



**IMA WOMEN  
LEADERSHIP CONCLAVE**  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2024  
BRILLIANT CONVENTION CENTRE, INDORE



# IMA 3<sup>RD</sup> WOMEN LEADERSHIP CONCLAVE

Thursday | Sep 26, 2024 | Brilliant Convention Centre, Indore

## LEADERSHIP CONVERGENCE

Steering the World Together



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Chairperson - Heidelberg Cement India Ltd.  
Former COO - Taj Palaces Resorts and Safaris, Mumbai



**Sangeeta Talwar**

Director on the Boards of Manipal Global Education Services Pvt. Ltd  
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**Nina Chatrath**

Leadership & Business Consultant  
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**MasterChef  
Pankaj Bhadhouria**

India's 1st MasterChef,  
Food traveler, TV Host & Author.



**Preeta Singh**

Co-Director Jaipur Literature Festival,  
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**Esha Nagar**

Founder & Chief Executive Officer -  
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Brand Stories, Culture Shifts  
Ex Managing Director - Nepa India



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Author & Life Coach, Chennai



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National Security Council,  
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**Renu Singhi**

Business woman and  
cyclist, Jaipur



**Kena Shree**

DGM - HR, NTPC Limited  
Author, Storyteller, TEDx Speaker, New Delhi



**Neelam Kothari**

Indian Actress, Interior and Jewellery  
Designer, Mumbai



**Aanchal Agrawal**

Standup Comedian & Content Writer

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## #IMAGINEHERPOWER



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LEADERSHIP CONCLAVE**  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2024  
BRILLIANT CONVENTION CENTRE, INDORE



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Amrit kal for the next 25 years the dice are loaded in our favor but it won't happen automatically until each of one of us contributes and we can do it only when we JUST DO IT !!

Amrit kal for the next 25 years the dice are loaded in our favor but it won't happen automatically until each of one of us contributes and we can do it only when we JUST DO IT !! When we take action and toss the coin, we will have both sides – the opportunities and challenges. At Corporate level, you have to keep INSIGHT about SITE: Sustainable Development, Inclusive Approach, Technology, and Emerging Market. If any business has sustainability to its core, having an inclusive approach within the organization and also towards stakeholders, embracing technology to the extent possible, and tapping the untapped markets. Adopting anything which is good for the society at large is welcome, but please do ensure that without the ability to think and discriminate between right and wrong, it is not intelligence. So perhaps artificial technology is smart, yes, but intelligent not yet. So, if we need to outplay technology, we need to be smart, intelligent insaan hota hi he just channelize it with proper energy and guidance. The other side of the coin lands up to challenges: GCC: Global Uncertainty, Climate Change, Cybersecurity. Though at

the local level, there are further issues of social unrest and stability. At an individual level, few questions to be asked to self to understand whether one can navigate through the VUCA world: The questions are: am I adding value to my knowledge and skill? Have I delivered at my workplace? Am I making a positive impact? Am I at peace with myself? Which currency will work for able to right path? RAS!! RISK, ADAPT, SKILL. रिस्क है तो इश्क है और यही इश्क है। and it is ishq that is always the driving force to go out that extra yard! Adapt and Skill will fall in place जब इश्क का जुनून वो करवाने लगता है आपसे जो आप कर नहीं सकते। The key will be 3C, Curiosity, Creativity, Consistency, to GROW ensure that baton of navigation is in your hand. And fast forward, 25 years hence if you cross each milestone, navigate all challenges and reach your destination do not stop, as अभी सफर खत्म नहीं हुआ है, क्योंकि सफर कभी खत्म नहीं होता। and remember few lines:

चरेवेति चरेवेति यही तो मन्त्र है अपना  
नहीं रुकना नहीं थकना सतत् चलना सतत् चलना  
यही तो मन्त्र है अपना शुभंकर मन्त्र है अपना

Get moving and keep navigating the world, at the end will say वाह उस्ताद वाह।

Warm regards,  
CA Navin Khnadelwal, President  
Indore Management Association (IMA)

Registration No. - 52079/90

## EDITORIAL MESSAGE

We cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose. We stand together until the end” is one quote that aptly captures the state of the world we live in. Reinterpreting aforementioned words of Woodrow Wilson in the context of ‘global economic interdependence’ fosters the belief in the fact that the best way to unite the world is through the pursuit of symbiotic progress. That’s where the value-creation for stakeholders across the globe comes into picture.

