



September 2017

# EMPOWERING TIMES



## THINKING ALOUD

Inspiring the Best from the Knowledge Worker  
Jay



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Head - Human Resources  
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## WONDER WOMEN

Anindita Garg  
Co-Founder - Mindware, Pune



Dear Reader,

The term 'Knowledge Worker' was first used by Peter Drucker in his book, 'The Landmarks of Tomorrow,' in 1959 at a time when the post-war workforce was on the edge of another industrial revolution - shifting from laborious jobs that needed expertise and experience to jobs that would create and share knowledge. His book highlighted that "the most valuable asset of a 21st century institution, whether business or non-business, will be its knowledge workers and their productivity." The management guru further went on to emphasize that "knowledge work was the most important contribution management needs to make in the 21st century."

Drucker foretold this shift years ago and today the move from blue-collar jobs to knowledge work presents new opportunities and challenges. **ET** this month looks at the **Challenges of Managing the Knowledge Worker**. Knowledge Workers are characterised by their intellectual capabilities which can generate value, probably more than any of the other economic resources. Therefore, from a firm's perspective, it becomes imperative that these professionals be managed differently. We speak to the **Head - Human Resources - Avendus Capital, Agnel Victor**, in the **Podium** section who shares his thoughts on managing people in Knowledge Worker industries and stresses that it is not an impossible task to management this talent.

In the **Thinking Aloud** section, **Jay** highlights the rise of Knowledge Workers in the various sectors of the economy making it imperative to manage Knowledge Workers by creating and sustaining a value-driven and learning organization to inspire this segment of the workforce.

Senior journalist Shankkar Aiyar comprehensively traces the history of India's unique identification system, Aadhaar, in his book - **Aadhaar: A Biometric History of India's 12-Digit Revolution**. **Jay** reviews this book in the **We Recommend** section.

## FIGURES OF SPEECH

Only problem with managing knowledge workers is that they know when you are bluffing!

© Vibram Nandwani



In the **Wonder Women** segment, Co-Founder **Anindita Garg** takes us through her entrepreneurial journey in the setting up of Pune based, Mindware.

In **Figures of Speech**, **Vikram's** knowledgeable toon tickles your funny bone!

As always, we value your opinion, so do let us know how you liked this issue. To visit our previous issues you can visit the Resources section on the website or simply [Click Here](#). You can also follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) & [Google+](#) - where you can join our community to continue the dialogue with us!

## THINKING ALOUD

### Inspiring the Best from the Knowledge Worker

- Jay

*'Society needs people who take care of the elderly and who know how to be compassionate and honest. Society needs people who work in hospitals. Society needs all kinds of skills that are not just cognitive; they're emotional, they're affectional. You can't run the society on data and computers alone.'* (Toffler)

In his book, *The Third Wave*, published in 1980, Alvin Toffler spoke of the post-industrial society that we live in and mentioned that 'information has become the world's fastest growing and most important industry'. The inimitable Peter Drucker had forecast this soon after the second world war and predicted that industry would soon see the rise of a new breed of employees, the Knowledge Worker. Suffice it to say that what the futurist Toffler predicted is our reality now as the age of technology and internet enmeshes everything we do.

Lest it be assumed that there are no more industrial workers and all of us have become Knowledge Workers, let me distinguish a fine point here. Yes, industrial processes have changed and blue collared staff are perhaps not facing the 'blood, sweat & grime' of the old industrial world, but the challenge in certain sectors remain,

particularly the classic smoke stack businesses. However, over the last few decades, it is no secret that classic manufacturing (think textiles, auto and other engineering sectors) has undergone change with the rise of automation, programmable machines, and even robots on the assembly line. And, with the emerging trend of Manufacturing 4.0, shop floor technicians will be more empowered than ever before. The rise of the Knowledge Workers, on the other hand, has been more visible in the services sectors (banking, information technology, law, consulting, etc.), where since the late-70s, early '80s, the bulky behemoth called a computer morphed into the friendly desktop (and later into a laptop) which is now an ubiquitous element of every office.

Another way of distinguishing the two is to look at the way the work environment is structured in these businesses. Traditionally, the Industrial worker operates under the command-and-control model where he is a cost to be managed and from whom returns have to be generated by the supervisor who takes the major calls on defining tasks, measuring output, compliance to generate quality, etc. The Knowledge Worker, by definition, on the other hand, is breathing a different air - of autonomous work demands, continuous nurturing, etc., as he is considered an asset who is expensive to replace, and who brings brain power to work, not muscle power. Ideally supervised in a general and mild manner, this worker is expected to be self-driven and creative and not vulnerable to standard 'motivational methods' as he generates 'quality from within'. Given his penchant for learning, he is constantly seeking more avenues to up-skill.

