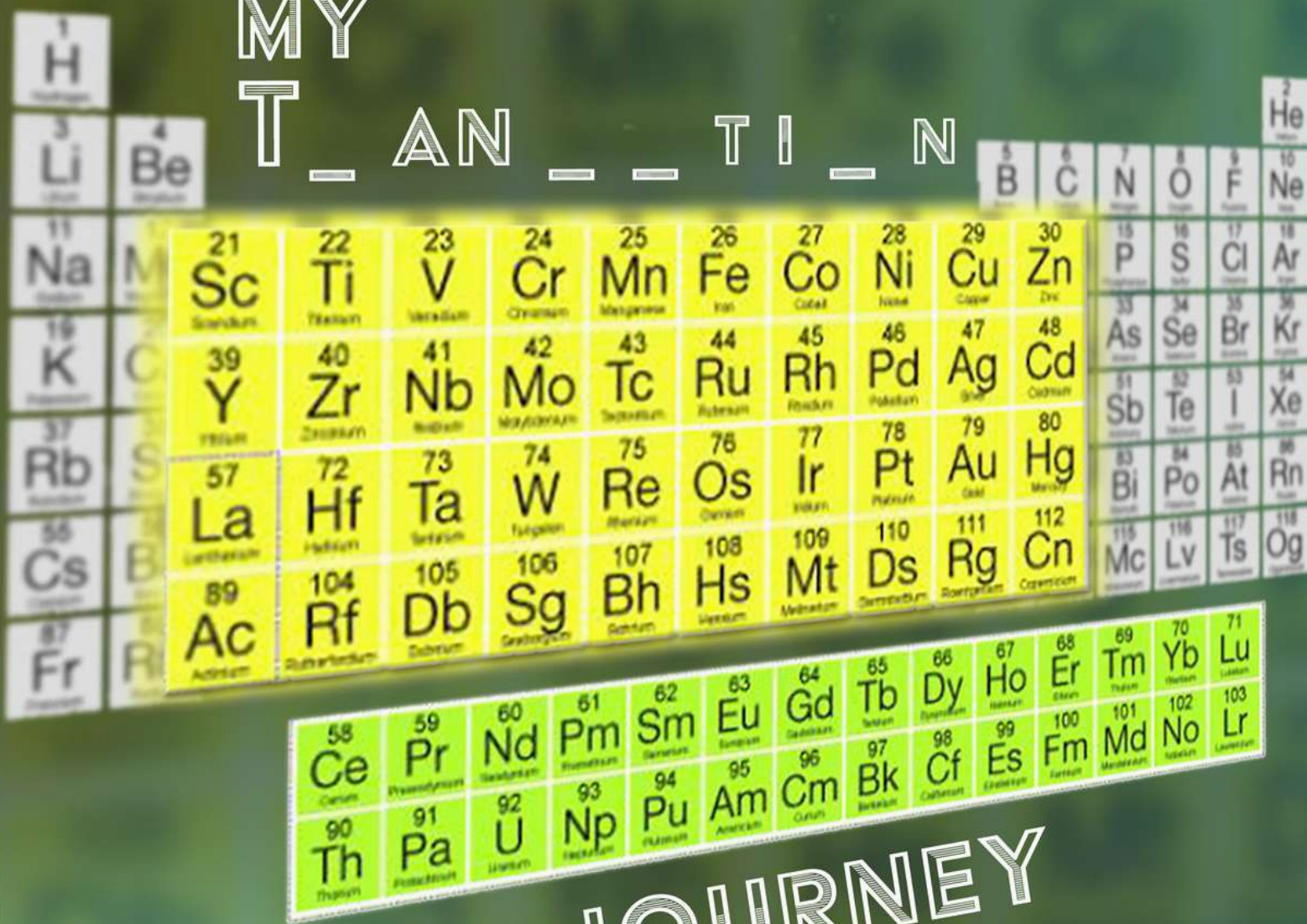


FORCENET

E-ZINE

Magazine for military veterans in the corporate
May 2023, Volume V, Issue 05

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JOURNEY



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FORCENET

From the Editor

Hello Friends,

It's May Day today and we are ready with another Issue of your beloved e-magazine the ForceNet E-Zine – the magazine of the military veterans in the corporate. This month, our magazine theme is "My Transition Story." We have the privilege of sharing the stories of several military veterans who have successfully transitioned from the military to the corporate world. Each of their stories is unique, their circumstances different yet you would find that they share some common threads: preparation, perseverance and determination.

As a veteran myself, I understand the challenges that come with transitioning from military to civilian life. The process can be daunting, but it is not impossible. The stories we share this month are proof that with the right mindset, support, and resources, veterans can thrive in the corporate world. Believe you me this Issue is treasure trove, a collector's Issue for those planning to transition. You can learn from the shared experiences of so many veterans spanning more than a few hundred years of experience. I encourage you to read these stories and take note of the valuable lessons they offer. Remember, you have skills and experiences that are highly valued in the corporate world, and with determination and support, you can achieve your goals and also build an extremely rewarding career.

To our corporate readers, I urge you to consider the value that veterans bring to your organization. Veterans possess unique skills such as leadership, adaptability, resilience, team work and integrity that can benefit any company. By hiring and supporting veterans, you not only gain valuable employees, but you also give back to those who have served our country.

In conclusion, I want to express my gratitude to the veterans who shared their stories with us. Your bravery, determination, and success are an inspiration to us all. I hope that this issue will serve as a valuable resource for veterans transitioning to the corporate world and as a reminder to all of us of the tremendous value that veterans bring to our communities. I hope you find this edition of the magazine informative, inspiring, and useful.

Keep learning and sharing.

Until next time, cheers to Forces Network – **“the Network that works”**.



Yours,
Transitioned Veteran

Capt Rajesh Nair

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[A NOTE FOR THE READERS](#)

This is an interactive e-magazine, with active links on many pages, including the advertisements, which can be used by just tapping/clicking on them.

For the ease of providing a feedback, such links have been provided at the end of the articles too.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed within this e-magazine are the personal opinions of the authors and interviewees. The facts and opinions appearing in the articles thus do not reflect the views of Forces Network, and Forces Network does not assume any responsibility or liability for the same.

Star of Forces Network

A Forces Network Star is a member of the Forces Network who has gone on to achieve glory in the his/her corporate/civilian avatar. The aim of this series is not just to celebrate our successes from the veteran community, which unfortunately we do not do enough, but also to inspire others. The ultimate goal is to set up a virtuous self-sustaining cycle of inspiration leading to more successes in turn inspiring many more.

IN INTERACTION WITH IQBAL SINGH

Maj Nitesh Kala was commissioned to 24 Rajput in Sep 2001. He moved to the Corporate World post completing his MDP from NMIMS, Mumbai in 2008. He has worked with Organisations like Oberoi Realty Ltd, Oberoi International School, Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd, Godrej Consumer Products Ltd before joining Viacom18 in 2016. Nitesh is a Chartered Facilities Management Surveyor from Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, U.K., a certified Facility Management Professional (FMP®) from International Facility Management Association, U.S.A. and has completed his IGC from The National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health, U.K.



IQ: Please tell us something about your background prior to joining the Army, and your subsequent Army career?

Nitesh: I am born and brought up in Dehradun, I completed my schooling from St. Thomas' College and my graduation from DAV College. I was a A+ student throughout and was captain of my Debate and Badminton team and part of the School Cricket, Football and Choir teams. I secured an All India Rank of 103 in the overall merit for OTA, Chennai. I passed out of OTA on 1st September 2001 and got commissioned in 24 RAJPUT. I performed the duties of Adjutant, Quarter Master and Company Commander in my unit. I also cleared both my Part B and Part D promotion exams in my first attempt. I left the Army in January 2007 and post completing my MDP from NMIMS, Mumbai in 2008 I have been working in the Corporate world post that.



Academy pic, 2nd row standing, 6th from left

IQ: Give us an understanding about your current role and what you are presently engaged in. Also please share in chronological order the roles and companies in your corporate career?

Nitesh: I am currently working as Vice President and National Head of Facilities, Corporate Services and Security at Viacom18 Media Private Ltd, Mumbai. I take care of Corporate Real Estate, Project Management, Technical, Soft services and Physical security of 11 offices in 8 cities managing close to half a million sq. ft. office area PAN India. I also head the Corporate travel for the company. I have completed close to seven years in Viacom18. Presently me and my team are engaged in providing 24*7 support to our Sports18 BU as IPL is on till 31st May 2023. I manage a team of 14 direct reports and 250+ IFM support staff PAN India.

The other companies I have worked with previously are mentioned below.

Asian Heart Institute and Research Centre, Mumbai as Administration Manager

Oberoi Realty Limited, Mumbai as Manager - Employee Services

Oberoi International School, Mumbai as Senior Manager & Head - HR & Administration

Ranbaxy Laboratories Limited, Mumbai as Sr. Manager & Head - Administration India Region

Godrej Consumer Products Limited, Mumbai as D.G.M & Head - Administration



With my Viacom18 Mumbai team (Corporate)

IQ: How did you prepare yourself for the Military to Corporate transition?

Nitesh: Being a short service commissioned officer with a mandatory service of 5 years, age was on my side and I was able to take the leap of faith. I did my full time MDP (Management Development Program) from NMIMS Mumbai after leaving the Army. The six months program prepares you mentally on how life will be in the Corporate as you learn the corporate jargons and interact with people from different backgrounds. There are sessions taken by Ex-Defence Officers who are doing well in the Corporate world and interactions with them help a lot. There is a placement cell which helps officers getting placed in Corporates who come for campus selections. It

is also good/ advisable to do the MDP from the city where you want to work in as you get used to the city while doing the course. I wanted to be in Mumbai and hence chose NMIMS to do my MDP.

IQ: What were the challenges faced during your Transition? How did you overcome the challenges?

Nitesh: Fortunately for me I got my MDP right after leaving the Army resulting in my smooth transition from Army to the Corporate world. During the course of the MDP I would advise the transitioning officers to attend all classes, interact with the faculty, attend networking events, meet officers who are doing well in the Corporate and keep their morale and motivation high, there are some officers who don't have age on their side and they don't get placed during the campus placement, the mantra is not to get bogged down and to not get demotivated, there is always a company on the lookout for the skills that they possess. Over the course of time they too will get placed suitably.

IQ: Though you are an infantry officer now working in Facilities, Corporate Services and Security? Did you have to learn some technology related subjects? How did you do so ?

Nitesh: Learning is an ongoing activity and one should keep learning throughout their lives. The field of Facilities and Corporate Offices is now being led by technology and just like smart cities we have smart offices now, all the processes and employee touch points are fully automated today be it visitor management, space management, asset tagging, cafeteria management, stationery management, energy management, helpdesk management, Travel & Expense Management. I kept myself abreast of the latest happenings in my field by qualifying for MRICS in Facilities Management and Planning from RICS, U.K. I also completed my F.M.P. from I.F.M.A, USA and my NEBOSH IGC in Occupational Safety and Health from NEBOSH, U.K. I am currently pursuing my CPP from A.S.I.S. U.S.A.



With Coursemates at Juhu Beach, Mumbai

IQ: If you were to Transition from the military to the corporate today with the benefit of all the insights and wisdom that you have gained in the corporate today what would you have done differently?

Nitesh: In hindsight, I would have definitely done my Masters or the global certifications I did post joining the Corporate world, they would have helped me with the understanding of my chosen field and could have given me an edge on my compensation as well.

The advice I would want to give all transitioning officers is that please do not leave the Forces in a hurry without preparing for the Corporate world, while the Force teaches us a lot it is not enough in the Corporate world, start planning your exit 2-3 years before your release so that you can finish your M.B.A., any P.G. specialization or Global certifications, this will give a positive message to the prospective recruiter and you will be able to negotiate a better CTC and hopefully a role to your liking, armed with all the above you can also target to work in your dream companies, if any.

IQ: Any important lessons you learnt while switching jobs and companies in your corporate career? Any advice for transitioning military personnel on this front?

Nitesh: One should ideally work for a minimum 3 years in any company as that denotes stability in your CV and you don't come across as a job hopper to the prospective recruiter.

One must approach all job changes with a lot of thought, preparation and research on the company that they wish to join, the most important things while considering to switch jobs should be a bigger role and more responsibilities, PAN India or Global role, attractive compensation including ESOPs where the company is a listed entity, working under a good manager and with a company that is either the market leader in their field or a company which is growing exponentially. While going through the interview rounds if the recruiter asks you for your expected CTC then that is not the right time to commit a figure, wait until the last interview and a confirmation from that recruiter that you have been shortlisted for the role, it is then when you should start talking numbers and finalizing your CTC expectations, discussing CTC at this stage will give you an edge over the negotiation process and you will be able to join at the CTC you had in mind.

While one can switch after every 3 years in the initial stages of their career it is advisable to work for a minimum of 5 years as one takes on senior roles in the hierarchy as that denotes stability and commitment to the organization and the role. Working for 5 years or more also makes you eligible for gratuity. While this is a general rule, if someone has been lucky enough to get a job in his/her dream company then it is advisable for them to stick to that company till their retirement or till the time they get an offer which is too good to be ignored.

IQ: How important is it to understand your own passion and expertise and then to work towards upskilling in that domain so as to have a better innings in the corporate? How does one identify one's passion?

Nitesh: It is very important to identify your passion and expertise because your entire career will revolve around that and how well you do in your career is dependent on how passionate you are about your job and what expertise you bring to the table. Upskilling is the most important thing for anyone working in the corporate world. One has to constantly upgrade his skills and knowledge to excel in their respective jobs. There are plethora of options available today to pursue a career in, be it HR, Administration, Facilities, Security, Finance, Supply chain, Operations, Sales etc. One has to identify which function is one passionate about and that he relates to and just follow his/her heart. If someone is still confused on what to choose then they can avail the services of qualified career counsellors who will guide them on what they can undertake depending on their aptitude, skills and liking.



With my Mumbai Viacom18 team

IQ: You have had a long stint in the corporate. To be successful what traits from the military must be give up and what must we imbibe?

Nitesh: The traits that one must imbibe and continue are discipline, dedication, adaptability, flexibility, tenacity, resilience, multi-tasking and high integrity.

The traits that one must give up are inflexibility, fixed mindset, particular way of doing a job, not being a good listener. They should also not be rigid about the city that they want to work in after leaving the Forces as Class B and C cities will not offer the same role and compensation that a Class A city will.

IQ: What message would you like to give to transitioning military officers who wish to make a career in the technology industry in non tech roles, especially in a product company?

Nitesh: I would just like them to follow their passion and choose the vertical that they most closely relate to, since the corporate environment is professional and cut throat I would recommend that they finish their Masters in the field that they chose to be in. Other than finishing a Masters they must keep themselves abreast of the latest happenings in their field through online courses/certifications. Global Certifications are important and give a positive impact to any recruiter hiring for any role, it shows that the candidate is serious about constantly upgrading his/her skills and knowledge and is not complacent at any stage of his/her career.

IQ: Tell us about your family. What role did your parents play in shaping your value system. Also share the role played by your family including spouse in your successful Transition?

Nitesh: We are a family of six members, my father retired from the Survey of India, Dehradun and my mother is a homemaker. I have three older sisters and am youngest in my family, two of my sisters are teachers and one is a doctor. My wife Sonali has done her M.A. and B.Ed but she is a homemaker as my job entails travel she is there with the kids. My daughter Aindri is in Grade X and my son Traividh is in Grade XIII. My parents inculcated discipline, focus, punctuality, high integrity and sense of responsibility to all the four kids.

My family played a pivotal and important role in my transition from Army to Corporate, they supported my decision and assured me that I will do well in the Corporate world as well, right from the beginning they never forced me to do



With my parents



Family outing

anything against my wish be it choosing my stream or my career so when it came to leaving the Army to join the Corporate world they encouraged me to follow my heart and passion and it is because of them that I owe my current success to.

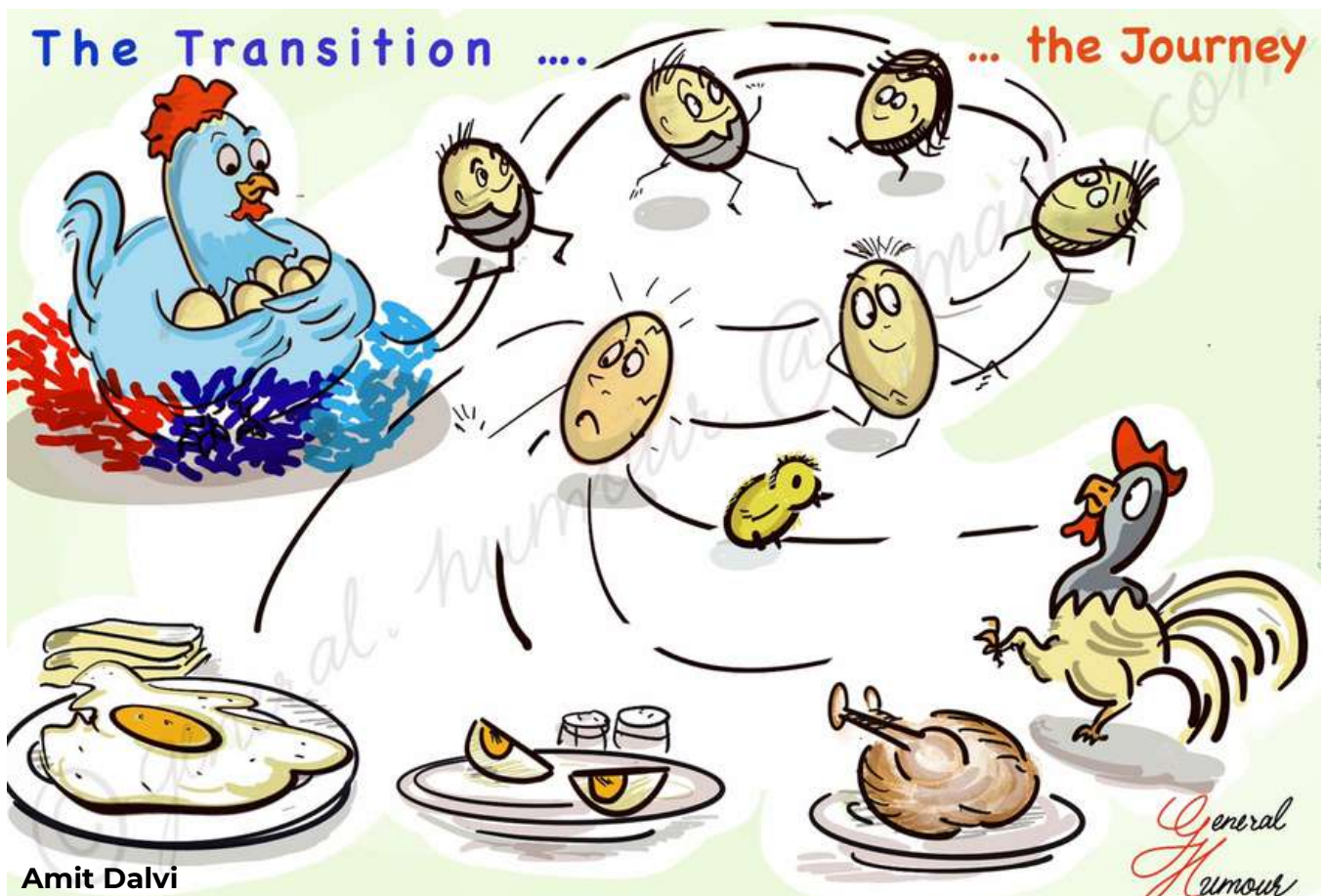
IQ: Do you have any other hobbies or interests, which you pursue passionately?

Nitesh: Hobbies are reading, playing Badminton and watching thriller and suspense content on Netflix, one needs to be focused and productive in office to finish work on time to find time for what one loves. While I get up early to play Badminton in the morning, evenings are reserved for daily walking and completing 10K steps, I also read minimum 30 pages of a book before sleeping everyday without fail. The weekends are reserved for spending time with my family and watching interesting content on Netflix



Lt Col Iqbal Singh is the Founder of Forces Network. Iqbal is an infantry officer who is working as a senior tech executive in a Big Tech company. Iqbal apart from two technology degrees has a slew of industry certifications spanning across IT service management, Cloud, AI/ML and Project Management. He is a keen technology enthusiast who firmly believes in breaking barriers to learning technology and making it accessible as well as easy. He has mentored thousands of veterans and guided them on to successful corporate careers.

Please provide your invaluable opinion/feedback on this Interview, by clicking/tapping [HERE](#) - Editor



Amit Dalvi

Women Power

Spouses/Daughters of Defence Officers as well as those who have donned the uniform, have immense potential as individuals. While many of them have already established themselves as successful independent entities, a very large number still has to recognise and exploit their inherent hidden capabilities and worth. In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of such women of the members of Forces Network who have carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination, so as to provide adequate motivation to the others.

IN INTERACTION WITH UDAY K SHRIWAS

Ms. Tejilee Tembe is daughter of Lt Col Pramod Tembe (Retd.) She has over 15 years of work experience and is currently working in a leadership role at a leading global FMCG. She describes herself as an adventure enthusiast and loves travelling that gives her an opportunity to explore places and meet people across different geographies and cultures. She speaks and comprehend various national and internationally recognized languages. She is a keen mountaineer, biker, she knows Latin American dance forms, enjoy cooking and baking. As Milton Berle says, "If opportunities doesn't knock, build a Door", She strongly believe in self development and continuous evolution.



Uday: Please tell us about yourself and what you do?