Enabled by technology and driven by enterprise, today’s businesses are in just the right place to utilize the opportunities that an interconnected world has to offer. Now, only limiting-factors can be their unwillingness to expand their horizons and inability to envisage possibilities. This issue of Indore Manager makes an effort to help readers put things into perspective on both these fronts. We hope you will find this effort a worthy one.

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Indore Manager

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## A SOULFUL PRELUDE



### Padma Shri Smt. Malini Awasthi Graces the Curtain Raiser

As a prelude to the much-anticipated 3rd Women Leadership Conclave, the Indore Management Association (IMA) organized a grand Curtain Raiser event that resonated with cultural pride and leadership inspiration. The highlight of the evening was the presence of the illustrious PadmaShri Smt. Malini Awasthi as the Guest of Honor.

Renowned as an icon of Indian folk music, Smt. Malini Awasthi's divine voice filled the air with the rich essence of India's heritage, creating a soulful ambiance that captivated the audience. Her enthralling performance seamlessly blended tradition with inspiration, reflecting the spirit of the conclave that seeks to empower women leaders while staying rooted in their cultural identities.

As her melodies unfolded, the atmosphere transformed into a celebration of India's timeless

legacy. Each song narrated stories of resilience, tradition, and unity, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of the attendees. Her divine presence and charismatic address emphasized the importance of drawing strength from one's roots while embracing modern leadership roles.

The Curtain Raiser was not just an evening of cultural enrichment but also a call to action for the journey ahead. Smt. Awasthi's performance served as a symbolic bridge between India's rich past and the aspirational future of women leaders.

Her presence ignited a collective spirit of leadership, collaboration, and unity, setting the perfect tone for the 3rd Women Leadership Conclave. It was an evening that celebrated the convergence of tradition and progress, leaving an inspiring legacy for all present.



# SANGEETA TALWAR

**Director on the Boards of Manipal  
Global Education Services Pvt. Ltd.,  
HCL Infosystem Ltd., Mahindra First  
Choice Wheels Ltd & Castrol India Ltd.**



**T**his trailblazing businesswoman, recognized among the top 25 businesswomen in India, has played a crucial role in launching Maggi at Nestlé India and contributing to the success of iconic brands like TATA Tea and Barbie. A renowned speaker and author of *The Two-Minute Revolution: The Art of Growing Business*, she emphasizes the importance of visionary leadership, resilience, and emotional intelligence in driving success. Her leadership philosophy revolves around clarity of vision and the ability to adapt. She describes "fly vision" as the capacity to rise above daily operations, view the bigger picture, and identify emerging opportunities. This perspective enables leaders to guide their organizations effectively toward future growth. In her words, "Astounding is how, despite everything, you can put it all together—for your family, your work, and your environment. That's truly amazing."

Reflecting on her professional journey, she shares her experience of breaking barriers as India's first regional sales manager in the FMCG sector, a role that required courage, adaptability, and risk-taking. A pivotal moment in her career occurred during the launch of Maggi, when sales initially fell short of expectations. She candidly highlighted that the issue lay in overestimated projections rather than the product or sales strategy. This honest approach earned her credibility and reinforced her reputation as a courageous and insightful leader.

She firmly believes that life is shaped by the choices one makes. Encouraging those around her to make their own decisions, she highlights how personal choices build confidence, enhance risk-taking ability, and foster growth. Her journey is a testament to the importance of resilience and adaptability in overcoming challenges and achieving success.

With a focus on engaging younger generations, she stresses the need to help them uncover their passions and take ownership of their paths. Leaders, she believes, must connect with their teams through empathy, adapt to change with resilience, and embrace emotions as a tool for understanding and improving behavior. For her, building strong brands means focusing on consumer needs, maintaining unwavering commitment, and continually evolving to ensure relevance in an ever-changing world.



