

Interview: In Conversation with Mr. Srikant Srinivasan, Director - Manufacturing GE India

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VIM:Sir, we are keen to know about General Electric (GE) as a conglomerate and the specific role of GE India?

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan: GE is more than 130 years old; it was started as Edison Electric Light Company in the year 1878 by Thomas Alva Edison. It became GE in the year 1892 by merging the Edison Electric Light Company & Thomson-Houston Company. GE is also the only company in the New York Stock Exchange Dow Index since its inception. In India, GE has been present since 1902 – when it installed the first hydro-electric turbines in India at Shivanasamudra, near Mysore.

Post economic liberalization of 1991, GE has been investing and growing in India, again.

VIM:Sir, accept our congratulations on opening the new manufacturing facility at Chakan, Pune which was inaugurated by Honourable Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi. Could you please tell us about the concept of a Multi Modal Facility (MMF) at Chakan?

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan: Multi modal means diverse products of diverse businesses being manufacturing on the same manufacturing line under one roof (plant). It is unique because no other plant in the world has such type of diversified production on the same line.

VIM:Being such a massive facility, we as students of management, would be interested in knowing how the idea of MMF was initiated and the challenges faced to get this into reality?

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan: I wouldn't say challenges but call them exciting times. I started this role in 2011, four years ago. We started the MMF operations in May 2014. Like any other project of such a magnitude, the team meticulously planned the execution of the project and did gain considerable experience and time on infrastructure and regulatory permissions. Safety is of paramount importance at GE and the construction industry in India undergoing transition into becoming more professional, the manpower skills and standards in terms of safety expectations needed improvement. We were one of the first companies to get environment clearance prior to starting construction activities, in the entire industrial area.

VIM:Sir after such a grand commencement of this plant what are the other upcoming projects of GE India?

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan:During the inauguration of the

plant, we have committed to the Prime Minister that we will invest in this facility in the second phase also. How much? Specifically depends on how the economy grows. But we are committed to grow.

VIM:Globally GE is an established diversified industrial company with a strong customer base, what are the key challenges faced by GE India? What strategies will GE implement to gain domestic market share?

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan:The 'Make in India' initiative of the present government should address the challenges of infrastructure such as adequate and good quality power, roads, ports, efficient government processes and simplified labour laws.

VIM:What are the key sectors/businesses that GE India is focusing on?

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan: We are basically a diversified industrial infrastructure company with speciality in finance. Few big sectors like oil and gas, Power & Water healthcare, and aviation are key to us. We are the largest manufacturers of aircraft engines and diesel locomotives in the world. We shall focus on all these businesses.

VIM:Today CSR is a priority with all major organizations. Would you please highlight some of the key CSR activities at GE India? Could you elaborate on the EHS best practices followed at GE India?

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan:CSR has two aspects to it. First is working with the community by giving financial aid and support. The second one is being involved through the employees, which is distinct. GE does not believe in being involved with financial aspect only, GE believes in partnering with the local communities and government and enabling sustainable all round development. We do this through being engaged financially as well as engaging through our employee initiative called GE Volunteers, which is purely made up of our employees. Our employees are involved in implementing most of the CSR projects.

We want to focus on our surrounding local community here. Specifically for the Chakan MMF, we primarily focus on two villages next to us. One is Vasuli and other is Sudumbare which is just 2 kms from the Chakan MMF. We have focused on specific areas viz: education & infrastructure like lighting, clean water. Last year what we have involved the Panchayats and helped them install street lights - Solar as well as LED lights. We are involved in schools of both the

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villages and are improving their infrastructure. We have added a couple of classrooms to one of the schools, built washroom for girls. We are looking forward to an increase in the number of children intakes at the school. We are modernising the schools science labs. We have made an ambulance available to the 7 villages that are around us, on a 24x7 basis. We are in the process of teaching the students too. Our GE Volunteers help students in the higher classes of 8th 9th and 10th so that they are able take exams more confidently.