Tejilee: I would describe myself as an explorer and adventurer. I have always had the flair for the outdoors, participated in marathons, endurance challenges and undertaken road trips exploring the diverse landscapes across India and abroad, thanks to the exposure while growing up at fauji cantonments. I am a certified mountaineer having done my Basic and Advance mountaineering course and summiting upto 19000 ft. I am a fitness freak and ensure that I am healthy in all aspects, mind, body and soul. I swear by the motto of 'You didn't wake up to be mediocre today' hence everyday I take up as a challenge and put in my best foot forward.



Tawang Jan 2020.

As any Fauji brat, I have changed a lot of schools, completed my graduation from University of Pune and further went to University of Leeds, UK for my Masters, where I also started my career. I am presently working in the leadership team in a leading FMCG company based out of India with their headquarters abroad and have a total of 15+ years of professional experience in my kitty.

Uday: Army life must have had influence in your choices as you travelled and grew in personal and professional life, could you please tell us more about the Fauji aspect of your life journey?

Tejilee: I am a complete fauji brat. The regimental and the army life has been a family in itself. Having been brought up at different places and cantonments I learnt adapting to different cultures, languages, food as any another Fauji brat. This taught me the importance of being adaptable, flexible and being independent with moving places every two three years, changing schools, making new friends, learning the nuances of the new environment and baking in new memories. Needless to mention that this teaches things like resilience, adaptability and discipline to name a few. The fauji upbringing shaped my personality in a way that today I can look at any challenge and say 'bring it on'.

Uday: Would you like to share the details of the domain/industry you work in, your organisation and your profile in your organisation?

Tejilee: I work in a leadership role in a leading multi-national FMCG and as part of my role, I have worked in multiple geographies and cultures. Being a part of the product journey from inception to execution has given me the necessary skills to perform my role better with a holistic and a strategic mindset.

Uday: How has been the journey in the corporate so far and any stories of great remembrance and significance you wish to share with us?

Tejilee: The journey has been quite interesting and challenging at the same time. Each role, each day has helped me in my personal and professional aspirations. I have learnt from great mentors, made some life long friends and added a lot of good stuff to my memory bank.

Uday: We all have mentors and guides in our professional world, and they are a great influence, could you please tell us from your life?

Tejilee: My parents have been my greatest mentors and friends. They have taught me to be confident, fearless in all walks of life and to be a better person of my myself each day.



Sister's biking trip on my Airborne Signals limited edition !!! 'Why should boys have all the fun ?!!'



Enroute Nathu La, Sikkim with sister, Mom and Dad, Oct 2021

Uday: What's your biggest source(s) of inspiration?

Tejilee: My biggest source of inspiration has been my father. A father is a role model for every daughter of course. The values that he has imparted to my sister and I, are something we would carry to our grave. Integrity and humility were the values he swears by even today and I am fortunate to be able to inculcate them in my life.



Enjoying a hearty laugh in the mountains



Proud daughter & father before his jump,

Uday: I understand that you have travelled globally for your work and you must have had interesting interactions with leaders and visionaries? What are the top 5 personality traits of such excellent leaders?

Tejilee: Be it nationally or internationally, there are certain common traits that every leader possesses that I have experienced and practice to imbibe these in my day to day activities;

- **Humility** – Leaders portray a lot of humility towards people in their arena. In one of my profiles, I was fortunate to have worked very closely with the owner of the company who built in such an empire and yet was extremely grounded and humble as a person.
- **Discipline** – It is very important to have discipline in all aspects. The importance of time and punctuality is something that fauji's swear by and is a common trait present in successful leaders, which helps in bringing in the focus and consistency required by any successful leader.
- **Respect** – Self respect as well as respect towards each and every person within and outside of their organization. A leader is someone who people look upto and the sense of belonging and appreciation comes only when mutual respect is shared.
- **Curiosity** – A natural habit of wanting to understand and learn more. Learning never stops, continues at every age.
- **Passion** – Passion brings in the right kind of energy, motivation and creativity. If a person is passionate and involved, this helps to have an out-of-box thinking mindset to overcome any adverse situation smoothly and to understand how tasks can be performed differently, maybe also more efficiently.



Backpacking trip across Assam to Tawang, Arunchal Pradesh, Jan 2020.

Uday: Challenges you faced so far, on the way to establishing yourself and how you challenged those challenges? Was there any Turnaround event or moment in your life?

Tejilee: Once you decide to go out there, challenges are bound to be a part of your life. Similarly, I have faced quite a few challenges myself, however what is important is to carry the right attitude and positivity to be able to tackle the situation and to evaluate what kind of learnings can be taken from such challenges to be implemented for any such future situations.

Uday: Live in the present moment and/or Plan for the future? What's your mantra?

Tejilee: Never forget the past lessons, keep the hope alive for the future but yes most importantly seize the moment now and make the most of it.

Uday: Lessons learnt as the world transitions through one of the most challenging times?

Tejilee: Every adversity that the world faces today has been an important lesson and milestone. Recently when we talk about COVID, it was unfortunate that we lost on a many lives but it also taught us to slow down, take a pause and value both your physical and emotional health, work but ensure to maintain the right balance too.

Uday: What advice do you have, especially for family members (women)from Fauj?

Tejilee: Be your authentic self. Trust your gut and just go ahead and conquer the world. Nothing ever should limit you from reaching your dreams and goals.



Chai break enroute Nainital, Uttarakhand, Nov 2019

Uday: As an aspiring, experienced and confident woman in the Corporate World, what makes you enthusiastic about the future of women from the Armed Forces families in the corporate world?

Tejilee: We have grown up with similar values, our personalities have shaped up over years of conditioning. The sense of time, discipline, respect, resilience, adaptability that the Fauji life has taught us, are all values of added advantage and definitely an edge above the others when it comes to becoming successful in the Corporate world.

Uday: What is the best thing you love about Fauj?

Tejilee: The camaraderie, the never give up spirit. We know how to deal with an adversity. Our soldiers celebrate Diwali without their families in high altitude areas without a mobile network too and the josh doesn't dip a bit. They will welcome you and assure you that if a fauji is for our national security, we can be rest assured and enjoy a good nights sleep.

Uday: What keeps your going other than the work, what are your likes and hobbies? And how do you make time for your hobbies from your busy schedule?

Tejilee: I love the outdoors. I also love art and being creative. I have worked a lot on my culinary skills since I was staying abroad on my own for a long time. I love meeting people from all walks of life and understanding their journey. I also comprehend and speak a lot of languages and for me that's the best way to connect with the locals in any place within our country and/ or abroad. I spend time with pets, they teach a lot of compassion and the value of unconditional love.



Fluffy (6) on top and Leo (2) in his Den

Uday: Last but not the least, rather most important, FAMILY and its role in your life as you excelled in your corporate career?

Tejilee: FAMILY has been fundamental in shaping my life, career and for the person I am today because of their unconditional love and support through out my personal and professional journey. The faith and confidence given by our families helps and pushes us to take those life challenging decisions that help in shaping our paths ahead.



Europe trip with Mom, July 2013



Capt Uday K Shriwas was commissioned into the Corps of Signals, and served in various theaters during his service for five years, including in a newly raised RR Battalion. Thereafter he has worked with many renowned Companies, like Kingfisher Airlines, IFB Home Appliances, JK Cement, and Yes Bank Ltd. He enjoys working in the field of Marketing, Business Development, Strategy. He also has keen interest in the field of Personal Branding. He is presently working as Regional Head - Honour First (Defence Vertical) IDFC FIRST Bank

Please provide your invaluable opinion/feedback on this Interview, by clicking/tapping [HERE](#) - Editor

Moment In Time

We have started with a Photography section “**Moment in Time**” to provide an outlet for creative side of our esteemed members. The rules for submission are as under:-

1. Forces Network members, spouses and their wards can submit images for publication.
2. No Nudity or Porn.
3. No mention of Mil establishments or unit identity or tac numbers or tail numbers.
4. It's a photography section so no images of various get togethers and social functions will be published.
5. The longer side of image should be 2048 pixels.
6. Maximum 5 images will be published every month. The images must be submitted by 20th of every month.
7. Mention your Instagram ID.

8. **While submitting the following details be submitted along with the suitable**

Title:-

- a. Aperture
- b. Shutter speed
- c. ISO
- d. Camera used
- e. Lens
- f. Focal length.
- g. In case of a mobile click, the same may please be mentioned.

All Photos may please be sent to forcesnetworkz@gmail.com by 20th of every month.



Bottled poetry - Mobile click realme XT, Aperture - 1.5, SS - .001, ISO - 400, FL - 5.6mm

By Col Prashant Kakkar



Papa don't preach - Nikon coolpics P900, A- 2.7, SS - 1/800, ISO - 100, 33mm
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The Greens - Mobile click IQ007, 1.8, SS - 1/239, ISO - 82, 4.7mm
By Col Prashant Kakkar



Sunset At Jaisalmer- Nikon coolpics P900, 2.7, SS - 1/2000, ISO - 100, 6.2 mm
By Col Prashant Kakkar



Assorted Shells- Nikon cool pics P900, 2.7, SS - .01, ISO - 100, 8.9mm
By Col Prashant Kakkar

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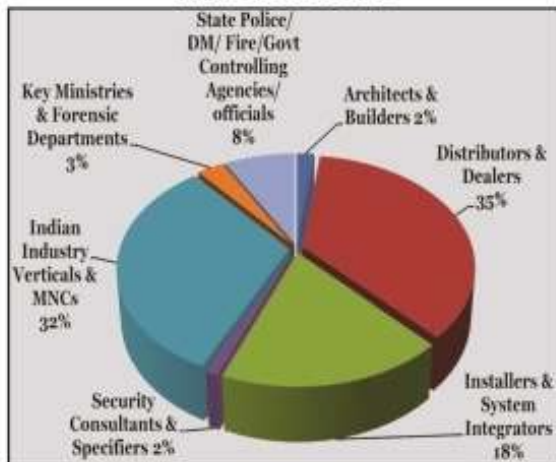
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Tech Corner

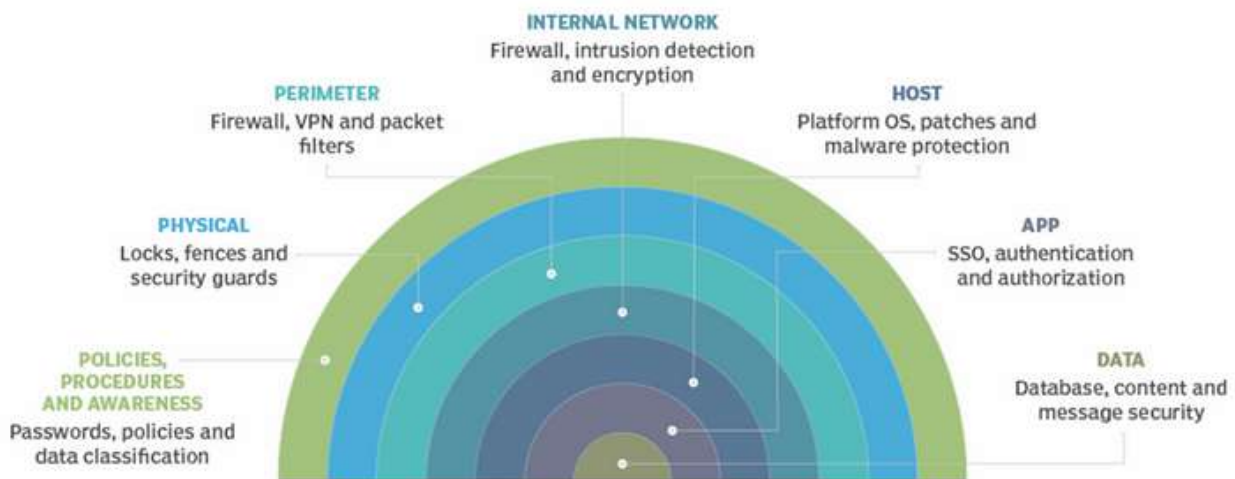
An Intro to Roles in Cyber Security: Application Security Engineer: A Much In Demand Critical Role

BY IQBAL SINGH

Introduction

Increasingly businesses are becoming software-based and data-driven, so much so that almost every business uses some form of software and relies on data to make smart facts based decisions. From simple applications to advanced business tools, every company is slowly becoming a software and a data company.

Defense-in-depth layers



Just as in the military the defences are laid out in a tiered and multi-layered fashion similarly in the cyber world the defences are laid in layers as illustrated in the above figure. Each layer needs to be protected and each layer demands a specific set of skills. Application layer is the second last layer in the tier. It denotes an extremely critical part of the cyber security architecture. An Application Security engineer is the one who protects this tier of defence. While security across all layers is important, Forrester's 2020 State of Application Security Report revealed that the application layer is the most vulnerable to external attacks. They also cited open-source software as the chief concern for application security. The threat of application security outweighs the efforts currently being expended to curb it. Understanding why software application security is important centres on being aware of some of the vulnerabilities that leave your application open to attacks. For one, integrating open source code and APIs increases the opportunities for vulnerabilities as applications rely on traffic from these APIs and malicious files could pass through unfiltered. Also, your application's code is written by software developers who are after all humans not beyond mistakes. These mistakes could be as evident as errors in a couple of lines of code or it could be that the entire code base leaves loopholes that could be exploited by an attacker. Vulnerabilities could also come from other aspects like weak passwords. Websites and applications that allow weak passwords are more vulnerable to bad actors than those that enforce strong ones. That's why many sites have standards for the types of passwords users are allowed to create.

Mandate of an Application Security Engineer:

An Application Security Engineer is responsible for ensuring the security of the software applications developed by their organization. They analyze the software code and design of the application to identify and mitigate any security vulnerabilities that could be exploited by cybercriminals. Their role is critical as application vulnerabilities are a common attack vector for hackers who want to gain unauthorized access to sensitive information, cause damage to the system, or steal data.

A good way to explain what an Application Security engineer does is to understand what they do NOT do. Application engineers are not software developers. Although they know the full software development life cycle, the application security engineering skill set does not include developing business applications. However, much of their job is done during the business application's development stage. They work with software developers to set up security control measures during every stage of software development. Their activities would include proper implementation and configuration of security measures and controls to protect a company's applications such as authentication, encryption, and authorization and testing applications to ensure they are free from security loopholes. They also use tools and techniques to protect applications that have been deployed.

On a rolling basis, an Application Security engineer will implement the different types of application security as listed below:

- **Authentication:** Implementing systems that ensure that users are who they say they are. The most basic form is a username and password, but more advanced forms of authentication have been developed.
- **Authorization:** This layer ensures that the user has permission to use the application or the components they are trying to access. If they are, they can. If not, their access is blocked.
- **Encryption:** This prevents attackers as well as genuine users from accessing information they are not authorized to see, especially with data in transit.
- **Logging:** Application Security engineers set up monitoring to help identify culprits in case of a data breach and to keep track of the application's behaviour.
- **Application security testing** This include specific tests that Application Security engineers run to reveal application vulnerabilities.

Other common tasks that Application Security engineers undertake include:

- Identifying security vulnerabilities and determining solutions to fix them.
- Reviewing system services and noticing problems in applications.
- Performing software updates.
- Setting up firewalls.
- Running encryption programs within applications.
- Scanning and testing applications.



Application Security is an Exciting, Dynamic and In-Demand Skill

Application Security Engineering Roles and Responsibilities

Application security engineering roles and responsibilities span the entire software development life cycle. The industry is extremely fast paced and the duties may evolve, the following describes the basic core of what they do.

- **Setting Development Parameters:** Application Security engineers set security controls and design requirements during the software creation and development stage of the software lifecycle. They also integrate these designs into the software.
- **Ensuring Security Across The Development Lifecycle:** The application security engineer ensures that security across all aspects of the software is uniform by setting up checkpoints.
- **Testing Source Code and Running Code:** There are multiple types of testing that application security need to undertake and be proficient in.
 - **Static Application Security Engineer Testing (SAST):** The Application security engineer analyzes your application's source code for vulnerabilities before compiling and running them. This goes hand in hand with security measures in the development stage to avoid security loopholes
 - **Dynamic Application security engineer testing (DAST):** Security depends on software responding to inputs in a predetermined way. Dynamic testing analyzes running code by running attack simulations and studying how the application responds. These simulations often employ the same techniques hackers use to break into applications and they reveal vulnerabilities that the engineer can patch so the app remains secure in case of a real attack.
 - **Interactive Testing:** Combining the best parts of both static and dynamic testing, interactive testing analyzes code when its functionality is being engaged. In other words, it is analyzing code when a user is interacting with the application.
 - **Mobile Testing:** In this, mobile apps are tested for their app functionality (UI/UX, business flows), real environment conditions (gestures, network), performance, accessibility, and availability.
 - **Email Testing:** Email testing is an essential part of any marketing, transactional email campaigns. Application security engineer engineers make sure that technical parameters of emails look right, have correct HTML, get the highest deliverability, and each email protocol works properly.

- **Implementing Advanced Security Features:** The Application security engineer after testing applications, implements patches and utilizes shielding tools that harden applications, making them less vulnerable to attacks. Some of these processes include:
 - **Runtime Application Self-Protection.** A combination of testing and shielding that protects applications from reverse engineering attacks. These tools also monitor the application's behaviour and can stop certain code/functions from running and even terminate the application if the need be.
 - **Code Obfuscation.** This involves hiding your source code from hackers so it can't be attacked. Other methods involve encryption and using threat detection tools.



Cyber Security is a Career Where You will be tested daily by your adversaries and hence demands high skills

Skills Required to Succeed in the Role

To succeed as an Application Security Engineer, one needs to have a strong foundation in computer science, software engineering, and cybersecurity. Some of the essential skills required for this role include:

- **Programming Skills:** A solid foundation in programming languages such as Java, Python, C/C++, and others is a must. An Application Security Engineer should be able to read and understand code, identify vulnerabilities, and write secure code.
- **Security Knowledge:** A deep understanding of cybersecurity principles such as threat modelling, secure coding practices, authentication, authorization, cryptography, and network security is essential. An Application Security Engineer must be up-to-date with the latest security threats, vulnerabilities, and attack methods.
- **Communication Skills:** Effective communication is critical in this role, as the Application Security Engineer must be able to articulate the security risks and solutions to developers, project managers, and senior management.
- **Analytical Skills:** Analytical skills are essential for analyzing application code, identifying vulnerabilities, and recommending solutions.
- **Testing Skills:** An Application Security Engineer must have expertise in testing techniques such as static analysis, dynamic analysis, and fuzz testing.

Learning Paths to a Career As an Application Security Engineer

There are various paths one can take to become an Application Security Engineer. Some of the common paths include:

- **Computer Science or Software / Engineering Degree:** Pursuing a degree in Computer Science or Software Engineering is a great way to gain a strong foundation in programming and software development. One can specialize in cybersecurity by taking courses in cybersecurity, cryptography, and network security. This is an ideal requirement. Having said that several successful application security engineers do also come from non-computer science background but they do the necessary upskilling on software programming
- **Cybersecurity Bootcamps:** Cybersecurity bootcamps are intensive training programs that can provide one with the knowledge and skills required to enter the field of cybersecurity. These programs can cover topics such as cybersecurity fundamentals, penetration testing, and secure coding practices. These can be organized by training companies or by tech organizations themselves.
- **Certifications:** As mentioned earlier several cyber security professionals come from non computer science backgrounds. Relevant certifications provide a solid grounding to them as well as lend their profiles credibility.
- **On-the-Job Training:** Many organizations offer on-the-job training programs for their employees to help them transition into cybersecurity roles. These programs can include mentorship, shadowing experienced professionals, and hands-on experience with real-world projects.

Certifications Required

Certifications can help validate one's knowledge and skills in the field of cybersecurity. Some of the popular certifications for an Application Security Engineer include:

- **Certified Application Security Engineer (CASE):** This certification offered by the **International Council of Electronic Commerce Consultants (EC-Council)** is designed to validate an individual's skills in identifying, mitigating, and preventing application security vulnerabilities.
- **Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP):** This certification offered by the **International Information Systems Security Certification Consortium (ISC)²** is a globally recognized standard for cybersecurity professionals.
- **Certified Secure Software Lifecycle Professional (CSSLP):** This certification offered by (ISC)² validates an individual's knowledge in the areas of secure software design, development, and deployment.

A Typical day in the life of an Application Security Engineer

A typical day in the life of an Application Security Engineer can be varied and challenging. Here is a brief overview of what one might expect:

- **Review Emails Prioritize Tasks:** An Application Security Engineer typically starts the day by reviewing emails and prioritizing tasks for the day. They may have received requests from developers or project managers for security assessments, code reviews, or recommendations for mitigating risks.
- **Conduct Security Assessments:** One of the key responsibilities of an Application Security Engineer is to conduct security assessments of software applications. They may use tools such as static analysis, dynamic analysis, and fuzz testing to identify vulnerabilities in the application code. They may also use manual testing techniques to identify weaknesses that automated tools may miss.
- **Collaborate with Developers:** An Application Security Engineer works closely with developers to ensure that security is integrated into every stage of the software development lifecycle. They may collaborate with developers to review code, identify vulnerabilities, and provide recommendations for remediation. They may also provide training to developers on secure coding practices and help them implement security controls.
- **Attend Meetings:** This is a task no role can escape in the corporate. An Application Security Engineer may attend meetings with project managers, developers, and senior management to discuss security risks, remediation plans, and progress updates. They may also provide input on the security implications of new projects or changes to existing applications.
- **Analyze Security Data:** An Application Security Engineer may spend time analyzing security data such as logs, alerts, and threat intelligence feeds. They may use this data to identify patterns and trends that could indicate a security threat. They may also use this data to develop security metrics and reports that can be shared with senior management.