# NEELAM KOTHARI SONI

Indian Actress,  
Interior &  
Jewellery Designer



Neelam Kothari Soni, a name synonymous with grace and talent, has left an indelible mark in Hindi cinema. Born on November 9, 1969, in Hong Kong to a Gujarati Jain father and an Iranian mother, Neelam's journey has been as vibrant and multifaceted as her heritage. From an early age, she displayed a flair for the arts, learning to play the keyboard and mastering Jazz Ballet. Her family, deeply rooted in the traditional jewelry-making business, moved to Bangkok during her teenage years. It was during a vacation to Mumbai that destiny intervened—director Ramesh Behl spotted her and offered her a role in *Jawaani* (1984). This film marked her debut in Bollywood alongside Karan Shah. Neelam quickly rose to prominence, enchanting audiences with her charm and talent. She starred opposite some of the biggest names in the industry, including Govinda and Chunky Pandey, in memorable films like *Love 86* (1986), *Ilzaam* (1986), *Hatya* (1988), and *Khatron Ke Khiladi* (1988). Her performances captured hearts, solidifying her status as a beloved actress in the late 80s and early 90s.

Beyond her acting career, Neelam ventured into her family's jewellery business, showcasing the same dedication and artistry that defined her time in the film industry. She believes in embracing every phase of life with courage and resilience. Reflecting on her journey, she shares an empowering message:

"I used to fear what people might say—whether it was about the roles I played or the clothes I wore. But over time, I realized the importance of letting go of fear and being true to oneself. Life, whether in movies or business, is full of ups and downs, but what matters is doing what you genuinely enjoy. No one is perfect, and the key lies in believing in self-improvement and trusting your destiny."

For Neelam, success comes from giving your all and embracing the uniqueness of each moment. She emphasizes the value of understanding individual tastes, especially in her jewellery business, and building trust with customers through authenticity and dedication. Her advice is timeless: learn everything from scratch, view life from multiple perspectives, and always give your 100% in whatever you do.

Neelam's story is one of passion, perseverance, and a fearless embrace of life's challenges, inspiring others to pursue their dreams with unwavering faith and determination.



# AANCHAL AGRAWAL

Standup Comedian  
& Content Writer



Aanchal is a dynamic social media ninja, stand-up comedian, and content creator whose work revolves around sports, family, and relatable humor with a comic twist. Her journey began in June 2015 when she started her career as a social media and digital marketing strategist. She then briefly worked as a sales trainee at Café Coffee Day before venturing into the world of stand-up comedy. Her talent and charisma quickly gained attention as she began performing at various shows.

In 2016, Aanchal expanded her repertoire by playing the role of Sameera Saxena in the web series Confessions: It's Complicated for five months. Later, in 2019, she appeared in a short-term role in the television series Ek Bhrm Sarvagun Sampanna. Alongside her acting career, she starred in advertisements for renowned brands such as Coco Pure, Airtel, Micromax, and Flipkart. She also lent her talent to campaigns for Shudh Desi Ending and The Man Company, leaving a mark with her versatility and screen presence.

Since then, Aanchal has focused on creating engaging content for her social media platforms, amassing an impressive following of over 265,000 across various platforms. Her collaborations with brands like Truly Madly, Amazon Prime, MX Player, and Flipkart further solidified her position as a prominent content creator.

During the challenging times of the 2020 pandemic, Aanchal's humor and comic videos became a source of comfort for many, helping people navigate those difficult days with laughter. Beyond her humor, she used her platform for a greater purpose, becoming one of the first content creators to provide verified leads and medical resources to people across the country. Her dedication to helping others showcased her compassionate and resourceful nature.

Aanchal believes in taking small but consistent steps toward one's goals and emphasizes the importance of staying attentive and updated. She advocates for trying new things, being resourceful, and networking to unlock opportunities. Her grounded perspective reminds others not to let success get to their heads and to ignore irrelevant comments that can distract from one's path.

With her wit, creativity, and dedication, Aanchal continues to inspire her audience, proving that with the right blend of passion and perseverance, nothing is beyond reach.





# PREETA SINGH

Co-Director,  
Jaipur Literature Festival,  
President, Teamwork Arts



With a rich background spanning the arts, communication, and advertising, she is a leader who has left her mark across diverse industries. Holding a foundation in psychology from Delhi, she has built a career defined by innovation and impact. Currently serving as the Executive Director of Ogilvy Advertising, she has led teams across major cities—Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Delhi—driving the company’s growth through strategic acquisitions and creative excellence.

