MANAGE India

PMI INDIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2018 SPECIAL COVERAGE

'DISRUPTION' TAKES CENTERSTAGE AT PMI INDIA CONFERENCE

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Dear Practitioners,

It has been a decade since we launched our annual professional development summit, the Project Management National Conference. So, this year, when we prepared for the 10th anniversary of the conference, the expectations from the practitioner community were high.

And with immense pride I can now say that the conference lived up to those expectations. Over 700 delegates got the opportunity to listen to some of the most prominent thought leaders and subject experts from industry and the government. There was a conscious effort to push gender diversity in our choice of speakers – four out of the eleven keynote speakers were women. Our speakers built a strong case for *India in 2022 – Leading in a Globally Disruptive Market*, our theme for the conference. Some of the topics covered were the government's reform agenda, the country's entrepreneurial climate, readiness for a digital future, rural transformation, infrastructure building, social uplift, and our rich spiritual traditions.

The PMI India Project Management Awards were given away at the conference. Hearty congratulations to Larsen and Toubro Hydrocarbon Engineering Limited, Tata Housing Development Company, State Bank of India, and Fusion Micro Finance for winning in the large, medium, small, and micro categories, respectively. Kudos also to Tata Consultancy Services and Save

the Children for winning the award in the Contribution to Community and the Non-Government Organization categories, respectively.

We successfully launched a new feature this time – Pitch Perfect. It was a highly engaging format in which practitioners presented their papers and case studies. I look forward to taking this format to a bigger scale the next year.

Based on the feedback I've received from speakers, partners, and delegates, it is satisfying to see that we have pulled off a great event. Special thanks to the conference project management office headed by Manoj Gupta, president, PMI North India Chapter and Cmdr (Retd.) Naveen Kataria, and assisted by other board members and volunteers of the North India and other chapters in India. They dedicated an enormous amount of effort and their personal time to give us a memorable conference.

Thank you, practitioners, for your continued support. I'd also like to thank our platinum sponsor, Zoho, for their support.

I look forward to seeing you in 2019 in Hyderabad.

Warm regards,

Raj Kalady
Managing Director, PMI India

Dear Community Members,

12-13 October, 2018 were the most critical days for us in the conference organizing committee, as we waited for the fruits of our efforts over the last 390 days, to make the 10th Project Management National Conference a memorable event. The fruits of these efforts were visible in the feedback we received, and in the enthusiasm of speakers in listening to other speakers, connecting, interacting, and sharing views with them.

The theme for the conference was selected to align with our national objective of becoming a global leader by the year 2022.

Industry and non-industry speakers presented their views on how to embrace and ride over the disruptions that are being presented to us in multiple spaces ranging from technology to economy to global policies. The need for agility and an organization's ability to integrate rapidly with evolving technologies were identified as vital skills for survival. We must also attend to the most vital element – that's human capital – by way of skill development and helping them to achieve work-life balance and happiness.

On behalf of the conference committee of the Project Management National Conference 2018 and PMI North India Chapter board, it is our pleasure to thank all the delegates for their participation. It was encouraging to receive compliments from delegates and fellow chapter leaders on the quality of volunteering, value delivery, and hospitality.

Our sincere gratitude to the team comprising PMI India, PMI North India Chapter volunteers, chapter ambassadors (region and company connect), the "unconference the conference" team, the leadership team for awards, and chapter leaders from other geographies of India, who made this conference a success.

Looking forward to meeting you at the next national conference to be hosted by PMI Pearl City, Hyderabad Chapter.

Warm regards,

MANOJ GUPTA
Conference Chairman
PMI North India Chapter |

PRITAM D. GAUTAM
Conference Co-Chairman
PMI North India Chapter

Dear Practitioners,

Project Management National Conference 2018, being the 10th national conference, marked a major milestone in our endeavors to promote excellence in project management practices in every industry. The theme of this year's conference, "India at 2022: Leading in a Globally Disruptive Market," aligned to our national objective of becoming a global leader by the time we turn 75 as a free country. PMI North India Chapter hosted this conference after a gap of five years.

It was action time from the moment we took over the baton from PMI Chennai Chapter in 2017. The conference was attended by thought leaders from across the globe and from different walks of life. This year's conference introduced a new concept of "Pitch Perfect" wherein practitioners presented solutions to real-time problems being faced in projects. This was a novel concept and well received by every participant. This was made possible by the hard work put in by the Pitch Perfect Team working in close coordination with PMI and the North India Chapter.

I extend my heartiest congratulations to all the award winners and my sincere gratitude to all the long-standing members of PMI and the chapter.