- **Stay Up-to-Date with Security Threats and Trends:** An Application Security Engineer must stay up-to-date with the latest security threats, vulnerabilities, and attack methods. They may spend time reading security blogs, attending conferences, and participating in online forums to keep their knowledge current.
- **Test and Evaluate Security Tools:** An Application Security Engineer may spend time testing and evaluating security tools such as vulnerability scanners, code analysis tools, and intrusion detection systems. They may evaluate these tools to ensure that they meet the organization's security requirements and provide recommendations for improvements or alternative tools.
- **Document Findings and Recommendations:** An Application Security Engineer must document their findings and recommendations in a clear and concise manner. They may use tools such as bug tracking systems, wiki pages, or reports to document their findings and recommendations. They may also provide guidance on how to implement their recommendations.

Conclusion

In summary, an Application Security Engineer plays a critical role in ensuring the security of software applications developed by an organization. The task is not only dynamic and demanding but also exciting and financially rewarding.

They work closely with developers, project managers, and senior management to integrate security into every stage of the software development lifecycle. They must have a strong foundation in computer science, software engineering, and cybersecurity, and stay up-to-date with the latest security threats and trends. Their day is filled with tasks such as conducting security assessments, collaborating with developers, attending meetings, analyzing security data, and documenting their findings and recommendations.



Lt Col Iqbal Singh (retd) is an infantry officer who started his career with the Garhwal Rifles in Dec 1987. He is currently a senior technology executive with a Big Tech firm based at Gurgaon. He is firmly of the belief that tech is an enabler and your friend. He is the Founder of **Forces Network** – the Network of the military veterans in the corporate. His message to comrades-in-arms has been do NOT be afraid of tech but embrace it. In line with thinking he relishes breaking stereotypes, crashing glass ceilings and doing the seemingly impossible. He believes that there are no barriers: all the barriers exist only in one's mind. It was with that firm conviction that Iqbal started the now famous **ABCT** (Any Body Can Tech) Program in Forces Network in 2019. Under this program non-tech officers were taken to cloud certification level. Over 40 participants got certified from Microsoft in cloud computing under this program. This launched the tech careers of many of such participants. Iqbal believes that cyber security as a career is set to boom. He is convinced that military personnel can easily transition to cyber security with some upskilling. Accordingly he has authored a series of articles demystifying cyber security. The current article is the sixth article to appear in the ForceNet E-Zine as part of the series.

Please provide your invaluable opinion/feedback on this Article, by clicking/tapping [HERE](#) - Editor

Tech Corner

"Blockchain Unlocked: How This Revolutionary Technology is Changing the World as We Know It"

BY SHUBNEET CHAWLA

With the advent of digitalisation, the need for secure and transparent information exchange increasingly becoming important. Blockchain - A revolutionary technology has the potential to transform the way we store, share, verify data in a secure and transparent manner.



Initially developed as the underlying technology behind cryptocurrencies, blockchain has since expanded to various industries, offering a secure and decentralized way of exchanging information without the need for intermediaries.

Its potential applications are vast, ranging from financial services and supply chain management to healthcare and voting systems etc

But what is blockchain exactly, and how does it work?

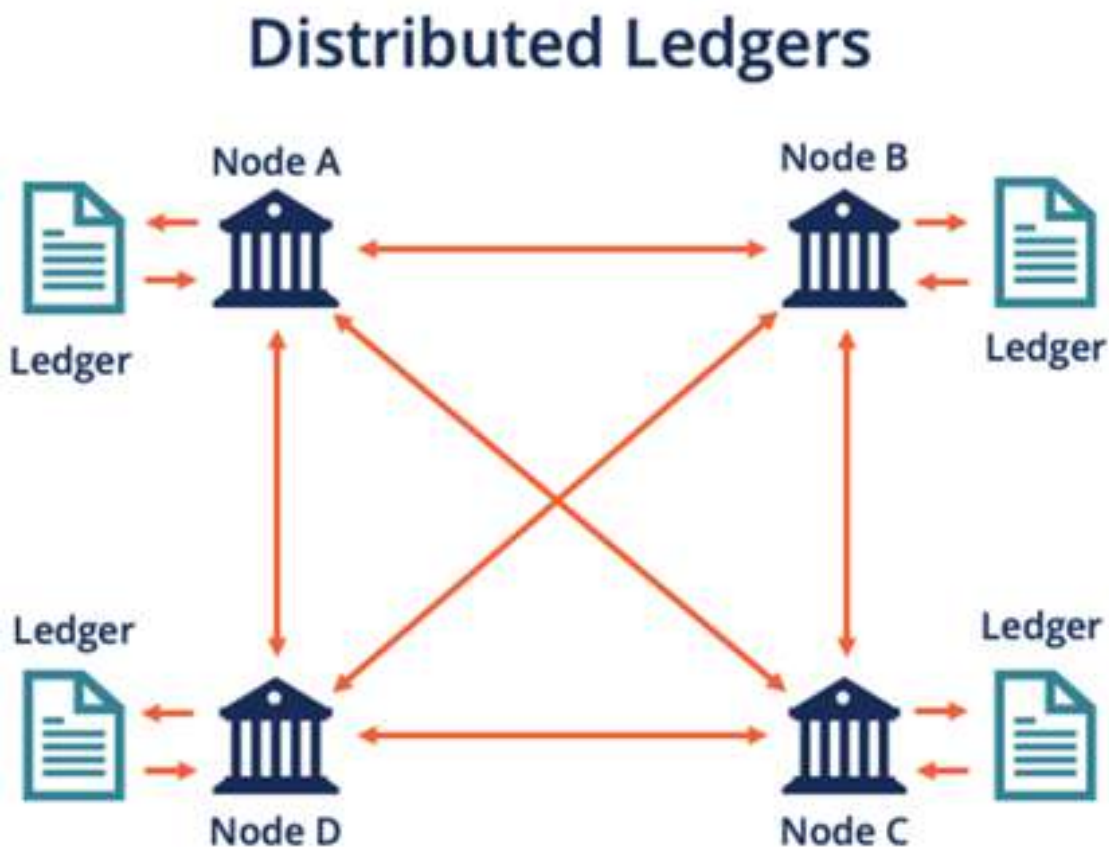
Fundamentally, blockchain is a combination of already existing technologies that together can create networks that secure trust between people or parties who otherwise have no reason to trust one another.

Specifically, it utilises distributed ledger technology (DLT) to store information verified by cryptography among a group of users, which is agreed through a pre-defined network protocol, often without the control of a central authority.

The marriage of these technologies gives blockchain networks key characteristics that can remove the need for trust, and therefore enable a secure transfer of value and data directly between parties.

What is Blockchain?

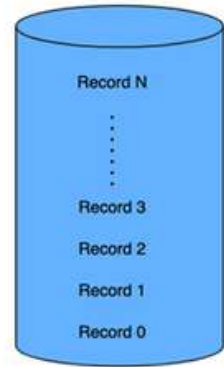
A blockchain is a distributed ledger of transactions between parties in a network, not controlled by a single central authority.



Ledger



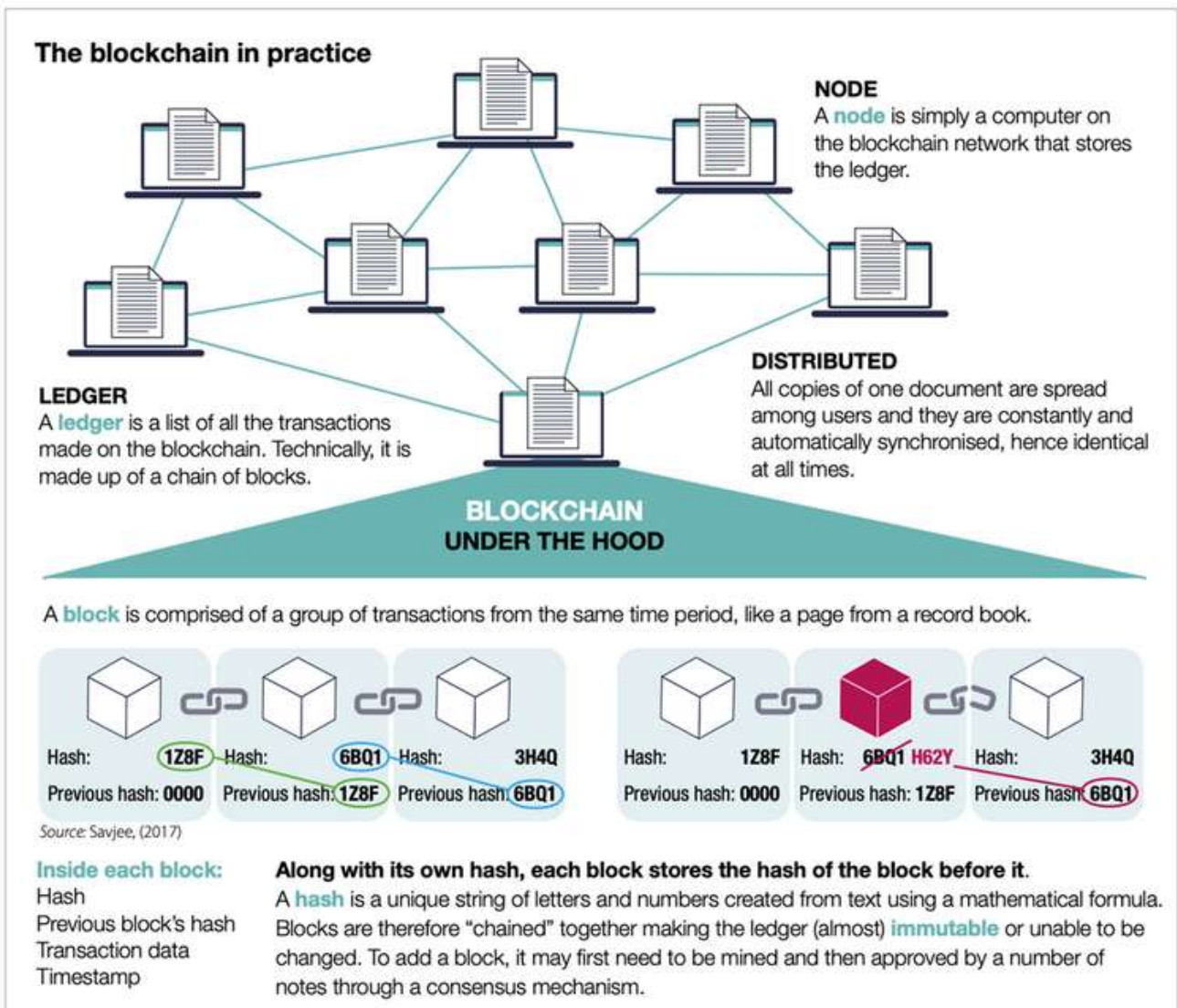
Ledger in Earlier Times



Digital Ledger

You can think of a ledger like a record book: it records and stores all transactions between users in chronological order. Instead of one authority controlling this ledger (like a bank), an identical copy of the ledger is held by all users on the network, called nodes.

Blockchain under the hood



Blockchain's key characteristics

Distributed:

- One of the core aspects of a blockchain is that it is a distributed ledger, meaning that the database is maintained and held by all nodes in the network.
- No central authority holds or updates the ledger, rather each node independently constructs its own record by processing every block (group of transactions), deciding if it is valid, then voting via the consensus mechanism on their conclusions.
- Once a change in the record is agreed, each node updates its own ledger.

Traditional databases are stored and maintained centrally, which can make them high-value targets for hackers and criminals.

Immutable:

- Once a transaction is added to a blockchain ledger, it cannot be undone.
- Immutability is one of the principal aspects that contribute to the trustworthiness of blockchain transactions.
- A blockchain's immutability is secured through its use of cryptography.

In Traditional, centralised database,

an authorised user can connect to the server to add or modify the data without the approval or detection of other users. Because all the data is held in one place, if the security of the server or the authority that runs the server is compromised, data can be modified or permanently deleted. This may sometimes be irreversible and occur without anyone else realising it.

Agreed by consensus:

- No block can be added to the ledger without approval from specified nodes in the network.
- Rules regarding how this consent is collected are called consensus mechanisms.
- Consensus protocols are crucial in ensuring that every block is valid and that all participants agree and maintain the same version of the ledger.
- They heavily affect the incentives for nodes to act honestly and are therefore the most important variables when designing a blockchain.

Benefits of blockchain technology :

Transparency:

Blockchain is a decentralized ledger, anyone can view the transactions on the blockchain. This creates a high level of transparency and trust in the system.

Security:

Blockchain technology is highly secure and resistant to hacking or other malicious activity. Because there is no central point of failure that can be targeted by attackers.

Efficiency:

Transactions are processed automatically by the network of computers, they can be completed much more quickly and efficiently than traditional transactions.

Trust:

Technology creates a high level of trust in the system because it's virtually impossible to alter the data in the blockchain without being detected.

Overall, blockchain technology has the potential to revolutionize many industries and provide a new level of transparency, security, and efficiency in digital transactions.

Blockchain technology goes far beyond cryptocurrencies and tokens, and its usefulness as a wider economic and administrative tool is well worth exploring.

The table below describes just a small sample of blockchain's potential to transform supply chains, healthcare and the energy sector.

Policy area	Description	Potential benefits	Potential risks/Obstacles
Due diligence in supply chains	Blockchains allow multiple parties to access the same database to track and record and audit products as they move along the supply chain	<p>Enhanced transparency A more transparent supply chain will help companies and consumers identify risks of adverse impacts (i.e. human rights abuse and financial crime), and on that basis, prioritise further efforts to prevent or mitigate such risks.</p> <p>Sharing value of due diligence Using blockchain technology to tokenise due diligence data (attaching a monetary value to access to the data), could potentially help fund due diligence efforts.</p> <p>Financial inclusion Blockchain technology can lead to greater integration of informal actors and SMEs in the formal supply chain by helping overcome cash flow barriers through self-executing smart contracts.</p>	<p>Difficulty controlling data quality Widely known as the "garbage in garbage out" issue where the information entered on the blockchain is only as good as its source.</p> <p>Upfront costs and lack of access In order to link the physical world to the digital, supply chain stakeholders have to invest in technology as well as facilitate access to and encourage uptake of the technology.</p> <p>Fragmentation Despite being created for very similar purposes, multiple blockchain initiatives have developed, operating on different platforms, identifying and collecting information differently, and with different governance structures.</p>
Healthcare	Blockchain could be used to provide more robust patient healthcare information data management systems. Instead of information siloed in different data systems, patients and healthcare providers could choose what they share and with whom.	<p>Continuity of care Information can be shared between different healthcare stakeholders and end users could find it easier to share information to new providers.</p> <p>Cost effectiveness Providing better data sharing between stakeholders can increase the ability of healthcare organisations to provide cost effective care and reduce clerical errors that are at best inefficient and at worst life threatening.</p>	<p>Privacy rules While some healthcare blockchain solutions will make only high level demographic information publicly viewable, it is conceivable that the combination of demographic data and geographic location could reveal sensitive information.</p> <p>Data security Given the information stored (or linked onto the blockchain) is highly sensitive, data security is a potential risk.</p>
Energy	Blockchain can enable decentralised peer-to-peer electricity markets, allowing individuals and entities to balance supply and demand and trade electricity without going through a central entity.	<p>Lower transaction costs Without intermediaries, costs can be significantly reduced along the electricity value chain. This could potentially lead to more competition and a broader range of options for consumers.</p> <p>Facilitating distributed and low carbon electricity Blockchain could reduce the complexity of managing systems with large numbers of small-scale renewable and distributed energy resources, accelerating their deployment.</p>	<p>Scalability and technical performance As is, several types of blockchain have difficulties scaling (for example, due to data volumes and transaction speeds).</p> <p>Energy consumption To reach scale in energy applications, blockchain technologies will have to develop less energy-intensive frameworks for processing transactions.</p>

Why should you care ?

Blockchain as a technology seems too valuable to be ignored. While process efficiencies and better security are key benefits that are being targeted, perhaps the real value proposition and potential lies in the new revenue and solutions that could be enabled by the technology.

Final Thoughts

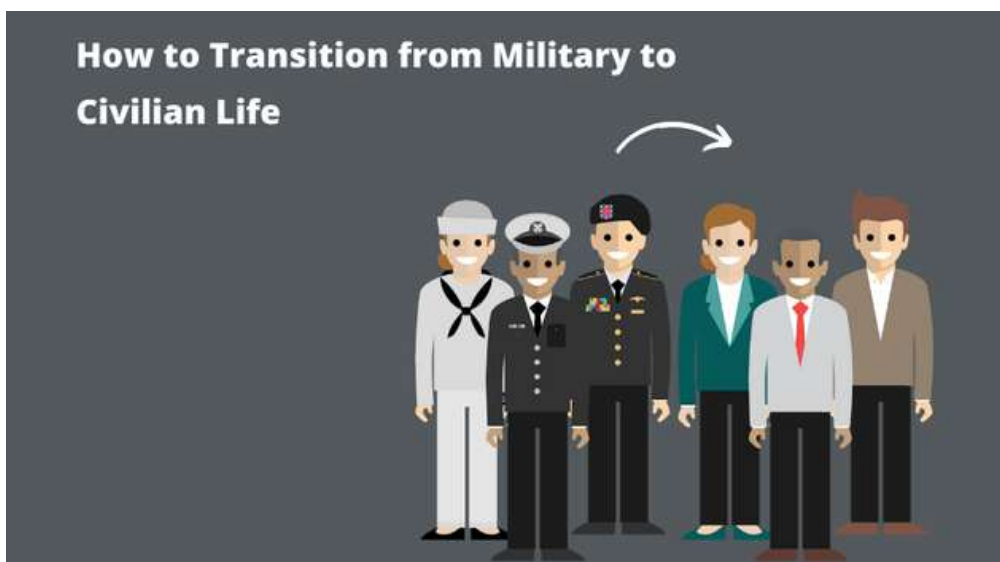
Blockchain technology is a game-changer for industries that rely on secure and transparent transactions. Its benefits over traditional systems, including decentralization, transparency, immutability, and security, make it an attractive alternative to traditional systems. As the technology continues to evolve, we can expect to see more applications of blockchain in the future.

Till then stay tuned and stay connected !!



Shubhneet is a Cloud Solution Engineer - Blockchain Specialist with 6+ years of enterprise Blockchain experience. He has done blockchain Specialization and various certifications on related technologies like Web3.0 and Metaverse. He has been a part of multiple live Projects and POCs with Indian Govt (Niti Ayog) , Japan Exchange and US HealthCare and Supply Chain Sector etc.He is also Certified in Project Management from Google and currently a part of Oracle India. Currently deployed at ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce) an initiative to democratize commerce by Indian Govt. and working as a Master Programme Manager and Blockchain Specialist wherein he is streamlining Network Operations and working closely with cross functional stakeholders at various layers

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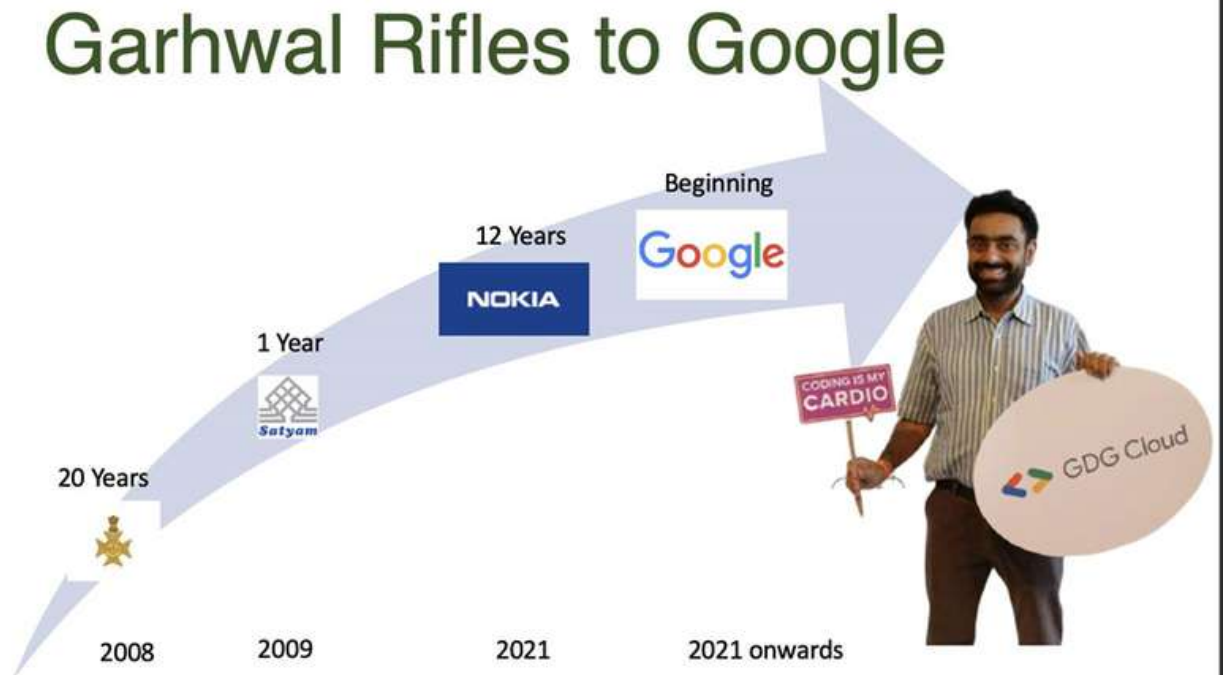
My
Transition
Journey



My Transition Journey

From Garhwal Rifles to Google: My Transition Story

BY IQBAL SINGH



My Transition Story in a Single Picture

To sum up in a phrase this is my Transition story **“From Garhwal Rifles to Google”!**. As simplistic, linear and romantic as it might sound, I must confess that it was anything but that. Well, definitely I feel grateful and humbled by where I have been able to reach, more so considering from where I started. My aim of sharing my story is NOT to massage my ego or tom-tom my career credentials but rather to inspire others. If my story can help, guide, positively impact or inspire even one person I shall feel very, very satisfied.

