

Baroda Management Association



An Interview with **Dr. Nirmit Jha** MD, Asta India Pvt. Ltd.



A pleasant Saturday afternoon and a nice ride through the (currently) lush green countryside away from the din of the city took me to the works of ASTA INDIA PVT. LTD. in one extreme corner of GIDC Savli, to meet the Managing Director of the company, Dr. Nirmit Jha. For sure there must be others like me who had never heard about this company. No worries! Read on to know more about the man and the company he manages.

MG: Good afternoon Dr. Jha. Tell me about your company and how long have you been here?

NJ: Well, here we are not so old, but the parent company in Austria is really old. It was established in **1814**. We basically manufacture Energy Transmission Components. Our company is known world over for environment friendly production of high quality customized winding wires for use in electrical machinery. Efficient logistics and flexible production supported by state-of-the-art plant has enabled ASTA to fulfill special customer requirements.

MG: In your specific area, what is your specialization?

NJ: Customer orientation, innovation, global marketing, zero defect strategies, process oriented infrastructure and high employee motivation over the years have continued to insure ASTA stays on top. Our optimized cost efficiency, assured quality products conforming to international standards have helped keep long partnerships with all the large international electrical engineering groups.

MG: Sounds great! Tell me more about your products.

NJ: We manufacture high quality insulated winding materials made of copper for use in electrical machinery in the high energy sector. They are called conductors (CTC) for transformers and Roebel bars for generators. Round wire is produced at three locations – in Austria, India and China at dimensions specified by customers – accurately down to one hundredth of a millimeter, insulated with special enamel, paper or a netting tape.

MG: Would you like to tell our readers the names of the global companies you partner with?

NJ: Ya why not. These are companies which manufacture transformers and generators – ABB, SIEMENS, ALSTOM, SMIT/SGB and CG Power. They are our highly satisfied and repetitive customers – as we like to focus on quality rather than volume.

MG: Your visiting card says Dr. Nirmit Jha. So you have done a Ph.D. In what subject? Electrical Engineering?

NJ: Throughout my career I have preferred to remain a student and have never been truly away from studies. I firmly believe in theories and their might while using them in practice. I have studied Mechanical Engineering, Masters in Financial Management and Diploma in International Business Management and recently doctorate in Economics with principle subject as Theories of Games. I have also earned my Master Black Belt in Six Sigma.

MG: Very impressive! So how did you join this company?

NJ: It is a long story and dates back to 2007. At that time I was working with Mahindra & Mahindra at Mumbai; was happy and young (surprisingly both) at the age of 31. One day I got a call from an elderly gentleman, who initially did not reveal his name. He virtually invited me to 'script' ASTA's entry into India. I took the challenge as it was too good to refuse primarily because seldom a professional gets blank paper in his hand to script the success. I felt blessed when I got one on that day. That's how first I landed in Baroda/ Savli.

MG: Oh, so you are here since inception?

NJ: The land was selected and construction started, but within no time I was sent to the mother plant in Austria as GM works to "Asianize" that set up. The business there was in bad shape. Imports were increasing and exports were

difficult due to the slump in Europe. My appointment there was taken with a lot of critical and almost typical European cynicism – not because I was not white, but because I came from *backward India*. Initially I faced hostilities just because of that until I discovered the right HR strategy to purposefully integrate with the larger. It was one more instance of the importance of having the right HR strategy. I worked there for almost five years during which I travelled a lot too, learning from different situations and handling them with a certain degree of expertise and unconventional methods. It was a difficult yet fulfilling time where the board reposed their faith in me and never let the professional freedom ever be chocked my professional freedom. Eventually after two years of hard work and a lot of re-alignment, a turnaround could be seen. Purpose was to transform people and mind-sets with more acceptability towards change and a better future. They had to get out of their laid back complacent attitude. My idea was to groom a whole new generation for the bright future of the company. I also was actively involved in managing the change globally at other units like China, India and USA.

MG :And when did you come back?

NJ : In 2012 there was a change of guard at the top, the new management board of ASTA had an aggressive approach. The companies in India and China were in deep trouble on the verge of bankruptcy. I was sent to rescue this plant. The very reason I had joined this company was lost as I got no blank paper to write my script, instead I got a soiled sheet. I was received here by 81 employees, 2 GMs and a clean, underutilized infrastructure, unrealized potential, a lot of scope but no money to do anything. Everything was apparently in a mess.