The success of this mega event is attributable to the wholehearted support and hard work of the PMI North India Chapter conference tower leads, volunteers, company connect ambassadors, regional connect ambassadors, and PMI staff, who worked tirelessly over the entire year. I also thank Raj Kalady, managing director, PMI India, and Manoj Gupta, chapter president and chairman, PMNC18, for their guidance and support.

Warm regards,

CMDR NAVEEN KATARIA (RETD)
Conference Director & VP Compliance & Governance
PMI North India Chapter

'DISRUPTION' TAKES CENTERSTAGE AT PMI INDIA CONFERENCE

The 10th Project Management National Conference collates learnings from industry experts to help project professionals manage change and unpredictability better

Papia Samajdar and Juhi Chaudhary

Manoj Gupta, PMI North India Chapter President, lighting the lamp

A theme that unites practitioners from across industries and sparks conversation is how to manage market disruption. The 10th edition of PMI India's Project Management National Conference in New Delhi provided project managers from across India new ideas and perspectives on how to lead in a disruptive market.

Eleven keynote speakers from different sectors presented their views, the challenges they had faced, and the learnings they had acquired — all revolving around the conference theme, *India in 2022 – Leading in a Globally Disruptive Market.* The conference on 12 and 13 October attracted over 700 delegates.

At the heart of all the discussions was an attempt to identify new ways to navigate change. As succinctly put by Joseph Cahill, senior vice president - finance and administration, and interim executive, PMI, "It is difficult to predict the scenario in 2022, hence we must be flexible and prepared for everlasting disruptions."

Raj Kalady, managing director, PMI India, shared lessons from his personal experiences of tiding over disruptions and volatility. "What is important is to understand that we all are interdependent, and that asking for help at the time of a crisis is a sign of strength." He stressed on the need to build a professional network to be able to respond to change better.

Sanjeev Sanyal, principal economic advisor, Union Ministry of Finance, Government of India, spoke about the major economic reforms that India is undertaking. Sanjeev Bikhchandani, founder and vice-chairman of Naukri.com, and founding trustee of Ashoka University, provided a glimpse into his entrepreneurial journey. M. Damodaran, chairperson,

Excellence Enablers Pvt. Ltd., and former chairman of Securities and Exchange Board of India, Unit Trust of India, and Industrial Development Bank of India, exhorted project managers to unleash their hidden potential to deliver outstanding performances.

Spiritual leader Shivani from the Brahma Kumaris emphasized the need to create a happy, healthy, and prosperous nation to prepare for the future. Naina Lal Kidwai, chairperson, Altico Capital India Ltd, presented a scenario of how, in the days to come, businesses will be impacted by digital technologies and increased protectionism around the world. Vickram Nagi, vice president - global technology services, Client Innovation Centers, IBM India, spoke about focussing on customer experience during digital transformation.

Chhavi Rajawat, sarpanch (village chief), Soda village, Rajasthan, emphasized on the need to transform rural India. Dhananjaya A. Tambe, deputy managing director and chief information officer, State Bank of India (SBI) shared his insights on the root cause of project delays in big infrastructure projects. Aarushi Batra, co-founder, Robin Hood Army, gave a presentation on how the use of social media and personal connections help her run her social organization that feeds the hungry.

PMI India presented the prestigious annual Project of the Year awards during the conference. Larsen and Toubro Hydrocarbon Engineering Limited won the Project of the Year (Large) for its Bassein Development Project. Tata Housing Development Corporation, SBI, and Fusion Micro Finance Pvt. Ltd. won in the medium, small, and micro categories, respectively. Tata Consultancy Services and Save the Children won in the Project of the Year (contribution to community) and NGO categories, respectively.

There were two panel discussions on the first day that brought industry experts, bureaucrats, and entrepreneurs on the same platform. The first panel, on "Infrastructure Projects to Prepare India for 2022," revealed interesting insights into the changing dynamics in the infrastructure sector in India. In the second panel, discussion revolved around the challenges in achieving service excellence and how digital technologies are taking service excellence to a whole new level.

This time the conference introduced a new learning platform, Pitch Perfect. Teams from four organizations presented case studies of projects that had made innovative use of digital technologies in project execution.

Delegates also participated enthusiastically in slogan-writing contests and quizzes through the conference app. Another popular feature was the "Memory Wall" that captured vignettes of the national conference over the past one decade through numerous photographs. The host for this conference, PMI North India Chapter, passed on the baton for the 2019 national conference to PMI Pearl City, Hyderabad Chapter.

PROJECT MANAGER OF THE FUTURE

JOSEPH CAHILL,
senior vice president
(finance and administration) and Interim Executive, PMI

Joseph Cahill opened his presentation with an example to illustrate how digital technology is a part of our daily lives, like how he used WhatsApp to ensure he boarded his flight to India on time.

