

CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH MR. ASHOK RAO

Mr Ashok Rao served as the President of Automotive Axles Ltd. from November 1, 2002 to October 1, 2013. Mr Rao served as a Director of Operations at Automotive Axles. He was with MICO, Bangalore and worked in various capacities in Machine Design, Machine Building and Production / Process Planning. He served as a Whole-Time Director of Automotive Axles from 2001 to October 1, 2013. He is a Mechanical Engineer from Karnataka Regional Engineering College, Surathkal, with a Master's Degree in Manufacturing Engineering from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

INTERVIEW EXCERPTS

1. How do you maintain quality in your company?

Quality is very important; we make sure that we meet industry specifications. Customer is the king for us. We take their continuous feedback, understand their problems, and we make sure their expectations are met.

2. How are you able to maintain your market share in this competitive environment?

It is tough. But we are able to meet the customer demand by continuously engaging with them. We do not stick to a particular pattern, we are flexible and we change along with changing environment.

3. What is your point of view on business ethics? How important is ethics to you?

Business ethics is very fundamental. We face pressure from various fields. But ethics is by and large a reflection of leadership. It is difficult to be ethical all the time but it is doable.

4. What do you think are the key qualities you expect in an MBA graduate when you recruit them?

- Attitude
- Focus
- Ability to learn
- Extra effort put by them apart from curriculum
- Leadership ability
- Ability to differentiate from others

5. What is your take on leadership?

Leadership paradigm is changing. Today leadership is not only about leading but also enabling others in finding solutions.

6. What is entrepreneurship to you?

Entrepreneurship is very important in today's condition. We have enough opportunities in our country. Employment can be created by encouraging more people as entrepreneurs. Inequities like unemployment, poverty etc. can be resolved through entrepreneurship. We should encourage more people to take up this less trodden path.

7. What do you think are the good qualities of an entrepreneur?

- Leadership qualities
- Vision and passion to drive
- Innovative thinking
- Create needs to society

8. What is your advice for us?

Have vision driven by passion. Check your capabilities and grab the opportunity. Do SWOT analysis and have focus.