

ANUPAM VASUDEV, chief marketing officer, Aircel

Leaders' motto should be 'together we can'

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Anupam Vasudev, chief marketing officer, Aircel, is a marketing veteran with 22 years of work experience in sales, marketing, communications, branding and research. Before joining Aircel, he served as executive vice-president, marketing and communications of Star India. He also had a successful stint with Hindustan Lever in various sales and marketing functions for over a decade.

How do you define leadership?

Leadership has little to do with seniority or hierarchy. It is more about creating conducive working environment by setting clear goals, roles and responsibilities for the team members, and giving them the belief and comfort that I will always stand behind their decisions and actions.

Who inspires you the most?

I have been deeply inspired by US President Barack Obama. When Hurricane Sandy shook

America right before the US presidential elections, he gave priority to disaster management over personal campaigning for a second term. This really impressed me.

What are the most important traits of a leader?

A leader should be able to get the right person for the right job to achieve maximum results, and be optimistic and show faith in every team member no matter how tough the situation is.

How do leaders manage a bad economic scenario, especially when performance is constantly monitored?

Good leaders should be able to absorb pressure and not let it affect the team's morale or functioning. At the time when the telecom industry was going through a rough phase, Aircel also had to face certain challenges to keep treading on the growth curve. The leadership team here managed to get the entire organisation to work towards achieving clear, measurable goals.

How should a leader motivate oneself and their employees during crises?

As the saying goes, tough times don't last, but tough people do. This belief is the hallmark of a good leader. A good leader should believe that every problem has a solution. Only then will the team and the leader be able to focus energies towards the right solution,

and ultimately achieve it.

Being a leader of a relatively young organisation, how do you plan to tackle competition from national and global players?

Today, the world has truly become a global village. In this age of information and communication, an organisation's scale is no more a measure of its worth. Our ability to capture the audience's pulse, map their needs and requirements, and offer them products and services which are relevant and affordable has helped us find a place in the minds of almost 70 million sub-

scribers in the country.

What is the most important lesson that a leader should always remember?

A leader's motto should be "together we can". All their efforts should be channelised towards positively influencing those around.

It's important for a leader to watch his words, but speak through actions. What is your belief?

A leader has to walk the talk. Otherwise, the team will not trust him/her. I ensure that I'm open to ideas, take quick action on the brilliant ones, and help my team improve those that need improving.

What is important for a corporate leader – a management degree or inborn qualities?

One may have inborn leadership qualities and skills, or acquire them over a period of time. But it is not a prerequisite for a corporate entity leader to be from a top management school.

