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@ ANAROCK



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ANUJ PURI
Group Chairman

Dear Friends,

Former US President Barack Obama rightly pointed out, “empowering women is not just the right thing to do – it’s the smart thing to do.”

Multiple studies show that there is a direct correlation between gender diversity and organisational performance resulting in improved team performance, creativity, productivity, and success. That said, in order to fight against the socially constructed gender bias, women have to swim against the system that requires strength and determination. And such strength comes from the process of empowerment.

We at ANAROCK strongly believe that achieving sustainable development goals are impossible without gender equality and women empowerment. Over the course of the last four years of our journey since inception, we have focussed on nurturing and growing our female talent through our “Empower Diversity” initiatives. We are proud of the strong representation of women in our workforce, especially in our leadership group.

There are stories about impressive and accomplished women breaking barriers and fighting the accepted norms for how we see women and what they can achieve. These stories need to be told to push forward the conversation about gender equality and normalise the voice of powerful women; women who have shaped us, our views, and their impact on the society but not all may get the recognition they deserve.

In our endeavour to cherish the contributions of all our women at ANAROCK and to celebrate each one of them, we have brought forth this book - a beautiful compilation of the life stories of 25 of our women employees. Each profile beautifully encapsulates their personal and professional journey so far and unravels the innumerable struggles, their grit, and determination to overcome all hurdles, the factors responsible for their success, and much more. Above all, their stories go on to highlight the multi-hued hats that they have donned and doffed with much flair. Undoubtedly, each one of them has made an indelible mark on the road they have treaded all along.

I proudly urge the discerning readers to read and cherish the stories of our empowered group of women and see how they have carved a niche for themselves in their own way – it was not easy. Still, they faced every challenge, broke barriers, carved their paths, and showed their families, colleagues, communities, and the world that traditional gender roles belong in the past and that gender equality is the path to a better, brighter future.

I hope you enjoy reading the stories of each of our women role models of ANAROCK as much as we enjoyed discovering them. Because SHE ROCKS!

01

TILL SUCH TIME I GET EVERYTHING RIGHT, I'M WILLING TO LEARN AND I'M WILLING TO MAKE MISTAKES.

*Shikha Sharma,
Former MD & CEO - Axis Bank.*



ADITI WATVE

*President - Investment Sales & REIT Advisory
& City Lead, Residential Sales, Pune*

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I want to do something entrepreneurial and leave a legacy.

- *Aditi Watve*

A first look at the life of Aditi from Capital Markets makes you think that she had everything served to her on a platter. However, that is not true. She could have chosen just to be part of the family business or pursue no career at all. A closer look reveals a very clear-headed, strong woman who knew exactly what she wants, who took very well-planned steps in her career, and who is equally clear about where she is headed.

Q: Your English is excellent even though you studied in Marathi medium school. How did you achieve that?

A: My first exposure to English medium education was when I moved to junior college i.e., 11th and 12th grade. These two years were a struggle, but I survived by reading Nancy Drew and Sherlock Holmes to sharpen my written and spoken English skills.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR MANTRA IN LIFE?

A: I want to have no regrets if I die tomorrow, so I make the most of every day and live life to the fullest.

Q: What keeps you awake at night?

A: I want to do something entrepreneurial and leave a legacy.

Q: What made you join ANAROCK?

A: I had one other option but was advised to opt for the leaders I trust, i.e., Anuj and Shobhit. Also, my father asked me: how can you even think of saying “No” to Anuj?

Q: What excites you at work?

A: Actually, solving the client's problems excites me even more than doing the deal.

Q: How is your experience at ANAROCK so far?

A: Brilliant! I love what is being created. It's very inspiring.

Aditi grew up in a family where real estate was discussed over dinner. Her father is an esteemed structural consultant, so her love affair with the sector began very early in life. Aditi and her younger sister were brought upon the principle of "fairness" with the same rules and expectations as the boys in the family.



She chose to study Architecture at Pune University. The five years taught her that to be a fantastic architect, you need art in addition to the science of it, and she felt she sorely lacked the "art" piece. Aditi had excelled in theatre, debates, and elocution in school and wanted to put those skills to use. She also felt she needed exposure outside the sector, and hence the logical extension was to study management. A leaked CAT question paper followed by a good score in GMAT led to an admission to the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad. It was the

most challenging yet rewarding experience in her education.

