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# Creativity Sphere

Creativity is the ultimate skill of mankind  
(However there is nothing called ultimate in creativity)

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## Innovating India III – Sustaining Successes

In the last two issues we saw successful innovations of few large business houses. In this issue, we will see some unique ideas of few individuals and that of, 'not that much known' companies.

Sustaining successes call for more efforts than achieving them. Culture started when men and women started wearing dress. K R Nagaraj of Ramraj Cotton started his career as a salesman for dhoties and learnt the basics of business – there is always a market for quality product. It was the time when young men (and the old) were going for fashion and modern dress like jeans and T shirts. (By the way, jeans (denim) is not that modern, it is 150 years old!) Nagaraj started his mental exercise on how to bring them back to dhoti culture. The main reason people were shifting from dhoti was the matching dress – shirt and inner wear. He first addressed them with matching innerwear, matching shirt, matching handkerchief and even matching cellphone cover. And it worked.

Then the second challenge came from some of his close people in the form of warning, "Unless young people started wearing, dhoties worn even during the weddings will also vanish." Rather than accepting that young people won't wear dhoties, he started thinking on how to get younger people to dhoti culture. One of

their major, genuine apprehensions was whether the dhoti will stay in their hips or will it slip at the odd times causing embarrassment. He came with the idea of matching white belt. Now there is no reason for them not to go for dhoties.'

To retain the customer, there should a brand name' thought Nagaraj and came the brand "Ramraj." 70% of the dhoties sold in the south are of Ramraj brand. Today it is 'Ramarajyam' for politicians to bridegrooms in the south. Now Nagaraj is going to the energy sector with installation of windmills. No doubt, with his uncommon approach he will revolutionalise even the energy sector.

"Doing the same work daily is for machines, not for humans. Anyone who comes to me has to get new designs every time." "For every card I make, I take care as though I am making it for my own family function." "When we are honest and sincere customers will come. At the same time those who respect our work, our honesty, and our abilities only deserve to be our customers. After all honesty is a two sided coin." "Whoever comes to me for the first work is not my customer. He is, only when he returns for the next work." "If I get an order for invitation cards in the morning, in one hour it is made and printed with the most modern machines at my village 700 kilometers away . If I do it in Chennai, I can

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Many ask: Am I earning what I'm worth? Few dare to ask: Am I worth what I'm earning? -  
Joao Mendonca Ferreira

can save few rupees. After all business is not only profit and loss. My village has also to grow.” “Those who receive the invitation card, designed and printed by us, should preserve it and bring it as a model, when they come for their own requirements.”

Well, these are some of the views, policies, ideas, strategies followed by Sankaralingam of Menaka Cards. Anyone passing thro’ the Kodambakkam over bridge in Chennai cannot miss the huge hoarding, “Marriages are made in Heaven; Marriage cards are made in Menaka.” When Sankaralingam gave his own design of card for printing, for his own marriage, the printers declined as it ‘cannot be done.’ He was angry. This was the seed that made him to start “Menaka Cards,” not only for making of cards as per customers’ design, even printing, offering total solution.

“Some people used to tell that others are talking as though my wife is mainly responsible for all my successes.” “No, no” I respond, “Not mainly, but wholly.” This is what Duraisamy of Sakthi Masala says about his wife Santhi. When Santhi was 14, she was asked, “Would you marry Duraisamy?” She immediately agreed. Reason: there are many children in Duraisamy’s house and it would be fun to play with all of them.

Duraisamy’s family used to grind turmeric and sell it in the market in loose 50g, 100g etc. The weighing of 50g or 100g was done in the market in front of the buyer. Duraisamy’s first idea is to pack it in the house and carry the small packets rather than carrying bulk sacks. Well, that’s the turning point in their life. That was the time, in several households, both husband and wife used to go for jobs. They didn’t have time to make variety of spices for their cooking. So the next idea of the couple is to go for ready-made spices in packets. And then there is no end, as nothing could stop their progress.