MG : My goodness! So how did you start the cleaning process?

NJ : The situation was posing two distinct dimensions i.e. Nothing can be done and

hence do not try OR nothing worse can happen so try with all you might and enjoy the pleasure of turning around.. I found an answer from my conventional wisdom to begin with, work harder than others before you demand others to work hard and don't look at your designation as an MD in stereotypical "Glass House Elite" syndrome while leading from the front. The pursuit demanded both harsh unpleasant decisions as well as cool, intensely strategic decisions. When I look back, I feel content with our performance in both the categories. One example is about our decision to invite INTERTEK for an in-depth audit about the moral and ethical practices concerning various compliances apart from financials. I must tell you our unit was indeed poor in these regards at the time of management changeover. Subsequent we took image transition as a major mile stone even before we worked on all profit making strategies.

MG : So the results of the audit actually helped you?

NJ : Yes. I believe once you aspire to bring in right character within the organization the organization stands up and absolutely sides with you.

MG : Oh really! How did that happen?

NJ : Subsequent audit with INTERTEK made the difference. The report put us at 92% whereas the Indian average of the best companies was only around 75%. After that we have not looked back. The year 2012 was a year of turmoil and change. The same year subsequent to our transformation, our capable employees stood up to their best. We first saw substantial net profit in the month of May-2012. This was indeed a credible glimpse of hidden potential for my small unit where initially we had to borrow money to make salaries immediately after management changeover. 2013 was cash break even, 2014 net break even, 2015 cash accrual, 2016 wiped off accrued losses and 2017 expansion plan to double the capacity. 2018 we are staring firmly at another round of capacity expansion probably diversification or inorganic growth.

MG : Fantastic, so finally you will be able to relax and enjoy the fruits of all the hard work.

NJ : Not really, Success is an addiction, it forces you to spread your wings even further. I am yet to search for "Rest" and in fact, the journey at this speed is truly the "Rest". On personal side, I still find lot of time to play Sitar which is the other extreme.

MG : How unusual to know that a business driven person like you likes to play the sitar. Any other hobbies?

NJ : My Guru and Sitar is the essence of melody I see constantly flowing in my professional life as well. I am in debt to my Guru Shri Sanjay Sant and Senior Guru Shri Arvind Parikh, who lives in Mumbai. I also like to visit him whenever possible. In fact I recently met him on Guru Purnima. What differentiated me is my education encompassed by art. It gives me freedom to think beyond the rules and boundaries of education. A liberated thinking is an essence in my strong views. Apart from this I have a horse for a pet.... In Baroda he is my only family.

MG : It has been a pleasure meeting you and talking to you. Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your journey so far. Particularly glad to know about your interest in music.... it must be helping you keep a balance through all the stress.



- Interviewed by
Malti Gaekwad

Managing the Monsoon



Dr. Vinod Rao, IAS
Municipal Commissioner
Vadodara

To meet the Municipal Commissioner at a time like this is definitely a tough job: because he is a busy man. As citizens it is easy to blame the Municipal Corporation for all our woes during the rainy season, but it's worthwhile to know what all steps are being taken by them in advance on various fronts long before the monsoon sets in.

On 26th, July amidst the heavy rains in the city and crisis situations in other parts of Gujarat, I was lucky to be able to meet Dr. Vinod Rao briefly, for a few minutes to know and understand what steps VMC takes before and during the monsoon. Dr. Rao said that there are 8 major areas on which

the VMC takes action to prepare for the monsoon. He listed them out for us.

1. Cleaning and clearing the drainage lines.
2. Ensuring smooth flow of sewage.
3. Plugging leakages in the drinking water lines.
4. Take steps to halt water borne diseases.
5. Strengthening of solid waste management systems.
6. Tackling stray cattle menace.
7. Trimming of trees.
8. Flood management from Ajwa Lake up to the city.

