

Corporate Woman

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No shortcuts to success

The success of Nita Kapoor lies in a few mantras

Very well deserved' is an adage that suits Nita Kapoor just perfectly. She has worked hard and really hard to get to where she is – the post of executive vice-president, marketing and corporate affairs, Godfrey Phillips India.

After finishing her MBA from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, Kapoor joined Mudra Advertising as a fresher. In a year's time she became the management trainee, the first professional title she earned. By the time she left Mudra 17 years later as senior vice-president, she had to her credit several successful advertising campaigns – remember the taglines 'Hamko Binnies Mangta'; 'I Love You Rasna' – and a host of clients (Mobil, McDonalds, Nestle and Dabur Healthcare).

After establishing her credentials in the fiercely competitive milieu of advertising, she joined Godfrey Phillips India in 2002, making a shift to the client side. "It was a completely new challenge for me. I understood branding well, but here I had to begin by understanding the entire value chain – advertising, marketing, operations, R&D...I wanted to be on the same page as others as soon as possible. Honestly, it took me more than a couple of years to completely settle down. And since 2006, I have also been handling the corporate affairs portfolio," confesses Kapoor.

Kapoor has a knack for having an ear close to the ground – an ability that has helped her in all her assignments. She also has the uncanny ability to simplify seemingly complex propositions. It wouldn't be an easy task for someone to pick up her most gratifying moments from a career spanning over two decades. But Kapoor is quick to summarise: "In advertising, the moment came when you knew that you have cracked the campaign or when I heard someone saying 'oh, you have Nita on the team so you don't have



Kapoor: well-deserved

to worry at all.' Back in those days, it was very individual-centric. Later the 'self' got extended to the team. It became gratifying to be able to articulate your vision and see people follow and execute it flawlessly."

Spreading joy

Kapoor's passion has been to create meaningful brands that all stakeholders are proud of – a brand that surpasses business deliveries and is conscious of its responsibility towards society. Both Amodini and Godfrey Phillips Bravery Awards are, hence, close to her heart. "At Amodini, we attempt to equip rural women with self respect and financial independence. It is truly my baby. I want it to become a catalyst of widespread change," she says. The inspiration for Amodini came to Kapoor from an unexpected quarter. In her early years, she had the opportunity

to travel extensively in the interiors of Gujarat, such as the Bharuch. She became witness to a lot of physical and mental abuse being meted out to women, more often than not arising from the fact that they were not economically independent. The impressions stayed with her through the years and found form in Amodini (meaning happiness). The initiative has already touched the lives of over 7,000 women by providing them with the necessary training and opportunities to gain financial independence. "I want to reach out to one lakh women in the next four years," adds Kapoor.

It is also mention worthy that Kapoor has been bestowed with several accolades over the years in recognition of her good work: The 'Marketing Super Achiever Award' by CMO Council, 'Best Social Marketing Leader of the Year Award' for Godfrey Phillips India and 'Pride of the Industry Award' for her initiatives Corporate Social Responsibility.

In the interim, she also attended the Executive Education programme from Harvard Business School. Apart from the management lessons, there are other golden rules by which she abides. "I was closely associated with an NGO called Muskan that works with intellectually challenged children. That is where I really learnt what it means to 'live in the moment,'" she says. "I have also always maintained that there are no shortcuts to hard work. It is equally important to hold your integrity and speak your mind." "Cause marketing' is an idea that she strongly believes will be the next big thing. "It's an idea whose time has been long due."

A self-confessed 'health freak,' Kapoor likes to start her day with meditation. Despite a busy schedule, she also tries to make time for gym and yoga. Her work-life balance is, least said, commendable. Consider the fact that currently she is also learning Indian classical music. An avid reader, she also has a spiritual side to her. Halfway through Steve Jobs' autobiography, she is also re-reading the Bhagavad Gita to understand the finer nuances of its text.

• KIRAN YADAV