Their first learning began when they took on lease a cattle feed company. After all it is cattle feed, so they didn’t give importance to quality and very quickly burnt their fingers. And they decided never to compromise on quality.

Their second learning was not to run business with borrowed money (from unorganised sectors.) Due to pressure of refunding, quality and honesty might suffer.

Among the recognitions they received, the notable one is “Shanti Puraskar” awarded by Government of India for employing the largest number of differently-abled people.

Who started online reservation, even before Indian Railways started? Who were using wireless systems for tracking bus movements even before computerisation came? Who installed ‘head rest’ for the passengers’ comfort as early as 1977? Who started air suspension system buses first in India? (By the way the phrase ‘Air-bus’ was coined by them.) Well the answer for all these is KPN Travels of Salem. K P Natarajan attributes each of his innovation was the result of a problem.

Generally Sundays are meant for relaxing and watching TV programmes, but not for KPN Travels people. This is one of the busiest days in the week, when the families of the drivers and other staff members come for a get together, have food and fun. Another important item in the agenda is reconciliation. The list of wrongs committed by everyone in that week is read in front of the family members, they are given a chance to defend their cases and fined if found guilty. The judges are the senior drivers. After all they are responsible for the lives of thousands of people who travel everyday by KPN Travels.

Natarajan was attracted to the buses as a kid and spent more time watching buses than with the books. He started as a cleaner in a bus, what else can a class 7- read person do. He loved buses. That is the reason for his success. Today he is running 200 buses, transporting 7000 passengers and 15000 parcels daily. Natarajan says, “Today airlines are operated like bus services; we are operating bus services like airlines services. When we start our KPN Airways, we will make it that bus passengers can afford to travel in airways.” No doubt Natarajan can do it.

(Concluded)

## Discussions: Competition 73 – Car and goats

You are contesting in a game show and reached the final round. The game is simple. The host shows you three doors. Behind the other two are goats. You choose a door, and win whatever is behind it.

You choose a door. Before you open it, the host (who knows what is behind every door) opens one of the other doors and shows you a goat. She now gives you the chance to stick with the door you first chose or to change your choice. What should you do? Stick to it or change?

**There has been an overwhelming response from you, thanks to the TV shows.**

**Most people say it doesn't matter, some say stick, and few say move. Only the few are correct. You double your chances of winning by changing. This doesn't seem logical. After all, of the remaining doors one is a car and one is a goat. Surely there is a 50:50 chance? Initially there was one – in – three chance of guessing the correct door, so there is a two – in – three chance that the car is not behind one of the others. The host shows you one of the other doors it isn't behind, but there is still a two – in – three chance you guessed wrong. If that doesn't make sense, read it a few more times. Don't worry if it still seems crazy – when this puzzle was first published there were angry letters from professors denying the truth of it. But you can prove it with a computer – changing is the right thing to do.**

**If you can't accept the result, let it simmer for few days, then look at it again.**

**CONGATULATIONS! Change - Subhash of Bhubaneswar, Ranjit Tewari of Udaipur, Satish Nair of Secunderabad, Rabindranath Tandon of New Delhi, R K Gupta of Meerut, Swapan Bhandari of Kanpur and A P Sharma of Muzaffarpur.**

**Stick – Meenakshi Sundaram of Chennai, M K Ghosh of Rourkela, Satish Patil of Pune, K P Menon of Mangalore, S Bhattacharya of Siliguri, Saranya of Hyderabad, Ashok of Coimbatore and Ramachandran of Kozhikode.**

**Anand Sundar of Chennai prefers to go with the opened door and pick up the goat since no where it is mentioned that (except in the title – car) what is there in the third door, even it may be empty.**

## Letters

S.Arumugam, Chennai: The facts and information about Steve Jobs and Wilson Greatbatch are very interesting and motivating. Thanks for highlighting them.