Her influence extends beyond advertising. She played a pivotal role in transforming the Jaipur Literature Festival into India’s premier festival brand. As the Commercial Director of Listens Communication Limited, she now champions campaigns for the rights and needs of over one billion vulnerable and disadvantaged children worldwide.

Reflecting on her journey, she says, “Advertising was my first love. It exposed me to countless industries, ideas, and concepts, each demanding creative communication to connect with people. This experience, combined with my habit of diving deep into every subject, has equipped me to tackle anything. If you’re passionate about something, feed yourself with enough knowledge, and you can create anything.”

Her achievements, she insists, were not solo endeavors. “It’s always about the team. Experts coming together, collaborating, and building something extraordinary. That’s how we created the business side of the Jaipur Literature Festival and helped it grow. It’s about hitting the refresh button, seeing the millions of opportunities around you, and simply diving in with joy. Fear doesn’t matter—what matters is what you wish to achieve. You’ll land on your feet if you just go for it.”

A storyteller at heart, she believes in the transformative power of stories. “Listening to stories and telling them—it’s the most powerful tool in society. Stories show us a mirror, motivate us, and connect us. Always read books; they are better than anything else.”

Her early career in advertising wasn’t without challenges. “I thought it would be a cakewalk, but it was far from that. It was a male-dominated industry, with women often confined to creative roles. Proving yourself wasn’t easy, but once you did, opportunities opened up. Whether you’re a man or a woman, the key is to focus, get the job done, and make your mark.”

While she acknowledges that technology and smartphones have revolutionized the industry, she asserts that no advancement can replace the human touch. “Technology has made our work easier, but original thought and human insight remain irreplaceable. No advertisement can come to life without the magic of human editing and creativity.”

Her journey is a testament to resilience, passion, and the ability to turn dreams into reality—an inspiring story for anyone ready to embrace challenges and create something meaningful.



# LT. COL. POOJA NAUTIYAL (RETD.)

National Security Council,  
Government of India



Her journey began in the year 2000 when she joined the Indian Army after undergoing rigorous training at the Officer Training Academy in 1999. With a career spanning 24 years, Lt. Col. Pooja has emerged as a passionate, dynamic, and result-oriented leader with exceptional expertise in operations, leadership, and team management. Her contributions have extended beyond the national level to the global stage, where she has represented India in United Nations missions and participated in critical cyber dialogues with Israel's national cyber directorate.

Her remarkable career includes being a part of Make in India initiatives in the telecom and IT sectors at both the national and military levels. Currently, she serves in the National Council for Security, bringing her extensive knowledge and leadership to this critical area. As an instructor at the prestigious National Defence Academy and the Military College of Telecommunication Engineering, she has honed her ability to handle large-scale courses, foster diverse team cultures, and manage cross-functional operations.

From the British era to today, the role of women in the Indian Army has seen a significant evolution. The growing acceptability of women in this traditionally male-dominated world speaks volumes about changing perceptions. However, when she began her journey, she often found herself as the only woman in her unit. This posed unique challenges, as she had to constantly prove her strength and capabilities to earn respect. The Army, she says, requires you to be a jack of all trades, demanding proficiency in operational terms, technical knowledge, and training, all while delivering results under pressure.

Inclusiveness remains a work in progress, but she emphasizes the importance of resilience and adaptability. She became the first woman to be posted to CI operations and the first to represent women as an instructor at the National Defence Academy. Her dedication and excellence have been recognized multiple times, earning her four commendations from the Army Chief. She has also undertaken numerous cybersecurity courses, demonstrating her commitment to staying ahead in this critical field as India works on advancing its cybersecurity policies.

Her philosophy centers on being part of the solution, turning challenges into opportunities, and never shying away from taking on new responsibilities. She believes in accountability, mission clarity, and goal setting while embracing emotional intelligence and empathy. Leadership, she says, requires resilience, grit, and decisiveness. Her journey is a testament to the fact that one can overcome barriers and inspire change with determination and purpose. Through her story, she motivates others to rise above challenges, believe in themselves, and strive to create a lasting impact.