Additional City Engineer **Mr. Alpesh Majmundar** shared details of all the works undertaken. He said that work in almost all of these areas starts right from January and in some cases even soon after Diwali. Basically in the first round all the manholes are cleaned between Diwali and January end. Then the second round is undertaken after about a month.... The data and the reports are checked, and a third round of cleaning is done in the areas which show chronic problems. They also check for minor and major leakages in all the sewage and drinking water pipelines, so that there is no mixing which may lead to contamination. Since there is no storm water in those months and no or minor flow is there leakages are easily detected and they are plugged. The leakages could be due to wear and tear, tampering, leaking valves, corrosion etc. The total maintenance activity is taken up for the entire network of water supply and sewage pipelines both of which measure 1500-2000 kilometers each. Sewage cleaning is done by jet machines and suction processes during night times. There are 7 Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) with a total capacity of 276.5 million liters per day. All the sewage is treated before being disposed off.

Quality of water is checked before the rains and again house to house mass sampling is done at customer end on regular basis. It is checked for chlorine content, absence of which may lead to contamination and spread of diseases. In case any problem is observed, those lines are cut and segregated and leakages plugged and treated.

For solid waste management first all the open spots are cleaned regularly and medicated appropriately. And for collection of domestic waste door to door collection is done on a daily basis in the entire city.

Flogging is also done in the city at intervals for the arrest of diseases spread by mosquitoes. Guppy fish are put into all the lakes as they eat the mosquito larvae.

Trees are trimmed by the Corporation in collaboration with GUVNL, every year as a precautionary measure.

Many times cattle create menace by coming onto the roads. Corporation captures

them and takes them away to panjara poles and keeps them there.

Now about flood management... it is of two types. One is the outflow from the Ajwa Dam. Since the height of the dam was raised from 212 feet to 230 feet, currently we have no fear of water having to be released or overflowing. Discharge from Ajwa is always monitored in such a way that it does not coincide with heavy rain fall. The second of course is the rain fall itself in Baroda district or the upper regions which flows into Vishwamitri River. There are 15 rain gauging stations in the city from which data is collected to monitor or take action about probable flow into the Vishwamitri.

The Vadodara Municipal Corporation is doing its work round the clock and it is monitored by senior officers, but to bring in best results the cooperation of citizens is required. VMC also has a **24x7 help line or grievance cell** to attend to all complaints. Citizens are encouraged to use this number: **18002330265**



Mr. K.M. Bhuva
Director (Technical)
Gujarat Urja Vikas
Nigam Limited
(GUVNL)

Mr. Bhuva shared with us what measures are taken by the Electricity Distribution Companies to ensure safety, availability and reliable power at all times and especially during the monsoons. He said maintenance of the distribution network is given high priority. All the High Tension Lines and Low Tension Lines, all Transformers, Poles and Wires in the City, Industrial and Rural areas are checked during the summer months – a pre - monsoon preventive maintenance and the same is also being undertaken on regular basis periodically. A proper 'Action Plan' is prepared and the same is being monitored on a regular basis by the authorities.

The greatest concern is to maintain



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continuity in the distribution and supply of electricity to the society even during the monsoon. If any problem arises, the same is being attended immediately by the concerned field staff. There is a Disaster Management Plan also in place. There are Control Rooms in every Circle Office where officers are on duty, round the clock. The Engineers and Assistants work in three shifts a day and have to submit a daily report along with details of the power position. There are two toll free numbers for Madhya Gujarat Vij Company Limited (MGVCL): 19124 and 18002332670, for customers for registering their complaint for electricity fault, both are centralized customer care centres, which are connected to the fault centres in all areas. Other Distribution Companies in the State have this kind of arrangement too.

In case of emergency, our teams of Sub-Division are directed to ensure immediate Repair and Restoration of power supply in a situation of heavy rain. All materials that could be generally needed in any emergency are stored at the Division /Sub-division office to tackle any adverse conditions like unexpected floods etc. Even all work contractors and response teams are kept on alert to attend faults and to restore the power supply as early as possible.

Mr. Bhuva said, the GUVNL is taking all precautions at their end, however if people also got aware and became responsible citizens, many accidents can be avoided at individual and domestic levels. He listed a few for us to follow:-

1. For safety at all times, all the wiring and electrical appliances which are used, should be as per Rules and ISI marked.
2. During monsoon there is dampness so all people, especially housewives should be careful while using any domestic appliances. Even a little bit of negligence can lead to a mishap.
3. For drying clothes, always plastic wires should be used. Metal wires should be avoided as far as possible. During monsoon they can carry current.
4. While applying for electricity connection, proper estimate of the load of electrical gadgets should be calculated and load capacity should be increased with the increase of geysers and air conditioners etc. accordingly.
5. For safety everyone should install an 'Earth Leakage Circuit Breaker' (ELCB) which will automatically cut off the current if there is a problem.
6. Two Android applications are made available on Google Play Store to enable the customers to pay online and also to register their complaints.