The Backstory

I was third generation in the Indian Army, second generation officer. Joined the NDA at the age of 16 got commissioned at 20. My career got off to a good start in Dec 1987 a string of Instructor gradings in almost all my army courses, was privileged to be selected from the whole of infantry in 1993 to undergo the EME Officers Degree Engineering course, followed that up with an MTech and also graduated from the prestigious DSSC, Wellington. Grade-2 staff roles as the DAA&QMG of a Mountain Brigade (before DSSC, truncated tenure as I qualified for DSSC) and the Brigade Major (BM) of an Infantry Brigade – based at New Delhi. Some even called it the most powerful role for a Maj in the Indian Army.



As the Brigade Major

Two words “*Not Empanelled*” brought my seemingly illustrious career crashing down like the proverbial pack of cards! I would be lying if I said that it did not hurt. It hurt and very badly at that. The worse was that it happened when I was tenating the so called “*most powerful major’s role in the Indian Army*”. Notwithstanding the failure to meet the career expectations of a second-generation officer the family was extremely supportive.

A very short casual leave gave me some time to introspect and look at the situation from a different perspective. I came back from that leave a different man. I was convinced a better life awaited me I was born to stand tall! I also realized what my real assets were. My knowledge, my skills, my qualifications and my intelligence these were mine for life and nobody repeat NOBODY could take them away from me. I decided to build my second career on the foundation of these. I knew we were in a knowledge economy and these were the currency for that. That feeling, already made me feel good! My preparations for that career started immediately. I refused to run on the treadmill of mediocrity and resolved to build a shining, gleaming new career from the wreckage of the old. Ever since, I have been consumed by this burning desire to rise like a Phoenix from the ashes.



My Abiding Inspiration the Phoenix Bird. Rising From the Ashes Symbolizing Renewal and Resurrection

The Preparation

I had always been academically bright right from school, NDA to the Army days – that is what earned me the sobriquet of IQ within my course mates. The question what sector to join was clear to me from day one. This was the early years of the 2000s first decade, technology /IT sector was the toast of the town. It aligned with my passion of learning newer and newer technologies and harness it for good. I had made up my mind this is the sector for me to target. Coming from a Jatt Sikh family, I had no one in the family to seek advice from on this topic as all my family members were either in the army or farmers. More so there were hardly any veteran success stories in the technology sector to turn to. Notwithstanding, I fortunately did not have to go through the crisis of choice where many military personnel typically flounder. I made the choice even if it was the road less travelled, even if it was a difficult shift, I was determined to go all the way and make it happen!

The MBA

I at that time felt that MBA was a good choice to turn to. I enrolled for a distance learning course at Symbiosis with a major in Marketing. In addition, I enrolled for several 6 months technical courses from IGNOU ie certificate in computing and some more. I also joined a 1 year Diploma course on Creative Writing from IGNOU. Writing had always been a passion right from school, I had won several awards for creative writing at the school, NDA, IMA and other institutes.

PS: In hindsight I feel that doing the MBA was not the best use of my time. I should have instead done some industry certifications. There was a lack of guidance and mentoring that I missed.

Posting to Mumbai

As they say when you want something badly, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it. I was posted to DGQA Mumbai in Jun 2005. I would get a stint of 3 years there by when I would complete the 20 years service mark. This posting I feel was a game changer for me. I was away from the typical active formation environment and I made the best use of my time.

One important aspect that I could focus on here was professional networking. I started attending IT industry seminars some were free but mostly were paid. Attending these industry events gave me an entirely new perspective, I firstly became familiar with the industry jargon, built links to some professionals in the industry and started seeking their advice. I got to understand concepts like Networking, Databases, ERP, Programming, web technologies, embedded systems, computer hardware, operating systems and more importantly their industry use cases. This really stood me in good stead in my subsequent job interviews.

It was from here that I learn that the *Project Management Professional (PMP)* certification was a hot skill in demand in the industry. It was new in India and there were very few PMP certified professionals in India back then in 2006. Many practicing industry professionals would typically take more than one attempt to pass the exam.

PMP Certification

Having made the decision I invested a lot of time, money and effort in getting the requisite training, buying books, PMI membership etc and successfully passed the PMP exam on 18 Apr 2007. I had spent Rs 52,000/- in attaining this certification and my monthly salary then was Rs 40,000. Nevertheless, the confidence that this accomplishment gave me was huge. Many of my civilian practicing industry professionals failed to pass in their first attempt – that fact alone gave an enormous psychological fillip. As far as I know I was the first serving Indian Army officer to get PMP certified. I later also guided several military comrades and many of them got PMP certified.

Project Parivartan

I decided to deploy my newly learnt PMP knowledge in my DGQA unit . There most diploma engineers were armament engineers for which the demand was low. The new field of Opto-electronics had a lot of demand and we had no one qualified to fill these roles. Opto-electronics is a complex field which involves knowledge of Physics, Optics and electronics hence it was a challenging field. However, I felt that by launching transformational training program we could reskill these armament engineers into opto-electronic engineers. I moved a formal proposal in the organization and it was accepted. It was going to be a 5 months long program involving 1-2 hours of training everyday. I followed the PMP project management methodology and got a Project Charter issued signed by my Head of the Department.

It was not going to be as simple as I had envisaged. The staff was 100% civilian, there was also a labour union to contend with and the average age of the employees was 49 years as the recruitment had been frozen for more than the past 15 years. I devised the training curriculum and I was also the sole trainer apart from being the Program Manager of the program. While there were several challenges in the program I managed to conclude it successfully in 5 months. In the process I authored my first book which was a training manual on opto-electronics. Importantly, we managed to deploy a Quality Assurance detachment at BELOP (Bharat Electronics Limited Optronics Devices) at Pune. I also armed this team with my training manual. Our detachment did a wonderful job. This act got me noticed in the DGQA top brass, which created another issue of being retained in the DGQA. Will come to it later.

One day while I was shopping with my wife in Crawford Market, Mumbai in the evening I got a call on my mobile from the personal secretary to the CEO of BELOP. She informed me that the CEO wanted to talk to me. I was worried as to why is the CEO calling me. I felt something must have gone wrong with our QA detachment at BELOP. When the CEO came on line he was very cordial and said that while on a round of the factory premises he had come across our QA detachment and found them referring to a manual. He borrowed the training manual from them and browsed through it. He said that he was thoroughly impressed with the content and quality of the manual. He said, "I have been trying to get a manual like this written in BELOP for the past 3 years but it had not happened". He requested my permission to make my training manual as the Official training manual of BELOP. I was extremely exhilarated I must say. Of course, I gave the permission - I was too naïve at that time to know about intellectual property and royalties.

As a token of his appreciation the CEO sent me a formal letter of recognition. I got that letter laminated and it was extremely helpful in my job interview as a supporting collateral.

PS: In my subsequent job interviews I would often be asked as to how did I apply my knowledge for my organization and create impact. It was then that the training manual, the project charter, project report and the CEO BELOP's appreciation letter would come in handy.

I Was Closing On to the 20 Years Service Mark

In Dec 2007 I would have completed 20 years of service. In Nov 2007 I moved my application for Premature Retirement (PMR) from the India Army. I was on deputation at the DGQA. Meanwhile I also applied for the 24 Weeks DGR management course - in those days the campus placements were good and it was difficult to get a seat on these courses. I could NOT get a seat on the IIM,A course starting in Oct 2007. I decided to proceed on PMR without the course. My Project Parivartan created another issue for me. The Director Armament, HQ DGQA rejected my PMR application. They wanted to me get permanently seconded to the DGQA.

However, for me it was clear there was no looking back now. I requested for an interview with the Director a very nice Maj Gen. He gave me a patient hearing, told me that he could see a bright future for me in the DGQA. He had planned my posting to DGQA in Dehradun which had the Optoelectronics wing. However, I stood my ground. The General understood my strong motivation to pursue a career in the corporate world and relented. He signed my PMR application and sent it to MS-7 in the Army HQ. Meanwhile in Dec 2007 on a very short notice I was nominated to the DGR course at IIM, Indore starting on 31 Dec 2007. Initially I was in double mind however consulting some veterans they advised me to undertake the course.

IIM, Indore Course

Soon I landed at IIM, Indore. While there were many new things to learn on the course I realized that since I had done my MBA very sincerely I was quite up to date on most subjects. Anyway, long story short I did pretty well on the course. Upon the insistence of my course officers I was made the Placement Committee Head – a role I took up very reluctantly. However, it was an amazing experience organizing the team of volunteers, interacting with the corporates. I am really proud that we managed to get 100% placement for all the 58 officers on the course by the time the course ended. I got a placement from my efforts outside of the IIM campus placement endeavour at Satyam Computers, Hyderabad. I was thrilled!

Satyam Computers

On the day of my joining after the induction program when we were handed over the company access card and I wore it around my neck I felt an immense sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. I had achieved what I wanted to joined the technology industry. I felt very confident that I already knew a lot and this role would be a cakewalk. I was assigned to conduct the performance audit of the IT Department their various functions LAN, WAN, Applications, ERP, etc. Very soon to my chagrin I realized that I knew almost nothing. The technical jargon that would be bandied around was incomprehensible to me. I had never heard those terms before. I thought I am going to lose my job soon.

I told myself having come thus far I am not going to blow this up. Thus began my journey of self-learning. I would be Google searching and educating myself. This involved long hours of toil well past the midnight after office hours. Somehow I manage to keep my nose above the water. Burning the midnight oil finally bore some fruits. At the end of the first quarter I was awarded an award **“Pat on the Back Award”** for good performance. While the prize money was a meagre Rs 2,000/- the wonders that it did to my confidence was nobody's business. There was an award ceremony, the VP (he was IIT,K and IIM,A) who gave me the award had also interviewed me. Later he called me to his cabin and asked me, “Iqbal, do you know why I selected you?”. I said, “I don't know”. He replied, “When I interviewed you I knew that you did not know a lot of things but on your CV I saw a consistent track record of learning year on year ie courses, certifications, and I felt that this man can learn. Thanks for vindicating my faith”. I was on cloud nine. I felt this is it I had arrived.

It also got me thinking that while I did not get any award in my 20 years career at the army I got one in my first 3 months here. Maybe, these corporate guys could see what the army could not. Maybe I was a misfit in the army. Subsequently I have won many awards in my 15 year corporate career but that first award holds a special place in my heart.

Things were going smooth for me in the company by the end of 6 months I had established myself somewhat. However, fortune had something else instore. In Jan 2009 our Founder Ramalingam Raju confessed to the now infamous Satyam Scam. So one had to start looking for a job again. This was post the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of Sep 2008. There were no new hirings only retrenchments that were taking place. After a lot of effort I managed to get a job offer at Nokia Gurgaon.

Nokia

Though I landed in a telecom company I soon realized that I know almost nothing about GSM. My initial role was that of a Project Manager **“Special Projects”** initially I did not know what that special meant. Very soon, I realized that all the projects which nobody wanted to do or projects which were stuck would be assigned to me. Anyway, I continued to deliver results. That got me noticed and I also rewarded. I got an award of 1 month additional salary – I felt so happy. I asked myself as to why did I not come to this world earlier? I was assigned the project to get the new graduate engineers trained on GSM technology. It was a 2 months capsule to be run at a BSNL training academy. I sensed an opportunity to learn GSM. I would sit in these training classes as a student along with these young employees – I did NOT care what others might think. This training stood me in very good stead, it helped me in my subsequent tenure at Nokia.



Speaking at an Event in Nokia in 2009

After a year I managed to get selected for a technical role (Technical Support Manager for Systems Integration) at the Global Delivery Center (GDC) at Noida. This was a step change for me. The learning curve was steeped but I managed to put in the grind and thrive. Had several role elevations in my 11 year stint at GDC. It was an extremely enriching experience I handled global customers from Japan to North America and also got to travel abroad. I loved this tenure.

In Dec 2016 I happened to attend the NASSCOM Annual Technology Conference at New Delhi. This was a defining moment for me listening to eminent speakers from across the globe. Soon I realized that public cloud was the future and I knew nothing about it. I decided to enter this field. Internally in Nokia a new team was being set up for public cloud I applied for and got selected for the role. Upskilled myself and also added a few cloud certifications to my professional credentials. That is what subsequently led to me joining Google Cloud 4 + years later.



Speaking at a CII Event 2017

Google

In Dec 2021 I joined Google at Gurgaon. While to most this might seem like a random event it was the culmination of a long and grinding process. The strategic decision in Dec 2016 to shift to public cloud, all the self-learning efforts, the certifications, hands on experience of migrating 100 software applications from the on-premise data center to the Azure cloud all that helped. So, this is where I am today. The environment is Google is amazing, the lavish free food at Google, the free massages and the perks all of that is true. However, what I feel is the biggest differentiating factor is the quality of talent. That environment pushes you beyond your boundaries and makes you grow. You are after all a product of the company you keep.

What Went Well In My Transition

Whether by sheer fortune or by strategic decision making I feel the following things went well in my Transition.

- **Clarity:** The fact that I was clear as to what role, industry and companies I was targeting was a major factor. This is where many veterans fail to a decisive choice or spread themselves thin all over.
- **Unrelenting Drive:** The image of the Phoenix would keep coming back to me again and again, almost as if haunting me. I was a man possessed and ready to do whatever it takes.
- **Mindset:** This is an extremely critical factor. Setbacks will happen in everyone's life. How you respond to them matters. There was a strong desire to not let anyone else decide my destiny coupled with the intensity that brought about a monastic devotion to the mission.
- **Continuous Learning:** It was easy to rest on my laurels having two technology degrees against my name. However, as I learnt in my very first corporate job that there is a lot that I needed to learn. This continued throughout the career. When I moved to the telecom industry I had to learn GSM then 3G, followed by 4G and then 5G. The learning still continues for me as I feel that there is so much I do not know.
- **Articulation of My Value Proposition:** I feel my strong written as well as verbal communication skills helped me articulate my value proposition convincingly and emphatically to employers via my CV and more so in job interviews. It also helped me negotiate or convince decision makers and other stakeholders once inside the company in my day to day working. I continued to hone the skill by joining Toastmasters International and writing articles. All that helped.
- **Achieving Results:** In each of my corporate roles I was able to produce tangible business impacting results in a very short period of time. I picked up projects which nobody wanted to touch. Of course that came with attendant risks however I also knew that success in them would fast track my career growth and make me stand out.
- **Time Your Most Precious Resource:** Most people when asked as to what is their most valuable resource reply 'money'. I too use to think that way however, very early in my corporate years I realized that my most precious resource was time. I have always made an endeavour to optimize my time and productivity - I think that helped tremendously.
- **Choose Your Company Wisely:** Here I mean the company of the people you interact with. Be in the company of people where you aspire to be next and not in the company of gossip mongers and negative people. The fact that I worked with marquee employers made this thing easy for me.
- **Understand the Value Chain of Your Industry:** This is where many veterans go wrong. You must get under the skin of how your industry works, what is the value chain and where can you add value in that chain. Then dig deeper there.

- **Psychology of Success:** I had always been a voracious reader. Reading books from Dale Carnegie to Anthony Robbins made me aware of the psychology behind success- the role of the subconscious mind. I invested money and effort into learning more of this. This greatly helped me.
- **Payback:** As the quote goes “Energy is reciprocal : the energy you expand always comes back”. In my own small humble way I have tried to pay back to the community – Forces Network is a major part of that endeavour. I feel the good wishes and blessings of the community has augured well for me. I couldn’t have done all of this on my own.



At the Military Literature Festival 2019 at Chandigarh as a Speaker

What Could Have Gone Better In My Transition

Despite the fact that I prepared for 5 years for my second career I feel there were some mistakes I made. Listing them out so that others may learn this from me:

- **Lack of a Mentor/Guide:** This lacuna I am only able to detect in hindsight. I tried, hustled, found my own way, slipped, fell, had missteps in the bargain I lost time. I wish I had a mentor to guide me in my Transition. That would have saved me a lot of time. In fact, I feel it is worth it to even have a paid mentor or coach.
- **Mindset Reset:** While I prepared fairly well in terms of skills and qualifications. I continued working with the army mindset in my early years at the corporate. This was an area which was a blind spot – I did NOT know what I did NOT know. I was very direct, raw and extremely aggressive with people and could not understand their lack of commitment to delivering company objectives. So much so that I got

- into many altercations with many, many colleagues. It is a wonder that I survived and was not sacked. The fact that I was producing impactful results I feel saved me. It did not have to be that way had someone thrown light on this blind spot in my transition. I feel I lost at least 2 years of career growth because of this drawback. It only one manager who was kind enough to give me this feedback (nearly 4 years into my corporate career) that I made a course correction. All I needed to do was to put my iron fist in a velvet glove, develop empathy and have a more benign narrative in my tough conversations. Another thing that helped here was the precision of thought the economy of expression.
- **No Industry Network:** Just like it happens in the army there are corporate leaders' camps who move from one company to the other as the leader moves. I obviously being a rank outsider did not have any such network. Having said that I would say the corporate world has treated me very kindly.

Conclusion

I am not sure if I can term myself to be successful or unsuccessful but to me what is more important is to be endlessly on this journey towards personal excellence. That has been the leitmotif of my career whether in the military or in the corporate. I deem myself to have been incredibly fortunate to have straddled the work lives across the military and the corporate. I had incredible colleagues in both formats from whom I learnt so much. Both the realms have taught me, endured me, enriched me and this unique exposure has made me who I am today. The military I feel laid a very strong foundation and armed me with a work ethic which helped me build a career in the intensely competitive and fast-moving world of technology.

While I may have shared my Transition lessons in may talks, lectures and webinars this is the first time that I have formally documented them. The intent is to share it candidly with the fraternity no holds barred so that they may learn from my mistakes and as well may pick up a few good aspects of my journey. That would result in we as a community have a learning curve. The generations to come in the future would be able to do better than those in the past and go farther. I am happy to receive feedback on my article please feel free to email at iqchucks@gmail.com.



Iqbal Singh is an ex-NDA officer who served in the infantry. After a 20 year stint in the army he joined the corporate world in 2008. He has carved out a career for himself in the hyper competitive and exciting world of the technology industry. Currently he is working with a Big Tech firm based at Gurgaon. He is the Founder of Forces Network – the community of the military veterans in the corporate. He is also a much sought after speaker and trainer on technology as well aspects of military to corporate transition. He loves breaking myths and stereotypes. He has mentored several military officers into extremely successful corporate roles.

My Transition Journey

“My Transition Journey: Still in Transition !”

BY VARUN DHAND

I joined the Indian Navy on 29 July, 2007 as Short Service Commissioned Officer. While joining armed forces service, I didn't understand the meaning of Short Service Commissioned Officer entry. The only thing I understood was that I was first person from my family who joined armed forces. This was the result of the passion for the country for which I could slay the enemy and could also lay down my life for Matrabhoomi (Motherland). Slowly while getting mature in the service, I got to know that I have only 10 years of engagement and there is no option of Permanent Commission in my cadre. Initially, I felt very bad but slowly I understood and made a truce with this reality. I hung up my uniform as a Gunnery Specialist (Artillery Equivalent in the Indian Army) on 04 May, 2018 after completing 11 years of service. I still miss armed forces' life and it will remain in my heart till I die. I had to leave service because I was not having an option to continue so, my fate was sealed along with my joining. So, I am one of the Agniveers in the officer cadre but I am very proud to have served in the armed forces.



Two Sides of Life

I approached my Transition when I enrolled myself for distance learning MBA (Project Management). I started my transition from Military to Civvy Street when I got to know regarding various Resettlement courses offered by DGR (Directorate General of Resettlement). I started inquiring about the courses through my course mates and seniors who had earlier done resettlement courses. In this process, I got in touch with INPA (Indian Naval Placement Agency) who looks after naval share of seats for resettlement courses offered by DGR. I got the support of my Commanding Officer, Captain APJ Shaji Kutty (Now Commodore) for approving my request to send my name for the resettlement course at IIM Indore. It took a great deal of time and energy while talking to INPA, DGR and IIM Indore representatives to get my name cleared for course. Finally, I got an email from IIM Indore where my name was mentioned in final list of CCBMDO (Certified Course in Business Management for Defence Officers') resettlement course.

After landing at IIM Indore for CCBMDO Course, the aim was to secure an employment opportunity while making a balance with strict academic schedule and working on several aspects of my transition. Few tips which I learnt while doing course that helped me for my transition are as follows:

Curriculum Vitae: I started working on my CV, which is an overview of individual's professional journey, achievements and educational qualifications. It yielded results as I was shortlisted for every opening where I have applied.

Certifications: I got to know about various profiles where Defence Officers were working in the Corporate. I learnt that there is a constant need to upskill oneself according to requirements of one's industry. So, I did certifications like Lean Six Sigma Green Belt, one failed attempt for PMP (Project Management Professional) while doing resettlement course.

Preparing for Interview: During course, we start getting interview calls (thanks to our students placement team) and slowly I got to know the structure of the interview calls (HR round followed by interview by Hiring Manager and Panel Round depending upon hierarchy of the company) for job opportunities. I prepared myself for the job interviews by working on my own personal SWOT analysis (strengths, weakness) according to the job description of profile, company and management running company.