# RENU SINGHI

Business Woman  
& Cyclist



At 52, her journey into cycling began unexpectedly and soon transformed into a remarkable story of passion and perseverance. It all started when she accompanied her son to buy a bicycle. As her son encouraged her to wait outside, she declared that she too would ride a bicycle. That moment sparked a decision—she bought a bicycle for herself alongside her son's. Back home, her elder son encouraged her further, and that's when her cycling adventure truly began.

The initial days were challenging, especially navigating the complexities of a geared bicycle, but she embraced the difficulties and turned them into stepping stones. Over time, cycling became not just a hobby but a powerful journey of self-discovery and achievement. She cycled over 55,000 kilometers, a testament to her dedication and resilience. Among her many feats, she completed the prestigious PBP endurance ride in France in 2018 and earned the Super Randonneur title multiple times.

Her accomplishments extended to high altitudes, proving that limits are only in the mind. In October 2021, she became the only woman cyclist from Rajasthan to conquer the Srinagar to Leh route, covering 420 kilometers and reaching Khardung La at 18,000 feet. Her participation in events like the Cyclothon Freedom Challenge and the Super Randonneur series has inspired many, showcasing that age is no barrier to extraordinary achievements.

Beyond her cycling pursuits, she serves as a respected advisor at Purnima University in Jaipur, further extending her influence and motivation to others. Her journey is a powerful reminder that remarkable milestones can be achieved when determination meets passion.

Reflecting on her experiences, she emphasizes the importance of focusing on oneself and never letting hurdles define the path ahead. Success, she believes, comes to those who persevere, who refuse to stop, and who prioritize mental strength alongside physical well-being. She encourages others to decide their destination and trust that the way forward will reveal itself. Challenges will arise, but the key lies in unwavering effort and a mindset that values personal growth above all else. Her story continues to inspire, proving that it's never too late to embark on a journey of transformation and triumph.



# PUJA PUNEET

Author & Life Coach



This inspiring story is about a woman from Chennai who transitioned from being an aspiring law student to a successful entrepreneur and life coach. Her journey began in 2006 when she pursued a Montessori course and founded Alps Pre-School, her first professional success. Over the years, the preschool flourished, impacting hundreds of children and their families. She soon realized that counseling parents was her favorite part of the job. Coupled with her love for self-help books, this realization became the turning point that steered her toward life coaching.

In 2010, she flew halfway across the globe to attend Jack Canfield's Breakthrough to Success, a transformative program that marked the beginning of her pursuit of personal growth. Inspired by this experience, she went on to learn from renowned mentors like Tony Robbins and Brian Tracy. This period of discovery awakened in her the belief that everyone could design a life of fulfillment and purpose. With this newfound clarity, she launched Life by Design in 2011, dedicating herself to helping others overcome struggles and unlock their potential.

Her mission is rooted in empowering women to become the best version of themselves. She teaches the importance of overcoming resistance and recognizing the power of the inner voice. Resistance, she explains, is a universal force fueled by fear and doubt, growing stronger as dreams become bigger. It often manifests as a voice that keeps people from pursuing their highest potential. She encourages people to name this voice, confront it, and realize that it will always be present in some form.

One of the key strategies she advocates is the five-second rule—counting down from five to one and taking immediate action whenever fear or hesitation arises. She believes this simple practice helps break through moments of doubt and create momentum. Resistance, she says, speaks the language of fear and doubt, and its presence is inevitable. Acknowledging it and learning to act despite it is a powerful step toward growth.

She also emphasizes the importance of dealing with negativity and dream stealers with kindness and resilience. Negative thoughts and labels, she warns, can confine individuals to self-imposed limitations. By avoiding these traps, fostering quality connections, and framing aspirations positively, people can unlock their true potential.

Her philosophy revolves around the idea that courage and clarity are key to success. When negativity is replaced with positive actions and beliefs, everything begins to fall into place. She reminds everyone that they are their own best coaches, capable of guiding themselves toward their dreams by listening to their inner voice and focusing on their goals. Through her teachings, she has helped countless individuals transform their lives, achieve their dreams, and embrace the life they desire.



