



## PRAKASH RANE

FOUNDER & MANAGING DIRECTOR  
ABM KNOWLEDGEWARE

**WORDS TO LIVE BY** | **SUCCESS** isn't about the money earned, but about the **DIFFERENCE MADE!**



## LEADERSHIP LEARNINGS

**DNA OF A LEADER** - A good leader must be stubborn and uncompromising in the pursuit of his vision. A leader has to have a perspective which is global and not limited by any segment or geography. Dreams can be seen with closed eyes but can only be achieved with wide open eyes. Willingness to accept mistakes and undertaking mid-course correction are vital for leaders, as is disallowing their mistakes/ego to become fatal liabilities. Discipline, Professional Ethics, and Meritocracy must be the foundation for sustainable success, however frustrating it can be at times. Leaders need to have the courage to take the blame for blunders done by the team and give credit to the team for the success.

**EVOLUTION OF A LEADER** - Irrespective of which business you are into, a leader learns from everything around them and grows consistently. Leadership is a dynamic concept and it will change if the leader fails to see the winds of change or notice the stagnation from within. Bankers, shareholders, children around you, judiciary, politicians, journalists, bureaucrats and almost everyone offers something for a leader to learn from.

## MY STORY

### SEED OF THE DREAM

Even as a child, I knew that I didn't want to make a career while working for someone else. I grew up in a middle-class family with three siblings and my parents. While we did not have a life of material abundance, it was more than made up with love and the values our parents gave us. I made my foray into the Information Technology business while doing post-graduation in management. While the business was growing, I began receiving lucrative offers and was compelled to make a choice between continuing my business and accepting a job. At that juncture, I decided to drop my inhibitions and focus on my business. I rejected all the offers and since then there has been no looking back. I noticed a need for competent e-Government Solution Providers to Government customers, and that went on to become the backbone of my current business.

### PIVOTAL MOMENT

In the late 90s, few if any, Government customers believed that an investment in e-governance could actually make a qualitative difference in citizen services or improve the efficiency of their functioning. I decided to undertake two Government projects by bankrolling them myself and left it to the Government customers to pay only if it worked. One project was about improving citizen services by blending ICT and Administrative Reforms in a Collectorate (Head of District

Administration). The other one was automating functioning of a Government department in the Secretariat (HQ for state administration). I had invested all my money into these projects knowing very well that I ran the risk of business closure if it failed. I was fortunate that each of the projects was led by a bureaucrat par excellence. The Collectorate electronic services delivery project became a benchmark in the state (named as Setu), and we were noticed by the ecosystem. The Secretariat project provided strong inputs and conviction, which led the Government to lay down its first formal policy for implementation of e-governance solutions. This success landed us with a big, trend-setting contract for Automation of Citizen Services in 1998 which was the pivotal moment for our company 'ABM Knowledgeware'.

### FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

In the late 90s, Indian IT companies were naturally attracted to the potential of the export business. The invincible IT industry of India was growing faster than ever before. The needs of the Government customers were on lower priority due to the challenges of the 'change management (assisting govt users to accept the paradigm shift from manual to computerized functioning for doing day to day work)' and poor success rate of projects. We identified the main loopholes and evolved our own change management strategies.



## PERSONAL TAKEAWAYS

### MUST-HAVE GADGETS

My laptop and my smartphone are indispensable indeed. I am not addicted to the same, but my productivity is strongly linked with these two gadgets.

### SUCCESS TO ME IS

"Success to me is a moving goal post. It is an unending marathon with multiple sprints. It is not measurable by material wealth alone, but acceptance within the society as someone who made a difference. A feeling where you find sense of achievement by adding value to the lives of millions of people without a demand for proportionate recognition and rewards - that is success!"