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THE MOST ADMIRABLE GLOBAL INDIANS 2025

Radiating brilliance with their spirit, these pioneers carve unmatched legacies while inspiring generations towards limitless horizons."

RAJNISH VIRMANI

A Global Game Changer with a Human Touch





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RAJNISH VIRMANI

A Global Game Changer with a Human Touch

Over the course of more than four decades, Rajnish Virmani has stood at the forefront of change, helping to redefine India's role on the global stage. From the early days when India was stereotyped as a land of snake charmers to today, when Indian leaders occupy top global positions, Rajnish has been a catalyst in three distinct waves of transformation: India's emergence as the world's IT hub, its evolution into the back office of the world, and now its rise as a

leader in global business and technology.

An engineer and MBA by training, Rajnish describes his career in two innings. The first spanning three decades was spent as a professional in IT and global corporations. Rising quickly, he became a CIO at a young age and later moved into senior leadership roles as COO and CEO of large multinational companies. Managing teams of more than 10,000 people, including thousands across the USA, UK, and EU, he learned what



**POSITIVE
MOMENTUM**
no nonsense business expertise

it meant to drive global-scale change.

The second inning, now over a decade long, has been devoted to entrepreneurship, consulting, and leadership development. As Managing Director of Positive Momentum India, Rajnish leads a team of former CEOs and CXOs who consult on strategy, operational excellence, sales transformation, organizational design, and leadership coaching. His personal mission is crystal clear: to help develop the next 100 CEOs for the corporate world.

Rajnish credits much of his leadership philosophy to his lifelong passion for sports. Having represented his college



at university level in nine disciplines, he learned lessons that shaped his approach to business: the hunger to win, the importance of teamwork, the resilience to bounce back, and the ability to stay calm under pressure.

“These are the same qualities I carried into boardrooms,” he says. “Sports teach you focus, composure, and the never-give-up attitude all of which define effective leadership.”

Colleagues often point to his positivity as his defining strength. Rajnish calls it his PQ-Positivity Quotient. More important to him than IQ or EQ, it reflects his ability to focus only on what can be controlled and to discard negative thoughts like jealousy or anxiety. “I consciously observe my thoughts, reject negativity, and focus on the power of the subconscious mind,” he explains. “For me, positivity is not a trait, it is a practice.”

Ironically, his inability to shout or use harsh language, a trait sometimes seen as a weakness in corporate circles has also defined him. “I’ve proven that nice guys (but tough guys) do win,” he says with a smile. For him, leadership rests on what he calls the four Hs: Honesty, Hard Work, Humility, and Hunger. When leaders focus on customers and employees, he insists, profits take care of themselves.

Asked about balancing professional and personal life, Rajnish is characteristically straightforward. “It’s all about mind-set there’s no rocket science here,” he says. He manages both with a single calendar, giving equal weight

to a morning board meeting and an evening squash game with his son. To him, discipline, punctuality, and preparation are what make balance sustainable.

Rajnish devotes much of his personal time to mentoring young women from underprivileged backgrounds. Every weekend, he works with school and college-going girls from nearby villages, helping them build self-confidence, communication skills, and job readiness. “These girls are bright and capable but lack opportunities,” he says. “If I can help bridge that gap, it is deeply fulfilling.”

So far, he has mentored over 500 young women, many of whom are now pursuing careers and education with renewed confidence. This, he admits, has become one of the most rewarding aspects of his life’s work.

For Rajnish, leadership is never about him it is always about others. “My role is to be interested, not interesting,” he says. Known for his curiosity and incisive questioning, he calls them BGQs-Bloody Good Questions. This philosophy also inspired his book, *Bloody Good Leadership*, where he lays out lessons for aspiring leaders.

He extends this mission through his podcast, *Your Career Ladder*, where he shares stories and challenges of senior leaders, especially to inspire the young women he mentors. “Leadership is about action, not words. You have to inspire people through what you do, not just what you say.”

Over the years, Rajnish has been recognized with numerous awards, from global accolades for quality delivery to being celebrated as a role-model leader. NASSCOM once

nicknamed him “Mr. BOT” for his pioneering work in Build-Operate-Transfer contracts, and he continues to hold the record for leading the largest such project delivered in India. More recently, he was honoured with the Outstanding Leadership Award at industry forums. Sports too remain a field of recognition, with awards in cricket, badminton, and golf underscoring his lifelong commitment to discipline and excellence. Rajnish carries immense pride in India’s progress and optimism for its future. “I have been fortunate to see India transform in my lifetime,” he says. “From stereotypes to being the IT hub, to becoming the back office of the world, and now emerging as global leaders. With our young population, strong work ethic, and determined mind-set, I believe India will reclaim its place as the world’s leading economy.”

From pioneering change in IT and corporate leadership to mentoring the next generation and giving back to society, Rajnish Virmani’s journey embodies the values of resilience, service, and vision. For him, success has never been about titles or accolades alone, but about creating leaders, institutions, and opportunities that will outlast him.

