

- Ride through the chaos though single- minded determination and try to reset goals, however, nebulous they may be initially

For Intel, the realization that it could not compete with the Japanese in the memory business made them redirect their entire strategic intent and plan which proved to be a turning point for the company where it decided to limit its scope of activities only to the chip business. This strategic decision changed the long- term direction for good. The decision to shift manufacturing facilities from memory business to chips by managers and supervisors down the line itself acted as a strategic decision which affected operational decisions within the firm and triggered waves of lesser decisions when the actual shift took place.

The book can serve as an excellent case study to understand and learn

about concepts and practices relating to management and strategic leadership, communication and empowerment of people. It also gives an insight into why a company must listen to its customers to survive and sustain in times of changing needs and preferences. More importantly it needs to listen to its people who are in actual contact with the customers who play a vital role as a major stakeholder in business.

The book also provides examples of companies who have both succeeded or failed in surviving through changing times. Companies like Intel, HP, and IBM provide excellent cases of survival, whereas the likes of Wang Labs, Mostek and others portray pictures of gloom and failure. Groves' skepticism about gee- whiz technological innovation like

"Internet applications" provides an excellent example of how Intel

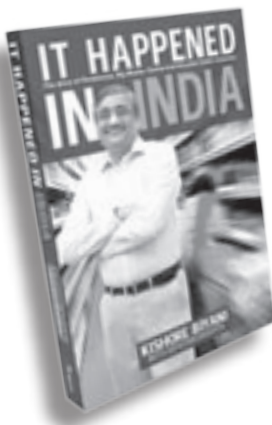
maintained its strategic focus to ride over the hump before it tasted its sweet share of success.

As far as the organization of the book is concerned one must appreciate the anecdotal style which has been used by the author to make the book more reader- friendly. It is also not a thick book and therefore can be used as carry book for reading with enjoyment without having the hands to carry a load full of pages. The chapters are neatly organized and limited and that makes for easy reading of the book.

Overall, a must read for all those who are intimately interested and connected with business.

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## ***IT HAPPENED IN INDIA :The story of Pantaloons, Big Bazaar, Central and the Great Indian Consumer by Kishore Biyani with Dipayan Baishya***

***Rupa & Co., New Delhi-110 002, 2007, pp1-268.***

The book under review is a business travelogue very intimately woven in a sequence of ten chapters. The book is not just Kishore Biyani's (KB) personal-

ity or success story. It is neither another family business growth revealed nor unfolded. KB's story is of success brought about by a business family supported by internal customers and the society. KB as an adolescent was a rebellion. His ability to question anything which is not amenable to logic and searching for solutions built up the entrepreneur who was ready to take on challenges! Business, time and opportunity waits for none! KB waited to strike at! The story begins with created and excited customers in a queue for picking up products to optimize their baskets in two major cities- Kolkata and Mumbai.

KB moves on to narrate his childhood- people at home, family influences and relationships and his *dandiya* experiment which gave an insight as to how to manage a crowd. KB was

interested in thinking new, while his family members were interested in sustenance and presentation. When sporadic growth is foreseen, creation and destruction consistently moves assets and liabilities.

KB had internship with the support of family members. As an intern he failed in several businesses which he took up at once. Failure in many of these businesses made him realize the best option under circumstances. He had been experiencing the environmental changes which made him assess the requirements of a challenging business. The challenge is to assess risk and face it. KB did this admirably well! Selling products to customers is not easy. Ideas have to be generated. Some of these ideas need to be converted into designs to match with the patterns in consumers' mind. KB realized one of the basic principles of marketing-product nature evolves the marketing system. Retailing requires several products of varying natures that need be sold under one roof. The real challenge is in designing an attractive format to make consumers come, buy and buy repeatedly. This was attempted well by placing consumers in a pivotal position around whose needs the design and format was attempted. KB observed existing chains in Mumbai (Akbarally and Benzer), Chennai (Spencer) and Bangalore (Kids Kemp and Nilgiris). He further looked at national chain stores - Raymond and Bombay Dyeing. Pantaloons, Big Bazaar & Central were thus born! 'Observation' - what a great intangible instrument it is! KB was able to manifest new ideas by continuously observing consumers and the existing formats in retailing. *Mandis* and *Melas* are places and occasions wherein consumers of all diversities will have unifying shopping experience. In a country where

shopping is a societal joy, wholesaling or retailing were never places of harmonious relations. KB's mind works here on backward linkages with suppliers. The idea KB has is establishing co-makership to ensure continuous supply, there by assessing availability of products to consumers. KB adhered to meeting another principle of marketing availability (opening retail chain 24x7 is another great idea). KB's idea of integrating wholesale functions with retailing is an evidence in itself of failure of wholesaling institutions such as Agricultural Product Market Committees (APMCs). Supply chain through co-makership and contracting would ensure rewriting the roles of existing wholesaling institutions.

APMC Acts are being changed to ensure entrepreneurship takeover the governmental regulations. India, in the years to come will have many more KBs to manage supply chains. The narration of KB never speaks of profit. KB speaks of value created utility, based on social values. One can feel KB as an entrepreneur-leader to business and a man who has the nation and society in his mind.

Business cannot continue successfully unless decisions are made at different levels at appropriate time. Timing of decisions can be likened to timing of ball and bat in cricket. A wrong timing or a mismatch may cost heavily or lead to loosing an opportunity. Business need to go on at the speed of thought! KB demonstrates this in decisions on location choice, product selections, HR decisions and establishing rapport. His investment decisions are based on not just gut feel, but on trust and futuristic feel - the relationship. Consumers would react impulsively on a day of national importance. *Sab Se Sasta Din* on 26th January - the Republic Day turned out to be a success because of availability

of time, and an environment created for a unique shopping experience. The overcrowding at these places reflect consumer interest in buying cheaper, better and trustworthy products. KB has introduced Indian Consumers to a new shopping style drawn from formats well knit to Indian Societal fabric. Such experiences need be replicated on all days of festivals - religious, national or otherwise!

The two decade story of KB is unfolded by as many as 46 friends and colleagues who made things possible. The narrative support had obviously been one of praising KB for his success, while the scripts of Rama Bijapurkar and Darlie O.Koshy looked to me an objective and a careful assessment.

The 268 page book is presented with appropriate chapter titles and quotations. The book should have had narrations in italics (which was conspicuous on page 215-216). The reviewer could see one mistake on page 213, III, line one. The narrator Dipayan Baishya has done a great job in presenting this book to the readers.

A business leader need be a learner! KB has also been influenced by books. Those books have found a place suggesting the forthcoming entrepreneurs and business leaders to find time for reading and updating. The world of business expects many such documentation from KB, the Retail Maharajah!

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