



My dear fellow Chief Executives of the seed Industry in India, it gives me immense pleasure to welcome you all to this distinguished gathering of seed industry leaders, to this first ever NSAI CEO Conclave. It is indeed a proud moment for the National Seed Association of India that we are jointly choosing to embark, on the path of collective leadership and growth. This becomes more important in the context of the growing

responsibility on the industry to create food, fiber and nutritional self-sufficiency for India in particular and world at large.

We have here young CEO's and also highly experienced ones. We also have amongst us seasoned seeds men. We are all here for a small but interesting break from our routines; for an interactive, thought provoking and innovative conclave ahead which should lead to an informal discussion about the best practices, for creating an even more vibrant seed industry, and also provide opportunity to network with peers.

A CEO by his very nature is supposed to be a leader, characterized by qualities such as the ability to dream, courage to chase those dreams, boldness to own team failures, humbleness to delegate the rewards of success, a positive mind, fearless heart, and clarity of vision.

Before I go on, I would like to tell you a short story. The story is of a man who goes into a shop to buy a parrot. He picks out a parrot and asks the shopkeeper how much it is. The shopkeeper says, "5000\$." The man says, "Oh! That's terribly expensive. What does this parrot do?" The shopkeeper says, "Oh, he types in English with his beak."

The man says, "That's far too expensive. What about that parrot?" The shopkeeper says, "Oh! That one is 10,000\$ because he is proficient in 3 or 4 languages and he understands SAP." The man says, "Well, I really don't want that, what about the last one there?"

The shopkeeper says, "Oh! That is 30,000\$." The man says, "What does he do?" The shopkeeper says, "I really don't know, but everybody calls him the CEO." And that I think is what most of the people in any organization would feel.

But we all only, can appreciate, the pressures that come with being a CEO, and being a CEO in the seed industry is even tougher. I am not one to complain, but it is a fact that we operate under more complex circumstances, a dynamic environment with climatic uncertainties, uncontrolled production factors, very sensitive customer base, not to forget stock returns, product returns and what not. We don't only invent new products but also new problems, year after year. Therefore someone has rightly said that with the passing of each seed industry "season", we age by two years!

52% of the country's workforce is employed by agriculture and it contributes to only 17.1% of the GDP. However, the seed sector is poised to continue growing by 15-20% over the next decade.

In fact I believe there is something glamorous about our industry, with every notable industrial house and most MNCs setting up shop here. No wonder I am seeing a lot of similarities between our industry and the Indian Premier League... Every season even we come up with new products, people and markets. There are ups and downs, a lot of hype, curiosity. Every team is always positive before the season... The only difference is, the scores in IPL are open and in our case, we keep everyone guessing. And, of course, excuse the lack of cheerleaders...



In this backdrop, the role of seed industry CEOs is undergoing huge transformation, while chartering the newer terrains of growth and stakeholder expectations. He is someone who is not only supposed to foresee the future, but also continuously re-engineer the organization to keep it future ready. And all this besides needing to outgrow his own self all the time.

Studying the thoughts of legendary CEO's, I connected the dots through their careers, and interestingly they all shared something in common that I would like to call "success mantras". Mr. Azim Premji emphasizes on building a value set, transparency, smart work, self confidence, extra ordinary physical, mental and spiritual ability and Mr. Ratan Tata talks about principles and ethics in the workplace, leading by example, sense of vision... My God it is a tall order.

With this all this in mind, we thought of organizing this unique CEO Conclave to bring a sharper focus on the role, responsibility and inner growth of the CEO. At the same time to also collectively work for the growth of the industry, in other words enlarge the playing field.

According to a Thai saying, "Experience is a comb that nature gives to man, after he grows bald." and experience sharing with a generous sprinkling of gyan is what this Conclave is all about.

I am very pleased that we have with us today a diverse galaxy of leaders, who are success personified in their own lives. Beginning with talent management to analyzing industry trends. Followed by a demystifying panel discussion to our very own New CEO Avatar, we can only hope that this one of a kind CEO conclave will help guide your next step forward in your own quest for growth and success.

I would like to leave you all, with an inspiring thought from one of the most brilliant Leadership experts of recent times, Robin Sharma, he says:

*Today could be the beginning of a whole new way to lead-and live. Make the choice. Start small. Dream big.*

Thankyou

