



CAREER RULES

HOW TO CHOOSE RIGHT
AND GET THE LIFE YOU WANT



SONYA DUTTA CHOUDHURY



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HarperCollins *Publishers* India

*For my three teenagers – Diviya, Aleya and Analie – without whom this book
would have been written three years earlier!*

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INTRODUCTION

‘It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.’

—Albus Dumbledore
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

In February 1992, I got a job offer from the multinational bank ANZ Grindlays. This was thrilling for me. I was a student of IIM Calcutta then, about to complete my post-graduate diploma in business management in March of that year. ANZ Grindlays was a Day One company and considered a dream employer – it paid well and provided its employees with luxurious chummeries or shared flats like in sea-facing buildings in Mumbai. I couldn’t believe my luck at being selected. Little did I know that much of this would change, and in just a few months.

It began (and ended) with nine, innocuous pieces of paper. In May 1992, one month before the newly recruited management trainees were to start work, nine cheques totalling to a sum of ₹506 crore were credited to a Grindlays customer known as the ‘Big Bull’. This was none other than the notorious Harshad Mehta, a stockbroker who shot to fame for having made fortunes by manipulating the markets with money he borrowed from banks.

The trouble began when the markets crashed and Mehta ran out of money. His cheques bounced, signalling the devastating end of a share market bull run. Suddenly, the music stopped. ANZ Grindlays, along with Big Bull Harshad Mehta, were left holding the baby.

Mehta was thrown into jail for his part in the affair, and he died soon after. Grindlays received a hard rap on the knuckles from banking regulator Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for allowing this to happen. The bank also became involved in a law suit and stood to lose ₹506 crore. Not surprisingly, the bank went into shell shock.

Now here's where fifty-two young management trainees walked in. I was one of them. Hired by the bank in its heyday, we were redundant even before we arrived. To their credit, the bank *did* try to keep on as if nothing had happened. My life meandered through training, followed by a stint as marketing manager in a branch, after which I became part of one of the groups that was set to work on cleaning up the organizational cupboards. While the bank did for us the best it could under the circumstances, I personally felt like I wasn't achieving anything, or even contributing to the world in any meaningful way.

And just like that, for me, the best of jobs went awry. I chose to leave soon after. The choice took me away from the world of banking and into the worlds of marketing, exports, education, and then journalism. Through these I met youngsters and experts from varied walks of life, and they shared with me their career stories.

This drew me to what may be the most important question of the twenty-first century: *What do you do?*

It's a question that gets asked a lot. In drawings rooms, at dinner parties, next to bus stops, in airport lounges, anywhere where people hang out.

The follow-up to this question is of course: *Why do you do what you do?*

This book tries to answer both these questions, through stories. These are stories I have collected over the years. They are a part of the Get-a-glimpse series I have been privileged to write for *Mint*, the business daily published by Hindustan Times Media. Writing this column, I have had the good fortune of meeting an incredible number of talented professionals. They have ranged from eighteen-year-old interns to sixty-year-old CEOs. They've talked to me at length about their choices. What made them choose the profession they did? What are the skills they needed to develop to succeed in their professions? Each question led to another question. Like, what is the worst part of life as a management consultant? (Answer: Living out of a suitcase.) What is the most glamorous part of being a hotelier? (Answer: Working with Gauri and Shah Rukh Khan on the detailing involved in private parties.) I hope that reading these stories will

give you a flavour of their work and, more importantly, their approach to work.

I've picked a selection of forty-odd stories from the few hundred professionals I have interviewed over the last seven years. I've grouped them into fourteen different career clusters. But the clusters are only approximate. Because today, more than ever before, the lines between different careers are all so blurred. As you will see from some of the stories here, you can specialize in big data or computers, and then work in healthcare. You can study law or finance, and then work for the government.

Jobs and work roles are constantly being disrupted. Many jobs have actually disappeared. Robots and computer software have taken over, replacing manual work like loading, sorting and manufacturing. With artificial intelligence and development of specialized software like image and speech recognition, many skilled jobs like those of accountants, lawyers and even doctors are also being taken away by machines. Driverless cars are already gliding their way down the freeways of Silicon Valley. And soon, chatbots will replace customer service managers.

But this disruption has also brought in opportunities for people who can spot them. Because no matter what your area of interest is – sports, entertainment, computers or finance – there are careers out there waiting for you. With machines to do the repetitive physical and mental part of our jobs, there is now more scope for creativity. There has never been a better time to be an entrepreneur. It's also a great time to be in data analytics, healthcare, artificial intelligence, education, and so many other avenues (both the mainstream and niche varieties). Read on to know about the hottest careers of the future, how to pick them and how to excel at them.

And don't worry, it's not all serious discussion and advice – you will find movie recommendations on different careers too! Movies and books are often a good place to begin. Does the character of Shah Rukh Khan in the 2016 film *Dear Zindagi*, for instance, accurately represent what a personal counsellor does? Does the television series *House MD* show what a doctor's life is like? Read Michael Lewis's books for a fascinating peek into Wall Street. And so on...

Apart from movies and television series to watch, I've also included lots of recommendations on books to read. In addition, I've assembled

interview questions to be prepared for and outlined many career hacks that can help you. Use these resources to help you choose a career wisely, or do better in the career you have chosen.

Choose wisely. Choose well. As the great Chinese thinker Confucious said: Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.

As for me, I now have three children, work from home, write and read, review books, interview people, run a book club – all the things that I love.

ANZ Grindlays no longer exists, bought over by Standard Chartered, and banking is no longer as hot as it was. And all this in less than a lifetime.

So the choices I made, made a huge difference to my life. Read on for the stories on other people's choices, people who are more successful than me.

Section One

THE JOBS

COMPUTERS

Data Scientists, Cyber Detectives, Geeks and Gamers

‘Data is the sword of the twenty-first century, those who wield it well the samurai.’

—Eric Schmidt
How Google Works



As the world moves online, people who work in technology are in high demand. Artificial Intelligence and Analytics are in. Data scientists officially have the sexiest jobs of the twenty-first century. Tech jobs on an average now pay the highest, having overtaken finance. Read here about the teenage hacker who became a cybersecurity expert, a country head at Microsoft, an engineer MBA who turned data detective and a girl who plays computer games for a living. How to get to where they are, what is the secret behind their success? And books, movies and TV serials that give a glimpse into the life of tech professionals.

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A TEENAGE HACKER-TURNED-CYBERSECURITY EXPERT

SHASHANK KUMAR

Security Consultant, [Binary.com](#)

Vellore

Age: 20 years

Shashank Kumar is a lanky college kid who wears a trademark casual T-shirt and carries his Mac laptop to most places. He started hacking young. 'When I was in Class 9 in Sainik School in Rajgir in Bihar, I joined a hackers' group called Indishell. We called ourselves the India Cyber Army (unofficial of course). We would spend all day online. After 26/11, we hacked Pakistani websites, changing the front page of their government websites to display the message: *What you did was wrong*. So when anyone logged on, all they would see were these words.'



‘It’s only now that we realize that what we did was actually stupid,’ he says. ‘We were not contributing anything to our country; instead, we didn’t have a life, we were very bad in studies, and our careers were ruined,’ says Kumar, who then decided to quit hacking and start studying for engineering entrance exams instead.

Kumar’s next brush with hacking came a few years later. He was in Class 12 and his studies were going really badly. ‘The engineering entrance exam preparation IIT-JEE tutorial classes were really boring. It didn’t matter if anyone really understood the concepts,’ says Kumar.

Instead, he became part of ‘bug bounty’ programmes, in which technology companies like Google and Facebook pay hackers to discover vulnerabilities in their systems. Kumar started earning. But his family wasn’t happy. His father, a bank manager at Grameen Bank and his mother, a housewife, wanted their son to study engineering. Spending days (and nights) on the computer, scanning systems and websites for

vulnerabilities and reporting security bugs to websites like Facebook and was all very well. But his family didn't think it was much of a career.

And so, Kumar was enrolled at Vibrant Academy, a coaching institute in Kota in Rajasthan. It was a miserable one year. The town teemed with coaching institutes and all that the students did was attend classes from 6.30 a.m. till ten at night. In between classes, Kumar often got emails to take part in bug bounty programmes. 'I could do nothing about them. That was a great opportunity I missed – 2014 had a lot of bug bounty programmes, and I could have earned about ₹1.5 crore if I had worked that year,' he says regretfully.

He eventually got admission at Vellore Institute of Technology, where he is currently studying to be an information technology engineer. This time, however, he decided to resume his computer security work, along with his studies. He was determined to bounce back. He wrote to online hacking platform Cobalt: 'Today, I don't have any rankings, but I know I could do (the bug bounty programmes). Give me a chance and you won't regret it.' In response, he received 'invites' to participate in a few bug bounty programmes on Paypal and blockchain.com. Kumar did well. He was back. A few months later, he landed a part-time job with forex trading company binary.com.

Currently, Kumar spends most of his day in class – attendance is compulsory. He returns to his sixth-floor hostel room by 6 p.m. after tea and snacks, and opens his Macbook, which he bought recently with his earnings as a bug bounty hunter.

'I spend the first few hours before dinner on binary.com work,' he says. Kumar also runs the firm's bug bounty programme, which challenges outsiders to 'hack' the company's systems. If they manage to penetrate the computer systems owing to weaknesses and vulnerabilities, they are paid for exposing those flaws, which are then rectified.

'Everything I learnt about hacking I learnt on my own. You have to Google the right terms. Explore the common vulnerabilities in websites and how they can be bypassed as well as find the fixes for these. There are thousands of articles on these subjects, as well as blogs written by ethical hackers on how they fixed certain bugs. As you go around the internet, you may go looking for one thing, but you end up learning about other things too.'

THE GIRL WHO PLAYS GAMES FOR A LIVING

ARPITA KAPOOR

CEO, Mech Mocha Game Studios, Bengaluru

Age: 26 years

Designing games for a living sounds like fun but it takes an army, well, almost an army, of designers, programmers, artists, testers, animators, producers and sound engineers to create a game that works.

‘With 70 million Indians on WhatsApp, people in this country are ready for gaming,’ says Arpita Kapoor, co-founder of gaming startup Mech Mocha Game Studios, set up in 2013. The company launched its first game, Puppet Punch, in multiple languages, including English, Japanese and Spanish. Within the first few weeks of its launch, the game was downloaded 2,00,000 times. Mech Mocha started in Ahmedabd, under IIM-A’s accelerator programme, iAccelerator. It is now in Bengaluru, and has expanded from the original five employees to twenty.

How it all began: It started in 2011, when Arpita was in her third year of college and she won a scholarship to attend the Game Developers Conference in San Francisco, USA. Co-founder of Mech Mocha, Rangaraju got a similar scholarship the same year. ‘It was life-changing. I visited the big game studios; saw the quality of games people were building outside. There was a wide gap with what was being done in India,’ says Kapoor, who became inspired to come back and start a development studio of her own.

Market trend: ‘The gaming market in India will get bigger and bigger. Once people can type (even in Hinglish) and understand reading data and text, they are ready for games. Payment mechanisms for consumers used to be a problem, but now with mobile wallets and the possibility of carrier billing, we are confident this market will take off,’ says Kapoor.

A day at work: ‘In the early days, I was involved in coding. Now that we have launched Puppet Punch, we have tried to bifurcate responsibilities,’

she says. Her co-founder Rangaraju handles most of the technical aspects, while Kapoor works on marketing and new business development. They have a team of five, as well as interns who work from time to time at the company, and Kapoor works closely with them. There is a fair amount of travel, mainly for marketing and business development.

What the gaming industry needs: ‘Gaming requires good coders and developers to programme games, good designers, artists and visualizers as well as producers, sound engineers, game testers and marketers,’ says Kapoor.

Education

B.E. MBA integrated	IITM Gwalior	2008-13
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THE MAN FROM MICROSOFT

SRIKANTH KARNAKOTA

Country Manager – Servers and Cloud,
Microsoft India, Hyderabad
Age: 40 years

‘Organizations today have a “big data” problem; they are able to make sense of just 20 per cent of their data, the balance 80 per cent is just there, and that is why big data today is one of the top priorities for the CEO,’ says Srikanth Karnakota.

Daily duty: Karnakota’s job is to sell and service the Microsoft range of tools and solutions for big data. These include the Hadoop-based Windows servers as well as Windows Azure. On a typical day in Hyderabad, he sits down to work with his four product managers, to work out a sales incentive structure for Microsoft salesmen.

Apart from virtual meetings via Skype/Lync, Karnakota travels a lot, both for internal meetings and meetings with customers. He spends three days a week on the road, mostly in Delhi, Bengaluru and Chennai, with a

quarterly visit to the Microsoft headquarters in Redmond, USA.

Karnakota heads home by 7 p.m. He is looking forward to cycling with his daughter, and hearing all about her school day. Working in the US was great, but his family enjoys living in Hyderabad and Karnakota is glad he made to the decision to return to India, to have his son and daughter grow up here.

Most interesting project: Working with a car company that uses big data on consumer preferences derived from the internet and social media. ‘This is where the magic happens. So the dealer from Coimbatore now knows he has to store fewer jazzy colours because Coimbatore consumers prefer sober colours,’ says Karnakota.

Biggest challenge: ‘Anticipating the trends that are going to shape the industry and being ready for that,’ he says. Karnakota keeps up with the latest technology trends almost obsessively. ‘You will be dead if you are not curious,’ he says.

What he likes about his job: Working with startups, understanding how important the sector is and how important it is to include them in the Microsoft ecosystem. Today more than ever, it’s important to know what lies ahead.

Education

B.E. – Electronics and Communications	Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad	1997
MBA – Foreign Trade	IIFT, Delhi	1999

Work Experience

Maruti Udyog	Exports and Imports at the Nhava Sheva Port	1999–2000
Pramati Technologies	Business Development	2000–04
Microsoft	Incubating startups, Cloud and Server	2004 to

MICROSOFT	Incubating startups, Cloud and Server	2004 to date
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THE ENGINEER MBA WHO TURNED DETECTIVE

SRIKANTH VELAMAKANNI

Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO),
Fractal Analytics Inc., Mumbai
Age: 42 years

‘We are like Sherlock Holmes; we do what the human mind has always wanted to do – find answers to questions,’ says Srikanth Velamakanni, who quit a career in finance seventeen years ago to become a co-founder at Fractal Analytics Inc., a data analytics firm.

At ICICI, Velamakanni worked on designing India’s first Collateralized Debt Offering. ‘We had to do a lot of very interesting math to understand the risk profile of different cash flows and pool them in a way investors found attractive,’ says Velamakanni. The math was great but didn’t seem to add much value to the world. So, in 2000, Velamakanni along with an IIM-A batchmate, Pranay Agrawal, set up Fractal Analytics, a company that studies patterns in data to understand the world.

Velamakanni’s day in Mumbai begins at 8.30 a.m., with Fractal’s executive committee global telephone call. The week we met, Fractal was hiring and Velamakanni reviewed with the head of human resources the hiring plans as well as the training programme for the new hires. The entrepreneur, who believes in ‘management by walking’, walks across to the head of Fractal Sciences for a discussion on the customer genomics algorithm. ‘It’s an algorithm we are designing that tries to figure out what kind of person you are and what are the kinds of things you would like to buy based on the data obtained from your earlier purchases,’ says Velamakanni.



Post-lunch, the team was busy with a client visit; most of Fractal's customers are based in the US and interact on the phone, but every now and then, a client visits the Mumbai office. With over a thousand employees spread over seven locations, and a bulk of customers based in the US, Velamakanni says he is always on a plane.

Most interesting project: We started our business with designing a model for ICICI that would reduce their loan default rate.

Education

B.Tech	IIT Delhi	1992-96
MBA	IIM Ahmedabad	1996-98

Work Experience

ANZ Grindlays Bank	Associate, Investment Bank	1998
ICICI Bank	Assistant Manager, Structured Products Group	1999
Fractal Analytics	Founder	2000

THE SECRET TO GETTING THERE

An engineering degree helps. But even if you haven't done engineering or computer science, courses in coding, big data and analytics, and business intelligence programmes are a good way to start. Programming languages and tools like Hadoop, Python, SQL are taught at computer institutes all over India. Online portals like Coursera, Udemy, Edx and Rackspace offer computer courses in programming languages like Python, and in subjects like data analytics, data structures, Cloud Computing and statistics. Also try projects on Kaggle and Crowd Analytix, as projects matter a lot.

EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT MAKING MONEY IN COMPUTERS

Cyber security: Starting salaries can be as high as ₹16 lakh per year, which is what Shashank Kumar earned last year. He pays his college fees from his earnings, buys the occasional gadget and invests his savings in the equity market.

Working in computer gaming: ₹6–8 lakh at the starting level. This could go up to ₹20–24 lakh after five years' experience.

Data analytics: The starting salary can be around ₹7.5 lakh per annum. Data professionals in the US earn upwards of \$1 million (around ₹6.2 crore). In India, at the CEO level, it is upwards of ₹1 crore.

THE SECRET CODE TO SUCCESS: FIVE CEOs TELL YOU WHAT THEY LOOK FOR

'We look for problem-solving abilities. Humility, because at the end of the day, ours is a service business. Basic learnability. People with economics and statistics backgrounds, because we are building econometric models. Computer science backgrounds, for building machine learning models. People with a sociology, psychology or anthropology background that can help us try to understand the human mind.'

–Srikanth Velamakanni,
CEO, Fractal Analytics

'Being an engineering graduate helps. Also an MBA. You need decent programming skills, and decent database management skills. However, even if you have a basic engineering/science degree and some knowledge of computer programming, that is a good start. From here you can learn big data languages like SQL, Python and Pig and tools like Hadoop. You need not be passionate about Microsoft but you have to be passionate about something in life. The ability to collaborate, as well as confidence.'

–Srikanth Karnakota,
Country head, Servers and Cloud, Microsoft

'We look for programming skills. For artists and game designers, we need a good portfolio in game art, animation and illustration. Knowledge of basic mathematics and statistics is also necessary to be able to construct the game. People interested in careers like gaming should hone their skills in graphic designing. You should be equipped to do some scripting, at least modify existing games, be good at art, even if you don't do art full-time. Many game-design courses being offered in India today are not adequate. It's better to do a conventional computer science degree and concentrate on building skills in graphic programming.'

–ARPITA KAPOOR,
Founder, Mech Mocha, Bengaluru

'Take part in programming competitions. The Kaggle platform, for

instance, is open to everybody. A company like GE may give out a data set, pose a problem and give you a timeline, as well as give prizes for the best entry. This helps you develop a familiarity with programming languages and forces you to move from theoretical knowledge to problem solving. Also, some of the people who are successful share their approaches on the site, all of which automatically enhances your skill level. There are many others like the Netflix prize. So keep taking part, to get real world experience.'

-VENKAT VISHWANATHAN,
Founder, Latent View Analytics

"But I'm not a numbers person", we hear some of you whining, especially you in the back, in the magenta shirt. Don't worry, there is hope. Asking the questions and interpreting the answers is as important a skill as coming up with the answers themselves. No matter what your business, learn how the right data crunched in the right way will help you make better decisions. Learn which questions to ask the people who are good with numbers and how to make the best use of their replies. If you aren't a numbers person, you can learn to use the numbers to get smarter.'

-Eric Schmidt,
How Google Works

WHY YOU SHOULD WORK IN COMPUTERS

- 1. There are lots of jobs for you – technology is the fastest growing area with a high demand for specialized professionals.*
- 2. You don't need a four-year computer degree; you can do a four-month course in a programming language, start to work and keep learning on the job.*
- 3. Work is flexible – computer programmers, data analysts and information technology specialists can work from home.*
- 4. Computer work allows you to be creative and resourceful. Careers with computers allow you to be detail and solution-oriented.*

WHAT NO ONE TELLS YOU ABOUT BEING A COMPUTER

PROFESSIONAL

- *The hours can be long.*
- *The job can be stressful.*
- *You have to constantly keep up with changing technology.*
- *You may find yourself in a rut, doing the same thing over and over again.*

SIX BOOKS EVERY ASPIRING COMPUTER PROFESSIONAL SHOULD READ

1. ***The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*** by Stieg Larsson: This Swedish thriller is the first of a trilogy; so if you like it, there are two more to follow. Starring computer genius and hacker Lisbeth Salander, the book has journalist Blomqvist and Salander investigate the dark sides of the human condition. Racy reading!
2. ***Vaporized*** by Robert Tercek: The book tracks the enormous potential of software. It has 'vaporized' existing physical things like books, CDs and music players, and will go on to disrupt every single industry. The effects of software are already being seen on a massive scale in sectors like education and healthcare.
3. **Tom Davenport on big data:** The 'guru' in the field has written a series of books on big data and how it can be used.
4. ***Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work, and Think*** by Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Cukier: Full of fascinating examples, this book by the data editor of the *Economist* and professor of internet governance at Oxford, is well worth a read. It looks at technology and the dramatic impact it will have on economy, science, and society at large.
5. ***What to Think About Machines That Think: Today's Leading Thinkers on the Age of Machine Intelligence***: A collection of essays by some of the most prominent scientists and experts in the field of Artificial Intelligence. Good reading for anyone interested in robotics, AI or philosophy.
6. ***The Signal and the Noise*** by Nate Silver: This data guru's predictions

failed in the US election in 2016. Nevertheless, he is a great read on how big data can be used for prediction in a wide range of domains, covering politics, sports, earthquakes, epidemics, economics and climate change.

SEVEN MOVIES EVERY ENTHUSIASTIC COMPUTER PROFESSIONAL SHOULD WATCH

1. ***Mr Robot***: This drama series stars a young cyber security expert. By day, he works for Evil Corp, safeguarding software that exploits the world, but by night, he is a hacker. Gritty and gripping, the series captures the world of hackers and computer fraud with what feels like total authenticity.
2. ***War Games***: A thriller starring a nerdy whiz kid who connects into a top secret military mainframe that gives him complete control over the US nuclear weaponry.
3. ***The Matrix***: A cult classic (trilogy) of movies on virtual reality, this one is a must see! Keanu Reeves stars as a computer programmer hero in this set of films, fighting evil robot machines who have created a fake world to keep human slaves asleep.
4. ***Moneyball***: In this film, coach Billy Beane, played by Brad Pitt, designs a winning strategy based on big data. He uses a careful statistical study of information of batting averages to choose players that make Oakland Athletics baseball team champions.
5. ***Minority Report***: In this Tom Cruise starrer, big data and statistics on crime is used by the state to determine the likelihood of crime. This happens even before the crime is committed!
6. ***The Social Network***: The story of how Facebook was created while Mark Zuckerberg was a student in Harvard, the film received huge critical acclaim. It did create some controversy as well, when Zuckerberg claimed it wasn't historically accurate – he didn't like how he was portrayed in the film!
7. ***Jobs***: This is the story of Apple founder Steve Jobs, as he makes his way from college dropout to the creator of a multi-billion-dollar tech

brand.

Online Resources Every Networked Computer Professional Should Follow

WEBSITE

- bigdata-careers
- dataversity.net
- informatica
- bigdatanews
- kdnuggets
- fivethirtyeight

TWITTER

- @TechCrunch
- @WIRED
- @mashabletech
- @timoreilly
- @google
- @kaggle

ENTERTAINMENT

The Dream Merchants

'I don't dream at night, I dream in the day, I dream all day; I'm dreaming for a living.'

—Steven Spielberg



Entertainment is a billion-dollar industry that will never ever go out of style. It's ruthless and competitive, but there's space here for the best, the brightest and the most hardworking. Specialities in this field range from acting, directing, scriptwriting, lighting, makeup, cinematography, props, costumes, casting, sound, editing, special effects and more.

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THE MAKER OF DREAMS

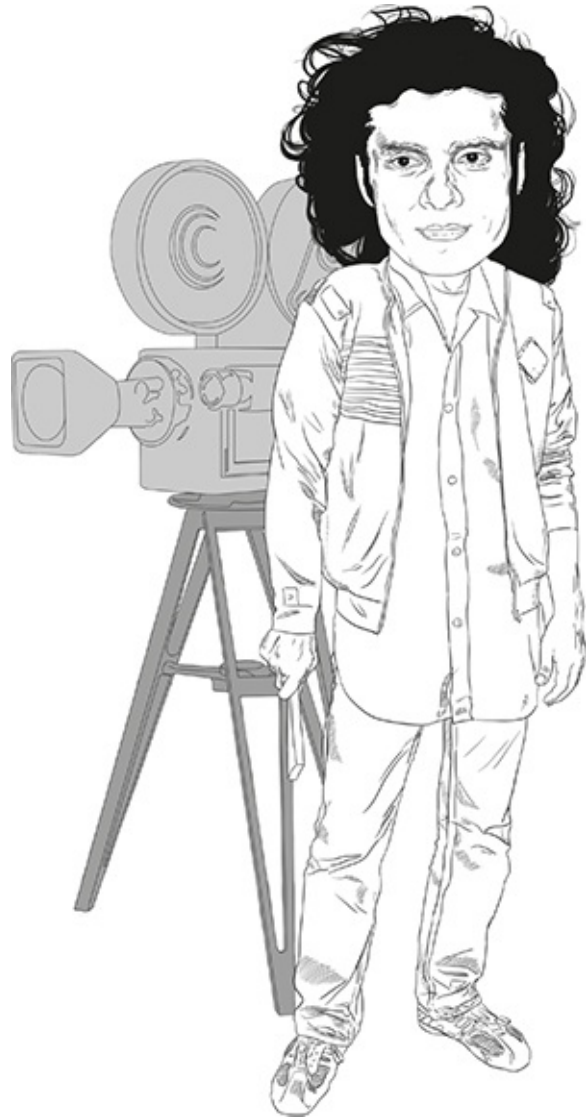
IMTIAZ ALI

Film Director, Mumbai

Age: 45 years

Imtiaz Ali wakes up early. There's just time for a few glasses of water, and then he must leave. In half an hour, at 5.30 a.m., he is in his car, driving to the film set where he will resume shooting on his film *Tamasha*.

Sitting in the car, he looks outside, at the sleeping city of Mumbai. It's been twenty-four years since he came here as a twenty-one-year-old, to study at Xavier's Institute of Communications. The city has been kind to him. He was an outsider, a small-town boy who grew up in the steel city of Jamshedpur in Jharkhand. From there to becoming one of the most successful film directors in Bollywood has been quite a journey.



'I was not even thinking of making it in the film industry. I was thinking of making my money working, doing whatever job was available...' he reminisces. As a postgraduate, he had looked, unsuccessfully, for a job in advertising. In desperation, he took the only job he got, that of a production assistant at Zee TV. He remembers those days. Working on production and writing scripts in his spare time. Making *Kurukshetra* (1996) for Zee TV and *Imtihaan* (1998) for DD National.

At the film set, there is the usual buzz of activity. Ali surveys the surrounding. He speaks to the assistant director (AD) on set and they decide on where the generator cars should be parked. Ali looks around for the director of photography. They discuss the scene for today, which shots and which angles they will take. Actors Deepika Padukone and Ranbir

Kapoor are both on set; this will be a scene they share. Ali speaks with both briefly, mainly about the scene, and then they go off to get ready.

Looking around, Ali feels the familiar exhilaration of being on a shoot. No calamities so far today, like there often are – an actor being unable to make it, equipment malfunctioning, or worse, bad weather or bad light.

Shooting for the film will soon be over. Post-production activity, including editing, will then begin and the film will be well on schedule, on its way to its release date later in the year. Ali thinks back to his first film, *Socha Na Tha*. Getting that first big break had been amazing. He thinks of all the film scripts he has written, from his Zee TV days. Some like *Jab We Met*, *Rockstar* and *Highway* have been made into films. But there are others... many others which never got made. He looks forward to making some of these into films one day.

But for now, shooting is over and he will go home. His fourteen-year-old daughter Ida will be home and he is looking forward to spending time with her. She's the silent type, extremely sensitive and observant, and is also interested in stories. Afterwards, he may go to a party.

Education

B.A. – English Literature	Hindu College, Delhi University	1990–1993
Mass Communications	Xavier's Institute of Communications, Mumbai	1993–1994

MANAGER TO THE STARS

ATUL KASBEKAR

Managing Director, Bling Global, Mumbai

Age: 51 years

Atul Kasbekar walks into a coffee shop in Bandra, wearing a grey Abercrombie T-shirt and trousers. He lays his glares on the table, puts down his two phones, a Nokia and a Blackberry with a secret number,

known only to ten–twelve people. Sorry he’s late, he says, the meeting with Deepika Padukone took longer than he thought.

This chemical engineer turned ace fashion photographer, and now celebrity manager as well, is easily as charming as the stars and celebrities he represents. It’s been twenty years since he began fashion photography, shooting the likes of Sheetal Malhar and Yana Gupta, John Abraham and Katrina Kaif, creating Bollywood superstars and celebrity supermodels. Today, he also runs Bling, an entertainment company that represents many of these models and stars and a few sportsmen as well. He turned film producer in 2016, with the release of *Neerja*.

How he came to it: As a photographer, Kasbekar missed having somebody who could negotiate for him and manage the commercial side of things, letting him concentrate on the photography. ‘I know I could have done four-five times better, commercially, if I had an agent. So at Bling, my job is to be the person I wish I had as a creative person. No creative person should be negotiating their own deals, because you’re a lousy negotiator for yourself, whoever you are.’

One deal to remember: Creating a distinctive brand for actress Sonam Kapoor. This was post *Saawariya*, her debut film. When Kapoor signed on with Bling, she was perceived as very Indian-looking, ‘almost rustic’. The truth couldn’t be further, says Kasbekar. ‘She is actually 5’ 10–11’, fabulous-looking, with a great body, extremely pedigreed, incredibly well read – I don’t know too many people who are better read – and probably has the most innate sense of fashion that I’ve seen. It’s not a stylist dressing her, it’s her. We just started to showcase that. Next thing we know, she was on magazine cover after magazine cover. Within a year and a half, she is on every “best dressed” list, justifiably so. So this is what we do, and this is what we do really well.’

Typical day: ‘Work out, and then start my day with meetings. Yesterday, for example, I had a two-hour meeting with some people who wanted to talk about a joint venture with my company. From there, I rushed to Sonam’s (Kapoor) house for a meeting. Then there was a meeting at Shahid Kapoor’s house. Then there was a meeting with Sahil Shroff. I reached home at 6.30–7p.m. I have twins, a boy and a girl, Arnav and Naomi. Arnav had recorded some Arsenal goals (from the Champions

League). So we watched that and then we all went out to dinner.'

Biggest challenge: 'Being able to say it like it is. It's a dangerous business of expectation management; if I paint a rosy picture for a star, which is unrealistic – the only person who is going to suffer is me.'

ABHAY DATT SHARMA

Assistant Director (AD),
Rakeysh Omprakash
Mehra Pictures Pvt. Ltd, Mumbai
Age: 25 years

Abhay Datt Sharma says his lucky break came in 2012, when he got a chance to work with the *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* unit at Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra Pictures Pvt. Ltd as a third AD at the start of his career.

Just like actors, ADs too need to find a film with a big banner to work on. 'It's very important for your first film to be the right one; this is where you learn a lot, make a lot of contacts,' says Sharma, who is from New Delhi.

Like most professionals in films, Sharma is hired on a project basis. 'It is a difficult industry, people sometimes go without work for months between films,' he says. Sharma has been lucky; the breaks between films have been brief. His dream is to direct a 'historical film with lots of music'; he has already started working on a script.