It set the stage for discussions around changes in the business scenario with the advent of digital technologies, the need for project management to evolve, and the skills that the project manager of the future needs to acquire to succeed. Quoting Dr Michael Chui, partner, business and research, McKinsey Global Institute, from PMI's podcast *Projectified*, Cahill said that a major part of what we do at work would be automated in the future. "Though technology will free us (from manual, repetitive work), teamwork will become even more important," he said.

The project manager of the future would need fewer technical skills and more refined soft skills. A leader must have soft skills to be able to motivate, inspire, communicate, and respond effectively. Project managers would need to make data-driven decisions. As the amount of data available can be overwhelming, knowing how to pick the correct data and make timely use of it would be a valuable skill.

His presentation focused on the tools and strategies required to manage disruptions successfully. Being data-driven, adopting collaborative leadership, having an innovative mindset, and being open to change, were key mantras for success in this business environment, he said. He recommended skill development and an agile approach to project management as the way forward.

Cahill urged delegates to consider PMI as their partner in this journey, learn from one another, enhance their skills, and leave the conference with a new goal.

BUILDING A RULE-BASED ECONOMY

SANJEEV SANYAL,
principal economic advisor,
Ministry of Finance, Government of India

The Indian economy is witnessing creative disruption for the first time, said Sanjeev Sanyal. He was referring to a slew of tough economic reforms that the government of India has brought in — like the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the insolvency and bankruptcy code.

On GST, the biggest tax reform in recent times in India, he said, "Even though it was tough to introduce it, it had to be done to create an internal market. Now the system is working well."

Sanyal gave an overview of the history of the country's economic policies and said the focus of the current government is to "shift India from a patronage-based economy to one that is rule-based." The creation of an independent monetary policy committee to control inflation and introduction of codes to tackle bad loans in the banking sector were key measures to achieve the goal.

"We have managed to bring down the inflation rate from 8-10 percent to 2-4 percent permanently, while retaining a reasonable rate of growth of 7.3 percent, which makes India the fastest growing economy in the world," he said.

Talking about the success of the government's strategy in tackling bad loans, he said, "One of the obvious ideas was to create a bad bank warehouse. Just 50 cases were accounting for two-thirds of the non-performing assets. We put the first 12 cases in the system and within 270 days we have already started auctioning them."

Even if the measures were tough, they would help reap gains in the long term, he said.

FROM POTENTIAL TO PERFORMANCE

M. DAMODARAN, chairperson, Excellence Enablers Pvt. Ltd., Former Chairman, SEBI, UTI and IDBI

M Damodaran congratulated the winners of the PMI India Best Project of the Year on their accomplishments, and shared some thoughts and practices on how to become successful leaders. He advised delegates to become aware of their strengths as also the strengths of their competitors to stay relevant.

"You need to know your strength before engaging. You also need to know what strength lies on the other side. Choice of time is also very important. There will be failures, obstacles, and shortcomings, but that does not mean you leave the road," he said.

He noted that time management was crucial for project delivery. Giving the example of an average middle-class working woman with two small children, Damodaran compared her task list with that of a project manager. Much like a working mother, a project manager needs simple principles such as multi-tasking to make him/her successful without having to go through management course books. He also spoke about team management

and leadership styles. According to him, a leader needs to create an environment where every team member performs to the best of their ability.

"Delegate and empower your team members, incentivise them, and make them accountable. The results would then be much better," he added.

He also urged project managers to not forget to celebrate success, as this helps to keep the team together.

KEEPING SPIRITS HIGH

BRAHMA KUMARI SHIVANI, spiritual leader

B rahma Kumari Shivani opened her session by encouraging delegates to visualize an India that they aspire for. She also asked them to introspect about their own aspirations. "Close your eyes, and visualise what kind of lives you would be leading in the next four years," she said to a packed room.

In a calm and soothing voice, she urged the audience to work towards achieving their personal goals. "Your achievements would reflect on your organization and have far-reaching effects on the future of the country," she said. Sister Shivani also prodded delegates to take personal responsibility in creating the India of tomorrow.

Talking about the internal capacity to adapt to change, she highlighted the rising issue of mental health and the need to deal with stress and depression to create a happy, healthy, and prosperous India. She asked leaders to ensure that their organizations were workplaces where every colleague is happy to return to work each day.

A healthy division of time between work and family is crucial. Quality time for family should be non-negotiable for a healthy family. She urged delegates to devote time to themselves and their families.