# KENA SHREE

DGM - HR, NTPC Limited  
Author, Storyteller,  
TEDx Speaker



She is a remarkable blend of talent and inspiration—a senior HR professional, an enchanting storyteller, and a celebrated author. Gracing the TED stage three times, her talks have garnered millions of views on YouTube, making her not just an online sensation but also a true artist. Her voice has resonated on All India Radio, and her words have graced esteemed publications like The Huffington Post, The Times of India, and Hindustan Times. Honored for her contributions, she currently leads talent acquisition at NTPC, influencing over one lakh participants through transformative workshops.

**Her Philosophy:** Belonging to the power industry, she proudly says, “Every third bulb lighting up in this country has our contribution.” In a traditionally male-dominated sector, she strives to break stereotypes and encourages others to leave their unique mark.

**She believes in cherishing life’s journey:** “Life is short. Do what you love, make your dreams come alive, and savor each moment. As Shakespeare said, ‘The delight lies in the journey, not just the destination.’ I may not be famous, but I’m happy, and that’s what truly matters—making your journey special.”

**The Power of Awareness:** She shares the “Red Car Theory” to highlight the importance of mindfulness:

“How many red cars did you notice on your way here? Likely none. But if you consciously observe on your return, you’ll not only notice the cars but their make, model, and details. That’s the power of awareness—when you train your mind to observe, you’ll uncover opportunities you never noticed before. Someone next to you may hold the key to your next big break; you just need to start seeing the red cars in life.”

**Her Life Mantras:** “In situations where others prayed to survive, I learned to fly. That is the essence of every success story.”

Books are lifelong companions. “When there’s no one around, let books be your first friends. Remember, someone, somewhere is praying for your success—that’s where you’ll find your ikigai.”

“Do what’s yours to do; don’t live for what others say.”

Networking and learning are vital: “No one person is enough. Always keep learning—like a river, never stop flowing.”

Through her words and actions, she inspires others to embrace life with courage, self-belief, and a relentless pursuit of growth.



# MATERCHEF PANKAJ BHADOURIA

India's 1<sup>st</sup> MasterChef,  
Food Traveler,  
TV Host & Author



She is India's first MasterChef, a celebrated culinary expert, and the host of popular cooking shows like Chef Pankaj Ka Zayka, Kifayti Kitchen, 3 Course with Pankaj, and Just Like That. She has authored notable cookbooks, including the official MasterChef Cookbook, Barbie: I Am a Chef, and Chicken From My Kitchen. Her expertise has taken her across the globe, collaborating with renowned UK chef Rick Stein on his BBC series The Search for the Perfect Curry. She is a master of culinary innovation, menu planning, and has worked extensively with various food institutes. Breaking Stereotypes and Shattering Glass Ceilings. She passionately shares her thoughts on women breaking barriers in male-dominated fields:

"Today, we see women excelling in every sphere, including kitchens and cockpits. Decades ago, the idea of a woman pilot was unheard of; now, nearly every other flight has a woman in the cockpit. Thanks to education, changing times, and our collective efforts, we're dismantling stereotypes. The journey isn't always easy—'sticky flaws' often hold us back. But the day we decide to break free from those flaws, no glass ceiling will be strong enough to stop us. So, stand up, and do what you're passionate about."

In her words, achieving expertise is much like preparing a perfect daal makhni:

"Today, everyone wants shortcuts. Nobody wants to spend 12 hours cooking a dish anymore, but when they crave daal makhni, they turn to an expert. Success works the same way. To become an expert in anything, you must commit to the process—practice, persevere, research, and refine your skills. Good things take time, and expertise comes only through dedication and hard work."

The love she has received since winning MasterChef India in 2010 continues to grow. She describes this as the "true flavor of success," attributing it to her unwavering honesty and authenticity.

"Television and social media have been my mediums to connect with people. But the camera never lies—it quickly catches anything fake. Honesty has always been my secret ingredient."

Her MasterChef journey, however, wasn't without sacrifices.

"The hardest part was living away from my family. When I got the opportunity, it was a turning point—either quit my job or chase my dreams. My mother's words were my guiding light: 'They don't deserve you. Leave the job and follow your dreams.' Their unwavering support made all the difference, ensuring I never felt like I left anything behind."