A day at work: Sharma reports to and assists the first AD who, in turn, works closely with the director. In *Fitoor*, Sharma's job is to work with the actors and the different departments, like costumes and make-up. 'I read the script and break it into different parts, identify the looks for various actors,' says Sharma. He had to organize 'look tests' (where an actor comes in, wears the costume and make-up, and does a trial so that the director can see how close to the character he or she looks) and attend meetings with the director and key crew members, like the cinematographer and the sound director. The team discusses how certain key scenes have to be shot.

On days when the unit is shooting, the hours are long, and it is Sharma's

job to ensure everything is ready according to schedule – like the actors' make-up and costumes.

Education

Bachelors of Media Studies	Symbiosis Institute of Media & Communication, Pune	2008-11
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Work Experience/Films Worked on:

Bhaag Milkha Bhaag, Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara, Detective Byomkesh Bakshy!, Fitoor

CASTING EVERY ROLE

NANDINI SHRIKENT

Casting Director, Mumbai

Age: 41 years

'I have thousands of actors in my database,' says Nandini Shrikent, working on her computer at her home in Bandra, Mumbai. She gets twenty–thirty new actor portfolios every day, mostly on mail. The casting director works closely with production houses Excel Entertainment and Dharma Productions. She also casts actors for commercials and works on Indian casting for international cinema.

How she got here: In her early days as an AD, Shrikent worked on sets and costumes. She started with Karan Johar's *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham*. What long hours the team had spent, shopping in Crawford market! Yards and yards of silk fabric, thousands of diyas, elaborately carved doors. On a shoot day, they were the first in and last out. When the film ended, Nandini was exhausted. Days of being on the road, eating erratically and long hours took their toll. She went home to her parents in Delhi for a much-needed break.

The break in Delhi culminated in another break – getting into casting.

Reema Kagti and Zoya Akhtar, who had worked with her earlier, called and asked her if she was interested in working with casting.

Casting came easy to Shrikent. *Lakshya* was a war film with seventy-two characters, and challenging to cast. But even today, she remembers each of the people she met. Through *Lakshya*, she found that she enjoyed dealing with people and everything seemed to always fall into place.

A day at work: Casting begins almost as soon as a film is announced, and typically carries on for six months, says Shrikent. As part of her job, Shrikent has to attend script-reading sessions and meet the director to understand the story and the characters.

Each film also has a multitude of characters that Shrikent must cast, like the parents of the leads, siblings, even ‘walk-on (minor) characters’, like a watchman or a waiter.

A typical day at work usually consists of a series of auditions. ‘I review my database and call in actors for a certain role,’ she says. At the audition, which takes place in her office, Shrikent first discusses the nuances of the character and the scene with the actor, and then does a trial shoot. Shortlisted audition clips are then reviewed with the director. Often, selected actors are given a ‘call back’ for a second audition before the casting is finalized.

Education

B.A. – English Literature	Delhi University	1992–95
Social Communications Media, Sophia Polytechnic	Mumbai	1996–97

Work Experience/Films Worked on:

Dil Dhadakne Do, Two States, Life of Pi, Student of the Year, Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara, Wake Up Sid, Luck by Chance, Lakshya, The Bourne Supremacy, Darjeeling Express etc.

THE SECRET TO GETTING THERE

1. **Take the chance:** *'The chance of failure in the film industry is very high. For one Shah Rukh Khan who comes in from outside and succeeds, there are a hundred people who have gone back after ten years, having wasted the best years of their life. I was not even thinking of making it in the film industry. I was thinking of making my money by working, doing whatever job was available to me at the time, trying to steer myself towards what was better for me. But no two lives can be the same, so how can I advise? If somebody is compelled to take that chance, then so be it. All the best.'*

–Imtiaz Ali
Filmmaker

2. **Do an internship:** *'Getting into films isn't easy. Word of mouth and luck are what get people jobs. Working as an intern is a good way to start. Get affiliated to someone, work for them for free, and if they like your work, they'll keep calling you. To enter films, you don't need formal qualifications. But courses from institutes such as Symbiosis Institution of Media and Communication and Xavier's Institute of Communications can help get your foot in the door. The industry is very competitive. For every five ADs on a film, there is one director.'*

–Nandini Shrikent,
Casting director

3. **Join a film school/make your own film:** *'Going to film school is very important because you have a certain level of understanding of filmmaking. Having said that, most people in the industry are not necessarily from a film school (background). Many go to college or realize much later in life that this is what they want to do. If you're not sure that filmmaking is what you want to do, you should take some time to figure it out. Do something generic. Everything helps filmmaking. History exposes you to stories you never knew about, sociology will help you understand society, literature will give texts from all over the world,*

and psychology will help you understand people and their motives better.

Make a short film – write your own script to see if this is something you enjoy doing. Are you happy during the process of making a film? Because a lot of people are happy watching a film and think that this is what they want to do. Because filmmaking can be a very tiring process, and about doing the same thing over and over again.

–Abhay Datt Sharma
Assistant director

Some film schools of repute in India: Film Institute, Pune; Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication, Pune; Xavier's Institute of Communications, Mumbai; Sophia Polytechnic Social Communications Course, Mumbai; Jamia Milia, New Delhi; National School of Drama, Pune; The Actor Prepares Institute, Mumbai (run by Anupam Kher)

EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT MAKING MONEY IN ENTERTAINMENT

We don't make movies to make money, we make money to make more movies.

–Walt Disney

'People tell me I don't charge as much as I should. But I feel you get paid in different ways and not just by charging. I don't want to say how much I earn because that wouldn't be a modest thing to do. I can tell you how much I was paid for my first film, Socha Na Tha (2005). I was paid ten lakh rupees to write and direct.'

–Imtiaz Ali

'As a third AD, monthly salary ranges from ₹25,000–40,000. As a second AD, ₹40,000–60,000 per month. When you work with very big production houses like a Dharma or Yashraj, they don't pay very well. But if you are good enough, they'll make your movie. But it is also true that if you are good at your job, people are willing to pay you.'

Abhay Datt Sharma

-Adnay Datt Sharma

'Casting directors can make anything from ₹4 lakh to ₹18 lakh per film.'

-Nandini Shrikent

'As a celebrity manager, it all depends on the stars and celebrities you have. You normally make margins of 10-15 per cent on stars and anywhere between 20-30 per cent on models and lesser known stars.'

-Atul Kasbekar

ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR ASPIRING ENTERTAINMENT PROFESSIONALS

- *Three Ps: passion, patience, perseverance. You have to do this if you've got to be a filmmaker.*
- *Creativity – an eye for visuals/music/movement/light/fashion*
- *The ability to tell stories*
- *A familiarity with technology, since so much of entertainment today is driven by technology*
- *Effective communication skills – to be able to present new concepts well*

WHY YOU SHOULD WORK IN ENTERTAINMENT

1. *You get paid to be creative. If you are someone who enjoys storytelling, script writing, photography, make-up, sets, lighting ... this is the field for you!*
2. *It's high adrenaline – working with a team on a project makes the incredibly long hours worth it.*
3. *Careers in entertainment come with a glamorous lifestyle – you work with the stars, you get invited to happening parties, and get tickets to exclusive events.*

THINGS THEY DON'T TELL YOU ABOUT WORKING IN ENTERTAINMENT

- *It's extremely hard to break into.*

- *There is no job security.*
- *Long hours – there is no work-life balance.*
- *The pay, especially in the early days, is low.*

SEVEN BOOKS EVERY ASPIRING ENTERTAINMENT PROFESSIONAL SHOULD READ

The life stories of actors directors, musicians are great reads for the kind of insight they give into life in entertainment. Here is a selection.

1. ***An Unsuitable Boy* by Karan Johar:** An autobiography from the maker of multiple Bollywood blockbusters, the book is a wonderfully chatty account of Johar's growing up years, and how he became a film director, his struggles, the filmi life and his relationship with actor Shah Rukh Khan.
2. ***Khullam Khulla – Rishi Kapoor Uncensored:*** Read Rishi Kapoor's autobiography for a close look at the lives, loves and careers of many of the Kapoor family (and for interesting tidbits about their co-stars).
3. ***And Then One Day – A Memoir* by Naseeruddin Shah:** This book details the actor's struggles with his career, beginning with his childhood, and including his troubled relationship with his father. Shah's impulsive first marriage at the age of nineteen with a woman fourteen years his senior, followed by his second, his family, theatre and his hate-hate relationship with mainstream Hindi cinema – all figure here.
4. ***Dream with Your Eyes Open* by Ronnie Screwvala:** A book on being in the business of entertainment, Screwvala's autobiography is packed with interesting stories from the worlds of television, cinema and theatre.
5. ***Director Diaries* by Rakesh Anand Bakshi:** This is a book of question-and-answer sessions with Bollywood film directors like Subhash Ghai, Imtiaz Ali, Govind Nihalani, Farah Khan, Zoya Akhtar and Vishal Bharadwaj. Full of personal stories, anecdotes and advice, it also explores the working relationships between directors and their cinematographers, editors and art directors.

6. ***Screenplay*** by Syd Field: The screenplay writers' Bible, this classic book focuses on aspects such as why the first ten pages of your script are crucially important, how to visually 'grab' the reader from page one, word one, and how to adapt a novel, a play, or an article into a screenplay.
7. ***A. R. Rahman – The Spirit of Music*** by Nasreen Munni Kabir: Written by film journalist Kabir, this book and others in the same series feature interesting conversations with legends like Gulzar and singer Lata Mangeshkar. Also by Kabir is a biography of actor and filmmaker Guru Dutt.

Twitter and Instagram Accounts for Aspiring Entertainment Professionals to Follow

A lot of the film and television world is on social media. Here a few good starting points.

TWITTER

- @SanjayGupta
- @Talkingmoviez
- @FilmCompanion
- @moifightclub
- @DarrenAronofsky
- @bazluhrmann
- @JuddApatow
- @LenaDunham
- @BryanSinger
- @FarOutAkhtar
- @FilmCourage
- @KarinaLongworth

BLOGS

- [johnbrawley.wordpress](#)
- [directorsnotes](#)
- [noamkroll](#)
- [indiewire](#)
- [rogerebert](#)

INSTAGRAM

- [@aliaabhatt](#)
- [@sonamkapoor](#)
- [@atulkasbekar](#)
- [@iamsrk](#)
- [@shondarhimes](#)

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Land of Opportunity

‘The modern world is in love with entrepreneurship. Starting your own business holds the same sort of prestigious position as, in previous ages, making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem or spearing multiple enemies in battle.’

—Alain de Botton,
The Pleasures and Sorrows of Work



There has never been a better time to turn entrepreneur. Setting up your own business is risky. But it can be amazingly rewarding as well, as you take an idea, a product or a service and create a business around it. Read here the story of Pranay Chulet and the creation of [Quikr.com](https://www.quikr.com), now valued at a billion dollars. Also hear from entrepreneurs on how doing an MBA has helped their businesses, from Harvard Business School professor Noam Wasserman on the important things you should think about before you turn entrepreneur, and from venture capitalist Abhay Pandey on what investors look for. Additionally, read about young people who work in social entrepreneurship in businesses that create impact. But entrepreneurship in India can scarcely be contained in one chapter. So look out for this entrepreneurial energy all over the book! From healthcare entrepreneur Dr Deepu Sebin, law entrepreneurs M.R. Madhavan and Arghya Sengupta, computer analytics entrepreneur Srikanth Velamakanni, HR entrepreneur Manish Sabharwal, entertainment entrepreneur Atul Kasbekar to food entrepreneur Sanjeev

Kapoor, and education entrepreneur Praveen Tyagi and others, read their stories and find inspiration in the chapters ahead.

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WHAT HEADING A 'UNICORN' FEELS LIKE

PRANAY CHULET

Founder, Quikr, Bengaluru

Age: 42 years

Pranay Chulet always wanted to be a filmmaker. He grew up in Dariba Mines, near Udaipur in Rajasthan, where his father worked. The school at Dariba Mines had no physics teacher and Pranay learnt much of his class 11 and 12 science on his own, going on to study in IIT Delhi, doing an MBA at IIM Calcutta and then working with a consulting firm in New

York.



Illustration: Jayachandran/Mint

But he still wanted to make films. One day, he decided to take the plunge. He quit his job at Mitchell Madison. He was living in New York at the time and had saved some money, which he decided to invest in his film. The young engineer MBA had already written a script. But he needed a film crew. With no film background, no big studio to support him, Chulet decided to advertise for actors and technical crew like a sound person, a film editor. He listed his requirements on the online website Craigslist. In no time at all, he had a basic crew. *Latent Lava* was shot in

New York over a few months.

There was no money left for marketing or distribution. So sadly, *Latent Lava* didn't do well. But Chulet discovered something – the power of online ads.

Soon after, he came back to India and started Quikr. The early days were hard. Pranay went to every venture capitalist he could get a connection with, but nobody was willing to lend the young enterprise any money. 'Lehman Brothers had just collapsed, and with that, the financial world as we know it,' Pranay says.

Today, driving into the new office campus, Pranay thinks about those days. Since then, Quikr has grown and grown. It's now what Silicon Valley calls a 'unicorn'; a company worth a billion dollars. The company moved from Mumbai to Bengaluru, now tech hub of the country, to attract more talent. Pranay looks around the new office in the four-acre campus in Rachnahalli in Central Bengaluru, and enjoys the feel of the central lawn. He walks through the main building, which used to be a factory, and makes his way to his office. Today, in his office, he scans the metrics of all the Quikr verticals. Real estate is way ahead in revenue. The Quikr website continues to grow with two million listings a month.

Things are moving fast. 'We are not flying a commercial airliner,' Pranay tells his team. 'We are flying a fighter plane. It comes with a lot more speed but it also means you have to react faster. You need to be more watchful. You can definitely do all the acrobatics you want but you need to see that everything can be managed.'

It can be a tightrope at times. Quikr has had to spend heavily on marketing. Profits aren't yet on the horizon. But Quikr is now a household name. Chulet is excited by the possibilities the future holds. His advice to budding entrepreneurs: 'Don't overthink. Just go for it. You can only plan so much. You are not an entrepreneur if you keep thinking.'

Education

B.Tech Chemical Engineering	IIT Delhi	1992-96
MBA	IIM Calcutta	1996-98

Work Experience

Mitchell Madison, New York	Engagement Manager	1997-2000
Walker Digital, New York	Business Head	2000-01
Pricewaterhouse Consulting	Associate Partner	2002-05
Booz Allen Hamilton	Principal	2005-07
Excellere (web-based educational products)	Founder	2007-08
Quikr, Mumbai and Bengaluru	Founder	2008 to present

WHAT YOU SHOULD THINK ABOUT BEFORE YOU BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR

(Edited excerpts from an interview with Noam Wasserman, Harvard Business School professor and author of The Founder's Dilemmas)

There are three aspects to consider:

Personal readiness: Are you at the stage where you can put in twenty-hour days building the business? Are you single and without debt? Or do you have school-going children you want to spend time with?

Career readiness: Do you have the necessary skills like industry knowledge, the ability to knot together functions like sales, marketing and finance? Can you lead a team and manage a profit-and-loss account?

Market readiness: Will the market like the idea enough so that enough money will come in to keep the venture going?

What are a founder's major dilemmas in a startup?

- When am I going to be a founder?
- Am I going to do it alone?
- If I am going to get co-founders, who should they be?
- How am I going to split equity between the co-founders?

Should founders go solo?

There are some founders who decide to become Superman and do it all by themselves. But as it turns out, they end up overestimating themselves and their networks and underestimating their challenges and the support they need. They allow their passion to cloud their judgement, and this comes back to bite them. They decide to become solo founders, and they shouldn't.

How should entrepreneurs pick co-founders?

There is a natural human inclination to flock to like-minded people, but picking a co-founder who is just like you will make for a bad founding team. You will be overlapping, stepping on each other's toes and leaving behind holes. A founder should also resist the temptation to go to the most comfortable person nearby, like friends or family. There are all sorts of ways these relationships can get in the way of being a tightly knit team. We assume that because someone is a good friend, he will be a good CTO (chief technology officer) or CFO (chief financial officer) and it's a rude awakening when we discover our friends are not scaling with the venture. It's also hard then to bring up with a friend or family member the fact that they are not performing. In fact, in China, there's a time-worn piece of wisdom people believe in – that if you mix business and personal relationships, you will lose both. Despite this, more than half of all ventures have friends and family involved. It's a commonplace decision, but one that is fraught with peril.

What are the factors to be considered when splitting equity?

The most common way to split equity is at the beginning, and equally. There's an inclination to avoid a tension-filled conversation – it's assumed

that all the founders will be contributing equally, and what happens is a rushed handshake. But then there is a rude awakening when one partner is not contributing equally, either because of inability to take the pressure, lack of skill or otherwise. The equal split arrangement comes back to haunt the team, and just heightens tensions.

What is the most common myth about entrepreneurship that you have encountered?

That every founder is going to be the next Bill Gates, or that if Steve Jobs could do it, I can do it. But Gates and Jobs are not the norm. They are put up on a pedestal precisely because they are unique. For most ventures, there are trade-offs that have to be made at every stage. For a techie who has started a company, he will need a CEO who can knit together marketing, finance and people management. As a founder-CEO, you need to know when to transition yourself out. If, as a founder, you stay on the throne and try to keep the kingdom, it will be a smaller and less valuable one. If you give up the reins, you will be able to grow and have an equity stake that is going to be much more valuable. It's a hard trade-off.

DOES AN MBA HELP YOU BECOME A BETTER ENTREPRENEUR?

Akhilesh Bali was twenty-three when he founded Mithaimate.com with a few friends. 'We were very naïve. We had never heard of things like a "corporate business plan". And while for some, a business plan is just something sketchily put down on paper, in retrospect, I think it does force you to think about your business in a certain way and plan properly when you think of scaling up,' he says.

Mithaimate, an online portal for gifting Indian sweets, did reasonably well, but it stayed small, clocking revenue of a few lakh rupees a month. Two years after he founded Mithaimate, Bali headed to Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad. He felt he needed to improve his business skills. He needed to meet a cross section of people and learn from them what other possibilities existed.

Today he is the founder-CEO at LimeTray, a start up that helps restaurants all over the country go online and engage with their customers.

‘With LimeTray, I am on a much surer footing,’ says Bali, who recently secured a round of funding from private equity firm Matrix Partners.

In the world of entrepreneurship, there are many things no school can teach. But structured programmes, whether at business school or at other institutes, can help entrepreneurs acquire the requisite skills by teaching formal skills in a range of disciplines, say for example, finance. Many entrepreneurs say that studying business formally has given them a headstart as well as access to superb alumni networks. I spoke to entrepreneurs from diverse sectors like food, information technology and medical services, as well as experts, who told me that studying the theory of entrepreneurship helps in its practice. It quickly fills in gaps in skill sets.

Dr Vandana Jain went on to do an MBA after her MBBS and MD because she wanted to set up a chain of eye clinics. ‘I studied to be a doctor; my education taught me a lot about managing people and disease, and that mistakes should never be made,’ says Dr Jain. She had completed her MBBS from Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi, and went on to specialize in ophthalmology at Harvard Medical School, USA, in 2008. But when she decided to start a chain of eye hospitals across the country, she felt the need to add more to her skills.

‘There were so many things I didn’t feel confident about – like what sort of people I need to recruit, how I should scale up the venture, and so on. So I decided to go for formal management education,’ says the thirty-seven-year-old co-founder and director of Advanced Eye Hospital and Institute in Mumbai. She went to the Stanford Graduate School of Business, USA, in 2009, to do her MBA. ‘B-school is a place that can teach you anything you want to learn – hard skills, soft skills, or access to networks, whatever you want to build,’ she says.

For Bali, who did a bachelor’s in engineering (information technology) at the University of Mumbai, ISB helped fill in the gaps in his understanding of finance and strategy. ‘It’s not as if you can’t learn some of these things elsewhere, but it’s an all-in-one-go programme which helps a great deal,’ he says.

You develop better cash management skills

Finance is an important hard skill that many entrepreneurs haven’t studied formally. ‘Most businesses are heavily cash-constrained during the early

years. Often, their survival depends on their being able to manage their cash,' says Kunal Upadhyay, CEO at the Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship at IIM Ahmedabad.

Upadhyay, who meets entrepreneurs from across the country, says cash management is not a skill that comes naturally to most of them. They may often build up a large inventory and give long periods of credit, taking on the financial risk.

'What studying finance formally during an MBA programme does is give you an accelerated growth curve, which is much steeper than if you had tried to pick up the same knowledge through years of work experience,' says Mukund B.S., thirty-three, co-founder of ReNew IT, a Bengaluru-based business that refurbishes and resells computers. Looking back, Mukund feels the decision to enrol for an MBA course was a crucial step towards upgrading his skill set, and something that helped him a great deal when he set up his own company.

Having graduated as an engineer, Mukund had almost no knowledge of the fundamentals of accounting, but within a few months of studying the core finance courses as part of his MBA at IIM Calcutta, he was able to write out balance sheets.

You learn how to pitch, talk and sell better

Most entrepreneurs learn this on the job, but formal training gives you a head start, says Upadhyay. Creating good presentations, pitching your ideas and communicating them is something an entrepreneur is required to do at every stage. How, for instance, do you draft an email that will attract attention? Or how do you create a presentation for a venture capitalist? All these skills should be learnt formally.

Anzar Rabbani was a student studying metallurgical engineering and materials science at IIT Bombay when he founded an animation company, Adimation, with a batchmate. Adimation makes short animated videos for other startups.

Setting this up is what prompted him to sign up for the entrepreneurship course offered at IIT, conducted jointly by Prof. Anand T. Kusre and Silicon Valley serial entrepreneur Rajen Jaswa.

Rabbani says these sessions have not only been a window to the wider world of entrepreneurship, they have also helped him improve his business

at Adimation. 'After attending the session on sales, marketing and communication, I have begun talking much more to customers,' he says. Their feedback has helped him improve the quality of his videos, which has translated into better sales.

You learn to negotiate better

At Stanford, Dr Jain signed up for the negotiation class, nicknamed 'touchy feely' because it teaches you about yourself, your impact on other people, and how best to use that in negotiation. 'It's a skill an entrepreneur uses at every point, and sometimes you can be born with it, but it is also something you can learn. For me, negotiation had meant getting the best bargain for myself. Studying it formally made me realize I needed to understand what the other person wants too, and to try and hit the sweet spot,' says Dr Jain.

Negotiation skills proved important in almost every transaction, from dealing with vendors to hiring personnel. On a large investment in specialized machines worth nearly ₹7 crore, for instance, almost everything was settled in over-the-table negotiations. 'We were able to get good price reductions, as well as increased warranties, extra licences and deferred-payment options on some of the equipment,' says Dr Jain.

You can put together a better team

At LimeTray, Bali has just persuaded a batchmate, an engineer from IIT Kharagpur who worked at Microsoft, to join his startup and lead the team driving products. 'Not only do I have access to juniors at ISB, I am better able to attract fresh graduates as well. They see my trajectory of having started a business and then having gone to business school as a viable career path,' says Bali. Classmates can often prove great co-founders of businesses too. Dr Jain teamed up with a classmate to co-found Clear Ear Pvt. Ltd, a startup based in California that specializes in providing low-cost medical devices.

'Going to school before or after setting up and running a business helps you relearn the art of networking and the skills needed for it. Besides, the alumni network that an institute gives you can be a vital starting point for business,' says Mukund. 'It's a chicken-and-egg situation otherwise –

whenever you start, your first client will always want a successful reference before he signs on. What my alumni network gave me when I started up was a foot in the door, and the opportunity to be heard,' he adds.

Having set up Mithaimate, Bali did have the credibility of running a startup, yet a personal connect at a private equity firm where many ISB alumni worked gave him some extra credibility when he went looking for funding.

NOW THAT YOU ARE AN ENTREPRENEUR, HOW DO YOU GET FUNDING?

Abhay Pandey, managing director of private equity fund Sequoia Capital India, shares some insider inputs about what investors look for. Over the last five years in India, Sequoia has invested a billion dollars in sixty different companies, in sectors ranging from e-commerce to fast food.

What do you look for when you invest in a business?

- The company should be addressing a large market; there should be something that has the potential to be very big.
- A unique product or service.
- Single-mindedness about the business; it should be something the entrepreneur is spending all his time and energy on. He shouldn't have too many diversions and side interests ('by the way I also like horse-riding, that is my passion' sort of thing).
- The entrepreneur's track record, whether from a previous job, business or institution.
- The ability to assemble a good, well-qualified team.

Is there a particular profile of entrepreneur you look for?

We look for single-minded commitment to the project.

Is there a particular format or structure you look for when you receive a funding proposal?

No. If you have a good business, come to us. We can sit down and look at your business and, if necessary, hire someone or find a consultant to put together the relevant numbers. We are not investors who are hoping that someone dresses up the bride and brings her to us.

For one of our investee companies, Indore-based Prakaash Snacks, an unsophisticated company in a small town, we spent a long time setting up processes. We liked them so much, we spent as much as fourteen months setting up the entire finance function, generating the numbers, monitoring them, doing the due diligence, the valuation. And we had to closely guard the entire process.

How important is it for an entrepreneur seeking funds to have good communication skills?

There are two aspects to communication – one is the content of what you say and the second is how you say it. What you say is usually a reflection of what you're thinking and how you deliver it is a function of your schooling, social background, *etc.* We care about what you say and not about the polish of how you say it.

As an entrepreneur, you should be able to clearly say what exactly it is that you're doing, what markets you're addressing, what the product/service is about and what the credentials of your management team are. If you can put this on a presentation or even a piece of paper, that's good enough.

What are some of the funding myths you encounter?

That investors want to control the company or dictate the way you do business. Most investors have no desire to control or tell you how to run your business. They want to be around and to help as much as possible.

That investors' and entrepreneurs' growth aspirations vary. It is a myth that there is a misalignment; it may be so for a very brief period before disinvestment, but for the most part, both investors and entrepreneurs would like to see the company grow.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS: MAKING PEOPLE'S LIVES BETTER (AND MAKING MONEY TOO!)

Eight years ago, in 2009, US-based Vaishali Rao shocked her parents by saying she wanted to go to India and work in the social sector. Her Silicon Valley-based engineer dad protested. 'We moved here to give you and your sister a good education and a better way of life and now you want to go back.'

Vaishali did go back. Today she is programme manager, Livelihoods, at the Bengaluru-based Solar Electric Light Company (Selco). It's a social enterprise that provides sustainable energy solutions like solar power and services to both urban and rural areas.

She enjoys the challenges of the job – grappling to find solutions to problems of energy, livelihoods and poverty which even governments find tough to solve. The job involves a lot of travel.

Vaishali is just back from Kalahandi in Odisha and part of the trip involved visiting paddy farmers. She is testing a new thresher that will help farmers save time and make more money. 'People there live in remote areas with no access to machinery like threshers, so they thresh the paddy manually, by making cattle walk over the grains, a process that is inefficient and takes very long,' she says.

Vaishali, who is a graduate in political science and history from the University of Oregon, USA, began her career by working for Oxfam in Hyderabad in 2009 and joined Selco in October 2014. 'Social enterprise makes sense to me. It forces you to work with the triple bottom line of profits, social impact and the environmental aspect,' she says.

'It's one step beyond philanthropy. You are giving your time, your resources and your mind to make more of an impact,' says thirty-year-old P.V. Raghavendra Rao. The mechanical engineer is business and supply-chain manager with OneBreath, a healthcare startup that is all set to launch a low-cost ventilator. 'There is a sense of philanthropy in social enterprise. There is excitement in attacking problems, in being able to develop devices and services that impact the quality of life,' he says. Raghavendra worked as a consultant at technology consulting and outsourcing company Capgemini before joining the social enterprise space.

Harish Hande, the forty-nine-year-old founder of Selco, says the social sector needs youngsters. Hande, an engineer from IIT Kharagpur and a doctorate from University of Massachusetts, USA, won the Magsaysay award in 2011 for his efforts to put solar power technology in the hands of the poor.

‘The sector needs an unconventional approach. And young people who haven’t yet got into the corporate mould of thinking can be effective with their out-of-the-box solutions,’ he says. Selco gets a lot of internship applications, but only five out of the 300 applications that came in last year were from India. ‘In India, the decision about where to work is not one made by a youngster on his own, says Hande, who finds that most Indian parents are reluctant to let their children work in the sector.

Deciding to make a career in social enterprise does mean taking the plunge. Yet, people like twenty-five-year-old Abbas Dadla, who have done just that, have no regrets. ‘What we need in India is for more people to not take the conventional path, but to take steps to create a country that we all want, that we all talk about. In the best colleges of India, people are still studying to get jobs, no one is looking for problems to solve,’ says Dadla. A mechanical engineer from IIT Mumbai, he opted to stay out of the placement process in 2012, the year he graduated, and instead joined Avanti Learning Centers, a not-for-profit founded in 2010 by two alumni from his college. Avanti mentors disadvantaged high-school students and helps them crack engineering exams.

‘Today we work across eleven states in twenty cities, reaching 2,500 children,’ says Dadla. He is happy he managed to convince his family about his decision. ‘I felt this job would have much more impact than a conventional job. I told them I would do it for a year. They thought I would try it, fail and then come back to something conventional,’ says Dadla, whose family is now proud of his work and his role in education.

Also, before joining the social sector, talk to people in the field, as twenty-six-year-old lawyer Sanjana Govil did. ‘I attended Sankalp, the largest conference on social enterprise in Asia, and met impact investors, social entrepreneurs and other lawyers.’ Attending the conference helped Govil decide last year to join Impact Law Ventures, which does legal work for organizations in the social sector. ‘It is a huge motivational factor in my work that the client I am working for is doing something that could potentially change the life of so many people,’ says Govil, who has since decided to enter the social entrepreneurship space, and pursue a master’s in business administration.

Of course, working in the social sector, which includes healthcare, education, alternative energy and law, still involves negotiating a minefield of misconceptions. ‘People pigeonhole you as an activist or a jholawala. It’s

very unfortunate. They feel you have to be a feminist or a crusader to work in this sector. The truth is, you don't work for free, you can be a professional, you can innovate and make a profit, and you can bring about real change,' says Govil.

PROs AND CONs OF BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR

PROs	CONs
You get to be your own boss	Risky
Exciting; you can choose what you do	Have to handle all aspects, include the boring ones
Flexible, can work on your own schedule	Work all hours
Potential to make a lot of money	No regular salary
Being able to create something on your own	Can be lonely and stressful

FIVE BOOKS EVERY ENTREPRENEUR SHOULD READ

There are so many how-to books, books on persuasion, on selling, on understanding how decisions are made, on productivity, and many many stories of entrepreneurs, some told by entrepreneurs. Here are five, a tiny selection, but they are good starting points:

1. ***The Innovator's Dilemma*** by Clayton Christensen: This classic book by a Harvard professor talks about how just focusing on customers' present needs may lead companies to miss out on disruptive technologies that focus on future needs. Illustrated with case studies, this book on a strategy was published in 1997, but remains a relevant read.
2. ***The Lean Startup: How Today's Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses*** by Eric Ries: A scientific approach to design startups that are capital-efficient and

that leverage human creativity more effectively.