Aditi married her classmate's brother, Shridhar, with whom she played badminton during her college days. He is a Sports Medicine Doctor and is extremely supportive of her work and her career.

In 2005, she joined Chesterton Meghraj (which then became Trammel Crow and then JLL) in the Research & Consulting team and was part of the Pune office's start-up team. Aditi then moved to Shobhit's Capital Markets team and had an amazing stint in the ever dynamic, albeit crazy times of 2006-07.

In 2007, she moved to Paranjape Schemes to lead their BlueRidge project. This project allowed her to build on-site what she had put together on an excel sheet so far. She says it turned out to be a great ride. She and her team executed and sold more than 3 mn. sq.ft. of SEZ and approx. 5 mn. sq.ft. of residential real estate in 8 years. This project taught her to be a leader in the male-dominated field of construction, taught her the nuances of balancing finance with vision, and made her appreciate the developer's point of view – something that helps her every day

in her job at ANAROCK.

ANAROCK, for her, is like completing a full circle. She remembers telling Anuj that she wanted to test her leadership skills at Paranjape Schemes but would surely come back to work with him. She is glad she has got the opportunity to keep her word.

After office hours, Aditi loves to read and hang out with family and friends (and Netflix, naturally!). Travel plays a huge role in her life. Over the past few years, she and her husband have also been doing multi-day hikes in Europe. This time in the mountains allows her to untangle her thoughts and have clarity.



Santhosh Kumar
(Group Vice Chairman) **says:**

"Aditi took on the role of City Lead voluntarily in a very challenging situation and has managed to turn around the business brilliantly. She has leveraged her connections with developers and her capital markets experience to create a successful business in Pune. She has a very strong grasp of business fundamentals which enables her to make correct and timely decisions.

She is a great leader; she is very friendly with her team and bonds extremely well. They, in turn, look up to her and appreciate her leadership style, and are motivated to deliver their best.

Aditi has a cheerful, happy demeanour and always generates positive energy. It is a pleasure to work with her. I wish her the best."



02

YOU DON'T WAIT FOR
CHOICES TO APPEAR,
BUT YOU MOVE ON BY
MAKING YOUR OWN WAY.

*Srimathi Shivashankar,
Corporate Vice President – HCL.*



AMRITA DAS

Senior Manager, Residential Sales, Hyderabad.

“I want to make a name in the market. I want to be counted amongst the best property advisors.” This is what Amrita's dream is, and she is working conscientiously to make it come true.

Having studied in a boarding school from class 3, Amrita grew up as an independent and free-thinking girl. Her parents always ensured that they and the extended family treated her older brother and her equally.

After completing B.Com and MBA in 2014 from Chennai, she stayed with a cousin in a Puravankara property in Bengaluru. She saw a lot of sales and marketing activity happening by the developer at the site. Seeing the quality of the development and the flood of potential buyers at the site lit a spark in her. She wanted to be part of the action.

So, our independent and self-determined Amrita went directly to Puravankara to ask if she could get a job with them, and she did. She hasn't looked back since.

Coming from a family that excels in culture, art, and academics, there was obviously much consternation and concern at the field chosen by Amrita. However, her family respected her decision and knew that Amrita was fully aware that she would face the consequences of her decision if things went wrong.

She was so successful at Puravankara Bengaluru, selling 45 apartments in a month, that they posted her to Dubai, where she continued to do well and enjoy her work.

Amrita married her childhood sweetheart, Aritra, who she loves

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I want to make a name in the market. I want to be counted amongst the best property advisors.

- Amrita Das

and respects because "she can never go wrong" as far as he is concerned (lucky girl!). She married him because of the love, respect, support, and encouragement he gives her. His family, too, is very proud of what



she does. They share work at home 50:50 well, almost, but she is okay with that. They are clear that both their careers are important, and if, at some point, they have to move because of her job, her husband will willingly move with her and work things out for himself.