For her, food is more than sustenance; it's a language of love. "Cooking is not just an art; it's a fundamental life skill. Everyone should know how to cook because food is how we express love and connect with others." Her story is a testament to the passion, perseverance, and the boundless joy that comes from pursuing your dreams wholeheartedly.



# ESHA NAGAR

Founder & Chief Executive Officer - The Pegboard, Advocate for Brand Stories, Culture Shifts, Managing Director - Nepa, India



She is the founder and CEO of PEGBOARD, a brand strategy firm dedicated to incubating stories, conducting workshops, and building and transforming brands. Previously, she served as the Managing Director at Nepa, where she spearheaded the company's APAC strategy. Her unique dual skill set—combining a deep understanding of structures and logic with the ability to craft compelling brand stories—has enabled her to transform numerous brand narratives across the country.

Her Journey: She believes that leadership knows no boundaries of age, gender, or background. Reflecting on her entrepreneurial journey, she shares:

"The seeds of my journey were planted 13 years ago during my first internship in marketing research. I was always clear about my passion for marketing and branding. I spent seven years with an agency, running operations in 150 countries. When I was asked to take on the India mandate, many questioned how a young woman could manage an entire country. That phase was both the make-or-break moment of my career and the foundation of my growth."

On Storytelling and Leadership

"To craft great stories, you must first be a great listener. In any field, understanding the 'why' behind human behavior is far more important than just observing the 'what.' Humans are incredibly complex beings. For example, there's often a difference between the content we choose to watch on a screen and what we share with others. As a storyteller, patience and the ability to absorb diverse perspectives are critical."

She also emphasizes the power of dreams and manifestation:

"Start dreaming—they are essential. What you believe and think shapes your reality. That's the essence of manifestation."

She recalls an embarrassing yet pivotal moment early in her career:

"My manager once said, 'You're only two years into this. Do you think you're ready?' I loved public speaking and was excited to prove myself at a roundtable discussion. We had rehearsals during the day, followed by an office dinner in the evening. Despite my excitement and confidence, my mentor made it clear I wasn't fully prepared. I had to rehearse repeatedly. It was humbling but taught me the value of perseverance. You can work with your heart and win over your mind. You're not responsible for everyone's growth—focus on doing your work well and making yourself, your parents, and your loved ones proud. Trust the people who stood by you when you were at your lowest."

Her story exemplifies resilience, authenticity, and the importance of believing in oneself while staying grounded.



# JYOTI NARANG

Chairperson of Heidelberg Cement India Limited  
Former COO- Taj Palaces, Resorts & Safaris



As the Chairperson of Heidelberg Cement India Ltd., she embodies over four decades of leadership excellence, spanning marketing, operations, and strategic growth. Her illustrious career began with the Tata Group, where she mastered the nuances of marketing and operations, later excelling as the Chief Operating Officer of Taj Palaces Resorts. Her journey also includes serving as an independent director of AU Small Finance Bank and co-creating India's landmark Incredible India campaign.

Her leadership philosophy is rooted in the belief that no one is born a leader; instead, leadership is cultivated through experiences, environments, and relationships. She explains, "Leadership develops as you navigate through school, college, work environments, and the people you meet. It gets better with time." She attributes her success across diverse industries to an insatiable curiosity, a trait that drives her to constantly learn and ask questions, and to her ability to adapt swiftly to new environments—a skill she credits to her upbringing as an "army brat."

Adaptability, she says, is key to thriving in today's ever-changing world. "Industries and environments are constantly evolving. The ability to adapt quickly transforms challenges into opportunities and makes success attainable." She emphasizes viewing change positively, as a challenge to embrace rather than a hindrance to fear.

Her vibrant energy and optimism are qualities she brings to every table, inspiring teams and driving impactful initiatives. Reflecting on the creation of the Incredible India campaign, she recounts the collaborative efforts of hotel companies and the government to showcase India's diverse offerings, from culture and heritage to adventure tourism, spas, and palaces. Despite financial constraints, the campaign emerged as a global success, repositioning India as a premier tourist destination.

On the evolving role of technology, she underscores its transformative potential, particularly in marketing and customer service. She highlights how AI now allows businesses to understand and cater to individual customer needs, creating personalized experiences. However, she insists that human empathy remains irreplaceable: "Technology can enhance service, but it should never replace the human touch."

