

HOTTEST

Young Executives

OUR JURY



RACHIT GOSWAMI

(Standing from left) K. Sudarshan, Purvi Sheth, Rekha J. Koshy, BT's Suveen Sinha, Manish Pajan, Lakshmi Narasimhan; (sitting from left) Vivek Paranjpe, K. Ramkumar, Santrupt B. Misra

HOW WE DID IT

Professional executives less than 40 years qualify for this listing. Business founders and their relatives are not included, unless they are employed in a company where their family has no stake. Also ruled out are executives of Indian origin who are handling operations outside the country. Plus, people need to have put in at least a year in their current roles. Borderline cases are considered only if they have handled similar responsibility within the company before taking charge. Like in previous years, we partnered five executive search companies for the initial listing. They drew up - separately - their own lists, which added up this year to nearly 100 names. They then met to debate this list. The companies were represented by Purvi Sheth, CEO, Shilputsi Consultants; K. Sudarshan, Regional Managing Partner-Asia, EMA Partners International; Rekha J. Koshy, Partner, Accord Group; Lakshmi Narasimhan, Associate Director, RGF Executive Search; and Manish Pajan, Executive VP, DHR International.

This year, we introduced a three-member jury to moderate the discussion. The jury members were Santrupt B. Misra, CEO, Carbon Black Business & Director, Group HR, Aditya Birla Management Corporation; K. Ramkumar, Executive Director, ICICI Bank; and Vivek Paranjpe, HR Consultant. In fact, Misra was on BT's first Hottest Young Executive listing in 2002. Jury members were intensely discerning in their choices and had several screens in mind. For instance, Ramkumar probed to see if the talent was in the key space central to the company's needs. Misra was keenly conscious of the performance of various segments and the balance of choices, while Paranjpe asked about not just work performance, but behaviour and contribution beyond as well. The outcome of that discussion is on the pages of this package.

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“YOUNG LEADERS ARE COMFORTABLE WITH WHO THEY ARE AND DO NOT IMITATE STEREOTYPES OF LEADERSHIP. THEY REPRESENT BOTH HOPE AND FRESHNESS”

SANTRUPT B. MISRA/ CEO/ Carbon Black Business & Director, Group HR, Aditya Birla



Staying Put

Suraj Bahirwani joined the Aditya Birla group in 2002, after completing his management studies and PhD, and has stayed there ever since. This stickiness has precedence. His family, originally from the Sindh province in Pakistan, had migrated to Hyderabad at the time of Partition. The family members prospered in the real estate business in the south Indian city, but have never spread out.

Bahirwani started his career as executive assistant to Aditya Birla Group Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla, who mentored him for four years. He worked with varied businesses including mining, chemicals and fertilisers before moving to retail. "Since I was part of varied operations, I never felt work fatigue," he says. He worked in the food and grocery business since its inception and was also part of the team that handled the acquisition of supermarket chain Trinethra in 2006. One of his personal achievements is the turning around of the retail business in coastal Andhra, he says.

Bahirwani climbed up the corporate ladder quickly and was appointed as the COO of the group's hypermarkets in January 2014. He spearheaded the launch of 14 out of 16 of the company's hypermarkets in the country. He travels three to four days in a week, meeting employees and consumers to understand how the business is changing. Bahirwani, who is married with a six-year-old daughter, is busy even on weekends when the stores get higher footfalls. "Working in organised retail is a different experience," he says. "The business is still at a nascent stage in the country. We do test various models to stay put." ♦

NEVIN JOHN



SURAJ BAHIRWANI

COO, Hypermarkets,
Aditya Birla Retail
AGE: 36

GOAL IN LIFE: Retire from Aditya Birla group as a business director. And, become a good husband and father.

BEST LEADERSHIP LESSON: Listen to everyone.

RACHIT GOSWAMI