



BizDivas
INDIA

A CSR initiative led by Altavis Pvt Ltd

I Inspire 2014



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4/4/2014

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The logo for 'I Inspire 2014' features the text 'I Inspire' in a teal font with '2014' in a smaller teal font below it. To the right is a stylized graphic of a woman in a pink and teal dress, with her arms raised in a celebratory gesture.

Biz Divas is a national network of professional women connecting to advance one another personally and professionally, following the motto “Women Inspire Change”. Biz Divas’ goal is to provide a platform for women of our region to come together to be educated, inspired and connected. We identify, invest and bring visibility to extraordinary women in business, corporates, public & political leadership. I Inspire, Biz Divas’ flagship annual national conference for women leaders aims to be a confluence of ideas, a convergence of thought and celebration of the spirit of diversity and entrepreneurship. Biz Divas believes in learning from each other and moving forward by collaborating together. I Inspire seeks to open doors for women to ensure a positive impact in their work life and prosperity in order to achieve Biz Divas’ goal of making them economically empowered.



Running into its second year, **I Inspire 2014** saw more than 200 participants that included around 40 eminent speakers and thought leaders who shared their innovative thoughts, practices and success stories. Dynamic women, industry experts, professionals and leaders, role models and future mentors engaged in a rich dialog with

one another.

I Inspire 2014 proved to be a rich ground for exchange of ideas, networking and brainstorming with some of the finest minds in India.

A heartfelt thanks is extended to **Barclays, Monster, Encore Capital Group, Ernst & Young and Jacob's Creek** for sponsorship and their support to make this event come alive.

I Inspire 2014 opened to a full house with Welcome Note by **Ranjana Deopa, co-founder Biz Divas & Altavis.**

Plenary Discussion: One Woman in Every Boardroom

The Indian corporate sector has witnessed metamorphosis over the years. The things are not the same as it used to be in the past decade. The Indian businesswoman today commands a position of respect, recognition and laurels. With the emboldening of the position of woman professionals in India, the country has witnessed many breakthrough actions and landmark occasions of empowerment and growth.

With the new Companies Act, making it mandatory for companies to appoint at least one woman director on their board and including activities related to promoting gender diversity and women empowerment, Indian corporate sector will have to diagnose the challenges by taking women seriously in board rooms.



With the enactment of the law, many companies have already comprehended the requirement to work on training women employees for leadership roles. The directive comes into force from October. While the initiative brings forward a welcome commitment from various sectors; there are possibilities of hazards which could not be

ignored such as tokenism, conscious and unconscious biases. With this backdrop, I Inspire opened the first plenary session. This led to brainstorming of multiple aspects of law-making and mandating “One Woman in Every Boardroom” clause. **Sarika Gupta Bhattacharyya, co-founder, Biz Divas** was moderating the session and her question to the esteemed panel was whether the clause would bring positive changes and if it is a fair decision or mere tokenism.

The Panellists included:

- Apurva Purohit, CEO – MBPL (RadioCity 91.1) & Author
- Debjani Ghosh, MD, Sales and Marketing Group, Intel South Asia
- Kaku Nakhate, President and Country Head (India), Bank of America N.A.
- Sameer Chadha, CEO, Barclays Shared Services
- Sanjay Modi, MD, Monster.com (India/Middle East/ Southeast Asia)

Session Proceedings and Key Points Highlighted:

The session was substantiated by multiple inputs and real life examples from the panellists. Sameer discussed the common stereotype regarding perception of women not being suitable for leadership roles is a myth and this needs to be dismantled. He added that the quota system for woman in every boardroom could be a successful start-up but the systems in the country need to ensure sustainability of such initiatives. Kaku highlighted a very vital aspect of return on investment of woman's career could be ensured by accelerating on diversity. Since there are 50% women population in the country, there is a necessity of revamp in overall perspective which would in turns result into enhancement of ROE/ROI and shareholder's value.