Her vision extends beyond luxury markets. She cites the Ginger Hotels initiative by the Taj Group as a prime example of serving the middle-class traveler—a segment she identifies as the backbone of India's economic growth. Inspired by C.K. Prahalad's The Bottom of the Pyramid, the initiative sought to provide affordable yet quality accommodations to upwardly mobile Indians, much like OYO did later by repurposing existing resources in the hospitality industry.

She considers hospitality one of the most glamorous and impactful industries, combining service excellence with the opportunity to create memorable experiences for people worldwide.

Her journey is a testament to the power of curiosity, adaptability, and positive energy. Through her transformative leadership, she has not only navigated diverse industries but also redefined them, leaving a lasting legacy of innovation and inspiration.



# NINA CHATRATH

Leadership & Business  
Consultant, Founder-  
Partner, DHR Global  
Independent Director -  
Oriental Hotels



She is a distinguished leader in organizational development and talent management, serving as an independent director on the boards of Oriental Hotels Limited, Dwarikesh Sugar Industries, and Vision Spring Foundation. Active in the HR committee of the Confederation, she contributes to India's APX industry forum. Additionally, she writes for leading publications like The Economic Times, Hindustan Times, and Business Today, offering her leadership insights.

Reflecting on her early days, she shares how being perceived as physically weak didn't deter her from believing that her strength was not in her body, but in her mind. Early in her career at Taj Hotels, she learned that no matter how excellent your work, nothing moves the needle unless you put in the effort. She quickly realized that to succeed in a world that wasn't always kind, she needed to develop the resilience to face challenges head-on.

Her career is a testament to the importance of perseverance and positivity. She recalls juggling multiple responsibilities, such as completing a certification course in California while attending client meetings in Sri Lanka and preparing for an assessment in Moscow—all at the same time. She emphasizes that whatever we do, whether at home or at work, we do it for ourselves. Stretching beyond one's comfort zone, whether for family, colleagues, or personal growth, shapes us into better individuals.

She also stresses the importance of self-awareness in leadership. In her journey as a leader and consultant, she learned from her mentor, Daniel Goleman, that understanding one's strengths and weaknesses is crucial for authentic leadership. When we are self-aware, we not only manage ourselves better—avoiding anger and frustration—but also become more attuned to others. This emotional intelligence helps us navigate relationships, manage our energy, and channel it effectively, thus empowering both ourselves and those around us. Through self-awareness, we can truly lead with authenticity and impact.



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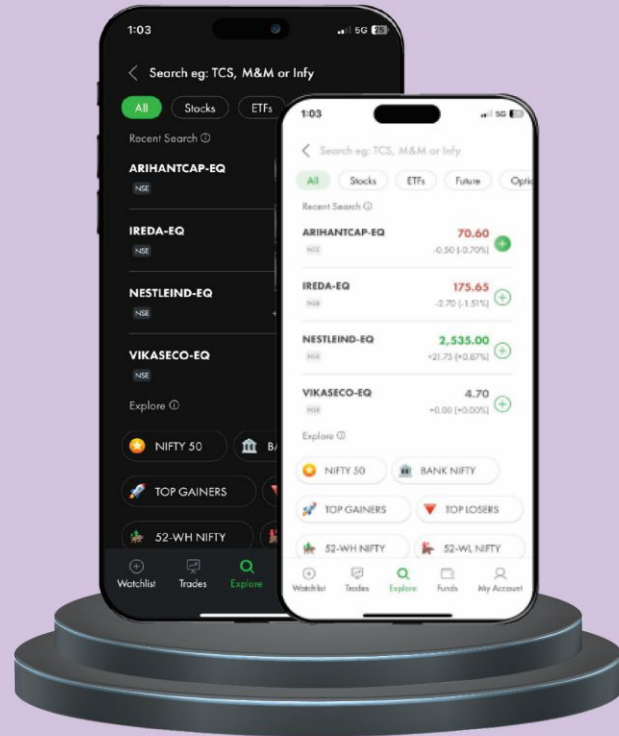
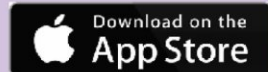
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