There was a time when they were doing different shifts and were not getting any time to spend together. Her family suggested that she quit work as Aritra was earning enough to support her. Aritra put his foot down and said he would not allow her to sacrifice her career.

In 2016, Amrita and her husband decided to move back to India and felt Hyderabad would be the

best for their careers. Her husband joined IBM, and after a few months at Aparna Developers, Amrita got her big break with ANAROCK in July 2017.

It was a dream come true because she always wanted to work for a property consultancy firm because of the opportunity and excitement of having a variety of properties to sell.

After Bangalore and Dubai, Hyderabad was a bit of a shock for Amrita. She felt at a disadvantage as a woman since male agents dominate the Hyderabad market. With her focus and determination, she has overcome all the challenges of becoming one of the Hyderabad team's highest performers.

When asked how she has coped with the challenges she faces, she smiles and says I don't consider anything a challenge. I just follow my mantras for success:

- Be mentally strong
- Have a clear vision of where you want to reach
- Focus on your results and do your best

She loves working for ANAROCK because:

- There is no hierarchy, and there is total independence and trust
- She is not treated differently because she is a woman; she feels equally empowered
- The platform at ANAROCK provides an excellent platform and ammunition for success
- She is confident that the organisation will always back her if she delivers

She leads a team of 3 currently.

How would her team members describe her?

- She is good and quick at decision-making
- She gives good client management advice
- She is not just a boss but a friend too



Satish Vadaga

(City Lead, Residential Sales, Hyderabad)

says:

“Amrita is very committed to her work and is a great team player. She helps her colleagues in closing their deals. Her relationship with developers is excellent, and I can be sure that she will handle every situation very amicably with them. She is also very flexible with her working hours. She enjoys music and loves partying too!”



03

I THINK IT'S GREAT TO BE FLAWED. I AM HUGELY FLAWED, AND I LIKE IT THAT WAY. THAT'S THE FUN OF LIFE. YOU FALL, GET UP, MAKE MISTAKES, LEARN FROM THEM, BE HUMAN AND BE YOU.

Priyanka Chopra, Actor.



ARCHANA PURAV

Assistant Manager, Residential Sales, Navi Mumbai.

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The more uninspiring your origins, the more likely you are to use your imagination and invent a world where everything seems possible.

-Archana Purav

“The more uninspiring your origins, the more likely you are to use your imagination and invent a world where everything seems possible,” says Archana, ANAROCK's #1 female agent for 2019-20 for residential sales.

Archana grew up with her older sister and younger brother (both two years apart) in Vashi, Mumbai, as the naughtiest and most whacked child in her family. Mischievous and playful, Archana was also everyone's favourite friend and confidante because of her extroverted nature.

Her parents brought up the three siblings with a lot of love and care. Her parents had not completed their schooling, but they were clear that their children would be given a good education. When they tried admitting their children to a neighbourhood convent school,

they were refused admission because the school only admitted children of educated parents. They were then admitted to a government English medium school, where they all excelled.

Archana's father lost his job at Kohinoor Mills when she was around five years old. Her mother supported her father by doing various jobs like sewing garments and running a small candy and ice-cream shop. So, when he found himself without a job, her father took up another shop nearby and started selling groceries. Her mother has always been the “Iron Lady” of the family and has always been a role model for Archana. Thanks to her mother's hard work and meticulous and smart planning, her parents invested sensibly and are now retired and live on rental income from their investments. Not

only did they manage to provide their children the best upbringing they could manage, but they also managed to settle their siblings and help their friends and neighbours generously. Truly commendable!!

After finishing class 12, Archana joined a web scripting and designing course during her summer vacation. Till this stage, Archana had never thought about having a career or working



because even her parents did not think that way. It was at this time that she got inspired by career-minded friends who were earning money to support their families. She also got involved in theatre at this stage, and with these theatre friends, she became part of a small venture for website development which got her enough money so that she did not need any pocket money from her father.

After the summer holidays,

Archana joined SNTD College to do her undergrad in Home Science while continuing her web designing work. Realising the need to upgrade her designing skills, she joined a program to graduate in Animation just as she was finished her SNTD graduation. So Her day was hectic studying Animation, working in her website development business, and rehearsals in the evenings.