Sanjay's viewpoint resonated with the matter of gender diversity essentially being a business issue-The way business, technology and workforce moves. Co-creation is the most important aspect one needs to work on. He quoted the data citing 28 trillion spend globally being done by women per annum thus highlighted the fact that an organization will have to focus on women not only as the biggest consumers but the largest talent store. A significant mention of the paramount issue of glass ceiling in Sanjay's remark further brought forth that an invisible glass ceiling is created for women since their college levels as barely 10% of the women out of the college are able to reach to their desired career goals.

It was further mentioned by the panellists that the dynamics in boardroom is bound to change with more women leaders coming in the forefront. It is essential to rethink that this issue is a business issue more than anything and could be a good initiative the way business notion is evolving.

Debjani cited the example of Intel in its endeavours ensuring diversity and inclusion. She added that the organization has maintained strong diversity in the workforce. Mentoring, leadership training and coaching have been focussed upon. She added that "the ownership lies with women too, to put their hands up to identify pipeline opportunities and need to ensure that they are nurtured in an organization."

Apurva raised a very vital point that all the problems of women are similar in nature and the women who manage them well ensure success for themselves. She added that woman of today goes for best of both the worlds. She also spoke about the latent unsaid mindset of wanting diversity on account of the preconceived myth that world has constantly been unfair to women. She was of the favour that the organizations need to be cognizant of the talent of both men and women. She mentioned that she strongly believed that "women need to be accountable for their own career and admit the fact that there is no short-cut for hard work and organizations are there to help the employees."

Talking about the quota in the boardroom, upon asking about the joint viewpoint, the panellists mentioned salient points as quota does no good in ensuring sustainability of any profession. In order to ensure sustainable leadership positions for women professionals, quota system would not be able to safeguard the sanctity of right talent reaching out at right place without any corruption, nepotism or discrimination. However the legal mandate

on boardroom quota for woman can act as a kick-start to create a viable professional culture for women leaders.

Recognition: Mentoring – Critical Path to Leadership

Biz Divas has always kept immense faith on the empowerment that mentoring fetch in. The professionals who bring in with them plethora of rich experiences to share, thus they can lead and motivate the ones who are evolving in their career path to be where they want to be. Biz Divas Mentoring Leadership Program, a six month long initiative announced by Biz Divas at I Inspire 2013 connected 18 mentees from Delhi and Mumbai with senior leaders as their mentors. I Inspire 2014 was a forum to felicitate the mentors and the mentees and to get inspired from their stories.

The mentees were felicitated by **Gagan Singh, CEO, Business & Chairperson Sri Lanka Operations, JLL**. Gagan was also requested to share her experiences with the forum as what she seems to have gained from mentoring experience, along with her mentee **Vermeen Kapoor, VP - Finance Change Management, Barclays**.

She focussed on that fact that a water-tight compartmentalized form of mentoring is not the method she preferred. Rather she was always of the opinion that mentoring should be a balanced approach. She shared her experience and added that mentoring has been a brilliant journey. Upon asking the same question to her mentee; she



shared her wonderful experiences and the benefits of having a mentor by her side. She added that initially the focus of the meetings used to be more professional in flavour, related to the career goals but as the relationship grew, the mentor and mentee took next step to sort issues pertaining to personal attributes, anxieties and aspirations. The journey marvellously evolved with taking important turns where mentor's past experiences immensely helped the mentee to shape her present and future goals.

Gagan finally concluded highlighting the importance of mentoring as a very useful attribute added to the career path of a professional. She endorsed idea that right kind of mentoring ensures success which is primarily accredited to the mentee as she is the one who plays the most imperative role in the whole process. A word of advice which Gagan gives to the forum is more than anything, the chemistry between the mentor and mentee does the magic and

ensures magnificent environment. One word of caution while mentoring is that we should not go by the approach of “one size fits all”. She concluded with her lovely words that the whole process of mentoring can’t be a forced one and it needs to be essentially driven by the mentee.