3. ***Venture Deals: Be Smarter Than Your Lawyer and Venture Capitalist*** by Brad Feld and Jason Mendelson: This one focuses on the nuts and bolts of setting up your startup.
4. ***The Founder's Dilemmas: Anticipating and Avoiding the Pitfalls that Can Sink a Startup*** by Noam Wasserman: Harvard Business School professor Wasserman has studied thousands of startups over a period of ten years. This book draws on this research, to examine key decisions faced by startup founders throughout the life of a company ... from pre-founding, funding options, initial team to board management, and finally to exit.
5. ***Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose*** by Tony Hsieh: The founder of online shoe company Zappos, Hsieh tells his story well. Lots of takeaways here on how to build an open culture at a company, how to manage finances when the economy is down and a lot of other nitty-gritty and fun parts of running a start up. And finally how to sell your business at a profit to Amazon!

THREE MOVIES/TV SHOWS FOR ENTREPRENEURS TO WATCH

1. ***The Founder***: The film is based on the true story of how Ray Kroc, a salesman from Illinois, met Mac and Dick McDonald, who were running a burger operation in 1950s Southern California. Kroc saw the business and the branding potential of the McDonald golden arches. And went on to take a single-restaurant business and build an empire, with a mix of energy, enterprise and machination.
2. ***Silicon Valley***: A spoofy satire about a meek corporate coder turned entrepreneur. Richard works at Hooli, a Google-like company, till one day he develops a data compressor whose potential he barely recognizes. Suddenly, he finds himself a pawn in the battle between VCs and a sinister Steve Jobs-like CEO. Interesting cast of characters – many of them quite recognizable!
3. ***Shark Tank***: An *American Idol* kind of television series for struggling entrepreneurs, the show lets aspiring entrepreneurs pitch their

business models to investors. If the entrepreneur makes a successful pitch, he gets investment in his business.

Online Resources for the Enterprising Entrepreneur

Entrepreneurs, venture capital firms and investors are prolific on social media. Check out their blogs and Twitter handles for a ringside view of their stories. Here are some good starting points:

BLOGS

- Yourstory
- Entrepreneur
- Techcrunch
- garyvaynerchuk.com

TWITTER

- @Inc42
- @travisk
- @TheNextWeb
- @mashable

COUNSELLING

The Mind Managers

‘Think of your head as an unsafe neighborhood; don’t go there alone.’

—Augusten Burroughs in his memoir *Dry*

‘There are many ways of getting strong, sometimes talking is the best way.’

—Andre Agassi in his memoir *Open*



In a world that is getting more fast-paced and more stressed, a counsellor can be the perfect go-to person. Today, the study of psychology and counselling gives you lots of career options – from organizational psychology, where you will work in a company and try to increase the productivity of employees, to forensic psychology where you will work with courts. Discover these and others through the excellent blogs listed at the end of the chapter. And read the story of Anna Chandy, counsellor to actor Deepika Padukone, as well as that of twenty-seven-year-old Piyali Misquitta, who works with children.

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- ▶ [The Counsellor to Deepika Padukone: Anna Chandy](#)
- ▶ [Testing Children and Counselling Parents: Piyali Misquitta](#)

- ▶ [The Secret to Getting There](#)
- ▶ [Everything You Need to Know about Making Money as a Therapist](#)
- ▶ [Skills You Need to Make It as a Mental Health Professional](#)
- ▶ [Three Reasons Why You Should Work in Mental Health](#)
- ▶ [What Nobody Tells You about Working in Mental Health](#)
- ▶ [Five Books Every Mental Health Professional Should Read](#)
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THE COUNSELLOR TO DEEPIKA PADUKONE

ANNA CHANDY

Chairperson, TheLiveLoveLaugh Foundation,
and Transactional Analysis Practitioner, Bengaluru
Age: 53 years

People of all ages come to see Anna Chandy. 'A majority of my patients are male, often at senior positions in their profession,' says Chandy. 'Sometimes it's depression ('I have everything, why am I not happy?'), sometimes a feeling of being 'stuck' ('Why am I not being able to do better?'). Some are teenagers, struggling with their own issues. Counselling can help tackle such feelings by exploring where they come from,' says Chandy, who has been a counsellor for twenty years now.



Empathize and be non-judgemental, she says. 'If someone says, "I am having an affair", I don't hear it as having an affair, because that term itself is highly moralistic. I hear it as "some needs of mine are not being met, therefore something is happening".'

Chandy charges anything from ₹1,000 to ₹6,000 an hour for counselling. In the early days, however, she worked for free. Nobody would pay. Chandy says a lot more recognition has come her way now. She was also in the news recently when she was interviewed with her patient, actor Deepika Padukone. 'I have been working in this field for three decades now. All these years, my family used to think, *what is this counselling?* Now, after the television interview, they are impressed.'

Sometimes, Chandy has review sessions with peers on Skype. 'As a counsellor, you have to constantly work on yourself, so talking to a peer who can change you in your assumptions and attitudes is necessary.'

Once a month, Chandy travels to Mumbai for meetings of the TheLiveLoveLaugh Foundation set up by Padukone to raise awareness about mental health issues.

How she got there: In 1993, Chandy joined a Bengaluru-based mental health organization called Vishwas and trained to be a counsellor. She turned out to be skilled at it and continued volunteering. By 1994, she moved into supervisory and training positions at Vishwas.

‘I had a tough childhood. There was conflict between my parents. I am also the survivor of abuse from a relative. I have worked through all of that and maybe that has made me a better counsellor,’ says Chandy.

When business process outsourcing (BPO) firm Firstsource Solutions asked Chandy to join as a consultant counsellor in 2003, she realized she needed more formal training. She joined the firm but simultaneously started studying Transactional Analysis (TA) at Bangalore University TA is a theory in psychology that examines interactions, or ‘transactions’, between people. The firm employed many youngsters who were open to talking about their problems, and Chandy’s office was always full.

Today, Chandy works with companies like Mahindra Retail, Titan and Intel as a consulting counsellor, sees patients privately, and trains young counsellors in Bengaluru.

The biggest challenge: ‘There is no regulation in this country in terms of minimum qualifications or certification. You can just put up a board saying ‘therapist’ or ‘counsellor’ after doing a course or training for ten–fifteen hours,’ she says. ‘There are all sorts of titles flying around. Like “life coach”. It sounds stylish and all, but who is a life coach?’ she asks.

Education

B.A. – Child Development	Mount Carmel College, Bengaluru	1984
Transactional Analysis	Bangalore University	2003

Work Experience

Vishwas, Bengaluru	Counsellor	1993
Firstsource Solutions, Bengaluru	Consultant Counsellor	2003

Mahindra Retail, Titan, Intel	Consultant Counsellor	2003 onwards
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TESTING CHILDREN AND COUNSELLING PARENTS

PIYALI MISQUITTA

Consultant Clinical Psychologist

Practising at Mind Craft and at B.Y.L. Nair Charitable Hospital, Mumbai

Age: 27 years

Piyali Misquitta says she was in class eight when she knew she wanted to be a counsellor. Her father sent her for a 'career test' to check her strengths and areas of interest. The test, administered by a psychologist, did help Misquitta discover what she wanted to do, but perhaps not in the way it was intended to. 'I sat there and thought, this is what I want to do. I want to be the psychologist doing those tests,' she says.

Misquitta's father is a psychiatrist who worked with the Indian Air Force. As a schoolgirl, she often used to wait outside his office so he could accompany her home. 'I would hear the ends of conversations, as his patients walked out. My father never underestimated my capacity to understand, and would explain how "depression was not just being sad, but being sad for long". So I realized from a very early age that mental problems are not blown out of proportion or invented. They require special help and skills to deal with,' she says.

Work: At the Learning Disabilities Clinic, appointments have to be made through schools, primarily government-run schools, months in advance. Misquitta works three days a week at the clinic, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. In the evenings, and on other days, she heads to Mind Craft, a mental health centre in Bandra.

'It's hectic work – tests like the Woodcock-Johnson test, which identify strengths and weaknesses in cognitive abilities, that have to be administered, are complicated ones,' she says. Children are brought in for testing and counselling, mostly for academic problems. Women seek

counselling, for relationships, anxiety and depression. 'Men come in too, mainly when they feel something is seriously wrong,' she says.

Education

B.A. – Psychology	St. Xavier’s College, Mumbai	2010
M.A. – Clinical Psychology	SNDT University, Mumbai	2012
Post Graduate Diploma in Counselling Psychology	St. Xavier’s Institute of Counselling, Mumbai	2013

Work Experience

St. Mary’s High School, Vashi	School Counsellor	2012–13
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THE SECRET TO GETTING THERE

An undergraduate degree in psychology helps. There are also specialized counselling courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate level at institutes like Montford College, Bengaluru and Xavier’s Institute of Counselling, Mumbai. Many short-term courses on different areas of counselling like somatic healing, neuro-linguistic programming, post-traumatic stress are also available from time to time.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MAKING MONEY AS A THERAPIST

- *Fresh graduates begin at ₹2.5–5 lakh a year.*
- *Experienced counsellors can charge ₹1,000–6,000 per hour. Annual income (depending on the hours you put in) could be in the range of ₹50 lakh or more.*

SKILLS YOU NEED TO MAKE IT AS A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

- *Empathy*
- *An analytical mind to see the different parts of the person and put them together*

THREE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD WORK IN MENTAL HEALTH

- *It is fulfilling.*
- *You can have a huge positive impact in the lives of people.*
- *As an expert in your field, you can earn a lot.*

WHAT NOBODY TELLS YOU ABOUT WORKING IN MENTAL HEALTH

- *The work can be emotionally draining.*
- *You are constantly dealing with negativity, so it is very important to have your support system in place.*
- *It's a profession where a lot of people burn out soon.*

FIVE BOOKS EVERY MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHOULD READ

1. ***Man's Search for Meaning***: This stunning story from Nazi concentration camp survivor Viktor Frankl addresses existential questions in a provocative way.
2. ***The Interpretation of Murder*** by Jed Rubenfeld: Set in 1900s New York and inspired by Sigmund Freud's visit, this murder mystery, with a psychologist as the detective, is wonderfully atmospheric too.
3. ***The Passions of the Mind*** by Irving Wallace: A wonderfully detailed biography of the father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud.
4. ***Games People Play*** by Eric Berne: We all play games – man-woman games, power games with our bosses and competitive games with family or friends, when we interact with each other, says Eric Berne in this bestselling classic on the psychology of human relationships and

transactional analyses.

5. ***The Happiness Project* by Gretchen Rubin:** This bestselling book is the story of a year in the author's life. Married with two children, a great husband and no money worries, she finds herself unhappy. Rubin embarks upon a year's project to be happier, doing different things every month – like cleaning her closets or making three new friends. It's a pleasant read, maybe a little trite, but it does leave you with food for thought.

FIVE MOVIES/TV SERIES EVERY THERAPIST SHOULD SEE

1. ***Dear Zindagi:*** Alia Bhatt plays a cameraperson who is beset by personal and professional crises in this Bollywood film. On a visit home, she accidentally encounters therapist Jehangir Khan, played by Shah Rukh Khan, and has numerous sessions with him to sort out her life.
2. ***The Sopranos:*** Mafia don Tony Soprano talks to his analyst, as he unburdens his guilty soul in this multiple award-winning TV series.
3. ***Analyze This:*** Actor Billy Crystal plays the analyst to mafia boss Robert de Niro in this spoofy but thought-provoking comedy.
4. ***One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest:*** This multi-award-winning film stars Jack Nicholson as McMurphy, a young man who fakes insanity in order to escape prison labour. He is shifted to the special ward for the mentally unstable, where he rises up against a cruel nurse, Ratched. The film became an expose for the cruel and dubious treatment of the mentally unstable.
5. ***Spellbound:*** This Alfred Hitchcock thriller stars a psychiatrist who protects the identity of an amnesia patient, while trying to solve the mystery.

Online Resources for the Networked Mental Health Professional

- <http://psychiatrist-blog.blogspot.in>: Better known as 'Shrink Rap', this site is where mental health professionals tell their different stories.

- <https://thealienist.wordpress.com/>: Reflections on counselling, therapy and other things. Also links to other resources, and great blogs.
- <http://www.daviddisalvo.org/> or The Daily Brain: A nicely formatted site with catchy articles such as 'Why your brain doesn't care if you have 1000 Facebook friends', among others.
- www.psychologytoday.com: Lots of articles here that range from 'Why men grope women' and 'What lack of affection can do to you', to 'Dealing with addiction and autism'.
- <http://blogs.psychcentral.com/>: Lots of articles on different aspects of counselling.
- www.mindhacks.com: Interesting set of articles on counselling and mental health from various bloggers.

TWITTER

- @abmarkman
- @SocialPsych
- @gretchenrubin
- @mocost
- @Psychscience
- @sapinker
- @ciaranopinker

LAW

Courting an Exciting Career

*'Has he come armed, then?' she asked anxiously.
'Has he brought a pistol or a sword?'
Ian shook his head, his dark hair lifting violently in the wind.
'Oh no, Ma'am!' he said. 'It's worse. He's brought a lawyer!'*

—Diana Gabaldon,
Voyager (Outlander no. 3)



There are many kinds of legal practice. There are corporate lawyers like Zia Mody, who manage the deals and laws within a workspace, and others who work in the area of civil, tax or labour disputes. There are arbitration lawyers, environment lawyers, even electricity board lawyers, who specialize in utility tribunal disputes. There are the criminal lawyers like Aabad Ponda who practise in Bombay High Court. And lawyers like Arghya Sengupta, who work with the government to make better laws. Their stories will give you a sneak peek into the lawyerly life.

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THE FIGHTER IN THE COURTROOM – Learning through Litigation

AABAD PONDA

Practises primarily at the Bombay High Court

Age: 47 years

‘I don’t sit in judgement on my clients,’ says Aabad Ponda, lawyer to the rich and famous in Mumbai. The well-built lawyer used to be a powerlifter, and even won a national junior championship in 1988. ‘It was just a hobby; you can’t make a living out of it,’ he says. So when Ponda hurt his back in 1988, he took it as ‘a sign from God to stop and do something with my brain’. Ponda went on to graduate from Government Law College in Mumbai in 1992. It helped that Ponda had grown up in a family of practising criminal lawyers. His father, Harshad Ponda, has, over

the years, represented both politicians and the common man. His mother, the late Freny Ponda, also worked as a criminal lawyer who even took on cases related to matrimonial disputes.

‘When I was a teenager, I would come back from school and find Dawood Ibrahim waiting in the office,’ says Ponda, who has found the practice of law interesting and exciting since then.

Getting there: ‘Both my parents being criminal lawyers definitely helped shape my career, but I was under their shadow for the first few years. People came with complicated cases, and nobody wanted a junior lawyer,’ says Ponda, who slowly began carving out a separate practice. Ponda wanted to practise in the Supreme Court of India and moved base to New Delhi in 2007. But he found he didn’t enjoy living in the capital, or even the practice of law there. ‘The Supreme Court is, of course, the Supreme Court and they have to deal with so many states, but as a lawyer, I didn’t get satisfaction. You don’t get any time to put forth your case and the entire DNA of the court is different.’ He moved back to Mumbai in 2012 and picked up his own practice – independent of his father’s practice – largely in Bombay High Court.

A case he won’t forget: ‘In 2005, I defended a man accused of murder in Bombay High Court.’ Through skilful cross-examination of witnesses, Ponda was able to establish that the accused was innocent. ‘He was an ordinary man, but I am proud of the case because I was able to save an innocent man from life imprisonment,’ says Ponda.

A tough call: ‘Keeping your ethics and moral values intact, not giving in to clients who will tell you XYZ can give you “guaranteed” outcomes for a certain sum of money. The guarantee I can give is that I will work hard, and nothing else,’ says Ponda.

Education

B.A. LLB	Government Law College, Mumbai	1992
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INDIA’S BEST-KNOWN CORPORATE LAWYER

ZIA MODY

Founder and Managing Partner, AZB & Partners, Mumbai Age: 60 years

‘I have no body clock,’ Zia Mody says. ‘If I can sleep more, I make sure I do.’ Not surprising for a lawyer whose ‘days’ often end at midnight, sometimes at 2 a.m. or even 5 a.m.

Mody always carries her BlackBerry and appointment book. The pages for each day are crammed – meetings from 10 a.m., speaking engagements and the occasional official function. ‘There’s no predictability about my days in office,’ she says. ‘There could be meetings, internal or external, or conference calls. In a day, I get asked questions on so many matters.’ Her team of around 250 lawyers is spread over six locations and she has to be available for all her colleagues.



Meals seem to be the biggest casualty in all of this. Breakfast never happens. If lunch isn't a client meeting, then it's a dabba from home, which is 'some dal, couple of vegetables, sort of a cold, dry, untasty chapati and some salad'. That dabba has to stretch to dinner sometimes.

Most of the partners work late. Mody herself often wraps up in the early hours of the morning, driving back home in her white Volkswagen Beetle. She lives fifteen minutes away from office. Apart from a few unavoidable business trips (abroad or within the country), Mody prefers to 'videoconference as much as we can'.

Sanity saver: Short breaks, three or four times a year, at the family's house in Goa, and the annual two-week vacation, in New York (where Mody worked for four years), or in Europe.

What she loves about her job: 'That I can make a difference. Indian law is still developing, and it's been great being part of the thinking, in trying to bring about good change, being part of advisory committees that have interacted with (the) government.' Mody is particularly proud of the many overseas acquisition deals she has worked on, including the path-breaking Tata Steel takeover of NatSteel in Singapore.

One thing she wishes she could change: 'I would like to change my daily pattern in some miraculous way into a normal eight-to-ten-hour day.'

Education

B.A. LLB	Cambridge	1978
Master of Law (LLM)	Harvard Law School, US	1979

Work Experience

Baker & Nackenzie, New York	Corporate Associate	1979-83
Chambers of Zia Mody, Mumbai	Proprietor	1984-2001
CZB & Associates, Mumbai	Founder & Senior Partner	2002-04
AZB & Partners, Mumbai	Founder & Managing Partner	2004 to present

**HELPING THE GOVERNMENT MAKE LAWS:
Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy**

ARGHYA SENGUPTA

Research Director at Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy,

New Delhi

Age: 32 years

In October 2013, Arghya Sengupta, then twenty-eight years old, packed his bags to leave Pembroke College, Oxford, UK, where he taught administrative law, to set up an unusual legal practice in New Delhi.

Called the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, it is a legal think tank that works with the government on lawmaking. It researches laws for clarity and consistency. It assists in drafting new bills and also looks at best practices in international law. 'Drafting of laws in India is poor; the obscure legalese used in many statutes mires them in litigation for inordinately long periods,' says Sengupta. Vidhi's first assignment was to work on the draft of an anti-superstition bill for the Karnataka government. Since then, they have worked on multiple bills – The Public Procurement Bill, 2012, the Bankruptcy Code, 2016 and the Aadhar Bill, 2016.

Vidhi's young employees, or 'fellows' as they are called, are all lawyers and are inspired by the possibility of using their legal skills to make a difference in how this massive democracy operates.

The idea of Vidhi took root as far back as 2010, when Sengupta was a student at Oxford. A group of young law students were disturbed by a few provisions in the proposed Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Bill, 2010. 'We decided to write in an expert report and email it to the standing committee of Parliament,' says Sengupta. They were surprised when they were called to make a presentation in person. 'We realized that if you bring something valuable to the table, people actually do listen. We were twenty-five years old at the time and politicians and bureaucrats were listening to what we had to say. That gave us a lot of confidence,' explains Sengupta, who went on to set up Vidhi.

'It's a real chance at reforming and working in close conjunction with the government on important questions of legal policy,' says Sengupta. 'Being able to influence legislative change seems a more constructive and satisfying thing to do than just critiquing the law. To see your work becoming a part of the law of the land and impacting the lives of millions

is the most satisfying part of my job,' he says.

THE SECRET TO GETTING THERE

The National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, is the number one destination for aspiring lawyers, followed by National Academy of Legal Studies and Research (NALSAR) in Hyderabad. For a complete list, refer to the listings by the website *Careers360* and by the *India Today* group of publications. Entrance to these institutes is through entrance exams conducted for Class 12 students, the major one being CLAT (Combined Law Admission Test) for the National Law School University. These test you on basic mathematics, language and communication, general knowledge, legal aptitude and reasoning.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MAKING MONEY IN LAW

- **Litigation:** *Starting compensation can range from ₹6–12 lakh per year. Later, the sky is the limit, says Aabad Ponda.*
- **Corporate Law:** *Starting salaries range from ₹12 lakh onwards and could go upto ₹30 lakh, depending on the bonus. At senior levels, salaries vary from ₹1 crore to ₹10 crore. 'It all depends on you,' says Zia Mody.*

ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR ASPIRING LAWYERS

'When I was young, I used to practise judo, and my coach once told me, "You know, talent is one part, but you must do everything with a strategy." Being able to design a superior strategy for your case is important. Another key requirement for someone in this profession is to build credibility. It takes a long time to build credibility in litigation, and only a couple of minutes to lose it.'

–Siddharth Luthra,
Supreme Court lawyer

'You always want to be at the forefront of all issues. To have a passion to

know more. You need a bit of luck to get involved with a domain or the subject matter of a practice that you enjoy. If you can connect your success in a domain to your fondness for it, that is lucky. For me, I really enjoy my M&A practice, my securities law practice and my litigation practice. I don't argue in court any more, but for nineteen years, I was in litigation. I went to court every day.'

–Zia Mody,
Managing partner at AZB Associates, Mumbai

'Hard work, and knowing the law by heart. Being able to put theoretical knowledge into action and having the presence of mind to cross-examine well. Being articulate.'

–Aabad Ponda,
Bombay High Court lawyer

'You start small in trials and deal with cases of cheque-bouncing, where nobody's life is hanging in the balance. From there you learn how to do a cross-examination and make your line of defence. You have to know the acts – Prevention of Corruption Act, Narcotics Act, etc. very well. Also, during the trial, you have to keep strategizing and applying yourself. It's hard work.'

–Shivam Sharma,
Lawyer, trial courts, Delhi

FOUR REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD WORK IN LAW

- 1. You learn to be analytical, to communicate and persuade.*
- 2. You learn to ask the right questions.*
- 3. It's a promising career path. Lawyers have made great CEOs of companies, politicians and even presidents.*
- 4. The compensation is good. Starting salaries for corporate lawyers are high. Litigation lawyers start with lower pay packages, but the top names in the business earn quite well.*

THINGS THEY DON'T TELL YOU ABOUT WORKING IN LAW

- *Law can be demanding and require you to work all hours.*
- *The early years, especially in litigation, are not very well-paying.*
- *Corporate law, though with better remuneration, can be tedious and involves endless paperwork.*

FOUR FAMOUS LAWYERS

- *Barack Obama*
- *Hillary Clinton*
- *Mahatma Gandhi*
- *Nelson Mandela*

SIX BOOKS EVERY LAWYER SHOULD READ

1. ***To Kill a Mockingbird*** by Harper Lee: This Pulitzer Prize-winning classic novel features the most iconic lawyer ever. Atticus Finch is father to Scout and Jim. He is also the lawyer assigned to defending a black man in a trial that rocks the sleepy Southern Alabama town he lives in.
2. ***The Firm*** by John Grisham: The first of several law thrillers, this book features a young lawyer who gets sucked into a world of intrigue. Fast-paced and a good read.
3. ***The Lincoln Lawyer*** by Michael Connelly: Mickey Haller is a Lincoln Lawyer, a criminal defense attorney who operates out of the backseat of his Lincoln Town Car, travelling between the far-flung courthouses of Los Angeles to defend clients of every kind.
4. ***10 Judgements That Changed India*** by Zia Mody: Featuring ten pivotal judgements in areas like custodial deaths, reservations and environmental jurisprudence, this book explains the key concepts and also how these judgements have impacted our daily lives.
5. ***On Balance*** – Leila Seth's autobiography: The first woman chief

justice of a high court in India, the first woman to top the bar examinations in London, Leila Seth, mother of novelist Vikram Seth, tells her story in this book.

6. ***My Sister's Keeper*** by Jodi Picoult: This bestselling American author's novels explore the ethical questions that lie at the heart of many of society's laws, pitting the rights of one individual against another. Read this one for an intriguing court case.

Internet Resources for the Aspiring Lawyer

WEBSITES

- [legallyIndia](#)
- [barandbench](#)
- [vidhilegalpolicy](#)
- [livelaw.in](#)
- [Indialegalive](#)

TWITTER

- [@pbhushan1](#)
- [@indialegalmedia](#)
- [@Lawreporter](#)
- [@menakaguruswamy](#)

GOVERNMENT

In Service of the Nation

‘Writing laws is easy, but governing is difficult.’

—Leo Tolstoy
War and Peace



You could be occupying some of the most powerful positions in the land, second only to politicians, if you work for the government. Your work will deal with issues that have an impact on the life of every citizen. Government jobs straddle multiple departments and functions - you could be a banker, an engineer, an architect, and work for the government. You could work in all India services like the IAS or in state cadres. Read Amitabh Kant's story and Kunal Khemnar's story here for the power and impact of such a job. Also read about economist, Arvind Subramanian, who quit his job in Washington to come work as economic advisor to the government. These, and the usual sneak-a-peek at books, movies and TV shows.

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GETTING A KICK OUT OF THE JOB

AMITABH KANT

CEO, NITI Aayog, New Delhi (formerly) Secretary,
Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, New Delhi Age: 61 years

It's 7 p.m. and there is a roomful of people at Udyog Bhavan, New Delhi, waiting to meet Amitabh Kant. Some are industrialists who have come to see him with the problems they have faced in doing business; others are fellow bureaucrats, working with him on different campaigns. Kant, a 1980-batch IAS officer, is from the Kerala cadre. He is the architect of the state's tourism campaign, God's Own Country, and has authored *Branding India: An Incredible Story*.



As a young district collector, Kant was posted to Kozhikode, where he helped clean up the city, get rid of encroachments and helped structure the Kozhikode airport project being implemented through a public-private partnership. He's also worked in fisheries, in tourism, in infrastructure and industry.

How he got here: Kant's father was a civil servant and his mother, a principal at Maitreyi College in Delhi University. Working for the government was a natural choice for him, he says; he had decided on this career while studying economics at St. Stephen's College in Delhi. 'Nowhere else in the world will you get the opportunities that you get in the government in India: building new cities, working on brands like Incredible India, and making a difference to the lives of people,' he says, referring to his various assignments over the years.

First assignment: Kant was posted as a sub-collector in the coastal town of Thalassery in north Kerala in 1984. Being in that town gave him the thrill of being a part of history. ‘Thalassery was where cricket was first played by the young Colin Cowdrey 200 years ago, when Lord Wellesley was collector of this area,’ he says.

Daily duties: Kant’s days are packed with meetings. ‘A lot of the work is internal, with departments at the Centre as well as in the states. I work closely with the chief secretaries and the industry secretary at the state level, looking at simplifying rules for industry, for manufacturing, for startups, etc.,’ says Kant.

Kant travels extensively, in India and abroad, often as part of the prime minister’s delegation. He has speaking engagements with industry forums, like the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), and conducts workshops in state capitals on how to simplify processes for businesses.

In the middle of all this, Kant may scan the news, read reports on industry in India, tweet his views on matters varying from a hackathon at IIT Bombay to urbanization and the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor.

Most challenging assignment: There are many. One of them was working on the ‘God’s Own Country’ campaign in 1999 as part of Kerala tourism – travelling with (late) artist M.F. Husain across the state, in the summer of 2001, as he painted a series on Kerala, shooting commercials with cinematographer Santosh Sivan. In 2001, Kant moved to the Union tourism ministry. This turned out to be an even bigger challenge. ‘Soon after I joined, 9/11 (attacks on the World Trade Center) happened. Suddenly, we had a war in Afghanistan. There was just no consumer demand for travel,’ he says. Kant worked on the Incredible India campaign, aiming to recreate consumer demand.

Education

B.A. History	St. Stephen’s College, Delhi University
M.A. History	Jawaharlal Nehru University

Work Experience

Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy	Probationer	1980
Thalassery, Kerala	Sub-collector	1984
Kerala Government – Tourism, Dept of Fisheries, Kozhikode, Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation	Secretary, Managing Director, Collector	1984-2001
Union Tourism Ministry, Delhi	Joint Secretary	2001-07
Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor	CEO and Chairman	
Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (Dipp)	Secretary	2014-16
NITI Aayog	CEO	March 2016 to present

THE DOCTOR WHO JOINED THE IAS

Kunal Prakash Khemnar

Assistant Collector and Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Gadhinglaj,
Kolhapur district

Age: 32 years

‘I have had breakfast with a farmer in a remote village in Maharashtra and dinner with the chief minister; that’s the kind of diversity this job offers you,’ says Kunal Prakash Khemnar, a fully qualified doctor. Today, he works in the IAS and supervises the administration of close to 180 villages in Kolhapur district. He says his job covers so many diverse things and is so satisfying that he doesn’t miss being a doctor.

How he got here: After getting an MBBS degree from King Edward Medical Hospital in Mumbai in 2008, Khemnar decided to switch careers and moved to Delhi to prepare for the UPSC exams. 'I worked for five-six months as a resident doctor in oncology at the BLK Super Speciality Hospital in Delhi to support myself, and spent the rest of the year studying for the IAS exam,' says Khemnar, who took the exam three times, securing an all-India rank of 87 in 2011, on his third attempt. He was allotted his home state of Maharashtra.

First assignment: As the sub-divisional magistrate of Gadhinglaj, Khemnar had to supervise an assembly election soon after he joined. 'I was in charge of the one assembly seat being contested in my district and had to do everything to conduct the election,' says Khemnar. He scrutinized nominations, appointed booth-level officers, a video-surveillance squad, flying squads to monitor unaccounted cash or liquor that might have been used to influence voters, and maintained law and order.

Daily duties: Revenue matters are a big part of his job. He hears them twice a week at his office. The procedure is similar to that of a civil court, with lawyers arguing on issues of land ownership. 'There are currently 250 ongoing disputes on land ownership in my revenue court,' says Khemnar, who is also involved in digitizing the land ownership records in his talukas.

On other days, he travels with district officials to remote villages to help villagers access government services. 'We hold camps in remote villages to bring essential government services to the people. These include issuing of official documentation, like caste certificates, income certificates, job cards, etc.'

His day ends by 8 p.m. and Khemnar walks back home. Home is across the road from his office. On weekends, he travels to Kolhapur, where his wife Prakriti is posted. She is an Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer. The two met in Delhi while preparing for the UPSC exam.

Most challenging assignment: Handling a mob angry about a coal-tar distillation company setting up its plant in Chandgad. Khemnar had to pacify them and seek additional information from the company on its compliance with Maharashtra Pollution Control Board conditions.

Education

MBBS	King Edward Hospital, Mumbai	2008
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Work Experience

Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy, Mussoorie, Training in Maharashtra	2011-12
Gadhinglaj, Maharashtra	2013 to present

THE ECONOMIST WHO ADVISES THE GOVERNMENT

ARVIND SUBRAMANIAN

Chief Economic Advisor to the Union Government
New Delhi
Age: 57 years

In a large room, on the first floor of North Block in the Ministry of Finance, sits Arvind Subramanian, Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) to the Government of India. It's cool inside with the air-conditioning and the high ceilings, even though it's mid May. Outside, the New Delhi skies are ablaze, with the mercury touching 40 degrees. Bright blue skies, with no traces of the storm clouds that will gather almost a month later, as Dr Subramanian, the economist who left Washington to join the Government of India as CEA, will find himself under attack for being 'anti-Indian' because of his position on trade treaties.

'People always ask me, "Isn't it difficult to work in government, coming from the outside?" I think I was aware of many of the challenges, and so was prepared for them. As an academic, you are unencumbered by what you can say, but it's different when you are in the public eye. So that is true, but I have been pleasantly surprised by how much one can do and

how it's possible to express oneself completely freely in private interactions and be taken seriously,' he says.