However, real-life is not a textbook case study! Therefore, managing the Knowledge Worker throws up its own array of challenges. Consider a few: monetary benefits are believed to be a hygiene element at the workplace for this class of employees. But, in an unequal world where comparisons between firms are constantly made, how can one shield employees from the lure of quick financial gratification? The truth therefore, is that satisfying this requirement is like wrestling with jellyfish - it is a difficult problem to contain, and will continue to sting the employer who believes he has found a water-tight solution.

In the Indian business context, another bug bear is the challenge of catering to the status need of employees. The annual promotion dilemma rears its ugly head in every firm as employees seek ways of seeming to be socially (and organizationally) ahead of one another. Those who think that creating a flat structure and removing designations (think Tata Motors) is the solution, may yet rue their mistake as a cloud of dissatisfaction quickly envelops the firm.

Far higher is the challenge created by employees seeking a stronger sense of purpose. 'What motivates - and

especially what motivates Knowledge Workers - is what motivates volunteers,' Drucker wrote... 'they need to know the organization's mission and to believe in it'. Simply put, the Knowledge Worker responds well when the appeal to them is to be part of a larger whole - as in essence, they are but 'volunteer investors' (to use Prof. Sumantra Ghoshal's words). How to do this is the Leadership challenge at a time where unfortunately many organizations are still struggling with mundane bottom line issues. Perhaps, such firms can pick a leaf from the playbook of ISRO or the way E. Sreedharan rallied his troops for executing the Delhi Metro project (never forget that both are public sector organizations!).

Creating and sustaining a value-driven organization is a dynamic trial for business leaders and many have faltered, causing Knowledge Workers to be sceptical, even disdainful, of what they consider management-speak. Part of this arises from the fact that Knowledge Workers are in turn supervised and led by other Knowledge Workers who are equally fragile in times of stress, as in the current business environment. And, in the face of rapid automation and technological obsolescence, the biggest task for a firm is to create a band of effective leaders who can truly inspire their team to aggressively stretch beyond existing comfort levels to become better at every step and thereby create a genuine learning organization. I leave the final word again to Drucker: 'If knowledge isn't challenged to grow, it disappears fast; it's infinitely more perishable than any other resource we have ever had'.

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## PODIUM

### Interview with Agnel Victor Head - Human Resources - Avendus Capital



*Agnel Victor is the Head- Human Resources for Avendus Capital and its subsidiaries. Agnel's mandate is to help the organization envision, develop and implement its people strategy.*

*He joined Avendus from Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd where he headed the Human Resources function for several of its group companies, for a span of over 16 years. He was a key member of the team that set up many diverse businesses like wealth management, retail broking, asset management, private equity, alternate investments, investment banking, institutional equities and the international subsidiaries.*

*Agnel has experience of over 25 years in Human Resources of which 21 years have been in the arena of financial services. He has worked largely with start-up businesses, nurturing and building the talent pools therein.*

*An Occupational Psychologist by profession, he started his career in the HR Consultancy division of the Indian Hotels Company (the Taj Group) and then moved into financial services. He subsequently worked with TimesBank, and post its merger, with HDFC Bank.*

*Deeply committed to helping youngsters and those at risk, Agnel works as a practicing Counsellor on a voluntary basis during weekends.*

**ET: Some would call financial sector employees (wealth managers, investment bankers, etc.) as Knowledge Workers. In your opinion, is this the right definition for these professionals?**

**AV:** I agree. The single product that Wealth Managers and Investment Bankers deal with is leveraging on knowledge platforms. Their skill in navigating across complex, challenging situations in their role as Advisors is based on strong domain expertise and relevant experience, translating into largely tacit knowledge that is not captured by formal Knowledge Management (KM) systems.

**ET: What are the unique challenges of managing such professionals in the financial sector?**

**AV:** Managing such professionals is challenging because the organization must necessarily provide an environment to nurture and meet their career aspirations. They are unique because the standards they set for themselves are always high and in turn they expect the same of the organization. Hence, above all, the organization must be empathetic and professional.

**ET: Automation, AI and machine learning, among other advancements, are slowly making its way into Knowledge Worker industries. How can firms in your sector ensure that their staff are ready to cope with these challenges?**

**AV:** Technology has a huge role to play in making the life of the Knowledge Worker easier and in harnessing their skills more efficiently. Effective CRM that enables predictive analytics, risk management and automation, will bring greater efficiency in back office services. However, in the domain of financial services, relationship management remains the key and that cannot be substituted by technology. It would be fair to say that while technology is invaluable, it is not a substitute for the human interface provided by the relationship/advisory team.