Sister Shivani said that the need of the hour was to create an organization which prides itself on values, ethics, and compassion. The message that India should send out to the world is that India is a healthy, happy and prosperous country. "Leadership is not about the position we hold, but the power we possess," she remarked.

She spoke about the need for self-management before managing others, to be able to create a shining India.

Even if the measures were tough, they would help reap gains in the long term, she said.

PREPARING FOR GLOBAL TRENDS

NAINA LAL KIDWAI,
chairperson, Altico Capital India Ltd.

Calling the present an "era of dramatic change," Naina Lal Kidwai said business leaders and project managers must learn how to cope with disruptive changes.

Kidwai, a well-recognized name in the banking and finance industry in India, offered her insights on two important factors influencing businesses today: digital technology and protectionism.

Quoting a Boston Consulting Group report on Industry 4.0, to which she has contributed, she said digital technology is changing the way business is done. As the cost of robotic technology falls, there will be a growth in its demand, which will directly impact the talent market. Large-scale, people-intensive organizations will need to relook their strategies. She also noted the big shifts in current world politics where countries are moving towards protectionism. She predicted that the manufacturing models of yesteryear will become redundant. The future is moving towards smaller units closer to the market. These shifts mean that business models will need to be looked at differently in India as well, she said, pointing to the rising role of micro-entrepreneurs in this market.

Kidwai said tech-driven platform services will make small businesses viable. According to her, the platform ecosystem and servitization, a process by which manufacturing companies are supplementing their product offerings with services and solutions, will be the new face of globalization.

Among the challenges the country faces in being future-ready, she highlighted the issues of lack of infrastructure, low social security, low skilling, under-utilization of resources, and ineffective delivery of services. "To overcome these challenges, we need to get innovative in our thinking and influence the unknown by shaping what is happening around us. We need to understand the change, educate ourselves about it, and adjust to it. Keep learning," she said.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

VICKRAM NAGI,
vice president, Global Technology Services
Client Innovation Centers, IBM India

Vickram Nagi said that with digital transformation becoming the new normal, business as usual is no longer enough to stay profitable. Decoding digital transformation, Nagi stressed that a mere transformation in technology is not the solution. Every organization has to think about customer satisfaction. This can be done by designing or upgrading processes. The expectations and demands of customer satisfaction drive disruption. And every organization must make this its top business focus to ensure that it does not lose customers.

However, transformation requires collaboration and a new mindset, as it is as much a cultural change as it is a technology change. To ensure this, one needs to unlearn what has been taught, and relearn afresh. New talent needs to be honed and trained.

On business models of the future, Nagi emphasized the need to be agile and responsive to change. Since everything is driven by customer satisfaction and customer demands are changing, businesses need to keep pace with them and respond effectively.

He concluded that since human capital cannot be digitized, it is important to keep human resources engaged, improve their skills, and provide them ample opportunities to learn and adapt.

BETTER GOVERNANCE FOR RURAL TRANSFORMATION

CHHAVI RAJAWAT,
sarpanch, Soda village, Rajasthan

Chhavi Rajawat got the motivation to run for panchayat (village body) elections, leaving behind a comfortable city life, after she experienced the poor state of infrastructure in her village, Soda. "Though I was no stranger to Soda, which I had been visiting ever since I was born, standing for panchayat elections was a big step for me," she recalls. An MBA graduate from Pune, Rajawat was working in Jaipur when she decided to take the political route to help the people of her village.

Her primary objective was to develop villages and take forward the work started by her grandfather, who had also been sarpanch of the village earlier. She observed that development activities in the village had stopped, even though funds were available. She also found that there was disconnect between the district administration and the panchayat. The immediate challenge that Rajawat faced on taking up office was depleting water sources. Among her first projects was to desilt the existing reservoir.

She shared the challenges of a young woman being a sarpanch in Rajasthan, a state rooted in patriarchy. She said that though on paper every panchayat can decide on its own developmental needs, the ground realities are quite different. She sought the help of the private sector to train village youths, who could then be mobilized to change the traditional mindset in villages. Rural children and youth also need quality education and skill development programs, she stressed, inviting professionals from the corporate world to take part in rural transformation.

Rajawat also said that there is a need for a collaborative effort between villagers, the private sector, and the government.

LESSONS FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

D.A. TAMBE,
deputy managing director and chief information officer, SBI

India is at the cusp of massive development, but at the same time there are big infrastructure projects that are behind schedule. D.A. Tambe gave examples of rail projects in Kashmir and the Navi Mumbai airport in Mumbai that are still unfinished despite being sanctioned years ago.

Sharing lessons from his own experience, he said the problem lies largely with inefficient project management, adding that India needs project management skills to improve the success rate of projects.