It's a short drive from Subramanian's bungalow in New Moti Bagh to his office in North Block. He gets to work at 8.45 a.m., before most of the office staff. By 10 a.m., people start walking in, either for scheduled meetings or informally.

'I try to keep things informal, creating a kind of academic seminar-type of atmosphere,' says Subramanian, who works closely with different ministries, like the railways, power and environment. Members of his team walk in at regular intervals. Many are young, in their twenties and thirties, members of the Indian Economic Service, or young PhDs from US colleges like Harvard and Princeton.

Occasionally, Subramanian meets the prime minister as part of a larger team. 'The interactions are a lot more than I expected,' says Subramanian, who sometimes presents reports at these meetings, and discusses issues like the impact of inflation on the common man.

Subramanian was on a family holiday in Peru, climbing the famous Machu Picchu in the Andes Mountains, when he first learnt he was being considered for the role of Chief Economic Adviser. Checking his phone for routine mails, he found one from a source close to the finance minister, asking him if he would be interested in the job. Subramanian and his eldest son conferred at the base of the mountain.

Taking the job would mean a disruption in their family life. Subramanian's youngest son, Rohan, was in his final year at high school in the US, and his two older children were also settled in the US. But Subramanian was excited about being part of the government and of policymaking.

Is it challenging to work in government? To give advice and not have that advice accepted? Subramanian is pragmatic: 'You have to respect the decision-making process in government. You provide an input, and try and persuade people. You will get your way sometimes, but you're not going to get it all the time. At such times, you shouldn't have too much vanity, because decision-making is very complex and there are many people at higher levels than you who are going to have a say. This is how governments in a democratic setting work and you have to know that in advance,' he says.

Weeks later, after Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy's critical tweets

are splashed over the media, I email him. Swamy alleged Arvind Subramanian was anti-India and demanded he be sacked from his job. How is he dealing with this onslaught on social media? He replies a few hours later with a measured response: ‘Professionals have to focus on what they are meant to do. The rest will take care of itself.’

THREE ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR ANYBODY ASPIRING TO WORK IN GOVERNMENT

‘The ability to work in partnership with all stakeholders, and to be able to find the best people and work with them.’

—Amitabh Kant,
CEO, Niti Aayog

‘You need to know how to address a large crowd of people and keep them calm. There have been incidents of strikes and “rastarokos” where I have had to speak to a crowd of agitators and try and defuse the situation. It is also important to be up to date with all the different rules and regulations – I constantly refer to the different government acts – the Maharashtra Land Revenue Code (in four volumes), the Arms Act, the Civil Procedure Act, etc.’

—Kunal Khemnar,
SDM, Gadhinglaj, Kolhapur

‘Physical fitness and endurance. The ability to see the larger picture, to connect everything from governance to technology, to find solutions that make sense to every stakeholder.’

—Sanjay Sahay,
ADGP, Indian Police Service (IPS), Bengaluru

THE TRUTH ABOUT MONEY MATTERS IN GOVERNMENT JOBS

- **Starting salaries:** IAS officers start with approximately ₹48,000 a month, plus

benefits like housing and allowances. (Upwards of ₹6 lakh per annum.)

- *At senior levels: ₹80,000 per month, plus benefits like housing and other allowances. (Upwards of ₹20 lakh per annum.) ‘You are paid adequately. But you join the government for the job content; you never join the government for the money. What gives me a kick is the job,’ says Kant.*

WHY YOU SHOULD WORK IN GOVERNMENT

- *You learn about how stuff really works. Working in local government allows access to the insider processes that keep a city, district or a village working. Understanding the interconnectedness of things makes you a more effective administrator.*
- *You get to see the results of work that make a difference to the lives of people, whether it is building infrastructure or regulating traffic.*
- *You learn to work with, and overcome, enormous challenges.*
- *You meet people you might never otherwise meet: from a farmer to a state chief minister to an ordinary citizen.*

WHAT NOBODY TELLS YOU ABOUT WORKING IN GOVERNMENT

- *Promotion can be seniority-driven as opposed to merit-driven.*
- *Salaries are lower than that in the private sector.*
- *Bureaucracy – the checks and balances built into government rules and regulations can make implementation of policies difficult.*

FIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ANYONE WANTING TO WORK IN GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR

1. *Why do you want to work in government?*
2. *Discuss two recent Supreme Court judgements you agree/disagree with?*
3. *What do you think are the biggest challenges facing India today, and how should they be addressed?*

4. *What is your opinion on any (current) political/economic global crisis?*
5. *Questions that revolve around your graduate studies.*

SIX BOOKS ANYONE ASPIRING TO WORK IN GOVERNMENT SHOULD READ

1. ***The Complete Yes Minister***: If you are going to work for the government, it's great to also have a sense of humour about what you do. And if that's the case, there is no better way to begin than watching the BBC *Yes Minister* series and also reading the books based on this show. The political wheeling and dealing and subterfuge may be set in Westminster in England, but it is true of bureaucracies and governments everywhere!
2. ***English August*** by Upamanyu Chatterjee: A humorous account of the life of a young IAS officer who finds himself posted in a little rural outpost called Madna. Fictional, but based on the author's real life experiences. Subsequently made into a delightful film directed by Dev Benegal, starring Rahul Bose as the hapless hero, Agastya.
3. ***Half-Lion*** by Vinay Sitapati: A book about how P.V. Narasimha Rao transformed India. Meticulously researched and well written, this biography covers the life of a little-known prime minister. From his early years in a small town in Telangana to his days as PM, Sitapati tells the story of a man who managed to transform India's economy.
4. ***Not Just An Accountant – The Diary of the Nation's Conscience Keeper*** by Vinod Rai: A tell-a-lot autobiography from former comptroller and auditor general Vinod Rai, IAS officer from the Kerala cadre.
5. ***One Life Is Not Enough*** by K. Natwar Singh: This is the autobiography of a foreign service bureaucrat who later turned politician. Natwar Singh was born into a princely family, studied in Cambridge and spent three eventful decades in the foreign service, before he became a cabinet minister. Well-written and steeped in the history of times like the India-China War and the Bangladesh War.
6. ***Memory's Gay Chariot*** by G.D. Khosla*: Civil servant Khosla began

his career as a bureaucrat in pre-Independence Indian Civil Service, going on to retire as Chief Justice of Punjab High Court. His book covers these turbulent pre-and post-Independence years. Justice Khosla presided over the murder trial of Mahatma Gandhi's assassin and investigated the disappearance of Subhash Chandra Bose.

Online Resources for the Networked Government Professional

WEBSITE

- gov.in

BLOGS

- Babusofindia

TWITTER

- @IASatWork
- @amitabhk87
- @E_P_W

* (full disclosure – G.D. Khosla is the author's grandfather)

TEACHING

A High Impact Career

‘A professor is one who talks in someone else’s sleep.’

—W.H. Auden



The profession of education is as potent as ever. Teachers can change the world, one child at a time. For all those drawn to engaging with young minds, you could qualify as a teacher, work in education technology, in policy or in specialized coaching. The rewards of the job are many, and not just monetary. Read in this chapter about the Harvard Professor who came back to head the country’s premier management institute, about the school teacher who fell so in love with his class and school that he never went back to the business job waiting for him, and the village boy who created a coaching empire. Learn the truth about making money in education and about the books, movies and online resources any enthusiastic educator should read.

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- ▶ [The Baniya from Kolkata Who Stayed On: Anoop Parik](#)
- ▶ [A Private Equity Investor Turned Educator: Ashish Dhawan](#)

- ▶ [The Village Boy Who Created a Coaching Empire: Praveen Tyagi](#)
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THE HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL PROFESSOR WHO CAME BACK

ASHISH NANDA

Director, IIM Ahmedabad

Age: 56 years

Ashish Nanda walks into the students' mess and picks up a stainless steel thali with two bowls. Walking around the mess, he helps himself to some special pulao, masala bhindi, dal, dahi, salad and a papad. The distinguished white-haired professor in his full-sleeved shirt and trousers stands out a little in a roomful of chattering students, dressed informally in jeans and T-shirts.



He takes his seat at one of the tables. The students look awed and there is a hushed silence, after the first 'Good afternoon, Sir'. But only momentarily.

'How are things with you?' Nanda asks the group.

'Sir, I'm preparing for our operations research quiz,' says one. Another pipes up: 'Sir, I'm from your institute, IIT Delhi. Do you think being an engineer helps you in life, and in doing an MBA? What was your experience?'

Sitting and chatting with the young students, Nanda recalls his student days. Being a top ranker at IIT Delhi, scoring a perfect ten every semester, receiving the President of India gold medal. Some journalists had come to interview him. How proud his mother had been! A school teacher at Delhi's Salwan Public School, it was she who gave Nanda his love for teaching.

The students, meanwhile, cluster around, waiting to hear Nanda's

stories and his advice. 'Engineering is a great discipline for the mind,' he tells them. 'But I missed the human interaction.' Nanda remembers clearly that moment in his final year, when this hit him. He was sitting on a chair in the computer lab, punching on the cards for the mainframe computer the students in those days used, talking to his printout!

Is this what I want to do for the rest of my life? He had asked himself. What should I do – I really love computer science but I miss the human interaction, he asked professors, mentors and friends. And that's how management happened.

The students listen, enthralled. No one stirs, not even for a second helping of the special pulao. They are around the same age Nanda was when he studied at IIM-A, though many are marginally older, having worked for a few years before they began their MBA.

Walking back to his office, Nanda checks his watch. It's time for the presentation of the Admissions Committee report. Like most management institutes in the country, 90 per cent of the students are engineers. And only 12–14 per cent are women. Nanda is concerned enough to reexamine the admission process.

'Our goal is to find students who can be excellent leaders of enterprises. But our entrance test is asking for students who are not just good at math, but are brilliant at math, who are rocket scientists. So somewhere in our recruitment, we have to balance things in such a manner that we bring in students who have the greatest potential of becoming leaders of enterprises,' he had explained to the professors on the admissions committee.

As Nanda enters his office, his secretary comes up to him. 'A group of alumni is visiting tomorrow and they would like to discuss how they can help with fundraising, how they can work together with the students on projects and on recruitment. Could they come in to see you in the morning?'

Nanda's routine is jammed, but he has the time. 'Thank you, Martha,' he says in his head, to his dean at Harvard Business School. He had gone to her in 2014, when he had decided to accept the job at IIM-A. 'Any advice for me, Martha?' he had asked her. 'Don't become a prisoner of your inbox. So many things will come to you. If you are just going to respond to the demands that come up to your desk, you will end up being in your office from early morning. At night, you will have emerged from

your bunker and you will still not have finished. Keep some time free.’ Nanda has time to meet the alumni, have lunch with them, walk around the campus with them.

It is evening by the time Nanda is done for the day. He heads home, taking the seven-minute walk to his house at a brisk pace. Nanda has just reached home when he hears the phone ring. It’s his wife Shubha. He looks at his watch. 7.25 p.m. That means it’s 9 a.m. in Boston, and she must be already at Tufts Hospital where she’s assistant clinical professor of dentistry.

Nanda walks towards the kitchen to take the call. The dinner is all laid out on the dining table, but he wants to check the ingredients for breakfast tomorrow. Since the time he began living alone, he started making his own breakfast. He opens the fridge and checks that he has eggs and milk for the next day. Tomorrow morning, he will make his usual omelette for breakfast, after an hour of yoga. He is proud of his omelettes. Shubha, in the meantime, is chatting animatedly. ‘It’s been one year since you left Harvard to join IIM-A as director. How does it feel?’ she asks him.

‘Sometimes, it feels like I am painting,’ he tells her in all seriousness. ‘There is an impact to the things I am doing. I have a meeting. Somebody is excited about a project. I am able to catalyse and get things done. Sometime, it feels like climbing a mountain. But in the last year, 90 per cent of the time has felt like painting and only 10 per cent like climbing a mountain. Maybe I am over optimistic, but I feel, truly, that you can have a catalytic influence in things,’ he says.

Education

B.Tech	IIT Delhi	1976-81
MBA	IIM Ahmedabad	1981-83
PhD	Harvard Business School	1988-93

Work Experience

Harvard Business School, USA	Associate Professor, Faculty Director, Professor	Sept 2007-present
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IIM Ahmedabad	Director	2013 to present
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THE BANIYA FROM KOLKATA WHO STAYED ON

ANOOP PARIK

School Teacher, Sree Geetan Vidyalaya, Mumbai

Age: 30 years

Anoop Parik wakes to the sound of his cats called Annabel Lee and Edgar Allen Poe. Looking at his watch, he sees its 5.25 a.m., which gives him enough time to get ready and do the 3-km walk to work.

Classes start at 7.30 a.m., but the kids are already milling around, when he reaches school. Entering class 8A, Anoop begins to read out from the book *Faces in the Water* by Ranjit Lal. It's humourous, yet talks seriously about female infanticide. It's a book Anoop discovered while working for Teach for India as a fellow. He had finished college in the US, studying Economics and English at Wooster College. Then he had spent two years as admissions counsellor for Wooster College, persuading prosperous young South Asian students that they should go and study there. The job paid well and Anoop travelled frequently, all over India and to Singapore, Sri Lanka and other parts of South Asia. But he didn't enjoy this job. So when he heard of the Teach for India fellowships, he decided to apply.

That's where it all began. Teach for India took him on as a fellow, they paid him a stipend of ₹24,000 a month. They posted him for a period of two years here, at this school. 'I didn't know what to expect. I came in the first day; there was this tin-roofed shed with classrooms made of bamboos with very low roofs. The roofs would leak. Sometimes a monkey would come into class, sometimes a lizard. But by the fifth day, I knew I loved it,' Anoop recalls.

So he never left. A baniya from Kolkata, Anoop's father is a businessman, his mother a school teacher. They wanted him to come back and work in the family business. But Anoop, after his two years as Teach for India fellow were up, found he couldn't abandon his class. He decided to stay on.

The bell rings soon after. It's time for a break. Time to buy a plate of idlis and sit down in class with the kids. Most have tiffin boxes of snacks and they cluster around him chit-chatting. 'Bhaiya, when will you get married?' comes the perennial question. Anoop groans. 'Don't be so eager for me to get married. Then there will be no more Sunday morning football sessions or Saturday practice,' he tells them. 'It's okay bhaiya, we don't mind,' they say.

Break is over and it's time for history. Today, Anoop will be teaching the class about the Simon Commission. 'Thirty years from now, nobody will ask you the date of the Simon Commission. But you should look at how the Congress protested and see what the impact of that protest was,' Anoop tells the class.

At 12.30 p.m., the students pour out of the classes and make their way home. Many will be back, as will Anoop, a few hours later, for football practice. Anoop remembers his school days at La Martiniere in Kolkata, and the games he enjoyed playing. 'Sports is where I learnt the most, more than academics,' he thinks to himself. This is what he wants for his classes as well. And as he takes football practice, three days a week, he can see that happening. The most difficult kids transform when they are on the sports field – there is perfect concentration, focus, discipline and hard work, all of which then translates to their academics as well.

By 6 p.m., Anoop is tired. Talking non-stop to a class of fifty students for hours has taken its toll on his throat. It's been a particularly dusty day and football practice in the school playground has added to the scratchy feeling in his throat. He takes a bus home, looking forward to eating a quick sandwich and settling down to read Shashi Tharoor's *Nehru: The Invention of India*. And looking forward to being back tomorrow.

A PRIVATE EQUITY INVESTOR-TURNED- EDUCATOR

ASHISH DHAWAN

Chairman and Co-founder, Ashoka University,
New Delhi

NEW DELHI

Age: 47 years

Ashish Dhawan misses reading the minutiae of the financial news; the company balance sheets and the profit and loss statements. It's hard to give up being an active investor. He started Chryscap in 1999, and it went on to be the first super successful private equity fund in the country. But all that feels like it was another lifetime ago. Before Dhawan decided, that is, two years ago, to give up active investment banking and move into education, where he could use his skills to make a difference to the lives of disadvantaged children.



It's early morning in Delhi and Ashish Dhawan is on his way to a meeting with the trustees of Ashoka University. Dhawan divides his time between the liberal arts university in Sonapat, Haryana, which he co-

founded, and Central Square Foundation (CSF), his Delhi-based trust. Dhawan's mother was a school teacher, and he himself had a short stint teaching low-income children maths, while he worked as an investment banker on Wall Street.

At the meeting, cappuccinos and green tea arrive, as the trustees begin to run through the agenda. Today, faculty recruitment is the first issue they discuss. There are forty full-time faculty and twenty-five visiting faculty, each experts in their fields, but there are always faculty positions to be filled. 'Are we advertising in the right places, in the right journals, do we have the right database of candidates?' Dhawan queries. He has just returned from a fundraising trip in the US. Ashoka University needs to raise ₹2000 crore by 2020. So far, Dhawan and his team are on target.

After the meeting, Dhawan heads to Connaught Place to the office of CSF. There Dhawan reviews a presentation he had made to Uttar Pradesh's then chief minister Akhilesh Yadav. In it, he had recommended ways to fill all the reserved seats for poor children in private schools. Start with making an application form available, he said. Use one form for all the schools, give it to anganwadi (childcare centre) workers to keep and distribute, were some of the practical suggestions. Yadav was enthusiastic. 'Abhi Krishna aur Sudama saath saath padhenge (Now Krishna and Sudama will study side by side),' the CM had told him, referring to the much-loved story where Lord Krishna and his poor friend Sudama study together and are best friends.

Later in the day, Dhawan meets Pramod Bhasin, former CEO, Genpact. The two discuss Ashoka University. It is meetings like these that have helped Dhawan get the support of industry, for funds as well as for recruitment of candidates from the students.

Post-meeting, Dhawan heads home to his house in Lutyens Delhi, on Amrita Shergill Marg. His teenage daughters are in boarding school in Delaware, USA, but his five-year-old son, Armaan, will be waiting to pepper him with questions. Mostly about the next day's programme, which includes a wrestling match that father and son are going to see.

Education

B.A. – Economics, Maths	Yale, USA	1988–92
MBA	Harvard Business School. USA	1995–97

Work Experience

Wasserstein Perella, New York	Analyst	1992-93
MDC Partners, US	Analyst	1994-95
Goldman Sachs, New York	Associate	1997-99
ChrysCapital	Founder and Partner	1999 to present

THE VILLAGE BOY WHO CREATED A COACHING EMPIRE

PRAVEEN TYAGI

Managing Director, IITians PACE, Mumbai

Age: 41 years

‘As a child, I had to struggle to get quality education and good teachers, so I know how hard it can be,’ says Tyagi. His father owned a farm in the village of Morta, near Ghaziabad, adjacent to the capital. The family wasn’t well off, but Tyagi’s father was determined to give his eight children a good education and all of them studied at Delhi Public School in Ghaziabad. Tyagi went on to study at IIT Delhi in 1994, taking up physics. It’s perhaps an early testimony to Tyagi’s coaching that his two younger brothers, whom he helped to crack the tough IIT entrance exams.

How he got here: When Tyagi was doing his summer training in Mumbai, he was often approached by young people who wanted coaching for IIT. Tyagi was a third-year student at IIT Delhi. He realized that while coaching centres were common in Delhi, there was almost nothing in Mumbai. So in 1998, a year after he graduated, he started coaching classes in a small room on the first floor of a ramshackle building, opposite Andheri railway station.

Today, he runs 66 centres across places such as Lucknow, Goa, Nagpur and Bokaro, even Dubai, coaching 15,000 students for engineering and medical entrance exams. He employs 400 teachers, 200 of whom are IIT graduates. A few centres are serviced through videoconferencing.

A day at work: Early in the morning, Tyagi's phone buzzes. 'Sir, I'm coming to Mumbai next week. I want to attend a physics class taught by you.' Tyagi reads the message and smiles. It's from a former student, now an IIT alumnus and a winner of the International Science Olympiad medal.

Once in office, a typical day for Tyagi includes meetings with his senior team – his brother Kuldeep, who handles the day-to-day management of PACE, and the other managers. Sometimes, they review students' test scores; at other times, they decide coaching strategies. PACE also runs eight junior colleges that are affiliated to the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Education, where students can enrol for classes 11 and 12 or avail of coaching for their entrance exams. The biggest challenge is the imbalance between the seats and the number of students. Of the 15,000 students who enrol for coaching every year, only around 1,000 clear the exams. 'It's a challenge, but we try and see if we can find ways to make the weakest students the most productive they can be,' says Tyagi, who works with his team on monitoring students and giving them pep talks. He also spends time with his team on developing educational apps as he feels the future of education lies in technology.

THE TRUTH ABOUT MAKING MONEY IN EDUCATION

- *School teachers get paid salaries that range from ₹80,000 to ₹6 lakh a year. These basic salaries are mostly supplemented with income from tuitions that could run into many lakh a year.*
- *Teachers at IIT Pace Coaching Institute earn salaries in the range of ₹20–50 lakh a year.*
- *At the Central Square Foundation, starting salaries range from ₹4–6 lakh a year.*
- *At Ashoka University, salaries for professors start at ₹18 lakh a year.*

THREE SKILLS EVERY GOOD EDUCATOR SHOULD HAVE

THREE SKILLS EVERY GOOD EDUCATOR SHOULD HAVE

- 1. You need dedication, you need to be a good communicator, and you should be able to inspire. It's important to be a good team-builder, and to build a sense of trust among people.*
- 2. Teacher presence and voice; you need to be theatrical. You need to know your subject, and to be enthusiastic about it. Seek feedback from students and be open to it.*
- 3. Be ready to switch between classroom teaching, which requires you to engage with people, and research, which is solitary. Be skilled at presentation, at engaging with students.*

SEVEN REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD WORK IN EDUCATION

- 1. It is a fulfilling profession because you have the potential to shape minds and influence others' perspectives, approach and future behaviour through your teaching.*
- 2. It's a profession that pays you to find answers to questions you find interesting.*
- 3. You can be a great mentor to young people, both in terms of their academics as well as their career.*
- 4. You can impact through research – provide insights to improve efficiency, create social impact, improve management and optimize operations.*
- 5. Academics act as advisors to policy makers.*
- 6. Whatever you have learnt, if it is effective, it needs to be disseminated.*
- 7. Teaching teaches you. When you are teaching, you learn so many things from young minds. There are some fertile minds that have a way of looking at things you never thought of.*

THINGS NOBODY TELLS YOU ABOUT BEING IN EDUCATION

- 1. Salaries are relatively lower than what you make in many other professions.*
- 2. The job is physically strenuous.*

EIGHT BOOKS EVERY ENTHUSIASTIC EDUCATOR SHOULD READ

1. ***Teach Like Your Hair Is On Fire* by Rafe Esquith:** In a rough Los Angeles neighbourhood plagued by violence, there is an exceptional public school classroom called Room 56. Here, educator Rafe Esquith discovered that teaching can save lives. That visiting museums, staging Shakespeare and reading books can have amazing results if done the right way.
2. ***Teach like a Champion* by Doug Lemov:** After five years of observing and videotaping classrooms serving students living in poverty, Doug Lemov describes specific techniques that distinguish great teachers from those who are merely good. The book discusses each of these forty-nine techniques in detail (and includes a DVD showing the techniques in action).
3. ***All Systems Go – The Change Imperative for Whole System Reform* by Michael Fullan:** Based on work with school districts and large systems in USA, United Kingdom and Canada, Fullan lays out an action plan for achieving whole system reform.
4. ***The University* by Henry Rostovsky:** The former dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University writes on his experiences at Harvard and on higher education in general.
5. ***Teacher Man* by Frank McCourt:** Best known as the author of *Angela's Ashes* – the story of growing up in famine-scarred Ireland, McCourt and his family made their way to America, where he became a teacher. Here he tells that story.
6. ***The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch:** A professor of Carnegie Mellon puts his life's lessons into a book. Pausch is dying young; he has been diagnosed with terminal illness and has only a few months to live. He leaves behind a wife and three young children, and this book is for them, as much as for students everywhere. He says, 'Brick walls are there for a reason. They're not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something.' Poignant reading.

7. *To Sir, with Love* by E.H. Braithwaite: The classic story of a black man teaching kids and transforming them. Also made into a movie with the famous soundtrack of the same name – ‘To sir with love’.
8. *Creative Schools – The Grassroots Revolution That’s Transforming Education* by Ken Robinson: Best known for his brilliant TED talk on creativity, this book is filled with case studies and research. Instructive and thought-provoking.

Online Resources for Educators

- Google Classrooms
- Khan Academy
- Discovery Education
- Pbsteachers
- [Teachers.net](https://www.teachers.net/)
- TeacherTube

HEALTHCARE

Heal the World

‘In nothing do men more nearly approach the gods than in giving health to men.’

—Cicero



India needs doctors. It needs doctors in rural areas and in cities. As general practitioners (GPs), as specialists, and as medical entrepreneurs like Dr Deepu Sebin Sebastian, who started off working in a government primary care centre. Studying to be a doctor can be hard, but it has its rewards. Including money. And there's also appreciation and honour. Padmashri awardee Dr Badwe tells his story here. So does Dr Taral, who impacts the lives of hundreds of sick patients in rural Maharashtra, even as he studies hard in order to improve his career prospects. Besides the stories, the suggested medical blogs, books and movies will give you a flavour of the healthcare professional's life.

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THE VILLAGE DOCTOR

DR ASHUTOSH TARAL

Village Bhorpadale, Kolhapur, Maharashtra

Age: 32 years

It's 2.30 p.m. and Dr Ashutosh Taral hasn't eaten his lunch. This is nothing out of the ordinary. The Out Patient Department (OPD) at the Bhorpadale primary health centre in Kolhapur district of Maharashtra still has about twenty patients awaiting their turn.

On an average, a hundred patients visit the primary health centre every day. Their troubles range from snakebite, fever and dysentery to a variety of small surgical procedures, including deliveries.

Dr Taral comes in at 9 a.m. and sees each patient. He records the details of their treatment – later in the week, there will be a meeting of the district's medical officers at Kolhapur and he has to present these details, as well as figures on how many contraceptive pills, condoms and copper-Ts have been distributed and how many vasectomies have been performed.

It is past 2.30 p.m. when the OPD ends. Dr Taral goes home for lunch. Just as he is finishing the meal, he hears a call outside. It is the A&M, the auxiliary nurse and midwife. A patient has just been admitted in an advanced state of labour. Dr Taral's wife, who also works at the centre, prepares to leave. She has a postgraduate specialization in gynaecology.

Dr Taral now wants to join the Indian Administrative Service. If he makes the cut, he hopes to change policy and fix hours for doctors in public health centres, as well as mandate special training for them so they can deal better with the challenges of providing healthcare in a primary health centre.

In the evening, after OPD finishes around 6 p.m., Dr Taral sits down to his books. His subject of choice in the Union Public Service Commission exam is medical sciences.

'That way, if I don't clear the exam, I will have still learnt something that is useful to me as a practising doctor,' he says.

MBBS	Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences, Karad	2008
Diploma in Public Health	College of Physicians and Surgeons, Mumbai	2015

THE SURGEON WHO TOSSED A COIN

DR RAJENDRA BADWE

Surgical Oncologist and Director,
Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai
Age: 60 years

To his patients, this gray-haired and soft-spoken surgeon is God. 20,000 patients have been operated upon by him, another 30,000 have consulted him over the last few decades. A 2013 Padma Shri awardee, he was appointed hospital director in 2008.



How he got here: It was a tough choice: it had to be either engineering or medicine. The toss of a coin decided it, though his family has been associated with the field of medicine. As a three-year-old, he would do the rounds of the wards at Kasturba Gandhi Hospital with his maternal grandmother, a nurse who rose to become the matron of the hospital. His father was an administrator – first at Kasturba Gandhi Hospital and then at the Tata Memorial Hospital.

Daily duty: It's 8 a.m. when Dr Badwe walks into the out-patient department (OPD) at the hospital. There is a crowd there already; fifty-odd patients with their families. Some are from Mumbai, and many from places like Ranchi, Jammu and the Northeast.

The patient interactions, with examination and discussions, take time. 'For a doctor, only 50 per cent is treatment, the next 50 per cent is giving

comfort,' says Dr Badwe. 'Today, we are good at treating cancer. The spectrum of curable cancers versus incurable cancers has changed,' he tells patients who panic at the dreaded C-word.

At 2 p.m., the OPD finishes, and Dr Badwe walks back to his office to move on to his second set of responsibilities: the administration of the 600-bed cancer specialty hospital. There are meetings and reviews of the various departments, including oncology and radiology.

The OPD resumes at 5 p.m. By the end of the day, Dr Badwe will have seen close to a hundred patients. On his rounds, he also speaks to the resident doctors.

A resident doing his DM (doctorate in medicine) in oncology asks him whether he should aim to work abroad. 'It is good to get an education in one kind of environment and test that education in some other environment,' Dr Badwe tells the resident doctor.

For Dr Badwe, the experience of working in two other countries has been enriching. For Tokyo in 1992 was very different from London in 1989-92. 'Tokyo was extremely disciplined, systematic, almost subservient. In London, things were a lot more research-oriented,' he says. Working in different environments has helped him become a better doctor, he says.

Education

MBBS & MS	Seth G.S. Medical College, KEM Hospital, Mumbai	1978 & 1983
M.Ch Surgical Oncology	Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai	1986

Work Experience

Guy's Hospital, King's College, London School of Medicine	Registrar and Honorary Consultant	1989-92
Toronomon Hospital, Tokyo	Fellowship in Oesophageal Cancer	1992
Tata Memorial Hospital	Began as Assistant	1993 to

WHY I LEFT PRACTISING MEDICINE TO BECOME A MEDICAL ENTREPRENEUR

DR DEEPU SEBIN SEBASTIAN

MBBS, MD, Internal Medicine

Founder, Daily Rounds

Bengaluru

Age: 33 years

Deepu Sebin practised medicine for seven years till 2013. Then he turned entrepreneur. ‘As a doctor, you can literally save patients on a day-to-day basis,’ says Sebin. But practising at a primary health centre in Kerala, and later in Chennai, where he studied Internal Medicine at Stanley Medical College, he began to see the difficulties that doctors in India faced every day. ‘It’s very hard to be a doctor at a government hospital. There is a constant sense of negativity. You have to manage 100 patients with the resources for ten. And if something goes wrong, it’s always the doctors that are blamed,’ says Sebin. He felt he wasn’t doing enough. ‘I wanted a product, something that would last,’ he says.

In 2013, Sebin visited IIT Madras and their incubation centre for start ups. He began to see how developers worked. ‘They shared all their knowledge, posting code, problems and solutions on sites like Github and Stackoverflow.’

This was unlike medicine – where knowledge sharing was through publishing and reading case studies in medical journals. But publishing an article in an international journal was hard. And getting to read them, almost as hard – the journals are prohibitively expensive.

‘The field was ripe for disruption. Today, doctors are taking their smartphones everywhere – into wards, consultation rooms and even the operation theatre. Photographing symptoms, ECG reports and X-rays. So constructing a digital case study is instantly possible.’

Sebin thought of his years of studying. He was a good student. But in retrospect, he feels he never got the larger picture. 'Medicine is like a story. It's interesting. But in India, you learn it in bits and pieces. It's myopic tunnel vision. First year, you study biochemistry. Next year, you study the drugs used to treat diabetes. Then you study the pathology of it all. Why not study the complete picture through summary clinical cases,' he tells students at medical colleges.