**ET: It is sometimes believed that measuring the performance of Knowledge Workers is difficult as their work tends to be nebulous and not easily defined in specific terms. What methods/tools would you recommend for assessing the effectiveness and productivity of such professionals?**

**AV:** Measurement of performance is difficult but not impossible. The metrics need to mirror the requirements of the role. For Knowledge Workers, client feedback would be an interesting dimension as well as peer feedback for team centric roles. One needs to bear in mind that more often than not, the lead time from inception to conversion is much higher in the case of relationship centric roles and brings in the dimension of reward for effort.

**ET: As a senior HR leader, what is your advice to professionals aiming to empower Knowledge Workers?**

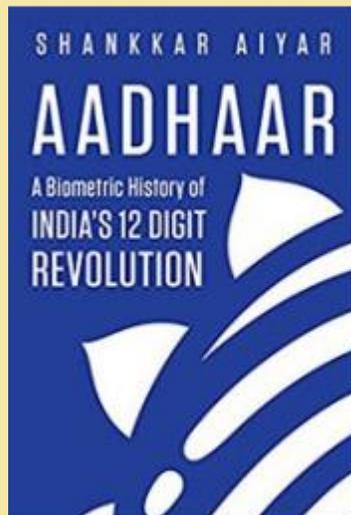
**AV:** The following is key:

- Building and enabling a conducive work environment, that fosters sharing and innovation.
- Training managers to be demanding yet empathetic.
- Never sacrificing professional standards - giving clarity on expectations and values.
- Trust and patience.

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WE RECOMMEND

## Aadhaar: A Biometric History of India's 12-Digit Revolution - Shankkar Aiyar



The name Ranjana Sonawane may not ring a bell very easily to most people. Yet, she will go down in history as a very significant individual. For, Ranjana was the first person in India to receive the Aadhaar number (on 29th September 2010). And, as of August 2017, over 1.17 billion people in India have been issued Aadhaar numbers. All this within 7 years, in what has been called as the largest and most sophisticated online biometric digital identity program of its kind in the world!

If even after this mass mobilization and enrollment, the success of the Aadhaar project has been questioned, it is because of its origin. The project began under controversial circumstances and has survived many a bureaucratic battle - which actually continues even now - as the scope of the project waxed and waned under different dispensations over these years. Even though the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) was established on 28th January, 2009, it is only on 12th July, 2016, that the project finally got complete legal sanctity after the government enacted the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, benefits and services) Act, 2016, a law that has now put the UIDAI project on a firm footing.

All this and more is narrated in detail in Shankkar Aiyar's book, Aadhaar - a Biometric History of India's 12-digit Revolution. With a journalist's penchant for story-telling, Aiyar has covered vast ground from the time the idea was conceived in the Manmohan Singh era of UPA-I to its 'Modification' (as he calls it) when the concept truly got embraced by a digital Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, who has unleashed Aadhaar's full power for e-governance (causing great anxiety to privacy advocates).

If today Aadhaar seems ubiquitous, it is ironic as the project was virtually still-born from the turf battles between various ministries (particularly the Finance Ministry under Pranab Mukherjee and the powerful Home Ministry, under P. Chidambaram), with an uncertain Manmohan Singh finding it difficult to weigh in on what he believed to be necessary in the nation's long-term interest. The role of Sonia Gandhi and her advisors in the National Advisory Council (a super-body that tended to over-play the social justice plank many times at the cost of commonsense decision making in matters economic) also caused a lot of uncertainties. Rahul Gandhi, in contrast, comes through in Aiyar's work, as being largely supportive of the project, even if at times on public platforms he is critical of the manner in which the project has evolved.

So, who are the brave men and women who made this herculean task of enrolling a billion plus into a digital identification program possible in the face of global scepticism of Indian bureaucracy's execution skills? While the recently retired former President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, played a huge hand in clearing all policy blockages in the creation of Aadhaar, the real heroes are a team led by Nandan Nilekani, the former Managing Director (and current Chairman - in an interesting twist of fate) of Infosys Ltd., who wrote about it in his book, *Imagining India*, and was brought into the government to design and execute the project. Nilekani's two closest aides were Ram Sewak Sharma (of the Indian Administrative Services, and currently the Chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) who became the Chief Executive Officer and Ganga K, who became the Chief Financial Officer. This intrepid trio (with a support cast of hundreds, consisting of creative bureaucrats, tech wizards, social scientists, enthusiastic volunteers, branding, legal and media experts and multitude of other well-meaning associates), tirelessly worked on a mission mode to realize the dream which had been written-off as impossible. They navigated political, social, legal, economic and every other land-mine in their way to bring to life an identity process that has the potential to become the lever to transform the way democratic governments (particularly in a developing economy) can serve its citizens. While there are many examples of the benefits, the Direct Benefits Transfer (DBT) is a serious attempt to stem the rot in India where by public admission, it has been said that only 16 paisa out of Rupee's worth of development spend was reaching the targeted poor.

