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"Work is empowering only if it is accompanied by performance"

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How it all began...

I started my career in advertising and brand communication. Luckily for me, those were the days of blockbuster commercials and advertising and I was involved in some of the most creative work including the Only Vimal campaign. But by the 1990s, advertising was going through the acquisition phase, with international companies foraying into the Indian market. Mudra, where I had been working, was still positioning itself and several companies were marred by uncertainty. This was followed by the arrival of multinational corporations. It was then that I decided to move to Godfrey Phillips in the marketing sector. The challenge of taking up sales and marketing excited me.

Life and as we know it

Women empowerment is simply a coinage created by the media industry because performance is not measured or based on gender. Yes, historically the business model has been dominated by men, but understanding of how cultures work and a new work environment can be created. I find this idea extremely myopic. Work can only be empowering if it is accompanied by performance and of course, environment is also conducive to perform. Identification of female involvement could be done by recognising their importance in brand positioning. The first way is their role as a primary consumer. Whether it is buying a fabric or a car, they play an important part in decision making since they form almost 50 per cent of population. It is important to have them on board.

Another aspect is their varied views and ideas. Women bring to the table views that might lead to additional growth. But at the end of the day, the fact is that we have to learn to juggle both professional as well as our personal life. It is like working with a baby on the hip. But it has to be done.

Social responsibilities

When I took over the Bravery Award campaign, our vision was rechristened. We wanted to expand the scope of bravery because it was not just physical. The concept of bravery was a very psychological one. The idea was also to bring transparency.

It was a direct and serious initiative. We put in a lot of effort to look for bravehearts and bring them to the forefront. After our campaign, the market witnessed an outpour of corporate social

responsibility campaigns. But we have been successful and there is a change of mindset in terms of bravery. We have only just ventured into the social media arena and the response so far has been phenomenal.

Another campaign that we started was Amodini. The objective was provision of jobs, skills and opportunities for women. We are currently working in three villages in Haryana, Rajasthan and Almora. My vision is to increase the number of those involved to 1,00,000 in the next three to five years. This would be our fourth year and we have tied up with several non-profit organisations to create opportunities for women in order to empower them.

Dharma, karma and yoga

I am an early riser and start my day with some meditation, this gives me my own personal space. By 8.15 a.m. of course, I am off to work. I think I am one of the good girls but I am not a very good socialiser. I am a voracious reader though. Any book, from a fiction to spiritual to business, intrigues me. Since my daughter is studying outside Delhi, I spend evenings with my husband. One could say I am also very spiritual. My day does not go without a dose of some soulful spiritual music.

The smart generation

This generation is far smarter and opportunistic than ours. They are extremely focussed. My advice to them would be to not look for short-cuts because god lives in the details. Also, they must abstain from consuming too much and learn to give back.

by Deepshikha Punj

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- **NO SHORTCUT** There is no easy way to get things done, god lives in the details.
- **DREAM, ENVISION** One must always dream and believe in themselves. Having a vision is the mark of a true leader.
- **LEARN FROM MISTAKES** Roll up your sleeves and work hard. Lead from the front. There is nothing wrong with making mistakes, but you must try to learn as much as possible from them.
- **BE HAPPY** Consume only as much as you need and always try to be happy.