Sebin built the cases. His programmer wife Nimmi built the prototype. But if they were to scale, they needed to build a team. By 2014, they had three other doctors and seven programmers on board. The start up relocated from Chennai to Bengaluru. They raised capital – approximately ₹3.5 crore rupees in funding from private equity. The team had 45,000 doctors sign on. Once the network got to this size, word spread and new doctors signed up every day.

'Being in a start up is like being in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Just like in an ICU, you may feel everything is all right. Then suddenly, some patient will go bad. As will a start up. Suddenly, somebody will say I'm leaving or there will be some technical problem,' says Sebastian. He finds managing comes like second nature to doctors. They are used to taking decisions at every point, in terms of what to do with a patient, how to treat him.

THE SECRET TO GETTING THERE

The Medical Council of India website lists 500 recognized colleges with their seats and their ratings. The best ones are run by the government; there are several private medical colleges as well. Check the *India Today* and *Careers 360* ratings that are available online.

Admission to medical colleges in India is tough. There are just too few seats available. And lakh of students sit for the exam every year.

There is now a single medical test for most government and government-approved medical/dental colleges through an exam called the National Entrance-cum-Eligibility Test (NEET). Preparation is through textbooks and specialized coaching classes.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR ASPIRING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

'A doctor must work eighteen hours a day and seven days a week. If you cannot console yourself to this, get out of the profession.'

-Martin H. Fischer (1879–1962)

'To be ethical, to prescribe a treatment with the simple understanding of "If I were in this patient's place, would I give this treatment?". Patience, and a listening and caring attitude – this is almost as important as correctness of treatment.'

-Dr Rajendra Badwe

THE TRUTH ABOUT MAKING MONEY IN HEALTHCARE

Starting salaries as a Government Medical Officer are approximately ₹7 lakh per annum.

'At Tata Memorial Hospital, residents earn in the range of ₹12 lakh and doctors earn ₹25–30 lakh. At a senior level, you can earn upto ₹2 lakh a month, plus housing (allowance). You have to balance between what salary is optimum from a physical needs point of view and a satisfaction point of view. There is moderation in everything. If you eat too much, for instance, you will become ill and obese. If one has much more than necessary, one falls ill. If you want to dine with your family in a five-star restaurant, once a week, then medicine is not for you.'

-Dr Rajendra Badwe

'At a senior level in hospitals, salaries can range from ₹30–50 lakh per annum for laboratory-related jobs, depending on the institution. For surgeons and some other clinical specialities, the sky is the limit, as such salaries have huge incentive components.'

-Dr Pankhi Datta,
Consultant, Kokilaben Hospital, Mumbai

WHY YOU SHOULD WORK IN HEALTHCARE

1. *Medicine is the most prestigious profession of all. Doctors get respect wherever they go.*
2. *It can be supremely fulfilling – think of the sound of reviving a heartbeat when resuscitating a patient, the cry of a newborn, the satisfaction of saving lives.*
3. *Some specialities – such as surgery, radiology, dermatology – pay extremely well. Private practice in medicine can also pay very well.*

THINGS THEY DON'T TELL YOU ABOUT WORKING IN HEALTHCARE

1. *The hours are long. You could have spent all night at an emergency, but you still have to go in, the next morning, for daily rounds.*
2. *It takes years to get qualified. While an MBBS takes five years, qualifying further with specialities and super specialities can take you an additional six-seven years (even though you are earning a stipend through these years).*
3. *The job has its rewards, but it can get extremely stressful.*

FIVE MOVIES/TV SERIES EVERY DOCTOR/HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL SHOULD SEE

1. **Medical drama/thriller TV series:** The life-and-death nature of medical interventions makes for good drama. There's a whole set of these medical thriller TV shows, from *Grey's Anatomy*, *MASH* and the George Clooney-starrer *ER* to the more recent hit, *House MD*.
2. ***Contagion*:** A medical thriller from the acclaimed Steven Soderbergh, the film is about a deadly virus. It stars an impressive cast, including Jude Law, Gwyneth Paltrow and Kate Winslet, and it received high praise for technical accuracy.
3. ***Patch Adams*:** Robin Williams stars in this film based on the true story of Dr Hunter Adams, a physician who believed in laughter being the best medicine, who used unconventional ways to treat difficult patients. Fun but serious at the same time.
4. ***The Painted Veil*:** Based on a Somerset Maugham novel of the same

name, this film shows a doctor and his young wife stationed in Shanghai. The couple end up travelling to a cholera-stricken village in remote China, to help fight the local epidemic. The book is interesting for its study of human character and for the way it highlights the profession of healing.

5. ***Munnabhai MBBS***: Sanjay Dutt plays Munnabhai, a mafia don who turns faux doctor in this hilarious comedy. Of course, Dutt is never really a doctor, but the film captures a lot of what it is to be a doctor. It also highlights an aspect that is recognized as important in the medical profession – the power of empathy and affection in the healing process.

SIX BOOKS EVERY BUDDING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL SHOULD READ

Doctors make good writers. Somerset Maugham, the famous short-story writer and novelist, was a physician. So was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of the famous Sherlock Holmes. Here are some fascinating books in the area of healthcare:

1. ***Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande**: This US-based neurosurgeon also writes for *The New Yorker*. If you like *Being Mortal*, there's a whole set of Gawande's books you can try. Also read *The Checklist Manifesto*.
2. ***The Laws of Medicine: Field Notes from an Uncertain Science* by Siddharth Mukerjee**: This slim book starts when Mukerjee is a young, exhausted and isolated medical resident, grappling with the ethics and practice of medicine. Philosophical, and yet practical, it's a great read. If you enjoy this, also read the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Emperor of All Maladies*, and the more recent *Gene*, both by the same author.
3. ***Reflections of a Surgeon*, a biography of Dr Vinayak Shrikhande** (who retired as Head of Surgery at Bombay Hospital): Simply written, this book is full of interesting and valuable anecdotes and experiences.
4. ***Coma* by Robin Cook**: This racy thriller will give you a crash course on the subject of ethics in the health profession. For more thrills associated with organ donation, health insurance, dangerous drugs and

their side effects, read his other books like *Toxin*, *Outbreak*, *Fatal Cure*, *Final Diagnosis*.

5. ***When Breath Becomes Air* by Dr Paul Kalanithi:** A real life story that pulls at the heartstrings, this bestselling book recounts a doctor's struggle with cancer.
6. ***Saturday* by Ian McEwan:** Booker Prize-winning novelist McEwan follows a day in the life of London-based neurosurgeon Dr Henry Perowne.

Online Resources Every Healthcare Professional Should Follow

WEBSITES

- natboard.edu
- nhp.gov.in
- Healthcaresource
- letsmd
- dailyrounds
- practo
- [blunt dissection.org](http://bluntdissection.org)
- ruralflyingdoc

TWITTER

- [@MoHFW_INDIA](https://twitter.com/MoHFW_INDIA)
- [@doctorsoumya](https://twitter.com/doctorsoumya)
- [@medicalce](https://twitter.com/medicalce)
- [@LancetGH](https://twitter.com/LancetGH)
- [@mellojonny](https://twitter.com/mellojonny)
- [@kevinmd](https://twitter.com/kevinmd)

- @halletecco
- @cuttingforstone
- @HopkinsMedicine

THE MONEY MANAGERS

Holding Up Civilization

‘Our entire civilization is based on the borrowing and lending of money.’

—Niall Ferguson, Historian



Finance jobs have a unique mystique about them. The returns in these jobs are high, but so are the risks. Financial markets can be very volatile and you have to be on your toes at all times. (Two of the three professionals featured in this section have since changed jobs!) There are many specializations - all the way from being a specialist in mergers and acquisitions to banking or selling insurance. Read here about private equity investor Vishal Dixit, equity trader Samar Khan and auditor N. Venkatram. Also read on to know how to crack careers in finance, and what are the good books, movies and online resources that offer glimpses into the life of high finance.

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THE PRIVATE EQUITY INVESTOR

VISHAL DIXIT

Former Partner, Mayfield Advisors India,
(Currently) Investor, Mumbai
Age: 37 years

‘After Stanford Business School there were so many options – investment banking, consulting, working in a corporate job – but I felt private equity (PE) would give me a chance to do all these,’ says Vishal Dixit. A two-year stint with the United Nations (UN) in Delhi from 2003–05, and with the secretariat for the Prime Minister’s committee on infrastructure in 2005–06, helped him get a PE job at the Macquarie Group in New York in 2008, where he worked for a year before returning to India to his present job. Zephyr Peacock targets investments in sectors such as financial services, education and consumer-related businesses.

The work week: A typical Monday begins with discussing aerospace components, Bollywood productions, heart implants and another twenty-odd investment opportunities sourced the week before. The second half is

spent reviewing the financial models, research reports and legal contracts of the deals under execution.

Often, Dixit needs to travel on work. A 4.30 a.m. ride to the airport can be a perfect time to catch up with colleagues in New York for a global perspective on prospective deals. A day at the portfolio company's office could cover anything from a formal board meeting, interviewing a CFO candidate and debating the economics of a pharmaceutical research and development project, to a game of table tennis with the CEO, or dinner with his family. 'These visits are fundamental to PE investing: you need to appreciate the people behind the numbers,' he says.

My dream deal: Acquisition of a stake in 2011 in Aizant, a Hyderabad-based company that invents and enhances drug formulations for almost every leading global pharmaceutical company.

What I love about my job: 'Working with entrepreneurs who lead your portfolio companies. Most of them are brilliant product guys – a bit in the Bill Gates mould. You get to be their Steve Ballmer by helping them build a great business and organization around that great product. A PE job is also the best antidote for boredom – you evaluate more than 500 new businesses a year, some within sectors that you didn't even know existed!' says Dixit.

One thing he'd like to change: '6 a.m. flights!' You may have the nicest, cosiest hotel room in town, but it's no fun when it comes with a 4 a.m. wake-up call.

Education

B.Com	Sydenham College	1998–2001
M.A. – Mathematical Economics	Mumbai University	2001–03
MBA	Stanford School of Business	2006–08

Work Experience

Macquarie Capital, New York	Associate	2008-09
Zephyr Management, Bengaluru	Vice President	2009-12
Mayfield Advisors, Mumbai	Partner	2013-16
Workskills India Ltd	Director on the board	2016 to present

PLAYING WITH BULLS AND BEARS: A STOCK MARKET TRADER'S LIFE

SAMAR KHAN

Former Associate, Institutional Equities,
Edelweiss, Mumbai
(Currently) Working in Account Handling and New Client Acquisition
Willis Tower Watson Co. LLC, UAE
Age: 32 years

Landing her dream job in January of 2008 came as a mixed blessing for Samar Khan: sure, she was happy to get a job but she was scared about her future. 'The day I joined Edelweiss as a trainee, the market crashed. We went into a recession,' the then twenty-six-year-old sales trader reminisces. 'It was a tough time, but when I look back, I realize it meant I got more time at the desk for training.'

Daily duty: As part of the sales trading team, Khan takes care of institutional clients, both in India and in the US. Her day starts at 5.30 a.m., as she has to be at work by 7.30 a.m. After a forty-minute commute, she starts her day at office by submitting her mobile phone at the counter outside the dealing room. Then she scans her Bloomberg and checks her email, to see if any US-based client has sent a buy or sell request.

She attends a markets meeting at 7.45 a.m., where the team discusses

the last day's trades, the volumes, what different funds may have bought.

This is followed by a fundamental meeting at 8.05 a.m., where the research and sales teams join in. 'We discuss the news in various counters (scrips) and the implications it may have on the markets,' says Khan. It is only after these meetings that Khan has time for a quick breakfast – a plate of idlis or toast – which she gets from the office pantry and finishes at her desk.

By then, it's 8.30 a.m. and time to make the morning calls, before the market opens. 'It's a very competitive sector,' Khan says, 'and we are among seventy brokers on the Street (jargon as in Dalal Street/Wall Street). If you call up your client first with relevant news in a holding that he has or is interested in, you are likely to bag that trade.'

Post 9 a.m., the markets open, and the day passes in a blur of trades. 'My job is to get the best rate for my client for whatever trades he is interested in,' says Khan. Lunch is a brief affair, supplied by a dabbawala and always eaten at the desk.

Once the markets close at 3.30 p.m., there is a final confirmation on all trades that must be sent immediately to all clients.

After 4 p.m., Khan can collect her mobile phone and also deal with emails and read research reports on individual companies or industry sectors before leaving for home at 5.30 p.m.

Leisure: 'I don't read any financial data on weekends and spend time catching up with friends on Facebook.' Khan has not taken any long vacations since 2008 because 'you can't stay away from the market too long'.

Sanity saver: Daily workouts at a gym, straight after work.

Wish I could change: 'The early mornings. I can work until midnight, but waking early every morning is a killer.'

Education

B.E. – Chemical Engineering	Mumbai University	2001-05
MBA	N.L. Dalmia Institute of Management	2006-

Work Experience

Edelweiss Securities, Mumbai	Institutional Associate	2008-10
IDBI Capital, Mumbai	Senior Manager	2010-12
Willis Tower Watson, UAE	Client Servicing and New Client Acquisition	2013 to present

THE AUDITOR: MAKING SURE COMPANIES COMPLY

N. VENKATRAM
CEO, Deloitte India
Mumbai
Age: 56 years

'We are incorruptible,' says N. Venkatram, who says the big audit firms never take money to sign off on accounts. Given the controversies with audit firms like the former Arthur Anderson, this defence is understandable. From his corner office at the Indiabulls Towers in Parel, Venkatram has a 270-degree view of Mumbai's Bandra-Worli Sea Link, of the Siddhivinayak temple, of home at the Planet Godrej building beyond Mahalaxmi Racecourse. And a 360-degree view of the profession, having spent the last three decades auditing a range of companies.

How he got there: After a bachelor of commerce degree at Mumbai's Sydenham College, Venkatram did his chartered accountancy, articling in 1979 at the Mumbai firm of SB Billimoria. The firm posted him in his home town of Jamshedpur to handle the audit of Tata Steel and Tata Motors. In 1983, Venkatram joined Tata Steel in Internal Audit, moving two years later to KMG (predecessor to present-day KPMG) in Bahrain. In

1993, he moved back to SB Billimoria and to Jamshedpur, continuing with the firm through its merging with Deloitte in 1997, finally moving from Jamshedpur to Mumbai in 2000.

Daily duty: Venkatram has to travel two to three days every week. Besides working with clients at their offices, or in their factories, or at their mines, a lot of time is spent on issues like audit transformation, which involves making the audit process more efficient and talent-driven. Venkatram works closely with his national head of risk, as a lot of client acceptance and client continuance is based on assessing their risk profile, as well as on training.

What he loves about the job: The opportunity to have sat in some of the most powerful boardrooms of this country, listening to some of the finest minds, seeing how they work. Always being in the know, whether it's deals or acquisitions or other news.

Most stressful moment: 'Many ... like being stranded in Jordan during the invasion of Kuwait by Iran. Or encountering a balance sheet of a large client that didn't tally one hour before deadline for filing accounts and claiming many crores of tax relief. But the worst part of the profession is still to come. The new Companies Act for instance, instead of recognizing us as the most honest people in the industry, threatens us with jail,' he says.

Biggest achievements: 'In 2004, we worked on two major listings on the New York Stock exchange. TCS was a billion-dollar company, oversubscribed twenty-nine times, while Tata Motors was the largest engineering company being listed from India. That year was the toughest year of my life. I would reach home every day at 4 a.m. and didn't sleep at all for almost sixty nights. But we got it done, and successfully!' he says.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR THE ASPIRING FINANCE PROFESSIONAL

'To be a good investor, you need to be extra smart and devote more hours of time. At a very early age, you join the board of investee

companies – this can be very demanding; you have to upgrade your skills, people will listen to you only if you have the substance. Also, it's very important to be a good team player. The team at a private equity fund is traditionally very small – only ten to fifteen professionals manage a billion-dollar fund.'

– Raja Kumar,
CEO, Ascent Capital, Bengaluru

'To be a good venture capitalist you have to be a bit of an economist, salesman, financial engineer, lawyer, strategic advisor, CXO and agony aunt, all rolled into one.'

– Vishal Dixit,
Investor, Mumbai

'To be a good trader, you have to love the stock market and have a head for numbers.'

–Samar Khan,
Former Institutional associate, Edelweiss Financial Services, Mumbai

'To be in treasury or corporate banking, you have to be comfortable with numbers, enjoy tearing balance sheets apart and have a reasonable sense of credit (bank lending) and of the (business) environment. A large amount of banking today, especially retail, demands an ability to emote with people and manage relationships.'

–Naina Lal Kidwai,
Former Chairman, HSBC India

'As an auditor, you have great authority. You can often dictate terms to senior managers as you report directly to the audit committee of the company board, so this means you need to have a great sense of integrity and responsibility. It is important to be able to have a cup of tea with a departmental head, where there is an audit issue, look at things from his perspective and suggest solutions.'

– Lavesh Shah

Jayesh Shah,
Additional General Manager controls and compliance, Bombay Stock
Exchange

THE SECRET TO GETTING THERE

There are many routes to getting a finance job. A BA/BCom in business studies, in commerce and subjects like maths or economics is one. An MBA will give you an entry at a higher level of seniority and pay scale. A professional course like chartered accountancy or previous internships at a bank/finance company help. Also to get certified by online finance courses from platforms like EDX, Coursera.

SIX INTERVIEW QUESTIONS EVERY FINANCE PERSON SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR

1. Why finance?
2. Which financial papers/magazines do you read and why?
3. Describe the best/most interesting story you read this week in your favourite finance publication?
4. Tell me about some stocks you follow. Should I buy any of them?
5. What are the biggest challenges and opportunities that the finance professional faces today?
6. Describe a tough financial analysis problem you faced recently. How did you tackle it?

WHY YOU SHOULD WORK IN FINANCE

- *The money is good.*
- *You work in an intellectually stimulating environment with some of the best brains in the industry.*
- *You can make an impact in how (efficiently) a scarce resource like capital is used.*
- *There is a range of occupations you can choose from – tech jobs in finance,*

banking, investment, and so on.

THINGS NO ONE TELLS YOU ABOUT WORKING IN FINANCE

- *It can be very stressful.*
- *Jobs are less secure as the finance sector is very volatile.*
- *Sometimes, the job might get tedious.*
- *The hours could be long.*

THE TRUTH ABOUT MAKING MONEY IN FINANCE

- *Salaries vary.*
- *The starting base salary maybe small, but this often climbs high, with huge bonuses.*
- *Perks include easy access to soft loans, at concessional rates of interest from 2–5 per cent, for housing, furnishing, etc.*

Here are some indicative figures:

Private Equity/Venture Capital

Money comes in the form of high salaries, profit sharing (of as much as 20 per cent) and ownership of companies. Salaries could start with anything from ₹75 lakh to ₹2 crore, plus a share in the returns generated by the fund.

Banking/Trading/Fund Management/Audit

Salaries could start at ₹6 lakh and move to ₹1 crore and upwards after ten-fifteen years of experience.

EIGHT BOOKS EVERY ENTHUSIASTIC FINANCE PERSON SHOULD READ

1. *Against the Gods* by Peter Bernstein: *A lot of finance is about risk, which is*

what makes this book on the history of risk essential reading. Bernstein begins with early gamblers in ancient Greece, continuing through the seventeenth-century French mathematicians Pascal and Fermat and up to modern chaos theory, thereby seeking to understand risk. Great for all those budding risk analysts out there!

2. ***The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World*** by Niall Fergusson: *As the name suggests this is a history of money, covering the move from barter to coin, and from coin to virtual funds, and from virtual funds to algorithmic trading.*
3. ***The Essays of Warren Buffett – Lessons for Corporate America*** by Warren Buffett: *A collection of Warren Buffet's letters to the shareholders, this book is recommended reading for anybody interested in investing.*
4. ***Barbarians at the Gate*** by Bryan Burrough and John Helyar: *Set in 1980s USA, this business bestseller tells the story of hostile takeovers. The story is set in 1980s America, but read it to understand the DNA of deals, the money, the legal manoeuvrings and, ultimately, the make-or-break personal relationships that underpin every deal.*
5. ***Liar's Poker*** by Michael Lewis: *Former Wall Street trader Lewis has written many books on Wall Street, including Flash Boys and The Big Short (made into a movie). His first and still best known book is Liar's Poker. Set in the 1980s, it's a revealing behind-the-scenes take on the high-stakes financial speculation and trading of the time.*
6. ***The Intelligent Investor*** by Benjamin Graham: *'The real money in investing will have to be made, as most of it has been in the past, not out of buying and selling but out of owning and holding securities, receiving interest and dividends and benefiting from their longer-term increase in value,' says Graham. Written for the layman, this classic is a great resource for the expert as well.*
7. ***The Black Swan*** by Nassim Nicholas Taleb: *This Lebanon-born trader-turned-author shot to fame when he wrote his book about an unstable system just a few months before the financial crash of 2008. Taleb writes with erudition and intensity and is dismissive of a lot of the existing expert opinion.*
8. ***When Genius Failed*** by Roger Lowenstein: *When it was founded in 1993,*

Long-Term was hailed as the most impressive hedge fund in history. It dazzled Wall Street with its algorithm-based trades that gave it stratospheric returns. But four years later, the fund collapsed, nearly taking down the financial system with it. Lowenstein shows how, the arrogance of mathematical certainties, and the culture of Wall Street itself contributed to both their rise and their fall.

TEN MOVIES EVERY ASPIRING FINANCE PERSON SHOULD SEE

1. ***Pretty Woman***: A love story might seem an unlikely film for a finance career aspirant. However, Edward Lewis, the wealthy businessman (played by Richard Gere) who falls in love with Vivian Ward (played by Julia Roberts.) Edward, is a corporate financier. He buys undervalued companies and restructures them so they make more money. The film gives a nice insight into the world of hostile takeovers, acquisitions and the role of finance in creating value.
2. ***Margin Call***: Starring Kevin Spacey, Simon Baker, Demi Moore. Loosely based on the 2007 Lehman Brothers scandal, the story in this film unfolds over thirty-six hours at a large investment bank. A junior analyst discovers that the bank's holdings in worthless mortgage-backed securities will soon bankrupt the bank, leading to all traders at the firm knowingly selling worthless investments to clients.
3. ***The Inside Job***: A documentary on the global financial crisis through to the 2007–08 crash, narrated by Matt Damon.
4. ***Million Dollar Traders***: A British reality television series that follows twelve wannabe traders with no share trading experience on their journey to becoming a fund manager.
5. ***Wall Street***: A cult movie, featuring Wall Street trader Gordon Gecko, played by Michael Douglas. 'Lunch is for wimps,' declares the hot-shot trader as he makes his millions, with wide-eyed protege Bud Fox (played by Charlie Sheen) in his wake. Gecko's famous line 'Greed is good' echoes the justification for an unregulated financial market, even as the film builds up to a dramatic conclusion.
6. ***The Wolf of Wall Street***: Starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Jonah Hill,

Margot Robbie, Matthew McConaughey, the film shows the excesses of an unbridled world of finance.

7. ***Boiler Room***: Starring Giovanni Ribisi, Vin Diesel, Ben Affleck, the film shows a nineteen-year-old college dropout who becomes a highly successful stockbroker at a boiler room (a company that sells worthless investments through high pressure sales calls).
8. ***Bonfire of Vanities***: Based on the bestselling book (also worth a read) by Tom Wolfe, this film stars bond trader Sherman McCoy (played by Tom Hanks). It's set in 1980s New York and is a story of ambition, racism, politics and greed.
9. ***The Bank***: Starring Anthony LaPaglia, an Australian drama about a mathematician who devises a formula to predict future movements in the stock market. Although it's a little slow at times, it finishes with a twist. People with an interest in algorithmic trading will find it interesting.
10. ***Too Big to Fail***: Based on the book of the same name, this film traces the fascinating story of the rise and fall of Long Term Capital Management, a once wildly successful hedge fund that made billions from finding 'scientific' trading methods, before it eventually went bust.

Online Resources for the Finance Professional All the major business channels and business magazines are a good place to start.

WEBSITES

- CNN Money
- Bloomberg Business
- *Financial Times*
- *Wall Street Journal*

TWITTER

- @WSJ
- @Investopedia
- @WarrenBuffett
- @livemint

FOOD AND HOSPITALITY

The Lifestyle Guys

‘Who knew working at a hotel would require me to be a psychologist, marriage counsellor, babysitter, personal shopper, and drunk person hauler!’

—Pinterest quote



The world of food is exploding, and so is hospitality and travel. Whether it's restaurants, apps for foods or e-commerce, skills in this vertical will get you good jobs. You can choose to work in hotels and restaurants, in food technology, with food and travel websites, apps and portals. These sectors need skills like technology, finance, marketing and operations experience, as well as entrepreneurship. Read here about the king of the food business in India, Sanjeev Kapoor, and about a day in the life of Gaurav Nerlekar, a young hotel manager. Also learn about interview questions and books, movies and interview questions to be prepared for.

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INDIA'S KING OF COOKING

SANJEEV KAPOOR

Director and Principal Host, Food Food channel,
Managing Director, Khana Khazana, Mumbai
Age: 52 years

'As a kid, I didn't know what a chef was. But I was clear – whatever I had to do, it had to be unconventional, it had to be different,' says Sanjeev Kapoor. The Padma Shri awardee chef runs a food empire – with the Food Food TV channel, a YouTube channel with a million subscribers, many chains of restaurants, sells the Wonderchef range of appliances and, of course, masalas and cook books.



How he got there: After studying at the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering & Nutrition, Pusa, New Delhi, Kapoor got a job at Centaur Hotels, in 1984.

‘On my first day on the job, we were taken to the kitchen, where we met the executive chef. I asked him, “How old are you?” He said, “Forty years, but why do you want to know?” I told him I wanted to know how many years it takes to be an executive chef. “So now that you know what will you do?” he asked me.’

‘I want to become executive chef in nineteen years,’ replied the young Sanjeev Kapoor. He went on to do better than that, becoming executive chef at age twenty-eight.

In 1997, he quit his job as executive chef at Centaur in Mumbai to become a food entrepreneur. Anchoring the popular *Khana Khazana* cookery show on Zee TV, Kapoor turned show producer, wrote cookbooks, launched a brand of spices, pickles and ready-to-eat mixes, and a chain of restaurants under the brand name Khazana, in Indian metros

and international cities like Dubai.

Around this time, in the early 2000s, the entertainment business was just expanding, and with the enormous popularity of *Khana Khazana*, Kapoor felt a TV channel devoted to food would be a hit. For the producer of a weekly show, such an enterprise was too huge to undertake alone, and Kapoor began to look around for an investor-partner.

Though Kapoor was a celebrity chef with great brand recall, getting funding was not easy. 'Anybody I would speak to then (in the early 2000s) would laugh,' he says. But he persisted.

Every day after work, he would sit with a finance consultant to format the investment-partnership proposals for the channel. In 2006, Kapoor contacted the biggest food channel, the US-based Scripps Network. When he got no response, he contacted another well-known international channel and was able to get an appointment with the then channel head.

Armed with a business plan, Kapoor and his finance consultant flew to London. But the meeting never happened. 'They said something about having sent an email about not being able to meet. I was so angry,' he recalls.

In 2010, Kapoor finally secured funding for his dream project from the Malaysian cross-media conglomerate, the Astro Group. The contact came through Sandeep Goyal, ex-CEO of Zee and chairman, Dentsu India, who also came on board as a partner.

'I showed Astro a short video clip and that caught their attention. The clip had bits of a few shows – a few were from *Khana Khazana*. We had produced about eight different shows and concepts. When I spoke about the opportunity and shared my understanding of it, I could see they were convinced,' says Kapoor.

Career advice: 'If you look at anything and want to convert it into an opportunity, first you have to experiment with it. You have to have the belief that you can do it. You need that confidence to start converting the environment around you, because the environment tells you it can't be done. And once you succeed, commerce follows. It's not a difficult thing.'

Tips for funding:

- Sometimes the unplanned opportunity you get to pitch is perhaps

your only shot at it. Therefore, keep the elevator pitch ready.
Kapoor's winning pitch was a small video clip of around five minutes.

- In any negotiation, be willing to walk away. But if you need to go back to the drawing board again, be willing to do that.

Work Experience

ITDC	Chef	1984-97
Centaur Hotels, Mumbai	Executive Chef	1992-97
Zee TV, <i>Khana Khazana</i>	Host	1993 onwards
Khana Khazana	Managing Director	1997 onwards

EARLY DAYS IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

GAURAV NERLEKAR

Service Manager, Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts
(Currently) Assistant Food Beverage Manager,
Intercontinental Hotels, Mumbai
Age: 30 years

'This industry is similar to Bollywood – glamorous from the outside, but heavy work on the inside,' says Gaurav Nerlekar, the formally clad F&B manager of Seven, the multi-cuisine restaurant on the ninth floor of Mumbai's Shangri-La hotel. 'It is possible to be in the hotel industry and still have free time,' he adds, 'it's just that you need to plan it.'

Why the hotel industry: Proximity, he says. Nerlekar lived next door to Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition in Dadar West, Mumbai. Also, he loved food and wanted to do something different. 'My father is a doctor, my mother is a professor and my elder sister is an engineer, so everyone has studied a lot. They are hard-

core vegetarians as well,' says Nerlekar. And they are all teetotallers. He is the exception. 'But I don't drink; only taste wine. We have to; it's part of the job.'

Daily duty: Nerlekar's workday begins at 6.30 a.m. or 3 p.m., depending on whether he is working the morning or evening shift. He begins the shift by briefing his restaurant team about the sequence of events for the day. On Sundays, for instance, a late breakfast is followed by a buffet brunch, so workflows have to be planned well in advance.

Mealtimes are spent on the floor, to ensure the comfort of guests and to defuse potentially troublesome situations. When the team is done with the meal, there are interactions with the chefs and the culinary team. The team is briefed on the preparations, and educated on the right way to describe these to guests. They also give feedback on the day's dishes. 'For instance, the dim sums at the restaurant are much appreciated, so we report back to the chefs on that. Sometimes, we have to give negative feedback too, like a fish preparation which wasn't popular,' says Nerlekar.

What I love about my job: 'Meeting people and talking to them. If you are able to interact successfully, figure out their preferences, ask them about their day, the interaction goes really well. Then if you meet them again and follow up on the earlier conversation by asking how a particular presentation or meeting went, those guests can really become friends, and that feels really good.'

Biggest challenge: 'Managing to stay calm in high-stress situations. If a guest is shouting, you just can't say, "I have been here since 6.30 in the morning and you are complaining!" You have to find a solution.'

Right now in the hotel business: 'In the food industry today, Indian families really like to experiment with their food. Wine has become a big thing. Guests know their wines, whether it is a crisp white chardonnay or an Italian cabernet sauvignon. And they want to hear that you have at least 250 different wine labels.'

A guest I will not forget: 'Shah Rukh Khan was a regular at Taj Land's End in Bandra where I was working. I used to work in banquets and we went every weekend to his house, which was close by in Bandra, to cater to

parties. I remember one evening I met Shah Rukh at the hotel at 5 p.m. He asked me, “What are you doing here? You were at my house till 5 a.m.” When I told him I had to report to work to the hotel at 3 p.m, no matter what, Shah Rukh laughed. “I too have to report to the hotel for my brand launch,” he said.’