Break-away Session: Lessons on Leadership

Leadership is a lifelong learning process. Breakaway session “Lessons on Leadership” was an occasion to gain knowledge of shades of leadership, the skills critical to success of any professional, whether employed or an entrepreneur. **Apurva Purohit, CEO Radio City & Author – “Lady, You Are Not A Man”**, shared gleaming extracts from her book and her experience as CEO of Radio City.

Apurva started her session in a most wonderful manner by showcasing a video of the song

of title of her book “Lady, You Are Not A Man”. The video displayed the nuanced excerpts from a working woman’s life and the way she manages different quarters of existence. She further talked about various steps taken towards building present environment for women at work. In first step she explains about feminist movement that



earmarked creating a better professional environment for the women by walking away from status quo. The next step she mentioned that globally it was gradually being recognized that having women at work is not a CSR initiative but meant for actual economic growth. The third step she mentioned is that still needs a lot to be done to change the configuration of the pyramid of lesser women being at the top leadership positions. She added that the mantra of tackling with difficult circumstances lies in simplifying the complexities of life. She suggested one of the most innovative methods of dividing the life situations into 3/3 matrix containing features of Accept, Adapt and Achieve.

Acceptance, according to Apurva is one of the most important keys to success. The notion of “Main Aurat Hoon” should not be a reason for failures, rather one has to accept the fact that she is a woman, equally competent to men and she needs to grab larger part of the sky themselves. One needs to be confident of her femininity. With the cognizance of the fact that we are women, one needs to recognize the conflicting emotions one faces. The guilt trips in one’s own life is very natural especially the working moms with young children. The wise step lies with the fact that one takes into account all the guilt trips and recognizes

which guilt one is comfortable with. This facilitates the thinking process and empowers one to take correct decision against momentary impulses.

Apurva spoke about one of the very inherent aspects of humans, of being complaining in nature and bemoaning about the fact that life has been unfair for them. She added that many women get into this trap and eventually waste their precious time and immense energies. She adds that life could never be “made to order”. She further goes on explaining that while it seems that life has been unjust largely to women and men have everything going their way, they too have numerous challenges to face.

Adapting is the second mantra that Apurva largely talked about in her book and eventually in the session. She puts a word of caution that one should not enter into scheme of things with a negative mindset, whether it is a marriage or an organization. One has to co-opt with the existing circumstances and create an ecosystem for oneself. The need is to understand what works best for a situation. There shouldn't be any hesitation to ask for help. We need to remember at all levels that there is no substitute to hard work and adaptation and our brains are capable of both.

The two mantras of accept and adapt leads to the road to third most important attribute and that is achievement. Apurva, while talking about achievement, mentioned three salient feature of the professional world which we need to keep in mind. Firstly, the requirement of personal accountability, secondly the knowledge of the fact that reputation always works better than a CV and finally we all need to celebrate success. She finally concluded by saying that women are superb at multitasking and extremely talented but when it comes to celebrating success, they take a back seat. It is essential get their share of credits and compliments of being amazingly organized and efficient and in this manner, celebrating success is vital feature towards accomplishment.

Break-away Session: Reinventing Yourself



Life is constant evolution. It is never too late to step back and take a deep look at where you are going and where you want to go. Whether you change your path altogether or pursue the same path you are on, it is necessary to be with the changing times and the constantly changing self. Reinventing Yourself was a workshop designed to explore

how to get in touch with your core and get the best out of who you are. Facilitated by **Shilpi Singh, Executive Coach, Altavis & Biz Divas** and **Sanjay Mitra, OD Consultant and Executive Coach**, the workshop helped participants emerge as Emotionally Intelligent Leaders.

Break-away Session: 5 Minutes Favorites

The idea was simple - the entrepreneurs at I Inspire met and exchanged simple 5-minute favors. Everybody had their share of stage time where they shared about what they do,



what they can contribute to the forum and what they would like to get out of it. The exercise helped in not only sharing knowledge but also building a stronger sense of community. More than anything else, everyone walked out of it carrying a bunch of contacts and information about their potential clients. Moderated by 91springBoard, this session

reinforced the importance and value of connecting and collaborating in a very inspiring way.