He drew a parallel with the annual Republic Day parade and attributed its success to the commitment of people behind it and a deadline that cannot be missed. He said that the same kind of dedication and respect for deadlines are needed in all key projects.

For effective project management, he urged project managers to focus on RAID, which stands for "risks, assumptions, issues, and dependencies." He also urged them to take learnings from personal projects like planning weddings and vacations, and apply them in the professional world.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE – A MORSEL AT A TIME

AARUSHI BATRA,
co-founder, Robin Hood Army

Practitioners at the volunteer-driven conference formed an immediate connect with young Aarushi Batra, who heads a global volunteer organization for a social cause.

The Robin Hood Army is a group of professionals who collect excess food from restaurants, weddings and other social events, and distribute it among the hungry. Since its inception, the organization has served 9.5 million people in 103 cities across the world. And it has achieved this without raising any funds.

It all started when three friends decided to distribute 150 food packets to the needy near a flyover in New Delhi. With that started a social venture that has now grown global. The Robins, as the volunteers are called, now have tie-ups with hotels and restaurants, who give their excess food of the day to be distributed among the hungry. The Robins organise and plan details over WhatsApp, and distribution takes place at identified areas. Talking passionately and proudly of how the Robins are finding success in this initiative, Batra related heart-warming stories of making a difference through food.

The Robin Hood Army has not raised a single rupee. It connects with potential food partners through social media. On how they manage food drives, Batra said, "Everything is on WhatsApp; it's as simple as that." Recently, Bollywood star Kajol promoted the Robin Hood Army on Kaun Banega Crorepati, a TV quiz show hosted by Amitabh Bachchan.

Taking this initiative forward, the Robin Hood Army has now started the Robin Hood Academy. Volunteers teach children who do not go to school, serving as a bridge between the streets and schools.

Raj Kalady shared life lessons from an adventurous scuba diving trip to Egypt that enthralled the audience. After a near-fatal experience during this trip, Kalady realized the true value of a strong network. Being in a foreign country with no mobile phone, passport, money, or resources to bank on, he used his network to get out of the situation. He advised delegates to develop strong networks, exit comfort zones, and "ask for help, as it is a sign of strength."

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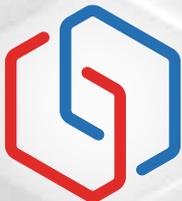
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INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS TO PREPARE INDIA FOR 2022

Moderator

Spending in the infrastructure sector is estimated to grow many folds in the future. With large projects such as smart cities and dedicated freight corridors, what does it take to complete large complex projects?

NEERAJ BANSAL, partner and head – ASEAN corridor and real estate sector – KPMG, India

Panellists

The execution of infrastructure projects is increasingly becoming dependent on international funding. This means that projects need to meet delivery deadlines. India has tremendous capacities, but needs to develop skills. Project managers need to take more ownership and show leadership. The international community, along with companies, must share equal responsibility in developing skills.

ALAIN SPOHR, managing director, Alstom India and South Asia

International projects in Malaysia and Singapore have been an eye-opener for me. Some of the key motivators I saw abroad were work ethic and the understanding of roles and responsibilities. I witnessed advanced project management skills, proper planning, and different tools being used for different project types. There is an understanding of the complete project management cycle — from design to delivery. To become more efficient and effective, India needs to drive change management, inculcate project management in the work culture, and spend time on developing people's skills.

BRIJ NANDAN YADAVA, executive director, DLF Limited

Funding is changing the nature of project management in the country. India faces delays in project delivery as the old institutions are not equipped to deal with mega investment projects. The development of technology is too rapid. India needs to devote ample time for project preparation. Despite the number of skilled people in India, the government lacks human resources for huge projects.

ASHOK KUMAR, senior highway engineer, World Bank, India

Railways remain a top choice for freight movement. The Delhi-Kolkata-Delhi and Delhi-Mumbai-Delhi sectors carry 60 percent of freight weight. Hence a dedicated corridor for freight is being developed with World Bank funding. As the funding is from an international agency, good project management is required. However, project management remains a constraint. Land acquisition, one of the biggest challenges, was mitigated by the creation of a new authority for it. New contracting strategies and good practices have been introduced to ensure timely project delivery.

AJIT KUMAR MISHRA, chief project manager, Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India, Government of India

SERVICE EXCELLENCE AND INDIA 2022

Moderator

SANJEEV BIKHCHANDANI, founder and vice-chairman, Naukri.com, and founding trustee, Ashoka University

Panellists

PARTHO BANDOPADHYAY, managing director, KPMG Global Delivery Center

TANMOY PRASAD, chief technology officer, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India

B.C.K. MISHRA, managing director, Uttarakhand Power Corporation Limited

BIKHCHANDANI: What does service excellence mean to you?