Education

B.Sc – Hospitality	IHM, Goa	2004-07
Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies	PGDB in CRM (Customer Relationship Management)	2008-09
Welingkar Institute of Management	PGDB – Human Resources Management and Services	2011-13

Work Experience

Taj Group, Mumbai	Assistant Banquet Manager	2007-10
Westin Mumbai, Garden City	Assistant Banquet Manager	2010-12
Shangri-La Mumbai	Service Manager	2012-13
Intercontinental Hotels, Mumbai	Assistant Food Beverage Manager	2013-15
Compass Group	Project Manager	2015 to present

THE SECRET TO GETTING THERE

The Institute of Hotel Management Catering & Nutrition at Pusa is the best known. There are many such hotel management institutes all over the country. Hotels chains like the Taj and the Oberoi also have their own programmes. Details of all these programmes are available online at the

Careers360 rankings and at *India Today's* best colleges rankings. Admission to these courses in hotel management is after Class 12.

THREE SKILLS EVERY SUCCESSFUL HOTEL OR FOOD PROFESSIONAL SHOULD HAVE

- *Being customer-oriented, being able to talk to customers and to be flexible with them.*
- *A passion to succeed; don't be tentative even in your mind ... it will happen, no questions asked, it has to work and it will work.*
- *An MBA and experience in different sectors.*

WHY YOU SHOULD WORK IN HOSPITALITY

- *Hospitality will always offer immense possibilities.*
- *It's creative.*
- *You get to meet interesting people.*
- *You get the chance to travel.*

WHAT NOBODY TELLS YOU ABOUT WORKING IN HOSPITALITY

- *It's a physically demanding job.*
- *The hours are long.*
- *You the most work when other people are on holiday.*

FIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS EVERY HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR

1. *Describe a situation where you had a dissatisfied customer and you solved their problem.*
2. *Are you able to interact well with people of all ages, backgrounds and walks of life?*

3. *Have you been a customer at our restaurants, and how was your experience?*
4. *Are you familiar with our menu and beverage offerings?*
5. *Describe your favourite meal.*

FIVE BOOKS EVERY ASPIRING HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL SHOULD READ

1. ***Hotel* by Arthur Hailey:** An old classic that goes into wonderful detail on the behind-the-scenes workings of a hotel.
2. ***Kitchen Confidential – Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly* by Antony Bourdain:** Part memoir, part exposé, this book by celebrity chef Bourdain is full of interesting anecdotes.
3. ***Without Reservations: How A Family Root Beer Stand Grew into a Global Hotel Company* by J.W. Bill Marriott, Jr:** The evolution of the Marriott chain of hotels from 1927 through 2012, this is an inspiring read for anybody in the hotel business.
4. ***My Life in France* by Julia Child:** A wonderful food and cooking memoir set in Paris.
5. ***The Art of Travel* by Alain de Botton:** Meditations on travel elegantly written by French philosopher de Botton.

FIVE MOVIES EVERY ENTHUSIASTIC HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL SHOULD WATCH

1. ***The Best Western Marigold Hotel:*** This film shows how to create a warm joie-de-vivre environment in a hotel in India for a whole set of quirky Western retirees.
2. ***Hotel Rwanda:*** The ultimate hotelier looks after his guests through civil war and bloodshed.
3. ***Fawlty Towers* (the BBC serial):** A funny spoof on idiosyncratic guests and everything that can go wrong.
4. ***The Hundred Foot Journey:*** Two restaurants in a little village in France go through a tale of deadly rivalry.

5. ***Julie and Julia***: A wonderfully atmospheric movie about Julie, a young American girl, who finds herself at a dead-end professionally. Her life changes when she begins a food project – cooking every recipe from Julia Child’s book of recipes and blogging about it. The film stars the amazing Meryl Streep and is a treat for anyone wishing to work in food, as well as for all food lovers.

Online Resources for the Hospitality Professional

There’s a whole world of bloggers and hospitality websites. Featuring amazing photographs and great copy, many of these are totally addictive. Here are a few that are a good starting point:

BLOGS

- blogs.economictimes.indiatimes.com/onmyplate
- The Backpacker
- World of Wanderlust
- Healthy.Happy.Life
- aremorch.com
- hospitality.net

TWITTER

- @masterche fonfox
- @TwitterFood
- @ruthreichl
- @MarthaStewart
- @Bourdain
- @PannaCooking
- @FoodNetwork

- @michaelpollan

INSTAGRAM

- @jamieoliver
- @anthonybourdain
- @bonappetitmag
- @nigella
- @sanjeevkapoor

THE MARKETEERS

‘Marketing is no longer about the stuff that you make,
but about the stories you tell.’

—Seth Godin



Marketing jobs will always be in. Sales, marketing and advertising skills are in demand. As author Dan Pink says: ‘Like it or not, we’re all in sales right now ... whether we’re teachers or art directors or in healthcare.’ Packaged consumer goods marketing jobs today are looking better than ever. So are sectors like technology and services. All of them need marketing. And yes, while working in sales may begin with the squelch and mud (read that as a mandatory stint in rural markets) and the sheer exhaustion of selling from shop to shop, it moves on to the glitzy world of brand launches, hobnobbing with celebrity endorsers, and designing ads that take the world of consumers by storm. From products to stores - read about the men and women who persuade us to buy. Read their advice on how to be a great seller, and the books and movies that show the sales life. And because almost all marketing has turned digital, read on to the chapter that follows on digital marketing.

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THE MARKETING WHIZ

DEEPIKA WARRIER

Vice President, Pepsico India, Gurgaon
(Formerly) Marketing Director, Pepsi India
Age: 47 years

PepsiCo's marketing office on the fourth floor in DLF Corporate Park, Gurgaon, has balloons, a giant basket of fruit, and pinboards crammed with collages on most desks. Amid all this colour is Deepika Warriar's cabin, with the doors open. 'I don't mind anyone walking in; I believe in not being regimented,' says the marketing director.

The assignment: As marketing director, Warriar is in charge of strategic development and promotion of beverages, including brands like Pepsi, Diet Pepsi, Mirinda, 7UP, Nimbooz, Mountain Dew, Aquafina and Slice. It is her job to work the mega campaigns for these brands. Signing on

cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni and working with international soccer sensation Didier Drogba may be the most glamorous parts of her job, but there is a whole underlying set of activities as well.

‘I divide my day into business issues and people issues,’ she says. The business issues include designing creatives, planning and executing advertising and other promotional campaigns. PepsiCo works with three advertising agencies, one media agency and one public relations agency. Along with Warriar’s own team of five direct reportees and thirty-five indirect reportees, they form part of the larger marketing team. Meetings with these teams, as well as with cross-functional teams like supply chain, research and development and sales, take up most of Warriar’s day.

The people issues are centred around her team of reportees. ‘As you move into senior leadership, your role changes from a doer to more of a recognizer and a champion of good ideas. You need to spend more time motivating the younger talent in your team and dealing with their career issues,’ explains Warriar.

Most proud of: Pepsi’s T20 ‘Change the Game’ World Cup campaign, with Bollywood actor Ranbir Kapoor, M.S. Dhoni and the Indian cricket team. ‘We had a terrific year on the back of that campaign, in terms of both sales and other measures like equity growth and brand affinity,’ she says.

Failures have taught me: ‘Be willing to take risks but ensure they are not fatal risks. With Lays we introduced flavours like chaat and chicken. Both had great responses from consumers during the trial stages. But both bombed after we launched them. Chaat started well but the growth didn’t sustain; it bombed so much that we had to recall the flavour a year later. With chicken, we had a major backlash from retailers,’ she says.

Why selling comes before marketing: While working at Gillette in 1997, Warriar spent a year and a half in trade marketing, selling buckets (as part of a special promotion scheme) and brushes to the trade in the wholesale markets of Delhi. ‘I fell into mud and got trampled by buffaloes in the wholesale markets of Sadar Bazar in Delhi. Did I thrive? No. But sales is something you need to do, otherwise you become an ivory-castle marketer,’ she says.

What I look for in the people I hire: Confidence, groundedness, a knowledge of strengths and weaknesses, and the ability to learn. Also the ability to work in a cross-functional team, partnering with sales or creative agencies.

Work-life balance: Warriar tries to encourage her team to leave office on time. 'We have one day a week – Wednesdays – where we try to get people home by 5.30 p.m. In case you have to stay on, you have to send me a formal mail explaining why, and also pay up ₹500 as a fine, which goes into a party pool. Unfortunately, we manage to collect a lot of money,' she confesses ruefully. Warriar says her stint in Mexico taught her the importance of doing things outside of work and how outside interests like reading, photography and travel could actually make you a better marketer.

Education

B.A.	LSR, Delhi University	1986-89
MBA	IIM Bangalore	1989-91

Work Experience

Ogilvy and Mather	Account Director	1994-97
Gillette India	Brand Manager	1997-2000
Pepsico	VP - Marketing	2000 to present

THE SHOPPING MALL MAN

GOVIND SHRIKHANDE

Managing Director, Shoppers Stop, Mumbai
Age: 55 years

Govind Shrikhande is a people watcher. He tries to spend at least one day

a week on the shop floor, either at one of the thirty-four Shoppers Stop stores all over the country, or at a competitor's store. 'There is a lot to be learnt by watching the dynamics of people shop. Often, you don't even need to talk to the customer to know what they are thinking; it's just obvious in the way they touch and handle a fabric or how they match a pair of trousers with a shirt or shoes. Retail purchase in India is not an individual activity; people typically shop in groups,' says Shrikhande. He is a shopper himself – 'I shop for everything – gadgets and gizmos, clothes, I would even shop for all the family saris.'



Daily duty: 'Once I am at work by 9.45 a.m., I put my cellphone on silent and concentrate on the meetings of the day. Everyone wants your time; from customers (whose 'I have lost my gift voucher, what can I do?' kind of queries and complaints can make it straight to the MD), your own team merchandisers, designers, product managers, sales, industry bodies like the

CII (Confederation of Indian Industry) or even the government (Foreign Direct Investment is a hot subject everyone wants views on),’ says Shrikhande, who handles emails during his morning commute.

At 1 p.m., Shrikhande takes a break. ‘I bring my tiffin from home, take it to our cafeteria, and eat with the team at the corporate office. This gives me a chance to catch up on office gossip and chit-chat – it’s a sort of pressure release too.’ Shrikhande tries, when in Mumbai, to wrap up the work day by 7.15 p.m. so that he can get home for dinner with his wife and two children, Sharvari and Ajinkya.

He travels eight to ten days a month. Some of this is to Shoppers Stop stores in other cities and some to stores abroad. When Shrikhande visits a Shoppers Stop store, whether in Bengaluru or in Aurangabad, he tries to be there by 10.15 a.m., which is the time the Shoppers Stop corporate anthem is played and sung at the store. He then meets the staff. ‘This interaction is important, you get a feel for the store, for the staff who often question you about career prospects, training courses they would like to do in customer management, quality control, etc.’

What I love most about my job: Retail is cutting-edge, where all the latest developments are taking place; the largest companies in the world are retail. It’s the only sector where you can actually watch the customer consume your product.

Challenges: Unlike many businesses, retail is a 24x7 one. Stores are open 365 days. So there is a potential for things to go wrong every single day of the year, whether in terms of staffing, customer issues or just physical problems in the store. So you have to be prepared all the time.

Education

B.E.	VJTI, Mumbai	1978-82
MBA	Symbiosis, Pune	1982-84

Work Experience

Mafatlal Industries	Handling Products and Merchandise	1985-88
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Industries		Year
Arvind Mills	Denim Division and Marketing	1988-94
Bombay Dyeing	Managing Retail Stores	1994-01
Shoppers Stop	Head of Buying and Merchandising (2001-06), CEO (2006-09) and Managing Director (2009 onwards)	2001 to present

THE SECRET TO GETTING THERE

An undergraduate degree in any discipline works well for a sales/marketing job. For advertising jobs, you will need a portfolio of your work if you plan to take a job on the creative side. For client servicing, again, a basic degree is good enough. You may choose to do an MBA and specialize in marketing if you aim to enter at a higher level. Of course, experience in sales or marketing or advertising counts as well.

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT MAKING MONEY IN MARKETING, SALES AND ADVERTISING

- *Entry level salaries: ₹6 lakh to ₹15 lakh per annum*
- *Senior levels: ₹50 lakh onwards. Can go upto ₹2.5 crore for heads of marketing at multinational companies.*

SEVEN ESSENTIAL SKILLS OF A GREAT SELLER (FROM REAL LIFE PRACTITIONERS)

1. *Persuasion: Speaking well, and being humble with the customer.*
2. *An eye for detail and the ability to be able to interpret figures. A sales head should be able to figure out from the available data as to why a certain store is not doing well – are less people walking in, or is it that once they walk in, they don't really buy anything, or that their purchases*

are smaller than average? And how to remedy that.

3. Being able to manage and motivate a large team.

4. Thinking global, keeping abreast of the latest trends through stores visits to international stores such as Selfridges, Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdales. Also, monitoring fashion on websites such as wgsn.com

5. Understanding brands: tracking the local customer and his preferences, through television, websites, even advertisements for local products, to see what is popular and what kind of products are selling in his local market.

6. Sales experience: Everybody should start in sales. A sales job is tough. It is physically hard work going from store to store, taking orders. But only when you do it can you understand what the job of a salesman is, how to keep him motivated. It helps you understand how to make a marketing plan.

7. An aptitude to work with other people:

Marketing has real-life problems, so people who can be analytical, those who can scratch beneath the data to understand the people issues, do well.

SIX REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD WORK IN SALES, MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

- 1. Being in sales and marketing is an excellent career path to general management and to leadership roles.*
- 2. You have lots of career options – from technology companies to financial services to consumer companies, everybody needs marketing.*
- 3. You can move to different industries with better prospects if you*

want to, as basic marketing skills are transferrable.

4. *If you are good, you can be very well-paid with high sales bonuses and commissions.*
5. *It is rewarding to close sales.*
6. *You get to meet interesting people and travel to different places.*

WHAT NOBODY TOLD YOU ABOUT WORKING IN SALES, MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

- *The travel can get exhausting. Being on the road, in a different place everyday can be difficult, especially if you are happier sitting in a nice air-conditioned office and working.*
- *It can be stressful chasing sales targets, running marketing campaigns, or meeting advertising deadlines.*
- *If you are in a sales job with a commission-based salary, your income maybe uncertain.*

NINE BOOKS EVERY MARKETING PERSON SHOULD READ (BEFORE THE COMPETITION DOES)

1. ***Marketing Management*** by Philip Kotler: This is undoubtedly the Bible of every marketing man.
2. ***Influence – The Psychology of Persuasion*** by Robert Cialdini: A great read for anybody who wants to do well in marketing, in advertising, in sales, or in life! Cialdini, a professor of psychology and marketing at Arizona State University, actually worked in real estate and in insurance to understand the logic of successful persuasion.
3. ***To Sell is Human*** by Daniel Pink: Traits and techniques on how to improve your selling skills from attuning yourself to the buyer, to surviving repeated rejection, pitching and servicing.
4. ***How to Win Friends and Influence People*** by Dale Carnegie: A classic that still holds good today.

5. ***The Call of the Mall*** by Paco Underhill: Interesting observations on the nature of buying. A great read for anybody in marketing or retail.
6. ***Buyology – Truth and Lies about Why We Buy*** by Martin Lindstrom
7. ***Thinking Fast, Thinking Slow*** by Daniel Kahneman: This wonderfully analytical book on psychology and economics by Nobel prize-winning Kahnemann helps understand how decisions are made.
8. ***Predictably Irrational*** by Dan Ariely: A behavioural economist, Dan Ariely demonstrates through research how forces like emotions and social norms skew our ability to make choices!
9. ***Nudge*** by Richard H. Thaler and Cass Sunstein: Read here how you can get people to modify their behaviour just by making a few crucial tweaks in a system.

SIX MOVIES EVERY MARKETING MAN SHOULD SEE

1. ***Glengarry Glen Ross***: Based on a Pulitzer-winning play, this film tells the story of a New York real-estate salesman slugging it out in a hyper-competitive sales environment.
2. ***Mad Men***: Set in 1960s Manhattan, this HBO classic TV series tells the story of Don Draper and his ilk, all advertising men on Madison Avenue.
3. ***Death of a Salesman***: Based on the play by the same name by Arthur Miller, this brilliant but profoundly depressing film tells the story of an ageing salesman, Willy Loman.
4. ***Rocket Singh Salesman of the Year***: Ranbir Kapoor stars in this marketing story set in a computer firm.
5. ***Thank You for Smoking***: The story of a lobbyist for big tobacco, the film is a fascinating look at the power of marketing and of persuasion.
6. ***Love and Other Drugs***: Jake Gyllenhaal stars as an ambitious but slippery pharmaceutical rep who goes on to become the No. 1 salesman.

SEVEN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS A MARKETING PERSON

SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR

1. Why do you believe you are suited for a career in selling/marketing/advertising?
2. Describe a product you admire and whose marketing you like?
3. Sell me – this pen, the phone brand you use, a vacation plan, *etc.*
4. You have to sell housing loans – where would you get leads from?
5. Describe an ad campaign you thought very effective/ineffective and why you thought so?
6. You have joined a new organization as a senior sales manager. You find five salesmen who have been in the company for twenty-five years are not being tapped. How would you go about settling in?
7. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an irate customer?

DIGITAL MARKETING

‘The internet is becoming the town square for the global village of tomorrow.’

—Bill Gates



The world has moved online. And digital marketers are in demand. Advertisements everywhere ask for social media analysts, content developers, marketers. Projects on popular intern sites like Internshala, Letsintern and Oysterconnect want young people who will do assignments in this space.

Whether it is search engine optimization (SEO), email campaigns or social media communication, skills in digital marketing are worth picking up. Read on about some of the many online resources that will help you keep up-to-date with the latest technology in this space. Also read here the story of Siddharth Rao, the man without a college degree, who started digital marketing firm Webchutney, which was later acquired by Japanese media giant Dentsu.

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- ▶ [WebChutney and the Story of the Founder without a College Degree](#)
- ▶ [Five Essential Skills for the Aspiring Digital Marketer](#)

- ▶ [The Secret to Getting There](#)
- ▶ [What You Can Earn in Digital Marketing](#)
- ▶ [Why Work in Digital Marketing](#)
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WEBCHUTNEY AND THE STORY OF THE FOUNDER WITHOUT A COLLEGE DEGREE

SIDDHARTH RAO

CEO and co-founder, Webchutney,
Mumbai
Age: 36 years

Siddharth Rao started digital marketing firm Webchutney in April 1999, when he was nineteen years old. He didn't have a college degree, and had worked for less than two years at ad agency Grey Worldwide. But he tracked digital ad firms in the US and realized it was the next big thing. Webchutney has since been acquired by international media giant Dentsu Communications. Siddharth continues to be CEO.

A day in his life: Siddharth Rao spends his morning working on a pitch to a Flipkart. The agency has worked before on the Flipkart account, studying the analytics to help focus on which category of goods Flipkart should concentrate on, to build volumes and to ensure profit. Today, Rao is working on a presentation he will make later to the Flipkart team on how to increase mobile downloads of their app.

Later in the day, Rao leaves office to meet a client. HDFC bank has recently redesigned its home loan pages and Rao and a few colleagues from Webchutney will sit with the HDFC team to review the new pages.

Rao has spent a major portion of his day on a few accounts. He recalls the early days of Webchutney and their partnership with Airtel and MasterCard. The role of a digital agency has changed over the years, he realizes. From pitching for individual projects, the agency is now on retainer for many brands like Airtel and Makemytrip, and Rao spends time on these accounts. He recalls the internet ads Webchutney made for travel website Makemytrip in the early years. The ads won Abbys (the famous advertising awards) and pulled Webchutney up to the position of the best digital agency. Still, he feels he should spend more time on business development and on meeting new clients as well.

Things are changing in the digital space. 'In the next few years, online advertising is going to become irrelevant. The next 200 million internet users will come from mobile, and mobile, as a medium, has not been designed for advertising. Marketers have tried to do banner ads, but have not made much headway. There's really no innovative mobile advertising. So for a digital agency to stay relevant, it has to go beyond advertising, and mutate into the tech-consulting space. Because the internet is not just a medium to advertise, it's a business challenge. Campaigns will be about driving billions of dollars' worth of transactions through a website, to work on operational problems or on customer relationship management programmes, etc.,' Rao tells his associates.

Education

College dropout	Delhi University	1997
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Work Experience

Grey Worldwide	Intern	1998
Webchutney	Founder and CEO	1999 to present

THE SECRET TO GETTING THERE

A diploma in digital marketing is a good start. There are many on offer – mostly online. These include courses on portals like Coursera, Udacity,

EDX. You can also take exams like the Google Analytics exam and HubSpot's Inbound Certification exam for extra certification. In India, websites like Digital Vidya, ManipalProLearn offer digital marketing courses. There are workshops conducted by business schools like Indian School of Business (ISB), IIM Bangalore and XLRI as well as classroom courses from institutes like NIIT. Doing an internship in digital media, in areas like search engine optimization or social media marketing also helps.

MONEY MATTERS IN DIGITAL MARKETING

- *Freshers: Around ₹2.5 lakh per annum*
- *With four-five years of experience: ₹9–15 lakh per annum*
- *Salaries at the director level can go up to ₹1 crore*

FIVE ESSENTIAL SKILLS NEEDED TO BE GOOD AT DIGITAL MARKETING

- *Excellence in statistics and in Excel programming*
- *Attention to detail*
- *A willingness to learn, and humility – because things in this medium change every day*
- *Patience, because if you lose patience with the data, it's disastrous*
- *A knowledge and understanding of social media, analytics and tech*

WHY YOU SHOULD WORK IN DIGITAL MARKETING

1. *This is where the jobs are.*
2. *It is a field in which you can build your skills yourself by studying online.*
3. *The pay is great.*
4. *You can work flexibly and from home, and have a better work-life balance.*

WHAT NOBODY TELLS YOU ABOUT WORKING IN DIGITAL MARKETING

- 1. A lot of expertise has to be self-learnt as the digital ecosystem is constantly changing and evolving.*
- 2. You have to constantly keep up with technology to stay good, as search algorithms and digital platforms change continuously.*

Online Resources for the Digital Marketer

- @buffer
- kissmetrics
- marketingprofs
- blog.hubspot
- moz.com/blog
- ducttapemarketing
- referralcandy
- impactbnd

MANAGEMENT CONSULTING

The Art of Giving Advice

‘My greatest strength as a consultant is to be ignorant and ask a few questions.’

—Peter Drucker



Management consultants begin young, many straight out of business school. They notch up frequent-flyer points as they jet-set to clients to crunch the numbers and spot the trends - never mind the stress or the constant travel. One day they may be advising an automotive company, the next day they are presenting strategy to a luxury brand - which other profession can offer that kind of variety?

Though it's a high-pressure career and many consultants do drop out at different levels, they often move to influential positions in industry, as heads of strategy, or even as CEOs. Management consulting thus becomes a springboard for accelerated careers. Read here the story of Yaquta Mandviwala, who is currently a partner at Bain and Company. Also learn about the best consulting books to read and the career hacks you can use, if you want to land management consulting as a career.

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- ▶ [The Life Scientist Who Became a Management Consultant: Yaquta Mandviwala](#)

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 - ▶ [Four Reasons Why You Should Work in Management Consulting](#)
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 - ▶ [Films for the Consultant](#)
 - ▶ [Online Resources for the Networked Consultant](#)
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THE LIFE SCIENTIST WHO BECAME A MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

YAQUTA MANDVIWALA

Partner, Bain and Co.,
Mumbai
Age: 37 years

A day in the life of a consultant: Most Mondays begin as early as 4.30 a.m., as Mandviwala catches an early morning flight to a client site. Once there, the day is spent working with the company, in meetings and workshops, or in interviews with their management. Dinner is with the team and clients, and the conversation is a mix of work and other stuff.



Typically, the bulk of the week is spent travelling, to destinations in India like Delhi, Chennai and Bengaluru and sometimes, to international destinations in Southeast Asia like Bangkok, for internal Bain meetings.

On Fridays, Mandviwala tries, like most other consultants at Bain, to make it back to the office. 'Fridays at Bain' is an initiative for teams to reconnect and time is spent in meetings at the office, brainstorming on projects, reviewing the approach and discussing solutions and recommendations.

Her years in consulting have taken her from talking to tractor buyers in rural districts in Karnataka to a consulting stint as the guest of a royal family in West Asia. 'When you sit in a boardroom, it is not about making slides and presentations. It is about having been on the ground and talking to people – that's what makes companies actually listen to you,' she says.

What she loves most about the job: 'The opportunity to be able to create

impact fairly quickly through changes you suggest, since you work with people at the CXO (top) level. Also, being able to do lots of different things – in different industries and different geographies. You also get to work with a bunch of really smart and ambitious people.’

What she would like to change: The constant travel can be challenging.

Work-life balance: ‘This whole concept of work-life balance is made out to be a zero-sum game. That is, if there is more work, there is less of life, and vice versa. Work is meant to enrich life. For me, at any given time, whatever is most important gets done. If there is work stuff I need to do over the weekend, I do it, and the same way, if I need to take a personal call during work hours, I do.’

Education

B.Sc Life Sciences	Presidency College, Kolkata	1984
MBA	IIM Calcutta	1988

Work Experience

Citibank		2004-05
Monitor Consulting, Mumbai		2006-10
Bain and Co., Mumbai	Principal, and now partner	2009 to present

THE SECRET TO GETTING THERE

There are some classic routes to becoming a management consultant. Graduate from the world’s best-known colleges and business schools for campus placements to consulting companies. Specialize. Consulting companies often recruit sector experts, with PhDs or with job experience in a particular vertical – like supply chain, risk analysis, *etc.*

Check the careers section on the websites of management consultant firms like McKinsey and Co. (http://www.mckinsey.com/careers/join_us/interview_prep for more detailed advice.) EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT MAKING MONEY IN CONSULTING

Management consulting pays very well. Salaries vary depending on which firm you join but here are some industry estimates:

- *Entry level: ₹15–35 lakh a year*
- *Manager/case team leader: ₹40–50 lakh a year*
- *Principal level: approximately ₹75 lakh–1 crore a year*
- *Partner level: Upwards of ₹1.5 crore a year*

THE SEVEN SKILLS YOU NEED TO SUCCEED IN CONSULTING

1. *You need to be intelligent.*
2. *You need to be able to draw insights from data. To cut the data differently and look at patterns which were being missed.*
3. *You need to be a very empathetic listener, to listen and understand your client's issues.'*
4. *It helps to come across as an interesting person.*
5. *Since consultants are in the business of providing advice, you need to communicate in an articulate fashion.*
6. *After solving the problem, you also need to convince the client to come on board with the solution.*
7. *You should be willing to put in the effort to constantly connect and network with new people.*

FOUR REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD WORK IN CONSULTING

1. *You will have a jet-setting lifestyle with lots of travel, within India and abroad.*
2. *Working in consulting significantly improves your job prospects – even if you leave consulting, you can always join client firms.*
3. *You learn a lot about different industries. It is quite usual for a consultant to work with two or three different industries.*
4. *Early in your career, you interact with senior people at client firms. You get a chance to learn from them as well as develop your skills in communicating with senior managers.*

WHAT NOBODY TELLS YOU ABOUT BEING IN CONSULTING

- *Needs a lot of travel and involves living out of a suitcase.*
- *Getting to the top (making partner) can be tough – many consultants choose to leave instead, after five–ten years or even fifteen years.*
- *The work hours are long. With that and the travel, there is often no work-life balance.*

FIVE BOOKS EVERY ASPIRING CONSULTANT SHOULD READ

There are literally hundreds of books on strategy, leadership and organizational structure that would-be consultants should read. Here are some recommendations:

1. ***The Competitive Advantage of Nations* by Michael Porter:** The godfather of all modern day consultants, Michael Porter revolutionized consulting. He is best known for the famous technique of the famous SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities, strengths) analysis framework. A must-read for all consultants.
2. ***The Firm* by Duff McDonald:** A tell-all exposé on McKinsey and company. Fascinating reading.
3. ***Case Interview Secrets* by Victor Cheng:** If you are looking to land a job as a consultant, this is a great book to read. It has tips for problem-

solving, interviewing, presentations and how to ace the case discussion interviews.

4. ***The Pyramid Principle* by Barbara Minto:** Always recommended as the Bible of good writing for all consultants, this book can be dense and detailed at times. Still, it's a good read for anyone wanting to dive deep into consulting.
5. ***The Mind of a Strategist*, by Kenichi Ohmae:** A former McKinsey management guru explores the ways in which the strategist must think, the key principles and thought patterns that real-world strategists have used to move their companies forward in Japan and throughout the world.

Films/TV Series Every Consultant Should See

1. ***Up in the Air*:** Starring George Clooney as a high-flying consultant.
2. ***House of Lies*:** A TV series on consulting, based on the 2005 memoir by Martin Kihn, a consultant with Booz Allen Hamilton.

Online Resources for the Enthusiastic Management Consultant

- firstconsulting.com: Set up by an ex-McKinsey partner, this site features case discussions, interviews, rankings of strategy consulting firms.

TWITTER

- @thinkers50
- @TEDchris
- @RogerLMartin
- @edge
- @PeterDiamandis
- @R_Thaler
- @KPMG

- @McKinsey

WEBSITES

- McKinsey & Co.
- BCG, Bain & Co.
- Deloitte S&O
- PwC Strategy
- AT Kearney
- Oliver Wyman Accenture

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Talent Managers

‘Human resources are like natural resources; they’re often buried deep. You have to go looking for them, they’re not just lying around on the surface. You have to create the circumstances where they show themselves.’

—Ken Robinson



As businesses grow more complex and more automated, their human element becomes even more important. Read here about Manish Sabharwal, an entrepreneur who has created India’s best known human resources outsourcing company. Also read about Srikrishna Pai, an engineer who started off sceptical about working in HR, but grew to love it. What are the essential skills an aspiring HR man needs, how much money can he earn, what books and movies should he look at - learn all this in the following pages.

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- ▶ [The Emperor of Jobs: Manish Sabharwal](#)
- ▶ [Using Technology to Manage People: Ramakrishna V.](#)
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- ▶ [Everything You Need to Know about Making Money in HR](#)
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- ▶ [Three HR Myths](#)
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- ▶ [Online Resources for the Aspiring HR Professional](#)

THE EMPEROR OF JOBS

MANISH SABHARWAL

Founder, Team Lease

Age: 50 years

‘We employ one Indian every five minutes’, says Manish Sabharwal, who runs staffing company Team Lease. Sabharwal and his college roommate partner, Ashok Reddy, set up this staffing company for temporary labour in 2004. The company decided to diversify into vocational training as well – moving from employment to creating employability. Today, Team Lease has grown into a ₹2,000-crore turnover company; it has established vocational training colleges, and works with the central and state government in training and employment. Much of Sabharwal’s time is spent interacting with his various stakeholders – employers, students and the government.



‘My job involves bringing in senior people laterally from large organizations and building a culture of performance, re-engineering processes and technology, and finally selling and building the brand. So essentially, talent, operations and sales.

Best part of the job: It is the intersection of being in a company that is fun, profitable and good for India. I had worked for a manufacturing company before going to business school and while that was profitable and good for India, it was not much fun. I know a cola company franchisee operation well; they are fun and profitable but not good for India (at least that is what my dentist thinks, and I agree). Team Lease is a unique confluence of being a high-growth business with a huge addressable market that solves an important national problem.

Worst part of the job: The fact that we have grown so large that I don’t

know everybody who works with us, that growing large means we often have to err on the side of structure (some days I call it bureaucracy) and that growing large means we are less spontaneous or nimble about our feet than we used to be.

