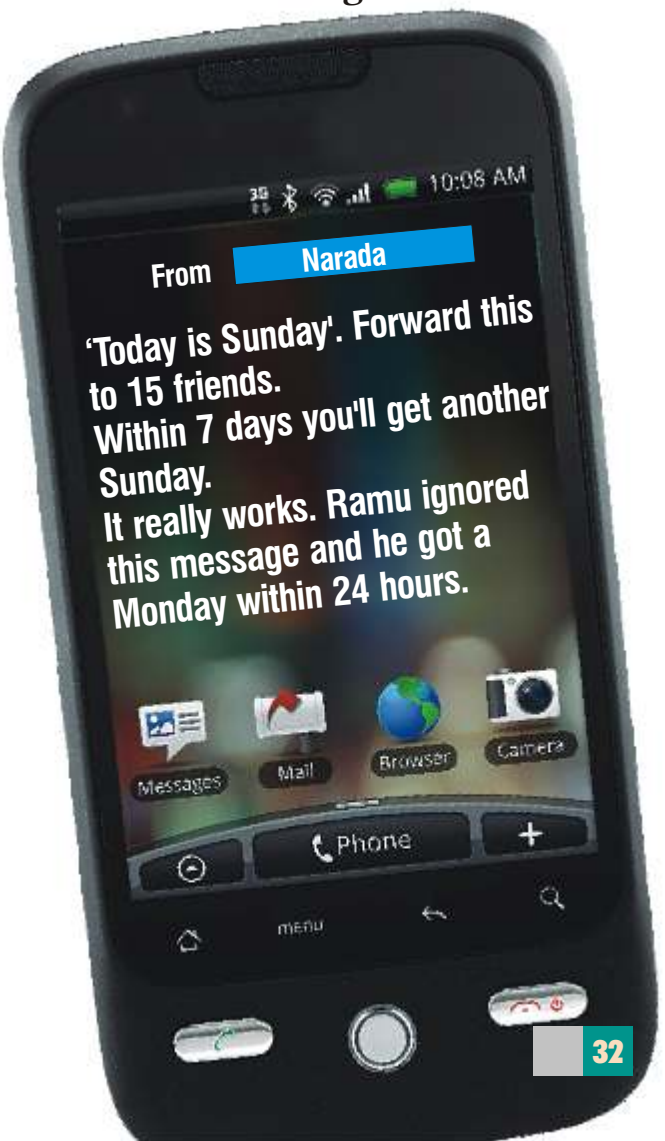
Familiar echoes from earlier hard times

Recession is the time for soul searching and saying things squarely. Here are two gems from the past:

- Prosperity is when people buy things they can't afford; recession is when they stop doing it (The Wall Street Journal, February 1963).
- The recession is hitting everyone. Just last week, a Washington lobby organisation had to lay off seven congressmen (Current Comedy 1991).

(Sourced from The Readers' Digest)

And this sms to all serial messengers



Talented minds and Creative collaboration

One minute games, rangolis on current themes, diya painting, a head scratching quiz, dance contests – the verve and imagination of Thermax employees were on display during the recent festive season.

The ripples from these sessions will certainly touch the workplace. Cheers to the collaborative energy that radiates from both engaging work and energising leisure.

Reliability
is the name of the game

Performing well after a decade, and sometimes nearing 20 years of customer service: this is true of many Thermax installations.

The four stream demineraliser plant commissioned in 1992 continues to treat raw water at NFCL, Andhra Pradesh. At Assam's Numaligarh Refinery, a Thermax boiler installed in 1996 recovers waste heat from six gas turbines to generate 2x130 tons of steam per hour. The SPV Project in Indonesia continues to rely on Thermax's electrostatic precipitators for boiler emission control since 1997. Thermax's very first double effect absorption chiller installed in 1993 runs trouble free in Thailand's Phoenix Pulp and Paper Company.

Complimenting the Thermax service team for ensuring the chiller "to be highly reliable," Phoenix has placed another order for a higher capacity chiller. Reliability has brought in repeat orders for Thermax businesses.