While she was still pursuing the Animation degree, at 22 years of age, her parents decided to get Archana married to Prasad Purav, an Electrical Engineer working in Telecom and AI in Muscat. She agreed on the condition that she be allowed to complete her degree and an internship with UTV for a Disney project.

She completed her degree but had to join her husband in Muscat without doing the internship. She describes life in Muscat as the best phase of her life. It was here that Archana came into her own as a professional and an entrepreneur. In a country with so many restrictions on women, Archana got to work very soon after settling in. She sent her portfolio to advertising companies and started getting assignments that would usually be outsourced to India. With her creativity and use of 3D

Animation, she managed to get larger and more lucrative assignments. Her work was connected mainly with real estate, villas, construction project renders etc.

Her 1st big assignment was the Mizara Dam Development, which led to her starting work with various Ministries of Oman for seaports, palaces, and other development projects.

Her favourite memory is making a presentation to the Health Ministry of Oman the morning after she partially burnt her face while boiling water. She made a fantastic pitch (with the burnt face) and won the assignment for a fee of 25 lacs – a hefty amount for her at that time.

Following her mother's example, Archana converted all her savings into gold. She had started with one computer and had gradually added three more and had created her rendering farm. She had also started training another girl to assist her when suddenly there was an announcement of "Omanisation" Reservations for expats were cut drastically, and after five wonderful years, she had to take her computers and move back to Mumbai with her husband in early 2012.

After coming to Mumbai, Archana realised there was tremendous competition in her field, so she took a job doing computer graphics and animation for Goshar Ventures, a real estate developer and contractor connected with luxury projects in Wadala and Tardeo. She was the 1st and only woman in the team and enjoyed working there as she was given a lot of freedom. She also got involved gradually in presenting & pitching their real estate developments to prospective clients.

Then, within two years of the move from Muscat came another significant shift in her life. Her husband decided to shift to Singapore to join a relative in a new venture. Archana was not at all excited about the move but succumbed to family and spouse pressure and moved to Singapore.

Singapore turned out to be one happy adventure for Archana. She made many friends, enjoyed the freedom of walking around in shorts, and explored the country. She partied hard and also got hooked on to a work-out and fitness regime.

While in Singapore, she met an Australia born Indian woman who had never been to India. She was

a highly successful freelance real estate advisor. She did only four deals in a year and holidayed and travelled the rest of the time. Archana was very inspired by how this lady worked with style, elegance, and extreme grace with no trace of arrogance and ego.

Just as Archana decided to start thinking about doing some work or take up a job, there was a new development. A bitter dispute developed between the partners, and her husband decided to quit and move back to Mumbai. Just one and half years after moving to Singapore.

The following two years were the most challenging years of Archana's life. Her husband had suffered losses, and there were bills to be paid, and she and her husband had to support a family of 7; parents-in-law and a widowed sister-in-law with two children. Her husband got into depression and was struggling to sort out the problems of the failed business. Archana remembered how her mother had supported her father under challenging times, and she took on the mantle of becoming the bread earner of the family at this time.

She says she did not take it as a burden, but more of learning to

live with compassion. She felt glad to be doing something to help the family in this time of crisis. This was the best way to support her husband until he got back his confidence and restarted his career.

As a first step, she sold some portion of gold she had invested in while in Muscat, which helped clear the backlog of the family's outstanding bills. She tried going back to Goshar Ventures, but the management had changed, and all they could offer her was the role of an office receptionist. Though she needed a job badly, she knew she could do much better and decided to explore other opportunities.

Archana managed to get a job with a Navi Mumbai developer, but the developer had to shut operations within four months due to funding problems. In this short period of four months, she got exposure to how the real estate broking business works in India. So, Archana started freelancing as a real estate broker in the Panvel area and even managed to close a few small deals.

After some months, she got a job with Indo Asian Buildcon, where she worked for eighteen months and did well despite the

company's very non-inclusive culture. It worked for her because she just wanted to deliver results, earn her commission, and attend to many problems on the home front.

It was around this time that her parents also realised how strong-willed and talented Archana is. She says it was at this point that they developed pride in the fact that their daughter refused to take help from anyone and worked hard to support her family in crisis. That makes Archana very proud.