Career advice: My advice to young people in choosing an industry or company is only one filter; choose something that is high-growth. India's staffing, skilling and education industry are going to be high-growth for a long time; only 80 per cent of India's infrastructure of opportunity of 2030 is yet to be born. The skills to be successful are different at different stages; in the early years, functional skills like sales, marketing, finance, HR, *etc.* are needed, but over time, all that matters is courage, persistence, curiosity, teamwork and patience.

Success mantra: A world that is changing fast is a world inherited by learners. Professionals must stop living on their education from years ago and read much more than they used to; fast food is a poor substitute for the vitamins and minerals that only come from reading books. And not only fiction; the best book about strategic alliances is the biography of the Duke of Marlborough by Winston Churchill; the best book to understand creativity is *Agony and Ecstasy* by Irving Stone; the best book to understand why India is poor is *India after Gandhi* by Ramachandra Guha. But my all-time favourite business book is *Strategy: A History of* by Lawrence Freedman – it is an amazing look at how strategy (the art of getting things done) has evolved from the military and politics to business.

Education

B.Com	SRCC, Delhi University	1987
MBA	Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, US	1996

Work Experience

India Life – Pension and Payroll outsourcing	Founder	1997-01
Team Lease – HR Outsourcing	Founder	2004 to present

USING TECHNOLOGY TO MANAGE PEOPLE

RAMAKRISHNA V.

Senior Vice President and (now) director, IDFC, Mumbai

Age: 36 years

Ramakrishna says you can't do HR by intuition, you need to know the science behind it.

'Initially, I felt HR, as a discipline, is unstructured and abstract and might not work for someone like me with a structured background,' he says. But he was swiftly and happily proved wrong, he says. Whether it is determining what motivates employees or designing a system of bonus payouts, every aspect of HR has a science behind it, he says.

A day at work: Ramakrishna is at office by 9 a.m. on all weekdays except Wednesdays (when he begins the day at 7 a.m. at the Kalina grounds, practising cricket as part of IDFC's corporate cricket team). Ramakrishna, who had worked earlier as a specialist in compensation and benefits, has recently started working on setting up processes for the IDFC Bank. The day is full of meetings. 'My role is to consolidate the efforts of teams like HR and the core services teams that are working on setting up the bank,' says Ramakrishna. He has three-four meetings every day with different vendors for hiring, selection of premises, *etc.* Work wraps up by eight or nine in the evening. But Ramakrishna carries on work-related calls during the forty-minute commute to his home in suburban Powai in Mumbai.

Most proud of: A project to automate the time office, which monitors the in-time and attendance of workers, at the Hindustan Zinc plant in Debari.

'There was a lot of resistance to automation,' says Ramakrishna. He had been assigned this project as a young manager in 2005, and completed it by getting the workmen involved. 'We made a team, involving one person from the time office, an old-timer who was proud of being able to use computers, as well as supervisors from other departments,' he says. The project went on to win a gold medal from the CEO as part of a Six Sigma productivity improvement initiative, and was deemed a huge success.

Interviewing candidates: 'Tell me about a success at your last

organization? Tell me about something you failed at and why?’ are two questions Ramakrishna always asks. The answers to these questions often give an insight into the person’s emotions, thoughts, and the way he gives credit to other people, says Ramakrishna.

Education

B.Tech	VNR Vignana Jyothi Institute of Engineering & Technology, Hyderabad	1999-03
MBA – Human Resources	T.A. Pai Management Institute, Manipal	2003-05

Work Experience

Sterlite	Associate Manager, HR	2005-06
Vedanta	Deputy Manager, HR	
IDFC, Mumbai	Vice President, Senior Vice President, Director, HR	2008 to present

THE SECRET TO GETTING THERE

A specialization in human resources helps. Such specializations are offered by most business schools, including the specialist XLRI. This is generally at the postgraduate level.

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT MAKING MONEY IN TALENT MANAGEMENT AND HR

- *Starting salaries: Range from ₹8-15 lakh per annum*
- *Senior levels: ₹18 lakh per annum to ₹35 lakh per annum, with variable bonuses*
- *CEO in HR/Director levels: Range from ₹80 lakh per annum to ₹1.5 crore*

FOUR SKILLS NEEDED TO SUCCEED IN HR/TALENT

FOUR SKILLS NEEDED TO SUCCEED IN HR/TALENT MANAGEMENT

1. *Basic etiquette, like taking calls and responding immediately. Employees are your stakeholders; if you are not always reachable and responsive to them, then you are not a good HR manager.*
2. *Good communication skills and the ability to keep things confidential, so that employees find you approachable and are able to talk to you.*
3. *The ability to know your organization's numbers – not just employee numbers but the numbers for revenue sources.*
4. *The ability to study and understand the business and to help it grow. Going beyond record-keeping, the ability to do analysis of attrition levels or diversity levels.*

WHY YOU SHOULD WORK IN HR

- *You have an opportunity to have a huge impact on the company through the kind of people you hire.*
- *You get a chance to make a direct impact on the culture of the company through design and implementation of performance evaluation, reward and employee benefit schemes.*
- *You can early on play a strategic role in the company through managing and motivating talent.*
- *There will always be a demand for this specialization, since dealing with people is a core necessity for any organization.*

WHAT NOBODY TELLS YOU ABOUT WORKING IN HR

1. *It can be hard to make friends at work since you are constantly balancing the interest of the employees with that of the company. People who receive bad assessments will dislike you. You have to deal with unpopular activities like firing.*

2. *You may not have decision-making power in many employee-related matters. In such cases, coordinating with functional and operational departments may sometimes become frustrating.*
3. *Because HR's contribution to company profits is indirect and not easily quantifiable, HR may not always be given credit for their contribution to the company.*

THREE HR MYTHS

1. *That you can do HR by intuition, or by having studied psychology in your graduate programme. This is not true. You need to study to know the science behind HR.*
2. *That HR professionals are mere MIS providers. With the right inputs and expertise, HR professionals can be as important as the CFO/CTO of a company and become the right hand of the CEO.*
3. *HR is often seen as a monolith, but in reality, there are a variety of roles. You could work in a plant with unions, in training, in reward management, recruitment, or as a business partner.*

NINE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS EVERY HR PERSON SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR

- Why do you want to work in HR?
- Thinking back over your college years and your job experiences, have you ever helped to initiate a change? What was the change and your role in making the change happen?
- How did you motivate your team to succeed? How did you establish goals and priorities?
- When you had someone in your team under-performing, what did you do to get that person to start performing?
- How would you gauge whether a candidate is suitable for our company? What questions would you ask?
- What do you believe is the role of the HR department in relation to

the mission and strategies of the business?

- What would you measure to determine whether the HR department was doing an effective job for the company?
- An employee came to the HR department with a complaint about his or her manager. How will you investigate the complaint and help the employee solve the problem? Any prior instance of this?
- If you were the decision maker, what programmes for employees would be your priority in an organization?
- Can you talk about any HR practices in a company which you found impressive?

SEVEN BOOKS HUMAN RESOURCE PROFESSIONALS SHOULD READ

1. ***How Google Works*** by Eric Schmidt: A fascinating account of how to build great organization.
2. ***Work Rules!*** by Lazlo Bock: The former head of people operations at Google writes on how to use human resources to build a great company. Crammed with great stories and pointers on how to motivate, how to 'nudge' people into better patterns, how to evaluate, and so on. This is a great read for any HR man.
3. ***Games People Play*** by Eric Berne: The bestselling classic that describes the psychology of human relationships.
4. ***The First 90 Days*** by Michael Watkins: As the name suggests, this is a good book on how to use the first few months in a new organization. For new hires, it's a relevant look at how to hit the ground running, how to organize priorities, and how to split up what you need to learn into easily manageable chunks.
5. ***Good to Great*** by Jim Collins: This all-time classic discusses people and processes that separate great organizations from good ones.
6. ***The Seven Day Weekend*** by Ricardo Sembler: The story of Semco, a company with unconventional HR policies, where employees choose their working hours and their work spaces.

7. **HBR's ten must reads – The Essentials:** This set of ten slim books includes Daniel Goleman on using emotional intelligence to maximize performance, as well as Peter Drucker on managing your career by evaluating your own strengths and weaknesses.

Online Resources for the HR Professional

- LinkedIn
- Glassdoor
- Naukri
- Monster
- Payscale
- Hewitt
- Salary
- Citehr
- Greatplacetowork
- Haygroup
- Recruiting

Blogs:

- Fistful of Talent
- Undercover Recruiter
- The Human Resources Social Network
- Talent Board
- HR Bartender blog
- Meghan Biro

TWITTER

- @fistfuloftalent

- @UndercoverRec
- @KevinWGrossman
- @MeghanMBiro

HOW TO CHANGE CAREERS



Do you obsessively watch the clock at work? Do you respond with a sigh when someone asks you what you do? Or feel you don't get recognition or make an impact? Time then to consider changing careers. For today's workforce, career shifts are the new normal. In fact, a background in a different career can even be an advantage to future employers. Many skills are transferrable across industries, as you will find in these stories of career changes. Read here about bestselling author Amish Tripathi, who quit banking to become a writer and about Twinkle Khanna who gave up acting and became a newspaper columnist and bestselling writer. There is also the story of investment banker M.R. Madhavan who decided to quit investment banking with its multiple lakh bonuses to do high impact research for the Indian Parliament. Following these stories, read the eight things that will maximize your chances of success in switching careers.

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Madhavan

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THE BANKER-TURNED-BESTSELLING WRITER

Amish Tripathi spent fourteen years working as a banker before he became a full-time writer. His first book, *The Immortals of Meluha* was initially rejected by twenty publishers, before a Delhi-based literary agent decided to give him a commercial footing and publish his book.

How he got here: After a postgraduate diploma in management from IIM Calcutta (1997), Amish joined banking. He worked for years as a banker at Standard Chartered Bank and then at IDBI. 'My heart told me that I wanted to pursue writing. My mind told me that I don't have any inherited wealth, I need to be practical and pragmatic,' he recounts. He resigned from his job only after his second book became a success, when his royalty cheque exceeded his salary cheque.



On switching careers: ‘You must use your heart to decide the destination but use your mind to plot the journey. I found people who have not thought through the change that they want to make; they just want to kick their boss, kick their job and jump right into something and then they fail at it, and that becomes a source of dissonance and sadness in their life. At the same time, someone can refuse to listen to their heart and just keep compromising, and then at age fifty or sixty, when their career is over, they are unhappy with the way their life has turned out! So you need a balance of both,’ says Amish.

For five-six years, Amish worked two jobs – management at IDBI Federal Life Insurance and writing. And when he left IDBI, he made sure he kept his options open. ‘I gave my boss, the CEO, a long notice period. I hired my replacement. I trained him. So I left him on good terms and he threw a farewell party for me. When I left, he gave me a lovely big idol of Lord Shiva as a gift at my farewell party. I even told him, “Sirji, if things

go bad, I'll come back to the job.”

Daily routine: Amish is an early riser, normally up by 5–5.30 a.m. every day. He exercises, does his puja, and reads his four newspapers every morning. Then he sits down to write by 8.30 or 9 a.m. Amish lives with his wife Preeti and his son Neel, in a flat in Mahim in Mumbai. Most of his writing is done here, in his study at home with a view of the sea.

‘Sometimes I might write all day, sometimes it may be for a few hours,’ he says. Later in the day, he may travel to his office for meetings or marketing related work. He travels quite a lot, often for book promotions or other events. And sometimes to write. ‘Much of *The Oath of the Vayuputras* was written in Kashi – I hired a place there. I wrote much of *The Scion of Ikshvaku* in Nasik, in Panchvati,’ he says.

Skills needed to be a successful writer: ‘Banking helped me hone my business sense. Because there is a business side to books as well – there are contracts that have to be negotiated, there is marketing that needs to be done, there are strategic calls that need to be taken. In a way, I am also an entrepreneur. I manage the business that emerges from my books. So my banking experience has certainly helped me out there, because we did a lot of innovative marketing things which had never been tried before. For my first book, we distributed the first chapter of the book as a sampler, free of cost; that had never been done before. It worked really well for us. We made a trailer film, which worked well too. That is certainly a learning, that you need to have proper marketing activities in place.’

Career advice to aspiring writers: ‘Be a good reader. A good reader gets all the inputs, the knowledge and the insights needed to become a good writer. When you are writing, you must be true to the spirit of your book. You must write with the honesty of your heart. You should be detached from success or failure when you are writing, because it is the voice of your soul.’

Reading list: Shashi Tharoor’s *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India*. I am halfway through it. It is a difficult book to read. I have read books on the British Raj before – *Late Victorian Holocaust* by Mike Davis, *The Company That Changed the World*, Will Durant’s *The Case for India*, and I always find these books very difficult to read because I get angry

every ten-fifteen pages and I am forced to put it down. A lot has been done to this country – forget being angry with the British Raj, what the hell were we Indians doing? We allowed them to do this. I simply don't understand Indians today who believe that the British Raj was good for us. I am also reading Shri Aurobindo's book on India, *The Renaissance in India*.'

Money matters: 'Unless your parents have left tonnes of money for you, and most of us Indians don't have that, there is the practical matter of money, for which I would suggest, have a job on the side. One can't count on a career in writing – a writing career is a bit like a movie career or a sporting career. Not just in India but abroad as well, most people actually don't make that much money. In fact, they can't even make a proper living out of it. There are very few people who make money beyond their wildest dreams.' Amish himself held onto his banking job for five years after he became a writer. Today he earns crores of rupees from his writing.

THE ACTOR-TURNED-AUTHOR

Twinkle Khanna wrote poems while she was in school, but she had no plans to be a writer. Instead, she entered films.

She chose films because it was important for her at that time to make money. Twinkle had seen her mother (actor Dimple Kapadia) be an independent woman, and she realized she too needed to be independent. 'A career in films just made more sense. I looked the part, so I got a lot of work. Also, since I'm the daughter of Dimple Kapadia and Rajesh Khanna, that helped too.'

How she got here: Twinkle started her film career in 1995. By 1999, despite good reviews and repeat film offers, she realized she was bored with Bollywood. In 2001, she formally quit films. A year later, in 2002, she launched her interiors store, The White Window. Writing came almost a decade later, in 2013, with a fortnightly column for DNA, followed by one for the *Times of India*. In 2015, she released her first non-fiction book, *Mrs Funny Bones*, which sold over one lakh copies. This was followed last year by a book of short stories called *The Legend of Lakshmi Prasad*, which received rave reviews.



Daily duty: The actor-turned-writer's day starts early, around 6 a.m., with yoga and some meditation. She sits down to write by 7.30 a.m. Khanna says she can write anywhere. 'But I do most of my writing downstairs, at a desk off my living room. I can write and also keep an eye on the children.' And yes, at times, she does get disturbed and irritated by interruptions like, 'Madam aaj khana ke liye kya banana hai?' (What food has to be cooked for today?) At which time, she puts on a pair of earphones with 'white noise', like the hum of machinery or the sound of a fridge. She writes steadily till 10.30 a.m. She works on the fortnightly 'Mrs Funny Bones' column she writes for the *Times of India*. 'Some days, it's easy; so much has been happening in the news that it is easy to get ideas and write. Then I finish my column in one sitting. Others days, I struggle. My last column took me six hours,' she says.

Twinkle says she sometimes gets into trouble with people for the things she says in her column. Recently, she made fun of a superstar and she had

his fans up in arms and attacking her on Twitter. She won't spill names but describes how her husband occasionally gets calls from political personalities – 'Tell Bhabhiji to be careful,' they remonstrate. For all these reasons, she says she runs her columns by her husband before she sends them for publication.

'He has a pulse on what works. Besides, we don't want *morchas* outside our house,' she laughs. When Ms Khanna is not writing columns, she works on fiction. 'I have three different ideas I am working on – they could come out as a novel, novella or short stories. Let's see.'

After her hours of writing, Ms Khanna leaves by 11 a.m. for The White Window, her interiors store in Bandra, where she works till afternoon, meeting clients or making a site visit. She returns home by 4 and spends the rest of her day with her children, Aarav, aged fourteen, and Nitara, who is four.

On switching careers: Twinkle Khanna says she got bored of being in Bollywood. 'I know being a famous actor and in the limelight is a dream for so many people,' she says. 'But I was born in this world. It wasn't something I aspired to. I used to spend all day on the set, reading or knitting. I remember my driver telling me, "Please don't knit, everybody will think you are an old lady."' She started working part-time with an architect even while she was acting. She always loved reading, but started writing only a few years ago. Her writing break came with a column she was asked to write for DNA. 'Sarita Tanwar, the editor (DNA), knew me and understood that I had an irreverent way of looking at things and asked me if I would write a column,' Twinkle says. The DNA column proved so successful that she was approached soon after by the *Times of India*, where she began the 'Mrs Funny Bones' column which went on to launch her career as an author.

Success mantra: 'I read, and try to be aware of what's happening in the universe. And then present my amalgamation of it to the world, in a way that's informative and entertaining.'

Career advice on being a writer: 'Write every day. Write 1,000 words. Then throw out 800 and keep the best 200 words. Look at life through the lens of 'what if' – if you meet somebody or some situation, even if it has nothing to do with you, try and think of the back story. Eat

carbohydrates – it's food for your brain. Read. Everything. All sorts of genres, whether they interest you or not. Read great books to see what you can achieve and terrible books so that you know you can do better than that.'

Favourite Books:

- *Tender Is the Night* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- *Gold: The Final Science Fiction Collection* by Isaac Asimov
- *Hot Milk* by Deborah Levy ('recently read and fresh in my head')
- *Anthologies of science fiction short stories* ('that's my love')
- *Any P.G. Wodehouse novel* ('they always make me laugh')
- *Jhumpa Lahiri's short stories* ('I love short stories')

FIVE MOVIES ON THE WRITER/JOURNALIST LIFE

- ***Spotlight***: *Four journalists pursue a story about child molestation charges against the local church in this 2015 Oscar-winning film.*
- ***All the President's Men***: *This film is based on the real-life story of the two reporters who investigated a Watergate burglary following the trail right upto President Nixon and the White House. Full of classic characters like the journalists themselves and the informant, Deep Throat, this is one must-see.*
- ***The Newsroom***: *This fascinating HBO drama series tracks the behind-the-scenes drama at a newsroom. Star news anchor Will McAvoy, played by Jeff Daniels, tries to report news constructively, never mind the commercial and political concerns.*
- ***The Hours***: *Nicole Kidman plays writer Virginia Woolf in this unforgettable film about writing, about depression and about women. It focuses on three women of different generations whose lives are interconnected by the novel Mrs Dalloway by Virginia Woolf.*
- ***Capote***: *This melancholic film explores the tragic character of writer Truman Capote as he travels to a small Kansas town to investigate a gruesome murder. Capote writes about the murder in his bestselling book In*

Cold Blood, but he is also immensely drawn to the accused in the murder.

THE INVESTMENT BANKER-TURNED- PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCHER

M.R. MADHAVAN

(Formerly) Investment Banker, Principal and Senior Strategist, Asia Region, Bank of America, Singapore.

(Currently) President, Institute for Policy Research Studies, New Delhi

Age: 48 years

In his previous job, Madhavan spent days (and some nights) researching international currency movements and writing papers on them. It was a great job, with sky-high bonuses, but Madhavan was bored. 'Currency research gets repetitive; at the end of the day, there are only so many factors that affect currencies,' he says.



It was around this time (in 2005) that Madhavan's IIT Madras batch mate, C.V. Madhukar, who was completing his master's in public policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, US, floated the idea of setting up a research service institute in India. He asked Madhavan to partner with him in setting up PRS Legislative Research (PRS), a centre that would provide background research on legislative and policy issues to members of the Indian Parliament across party lines.

'I had worked in research at ICICI Securities and at Bank of America for about a decade and that actually gave me training on how to do research. And more importantly, it taught me to communicate research in an easy-to-understand format,' says Madhavan, explaining why both he and

Madhukar thought he would be able to do this job.

So in September 2005, Madhavan quit his job and moved to Delhi to set up the research cell at PRS. It was a radical career shift, and meant less money. But Madhavan says he has managed to make it work. 'It's never boring now. Today I might be researching the government's food grain management policy, tomorrow we might be evaluating defence expenditures. When Parliament is in session, I have MPs calling me at all hours for information. Sometimes I have as many as three meetings a day – some are at the Constitution Club, others at MPs' houses.'

EIGHT SURE-FIRE WAYS TO SUCCESSFULLY SWITCH CAREERS

1. **Get a degree.** A degree like an MBA, a master's in public policy or a PhD can help you switch careers. Many a shop floor engineer has turned finance professional or marketer after doing an MBA. Studying at a good institute has the advantage of giving you a completely new network as well. Of course, this process is expensive, both in terms of time and money, and there are other ways of changing careers.
2. **Keep your contacts alive.** It was staying in touch with Madhukar, an old batchmate, that gave Madhavan the opportunity to switch careers. Tapping old connections can give you a kickstart in your new industry. Partner with the right people to build ventures.
3. **Leverage existing strengths.** Prepare a sixty-second elevator pitch as to how your existing skills can work in the new industry. The speech, which you should be able to say verbatim, should also talk about what drew you to the industry. Something you might say could include, 'I know X (say, wind energy for example) today is an industry at the forefront of development. It will help India transform. I'd like to be a part of this transformation. I feel the skills that I have picked up in my existing profession can help me be successful.'

In Madhavan's case, the discipline of clear, well-researched reports for institutional clients while at ICICI Securities and Bank of America stood him in good stead. 'I find it easy to cull the essentials of a complicated situation, like the government's subsidy policy, and am able to design an informative note on it that people can understand,'

he says.

4. **Keep the research going.** Learn how to ask the right open-ended questions like, ‘What do you like about working in computer gaming?’ or ‘What are the prospects for a career in equity research?’ or ‘If someone wants to work in management consulting, where should she start?’

Madhavan says he examined research models for public policy in the US, like the Congressional Research Service reports, and spoke to friends and colleagues to evaluate whether PRS was workable. ‘After several conversations with them and with Madhukar, I felt this was something we could definitely do.’

5. **Take risks.** Moving out of a comfort zone to start from scratch can be difficult. But taking the risk of moving into new industries, from say investment banking to consulting to alternative energy, can be easy if your strength is building new things.
6. **Know when to give up.** If you hate your job, or are in a loss-making venture, leave it rather than hanging on and trying to make things work against all odds. So while you should give yourself time to make the decision, taking too long, like say, a year, doesn’t work either. This means you are taking energy away from your present job.
7. **Play detective.** Look for opportunities. Subscribe to magazines that talk about smaller, rapidly growing companies. Attend business meets. Once you identify a particular industry, try and attend trade shows or industry meets. Research the industry; read company websites, study news about relevant companies, and distill the details of the key management teams and their backgrounds. Meet senior people in the industry (preferably a few levels higher than the level you plan to join at) in order to research prospects.
8. **Keep your options open.** Try not to burn bridges at your existing place of work. Try to get colleagues and bosses to come on board with why you need to try something different. Help ensure the transition to your successor is smooth.

THREE AMAZING CAREER CHANGE MOVIES

1. ***The Godfather***: Michael Corleone begins life as an officer in the Marine Corps. He's rebelled against the family profession and decided to do things differently. As the movie goes on, events happen that begin to pull Michael towards becoming a godfather. His innate leadership skills and competencies pull him into switching professions. The lesson here is that family professions can have a powerful draw in your future career, even if you initially rebel against them.
2. ***The Pursuit of Happyness***: Watch Will Smith as he struggles and succeeds in transforming his career from a struggling salesman to a highly successful stock broker. The lesson here is that it was Will Smith's internship at a stock-broking firm that helped him switch careers.
3. ***Raising Helen***: In an interesting twist, a young fashion professional must turn mommy to her sister's three orphaned children. In the process, she discovers leadership skills, the ability to persuade, negotiate and prevail. She brings her fashion job skills to the new assignment as well – she's trendy and manages to connect much better with her charges.

HOW TO CRACK THE CHALLENGES OF BEING A WOMAN AT THE WORKPLACE

‘When a little boy asserts himself, he’s called a “leader”. Yet, when a little girl does the same, she risks being branded “bossy”.’

—Sheryl Sandberg,
COO, Facebook



Many things changed when Anusha Bhushan turned entrepreneur. Before the IIM Calcutta alumna became entrepreneur, she had worked in banking and in consulting, where she never felt any gender bias.

Then last year, Bhushan moved to Bengaluru to set up Smoodies, a start up that supplies smoothies. Being a woman suddenly became a challenge. Sometimes, it was having to deal with no restroom for women. Other times, it was in basic communication.

‘I’ve been in all sorts of situations where men are simply uneasy with having a woman in the workplace. They have been taught to be respectful and sometimes being respectful means they don’t look directly at you. That doesn’t work in the workplace,’ says Bhushan. She is normally soft-

spoken, but finds she does have to raise her voice simply in order to be heard.

Today, there are lots of conversations about such challenges. Organizations like Catalyst, whose mission it is to expand opportunities for women and business, carry out regular research. Women icons in business write their own stories and are being written about.



One of these early icons has been a person I got to know quite well, first as my boss and then as someone I interviewed – Naina Lal Kidwai. As a young management trainee, one of the first names I heard at ANZ Grindlays was hers. People talked of her in admiring tones. ‘Did you know

she was dictating letters from her hospital bed, the day she had her baby?’ her secretary Lorraine would tell us. We were in complete awe.

But it was years later that I would get a chance to look beyond the legend in the public eye, to draw lessons from Naina Lal Kidwai’s challenges. It happened at another meeting with her, this time in Delhi. I had moved careers by then, and was reporting for *Mint* on a story. We talked about career paths, about her daughter Kemaya and the glass ceiling. Naina was now Group Chairman at HSBC India, on the board of Nestle International, and she had just come back from the World Economic Forum at Davos.

Kidwai’s breakthrough moment at Grindlays had come with becoming the head of the investment bank, she said. It should have been automatic, but it wasn’t. ‘I was the largest revenue earner in the team and had a natural liking and proclivity to management and leadership. Organizing people and working with teams came quite easily to me. So how could the job go to anyone but me? Fortunately, the bank took the right step there, with a little pushing from me. It was the one time I didn’t hesitate to make suitably threatening noises,’ she says.

At times, we women create our own glass ceiling, by not being sure whether we are ready or even whether we should aspire for a particular job, says Kidwai. ‘A lot of surveys show women tend to step back and expect performance to be noticed, as if to say, *don’t make me fight for that position*. I see that even with young people today, men push a lot harder – men will catch you even on the way to the loo to make sure they are able to say their bit; they would follow you in if they could! And the women who have the opportunity to do that don’t!’

MAKE THE BIG ASK

It took Kamolika Peres almost a year, at an overseas posting, to discover she was being paid less than similarly qualified colleagues. ‘Women don’t do as much hanging around the coffee machine,’ says the forty-four-year-old, now vice president & head, strategic customer programme at SAP. Peres was then working with another global IT company she would prefer not to name. When she found out she was being paid less, it took her some courage to take her concerns to her boss, and from there to human resources, to have the ‘compensation conversation’. The company was

receptive, all ended well, and the imbalance was ‘to a large extent’ rectified. ‘It’s kind of comforting to believe your performance will be recognized. But just like markets are supposed – in theory – to be perfect but are not, so also there are often discrepancies in individual effort and rewards,’ she says.

Discrepancies in salaries between men and women do exist, varying only in degree. Worldwide, women earn less than men for the same job, says Catalyst Incorporated, an international research firm. A difference of approximately \$5,000 at the starting level ends up becoming half a million dollars by the time the woman is sixty, say Linda C. Babcock and Sara Laschever, authors of *Women Don’t Ask*.

‘Women don’t play hardball in interviews when it comes to salary. A man would say outright, for instance, “I expect a 33 per cent rise”, but women are diffident. “I’m okay” or “Whatever your company standards are” is their response,’ says Ankush Agarwal, former founder-CEO of Mint RPO, a Mumbai-based recruitment firm specializing in technology recruitment for global positions. Even where starting salaries offered to graduates or post-graduates are identical, there are candidates who would negotiate better deals and bonuses, especially for high pressure sales jobs that come with a lot of travel. ‘For management, it is a blind spot. They don’t think they are being unfair; he is on a sales team, getting orders, and she is on account management. What the woman needs to do is to make her case, which is that account management is paying the bills, and that the value of the account has grown x per cent. Nobody can argue with hard data, but people can argue with perceptions,’ says Agarwal.

There are many factors that skew salaries and compensation against women. Women shift jobs less than men, says Radhika Gopalkrishnan, partner at Aon Hewitt Associates, a global management consulting firm. So they miss out on the larger salary jumps that happen, most often, when you come into a job from outside. Besides, they tend to compromise constantly, coming back after a sabbatical with hesitancy, almost grateful that they got their jobs back.

So, why don’t women ask for higher pay? ‘It is because asking is perceived as being aggressive in a culture where women are lauded for being “nice” women,’ says Professor Ruchi Sinha, senior lecturer, organizational behaviour and human resource management, UNISA, Adelaide, Australia, who also teaches a course on negotiation. ‘Women are

great negotiators when it comes to representational negotiation; that is when they are negotiating for someone else. They have the ability to be empathetic and nicer than men who can be more aggressive, and are extremely successful in negotiating on someone else's behalf,' says Sinha, who teaches women they can indeed negotiate for themselves.

The first step to negotiating is recognizing women's natural disinclination to negotiate for themselves, says Sinha. 'Women feel a lower sense of entitlement than men. They don't feel they deserve so much. They also struggle with the pressure to be "nice", both externally and internally. They are apprehensive of being perceived as aggressive. They fear the backlash – from both men and women – that invariably occurs when women get too assertive. Internally, women don't want to look bad in their own eyes by being overly aggressive and asking for more pay.'

'Don't bother much with salary hikes, concentrate instead on work,' said many women friends and colleagues in a Facebook chat that Peres was part of. 'It's working without worrying about results in a (Bhagavad) Gita kind of way,' says Peres, voicing the karma theory that gave Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella so much bad press when he referred to it recently in response to a question on how women should ask for more pay.

'You can ask for money in multiple ways,' says Sinha, who feels women should leverage their distinctive strengths of being polite and empathetic, and be assertive, but not aggressive. They should use good negotiation tactics like anchoring the discussion, by naming a figure, and being prepared to provide a justification for that figure. 'Never agree to a salary in one sitting. If you say yes immediately, you don't get a chance to evaluate, to ask around through common contacts,' says Agarwal.

Asking for a raise can't be a feeble exercise either. 'An emotional outcry for a raise is not well received,' says Peres. Her advice: 'If you are a great performer and you are not on par with your peers (compensation-wise), you should present your case objectively, and with data.'

At the end of the day, it's all very well to be nice but what is considered competent, especially in an environment that is extremely masculinized, is not niceness, says Sinha. She declares, 'Nice women don't get noticed.'

SIX BOOKS EVERY SMART WOMAN NEEDS TO READ

1. *Lean in* by Sheryl Sandberg: The new Bible for women at work, this

bestselling memoir by Facebook COO advises women on how to get ahead in the workplace. You may love it or you may hate it, but read it you must!