BANDOPADHYAY: We do a lot of auditing-related work with U.S.-based companies. One example of service excellence and disruption that resonates with me is of this big multinational insurance company which has introduced drone technology for insurance claims in hazardous areas. They are cutting down on cycle time, improving safety margins as far as surveyors are concerned, and using smart technology for service excellence. Also, we are the first organization that will use new-generation technologies to improve auditing quality and service excellence.

BIKHCHANDANI: How is the government striving for service excellence? With no existing competitiveness, what is driving the government to go for it?

PRASAD: Earlier the government was not open to using words like 'service' and 'servicing.' But the transition began from 2008, and in the past 3-4 years, the ease of doing business has been the priority of the current government. In the earlier regime, we used to inspect each and every consignment, but now we have developed an algorithm that just requires us to inspect 10 percent of cases, thus cutting down time. The push for excellence is coming from people who want to see change. So we are building an integrated digital platform to manage highway assets which will not just include roads but even petrol pumps and the quality of roads.

BIKHCHANDANI: How do you strive for excellence in the power sector?

MISHRA: Service excellence is important for us, as we provide power to the consumer. In 2001, under the accelerated power development program, budgetary support was given to states for power projects that were not delivering for some reason. In 2018, all the villages in the country got electrified. In Uttarakhand, 15,845 villages got electrified —which is a very difficult task. But this excellence has come about because monitoring is being done at the highest government level. Now the target is to provide a connection to every household by March 2019. Also, all the data is available on the ministry's website. There is a healthy competition among states for ranking, that is driving excellence in the sector.

AN ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY THROUGH SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Lt. Col. (retd.) Ajay Bhattacharya, conference co-director, in conversation with serial entrepreneur Sanjeev Bikhchandani, who is the founder and vice-chairman of job portal Naukri.com and the founding trustee of Ashoka University. Naukri.com also runs other internet ventures such as Jeevansathi.com, 99acres.com, and Shiksha.com

Sanjeev Bikhchandani took the audience through his entrepreneurial journey which was driven by the motivation of social good. Be it Naukri. com or Ashoka University, the idea behind the venture was to give Indians access to a service that was not yet available in the country. "By the time I was 13 years old, I knew I wanted to be an entrepreneur. After one year of working with a company, I was convinced I wanted to be one," he recalled.

Choosing St Stephen's College in Delhi over the Indian Institute of Technology was one of the early steps he took that was a break from the norm.

The serial entrepreneur who has set up several internet businesses remembered discovering the internet for the first time at a trade fair. He recalled the fascination of his first tryst with the world wide web. This triggered an idea which made Bikhchandani one of the leading digital entrepreneurs of India. "We knew that jobs were of high value search. What we needed was a platform through which people could search for jobs; that would be a hit," he recalled.

In the late '90s when he started, it was with borrowed money and operating from his father's servant quarters. However, the journey to make Naukri.com profitable took its time. Bikhchandani spoke about how an idea to offer it as a public service eventually became a profitable business. The success of Naukri.com led him to work on other digital platforms. He said the digital economy presents huge opportunities to budding entrepreneurs.

Bikhchandani also gave a glimpse into how he envisaged Ashoka University, the seed of which was sown during a conversation with a classmate he had met after a decade or so. He dreamed of providing high quality education with world-class faculty and a curriculum that is attuned to today's needs. That was how the idea of Ashoka University was conceived.

Ajay Bhattacharya (left) in conversation with Sanjeev Bikhchandani

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: OIL AND GAS

JAYANT MALHOTRA,
general manager, and Kumar Aditya, technical lead - data, Schlumberger, India

Jayant Malhotra started the session by raising the question, "Is digital transformation just a buzzword, or is it really happening?" He took the example of the oil and gas sector, where the demand and production volume are not synchronized and costs are rising, to explain the importance of technology and innovation. Oil and gas companies are now using disruptive technologies to increase production while keeping costs low.

He said that to be able to meet today's business challenges there need to be constant conversations between companies and customers, and companies should move towards technology integration. He added that the factors that would contribute towards a lower cost per barrel are people, technology, risk-sharing, knowledge, and experience.

Kumar Aditya gave an overview of Schlumberger's cognitive environment, known as Delfi, with a video presentation. Delfi leverages digital technologies such as security, analytics, machine learning, high-performance computing, and internet of things to improve operational efficiency and deliver optimized production.