We are always committed to '**SAFETY FIRST**'.

One Needs to Laugh Sometimes

An old French lady had a shop in her village for years, until one day a huge corporate supermarket set up across the road from her little shop. They put up signs advertising their prices, including one that said "Butter – 10 francs". In response the lady added a sign to her own window, "Butter – 9 francs". Next day the big supermarket had a new sign, "Butter – 8 francs". Sure enough, the next day after the lady's sign now read "7 francs". This went on for a while, until eventually the lady's customers pointed to the sign and said, "Madame, you cannot keep your prices so low for a long. These big companies can use their buying power to sell products cheaper, but a small store like yours can never compete."

In response the old lady bent forward conspiratorially and muttered, " Monsieur, I don't even sell butter!"



Dr. Ramesh Pujari

Family Physician
(Adarsh Hospital)

During the monsoon many people tend to fall sick. During the rainy season a few common diseases are seen. Malaria, Dengue, Chickengunia are caused by mosquitoes that breed in stagnant water. Jaundice and Typhoid are caused largely due to consuming infected or unclean water and stale food especially milk and milk products respectively.

Upper respiratory infections like cold, cough and influenza are also common during the monsoon. People can be spared much discomfort and sickness if the following precautions are taken.

1. Wash hands frequently and specially before and after meals and after visiting the toilet.
2. Use filtered or boiled water for drinking. Else put chlorine tablets (PURIPOT TABLETS) which are easily available, in the drinking water.
3. Avoid cold and stale foods which have been kept overnight without refrigeration. Avoid chutneys, salads etc. which have been kept exposed.
4. Only fresh boiled milk, milk products and Mithraism should be consumed. Keep the food covered at all times.
5. Eating street food during monsoon is not a good idea. If one has to eat – ensure it is hot and fresh.
6. Avoid getting wet and catching a chill. In case you do get wet in the rain, change into dry clothes at the earliest. Try to keep warm and have something hot to drink.
7. Last but most important is protection from mosquito bites. There are many ways to do this. Use mosquito nets and repellants. Wear socks and full sleeve garments. Keep your home and surrounding areas free from mosquitoes and flies.
8. These days Conjunctivitis (eye infections) are also prevalent. To avoid getting the infection, stay away from infected persons and avoid any direct physical contact with him or her.

One Day MDP on Neuro Linguistic Programme

Faculty : Ms. Kanchan Karunakar

Date : July 07, 2017



Brief Summary of MDP

MDP covered the following areas

NLP Model of communication: sensory experience, coding, emotions, representations, behavior Presuppositions of NLP and coaching – basic rules, beliefs and understanding Sensory acuity – discovery and enhancement of visual, auditory, kinesthetic preferences Rapport – developing powerful connections with others Mirroring and matching – non-verbal communication to build rapport

- Milton Model
- Chunking
- Anchoring
- Circle of excellence

Objective of the Programme

- To be able to face the unexpected challenges that the world throws at us and continue to remain on track with your vision and goals for life.
- Work with an elegance and grace in a smart integrated way.
- Have an ease and confidence in yourself that allows you to achieve what is truly important without stress.
- Operate from sound principles of excellence that guide you in your decisions about your life and work.

One Day MDP on Leadership Skills

Faculty : Mr. Chirag Desai

Date : July 13, 2017



Brief Summary of MDP

MDP covered the following areas

- Are we ready with Next line of Leadership? • Need of New Leaders • How to Identify a Leader • Competency and Capability • Role of the current Leader in creating future Leaders • Transformation

Objective of the Programme

- In current scenario mostly all the organizations are facing challenges in finding second line of Leadership and feeling crisis of Leaders.
- This program helped them to think on creating Leadership within organization or if required how to find from outside.

One Day MDP on Lean Six Sigma

Faculty : Mr. Madhav Reddy

Date : July 28, 2017



Brief Summary of MDP

MDP covered the following areas

- Lean vs. Six Sigma • Lean Six Sigma vs. other QM Tools • DMAIC Stages • Problem Solving Techniques • 7 types of Industrial MUDA • Real Life Case Studies.