Unlearn Yourself: 'Working in the Armed Forces is not a profession, it is a way of life!' Transition is more difficult when armed forces officer who is working in non - profit organisation wants to start his/her 2nd Innings with a for profit organisation. There are various aspects in military officer life which one has to unlearn before getting ready for the corporate life. Aspects like status of being an officer with stars/stripes on your shoulders, junior officers readiness to execute things just on your one order of yours. You have to adjust (not compromise) with your civilian counterparts who are not disciplined enough to match the military standards of integrity, teamwork and leadership.

Salary Negotiations: While joining the armed forces, the word 'salary negotiation' is non-existent. But when joining a corporate firm, one comes with 'a Cost To Company (CTC)'. Various faculty lectures were conducted during course which taught me the art of salary negotiations. Salary Negotiation is the art of presenting yourself which is subject to your strengths, skills, education and rich professional experience, finally converted into a monetary figure based on your your profile.

I had appeared for many interviews at the IIM, campus. I didn't get any job offers during the course. I used to elaborate a lot on any points of view with examples which ate most of the the interview time. It was only later that I realized that in **the interview process, one should be precise in one's thoughts and opinions. The interviewees would not be interested in your take of things until asked for. On the contrary it's important to gauge what they might be interested to hear.** I worked on this aspect and learnt how to be diplomatic and more polite while appearing for interviews.

The D-Day (my retirement- 04 May 2018) had arrived and I still had not got any job offer in my hand. I was worried about my future. After 3 months, I went back to my native place in Punjab without a job. I started applying for jobs through recruiters and was constantly following up with them. My income stopped but my house expenses like water and electricity bill, food expenses and children's education didn't stop. I had to use my savings to support family expenses since I didn't have any financial help like pension.



Started 2nd Innings

I got my first break in the corporate world with a big Industry group at Renukoot as Manager Security. Within few months, I realised that this is a 'LALA company' due to its work culture. But what surprised me the most is my Line Manager's (a retired Colonel - Chief Security Officer) behaviour and attitude. **I faced discrimination and verbal abuses from my Line Manager because from my naval background. I paid a heavy price for questioning my own line manager in some issues as a part of professional discussions and it was taken as ego issue.** As a result, my probation was extended and finally I was asked to resign in a span of 10 months without giving me an opportunity to defend myself. I got to know various discriminatory stories which is effected by our own retired armed forces community members. I believe a few senior officers are still mentally living in the armed forces and they don't respect their juniors.

I came back to my native place in Punjab where I again started my job hunt. I was once called for an interview for the position of a Bursar in an International School. While coming out of the interview, I had given my spouse's CV to HR. I didn't match the job but my spouse got a call for an interview for the position of a Biology Teacher in school. After clearing demo class presentation and interview she got the offer to join the school. It was a role reversal this time where I handled the household, kids and my better half started going to her work place. I thoroughly enjoyed this phase as I brushed up on my culinary skills and developed patience in handling kids.

I was jobless for 6 months and this phase drained me psychologically but I always kept reminding myself not to lose my nerve and my confidence. **My advice to every fellow officer who lands up in this jobless phase is that one should not lose self-confidence.** I actually faced this problem where I started losing my faith in myself. I eventually came out of this, but it can happen to anyone and it is a normal human behaviour.

Any candidate who applies for a job is considered unreliable to work in the organisation if one has not a spent minimum of 2 years in the previous organisation. I literally had to lie in my interview (couldn't disclose my sour relationship with my line manager in previous organisation) when a question was asked as to why you had left the organisation so early. I got a referral from one of my coursemates and I clicked the job opportunity of a Security Officer in another company in Vadodara (Gujarat). This company was an American MNC which was into chemical dyes business. I got a great working culture and a very supportive line manager Mr. Naresh Mude (EHS Head). He had given me freedom in handling my department and given me additional responsibility of handling Fire Hydrant System and Fire Station within 3 months of my joining the company. This was due to the trust and rapport that I built while working with him as a team. I joined in Jan 2020 and after 2 months, the Covid first wave stuck. I was away from my family as I had joined without my family in Gujarat. Professionally, it was skill addition of industrial fire and safety to my profile. I took initiative and brought lot of improvements in my

department and one of my tenure's achievements was the implementation of 5S Methodology for workplace organisation which was accepted as Kaizen. If the working environment of a company and the line manager is good then person will love to take initiative and work hard without any guidance or support. I had spent around 1.5 years in the company and I still cherish my tenure with them fondly.



Enriching Experience: Huntsman

Since I was away from my family, I was looking for opportunities in my native place. I simultaneously I got job opportunities of Security Officer with a local Steel Industry and in the State Bank of India. Since it was Covid Era, a family decision was made to have a secure job in hand. I joined SBI as Deputy Manager (Security) in Aug 2021 and am continuing till date. This job is very stagnant, new ideas are shown resistance and there is no skill upgradation. The work culture is not that modern and a little intimidating in the nature. I have not had work satisfaction till date because there is nothing new thing to learn. I am looking for a change for better job prospects and also want to provide stability to my family.

The brighter side of this job in SBI is that I get enough time for my family. I, along with my wife worked hard on our childrens' sports and academics areas. My elder son, Vardaan participated in U-10 Athletics Championship (Maharashtra State Level) and won gold medal in 100 mtr relay event after undergoing 6 months professional athletics training. He also secured A* Grade in Class 5 and was promoted to Class 6. My younger son also has started his Grade 1. I, myself on personal front, have been writing book reviews and running marathons.

I always had a belief of adding skill to my profile rather than do typical security/admin role but there was no one us to guide me. Finally, I came across the most popular training program of Forces Network ABCT (Any Body Can Tech) started by Col. Iqbal Singh (the Founder of Forces Network) where complete non-techies were trained on Cloud Computing and taken to the Azure-900 (Microsoft Basic Cloud Fundamental Certification). This entailed clearing an exam conducted by Microsoft to get the Az-900 certification from Mocosoft After getting trained from IQ sir, I cleared my Az-900 certification. I was very confused for my way ahead and then I talked to various professionals working in the IT field which helped me to make a blueprint for my cyber security transition. Finally, I came to the conclusion to map my personal skill upgradation programme where I want to make my career transition to Cyber Security field. I want to do courses like CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Associate), CEH (Certified Ethical Hacking) and Penetration Testing.

Now, I have a challenge to strike a balance in upgrading myself as well as invest time in my children for supporting them in their academic and sporting pursuits.

Conclusion

I am presently 38 years old, I have a long way to go. I just want to conclude that one should follow his/her passion, be diplomatic in handling sensitive issues and avoid direct confrontation in the corporate world. I have learnt with my own experiences and still navigating through the choppy waters. Sometimes, I feel I am a misfit for the corporate world and was doing better off in the Forces. I am also thinking to start my own venture rather than doing any job if I am not able to successfully transition to cyber security field.



***Lt Cdr Varun Kumar Dhand** ret'd from Indian Navy with 11 years of service in Executive cadre. He had left Indian Navy in 2018. Presently, he is working as Deputy Manager (Security) in State Bank of India, Mumbai. He is passionate of reading books, running marathons, write and debate on different topics of national importance.*

"DISCLAIMER: THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ARE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL VIEWS"

**"Treat the civilian world as a foreign country.
They speak a different language, have a
different culture and different customs.
Adapt to the new country by adapting to the
language, culture and customs."**



My Transition Journey

Transitioning into Uncharted Territories –

BY SAJAN MOIDEEN

Why did you decide to leave service?

My journey in uniform started from a very young age from Sainik School Amaravathi Nagar and through the rigors of NDA and IMA before being commissioned into the Army Air Defence and throughout my life from School, till I left the service ten years back, I was performing very well in all spheres. Winning a bronze medal at Passing out of IMA, to being awarded the coveted Silver Gun Trophy during Young Officer's Course, topping most courses in my career, going abroad for a 6-month training, being part of a new Raising, completing LGSC, getting posted to NDA as Instructor and completing the prestigious DSSC, every aspect of fauji career went beautifully well.

And suddenly as if God had other plans, I was misdiagnosed by the Fauji doctors and I was downgraded medically. This was a sudden low in my life. Yet with the support and confidence of my family and seniors in the unit, I decided to get up and fight it out. All my efforts to get upgraded failed due to the red tapism, and so despite being promoted, I decided to call it quits to the uniformed life.



In the Snowbound J&K serving with RR

How did you approach your transition?

The first decision I took in my life was at 15 years of service when I applied for Study Leave citing my medical category. I was amply helped by my seniors, and I completed my Two-year regular MBA from Symbiosis. I was awarded the Gold Medal in MBA. That was my third PG having acquired two while in Service during the long courses. The MBA opened my eyes to the outside world, and I also recognized that I was passionate about Training. So, I started my journey to acquire the required certifications.

What preparation (or no preparation) you did?

MBA was the first step. I went on to do ISTD certification and complete my Dale Carnegie Train the Trainer certification to transition into the world of Training. I also completed the Master Practitioner in NLP from Richard Bandler, which helped me in understanding the human mind and shifting perspectives during training. Alongside I became a Quality Management Systems Lead Auditor through the ISO 9001-2008 certification, as a requirement from my organisation.

A great learning from my son's tryst with Career Counseling and the clarity he got for his life inspired me to step into the world of Career Counseling in 2017. I completed my certified Career Counsellor course as well as Parenting Coach certification. This helped me immensely in the Career Counseling which started as a side hustle. I also completed a certification on Cyber Crime Intervention officer from ISAC, to understand the world of Gamers and Game addiction. And currently, I am getting trained as an Excellence Installation Specialist from Antano Harini, to enhance my skills as a Career Coach and Consultant.

Now when I look back, having empowered several thousand children, and how their career paths have changed with clarity making the right decisions at the right time, I realise that I have found my calling, as I derive utmost satisfaction in empowering children as well as giving clarity to parents.

What was the outcome of the Transition?

Understanding one's sweet spot and getting the required certifications helped me in getting the confidence. It also helped retrain oneself out of the fauji mould while retaining most of our fauji learning. I was easily able to do my role in Training & Development while pursuing my passion of helping people find their passionate careers.



Corporate Training Avatar

What are you doing currently?

I don two hats. Principal Consultant Training Operations with Renenergetics Consulting and Career Consultant for students and adults. I am happy that I have been able to help more than 2500 students, adults and officers in over 18 countries to find their best suited careers. Was also fortunate to have addressed more than 30,000 students across the nation through Career Guidance Workshops.



Career Guidance Workshop

What Went Well in the Transition?

Was adequately prepared and hence able to hit the ground running. Being a member of Forces Network helped me establish my Career Counseling part of my work, mostly through word of mouth by the members.

Lessons Learnt.

- Know what your passion is.
- Prepare for the same by getting the required skills, certifications, and relevant experience.
- Unlearn a few things learnt in fauj, at the same time retain the best practices of the Armed Forces. Eg... Make yourself Flexible, Fauji TP taught in Class A institutes are different from being a Corporate Trainer.

If you were to redo the Transition all over again with all the wisdom and experience what would be different?

- Would expand my horizon exploring more options, especially in the corpotes.
- Network better to land up with better opportunities.



Appreciation by Principal after Career Guidance Workshop

Conclusion

Sometimes Life throws up unexpected twists, more so in the Armed forces. It could be a medical issue like mine or for most it could be being overlooked in the promotion board. Those officers who retain their sanity, remain confident of taking the plunge, make plans and execute them have achieved greater heights. I say this with experience of having Career Counselling over 150+ officers and I have seen the ones with a fire in the belly land up with fantastic careers. Forces Network is one big help for many of them to network and understand before they take the plunge. The regular workshops and seminars have helped many to find their passion.

Fauji's are the best, and they can do very well because the service has trained them in all aspects. The world outside respects you for the professionalism, discipline, and dedication. We now need to specialise and be useful to the civil world in our own unique and special ways.



***Col Sajjan Moideen** is an experienced International Trainer, Consultant, and a certified Career Coach. Currently he is a Principal Consultant at Renergetics Consulting. Commissioned into the Corps of Army Air Defence in 1991, he is an alumnus of NDA, DSSC, and Army AD College. After a remarkable career of 22 years he stepped out to the world outside. He has been regularly guiding students and officers transitioning out, through Psychometric Assessments based Career Counseling. He also writes a popular blog www.sajanspeaks.com. You can catch Sajjan at www.renergetics.com/careercounselling or <https://in.linkedin.com/in/sajanmoideen>*

"DISCLAIMER: THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ARE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL VIEWS"

My Transition Journey

My Transition Journey

BY ANIL DUHOON

Why did you decide to leave service?

I am Lt Col Anil Duhoon (Retd.), a second generation officer. I got commissioned in the year 1988 and joined 14 Mahar. After serving for 22 years I decided to move back home to spend more time with the family.

My children were growing up and as an infantry officer I got very little time to see them grow up. Elder child (daughter) was about to finish her school and after that would have eventually moved out to pursue professional college, job and marriage. So I wanted to spend max time with my family.

How did you approach your transition?

I did not approach my transition in any particular manner or chalk out a plan. I had done a tenure at Embarkation Headquarter, Mumbai which had given me an excellent exposure to nuances of imports and exports. I had skills to perform well but neither was I looking for a job nor there were offers forthcoming. Hence I played golf.

By the stroke of luck and drinking whiskey at a bar, conversation veered to Imports and Exports. I was good at that and this guy next to us was listening patiently. He turned and asked if I would like to join him? We discussed it the following day and I joined him. That's how I started and joined M/S Triway Logistics - an international logistics firm based in Delhi. My first planned move however was when I joined Reliance Cement in 2015 and stayed until around 2018.



Self with Mr(Dr) Shashi Tharoor, MP and Mr Tehseen Poonawalla, Political Analyst.

What went well in the transition?

Everything went well. I was able to spend time with my immediate and extended family and of course enjoyed playing golf. Then in 2020 came COVID and all outdoor activities came to a standstill. My mother started falling sick more often. To remain indoor without any constructive activity was very tough. I revived my Twitter account and started interacting with people from varied field including politicians. It was around this time that the Galwan incident happened and I was quite aggressive on Twitter about the episode. It's during time when few main stream media TV channels noticed my tweets and approached me to participate on live TV debates. I featured on both English and Hindi channels. My debates were picked up Indian National Congress's media team since my views aligned with theirs and they helped me with providing me statistics for various topics and debates. I was featured on National Channels as an independent/neutral person. Slowly and gradually, I realised that voicing my concerns on social issues came very naturally to me. I became more involved with working towards our society, in whatever little sphere I could.

During this journey I realized that the best way to serve the society is to join active politics or be close to politics to repay the society which had given me/us everything (stature to status).

The journey to join main stream politics had been very satisfying thus far but it was moving at snails speed. It was around Feb 2023 when I learnt that Mr Kapil Sibal, MP Rajya Sabha is toying with the idea of starting an NGO. I met him through a common friend and heard the concept from horse's mouth. I was extremely impressed with the whole concept and I shared my thoughts with Mr Sibal. Finally after few deliberations I joined the NGO "**Insaaf Ke Sipahi**" as one of the Directors. We intend to take up social causes, children education, institutional matters etc. and ensure that justice prevails.



Mr Kapil Sibal, MP RS in his office during discussion on "Insaaf Ke Sipahi".



Mr Pawan Khera, Mr Jairam Ramesh, MP RS, self, Mr Vamshi Chand Reddy and Dr Vineet Punia at Hq AICC 24, Akbar Road

What was the outcome of the Transition?

I believe that transition is an ongoing process. I do not think an outcome has been achieved yet since my agenda is in motion and it is more about self-improvement and giving back to the society as I mentioned above.

I prefer being aligned with Congress for the simple reason of secularism since it is of utmost importance to me. In a thriving democracy there must be no room for discrimination based on caste, creed etc. These are the ills of society that must be dealt with democratic tools only.

What are you doing currently?

As a Director at the NGO "Insaaf Ke Sipahi", I feel proud to be associated with an NGO where there is no place for class, colour, creed, religion, community, etc. We intend to take up social causes that help our society moving forward and I believe it is a fantastic initiative led by Mr. Kapil Sibal, MP Rajya Sabha.

Lessons learnt?

Lesson is that don't plan too much in advance. Create short term aims, achieve them. Focus on next aim, achieve it and so on and so forth. My ultimate aim is to do something for the society. All this to happen only when one is free from immediate family responsibilities. If there is any immediate family responsibility then that is priority, rest everything can wait. Otherwise one must look at the ultimate aim and work on that.

If you were to re-do the transition all over again with all the wisdom and experience, what would be different?

If I can re-do one thing, it would be “not to go on raid during Chindit Camp” (only for legends to understand). (This was a joke).

On a serious note, If I were to re-do the transition, I would definitely start my journey of pursuing politics from 2010 itself. I would not have joined International logistics at all, my journey for social work would be longer and I would spend more time in networking and meeting people from various backgrounds.



***Lt Col Anil Duhoon (Retd.)** is a second generation Army officer, currently based in New Delhi. He hails from Meerut, UP and decided to retire from the Defence Forces in the year 2010. He then joined a Delhi based firm and led International Logistics for over 4 years. He switched his specialization into Security and joined Reliance Cement as General Manager in the year 2015. Lt Col Anil Duhoon (Retd.) then moved on to becoming the Associate Vice President of Security at the Birla Corporation in Madhya Pradesh where he was overseeing the security and operations for two separate plants under the same banner. Since the year 2020, Lt Col Anil Duhoon (Retd.) has been actively participating in several social media and digital initiatives to raise awareness for Defence Forces (primarily). With a strong following of over 20,000 followers on Twitter and an avid followership in Indian's leading news channels, his neutral opinions on topics related to Defence Forces are widely watched and appreciated. He recently took over the role as one of the Directors on the newly formed NGO “Insaaf Ke Sipahi”, set in motion by Mr. Kapil Sibal, MP Rajya Sabha. In his free time, Lt Col Anil Duhoon (Retd.) plays Golf, spends time with his family and travels to his hometown Meerut to keep in touch with his rural roots.*

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“Take advantage of everything the transition assistance program offers you. Don't cut corners as you are only hurting yourself in the long run. The military is helping you with the transition process. Don't look that gift horse in the mouth. Find that next job now. The best time to find the next job is why you still have one. It takes the pressure off of you.”

My Transition Journey

My Transition Journey

BY RAHUL TYAGI

I was standing in line for admission in Punjab Engineering College (PEC), Chandigarh in Apr 1997 when I decided to join National Defense Academy, Pune. I had applied for Air Force but secured a place for Army due to medical issues (eyesight). Reasons to join NDA were simple, I wanted to serve the nation by joining the elite forces and chose a life style over other material successes. Even after joining NDA in Jun 1997, I kept my PEC Admission Form with me for more than 10 years, to remind myself of the choice I made and more importantly why I made that choice. I can proudly say that I have no regrets at all for my decision. Now, even retired, I am a diehard infantry soldier with about 21 years of military experience and an extended family of more than 2500 loved ones, who fondly call me 'Romeo Tango' or just 'Romeo' sometimes.



In Action at Line of Control



Last Day In Uniform

Notwithstanding my decision of 1997, in 2016 I made up my mind to move out of forces post completing my mandatory 20 years of pensionable service. The reasons again were simple. Firstly, I would not be directly touching the lives of my men post my command and, in all probability, I would be chained to a Headquarters. Secondly, except for any strategic operational aspects, I had already learnt and contributed what I could and there was nothing substantial I was going to learn in next 11 to 12 years. Lastly, I would retire at a time where neither I can truly retire from work nor I would have the energy to start afresh. As such, by the now, my uniform was my second skin and I would still be a soldier wherever I go, forces or civil environment.

Of course, at that time I never knew what I will do, like a lot of forces personnel. At that the exact moment, my transition journey began with a Big Question Mark. I guess any officer transiting to civil environment faces this same question and some allied questions. I too faced these questions as slated below, but not limited to this list:

- What Upskill I should do?
- Should I do PMP, LSSG, CPP etc like all others who have successfully transitioned?
- Is re-employment course at IIMs, MDI worth attending?
- Do I do MBA?
- How much time I need to upskill myself?
- What is the ideal CTC I should target?
- Which city I should aim at?
- Should I hire someone (including ChatGPT) to write my CV?
- So on and so forth...

To be frank, I did not have answer for any of these questions. I reached out to a lot of successfully transitioned officers for guidance and I realized that everyone had their own path and no one could give me straight forward answer because no single size would fit all. Thus, I decided to follow my own path for which I followed one approach, which I knew very well from my military experience, to help me remain focused during my transition journey and remove any clutter that I may fall in. A simple yet effective approach which I learnt during my Pre-Staff Exams i.e. work backwards from a goal. The steps which worked for me in this approach are listed below: -

- **Most Important Step**- Decide why you want to leave army. I feel this was the only Question that needed to be answered in my heart. It was not to be based on how my career was progressing, how satisfied or not I was in my current role, or how much chances I had for future promotions etc. This was a decision that had to be based on where I see myself 15 years from hence. My vision was very simple and elementary, and I am deliberately not giving it here in public 😊, which included decent wealth, physical fitness, time for myself and my family, and someone to share my life till I die. I knew I could not achieve my vision while staying in forces, otherwise I would have stayed in forces happily. This vision could definitely be achieved in my own start-up but then I had no experience. Hence, I decided that to first gain experience, I must aim for a corporate Job.
- **Step 2:** Next I decided the vertical I wanted to pursue for balance of my career and to achieve my life's vision. This vertical was NOT based on my Infantry experiences or skills gained in army. This was purely based on where I see myself 15 years from hence. Thus, I decided Operations is the vertical for me.
- **Step 3:** Next I decided which industry or sector I wanted to work in. Each industry has all the verticals, but its own dynamics. Again, this decision was based on my life's vision and I decided to go into Supply Chain Management sector based on it.
- **Step 4:** Once I completed step 1 to 3, this 4th step was pretty simple. I homed on to the best 3 companies in the world in my chosen industry / sector.