ERP IMPLEMENTATION IN HYDEL PROJECTS

ARUN KAKRU,
senior program manager, IFS India

Arun Kakru spoke about his experience of implementing an enterprise resource planning (ERP) project, Project Kiran, across all the projects sites of the National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC) that constructs and operates large hydel power projects.

Kakru spoke about the challenges his team faced in managing a project that involved 53 different locations, many of which are in remote locations. "Sticking to the project schedule and cost proved to be a challenge due to the geographical locations of the project sites," said Kakru. Some of the sites are in mountainous areas, at high altitudes, or on river banks. The other big challenge was to manage a team of around 12,000 people.

IFS planned and executed the project by following PMI's project management principles. Instead of a single deployment, the company conducted several roll-outs. It was able to replicate a roll-out for other locations, thus minimizing time and effort. The company adopted a centralized approach and change management for the successful delivery of the mega project.

PRIVACY REGIME IN INDIA

MANISH SEHGAL,
partner – Risk Advisory Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP

Manish Sehgal opened his presentation with a question: "Does India understand privacy?" Quoting the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), he said India loses global opportunities due its weak protocols and the fear global companies have of potential data breaches.

Sehgal provided an introduction to the legal framework of data protection in India and the European Union. He spoke about the draft legislation in India, the Personal Data Protection Bill, which has opened a new debate on whether India must insist that global companies store their data in India.

According to Sehgal, people are the weakest link when it comes to upholding data privacy, especially in India. A change in mindset is required to enable India to keep up with the world when it comes to data protection.

Going by the number of questions that delegates posed to the speaker, this was clearly a hot topic among delegates.

SERVICE EXCELLENCE WITH CHANGING TECHNOLOGY

RAJENDRAN DANDAPANI,
business solutions evangelist, Zoho Corporation

SUBODH MATHUR,
additional controller general of accounts, Ministry of Finance, Government of India

In a world of constantly changing technologies, it is challenging to keep pace with changing customer expectations. Rajendran Dandapani spoke about the challenge of satisfying customers in projects.

Drawing on his experience with Zoho, a software products company, he provided delegates a set of mantras to help make an indelible mark with customers.

He emphasized on the frequent delivery of working software and striking a balance between tackling bugs and designing features, instead of chasing deadlines. He said project managers must welcome changing requirements even late in the development phase. "Google was in the final stages of developing an Android phone when Steve Jobs launched the iPhone in 2007. It was a phone without a keypad, which led to changes even in Android phones. Finally in 2009, the first Android phone was launched. So it is very important to embrace change even if it comes late in the development," he said.

Concurring with him on the fact that continuous technology excellence improves agility, Subodh Mathur highlighted how the government was using technology to improve the tracking of funds.

He made an eye-opening presentation on the public finance management system (PFMS) and the direct benefit transfer scheme that are helping the government effectively track fund disbursement of all centrally-sponsored public schemes and reducing corruption.

"We started collating data on the electronic process. The first step was to know which agencies are implementing central schemes. We started a massive initiative to register schools, colleges, and community health centers on the PFMS system and through expenditure filing, we were able to find out what was the realization of these funds."

Now PFMS tracks more than 1,500 government schemes under the central government's budget of Rs. 22 lakh crore.

DIGITAL DARWINISM

SANDEEP BIDANI,
partner, Positive Momentum, and founding director Cognitiv, and

HANUMANT TALWAR,
founder, Cognitiv

Sandeep Bidani and Hanumant Talwar brought their contagious energy on stage. The audience was hooked right from the start when they mentioned that they had stepped out of their corporate careers of 18 years to do something more meaningful –share their learning on how to thrive and survive.

They touched on the important issue of staying relevant in the midst of "Digital Darwinism." Digital Darwinism is how consumers change their behavior when society and technology change faster than they can adapt.

"Technology is gaining momentum and society and corporates are not able to align to it quickly. It is not about the strongest species that would survive, it is about species that can change. The ability of organizations to adapt to change is the key to success," said Talwar.

Giving the example of Uber, he said digital transformation is causing business transformation and artificial-intelligence-based tools are helping in scaling up of capacity.

Bidani pointed out that systemic impacts of these changes are big. He gave the example of driverless cars that can lead to big changes like less trauma and increasing life expectancy. Even mindsets of organizations are changing, he said, citing the example of solar technology being used in the walking canes of people with disabilities.

Bidani left the audience with this food for thought: "Do you want to have a digital leader or do you want to make every leader digital?"

PMI India presented the coveted annual project awards for excellence in project management. Project leaders from the winning teams accepted the awards from the guest of honor, M. Damodaran, chairperson, Excellence Enablers Private Limited, and former chairman, SEBI, UTI, and IDBI, along with Joseph Cahill, senior vice president, finance and administration, and interim executive, PMI; Cindy Anderson, vice president, brand management, PMI; and Raj Kalady, managing director, PMI India.