Discovering Biases: Interactive Theatre



This session used interactive scenarios to explore a number of case study situations involving different characters, enacted by the Steps Drama team. At key points during the scenario, one of the actor facilitators - in character - will turn to the delegates for their advice and help in moving the situation forward. That help is then woven back into the scenario.

They can also rewind the action

and try out different suggestions allowing the delegates to see the impact of different behaviours. Fabulously moderated by **Mohan Madgulkar, Country Head – India, Steps Drama**, it was very engaging activity that had audience in splits while subtly addressing certain key unconscious biases at workplace.

Plenary: Unconscious Bias at the Workplace

Unconscious bias has become an important topic in the area of Diversity & Inclusion in the workplace. Organizations are now increasingly aware of the potential negative effect unconscious bias can have on revenue, productivity and talent. As a result many are now including unconscious bias training and workshops as part of their Diversity & Inclusion strategy. However, until recently the missing piece of the unconscious bias jigsaw has always been what to advise people to do about it. After all, unconscious bias is by definition unconscious, and so not always open to introspection. Research has now emerged which has shown that giving people better cognitive strategies not only reduces unconscious bias, but that the bias levels continue to fall after intervention.

Led by Rashmi Mandloi, Diversity Lead, South Asia, Altavis & Biz Divas, the discussion focused on 1) Research 2) Strategies organizations are using 3) Need to make it interesting.

The Panellists Included:

- Caroline Graham, Director of Change Management, Barclays
- Gayathri Ramamurthy, Talent – COE, Leadership Development and D & I Head – India, Capgemini
- Katherine Nisbet, Director Diversity & Inclusion, Community Business

Panel Discussion: Inspiring Change Makers

The panel discussion aimed to highlight the scenic journey of women who have made a difference by being the change agents themselves. The panel identified and connected women leaders who have stepped out of their comfort zone and taken entrepreneurial challenges. In doing so, they have empowered others to build sustainable models, develop synergies and increase their impact. The panel was moderated by **Satya Narayanan R, Chairman CL Educate Ltd (Career Launcher)**

The Panellists Included:

- Neera Saggi , Chief Executive, L&T Seawoods Pvt. Ltd. (LTSPL)
- Pooja Goyal, Founder Director, Intellitots
- Shabia Walia, Media Professional & Author
- Neeru Sharma, Co Founder & Director (Corp Devt), Infibeam.com

Session Proceedings and Key Points Highlighted:

One such inspiring story was narrated by extremely forthcoming and Futuristic panellist, Pooja, Founder Director, Intellitots. Pooja was of the view-point that an initiative that enhances self –esteem and enchants the sense of fulfilment is certainly more inspiring than proving to the world about one’s own credentials. This has been the driving force in Pooja’s

life which made her follow her dreams. She shared with the audience that having a child was seminal event in life and when she was unable to find a perfect primary institution for her own child she was inspired to take up the paradigm shift and build up a model primary school for 6 months to 6 years old kids. She does mention that the road was full of unprecedented challenges but she carried on collaborating with more like minded people and women intellectual capital.

While sharing her experiences, Neeru supplemented that prior work experiences in India



and abroad gave her immense exposure and background to take up challenges and go the entrepreneurial way. She is proud of the fact that her family supported her in every decision that has led to success in the business. She further mentioned, "With trust of the family and the core team, the trust of people is won in entrepreneurship".

A veteran media professional by experience, Shabia recalled the toughest moment of her life when she had a small 10 months old kid at home and she couldn't take enough time out for her. It was then she propagated the idea of working from home in her organization and since then the trend begun. Shabia feels, if a person is good at work; favourable circumstances follow. She added that making a decision in favour of your family does not necessarily mean you are making a decision against your career. There could be different roles one could play at a time wearing different hats simultaneously which is eventually fulfilling both personally and professionally.