Last Day In Uniform

“What This 4 Step Approach Got me- I Homed on to my Dream Job, in top 3 companies of the world in my chosen Industry and my chosen Vertical.”

Once I had the choices ready, I could easily home on to the upskill I needed to secure my dream job. I scanned the JDs of each of these top 3 companies and decided what upskills were required for these roles. As a thumb rule, any qualification which was required more than 40% times for these roles, I made a list of all those qualifications and decided to complete those qualifications. For the role I was looking at, an MBA was the top contenders closely followed by PMP and LSGB. I had already done my MBA (distant learning) in 2010 and felt that I needed fresh on hands knowledge now. Thus, I decided to do a regular MBA for which I gave my GMAT exam post almost 1 year of studies and secured 4 out of 11 admissions abroad (2 in Canada, 2 in US, and 1 in UK). However, for personal reasons, I again decided not to abroad and thus I started with the next qualification on my list, PMP.

For my MBA applications, I had already made my own CV. There is no second choice here, you might take help and guidance from experts, but you have to make your own CV. I did take expert advice, but I made it myself and refined it before I made my final Master CV. For the 7 roles that I applied for, I refined my Master CV for each 7 of them. Concurrently, I attended each and every workshop for transition that I could attend, including the ones where I needed to pay a fee. There are no free ‘Gyaans’ and if you don’t pay, you will not be serious. Here I must admit that **M2C Transition workshop – 2022 of Forces Network** was very helpful to me. Concurrently to applying on job portal, I started reaching out to the recruiters on LinkedIn relentlessly.



The Day of Joining Amazon

Last, but not the least, I prepared well for my interview. I fondly remember the M2C Transition workshop's mock interviews of other candidates. I learnt immensely from these interviews and made notes of all the questions asked by the panel. My MBA application interviews also helped me in my preparations. There is an unsaid dictate in corporate world that when you get one chance at the interview in a company, you have to convert that one chance itself as you might not get a second chance. When I got my first Interview, I did convert it and landed in my dream Job.

In this short journey of mine, certain myths were busted and certain revelations achieved. I would like to list them here: -

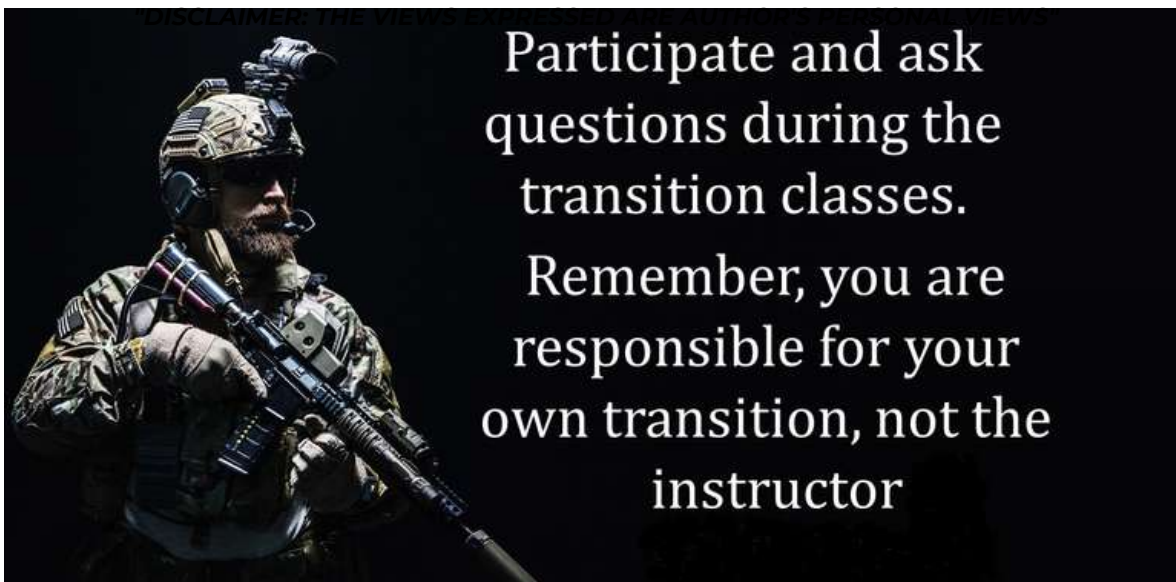
- **Myth-** *Veterans are not respected in outside world.* Not true. I must say that a veteran will always score in any role if they prove themselves to be worthy.
- **Myth-** *A veteran will easily get a decent job because of the skills and experience we bring on the table.* Absolutely no. We will get a decent job when we prepare for it. A well-prepared veteran is welcomed with open arms in all roles.
- **Myth-** *I must get a job the very next day of leaving forces to avoid any gap in experience.* No. I got my dream job after a gap of almost 5 months of retiring. If you can justify your gap, then any gap is no gap.

- **Myth-** *Some veteran got a job because they were lucky.* No. They have worked very hard for it. In my own case, I worked for 3 years to reach my first step. Even then, for personal reasons, I had to let go of my Plan 'A' and adopt Plan 'B'.
- **Revelations-** We have to mentally prepare our families to the transition. There are times when we will need family support. It is thus important that each family member shares the exact same vision as you.
- **Revelations-** You should plan for expenses based on your own liabilities as there is a high possibility that you might end up being job less for a long period.
- **Revelations-** We must have pride in our organizations. Believe you me, we are more respected in civil environment than we can imagine.

In the end, can I say that my transition Journey is complete? I can safely say no, because I know this is just a beginning. I know for sure that this is only my first step towards my life's vision. Will I reach there or not? I am not sure. Will I be successful or not? Again, I am not sure. There is only one thing I am absolutely sure about and that is I have applied myself in a logical manner and I am trying my best to achieve my life's vision. Will I take the same approach? Of course, yes, absolutely and blindly. To conclude, I can say that I am proudly transitioning my career!!!



Col Rahul Tyagi (Retired) is an Infantry veteran with 21 year of experience in active military operations. In his 21 years he has served along the length and breadth of the country. He has had 3 tenures in Jammu & Kashmir, 2 High Altitude including Siachen glacier, 1 tenure in North Eastern states of India and has been a military observer in UN Mission In Congo, Africa. He commanded his parent unit, 12th Battalion The Madras Regiment on Line of Control post which he was posted as Directing Staff at Coveted Army War College, Mhow, in Junior Command Wing. He took premature retirement from Army in Jan 2022 and for the past 10 months he has been working with Amazon India at Hyderabad as Operational Manager-III in Last Mile Analytics & Quality Team.



My Transition Journey

MY M2C TRANSITION JOURNEY

BY CT SADANANDAN

I am Maj CT Sadanandan, currently working as Vice President and Global Head of Shared Services Unit (SSU) Corporate Services at Tata Communications. I was commissioned from IMA into 1 MARATHA LI on 14 December 1984. Had a stint with 52 SAG (NSG), IPKF Operations in Sri Lanka and have held various appointments. I took PMR on 01 January 1995. During my corporate journey I have had varied experience in different industry such as IT, Automobile & Technical products retail, airlines and BFSI in various organizations in India and the Middle East. Over the past two and a half decades, have been recognized as a thought leader and functional expert in key areas, have been an Expert Panel member on various seminars and webinars, including on TV. I have received many awards in the industry over the years, I have continuously focussed on my progressive personal development and knowledge/skill enhancement thorough various learning opportunities. I have also authored one e-book The Crisis Crucible on managing crisis and Sri Lanka Diary, a summary of my Army Unit's operational tenure in Sri Lanka. The book on Crisis Management is being published as a paperback in May 2023. Based in Mumbai for the past two decades. I am currently an advisor to various industry work groups on workplace and future of work and a start up for workplace technology.



Then and Now at Collins Block in IMA

Why did you decide to leave service:

I was a permanent commissioned officer from IMA having a progressive and promising career track in the Army. I had performed well on various professional courses – including JC- with instructor grading on two courses. Had an eventful tenure with NSG and various operational areas with my parent infantry unit. I was preparing for DSSC entrance and looking forward to a long term career with the Army. However, due to a compelling compassionate reason I was forced to opt for PMR

How did you approach your transition?

The decision to leave a progressive career in the Army was not easy. After prolonged discussions within family, I made up my mind on the need for transition in 1993. Subsequently this was discussed with our Unit 2IC and then CO – both vehemently denying and dissuading me from this. However, after persisted requests they recognized the compelling nature of the reason and my application was processed. The application was processed after multiple personal interviews with the Brigade Commander and then Divisional Commander and after almost one and a half year, it was approved by MoD.

While the application was in progress I prepared myself mentally for the ensuing change in societal status and evaluated potential options for post release employment. This was actually a very tough period, however being deployed in operational area along the LoC did not allow much time to think too much about this!



The Swag!!

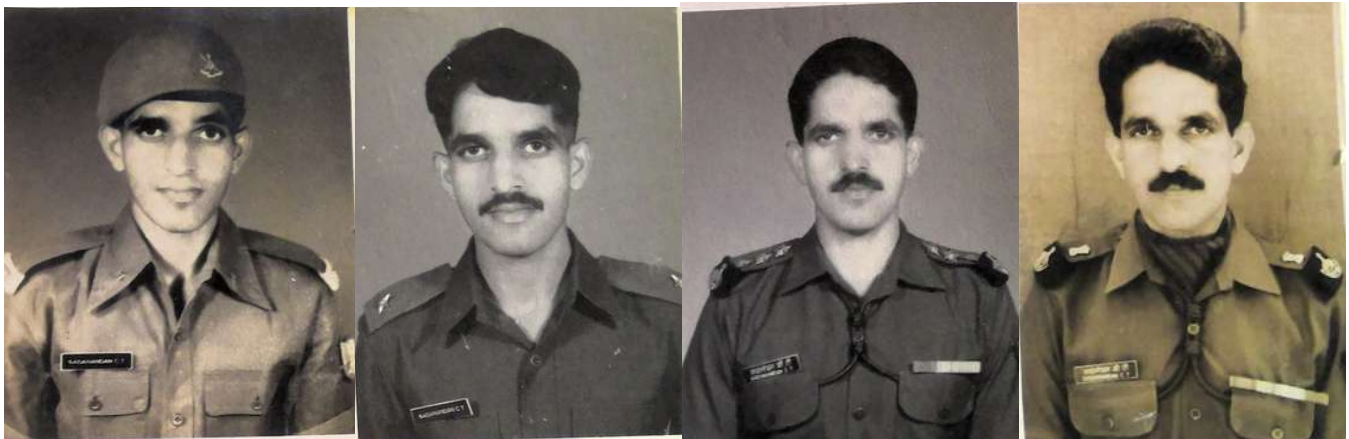
What preparation (or no preparation) you did?

My transition was in pre-internet era and being posted on the LoC added to the constraints. It was extremely difficult to reach out to the external world. All that one could do in the scenario was to send a basic CV to various known contacts in Mumbai and Delhi through post, which did not really evoke any encouraging response.

On being released from the Army in January 1995, I reached Mumbai and started looking for job opportunities. I was fortunate on two counts- first I had a relative who offered a place to stay and second I was lucky to have contacted a few senior managers working in the corporates who guided me on job applications, interview process and most importantly being realistic with expectations!

This initial guidance really helped me and I was able to do well in all the interviews and had four offers out of the six opportunities I pursued (all of them with very reputed organizations) in a month's time. I joined my first corporate job as a Personnel Manager in a well known, growing IT Company in February 95.

From my experience, I would say the most important first step in preparation for the transition is the mindset shift – that you are attempting something new and unknown and be patient. One needs to keep your family engaged stay optimistic and positive. Before applying for any job check the details of the organization, the role offered and location of work- go fully prepared for interviews.



The Transformation Through the Uniform

What was the outcome of the Transition?

As mentioned I had four job offers, one better than the other within a month of my release -it was actually a problem of plenty. In about three years I was able establish myself in the business environment and get few references for new opportunities. As one gets established in the corporate job, many opportunities will open up which needs to be evaluated thoroughly. My evaluation metric for all the job changes have been – what is in the new opportunity than what you already have- does it offer better learning opportunity, will it offer increased professional satisfaction – i.e.; will it help you create more value for the organization and your own self and will the job make you happy? I have used these evaluation questions before moving all the job changes – and have never been disappointed.

What are you doing currently?

As mentioned in my bio – I am currently an established global corporate leader. I am in the advisory board for a business publication and technology start up. I am also a certified leadership coach. I am now preparing for the next phase in professional career wherein I will move out of a regular job and will work as an advisor /consultant in the industry and also as a mentor/coach for aspiring leaders and certainly those looking for military to corporate transition.

What Went Well in the Transition?

My initial transition went off smoothly – in spite of the limitations on modes of communication, availability of opportunities in the market in those years (1995) and not having any godfathers to take care of. I think my determination played a major role in overcoming the uncertainties. Getting timely and correct advice from the industry experts on the process of job search and how to prepare oneself to get selected in the process, really helped.



A Good Transformation Effects at New Jersey

Lessons Learnt:

- Be mentally prepared to start all over again- so earlier the better. Be flexible and adaptable.
- Keep the aspirations high – for that motivates you, but be realistic with what happens so moderate the expectations.
- Have a clear plan as to what you want to do, how and by when. Seek help where required.
- Leverage network -professional and personal to help find opportunities. In the hyper connected technology world this is easily doable

- Ensure you have enough safety net – financially and socially -to take care of the turbulence during the transition period, which could be longer than what you have planned.
- Many leadership and personal qualities that you pick up from the army service does help you in the career path in the corporate, position that well in your resume and during interactions. Highest level of integrity and ethics is top in my list. Adaptability is the key.
- One needs to equip self with the skills that are required in the market – so there is a need to continuously upgrade your skills to stay relevant- an any industry/work stream that you may join. Continuous learning is the key – keep a child like curiosity to learn always and from everyone. Many of the basic practical lessons you can learn from the junior most person (by role or designation) in an organization- don't let your ego come in the way of learning
- Old school buddies and cronyism does not really work well in the long term. If you want to build a strong professional reputation which helps one have a long successful career, go for it yourself. Your reputation travels faster than you!
- Your passion, commitment and dedication will certainly help you succeed and progress – however building strong teams who can help you realize the dreams is equally important. A leader who is fair, unbiased and who provides an enabling and facilitating work environment for the team members, which helps them to learn and thrive gets into the higher trust levels from the teams and thus help you achieve your deliverables.



Vehicle Getting launched on same name as mine

If you were to redo the Transition all over again with all the wisdom and experience what would be different?

Yes, certainly. There are many things that I would can differently now leveraging the current hyper connected and technology driven world.

Conclusion

I have been very luck to have built two progressive and successful careers -first in the army and then in corporate. This has been possible with passionate personal commitment which has helped me achieve highest levels of professional competence and with the support from a large eco system of well wishers who connected me with the opportunities and enabled me with their value addition to me as a person and professional. I can be contacted at Mail - ctsadanand@gmail.com; Mob - 9223541875
LinkedIn profile - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ct-sadanandan-aka-cts-55689b1>



As a Speaker in one of the forum in Corporate



Maj CT Sadanandan was commissioned in Infantry in 1984. He had stint with 52 SAG (NSG), IPKF Operations and various appointments. He took PMR on 01 January 1995. Post that he has worked with different industry verticals in various organizations in India and the Middle East. Over the past two and a half decades plus in the corporate sector, he has been an Expert Panel member, including a panel on Bloomberg TV. He is currently an advisor to various industry work groups on workplace and future of work and a start up for workplace technology. He has had various Industry leadership awards. He has also authored one e-book *The Crisis Crucible* on managing crisis and *Sri Lanka Diary*, a summary of my Army Unit’s operational tenure in Sri Lanka. His interests include helping people enhance their competencies through coaching and mentoring, Volunteering and social work, walking & middle distance run, cross country long drives, travel and reading. Based in Mumbai for the past two decades.

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My Transition Journey

KEEP YOUR CHANNEL WELL DREDGED

BY KRISHNA RAJ

As the setting Sun took a plunge in to the haze hanging over the horizon of the sleepy town of Medhapattinam its port remains active to a silent hum. Gradually twilight turned to Dusk and the outline of Lighthouse, Gantry cranes of the port clung desperately on the silhouette against the sky. The aquamarine sea was calm but turning inky black underneath, with the Orange coloured master tug tugging at Merchant vessel, MV Crimson Minnesota the giant Panamax Coal vessel crept obediently in tow on an unseen line drawn on the blue water, lined on both sides by lighted buoys running towards the deep Turning Circle in harbour.



The Minnesota had sailed from Borneo two days back, Laden with Black Gold. Reaching the deep end outside the channel in sea the ship dropped anchor and waited for the Pilot to board the ship and guide it in to the narrow channel. The wizened old Pilot had been a captain of Merchant vessel for twenty long years and he took charge from the Captain of the vessel at the Bridge. Two tugs by the side and one behind, the Minnesota revved up to enter the narrow channel. Passing through a very narrow port channel 6 miles long into the Harbour, "Straight ahead"... aimed the pilot as he steered the giant of a bulk carrier vessel flying the flag of Liberia carrying an unbelievable seventy five thousand tons of Kalimantan steam coal into the narrow channel barely 30 meters to spare on either side belying the calm surface appearance of the harbour waters. As the shallow Tugs helps keep the massive vessel in the centre of the narrow channel one was drawn to the old William Turner painting of Steam boat and sail ship.



William Turner: The powerful steam tug is drawing the towering sail Battle ship into the disposed yard for breaking.

All was well till the 3 miles in point, then the Pilot felt the Minnesota Slow down in spite of good power. And the Harbour Master at port got a frantic call from the pilot on board - Slurry in the channel! The MV Minnesota moved steadily deeper into the channel and the soft slurring tends to reach the hull slowing down the mammoth ship. The pilot gets tenacious!

If the Minnesota got stuck the channel would be blocked for a very long time and the four ships in loading berths would be left stranded inside with Cargo, unable to move, causing catastrophic loss to the Port business facility. Then as MV Minnesota geared into full throttle the ship pulled free and came through much to everyone's relief and port survived again. Dredging started the very next day at the channel got cleared over a week. And the ships moved in and out of harbour bringing in huge VHC (vessel Handling Charge) advantage to the Port, well beyond Rs. One Crore per Panamax vessel.

As it enters the turning circle all 14 m deep, the rear tug holds back the juggernaut from losing control due to reverse thrust failure and go crashing into the loading vessels. A ship sunken in the turning circle – means curtains for the port and its best. There could be chance of the captain filling up the vessel arrival report negatively, the vessel handling charge may not come through fully cutting into the critical income of the Port.

Now, for those who came in late, '*slurry*' is a gooey substance that settles at the sea floor, a mix of sand vegetation and sea seashells. The Slurry that fills up crevices in the seabed are deposited by ocean currents near land as they swirl around with the current of water above. Dredging is an expensive exercise and Dreger ships are far and few between. Besides, they cost a King's-Ransom to take on hire; a day's dredging effort can run into crores of rupees. When the dredging of channel is overdue the ocean currents deposit slurry into the groove of the channel. Timely and proper dredging is the lifeline of port business. When the basic dredging is carefully carried out and the slurry is disposed off far away the ocean currents effect of depositing the slurry back into the groove in the ocean does not happen too soon.

Then as the adage goes and a harbour master knows... **Keep the channel well dredged.**

The analogy is not lost on the reader as to where we are getting at. As the veteran of the Services fields unchartered sailing in services can take him to the Belt of Doldrums – those sea bound would know that the Nautical term, the windless 'Belt of Doldrums' would many a times leave sail ships stranded for weeks at the end. The Aviators know it as the Intertropical Convergence Zone. (ITCZ).

Enter Vasco Da Gama - In medieval times, No sail – No sale!!

Stay like a well dredged Port Channel. As the saying goes keep your channel well dredged and you will have no issues in the core issues – You will attain depth, clarity, regularity, frequency, commitment, earnest effort and character!!

The corporate journey is one such journey where the more one keeps the channel dredged, the cleaner the flow of opportunities and options, if one is ready to move out with a special qualification; fine! If you are a normal soldier, then empower yourself with specific qualifications.

The first stop for the Soldier was an NGO where he joined as the senior-most employee and as General Manager reported to a Committee ensuring the enunciation of policies and implementation of all statutory norms. The matter was semi legal and more sportive at times as the NGO encouraged Golf as well as children sports. The management skills and norms of business took the soldier to another venture and that was a port. The Port is an eye opener of how beyond the visible spectrum of Sea, Quay, Channels, Cranes, Trains etc. the socio-economic spectrum of local muscle power, politics and Law interplay in the port townships puts a disciplined soldier much thru a crucible to come out unscathed. One is in-charge of Discipline where there may be none, one is in-charge of Work accountability where young employees have no intention of working. Politics have cooked people around the port in their own soup, and the soldier is expected to lend a sense of organization with Police help if necessary where even the police treads with care. The difference is that now you are not even armed.

The winds looked up and the sails were then filled with the easterlies. The soldier moved up North and then took on the role of administrator in one of the larger industries of India- Textiles. After agriculture and healthcare it is the Textile that calls the shots in India. How many in Uniform even heard of the DKTES Dattajirao Kadam Textiles education society - the most popular textiles education in India at Ichalkaranji near Kolhapur. The Mecca of Textile studies.

This is the Juncture where a bit of Legal knowledge, an LLB, some HR administrative qualification and some equipment familiarity would help. The education field being a vibrant one it can be presumed that Officers with their commendable IQ should be able to clear the UGC NET for professor grade and take on the Registrar, Pro VC line. Magellan of Portugal descent but Spanish hero forever, went around the world but himself did not return beyond Philippines. There is many a mile to go, Soldier! It is an ocean of knowledge and technology in numerous business verticals out there. You can be another Columbus and discover another America!



