

# Manu Parpia

## ‘Stay Persistent and Focused’

**M**ANU PARPIA, Founder and Vice Chairman, Geometric is a stalwart who has stood humble through the years and believes in the mantra—when treading the journey of life, you should follow your heart. A Chemical Engineer from McGill University, Parpia started his career with Humphreys & Glasgow Consultants. “In the eighties, Jamshed Godrej requested me

to develop a business of electronic typewriters. I had just busted a business and had nothing to do anyway, so I jumped in,” he recalls.

In 1992–93, he felt driven to do something diverse.

Parpia already had a clear vision of a company in mind (later named Geometric), and had in place its VC, international shareholders, and employees along with the financial minutes. “It was a complex route as software was a buzzword

and the number of VCs were less, but an entrepreneur needs to be persistent and focused”, he suggests.

Always appreciating a good quality in every person, Parpia puts forth, “There have been many people who have influenced me. My father, a lawyer by profession went into the minutest of details to understand a problem and I have learnt attention to detail from him. Vasant Seth of Great Eastern and Naval Godrej, as remarkable human beings and brilliant entrepreneurs, have influenced me. Azim Premji has also been an inspiration. It is amazing to see the number of successful enterprises started

by ex-Wiproites, which talks of the entrepreneurial spirit of the company”, says Parpia.

Honesty within himself and team members is crucial for a CEO. “You could be foolish enough to know you will succeed, but you should be smart enough to drop things when you fail. This dictum infuses toughness in organizations to carve a successful path,” he asserts. Advising entrepreneurs on financial management, Parpia advises, “Entrepreneurs should know how to generate cash. Or else, half-way into the project, they would be running from pillar to post to raise money rather than concentrate on business.”

However, the man who set up a multi-million dollar company does regret the fact that he wasn’t able to balance work and home. “At business, one is more accountable as your actions affect many lives. Of course, family is closer and more important, but work is where you spend maximum time,” he says. Retiring as CEO three years ago, his work role has eased. “But my daughter lives abroad now. Equations change in life and they cannot wait for you forever,” says Parpia in a low tone.

The most satisfying moment for Parpia was when his employees acknowledged his help beyond the salary pattern. “The best form of appreciation is former employees cherishing their work stint with you. This goodwill factor is important”, he smiles. If you do not dream big, you will never achieve anything, sums up Parpia. ■

— Yogesh Gupta



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