In EHS, S stands for SAFETY. SAFETY as our No.1 focus and priority and we are committed to it and is a key part of our culture. This is inculcated and driven across the facility by a very robust system and process called an EHS framework in which each aspect of safety is divided into different elements. We have about 21 elements on safety through which we implement and drive it. One of them is employee involvement and engagement, which ensures that all employees are involved, engaged in driving safety. The second is training - focus is given on culture, awareness, providing tools to ensure safe work. In terms of results of safety we have completed this big facility in a record time of about 16 months. We have had more than about 7 million hours of safe working without a single incident or accident.

In terms of environment, this facility is extremely committed. We have environmental clearance from the Govt. of Maharashtra. We have gone above and beyond what was needed for that clearance because we are committed to being not just environment friendly but really being at the forefront of embracing environment friendly manufacturing. This facility is going to be certified as a green campus. We have internal targets of how to be much lower than regulatory standards what are specified by government and we also have internal targets to reduce that YOY. We have an extremely robust programme that ensures that the footprint that we leave on the environment is extremely minimal.

VIM:What are your thoughts about the "Make in India" campaign and how does GE India look at it?

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan: Make in India campaign is a fantastic opportunity for India to make its mark in manufacturing. The government is trying hard but there are basic intrinsic challenges before it can be made a roaring success. From the government's perspective, it needs to enable reforms to facilitate ease of doing business, improve including labour laws, make available infrastructure at a very reasonable cost. Skill development that the government is already looking at will enhance people and productivity. The capability of people and the hunger for us to do more are very positive points. We are still not there in terms of electronics as the value stream is not there in India as compared to China, Japan and Korea. But it is a good start and if the government and industry work together then it could really gather momentum.

VIM:As the Director-Manufacturing at GE India, what are your key roles and responsibilities? What motivates you to give your best?

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan:The broad roles and responsibilities are:

- 1.Create a culture of safety, integrity, compliance & high performance.
- 2.Meeting and exceeding our operations and financial targets
- 3.Grow in harmony and in partnership with the local communities and help development
- 4.Nurture and grow talent

VIM:Having an extensive managerial experience, what advice would you like to give a fresh MBA graduate stepping into the corporate world?

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan:Have clarity of thought and purpose. Be focused, understand what your career goals are and have a plan around it. Once clear, be steadfast in acquiring in-depth knowledge in the chosen area.

Do not be taken in by the glamour and be obsessed about the pay packages. The focus has to be about developing a career. So choose companies keeping all these factors in mind. Do not be swayed by short term stuff. Focus on acquiring depth versus breadth in your chosen area of profession. Jack of all trades and master of none is short lived and will not be helpful in the long way. Also have patience, be realistic and set career goals. Career is a journey and it keeps evolving. Be prepared for ups and downs in your career.

VIM:What according to you could be the differentiating factor for MBA graduates to make a successful career in the Manufacturing sector?

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan: One is the clarity of purpose in mind. Do you really want to be in manufacturing? If yes, then start acquiring knowledge. Also people who think differently are more wanted and not just people who maintain a status quo.

VIM:What advice will you give to the fraternity in academia to enhance industry-academia relations?

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan:Engage the industry more. The institutes can add lot of value to industry, because the industry is so immersed in itself that they do not look up, at least in India, to an institute for value add. While engaging with the industry the institutes should be specific and should focus on what value additions can the institute do for the industry. When the institute interfaces with the industry, they should put the best students forward. This will help the industry assess the institute's depth as well as calibre of syllabi. Institutes should take up selective internships, which can create value to the industry instead of just doing vacation projects.

VIM:Being a Director at GE India, from your hectic schedule, how do you maintain a good work life balance?

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan:Good work life balance all depends on an individual. It is an intrinsic way of doing it, it requires extreme hard discipline. If you do not want to be

stressed up then maximize your productivity for every minute. So if you are not productive enough for every minute you put in work, you will be stressed and never achieve your work life balance.

Many priorities will come your way and ask for your attention. It is important to be organized and manage your time.

Have hobbies out4ur friends, your family, your hobbies and development as a person.

VIM:What are your passions and hobbies and how do you

make time for it

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan:Traveling and motorcycles are my passion. I am also a voracious reader.

VIM:Can you please share your success mantra with us?

Mr. Srikant Srinivasan:Ensure to take one day at a time and always have a sense of where you are going. Do not set goals which are not flexible. Have principled flexibility.

VIM: We thank you for your time & valuable inputs.