Objective of the Programme

- To gain insights into how the application of Quality Management can transform the competitive position of business.
- To appreciate the approaches and frame works that can be applied to different market segments.
- To increase the understanding of the impact of Quality Management on costs, production and financial performance.
- To Enhance Team Work and Group Dynamics amongst employees.
- To help teams to think out of the box and be innovative.

RTC on CSR “Challenges to Opportunities?”

Round Table Conference

on

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

22nd August, 2017

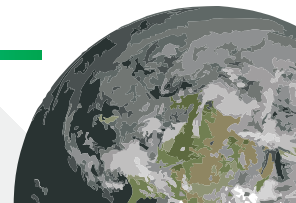
Theme

“Challenges to Opportunities?”



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Speakers



Prof. (Dr.) Satish Deodhar,
Chair - Post Graduate Programme
in Management (PGP) IIM,
Ahmedabad



CA (Dr.) H.B. Patel,
Executive Director
(Finance) & Chief Financial Officer
Gujarat Alkalies & Chemicals Ltd.
Vadodara



Mr. Prasad Pradhan
Sustainable Business & Communications
(SB&C) Director, Unilever, South Asia,
Mumbai

Panel Discussion

CSR – Need for or force by Society?



Mr. Chinmay Sengupta,
Chief Operating Officer,
ICICI Foundation, Mumbai
(Will also present the Case Study)



Mr. Niraj Lal,
Head CSR,
Arvind Ltd.,
Ahmedabad



Prof. (Dr.) Rajasi A. Clerk
Director,
University School of Social Sciences,
Gujarat University,
Ahmedabad

Moderator



Prof. (Dr.) Bhavna Mehta
Professor in Faculty of Social work,
Faculty of Social Work,
Director- Officer of Corporate Affairs,
M.S. University, Vadodara

Case Studies



Mr. Amit Mehta
Chief Executive Officer,
MAA Foundation,
Vapi



Ms. Urja Shah
Chief Executive Officer,
SETCO Foundation,
Kalol

Forthcoming Events

Full Day Workshop on GST

Date : August 12, 2017
Time : 09:30 am to 05:30 pm
Venue : The Hotel Gateway (Taj)

Round Table Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility

Date : August 22, 2017
Time : 09:30 am to 04:30 pm
Theme : "Challenges to Opportunities?"
Venue : The Hotel Gateway (Taj)

29th Annual Management Convention

Date : September 15-16, 2017
Time : 09:30 am to 05:30 pm
Theme : Empowering India's Growth Engine
Venue : The Hotel Gateway (Taj)

For Registration Contact Us : BMA
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From the Editor's desk



My Dear Members,

For BMA the year has begun well, despite the rains we have had many successful programmes. Baroda we can say is having a good monsoon, but the rest of the state is having a lot of problems, how prepared are we in Baroda? This month, we bring you one more interview of a young industry leader. Reading about the experiences of such people can be a bit motivation for our youngsters. That apart, Samanvaya team brings you a special feature on MANAGING THE MONSOON. While we are good at managing other things, let us see how good we are at this.

I have personally met two important people to bring to you the preparations that the VMC and GUVNL (erstwhile GEB) do much in advance of the onset of rains. They also advised what citizens could do or should do to be in better control of the situation. We also have suggestions from a family physician on how to avoid getting sick. So stay healthy and do attend all the fantastic programmes lined up for you during the month of August. The RTC on CSR seems to have an impressive line up of speakers, you wouldn't want to miss it!

Malti Gaekwad

FRIDAY EVENING TALKS

SR	DATE	TOPIC & SPEAKERS
1.	04.08.2017	'Big Data' Goldmine of Information by Mr. Sameer Rohadia
2.	11.08.2017	त्रिदोष-वात-पित्त-कफ by Dr. Rajendra Hathi
3.	18.08.2017	Fashionista by Ms. Palak Patel Trivedi
4.	01.09.2017	Know Your Plastics Before You Say No by Prof. Nitin Bhate

Venue : BMA, Guru Narayana Centre for Leadership, 2nd Floor, Anmol Plaza, Old Padra Road, Vadodara.

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