By the end of 2016, Archana's husband was fully recovered, had regained his confidence, and started working again. Things were much more settled now.

At this point, Archana decided she needs to change jobs to make a career in real estate, and that is when she applied to ANAROCK. She remembers the day she was in the Mumbai office for the interview and saw the team's energy and dynamism there. Fatima, head of Luxury Residential, walked past her, and she made up her mind that this is where she wants to work; the salary did not matter now.

She joined ANAROCK, and right from day 1, the induction and training she got and the

subsequent exposure she was given at client meetings and working on project-related work made her fall in love with her work. Now she wants to do it all; CP networking, lead mandates, business development..everything!!

Archana feels blessed to have a great manager and wonderful colleagues, and she is continuously motivated to give her very best. She says, "ANAROCK pushed me in the deep end to go hunt my clients, to make my bank of projects, my channel sales associates. I got an equal battleground to win the war, and it motivated me to play the "go getter" game rather than just work to earn a livelihood."

Her parents are extremely happy and proud of her. Her mother loves boasting about where her daughter works, what work she does, and whenever Archana gets an award, there are celebrations at home.

When Archana looks back at her life, she sees a girl who came from common roots, with no silver spoon, no pedigree, no early mentors but with a tremendous entrepreneurial "never say die" spirit and amazing resilience. She is convinced that people can achieve their dreams and beyond

if they have the determination to keep excelling.

Archana makes sure she is fit and toned and sticks to natural, low-fat foods. She has been this way since her early days.

In her free time, she enjoys gardening, exercising, trying new recipes, reading, and maintaining a diary.

Sachin Nivrutti Pawar

(Assistant Vice President, Residential Sales, Navi Mumbai) SAYS:

"Archana's work ethic to diligently focus on the objective sets her apart. She is a go-getter and very focused on the task assigned to her. She is extremely proactive with excellent networking and relationship-building skills, interpersonal effectiveness, and, most importantly, managing crises and uncertainty. She brings versatility with tremendous willpower, diverse cultural understanding, and excellent problem-solving skills.

She is undoubtedly an asset to the company and a very humble person who walks the talk."



04

AT THE END OF THE DAY,
DON'T FORGET THAT YOU
ARE A PERSON, DON'T FORGET
THAT YOU ARE A MOTHER,
A WIFE, AND A DAUGHTER.

*Indra Nooyi,
Former Chairperson and CEO of PepsiCo.*



ASHWINI MALPANI

Vice President-Human Resources, Mumbai.

“ I am an out and out Mumbai girl though my parents are from Karnataka. I grew up in Mulund and moved to Thane when I got married.

My father worked at VOLTAS, and he always encouraged me to study and do well. My mother has a neurological condition, and she needed to be always taken care of. Studies and anything involving academic pursuits was always encouraged. I always felt a sense of abundance and never thought we had scarce resources.

My brother is eight years younger than me, and given my high sense of territorial instincts, I am like his younger mother (he has no choice).

I studied in one of the well-known schools of my area and was blessed to have early experiences shaped by my school principal, teachers, friends, and caregivers,

each of whom brought a different thought and flavour from their personality. Apart from a few girls who were my friends, a large part of my friends' circle was boys. We were just 5-6 girls in a class of 50 students. Thankfully, gender and related differences were never a part of discussions at home or school, and I value that immensely. During my school days, I also had a friend who was an urchin and had leprosy. I valued that relationship immensely and would ensure I met him at least twice a week, even if it was for 2-3 mins.

As soon as I completed my tenth grade, I felt I must take care of most of my needs. I was a decent orator and was encouraged to take the stage at school functions, debates, elocution, etc. I used this skill to fend for my pocket money (my father gave me a decent sum every month, but it did not seem enough). I got opportunities to be

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Being your authentic self is more important than money or luxury.

- Ashwini Malpani

an anchor at local functions and award ceremonies. I worked at exhibition stalls as well. I also gave tuitions to some children in the neighbourhood. With all this, I made a decent sum every month; I charged between 300 - 500 rupees for every event that I did.