***Brig Krishna Raj Nambiar** was commissioned in 1987 into the Artillery, he opted for Aviation training, whereby he had extensive operational tenures in Arunachal, Nagaland & Ladakh including Siachen Glacier. After DSSC he was Grade 1 Operations officer in Sikkim. As CO he commanded 193 Medium Regiment in Kashmir valley. He was DS at Senior command Wing Army War College where he had the opportunity to be the coordinator for 'Decision Making Management sessions' with IIM Indore. While in service he completed PGD HR and LLB. He is also UGC NET cleared for professor grade. He took premature release in 2017 after commanding two Brigades. In corporate he has served one tenure as a General Manager of an NGO and two tenures as Vice President. He is presently a senior leader at a Port in South India.*

"DISCLAIMER: "THE ARTICLE IS A PROSAIC MANIFESTATION OF THE AUTHOR'S TRANSITION FROM THE MILITARY TO THE CORPORATE WORLD & THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ARE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL VIEWS"

My Transition Journey

MY M2C TRANSITION JOURNEY

BY SUMIT KUMAR BHAN

Hi Everyone,

I am currently working as the Program Manager & Delivery Lead in 'Digital Experience-Learning' team in Cognizant in Pune. I was a SS officer and did my transition after 5 years in Mar 2008.

The only preparation/ hope was to get into a good job after the 6 month resettlement course at XLRI. I was lucky to get the course in Jan 2008. In the hindsight it was foolish to get into civic street with no preparation. However once I was in XLRI, I started my preparation from the onset. Infact I realized between studying and preparing for the next job, I would prioritize the latter. I became part of PlaceCom at XLRI. This helped me get a connect with the corporate world and how they look at Fauzis. This helped me to prepare myself for the expectations of the corporate world.

Being part of PlaceCom and interacting with companies helped me look at us (fauzis) from recruiters perspective as well. The responsibility to get maximum (if not all) people placed taught us to look at the common value each of us bring irrespective of age, experience , arm or service we come from. I was lucky to be placed in Tata Interactive Systems before the course finished.



Then and Now

Lessons learnt:

- Please keep your stars (Rank) aside when you enter civil street. The value you bring is the only criteria that will determine how you do outside.
- Be honest and transparent in your dealings with recruiters.
- Your experience and expertise needs to be presented to outside world in the language they understand, not what you speak/understand.
- Start making professional contacts or Networking as they call it in corporate world.
- Do not decide your stream and work towards that rather than thinking that I am capable of everything. This would make decision process difficult when you are at cross road.

I feel I was lucky that all the factors went in my favour when I left Army. If I had to redo the transition, it would certainly be different. I would be better prepared in terms of right certifications and industry knowledge.



Capt SK Bhan Got commissioned in 510 Lt AD Msl Regt (SP) from OTA Chennai in 2003 and was posted in 58 RR in the last 2 years of his short service tenure. He did his Cert. in Business Management from XLRI Jamshedpur in 2008. He got placed through campus in Tata Interactive Systems in Project Management domain. After that he had the privilege of working for Indian Bank and Genpact, before joining Cognizant. He is currently based out of Pune working for Cognizant.

"DISCLAIMER: THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ARE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL VIEWS"



“Start thinking and planning now for what you’ll do after taking off the uniform.”

My Transition Journey

A Naval Communicator's Tale

BY V SRIVATSAN

I joined the Indian Navy, back when the posters read: "Join the Navy, See the World". It was as catchy a slogan as could possibly be seen. However, despite a large cross-section of the populace rubbishing it as a marketing gimmick, it played out to be rather truthful for me. Between Jul, 1986 when I joined the Naval Academy at Goa after graduating in Mathematics Hons from Delhi University, till I hung up my 'still not worn-out boots' in Oct 2008, I had visited a sizeable number of countries worldwide, and had achieved a near saturation in our proximate neighbourhood countries of SEA. My journey into the civvie street therefore, had an additional flavour of 'widely travelled', multi-culturally exposed, internationally experienced, and possessing multinational cultural alignment et al. I never realised that the Naval poster at the major intersection to my college would fetch me such rich dividends, well into my future. With that backstory, let me get you all engaged with the actual, operative portion of this article.

Background:

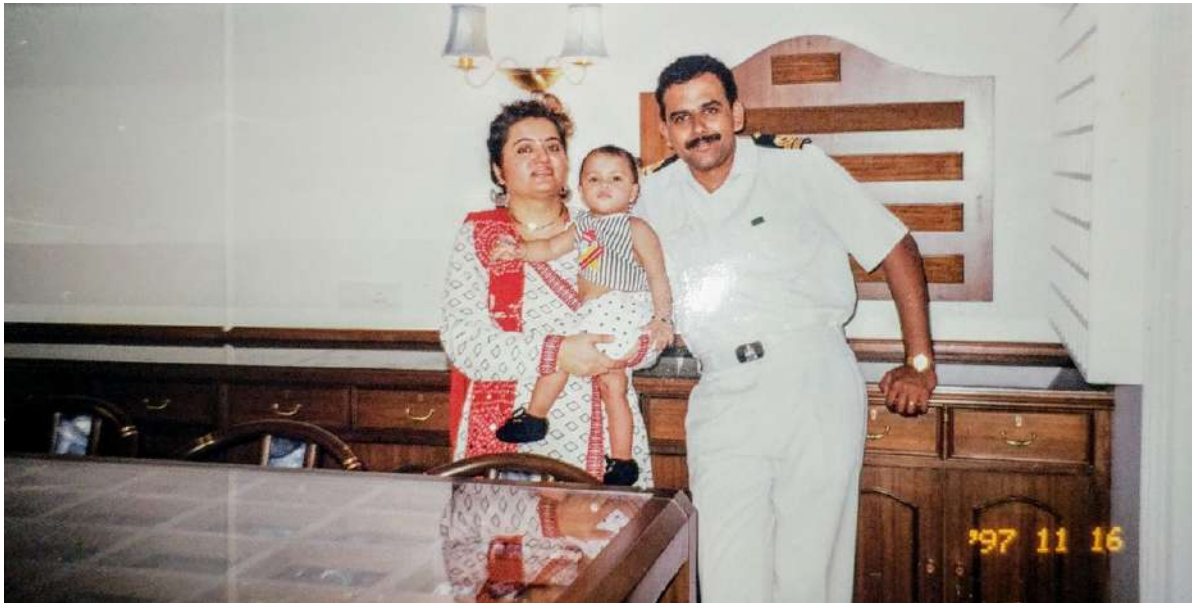
The year was 2000. A career naval officer [Communications Branch] with a fairly decent future in the Navy suffered a fall in the ship, and after a prolonged hospitalisation (almost 100 days) discharged in Low Medical Category with a severe spinal issue. Prospects of ever regaining the top medical category were always bleak.



Now and Then

Even if restored, I would have missed most of buses for career advancement. So, one can say in hindsight of course, that I had a providential 'crystal ball' to gaze into - that my days in the Navy were numbered.

With efforts on all fronts, I regained my full medical category in mid-2005. By which time of course, the career bus had moved to an altogether different route, and I was a mute bystander. Since I knew well in advance that I needed to bide my time till reaching pensionable service, I utilised it in making myself "market ready".



With wife & daughter onboard INS Delhi, Nov 1997 (the day after the ship's Commissioning) at Mumbai.

Preparation:

As with any military plan, I carried out a detailed SWOT Analysis/Appreciation/Pareto Analysis etc. etc. (pick any jargon which pleases your fancy and/or fulfils the purpose). Following were the steps I adopted commencing early/mid-2002: -

- **Speaking to friends/family in the Civvy Street:** To gain a perspective on the ideal preparation time-span, freezing timelines for implementing the same, gap analysis in respect of knowledge, skill, certification etc. Additionally, identifying the niche area where I could gain access through existing acumen, ability and proclivity. If YOU are not interested in the job that you WANT to do, then no organisation can make you.
- **Speaking to Veteran Fraternity:** Invaluable advice gathering happened through these interactions. Each veteran had a story to tell - some interesting, many boring, and still more of them castigating the 'civilian' mindset - despite being one themselves.
- **Speaking to Head Hunters:** For obvious reasons, this was one of the most vital cogs in the resettlement/retirement/re-employment wheel. They are undoubtedly a font of knowledge and provide in-depth POV on focus areas, industry dynamics & the attendant hiring trends etc.

- **Speaking to Industry Leaders:** One of the most illuminating and revealing interactions that helped in understanding my true worth as a veteran, what the industry generally thinks of us, what we are getting hired for, how to approach the same, what truly makes a difference during the entire hiring process etc.
- **Reading, Researching, Analysing and Rediscovering:** These exercises were carried out post major interactions – both the useful as well as the not-so-useful ones. This helped me to understand deeply what’s going to click for me, and what isn’t.



Representing IN at the ASEAN Maritime Security Cooperation Conference 2016 @Kochi.

Outcome:

As a result of all the preparations, I undertook the following academic-oriented courses to further my prospects for the future: -

- **MBA with a specialisation in International Marketing & Finance:** We Faujis have minimal understanding of Marketing, Sales, Corporate Finance and the various regulations around it. Hence dedicated myself to covering this knowledge gap through a distance learning MBA @SIMS, Pune.
- **Masters in Information Systems Management:** Looking at the trend extant at that time, and dovetailing it with my core competency in the Fauj [of being a naval communicator] decided to undertake this industry-led course on offer through AIMA, New Delhi.
- **PG Diploma in Human Rights:** Kept one of the options as a future job with the UN. Hence invested in it through the University of Hyderabad.
- **MSc Telecom:** The IN offered a lateral entry MSc degree through the Cochin University of Science & Technology [CUSAT]. Definitely worth it to invest in the effort to obtain this Masters (which I found out later).

I purposely gave the DGR Course a miss because it was during my retirement timeframe that the course had got introduced, and in the words of a very wise CEO:
“Vatsan, I am sure you knew longer than in the last year of your service that you are planning to quit or superannuate. So, what does it tell me about you that you invest only the last six months before joining the corporate world at the age of whatever, and expect a commensurate salary for a role for which you are competing with people much younger than you? And what can a 6-month course teach you beyond some broad-brush corporate / private sector theory & practices?”

All these were accomplished in the 2003-2008 timeframe. Come 31st Oct 2008, I was ready for the world. **AND THEN THE FINANCIAL MELTDOWN HAPPENED!!!**

Initial Experience:

Before 01st Nov 2008, I held 3 confirmed offer letters from prospective employers (as I had indicated during all my interviews that I would be joining only from 01st Jan 2009 – in order to resettle my family). Two more offers were at different stages of finalisation (almost confirmed). By the first week of Nov 2008, however, the world came crashing down – as ALL the offer letters stood withdrawn due to the global meltdown. I hit a personal sub-prime crisis wondering if I had sold myself short by trying to enter the job market as a fresher at the ripe age of 42. This all-pervasive self-doubt started playing out even during subsequent interviews & interactions. Long story short, it took me another 4 months before I could join a job of my liking & choosing.



At the Mobile World Congress, Barcelona representing Flytxt BV (Mar 2017).

Lessons Learnt:

- Be very clear why & when you are leaving the service. Your preparations cannot be subject to a largesse of the DGR. Accordingly, turn the clock backward & start the planning.
- There are enough hours in the day even with a full-time job to undertake academic pursuits or such other specialisations/certifications etc that would be demanded from your future job. Don't make excuses to yourself not to pursue those.
- Hang-up the uniform when you retire. Don't carry the pips/epaulettes to the Civvy street. The prospective CEO might even be half your age. He/she will certainly give you respect, but not necessarily employment (unless you bring something unique to the table).
- Stop adopting the approach of 'one shoe fits all'. No CV is perfect or tailor made for you. You need to invest yourself in it. At any given time, you would need upwards of 6-8 CVs – especially if you're aiming for a general-list position. The CV not only must speak for you, but even sing at times. It has to be made 'music to the ears' of the recruiter/hiring manager. I won't belabour the point any further here because there is actually no hard-sell except doing it yourself.
- For those retiring at the age of 42-43 and later, broadly speaking, there are two routes to getting hired. First is through the HR/Head Hunter, and second through networking. Both follow very different trajectories, and duration of hiring cycles. The former needs to see the keywords/key skills which you put out in your CV, whereas the latter needs to see your temperament/aptitude/ability to relate to the senior echelons – across geographies & nationalities etc (refer to my statement in the opening para, which stood me in good stead).



Dubai Airport encounter with the walking-talking dictionary

- Be aware of the general hiring cycles in the domain/industry you are targeting (at least the thumb rule). This is super critical for planning your approach. If you're not aware, you can end-up sounding ignorant/desperate/casual/demanding et al. There are quite a few organisations which have over 5-6 or at times 8 rounds of interviews / interactions (Google/Accenture were in the 6-7 bracket back then).
- A Head Hunter [even the established ones] will find it hard to place you with a reputed organisation in a general-list role. Be prepared/willing to get your hands dirty and learn the ropes of business. Even in a top-tier organisation, the competition is with people much younger to you. So, prepare your story which will be compelling (without it being boring). Therefore, the alternative to getting hired thru HR, is through networking.
- Network hiring works rather differently than the HR route. Here the Influencer decides where you can get placed in the organisation, and the HR will then attempt to make it happen accordingly. In the former route, however, the HR is aiming to place the right & best-fit candidate against an open position within a defined budget & timeline. All these factors play into where, when and at what salary you get placed in the organisation. There can be identical positions with completely different hiring methodology, and outcomes. Should not be cause for heartburn or elation. Ultimately, it's how you have played your cards that matters.
- Don't undersell yourself. All too often we do not understand the salary structure, and take a long time to grasp things like CTC, ESOPs, Fixed/Variable etc. You'll do a great amount of disservice to yourself & your family if you don't carry out your due-diligence and negotiate hard before the final hiring. This brings me to the next point.
- Learn/Teach yourself the Art of Negotiations. As Faujis we are often reluctant to ask and seek information, and therefore make certain basic assumptions & reach wrong conclusions. This stems from the fact that we aren't very good at negotiations. Especially with HR, one should be fairly 'ruthless' where it concerns our own interest & financial well-being. This is also the place where you highlight your various achievements/awards/qualifications/certifications etc, and seek appropriate compensation for the same. Any Hiring Manager's / HR Head's claim to fame is if he/she can close the position at less than the budgeted figure, and get an accomplished professional like you to boot. Drive a hard bargain for what you are WORTH.
- People are wary of hiring such senior folks like a 42/43-year-old veteran. Either you are too senior for them to employ gainfully, or they apprehend that you would leave the organisation prematurely due to inadequate use of your abilities, disinterest or plain ennui.

The Switch That Helped

Before proceeding further with the journey, there is an important pit-stop one needs to take. This is very essential – especially for those transitioning after a couple of decades (and often more) in uniform. This totally, entirely, and completely relates to the mental switch one needs to undertake. Or in the lexicon of the IT professionals – a

mental reboot. It may mean different things for different people, but I will try and give it a broader definitional connect so that anyone at any stage of transition can identify and/or relate to it, and suitably modify it for their respective situation. Again, this is MY learning, coping technique, and may not be applicable seamlessly to anyone else/everyone (again harping back to succumbing to the one-shoe-fits-all syndrome): -

Make mental preparations for hanging-up the uniform (whatever may be your personal reason(s) for doing so). This includes and is not limited to identifying and accepting the right decision for quitting. I say this because I myself carried a certain mental baggage that “I didn’t make it in the Navy”. At times it angered me, it upset me, it disappointed me, and even made me sad & frustrated. Overcoming it is critical to facing the rigors of “selection” all over again in an unfamiliar and unknown territory/domain/bosses/peers etc. And the sooner you get it out of the way, the better you will put your mental self. “How to do it” is again prescriptive, and all I can state is: Whatever floats your boat, Mate (pun intended...because can’t help the nautical reference...what with me being a sailor & all that).

At the expense of sounding repetitive, I will still stress that mental preparation is essential for making a successful transition, and some of the other key factors to consider are [some points may be repetitive - both for emphasis as well as relevance]:



Jan 2023 at Vizag onboard INS Delhi on the occasion of Silver Jubilee of Commissioning (gifted memorabilia to the present Commanding Officer flanked by the Commissioning CO & Cmde Kesnur, my boss at that time)

1. **Mindset Shift:** A mindset shift is necessary when transitioning from the military to the corporate world. The military operates on a chain of command, and the civilian world operates differently. It's important to adjust your mindset to embrace a new way of doing things. Here are some important factors to consider: -

- **Embrace change:** The transition from the military to civilian life involves significant change. Embrace the change and be open to new experiences and opportunities.
- **Focus on strengths:** Recognize your strengths and the skills you have developed in the military. Focus on how these skills can be applied to civilian jobs.
- **Be adaptable:** Be prepared to adapt to new environments, job responsibilities, and cultures. Recognize that not everything will be the same as it was in the military.
- **Develop a growth mindset:** Develop a growth mindset that focuses on learning and development. Recognize that mistakes and failures are opportunities to learn and improve.
- **Learn to market yourself:** Learn how to market yourself and your skills to potential employers. Understand what employers are looking for and how your skills match their needs.
- **Build a civilian network:** Build a network of civilian professionals who can provide insights into the industry, job opportunities, and career advice.
- **Seek out mentors:** Seek out mentors who can provide guidance and support during the transition process. Look for mentors who have successfully made the transition from the military to civilian life.
- **Practice self-care:** The transition process can be stressful and challenging. Practice self-care activities such as exercise, meditation, or hobbies to help manage stress and maintain a positive mindset.
- **Stay motivated:** Stay motivated and focused on your goals. Set realistic goals and take steps to achieve them.
- **Stay positive:** Maintain a positive attitude and outlook. Recognize that the transition process may take time and effort, but with the right mindset and preparation, you can successfully transition to civilian life.

2. **Networking:** Networking is crucial in the civilian world. Building a professional network can help you make connections, find job opportunities, and learn about the industry you want to work in.

3. **Job Search Skills:** Learning job search skills is necessary when making a career transition. This includes creating a resume, networking, and interviewing skills. Points which come to mind are: -

- **Create a resume:** A well-written resume is essential when looking for a job. Make sure your resume highlights your skills, experience, and accomplishments in a clear and concise way.

- **Networking:** Networking is a key part of the job search process. Attend industry events, join professional organizations, and reach out to people in your network to learn about job opportunities and gain insights into the industry.
- **Develop interviewing skills:** Interviewing skills are crucial when seeking employment. Practice answering common interview questions and prepare stories that highlight your experience and skills.
- **Research the industry:** It's important to research the industry you want to work in to understand the job market, required skills, and potential employers. Use online resources, attend industry events, and speak with people in the industry to gain insights.
- **Identify job opportunities:** Use job search engines, industry job boards, and company websites to find job opportunities that match your skills and experience. In addition, do the following: -
 - **Identify your skills:** Take inventory of your skills, experiences, and accomplishments from your time in the military. This could include leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, communication, and technical skills.
 - **Translate your skills:** Translate your military skills and experiences into civilian terms that employers can understand. Use language that is relevant to the job you are applying for and highlight how your skills match the job requirements.
 - **Focus on results:** Highlight the results of your actions and accomplishments, rather than just the tasks you performed. Show how you made a positive impact in the military and how those skills can transfer to civilian jobs.
 - **Research potential careers:** Research potential civilian careers that align with your skills and interests. Use online resources, speak with people in the industry, and attend career fairs to gain insights.
- **Tailor your application materials:** Tailor your application materials, including your resume and cover letter, to each job you apply for. Highlight the skills and experience that match the job description and requirements.
- **Develop a personal brand:** Develop a personal brand that showcases your skills, experience, and values. This could include creating a professional website, building a social media presence, or writing a blog.
- **Practice persistence:** Finding a job can take time and effort, so it's important to stay persistent. Continue to apply for jobs, follow up with potential employers, and seek feedback on your application materials and interview performance.
- **Consider additional education or training:** In some cases, additional education or training may be necessary to be competitive in the job market. Consider pursuing certifications or degrees to boost your skills and knowledge.
- **Build confidence:** The job search process can be challenging, but it's important to maintain confidence in your skills and abilities. Focus on your strengths, seek feedback to improve your weaknesses, and maintain a positive outlook.

4. Education: In some cases, you may need additional education to be competitive in the job market. Consider pursuing certifications or degrees to boost your skills and knowledge. Other modes are: -

- **Volunteer or intern:** Consider volunteering or interning in your desired industry to gain practical experience and make connections. This can help you build your resume and demonstrate your commitment to your desired career path.
- **Seek out veteran-friendly employers:** Some employers actively seek out veterans for employment opportunities. Research companies that have a history of hiring veterans and that offer veteran-friendly programs and benefits.
- **Attend career development workshops:** Attend career development workshops and training sessions to develop your job search skills, learn about industry trends, and gain insights into the job market.

5. Flexibility and Adaptability: The civilian world is fast-paced, and you need to be flexible and adaptable to succeed. Be willing to take on new challenges and learn new skills.

6. Mental Health: Transitioning from the military to the civilian world can be stressful. It's essential to take care of your mental health by seeking support, engaging in self-care, and maintaining a positive outlook. This may include, but not be limited to: -

- **Seek support:** It's essential to seek support from family, friends, or a mental health professional. The transition can be stressful, and talking to someone can help you manage your emotions and feel more connected.
- **Engage in self-care:** Self-care is essential for maintaining good mental health. This includes getting enough sleep, eating well, exercising, and practicing relaxation techniques such as meditation or yoga.



