

AlumSpeaks

*In conversation with **Mr. Jaishankar Srinivasan**
Managing Director, Group COO at Deutsche Bank, Singapore
K J Somaiya Institute of Management Alum Batch 1992-94*



- 1. With an illustrious career of over 25 years, what has been the most memorable moment so far in your career?**
 - A. Joining a global team in 2000 was a great feeling and from thereon I have had many such moments. One of the most recent ones being promoted to Managing Director and being appointed as the COO Singapore, our biggest location in the region.

- 2. Deutsche Bank is one of the leading global providers of financial solutions. What do you think is the biggest strength of the company right now?**
 - A. The biggest strength of the company is resilience under stress. We have 150 years old history and since the industrial revolution, the WW I, WW II and the GFC (Global Financial Crisis), we have learnt to be resilient; albeit the hard way.

- 3. Deutsche Bank is running staff training sessions on building psychological immunity. Do you feel there is a need for banks to monitor and support staff morale in response to Covid19?**
 - A. The relationship between staff and the company is akin to student and teachers. The success of one will breed the success of another. We need to ensure that in times of crisis, we hold tight and not let go. We are responding actively, starting from East Asia and now around the world.

- 4. You have been associated with Deutsche Bank for 20 years now. What keeps you so committed to the company?**
 - A. The fact that there is recognition of skill talent has been a key of being committed to the company. The bank respects the association and I cherish it.

- 5. Having worked in the financial sector across various regions of Asia, what difference do you see in the work culture of India & elsewhere?**
 - A. I strongly believe that a lot comes from within. The biggest learning is when to escalate matters. The need to differentiate between ownership and escalation is the key. More often than not, in Asian markets escalation is seen as a sign of weakness which is seldom true.

- 6. As a key thought leader in innovation, culture and change leadership what lessons would you like to share with our readers?**
 - A. In my opinion, learning is lifelong, be it hard or soft skills. The more the exposure, the more is the understanding of one's abilities. It may sound clichéd, but it is said that "failure is the stepping stone to success." If you don't try and fail, you will never know what victory means.



- 7. Managing money in the middle of a pandemic is an unprecedented dilemma. Millions of people are facing a great deal of uncertainty about their job, monthly income, daily expenses, debts, retirement and cash savings. Would you like to advise something to our readers?**
- A. There is no silver bullet, we have to go through the pain and the worst is yet to come. We have already experienced huge challenges during the GFC. Eventually it was all about survival. The policy makers & decision makers are doing their best, but we cannot change the world overnight. I believe that the best thing to do right now is to focus on your core skills.
- 8. With the world being manoeuvred and controlled by technological advancements, do you think that banks and financial institutions will have to change the way they function?**
- A. We need to look at business models, processes and technological advancements holistically. An open mind would be a good way to start. Traditional banks have automated existing process, but with the onset of digital banks one needs to think whether we need any of the existing work flows. Going back to the drawing board would do no harm. Singapore & Hong Kong have started issuing digital bank licenses in a big way. The trend is growing rapidly, disruption is inevitable and it's important that we embrace it and learn.
- 9. What do you do when offline?**
- A. Over the weekends, I try and combine some good long walks with my wife; a good mix of health and happiness. I love my sport; I play tennis 2-3 times a week that keeps me active and pumped up.
- 10. If you have to relive your days at K J Somaiya Institute of Management, how differently would you like to live them?**
- A. I had a great experience in my two years; wouldn't want that to change any which way.
- 11. What are some of the significant learning you had in your two years at K J Somaiya Institute of Management?**
- A. A good mix of professional and personal learning - developing strong skills, understanding competition and building lifelong friendships.
- 12. What would be your advice for the students/young alumni who are starting their career?**
- A. Build strong basics and have an open mind. Your start has nothing to do with where you end; you need to build from here on.

Rapid fire questions

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| 1. Favourite hangout spot in K J Somaiya Institute of Management: Maggie - Tapri | 4. Favourite cuisine: Indian Chinese |
| 2. Favourite movie: Sholay | 5. Role model: MS Dhoni |
| 3. Favourite holiday destination: Alaska | 6. Success mantra: You define it |
| | 7. Word that describes you: Marathon Man |

Interviewed & drafted by: Shivanjali Kumar