An exciting memory of my younger days that has stayed with me is the Michael Jackson concert in 1996. I had gotten out of school and was in college. A night out with friends and a Michael Jackson concert was a heady mix. I knew that my father would never agree and definitely not fund it.

I opted for the Rs. 5000/- ticket; a steep sum. I wanted to secretly find work so that I could make money to buy the ticket. I remember cold calling and physically visiting all small shops and establishments in the local area and finally found a small tele-calling and data entry job

part-time. I still remember the deal I struck with my employer.

I managed to make him pay INR 5500 as advance, telling him I needed the money for a noble cause. (I explained the cause to him)

Since we lived in Mumbai, family members from villages and small towns came and stayed with us very often for studies/in search of work. From amongst these, I remember two of them who crossed the line and were on the verge of doing things with me that were inappropriate. I remember handling these tough and disturbing conversations with them all by myself and with all my rage, anger, tears, and shock. I ensured they left my home almost immediately after the incident. I never thought it was my parents' problem to solve. In fact, I only told my mom and aunt much later. I want to forgive these men but have not been able to. I will eventually get to forgiveness, I hope. I am so glad awareness, and conversations around these topics are so prevalent these days.

I found my first and last boyfriend, who is now my husband, while doing my MBA. We were in the same class. Vinod was secretly working in a chemical company (none of us knew) and undertook

second and third shifts at his workplace, and attended college during the day to fend for himself and his fees. He was called 'Visiting Student.' I married for love, and despite all the travails and trials, I'm glad I married Vinod. Equality, simplicity, and commitment to family and the well-being of others are his mainstays. He introduced me to the joy of single malt (I love it! But do not indulge in it as often now), wants me to accompany him for a smoke (which I do not), and to the world of commerce and commercial wisdom.

My first organisation, "CRY-Child Rights and You," shaped my perspective about society, inequalities, and the concept of giving. I was rallying at the Ram Leela Maidan in Delhi, fighting for mandatory education for all children through the 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' program. We all stayed there in tents for two days rallying and speaking to people who had gathered from all walks of life demanding a better future for their children. We wanted the bill to be tabled in the parliament. A far cry!

After that, I moved to New Jersey for around a year in 2003. This was my first tryst in a foreign land, and I was all by myself (when Vinod was at work) exploring museums in New York, local plays, libraries (free!!).

We went to Broadway shows, nightclubs and visiting in and around the US.

When I came back, I looked for opportunities in Bangalore and made a list of organisations I wanted to work with, and cold-called them. I got into Accenture (I still have the offer letter) and Infosys (after clearing their much-dreaded entrance test, which they administered for HR executives as well at that time). I enjoyed my work at Infosys, and along with unit-level responsibilities, I was chosen for some organisation-wide initiatives.

My son was born five years after our marriage, and my second son just 1.5 years after my first one. I was working at a great organisation, was doing exceptionally well in my career, and had friends and family to enrich my life. Since I stayed in a joint family, I did not feel the need to be available for my children full time. But suddenly, a conversation with my pediatrician changed my mind, and I decided to quit work at the peak of my career and be at home for the children.

My husband then took a posting to London, and the kids and I moved with him. I remember the first day all alone with my kids in a different

country. I had no clue how to look after my children, but gradually things got better, and we enjoyed our stint in London thoroughly. I even pursued a film course from the London Film Academy and produced/edited/was a gaffer/cameraman for four very short films! One of my friends from the academy liked one of my scripts. We submitted it to CNC (Centre National De La Cinematographie, France), and though it was not shortlisted, I did learn a great deal during this project.

I came back to India and wanted to start afresh. After a break of four years, it was not easy finding a job. Our ecosystem still has a long way to provide equal opportunities to men and women who come back from a break. I remember applying to the best of organisations in Mumbai and getting offered entry-level positions or positions and salaries that did not merit my experience. I did not take them and was persistent and patient.

When I interviewed at ANAROCK, I met Anuj Puri first after my telephonic conversation with Sukhdeep and Shuchi. I had a great candid interview with him and was totally charmed by him at the end of it. I instantly took to his leadership style and his passion. I loved interacting with some other

leaders who are now my wonderful stakeholders.