2. ***Unfinished Business – Women, Men, Work, Family*** by Marie Ann Slaughter: The author writes about her experience of giving up a high-powered government job in Washington because she couldn't do justice to the job and to her family. The book grew out of Slaughter's article in *Atlantic* magazine, entitled 'Why Women Still Can't Have It All'. The piece went viral, was read by millions and is still debated.
3. ***Corporate Divas*** by Sonia Golani: This book features eighteen women who have battled the odds to reach the top of their fields. It includes the stories of women like ICICI Bank CEO Chanda Kochar, Roopa Kudva, managing director of Omidyar Network India Advisors and Axis Bank CEO, Shikha Sharma.
4. ***Own It: Leadership Lessons from Women Who Do*** by Aparna Jain: Based on interviews with 190 women in senior leadership positions in India, these are stories of prejudice and pressures women face. Lots of practical tips here on how to make an impact – from how to network, how to negotiate, and how to navigate office politics.
5. ***She Walks, She Leads*** by Gunjan Jain: The twenty-four women leaders profiled in the book come from different fields like banking, media, cinema, sports, fashion, philanthropy and industry. Most are very well-known names like Nita Ambani, Naina Lal Kidwai, Pepsico International CEO Indira Nooyi and tennis star Sania Mirza.
6. ***Mrs Money Penny's Career Advice for Ambitious Women***: A breezy, super readable book from *Financial Times* columnist Mrs Money Penny. It manages to pack in lots of good advice without ever being didactic or prescriptive. Well worth a read.

Websites

- Catalyst
- ForbesWoman
- Lean in Circles

- Inpowercoaching
- Careercontessa
- Makers
- Fortefoundation

Section Two

CAREER HACKS THAT NEVER FAIL

CONTENTS

- ▶ Learn to Tell Your Story – The Resume and the Interview
- ▶ Try Different Internships
- ▶ Get Yourself a Good Mentor
- ▶ Use These Tests to Know Yourself Better
- ▶ Consult the Employability Experts
- ▶ Build Supplementary Skills
- ▶ Dip into the Liberal Arts – Read These Eight Books

CAREER HACK #1

LEARN TO TELL YOUR STORY – THE RESUME AND THE INTERVIEW



It all starts with your resume. Your resume is the most important document in your job search. It is an employer's first glimpse of you.

Put the colourful pieces of your life together to create an interesting story – your education, your work experience and the people who may have inspired you along the way. Choose the ones that you feel are most interesting, that an interviewer will identify with. Write down for yourself incidents that you remember – what made you choose your subject or your institute. What incident in school/college/at work helped you realize a strength or weakness that you had. Weave these strands together and

form your story. Practise telling these stories.

Everybody loves a good story. Nothing sells better than a story. So if there is a chance that interviewer will remember you, it is because he will remember your story. Not your name, not your face, not even your grade point average.

So learn to tell your story. Analyse it. Explain it. Account for the gaps. The changes in direction. Believe in your story and learn to tell it well.

I started life as a banker, at ANZ Grindlays, the great British-Australian bank that once was. And moved from there to being a marketer. In 1994, I joined Tata Exports to market bone china tableware. The project sounded very exciting. The product even more – delicate bone china tableware with technology from the UK, the home of the most delicate bone china in the world!

The Tata bone china tableware project in India was set up in Cochin in the state of Kerala. In an export-oriented zone, set in the midst of coconut palms and the most amazing greenery.

My trips to Cochin were eventful and full of learning. So also the sessions with product designers, with marketing agents and consultants. Sadly, the project didn't make money. Commercially, it was a failure. But that failure taught me so much. About how design can make or break a product – we had great china, but didn't have the Villeroy and Boch or Wedgwood patterns. About costs – Tata Ceramics was set up in an export-oriented zone which was supposed to have many incentives – but our loans were taken at very high rates of interest, and most raw materials were imported. About distribution – the Tata Exports network had experience in leather goods, in textiles, but none in fine china. In negotiation – we had a few agents, all of whom asked to be exclusive, but were not prepared to give undertakings on the sales they would make.

From being a marketer I moved on to being an educator, running reading and mathematics workshops for children. From there to writing. And now a journalist. From banking to export marketing to teaching and then to writing. Lots of shifts and jumps. I spent years being apologetic about these jumps. Today, I realize it's a good story really. But only if I tell it well. Moving sectors and professions has given me adaptability, flexibility and the ability to land on my feet, come what may.

When I worked in a bank, I reconciled accounts. Years later, I visited wholesalers in Sadar Bazaar in Delhi to help sell bone china tableware. In

Mumbai, I drew maps for a treasure hunt on the streets of Juhu with twelve-year-olds, to teach them how to read directions. I interviewed artist M.F. Husain for the *Bombay Times* and actor Amitabh Bachchan for the *Deccan Herald*. I wrote stories on business. It all seemed so unconnected. And yet, the years working in business gave me an understanding of the business space and helped me to write better business stories. Running workshops for children and teenagers brought me to the question of innate skills, and skills that can be learned, as well as the best ways to learn them. And interviewing people in diverse fields like art, entertainment and business brought me to the central premise of this book – *how to choose right and get the life you want*.

So nothing you do, however offbeat or unconnected, is a waste. The iPhone was born because founder Steve Jobs studied calligraphy while at Reed College. Speaking at the commencement address at Stanford University, Jobs talked about the impact of the course. ‘I learned about serif and sans serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can’t capture, and I found it fascinating. None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But ten years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we designed it all into the Mac.’ So do it all and then connect the dots. Trace your story. And learn to tell your story, both in your resume and then later, during your interview.

Once you have figured out your story, you need to sketch it out, lightly, in your resume. ‘A resume should be like a teaser ad before the real one (the interview),’ says Purvi Sheth, CEO at Mumbai-based Shilputsi Consultants. ‘People tend to either put in too little or too much information. The idea is to put in enough, so it gives a clear picture of your experience and arouses curiosity, but not so much that it could backfire or is just too cumbersome to read,’ she says. After all, five to twenty-five seconds is how long the average recruiter will spend over your CV. So it is worth investing that extra time and attention to get your resume noticed.

FOUR FAIL-SAFE WAYS TO GET YOUR RESUME NOTICED

- Design your resume to look good

- Write your resume in such a way that robots can read!
- Appeal to an employer's requirements
- Make your resume interesting reading

Design your resume to look good

Your resume should be easy for the eye to scan. Name, contact details, experience and education should be easy to find, at a single glance. Use a clean, uncluttered, reader-friendly font. Arial and Times New Roman are standard and safe fonts. Other options include Cambria, Calibri and Garamond or Trebuchet MS. The size should be between eleven and twelve for most of the copy. Use bullet points, but not too many. Since bullet points are meant to draw attention, using more, than say five, takes away from the visual experience. Italics can be used as well, but selectively. Too many italics or too much bold defeats the purpose of using them – which is to draw attention to certain points. Have a text version of your CV. This version can be sent in the main body of an email. Attachments can be clunky to access or download, so having a well-formatted text version is an advantage.

Write a resume that robots can read!

Resumes today are searched digitally. Using the right keywords in your job experience or skills section will maximize your chances of being seen and selected by recruiters. Determine the right keywords for a job by scanning the ad copy for the jobs. Phrases like 'analysed', 'appraised', 'estimated', 'collaborated', 'allocated', 'facilitated', 'forecast', 'motivated', *etc.* can be useful words to employ in the description of your skills. Terms like 'marketing campaigns', 'customer database', 'procurement' should be used if relevant. If you have worked with a Fortune 500 company, using 'Fortune 500' helps your CV get picked up.

Make your resume appeal to an employer's requirements

List relevant experience early on. A bio data is often structured chronologically, starting with early education. The danger of this is that an employer may miss seeing what is relevant to him, if it appears too late in the CV. If, for instance, you are applying to an e-commerce firm, and you have had an internship with another e-commerce firm. it is better to put

down this fact early on in the resume, rather than list it on page two under 'Internships and Other Projects'. So pick what is most relevant to your potential employer. Highlight such experience or qualifications. Try and position this in the centre of the page, where the eye falls first. But take care that 'Current Position' should be listed early on as well, so that a potential recruiter can place where you are immediately.

Make your resume interesting to read

Tell your story. Problem-solving abilities are prized by all employers. Describing a difficult or challenging situation, and the steps you took to overcome it, can help interest employers.

Pick the more interesting experiences in your career, and write about those. Writing 'Hobbies: Reading, writing and travelling' is bland and insipid.

Instead put in details – 'Travelled to Sikkim as part of an internship with travel start up Tripver, helping to manage a group of twenty'. Or 'Formulated an outlook on Indian economy by analysing short and medium term trends, using a combination of statistical models and qualitative indicators'. Use numbers wherever possible. Describe your accomplishments in numerical terms. This gives them much more credibility. If you led a team, give the number of members. If you increased sales in a region, say what the figures were and how much you increased them by.

Resume to check out

Ex-Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer, who puts years of experience on a single page. Available online.

THE PERSONAL INTERVIEW – SIX WAYS TO MAKE SURE THIS GETS YOU THE JOB

Turn the personal interview to your advantage by keeping the following six maxims in mind:

LEARN TO TELL YOUR STORY – IN TWO VERSIONS

- *The long version: Here, write down six or seven subsidiary stories, that illustrate the challenges and learnings in your life. Incidents where your skill with data, with ideas, and with communication helped you achieve something. This could be anything from landing a job or a promotion you wanted to organizing a conference to winning a football match.*
- *The short sixty-second version: Your elevator pitch for yourself. Prepare for the most likely questions given below.*

PREPARE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS

- *Tell us about yourself.*
- *Why should we hire you?*
- *Why do you want to work for us?*
- *What do you think you can bring to the table?*
- *Tell us about a past achievement.*
- *Tell us about your biggest challenge and how you overcame it.*
- *Tell us about one mistake you made and how you overcame it.*
- *Why did you leave your last job?*

DRESS THE PART

It's always better to dress formally in an interview. It may seem an obvious thing to do, but many recruiters complain otherwise – of candidates who come in wearing T-shirts, and even slippers, or other sloppy attire. Likewise, avoid too much perfume/aftershave/make-up. Body language counts.

LOOK THE PART

You're nervous. You forget to smile. You don't make eye contact with the interviewers. All these things can prejudice a panel against you. Posture really does matter. Hear TED conference speaker Amy Cuddy as she explains on her TED talk (available online) why you should avoid doing things like folding your hands, or hunching. The first twenty seconds of an interview are when the interviewer decides a yes or a no, say research studies. The rest of the interview is mostly spent confirming that initial impression.

RESEARCH YOUR EMPLOYER

Research the organization. Pay close attention to everything on their website. Write down a list of metrics – turnover, profits, number of employees. For instance, if you are interviewing at consulting and accounting firm Pricewaterhouse, research close competitors Ernst and Young and KPMG as well.

PLAY THE PART EVEN WHEN YOU ARE NOT IN THE INTERVIEW CHAIR

It may sound improbable, but how you interact with fellow interviewees, with the receptionist, the canteen man or the lift man, can all play a part in whether you get the job or not. Small details get noticed and can swing your job either way. So be consistent in what you say and how you behave, both in and out of the interview room.

CAREER HACK #2

TRY DIFFERENT INTERNSHIPS



A few years ago, I met Sourav Patwari, an engineer who had interned with a Pune-based digital start up called Sokrati. The internship helped him get into a field that he found exciting – data crunching. ‘I worked on a project on search engine optimization, learnt things from a base level, worked with the sales team and the tech team as well as with clients,’ says the twenty-three-year-old. The biggest reward, however, came at the end of his four-month stint, when Sokrati made him an offer to return once he had completed his engineering degree at Pune’s Symbiosis Institute of Technology.

I remembered my own internships. The first as a class twelve student from Delhi Public School, R.K. Puram. It was at the publishing house, Oxford University Press (OUP). My first (and only) concern for this was sartorial. I needed office clothes! I shopped at Gurjari Emporium and Cottage India Arts and Crafts in Delhi’s Connaught Place, where I bought a few salwar kameezes, and would wear them in strictly regimented order. Wearing those formal clothes, as opposed to school uniform, suddenly made me feel very official. It underlined the fact of how different the work world was. What you wore suddenly became so important. It seemed to influence the way people at the office looked at you.

My projects at OUP focused on two things:

- Proofread a book of subaltern studies
- Write reviews on a book of poems

I didn’t really find any errors in the subaltern study proofs. My critical essays were never published. But interning at OUP taught me that the

world of publishing, with its hush-hush corridors and its rarefied scholarship, was not for me. Much as I loved to read, I wanted to work in the hustle and bustle of people, doing industrial development kind of things. Don't get me wrong, there is nobility in editing, but on getting up, close and personal with the job, I could see that it wasn't a good match for me.

My second internship was very different in three ways: sector-wise, geographically and sartorially. At the Timken company in Colmar in France, I sat in the finance section of a large multinational. I wore formal blouses, skirts and jackets. My project was to prepare a profitability study of tapered roller bearings, a widget kind of product I had never heard of before. I fed cost figures into an Excel spreadsheet, plugged in some basic volumes, and voila – I had my project! It wasn't a lot of work. I remember being disappointed. I felt like I hadn't really done anything at all.

Looking back, I realize I was too ambitious. I was working in a large multinational, not a start up. I had managed to learn how to do proper reports and was introduced to the delights of manoeuvring numbers on a spreadsheet. I also had the chance to practice soft skills, such as how to interact with colleagues. I learnt a smattering of French, how to travel alone by train across borders, and with my stipend, I bought myself my first camera ever. There was a huge merit to living in an unfamiliar environment and learning to adapt to new people and new practices.

FIVE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INTERN

- *It is a great way to spend a summer/holiday.*
- *It gives you a network that's completely different from your existing college network.*
- *It looks good on your resume.*
- *It allows you to check out which fields you like.*
- *It gives you some independence, the experience, perhaps, of living in a different city, and some pocket money as well.*

FOUR THINGS TO DO TO LAND A GOOD INTERNSHIP

1. **Begin your research early:** Check websites. There are industry

platforms like Internshala and Letsintern that make your search easier. There are individual company and government websites like the RBI. There are NGO and social entrepreneurs and start-up websites, many of which have details of their internship programmes online. Researching them early enough by checking their websites and Facebook pages keeps your options open. Both graduate and postgraduate students can apply to many of these programmes. Other useful websites where there are internship projects or discussion threads on internships are Oysterconnect, TechCrunch, Yourstory and Quora.

2. **Choose your sector and your firm:** Decide what it is – banking, consulting, marketing or programming – that you would like to do, and why. This way, you will be able to answer clearly why you would like to work in a particular sector. Scope out firms and identify their distinctive attributes. Identify the nuances in each of these companies, like their size and work culture. This will prepare you to give informed answers to questions most interviewers love – Why our firm? What do you think you can contribute to our team?
3. **Decide on whether you should intern at a start-up:** Interning at start ups lets you work in new-age sectors like data analytics and social media. And for those who aim to start their own businesses someday, interning at a start up is excellent hands-on training.
4. **Prepare for the internship interview:** Figure out what kind of people and roles companies are looking for. Some ways of doing this are attending forums like pre-placement talks where you may also have an opportunity to ask questions. Or find other ways to connect with senior recruiters in the company.

Study company websites in great detail. Go one step ahead and study competitor websites too! Being informed about the company and industry will help you answer interview questions better. Be prepared for questions like – Why do you want to intern with us? How do you think you can help us?

A BOOK EVERY INTERN SHOULD READ

The Devil Wears Prada by Candace Bushnell: A hapless intern gets ordered about by her boss. Watch the film version to see classic Meryl Streep play the evil boss. All's well though at the end; with the intern learning both about herself and about the world.

CAREER HACK #3

GET YOURSELF A GOOD MENTOR



Anjali Bansal was in a quandary. Working as a partner at talent management firm Spencer Stuart meant she had a demanding job and long hours. She had just got pregnant with her second child and was confused. ‘Will I be a bad mother if I keep working these hours? Should I slow down?’ Bansal was faced with an important decision. Should she carry on her high-pressure consultant career or look for something that would offer her more flexibility and more time?

‘I did then what any good consultant would do – I spoke to ten-fifteen older women, all amazing achievers, with families and with careers and asked them for advice.’

These women were her mentor figures. Bansal found she was able to make a better decision after speaking with them. They had already been in a similarly challenging situation, and had the experience to be able to offer sound advice. (Taking their advice, she chose to stay on at Spencer Stuart, became a member of the Global Board, moving years later to private equity firm TPG Growth, where she is currently advisor.)

WHAT MENTORS CAN GIVE YOU

- *Good advice*
- *Help with getting ahead*
- *Inputs on decisions at critical stages of your career*
- *Access to different networks*
- *Exposure to different roles*

FOUR WAYS TO FIND A MENTOR

1. *Reach out to alumni of your college in positions of responsibility where they can be helpful. Chances are they would respond, if you say you are from the same college/institute and need their help on something.*
2. *There may be somebody you admire in your office or elsewhere who is otherwise not reachable. Maybe they have an interest in philanthropy or in digital media. Try and connect through these interests Often, it's what you do in your spare time that is a better point of connection than what you are doing in the office.*
3. *Explore online mentoring platforms. LinkedIn and Facebook have professional networking groups that you can join. There are other specialist mentoring platforms as well, like Tapchief.*
4. *There's nothing like doing the networking in person if you can. At talks or at conferences, where there are speakers or notable people whom you would like to establish connections with, ask questions or make a point to try and connect with the presenters in some way. Don't hold back thinking that yours must be a dumb question. Even if you get rejected eight times out of ten, you still make those two connections.*

Read These Books

The Giver by Lois Lowry: A children's classic, now made into a haunting film, this book centres around a mentor-mentee relationship between the young hero Jonas and the older character playing the 'giver of memories'.

HBR Guide – Getting the Mentoring You Need: Like most HBR reads, this one too is concise, competent, and makes useful points about how to attract the attention of senior managers for effective mentoring.

CAREER HACK #4

USE THESE TESTS TO KNOW YOURSELF BETTER



For Harry Potter, the fictional series hero, his placement test came in the form of having to put on a magic sorting hat that sent him to Gryffindor House. In a less magic way, you can test your skills and preferences to give you clues about which career you will enjoy. Do you have the spatial abilities to be a good engineer, the attention to detail to be good at accounts, or the creative sense to be a good visualizer?

In Boston, at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), a young postgraduate student, Varun Aggarwal, became interested in assessments, while studying engineering in 2006–07. Aggarwal and a group of his friends, called the India Reading Group, met to discuss various issues. One such discussion was about a report that said only 25 per cent of engineers in India are employable. Prepared by McKinsey and Company and NASSCOM, the report stirred the young student. Varun Aggarwal decided to work together with his brother Himanshu, an alumnus of IIT Delhi, to create a tool that would measure the employability of candidates and assess their areas of strength and weakness. They started Aspiring Minds, and developed the AMCAT, a three-hour test administered in specially set up centres all over the country. The test, which costs ₹900 per student, has segments that include domain knowledge in disciplines including programming. It also has elements of cognitive reasoning and analytical ability. After completing the test, each student is given his score and fourteen pages of detailed analysis and recommendations. The results of these tests are also made available to different corporates and recruiters.

Taking a test like this could help you land a job. Like it did for Amrita Koul. She was twenty-three, with a computer engineering degree from Jammu Institute of Technology, and was seemingly out of luck because

very few companies had come to her campus to recruit. She and other students like her had good scores but no jobs, and fewer avenues to getting one. The college curriculum did not include any internships with companies, and there was no placement department or career counsellor she could consult. Taking the AMCAT test got her the job. Koul's test report was shared with corporates looking for hires. In less than a fortnight, she got interview calls from two-three companies. In a month, she was hired by Mindtree Limited, a Bengaluru-based software company.

Try These Books

The Test Book by Mikael Krogerous and Roman Tschappler: A nifty handbook on sixty-four different tests that capture your aptitude, thinking style and personality. They include the classic MBTI, but also the Job Interview Test, the Gene Test, the Stress Test.

Making Vocational Choices by Dr Holland: What sort of people do you like to surround yourself with – investigative, detail-oriented, artistic, enterprising or conventional, asks Dr Holland. His ‘Self Directed Search’ test uses these preferences to give you an idea of your skills and the jobs you will be good at.

Check These Websites

- Keirsey, Humanmetrics, myerbriggs.org

CAREER HACK # 5

CONSULT THE EMPLOYABILITY EXPERTS

‘The difference between an engineer at Google and a young engineering graduate from a tier-two city in India is not much. It is in the inputs they have received to be work-ready. Parents don’t believe in their kids and the kids don’t believe in themselves. These engineers are smart. But they don’t know how to communicate. And they need to acquire dynamic skills, with the ability to figure things out on their own.’

—Rahul Kulkarni, former Google employee and Founder,
Donew (an employability start up)



You have a degree but you still don’t feel ready for the job? Here is where employability experts can help.

One such enterprise grew out of a Harvard Business School (HBS) project on employability. In Mumbai, in 2012, HBS alumna Shveta Raina set up Talerang, a training company that aims to bridge the employability gap by training students in practical work skills like communication and time management. Raina previously worked with Teach for India and McKinsey and Co. ‘83 per cent of educational institutions believe that their graduates are ready for the market, but only 51 per cent of employers agree with that,’ she says.

The Talerang programme, conducted in Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore and Pune, is an intensive six-week training module for young graduates. The training is followed by placement at a company for an internship.

Nineteen-year-old Yash Mimani, a former student of St Xavier’s

Mumbai, recalls his first interaction with Talerang. 'I got a mail that piqued my curiosity. It said academic success is not equal to success in the professional world, and that if I was interested, I should call Talerang.' Mimani felt he was ill-prepared for a job, despite being a very good student. He called and decided to pay the ₹15,000 fee and sign on for the programme. He says the programme gave him an amazing internship with private equity firm Zodius Capital as well as clarity on his objectives. 'Talerang had an exercise where we had to write down our goals for the next few years. Just the simple exercise of writing these down helped me. I wrote down two or three goals like organizing a college festival, doing a successful internship, and have actually managed to achieve them.' Today, Mimani works with consulting firm McKinsey and Co.

CAREER HACK # 6

BUILD SUPPLEMENTARY SKILLS



Do an online/offline course in digital marketing, business analytics or statistics. Learn a programming language. Because programming is a good skill to have. It gives you the ability to communicate with computers. Learning to programme can develop several other skills – like learning to problem-solve and think precisely. It refines your attention to detail, as you will find that the little hyphen or comma you missed can derail your entire programme! It also looks impressive on your resume.

CAREER HACK # 7

DIP INTO THE LIBERAL ARTS – READ THESE EIGHT BOOKS

‘The more you read, the more things you will know. The more you learn, the more places you’ll go.’

–Dr Seuss



Twenty-nine-year-old Utkarsh Amitabh is a mechanical engineer from Delhi College of Engineering. But as national account manager at Microsoft Corporation, he is often glad of the liberal arts courses he studied. He studied anthropology, sociology, leadership and history after his graduation as part of a fellowship programme at the newly set up Asoka University in 2011. ‘That year taught me more about myself, and about the way the world works,’ he says. Soon after, Utkarsh joined the international business school at INSEAD in France in 2013. His year of studying liberal arts helped him at business school as well.

‘A liberal arts education prepares you for life in a somewhat different way. It allows you, even as an undergraduate, to exercise your judgement. You can read different texts and interpretations and decide which you think is right and why. If you are studying Einstein, on the other hand, your opinions count for nothing,’ says Indivar Kamtekar, professor of History at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. These qualities of critical judgement and interpretation are particularly useful in the context of a manager’s job. Because managers are often required to exercise their judgement and make decisions in the absence of complete information, says Kamtekar. The history professor also taught at IIM Calcutta earlier.

Liberal arts skills are particularly important in the twenty-first century,

says Ashish Dhawan, co-founder at Asoka University, where Amitabh learnt his liberal arts. 'The cycle of reading, writing and reasoning, asking the right questions, is really what builds your ability to think critically and independently,' says Dhawan.

If you plan to work in finance, software or human resources, it may seem that subjects like anthropology, sociology and literature are far removed. This is far from the case. 'Don't close your mind to subjects,' says 'Tiger' N.V. Tyagarajan, CEO at Genpact. 'For no matter how good a person is at math and science, he or she must possess the ability to listen, to communicate, to ask the right questions, and then to deal with multiple answers. People feel history is a waste of time. But it isn't. It allows you to study how great leaders have driven change. The idea is to have the best of both worlds by following a curriculum that exposes one to multiple streams of thinking.'

'Middle-class parents push their children to pursue a specialized education like engineering, medicine, accountancy. But there are many jobs – in sales, in general management, in the services industry, which don't require narrow vertical skills,' says entrepreneur and founder of the online employment portal Naukri.com's Bikhchandani. Such jobs require a broader experience of study. Even the more specialized jobs often require additional skills. A young computer programmer will be required to interact with customers, as he moves up the organization; he will need communication skills and the ability to scan the environment. 'I would like to bust the myth that liberal arts graduates don't get jobs. Good students will find good jobs. The best organizations in the world just want bright kids, they don't want these pre-programmed kids who have spreadsheets in their heads,' declares Bikhchandani.

'To be a successful investor, you need to know some math and some economics. But you also need to have some understanding of psychology,' says Dhawan. He discusses the most legendary investor in the world – Warren Buffett. 'He is as good a psychologist as he is an economist. He is also a great student of history. He takes his wisdom and puts it into the wonderful nuggets and letters he writes to investors; that's ability too; it's his thinking but it is also his writing skill,' says Dhawan.

So, reading the liberal arts – whether fiction, history or the social sciences – can give you a stand-out advantage in your career. Reading Western literature makes you comfortable with the nuances of Western

culture and the global corporation. You look at characters and the outcome of their personalities interacting with the world. Following the action in a fictional work like William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, you are simultaneously absorbing the subtexts of situations, power structures, rebellion, deviation and pushing the boundaries of civilization itself.

'Reading literature, classics and novels teaches you the language, and exposes you to different people and situations. After all, human beings are social animals, driven not just by data, but by emotions, and the biases borne of that,' says Genpact's Tiger Tyagarajan.

EIGHT MUST-READ BOOKS

There is a famous Chinese proverb that goes, 'A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.' Just so, a reading challenge must begin with a few books at a time. Here are some literary, historical and biographical volumes that are good starters. They are packed with life lessons (besides being good talking points in any 'what kind of books do you read' conversation).

1. ***The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins:** A story of survival set in a post-apocalyptic world, which is also a world that bears a startling likeness to the Roman Empire. The heroine, sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, is the ultimate survivor. Lots of life lessons in this racy trilogy – on power and politics and the state, on human nature and survival. Like early on in the book, where mentor Haymitch tells Katniss, 'You really wanna know how to stay alive? You get people to like you. Oh! Not what you were expecting? Well, when you're in the middle of the games, and you're starving or freezing, some water, a knife or even some matches can mean the difference between life and death. And those things only come from sponsors, and to get sponsors, you have to make people like you.'
2. ***Open* by Andre Agassi:** Agassi tells gripping stories in this unbelievably candid autobiography. The tennis legend talks of the difficulties of his early childhood where he was subjected to hours of rigorous training. This included being made to hit 2,500 balls a day by his father, and being sent off to a brutally rigorous tennis academy. It's

an inspiring story of passion, of struggle and everything that goes into becoming a champion.

3. ***Candle in the Dark* by Richard Dawkins:** This scientist and professor at Oxford talks about his days as professor, his research in evolutionary biology, and his encounters with people all over the world – fellow researchers and scientists, opponents of his evolutionary theories. Dawkins explains many of his theories and his research, always simply and very lucidly.
4. **Russian fiction (at least one!):** There are so many to pick from. Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Turgenev, among others, wrote sprawling classics about the human condition which deal with themes like man against society (*Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy), *Crime and Punishment* and the State versus the individual. If you want to start small, pick *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Or even smaller, pick a short story by Anton Chekhov.
5. ***The Century Trilogy* by Ken Follett:** Ken Follett is a writer of thrillers and easy-to-read sagas. Don't look for literary merit in his books; read them instead for the sweep of history they cover. This racy, pacy trilogy sketches two centuries of world history through the fortunes of different families. By the end of the trilogy, you have a fly-on-the wall perspective of events like the world wars, the Cuban crisis and the Cold War. You also come away with an appreciation of the patterns of history, the interaction with human nature and personalities. A good starting point to explore areas of history that you might find more interesting.
6. ***The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch:** A professor at Carnegie Mellon in his thirties is diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer. The professor, Pausch, goes on to write this book, which grew out of a lecture he was to give his students. A thoughtful effort to distil the learnings of a lifetime into snippets and stories spread over 200-odd pages. Great reading.
7. ***The Godfather* by Mario Puzo:** A classic mafia story packed with life lessons. Such as – don't act on emotion, act only after you have mulled over all of the possible outcomes. Emotional outbursts, like those of Santino 'Sonny' Corleone, eventually lead to his downfall.

Like Michael Corleone, keep your friends close, but your enemies closer. Delegate like the Godfather does. And most powerful of all – learn to negotiate – make the other party an offer that they cannot refuse.

8. ***The Mahabharata***: Set in ancient India, this epic explores the many dilemmas of human existence. A study of human nature, character and motivation, it follows the struggle for power between two factions of a family. There are many English translations to choose from. Each has varying levels of detail. The C. Rajagopalachari version is concise; Kamala Subramanian is simple but detailed; Bibek Debroy and Ramesh Menon have written multi-volume editions. For a gimmicky retelling, try Ashok Banker's *The Forest of Stories*.

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‘A necessary read for the aspiring student, the ambitious professional and all those curious to get an insider’s view.’

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— SANJIV BIKHCHANDANI, Founder, [Naukri.com](https://www.naukri.com)

Do you wince every time someone asks, ‘What do you plan to do once you graduate?’ Or maybe you want to change jobs but need some inspiration?

In *Career Rules*, journalist Sonya Dutta Choudhury gives a flavourful peek into the daily routine, job progression, compensation and lifestyle of today’s most sought-after professions. Hear from Sanjeev Kapoor on hospitality; Naina Lal Kidwai on banking; Zia Mody on law; Imtiaz Ali on film-making; Twinkle Khanna and Amish Tripathi on how they became writers, and many more authentic and experienced voices.

Insightful, full of mentorly advice and career ‘hacks’, this book is a guide to the diverse and interesting career options available out there. It is, in essence, a helpful nudge towards the life you want.

About the Author



Sonya Dutta Choudhury is a writer and journalist based in Mumbai. She has a post-graduate degree in management from IIM Calcutta, and has worked in banking, marketing and education. Her work has appeared in *The Times of India*, *The Hindu*, *Mint* and *Forbes* (India).

Praise for *Career Rules* ‘While there are no shortcuts to success, *Career Rules* offers us a unique perspective on what it takes to chart a successful path in an increasingly competitive world. A necessary read for the aspiring student, the ambitious professional and all those curious to get an insider’s view on much talked-about “rules” to making it big and redefining the scope and potential of traditional career paths.’

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– Anjali Raina,
Director, Harvard Business School, India Research Centre

‘The biggest challenge that parents and counsellors face is letting the child relate to a real-life story that is grounded, isn’t intimidating and seems within reach. *Career Rules* is a wonderful compendium of such stories, achieving this objective with élan while answering the big questions that children at their age would rarely ask. In the Indian context, it is difficult for a student to ask himself, “What do I want to do in life?” This book slowly but surely reaches out and helps him ask himself that big question, and answers it for him. *Career Rules* is a recommended read for all those

who are clear and confused, children and their parents, boys and girls, counsellors and teachers.'

– Maheshwer Peri,
Chairman, *Careers360*

'*Career Rules* is not really a rulebook but a Wikipedia of careers that everyone would enjoy reading. And the best part is that you learn about each career through real-life stories which bring out the nuances of each profession which a textbook definition cannot do justice to.'

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