Sharing her experiences of having almost three decade long stint with the Indian Administrative Services and then joining corporate sector, Neera explained to the audience that the present generation is more responsive towards women and allowing them to find mentors outside their homes. She added that women need not ignore their inherent quality of a nurturer and a care-giver; rather these qualities could be used to embolden their professional skills as well. In this way, empowerment needs to be strived, strategized and attained in all walks of life and women are very much capable of the same.

Plenary: Power of People & Partnerships

The session focussed on the common attributes of power of partnerships common in business leaders. The panellists in the session showcased how they have harnessed the power of partnerships to create scalable and successful businesses and in what ways strong, lasting relationships could be created ensuring larger economic goals to be fulfilled.

The Panellists included:

- Kunda Jadhav, Director, India Trade Control and Derivatives & FX Trade Services Operations, Barclays Bank
- Manu Rikhye, Executive Vice President and Managing Director Encore India , Encore Capital Group
- Meenu Handa , Director, Corporate Communications, Amazon India
- Parul Soni, Executive Director and Practice Leader, Ernst & Young
- Sandeep Narang, Chairman, Anglian-Omega Group (India)

Session Proceedings and Key Points Highlighted:

The moderator opened the house by asking how people partnerships and collaboration is important. Meenu responded to the question first by mentioning that in today's world, interconnected social tools are important and equally central are the people. One of the most significant ingredients to the formula of success is collaborating with people. She cited a University of Columbia study which has



empirically proven that women are the better collaborators. She urged the audience to look back and visualize man as a hunter hence he had to focus on his hunting skills whereas women had to do much more. Ability to take risk and multitasking comes from the theory of genetic evolution of women as human beings thus women should not short-sell themselves in the professional world.

Parul added his observation as a people's leader and shared that women are much efficient people's manager than men and they bring lot of value addition to the theory of people's participation. Parul highlighted the strength of high emotional quotient inherent in women which gives them edge to deliver quality product and services. Citing the examples of study

carried out across 32 countries, Parul underlined the problems of scaling up and glass ceiling in Indian context. He added that there is a common perception of women gravitating towards HR and communications role and are not having analytical or business focus is the prevalent myth.

Kunda mentioned to the panel that changing business aspirations for women for a more enhanced role and one should be very clear about what one wants which would allow them to move beyond the stereotypes. It is not about the fact that which gender is good at doing what. Everybody contributes to an organization and it is an established fact that women have greater endurance, increased levels of sensitivity and multitasking approach. She shared with the audience that we are in the best times till date in Indian context where women are recognized for their qualities. Situation was not the same earlier. One needs to make the best out of the fact that diversity is recognized in an organization and awareness levels have gone up.

Citing the empirical data, Sunny raised the issue that women-led businesses are very less in numbers across the globe and this is still a disturbing fact. He added that the MSME sector could be one possible arena where the talent and energies of women could be harnessed for maximum growth and empowerment. Continuing with Sunny's point, Manu enlightened the fact that a people-centric journey is shaping up to be an important aspect. He added, as an organization embarks on that journey, there is a need to be well aware of what others are doing and fundamentally change the problem areas within an organization. A macro step towards a more focused approach is to rethink how we are ensuring an enhanced global role for women followed by envisaging micro steps to build a responsive environment to deliver women-derived excellence.