WINNER

L&T Hydrocarbon Engineering Limited
Bassein Development Project

PROJECT OF THE YEAR
★ ★
LARGE CATEGORY

RUNNER UP

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited
Project on Diesel Hydro treatment unit (DHT) and associated facilities to produce 100% BS IV HSD

WINNER

Tata Housing Development Company
New Haven Ribbon Walk Project

PROJECT OF THE YEAR
★ ★
MEDIUM CATEGORY

WINNER

State Bank of India
CBS Merger of e-Associate Banks and eBMB Project

PROJECT OF THE YEAR
★ ★
SMALL CATEGORY

RUNNER UP

Tata Consultancy Services
Orange Day1.5- Divestiture Project

WINNER

Fusion Microfinance Pvt. Ltd.
Empowering Rural Women with Digital Cashless Culture

PROJECT OF THE YEAR
★ ★ ★

MICRO CATEGORY

RUNNER UP

IBM
Project Blue Prism

PROJECT OF THE YEAR
★ ★ ★

CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY

WINNER

Tata Consultancy Services Ltd
Adult Literacy Program

WINNER

Save the Children
New Horizons Project

PROJECT OF THE YEAR
★ ★ ★

NGO CATEGORY

RUNNER UP

World Vision India
Maersk -World Vision India Healthy Highway
Truck Drivers Project

FUTURE OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT WITH AI

RASHI KACKER,
senior project manager, Recotap

Rashi Kacker introduced the audience to the company's 'timebot', popularly referred to as Dan. The home-grown robot can be utilized by project managers for several tasks. "Project managers would agree with me, when I say we are firefighters. Given our situation where we have to multi-task and race against time, the timebot provides some relief," she remarked.

Kacker listed the timebot's key function as an assistant to project managers. All the project manager has to do is define the basic scope of the project for the bot. The bot then comes up with tasks aligned to the scope, flags off potential risks, and organizes information that can be analysed for informed decision-making. The bot is also useful to understand team dynamics, as it monitors and captures team activities to help managers in assigning tasks.

CROWDSOURCING FOR PROJECTS

AMIT MALIK,
technology principal engineer, and

KAVITA SINGH,
senior quality analyst, Optum Global Solutions

Digital disruption has given rise to a gig economy, where crowdsourcing platforms are bringing together clients and professionals with specific skills. Singh listed out Wikipedia and Swachh Bharat as some of the biggest examples of crowdsourcing. She shared examples of how Optum Global used crowdsourcing for its work in the healthcare sector.

"When we had a highly complex problem to solve, we decided to throw it open and challenge a billion brains," Singh explained.

Malik spoke about the company's crowdsourcing platform. "We have found experts after posting a gig on the platform. It leads to people engagement and matching talent with the task."

But there are challenges as well, such as the need to source the right set of people for a gig and keep to the time schedule.

CRUISING INTO THE CLOUD

ANKITA HEMNANI,
senior technical product manager,
Expedia Cruise

Ankita Hemnani shared her experience of migrating Expedia's cruise liner business from data servers to the cloud. The challenge was to do the task without impacting the existing business, and with zero downtime. Hemnani walked the audience through a step-by-step process of the migration – from the selection of the cloud provider to providing a cloud back-up and cloud resilience.

She emphasized the need to ensure a strategy that defines the process while migrating to the cloud. The decision to move to the cloud was primarily driven by the fact that the company decided to upgrade to the latest technology instead of renewing the contract for their servers. This made it time-bound. Moving to the cloud also optimized costs, as it follows the principle of pay-as-you-go.

BUSINESS INNOVATION TO SIMPLIFY PROJECT EXECUTION

MANOHAR YERRAGUNTLA,
project management group lead, Belcan, and
member, board of directors, PMI Pearl City,
Hyderabad Chapter

Manohar Yerraguntla who has rich experience in the aerospace field shed light on project issues that frequently occur in this sector, and the solutions that have worked.

"A Boeing 787 aircraft requires 3.5 million parts that need to be sourced from 4,500 factories from around the globe. Any delay in any of the parts affects the whole program. Even a small system takes 2-3 years for completion," Yerraguntla explained.

Yerraguntla and his team worked on a small system where they found the root cause of missed deadlines - unplanned work or unexpected issues due to poor communication. So he installed a visual board in the work area where everyone could see the status of the project, see who was working on what, and where in the chain issues were cropping up. The innovation yielded results in just 6 months, leading to improved customer satisfaction.

WE THANK THESE SOCIAL MEDIA VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

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