

EXCERPTS FROM THE INTERVIEW OF

Mr. Sharad Gupta

Vice President & Group Head-Corporate Communications
Escorts Limited



Mr. Sharad Gupta shared with us the market mix based on AI which helps in achieving targets. He believes in moving ahead in the learning curve. He talked about his efforts to observe the trends and how it helped him to excel and mentor the team to step-up in their journey. For the farmers he discussed that through smart farming practices and mechanization they can reduce cost and increase profits. He highlighted his interest towards Industry academia collaboration for good research and innovation. At the end he gave suggestion to students to become multitasker and adopt time management through creative thinking.

Your association with Escorts India has been closing in for decade now, what all initiatives have you taken to match with rapid technological changes in the industry?

Every organisation evolves with time and need of the industry. Markets are dynamic and thus, it is mandatory to adapt to the latest and the benchmarked. At Escorts, we are adopting Industry 4.0/6.0 practices and digitized efficiency. Data insights, AI based go to market roadmap and offering enhanced customer experience is core to us and we are taking extra steps to be inline with the latest. Telematics and VR are also some of the areas that are been integrated in our processes and technology bundling. Mechanization is critical in smart agriculture and infrastructure growth, hence our main focus remains advance innovation.

Mr Gupta please explain how the right marketing mix can help brands achieve their targets, from your past experiences. And What all marketing strategies have you adopted to make Escorts a leading tractor brand to most trusted and profitable engineering companies.

Go To Market strategy is key for business growth but has several vehicles to ride on. It is imperative we use the right marketing mix based on Artificial Intelligence based data analytics. The first pivot remains research based opportunity mapping and strategic focus. Brand push and product push remains two distinct areas, one depends on aggressive visibility and the other on application excellence. The three phases of a benchmarked marketing mix is Build Customer Connection, Drive Business Performance and ensure evaluation & trials. Brand push will have to be a smart mix of Above The Line, Below The Line, Trade, PR & CRM based marketing communications for broader reach, optimum leverage of marketing spend and better ROI. Experiential Marketing is another emerging area finding an important space when it comes to innovative marketing to demonstrate, co-create content and connecting with the customer well.

What is the biggest leadership challenge you have faced till now and how have you dealt with it? Also share the learning out of it.

I will not call it a challenge but an imperative. We have to be always moving ahead in the learning curve which comes from real time exposure to various trends of marketing and industrial requirements. I have made conscious efforts to observe the trends, read global case studies of marketing excellence, listen to the global industry experts and participate in various MDP programs offering latest learnings in the trade from AI to Data. I personally feel, such efforts align you with the current dynamics and help you excel and mentor the team to step-up in their journey.

How Innovation in agricultural ecosystem can encourage farmers and make changes in their life?

Farmers have a limited earning post all the expenses incurred in the farming inputs for a better harvest. Thus, it is key for farmers to increase their income and learn the ways to reduce their input cost. That happens only through smart farming practices and mechanization in the farm. The farmers today need to access technology and information system to be abreast of all the intelligent farm mechanization trends. From technology and data based soil preparation, optimal fertilizers consumption and leverage, better output through smart implements, better understanding of technology based irrigation system for smart water management, weed control and various other ag-tech innovative methods can bring out the best of farm output and the enhanced productivity will yield better income for farmers. Drip Irrigation, ph controlled soil environment mapped to crops, sowing forecast methodology with AI weather monitoring are few of the popular practices that farmers are adopting for better results.

Is there any scope of tie ups between Escorts and academic institutions for the development of research and start-up accelerator programmes?

Absolutely. We are working with various academic colleges and universities in the field of agriculture, rail tech and construction technology innovation. Through Rajan Nanda Innovation Lab, we also identify and run innovation capsules to identify merit based start-ups and student ideas to be incubated with seed and proto funds. IC Square is one such program, where we have already supported various ideas commercially for their upscale. We do look forward to associate with academia to co-create innovation & excellence centres within the campuses for enabling students to process their ideas to solve fundamental challenges in farming and infrastructure.

You are always called as multi-tasker and believer in making things happen rather than waiting for things to happen, please give some guiding light to our young budding professionals.

My suggestion to all the young minds is to not think the usual but differential. I personally feel, we all have a purpose led existence and are committed to bring about a positive change in our professional and personal lives. Both requires multi-tasking as we need to adapt to smart time management through creative thinking.

Optimally leverage your potential and work on bringing out the best through exposing yourself to the benchmark industry practices and listening to the experts.

Be future ready by acquiring skills that will build the future.

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