Panel Discussion: Women – Future Leaders in Futuristic Workplaces

Trends in workplaces are changing and so will the role of women change in these futuristic workplaces. The session explored these trends and in order to find a more collaborative approach to create leaders for tomorrow. The discussion was moderated by **Gagan Singh, CEO Business & Chairperson Sri Lanka Operation, JLL.**

The Panellists included:

- Anshul Punhani, Marketing Head, Monster India
- Anupama Mandloi, MD, Fremantle Media India
- Katherine Nisbet, Director Diversity & Inclusion, Community Business
- Paroma Roy Choudhary, Director & Country Head, Corporate Communications & Public Affairs of Google India
- Rubeena – COO, Moneycontrol.com

Session Proceedings and Key Points Highlighted:

The moderator, Ms. Gagan Singh opened the house for panel discussion, citing the example of Athena Doctrine which suggests “Women and men (who think like them) will rule the future”. She urged the panellists to define a futuristic notion of workplace and asked whether there are any ideal types. Paroma was the first among panellists to discuss



futuristic workplaces. Citing the example of Google, she shared that the organization focuses on skill led/project based model which is gradually moving towards a flat, non-hierarchical structure having cross –functional and across geographical frame . Katherine was of the opinion that futuristic workplace is an evolving frame of reference

and there could be no “magic-wand” approach. She envisaged a typical workplace could be one where the top performer might work from home instead of wasting travel time. She did acknowledge the fact, in contemporary scenario realistic pictures needs to be drawn and it is not easy to even be like Google who have done away with the corporate leviathan. Katherine focussed on futuristic technology and leverage to people to be two core aspects to create futuristic workplaces.

Rubina, when asked about futuristic workplace in media business, shared that she visualizes the same to be more led by women and an enabling environment which would substitute physical work to more technology oriented approach, collaboration and team building. To this Anupama added that there should be a point where freedom of choice is ensured to women. She mentioned that people attending this kind of programmes such as I Inspire are the privileged ones, the holistic futuristic model should focus on the underprivileged groups and how they are supported to make choice. She requested all to give a thought on the culturally vast nature of the country and what could be done for women who otherwise are very talented but do not have access to minimum freedom of choice and decision making.

Acknowledging the aspects on which Anupama focussed on, Paroma and Katherine highlighted that the companies will have to move away from command and control approach to a more consensual model. The leadership style is shifting and so the cultural fit approach to an organization becomes of greater significance. Unconscious biases need to be at bay to build futuristic workplaces and privileges should be followed by great accountability.

In Summary

A happy, insightful and inspiring mix of networking, learning, sharing and even dancing, I Inspire also served as the platform to launch Biz Divas Periodical aimed at reaching out to, connecting and inspiring professional women.

Felicitations of Biz Divas Mentoring Leadership Program 2013 also gave way to the announcement of Biz Divas Mentoring Leadership Program 2014 which is going to be bigger and better with a special focus on mentoring women ready to move to boardrooms in accordance with Biz Divas' vision of *One Woman in Every Boardroom*.

Priyanka Awasthy, co-founder Biz Divas & Altavis thanked all participants and shared her thoughts on the future of Women Leadership in Closing Remarks.

I Inspire 2014 culminated with Networking Reception, an informal gathering of senior leaders while leaving the Biz Divas team and participants already looking forward to even more inspiring I Inspire 2015!



Participants Speak...

It was good to be in a room with many like minded women. Also was refreshing to see what different interests/professions people were pursuing. The panel discussions and the theatre workshop was very insightful! All the sessions were very relevant given today's scenario and also very well put together. Kudos to the biz divas team!

~ Richa Rauniar, JLL

It is a good platform with great potential. Organizers are already doing a wonderful job!

~ Deepika Chaudhry, Xerox India Limited

It was a good opportunity to network with like minded people and listen to and learn from the leaders.

~ Shilpi Khandelwal, Royal Bank of Scotland

Exceptionally good experience!

~ Ruby Manhas, Encore Capital Group

It was a great experience to be a part of I Inspire 2014. All sessions were nice having excellent speakers. It brought a great push to my personality and I was really inspired with those sessions. Thanks Biz Divas for giving me such a nice and inspirational guidance on women leadership.

~ Samar Raqshin, Gautam Buddh University

The conference was organised very well in terms of content and relevance of topics to present day. The warmth and vitality of the organizers enveloped the environment and people.

~ Gayathri Ramamurthy, Capgemini