Y Chandra Sekhar, Vizag Steel Plant: We are very much thankful to you for your continuous addition of knowledge to the industry. The sharing of your knowledge

thro' series of Creativity Spheres is really useful and adding to our strengths.

Prashant Kumbhar, Pune: I am practicing the lessons taught during the session and experiencing good results.

K.Soundarraaj, Chennai: Your writings on 'creativity' thrills me very much and make me younger in my right brain as well in my physical action.

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**The liar's punishment is not in the least that he is not believed, but that he cannot believe anyone else - *George Bernard Shaw***

### Competition 74 / 1 : Horse Whispers

A man stands in the centre of a large field. There are four horses in the field, one at each corner – a reddish brown horse, a brown horse, a white horse and a black horse. For reasons we needn't go into, the horseman killed all his horses. He remained at the centre of the field, the horses stayed at the four corners and he is a perfect shot, how he made sure that none of his horses remained alive by using only three bullets?

Think of at least six possibilities that this could happen, and send the list to me

### Competition 74 / 2 : The Bus Riders (Let's think a little logically)

After school, 10 students boarded a bus at the corner of A Street & Main. The bus, which stops at every corner, proceeds up Main Street, first passing B Street, then C Street, and so on, turning left on G Street. The bus passes Central, Broadway, and Downtown Boulevard on its route.

**Study the clues and then indicate where each of the 10 students got off the bus.**

Clues: 1) Twice as many students got off the bus at G Street & Central than got off at G Street & Main.

2) The first student to get off rode for three blocks.

3) Javier got off first. None of the others got off at his stop or at the next stop

4) Liz and Edward got off at the same stop; Muhammad and Darice got off at the same stop.

5) Sam was still on the bus after Maria got off.

6) Carlos got off the bus three blocks before Emil. Emil got off one stop after Alicia.

7) Muhammad's stop was after Liz's stop.

8) Maria didn't get off the bus at G Street & Main. Sam didn't get off at G Street & Broadway.

9) All students left the bus before it reached G Street & Downtown Boulevard

## Letters

MVKS Rao: Innovation is inevitable to the modern organisations. Your initiations towards innovations is remarkable.

Neeraj Tiwari, Pune: It was a good learning from you, both professionally and personally. I thank you for the valuable guidance provided.

K.Ramesh, Chennai: I do forward CS to many of my friends. Every time I read...I get something new.....

P P Sengupta, Kolkata: The contents are simply amazing.

Sunil D. Sharma, Neemuch: I always use my right brain, by asking myself "aur kya hai?" whenever I am in any difficulty.

Sunil Agrawal, Raipur: CS 72 and 73 are superb. Innovation means only foreign companies. Thanks for highlighting Indian Experiences.

K Sundar, Mumbai: Even though you are using lot of published material, your own way of writing and making inferences is interesting.

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Nothing seems interesting when it belongs to you, only when it doesn't – Natalie Babbitt

## Letters

K Ajmera, New Delhi: How is it that initial enthusiasm doesn't stay for long?

Very enthusiastically I enrol for yoga classes, language classes, gym and what not. After few days the enthusiasm comes down. The reason could be many – I am not clear why I have joined or what I would get out of that. I am also not sure whether at all I will get it. It is not as interesting as I thought etc. Another reason could be that I am thinking, 'it may be of use sometime in the future when needed.' If these doubts are cleared or if there are clear answers for the questions, then my enthusiasm stays.

Once I am ready with these, then I have to consciously pursue the things for few days, like when I learnt to drive a vehicle. First few days, I was consciously moving the hands and leg and after few days, it has become a part of my system. Now I don't even know when am I shifting the gear or when I am applying the brake.

This is true with even buying things. Several things I bought with umpteen number of features. I was so particular while buying and after the payment is made, I never bothered to check whether at all that feature is working. How many people are having cellphones with imaginative features, but hardly ever they use it.

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You go to your TV to turn your brain off. You go to the computer when you want to turn your brain on – Steve Jobs

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