

A five-point mantra for managerial excellence

12th Madras Management Association awards presented to four companies

Our Bureau

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If today's managers want to strive for excellence, they need to manage themselves well on five counts: manage time, practise humility over arrogance, let EQ prevail over IQ, have the ability to learn and forget and also learn to handle failure, said D. Shivakumar, Senior Vice-President, Nokia, IMEA markets and President, All-India Management Association.

In a compelling address to the members of the Madras Management Association (MMA) on the occasion of the 12th MMA Awards for Managerial Excellence here, Shivakumar said, "To drive excellence in organisations you need to have these five characteristics."

More than 50 per cent of managers fail on the count of time management. "Being respectful of other's time is a great way to manage," he said. Elaborating on the other points, Shivakumar said that there is a difference between pride and confidence and arrogance. Confidence is needed to

drive excellence; the reason why many companies fail is because of arrogant leadership.

To be truly successful, he said, one has to have more empathy; pure rational thinking does not drive excellence. "Empathy and listening are skills which are needed now," he added. To learn something new, one needs to forget something from the past and shed some past baggage. "Great companies have the ability to learn and unlearn repeatedly," he said referring to GE's Jack Welch who believed in this strongly.

HANDLING FAILURE

Life's not easy and managers need to know how to handle failure. Shivakumar talked about his interaction with former Australian captain Ricky Ponting, who was vice-captain during Australia's India tour of 2003 and had scored only 16 runs in three tests. He overcame that by constantly being around Mathew Hayden and Adam Gilchrist, the two most consistent players of that series, instead of moping in his

room.

In the early part of his address, Shivakumar touched upon how the word excellence came into the lexicon of management. More than being successful, to continue that over a long period is a challenge. In the 1982 bestseller *In Search of Excellence* (written by Tom Peters and Robert H. Waterman Jr), there were 32 listed companies which were featured as excellent companies. Now, 30 years later, only 13 companies are in that list. "To be excellent for three decades is a challenge," he said.

PARTNERSHIPS

In his special address, P.S. Raghavan, Special Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, outlined India's development partnerships with many countries around the world and how the Indian corporate sector could play a larger role in this endeavour.

There are three strands to India's development partnerships abroad, said Raghavan. One is in helping other nations build their human resources by having their people train in



Celebrating achievement: (from left) Srivats Ram, Senior V-P, Madras Management Association (MMA); Venky Rajgopal, MMA; D. Shivakumar, President, All India Management Association; P.S. Raghavan, Special Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, with the award winners of the 12th MMA award for managerial excellence: Gowri Kailasam, President, Rane (Madras) Ltd; T.T. Srinivasaraghavan, MD, Sundaram Finance Ltd; M.R. Subramonian, MD, Adtech Systems Ltd; and Srinivasan Sundarrajan, Director, NIT, Trichy, in Chennai on Friday. — Bijoy Ghosh

India. The other is to offer lines of credit through Exim Bank for countries to build large infrastructure projects and projects in the social sector. Thirdly, India offers grant assistance for projects in neighbouring countries to bolster their infrastructure. "Much of this work remains

below the radar but a very large number of prestigious projects have been completed," said Raghavan. He said that he wanted to dispel the notion that only PSUs got these overseas contracts. Other companies could participate too and combine their commercial interests with de-

velopment projects abroad which could leave a greater India footprint. "There are exciting possibilities for corporate India," he added.

Shivakumar and Raghavan presented awards for managerial excellence to Gowri Kailasam, President, Rane (Madras) in the manufacturing sector

and to T.T. Srinivasaraghavan, MD, Sundaram Finance Ltd for excellence in the services sector. The award for the SME sector went to M.R. Subramonian, MD, Adtech Systems, and for education to S. Sundarrajan, Director, National Institute of Technology, Tiruchchi, and his team.