

# Believing in perseverance

37 could hardly be considered as too ripe an age to shoulder the responsibilities of marketing head of a logistics firm which is in the league of front ranking enterprise in its space in the country. The hurly-burly situations that primarily mark the logistics operations in general is believed to be something that needs decades of experience to handle deftly.

And by the time you reach to the pole position on operational scale, chances are you might have become an exhausted frame with plenty of grey tufts on your forehead. But meet Akash Bansal, National head of Om Logistics (with a topline of around Rs. 700 crore and positioning in nearly half a dozen verticals), and he belies the stereotyped 'uneasy lies the head' image. Still three years short of his forty mark, Bansal had to go through the rigmarole of learning too soon and too fast but he rather seems to have relished it than being unnerved by the taxing demands and situations. Heading a team of dedicated, strong work pool of Om Logistics on a pan-Indian basis, Bansal today probably testifies what a believer in perseverance mantra can achieve.

Bansal's report card boasts of an unique distinction. In terms of employment equations, logistics industry is often looked as a land of shifting sand but barring Om, Bansal has not worked for any other company. His has been typically rising through the rank story as he had joined Om as a management intern in 2002 and then went on become its national head by responding to all challenges which were entrusted to him. In fact, the big opportunity came quite early -- just one and a half years after he had joined Om. Due to a sudden change in the spearheading logistics team which was responsible

for logistics management for OEM manufacturers, a serious void emerged. "It is at that time that our chairman asked me to take over the baton. And next one and a half years was my defining spell. I had become totally workaholic since I knew the enormity of the responsibility. This phase taught me a lot including the art to sustain the customers. But it was a great learning experience, something which has stayed with me." So yes, today in hindsight I can say that I got my big chance by default," this is how he recalls that definitive turn in his life.

Born in a middle class family in Haldwani (his father worked in U.P State Electricity Board), Bansal had his primary education in Lucknow. He then moved on to obtain an engineering degree from Aurangabad in electronics stream.

His next educational abode was Pune where he enrolled for MBA. And it was there that he had first brush with logistics, something which he immensely liked and decided to make mainstay of his life. "After the first year course, I went for summer training in Panasonic. There I understood the importance of material handling and logistics. That is where I perceived that logistics scenario in India is not up to the mark and a lot of churning is bound to happen. I was guided by a senior professional (Prabhat Rastogi) there who told me in no uncertain terms that this is the in thing and you should go for it. Even as not



too many MBA aspirants were interested in this stream then, my decision was made," says Bansal.

Bansal was picked up by Om in a campus placement drive but the initial months brought in some rude shock resulting in some strong moments of self-doubt. "A couple of students from my batch had also joined Om. But within four months, all of them left

saying that this is not a lucrative option whereas I decided to stay. But their departure had indeed created serious doubts in my mind. Everybody is right or I am right?, that was the question. Six months after joining here, I rushed to my father and sought his guidance. And his suggestion was simple: if you feel that this is the right direction for you, then stick to it. Since then no self-doubt

has ever clouded my mind scape," Bansal explains.

Considered to be a strong pillar in taking Om Logistics to new heights—especially in last five years, Bansal does not mind being labeled as Mr. Loyalist asserting that his involvement with the company is not merely functional but it has strong emotional quotient too. "I am a thorough professional but yes I do have some emotional affiliation with this company. I was just a fresher and OM gave me the opportunity to prove my worth. And therefore I have always been driven by the desire to pay the organization back."

And, therefore, all the feelers made to him to move to proverbial greener pastures have failed to cut any ice with him. "In a booming market scenario, everybody get feelers and so do I. But its very important to analyse the opportunities that come your way. What does a professional want from an organisation? Three things primarily—trust from the management, growth in alignment with the organisation, and you should have job satisfaction by way of challenges in the position which you would like to maintain in an organisation. And I personally believe that if you are getting these three, what is the reason to move? Just some extra bucks. To me it hardly makes any sense," he strongly reasons.

Father of two children—a son (5 years) and a daughter (3 years)—Bansal's ultimate wish is to take on entrepreneurial baton one day. But he is quick to point out it is unlikely to happen anytime in the near future. "I see myself staying with Om and working dedicatedly towards the company's objective of emerging as top notch supply chain service provider in the country. Its only when time comes, that I would tend to give shape to my entrepreneurial dreams. I have not even decided on what precisely I would be doing. But one thing is sure: it would not be clashing with any interests of Om," he underlines. For Akash Bansal, the pay back time clearly is far from over.

—Ritwik Sishya