Is Aadhaar a perfect system? I don't think anyone has claimed it to be so. Late last month, the Supreme Court has ruled that Privacy is a fundamental right and activists on both sides of the Aadhaar debate have claimed victory. While the current government has willy-nilly chosen Aadhaar as the primary vehicle in its quest to cut through and streamline the procedural maze of Indian bureaucracy which has throttled the common man, there are many who worry that this is a tool for Big Brother to monitor our steps.

While Aiyar has presented arguments from both sides, he has refrained from emphatically staking his position. What comes through instead in his book, is the monumental effort that has gone into launching this amazing effort, in a short period, in a land where governance is still an ugly art form. But, the lesson that is evident is that given bi-partisan support by forward looking political leaders, there is much that can be achieved if Indian talent is permitted to flourish in a supportive environment. Alas, such events are too few and far between causing India to lurch unsteadily in a drunken stagger towards its development goals. Therefore, Aiyar's celebration of the success of the Aadhaar project is very welcome.

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## WONDER WOMEN

### Anindita Garg

#### Co-Founder - Mindware, Pune



Anindita Garg is the first woman parenting coach in Maharashtra with 19 years of overall experience including over 10 years of transformational coaching. She is the Co-Founder of Pune based Mindware, a multiple intelligence based assessment and counselling company which was established in 2005 and reinvented in 2010. Mindware was incepted with the purpose to reduce and stop the suicidal trends among teenagers under stress.

It was always Anindita's dream to become an entrepreneur. At a young age of 17, she started doing part time jobs to earn pocket money and continued to do various jobs with different companies till the age of 23. But she always wanted to do something unique and creative and so she started her firm Exotica - a proprietary company in corporate gifting from 2004-2010. Though it was a profitable venture, Anindita felt that her business should be beneficial and must contribute to transform human lives. So, along with her existing business, her husband and she started Mindware in 2005 - a corporate and HR training organization. After attending the ISB training, where she was coached by her mentor, she realised that mere monetary benefits in a business does not bring mental satisfaction unless you contribute to the society at large. A sense of giving, gives greater pleasure than receiving. She was deeply influenced by her mentor's coaching and fully dedicated herself to Mindware.

As a young coach, the biggest challenge she faced was at the beginning when she did not have enough credentials. Various challenges that women entrepreneurs face today include: family members doubting their abilities and lack of support, getting a fair chance as their counterparts, creating work-life balance and the sense of lack of security in work-place, among others. Due to family responsibilities, women easily go on a guilt trip whenever they have to choose between her family commitment and leadership commitment. "The woman

within" is the biggest strength and the biggest challenge of women leadership.

Anindita had to face failures right from clinching a deal, developing credibility to establishing a brand. Failure came in the form of fund crunches. She believes that success gives you moments to celebrate but failure polishes you and sculpts you as a master in your field. Failure does not define you; it refines you as a human being and tells you what you did not know yet. Integrity, passion and commitment are the key ingredients to long-term success. At the same time, it is very important to set up short-term goals and monitor it on a regular basis. It is very important to celebrate every small success as it provides one with the right fuel to go further.

After venturing into professional life, Anindita has become more alert about the quality of her personal life. She consciously spends quality time with her family. The most important thing she learnt from her mentor and the ISB Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women Programme is the courage and wisdom required to say 'no' to bad business. Saying 'no' creates workability in life as everyone has limited time. She advises readers and budding women entrepreneurs to convert the negatives of life to make you unstoppable. Only thinking and dreaming big does not help. What actually helps is to take action.

Mindware is currently established in Pune, Nashik, Hyderabad and Sawantwadi. Till now, it has transformed the lives of more than 40,000 people through counselling, life-coaching and transformational training. They plan to venture into five new cities in India in the next two years and two international destinations, to spread its unique school of parenting coaching. Anindita wishes to transform 60,000 lives in the next 5 years.

For more information, please check: <http://www.mindwareindia.in>

We wish Anindita the very best in her future endeavours!

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## THROUGH THE LENS



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Rupesh Balsara

Photographer, **Rupesh Balsara** visits Pangong Lake near Leh-Ladakh in the Himalayas situated at a height of about 4,350 meters. Despite being saline water, the lake freezes completely during winter. The lake acts as an important breeding ground for a variety of birds including a number of migratory birds and is currently in the process of being identified under the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. This will be the first trans-boundary wetland in South Asia under the convention.

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