

Subhash Sethi

Vice-Chairman, Subhash Projects and Marketing Limited

A strong passion for work, a focus on innovation, an emphasis on commitment, and an ability to align with the team, these are the qualities for which Subhash Sethi, vice-chairman, Subhash Projects and Marketing Limited (SPML), is known. Like his idol, the late Dhirubhai Ambani, Sethi too believes that success comes through choice, not by chance. "Therefore whatever I do, I give it my best," he says.

After completing his education 1981, he started his career by entering the family business of manufacturing pumping machinery and the construction of pumping stations in Guwahati. Later he was part of the company team responsible for expansion into water, environmental management, power and infrastructure development.

"While many people may not approve of family-run businesses, in my case, my brothers' support is my strength. I see greater stability and growth prospects with the family's involvement. Management decisions are based on sound business strategies and family members are inducted only after professional training," he describes his experience at SPML.

Sethi believes that, apart from technical upgradation, a key resource in today's world is people. He says it is a leader's job to be present where the going is tough. He has certainly had his share of such moments. In the early days when SPML was a new player, he had the crucial but difficult project of setting up the highest single-stage pumping stations at a height of 880 metres in Lunglei, Mizoram.

"The rocky terrain and freezing temperatures made it a very difficult project to execute. Our engineers were feeling demotivated. So I spent two months at the site staying with the workers and brainstorming to come up with innovative solutions to combat technical difficulties. We wanted to deliver quality standards and within the timeline. Both happened and that showed SPML's spirit of success," he says.

Sethi observes that the industry is moving towards consolidation and greater foreign participation. Moreover, there is an increased use of private financing of infrastructure projects. Many construction companies are coming up in collaboration with the government. Such alliances for major projects result in sharing of the risks and rewards by the owner



and the developer. "These changes will determine the construction industry in the future. A major focus will be on the mechanisation of the construction jobs with the aid of the best equipment used globally," he says.

When he is at home, away from work and its many worries, Sethi's stressbuster is a good comedy show on TV, such as the *Great Indian Laughter Challenge*. ■