Conducting a workshop on CVM (Customer Value Management) for the MTN Group senior executives @Kampala, Uganda Jan 2015

- **Stay positive:** It's easy to get discouraged during the transition, but it's important to stay positive. Try to focus on the opportunities and possibilities that lie ahead, rather than dwelling on the challenges.
- **Take things one step at a time:** The transition can be overwhelming, so it's essential to take things one step at a time. Break down your goals into manageable tasks and celebrate each success along the way.
- **Stay connected:** Staying connected with other veterans it can help you feel supported and understood. Consider joining a veterans group or attending events to stay connected with others who have shared similar experiences.
- **Seek professional help if needed:** If you're struggling with your mental health, it's important to seek professional help. This could include therapy, medication, or other forms of treatment.
- **Manage stress:** Stress is a natural part of the transition, but it's important to manage it effectively. Identify your stress triggers, and find healthy ways to manage them, such as exercise, meditation, or talking to a friend.
- **Give yourself time:** The transition takes time, and it's important to give yourself time to adjust. Be patient with yourself, and don't expect everything to fall into place immediately.
- **Maintain a sense of purpose:** It's important to maintain a sense of purpose and direction during the transition. Set goals for yourself, and work towards achieving them. This will help you stay focused and motivated.
- **Stay flexible:** The transition can be unpredictable, so it's important to stay flexible. Be open to new opportunities, and don't be afraid to change course if necessary.

7. Communication Skills: Communication skills are crucial in the civilian world. You need to be able to communicate effectively with colleagues, clients, and customers.

8. Leadership: Your military experience has equipped you with strong leadership skills. Use these skills to lead and motivate teams in the civilian world.

9. Teamwork: Teamwork is essential in the civilian world. Learn to collaborate effectively with colleagues and work towards common goals.

10. Time Management: Time management is critical in the civilian world. Develop effective time management skills to meet deadlines and prioritize tasks.

From personal experience, I am listing below some common reasons why I feel, veterans may struggle to transition to civilian employment: -

- **Lack of clarity about career goals:** Many veterans may not have a clear understanding of what career path they want to pursue after leaving the military. Without a clear goal, it can be difficult to know where to focus job search efforts.
- **Difficulty translating military skills to civilian language:** The military uses its own language and terminology that may not be easily understood by civilian employers. This can make it challenging to communicate the value of military skills and experiences to civilian employers.
- **Limited civilian job market knowledge:** Veterans may not be aware of the various job opportunities that exist in the civilian sector, which can limit their job search and career prospects.

- **Lack of network:** A strong professional network is critical to finding job opportunities and advancing a career. Veterans may not have a civilian network that can help them find job opportunities and make connections in their desired industry.
- **Difficulty adjusting to civilian work culture:** The military has its own unique work culture, which can be vastly different from the civilian workplace. Veterans may struggle to adjust to the differences in work culture, communication styles, and management practices.
- **Underlying mental health challenges:** Many veterans struggle with PTSD and other mental health challenges that can make the transition to civilian employment more difficult.
- **Physical disabilities or injuries:** Some veterans may have physical disabilities or injuries that limit their job opportunities or require accommodations in the workplace.
- **Limited education or training:** Some veterans may not have completed higher education or training that is required for certain civilian careers, which can limit their job prospects.
- **Age discrimination:** Some employers may discriminate against veterans based on their age or military experience, which can make it difficult to find employment.
- **Lack of support:** Without the right support systems, such as career counselling, mentorship, and job placement services, veterans may struggle to navigate the job search process and find meaningful employment.

Career Trajectory (post-retirement):

- Joined a telecom software company as Head of Implementation & Support Services. Mandate was to set-up the organisation comprising over 130 technical executives, put in place a robust KPI-based support organisation, and increase the AMC revenue from software sales. Held this position for 2 years.
- Moved to Operations Head of their Middle East & North Africa region. Primary mandate was to improve the sales pipeline, and most importantly pull up the CSAT [Customer Satisfaction] scores of the region as it was pulling down the entire company's score. Held this position for 2 years.
- Internally, pitched for a pure Sales role. Managed to corner the company's biggest client and headed the Sales Organisation for over 1.5 years.
- Got headhunted by a Dutch software company to head-up sales of Middle East, Africa & Europe and based out of Dubai. Reluctantly hung up my boots after 3.5 years and returned to India. Successfully made a fledgling \$2.5Mn account/region into something in excess of \$11Mn in sales.
- Turned an entrepreneur since 2019, and been the CEO of a niche Data Analytics company.



My Afghan partner and his Emirati representative @Dubai, Jan 2019

Conclusion:

- Each of us is unique, but there are also a lot of commonalities amongst the Fauji brethren. But when it comes to job search and employability, each has to choose and plan individually.
- Frustration, disappointment, angst, high, low etc all are a part & parcel of this journey. A well-planned exit will go a very long way in ensuring that your job-hunting techniques are honed commensurately.
- Prepare (qualifications), prepare (CVs), prepare (for interviews). None of it is an expense – not even the midnight oil that you might burn. It is an investment in and for yourself.
- Identify what you would love to do. Act accordingly.
- Decide if you want a second career or just a second salary to augment your pension. Your approach should then match this requirement.
- It is a specialised world out there. In fact, in this new world of entrepreneurship and free enterprises, the traditional concepts & principles of management are vastly transformed. You would be better served to attune yourself to the latest management/corporate realities rather than being caught in a time warp. Consequently, your armoury too needs to be uplifted through appropriate upskilling/certification and the like.
- Be prepared to get your hands dirty. Even the junior most individual in your organisation might know more technically than you do. Don't feel ashamed to face up to your ignorance. Pretensions can take you only thus far. Come to think of it, what worked very well for me was wearing my ignorance on my sleeve.

- Be humble. Be firm. Be tough. There is absolutely no need to wear your erstwhile rank, or engage in story telling of the days of glory (unless it is an engagement tool and used sparingly).
- Learned very early that, civilians in different nations across the world view ex-military folks differently - from healthy respect to disdain/contempt & even scorn. One has to be extremely judicious in using one's title & rank.
- There ain't no shortcuts & none are expected to be taken by you coming from the Fauji background. Discipline, punctuality, proper deportment, sensitivity, integrity etc are all a GIVEN. Show ample examples of it in your daily conduct. This is one of the lowest hanging fruits out there, and you'll find that folks soon gravitate towards you for your impartiality, acumen in interpersonal relationships, advice, sagacity and the like. Leverage all these.
- Never cross THE line - be it financial, cultural, hierarchical etc. Keep yourself above pettiness & politics.
- Keep your ears close to the ground, eyes wide open, nose open to smelling out dirt, and mouth judiciously shut. You will go a long way.



Cdr V Srivatsan was commissioned in the Indian Navy's communication branch in year 1988. Post his Navy tenure he has worn different hats, a Mathematicaphile turned Naval Officer turned Software Sales Executive turned Entrepreneur. in different geography of the globe. He Loves studying, writing poetry and public speaking. His aim is to complete visiting the balance 4 countries which are pending by 2025, to complete a century of foreign country visits.

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My Transition Journey

My Transition Journey

BY MEENA ARORA

I am a Clinical Psychologist, Life Coach and NLP Trainer. I officially practice in two hospitals and a clinic of my own. I take both online and offline sessions. Clients seek my counselling sessions from many parts of the globe.

I am an author with National Book Trust of India, conduct trainings, guest lectures, group and personal sessions in colleges, schools and corporates. I also design “Workshops” according to the individual and organization’s requirements.

None of our journeys start on a particular day, but definitely on the day we start thinking differently. My journey commenced when I got commissioned in the Indian Air Force on 18 December 2004. As a freshly posted fighter controller, I was all set and prepared to conduct my specialised work as my job description laid out for me. But unexpectedly, due to various service requirements, I was put in command of more than 200 men, who varied in age from 17 to 56 years, and I was barely 23 yrs. old at that time. It was then that I realized that working religiously on my core competencies was not enough. I had additional responsibilities of care and accountability of my men.

As I took charge, I could see in a larger picture, that the motivation levels of worthy manpower were quite disheartening. It was understandable that the work and performance stress in the armed forces was immense. That further led to various health issues, family and financial problems, to the extent, that few had started contemplating on changing their career. Amidst all this, it was evident that they could not exhibit their full work potential.

That situation gave me an opportunity to figure out the path to redirect and reset a person’s mind to get the best work output. So, most of the time, despite many personal and professional pitfalls, my men started to get highly motivated to work with me. They even used to discuss and get solutions to their family and parenting problems. People from diverse backgrounds and cultures came to me for venting out their suppressed and pent-up issues. Such continuous sessions paved a way to my deep interest in human behaviour and psychology.

But this clarity did not come to me that easily. As I was nearing the date of completion of my short service commission, I wanted to be very sure about my next career plan. I consulted Ex-Service Officers, met cousins and friends in corporates and other companies, explored DGR and contractual jobs. I studied voraciously. I did LLB (Law) and courses like Coaching Skills Certifications on different people’s advice.

During Business Management Certification from MDI Gurgaon, I came across various other industry and corporate domains like HR, Facilities, Cloud Computing, Marketing, Service Providers, Administration, Data handling and much more. As my professional and academic expertise was in Remote Sensing and GIS, I was handling Imagery Intelligence in the Indian Air force and DIPAC. So, I was also looking for jobs in Location Based Systems. I had listed the related companies, colleges, and universities. I was actively attending seminars by ERDAS and such companies and started writing related resumes.

But just like a subtle background music, my deep interest in understanding human behaviours kept playing. I was incessantly doing free sessions of coaching and counselling. I used to feel really satisfied if someone used to go with clarity after my sessions. Any feedbacks used to motivate me to study and explore this field more till maximum people derived insights and clarity. I kept enhancing my skills by learning Neuro Linguistics Programming, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Psychodrama and such other therapies.

While taking care of my two-year-old daughter, I couldn't go for any regular job. Still confused and unaware of my passion, I planned to open SSB coaching centre, give defence analysis talks on TV channels, be a motivational speaker, partner in chain marketing firms like Amway, Kangan water, and what not.

Obviously I couldn't involve my heart so well in any other field and my passion started surfacing. My clientele increased and even patients started coming to me. It was at that time in the year 2017 that I took admission in MA Psychology from IGNOU. I then did internships under various psychiatrists. They gave me exposure of many kinds of mental disorders and substance abuse. I loved spending time with patients. That officially got me into the profession of counselling. My passion was realised but turning it into a full-fledged profession was still very challenging.

My networking and entrepreneurial skills developed when I joined Forces Network. I met industry experts and mentors who guided me. I got my company "Insights" registered. I became an official content provider in colleges and institutions. I digitally created psychometric test for my patients and corporate seminars.

During COVID-19 first wave, I started providing free and low-cost counselling sessions on phone and video calls. This increased my clientele to other countries as well. Because of good networking, I got proposal from National Book Trust of India to co-author two books on concerns related to Covid 19. These books were used extensively for research purpose. Apart from networking, variety of courses and seminars to upskill myself, ForceNet mentors inspired me to create specialised training modules. As a result, my "Success Mantra Coach & NLP Trainer Program" was created that picked up very well in defence and civilian groups.

On personal front, I spend quality time with my family. I love exploring hobbies and activities with my daughter. I am a passionate baker and theatre artist. I also keep volunteering in NGO's and seeking spiritual recourse.

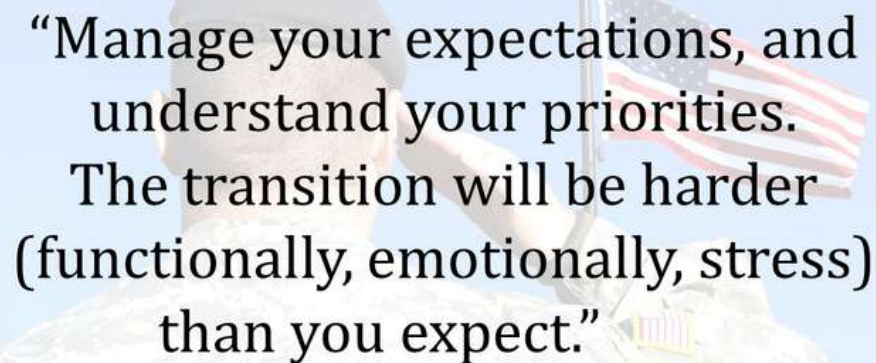
I would like to summarise my transition journey with few important pointers:

- Everyone has his/her unique journey, seek inspiration but never compare yourself with anyone.
- Realising your passion is one of the biggest steps you must cover, especially while thinking of your career in second innings.
- Keep enhancing and upskilling. Its never too late for any degree or certification. (I am presently pursuing PhD in Clinical Psychology)
- Be a part of good networks, seek company and advice from mentors, experts and consultants.
- Explore and enjoy life. Learn from every experience. As far as possible be happy and spread happiness.



Sqn Ldr Meena Arora has served in the Indian Air Force for ten years. Thereafter, she has devoted herself completely to counselling and training. She is a competent Life Coach, Counsellor & NLP Trainer. She takes Personal Sessions (One on one's) and conducts Workshops in Schools, Colleges and Corporates. She also associates with organizations in creating specific training content, customized presentations, videos and audios, especially, utilizing her knowledge and awareness of Psychology and Neuro Linguistics Programming.

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“Manage your expectations, and understand your priorities. The transition will be harder (functionally, emotionally, stress) than you expect.”



Visit www.Military-Transition.org for additional quotes and transition resources

My Transition Journey

The Journey With Many Faces

BY RAJESH NAIR

Background and Why? From being a Server Administrator in IT to going for the Army. One fine day, got hypnotised by the slogan "Do You Have It In You". It was a passionate decision to change the line and don the uniform. I had to fight with many in family for changing a comfortable life of Computers to an Unknown life of Olive. Accidentally I filled the SS entry (I avoided giving the maths paper). Being a hard core infantryman in the academy, I got the regiment of choice and in an intense CI environment. I was sure that I would continue for years in the regiment of my choice. However in the course of service, due to inappropriate handling I was soon made a category and declared unfit for infantry. At this stage I had two choices, being a SS officer leave after the stipulated bond time or move to the services and continue serving the forces. I chose the former. The decision was due to rage of not able to perform in the choice regiment and also due to the anger on being mishandled. I convinced myself that I was not destined for this life.



Now and Then

Approach and Preparation: I was confident that considering my past working of four years before Army in the IT sector I would land with a good job in the civil world. The confidence was due to the fact that I was performing very well in the IT before joining Army. However the timing was not good and neither the preparation. The General statement by seniors was, an Infantry officer is good for security profile only. A look at the software industry made me realise a lot has changed in the last six years. My skills & proficiency than, is obsolete now.

In those days there were no network group like Forces Network, which would have guided and prepared me for the outside world. Forces Network has been the guiding light for many years for officers who have been planning the transition to the outside world. A thing which I missed the most. Those weren't the whatsapp days either and connecting weren't any easier. So it would not be wrong to say there was NIL preparation for the transition, except the mind which was ready.

Outcome: I got the DGR resettlement course at MDI gurgaon. While it gave an insight into how a MBA course would be like, I personally didn't find it of much appealing from the resettlement perspective. The campus placement was not great either. 2008 being the great recession time, the market was calm and companies were hesitant to hire fresh faujis. There wasn't any support from the college either except providing their infra.

The course ended with no job in hand, I reached home without salary hitting the account that month, after 10yrs of continuous flow. Being the bread earner of the family it pinched and my morale was rock bottom. A scary time considering there was no pension from the service or assurity of getting a job. Job interview were limited, what ever I got, was through fauji reference. During this time I did followed the below:

- As suggested by few veterans in market, I was applying for any type of industry to get a security manager's job.
- I Kept applying for job through portal, newspapers adds and connects.
- Continue to do networking and speaking to veterans who were already in market, some were helpful while few gave cold shoulder.
- I Never lost the hope, thou morale was low.
- Researching about the companies for whom interviews were lined up was the pre preparation before interview.
- After every interview, would seek advice from seniors on question which were not well answered by me.

It was more than a month at home and almost two months without salary. During such a period, one day I got a call from an *Unknown Officer* asking if I landed with any job. My answer was a -ve, on which he asked, whether I would be interested in admin field with a night shift in Mumbai. Without a blink I said YES. And then the interview process started and almost a month later I joined an IT company under a fine gentlemen almost 14 yrs senior to me.

Career and Current Status:

- I Joined an IT company as a Transport Dy. Manager and got elevated due to my performance to lead one of the location in admin. Learnt a great deal of administrative work and most importantly learnt to become a civilian and deal with a team of civilians. Was taking care of Mumbai three location before I relocated to Pune with a R&D setup.
- Here I learnt the trades of manufacturing and R&D setup, handling PAN India locations. Culturally quite different from an IT setup here compliance, Union, HR and Infrastructure become my forte. With a boss who hated faujis, survival was the key, I also learnt the corporate cunningness and perfection from him.
- My next tenure was handling a campus location. Turning the campus into a cantonment was the task. Again under some of the best officers I learnt environmental, horticulture, Café and maintenance. Time management in civil and handling a diverse team was the gift from here.
- Opportunity again gave me an offer to join a new raising, where I was responsible to not only raise the admin function and its team but also brining it at a respectful level and build processes and polices.

After almost over 15years I have handled Administration in different industries and at different levels. Handling all the portfolio and becoming seasoned in the function. (have handled a diverse portfolio of admin due to the different industries I have served). Currently I am India Head Administration at one of the global Gas and Chemical company based out of Pune.



Speaking in an Industry Meet

Lesson Learnt: The transition made me struggle to get better networking and also had to struggle to learn without much guidance. My success attributes to those officers who had put in efforts and time to guide me and network with me. Few learnings:

- Networking is required for survival.
- Networking is also the way to learn.
- There is no alternative to hard work, irrespective of your level.
- Shed your ranks and your ego, it is a Waterloo.
- Every day and every job you have to start like the young Lieutenant started in his unit post training.
- Be grounded and be humble, that's the road to becoming a leader.
- Never stop learning even if it's from people Junior to you.
- Mentors are necessary to converge your journey in the civilian stream, a good mentor will ensure you learn and have a seamless transition.
- Having your course/academy bonding is necessary, however building relationship with your civilian world is also very important.
- Have a stress buster activity, a hobby or a passion it helps for becoming a thoroughbred.
- Research about the company, its culture, the management before the interview



At Forces Network Event in Pune with my buddy

I continue to help and share opportunities with brother officers who are in transition ways, a debt repay of the *Unknown Officer* who helped me 15yrs back and to continue the legacy of Brothers - in - Arms. My Buddy Uday Introduced me to Forces Network and subsequently joined the Editorial Team. Being the editor of the Forces Network magazine helping the veterans automatically increases.

What if? Thanks to Uday Shriwas I got associated with Forces Network. Being associated with Forces Network I was able to drive the zeal to help the veteran's community in shaping and showcasing their skills and journey. Had I got the opportunity to restart with better knowledge, the transition would have been much smoother and faster. I would have loved to move to technology and data and start a different line all together. However whatever happens is for good. My starting early would also mean my association with Forces Network would have started much before and would have helped to create more legacy and help many other officers to transform better in their life.

But I guess “*Better late than never*” and **No Regrets.**



Capt Rajesh Nair is from the 75th Course, OTA, and was commissioned into 14 Maratha Light Infantry. Post Army service, he has worked in the field of administration for more than a decade, having worked with companies in the IT, ITES, Manufacturing and Service Sectors. He is currently working with a global Oil and Gas company as India Lead for Administration and is based out of Pune.

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“Remember that
your family also
makes the transition
and it can be
difficult for them.”

MEMORIES

SS65 & WS11

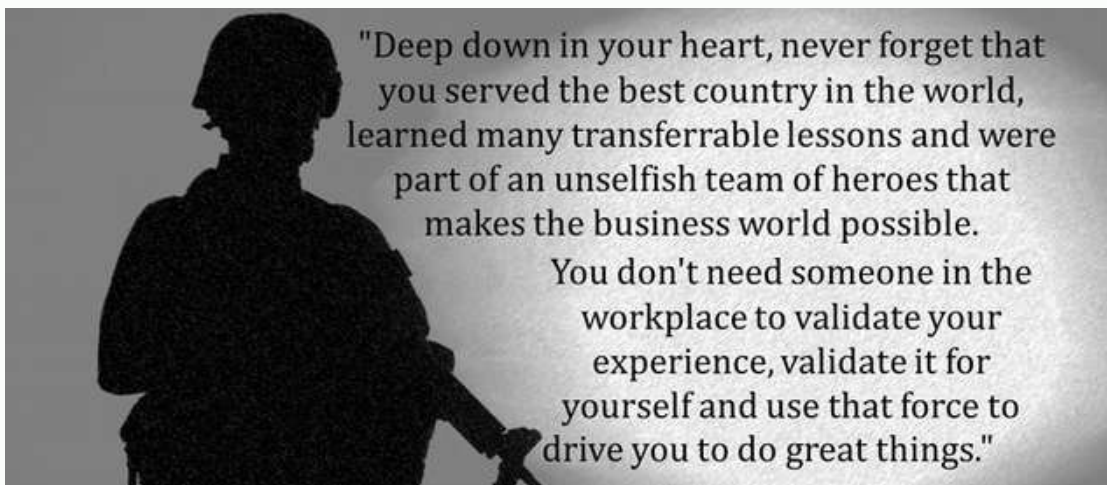
We have started with a new section, "Memories" to provide an outlet to showcase course Get-together for Anniversary celebrations. The rules for submission are It has to be course photography for anniversary celebrations.



**SS65 & WS 11 celebrating their 25th Anniversary at
Officers Training Academy, Chennai.
A Total of 83 Officers with Families Attended the same.**



Officers Meet in Pune



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