I have completed almost 2.5 years at ANAROCK, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities that this place has provided. I get a chance to work with fantastic, bright, and committed colleagues who have audacious goals and work hard to pursue them. By virtue of being in the function that I'm in, I get to encounter closely the steps and measures we take to ensure that our Values and Ethics are upheld whenever there is a transgression. This fuels faith and belief in what we put out to the world – "Values Over Value."

I have extraordinarily competent and chilled out managers. Their belief in my work (even though I have my doubts sometimes) and the trust they place in me is precious, and I am so grateful for that. This organisation has placed its trust in me and values my advice. I can (sometimes firmly) place my dissent and be heard. I have always spoken my mind, and

I do here too. That is valuable and liberating.

The team that I work with is young, committed, and a lot of fun. I am stern with them at times, but I love them. I learn a great deal from them, and I consider it a privilege to be part of this team.

I am a hands-off mother, and sometimes I actually need time to figure which class my children study in. I don't feel guilty about it. For some strange reason, society has overrated motherly instinct and burdened us with unwanted emotions that a mother ought to have. I am very realistic about these and do not ever feel guilty. I keep it real with all its frailties and joy.

My husband, my in-laws (esp. my Mother-in-law), my parents/brother are my support system who also bear the brunt of my moods and temper. Whatever time I get with my kids goes in cuddling, kissing, and embarrassing them. I have a close group of friends who are from school, college, and Infosys. I love spending time with them. I am a serial hugger and have been warned by well-meaning colleagues and friends about the consequences. I read and love to dance (even though I can't). I am "Unapologetically Ambitious."

I am extremely grateful for all the beautiful relationships, learnings, and love I have in my life. I believe being your authentic self is more important than money or luxury.



Sukhdeep Aurora
(Chief People Officer) **says:**

“Ashwini is really multi-hued. She is this fiercely assertive, process-oriented HR leader who strives to demonstrate the strategic value-add of her function. You will see the same Ashwini at the centre of any party making fun happen all around her. She is one person who knows the art of putting her hand around the shoulder of our chairman with the same ease as she does it with her team members. The first one to contribute to any initiative the

company takes; she is also the first to apologise on realising a mistake has happened. Despite a hectic work profile, she brings a beautiful balance between work and her family and thus inspires many young women in their early years of corporate life. Mother hen to her team (one should hear her fighting for the well-being of her team members to know what this really means), she is a manager's delight.”



05

PEOPLE USED TO SAY THAT BOXING IS FOR MEN AND NOT FOR WOMEN AND I THOUGHT I WILL SHOW THEM SOME DAY. I PROMISED MYSELF AND PROVED MYSELF.

Mary Kom, Boxer.



DEVI SHANKAR

President, ANAROCK Capital

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Life can come a full circle,
but in the end, it all
happens for a reason.

- *Devi Shankar*

Devi's personal and professional path is an unconventional one. And through this journey, one belief that has stuck with her is that everything happens for a reason.

Devi's biggest inspiration has been her father - a friend, philosopher and guide - who she lost to cancer at age 13. At 10, she accompanied her father to Tata Memorial Hospital for his radiation treatments.

Looking at all the cancer patients around and their families exposed her to life's intricacies at a very early age. The years after her father's death, they struggled to make ends meet. Her mother was a homemaker who herself couldn't finish her education, which she then regretted with not being able to supplement the family's income. She believed that education is the best wealth and wanted her

daughters to be financially independent always. Devi believes her mom's strength and dad's profound influence continues to guide her in her daily decisions even today.

Devi's teenage years scraped through with just enough money to pay bills and tuition fees. Luxury was being able to afford two new dresses a year, one for birthday and the other for Diwali.

Devi was good at her academics. She pursued a Bachelor of Commerce at RA Podar College. She simultaneously enrolled for chartered accountancy, not because she aspired to become an accountant, but because that was the only employable course that could be completed alongside graduation. In her own words, she aspired to become a creative advertiser, but she didn't have the leeway to pursue two

more years of Master's after graduation.

Her typical schedule was heading to college at Matunga from 7 to 9 am, CA articleship at Santacruz from 10 am to 5 pm, and then rushing for coaching classes at Vile



Parle from 6 to 9 pm, and repeat. The grueling schedule left no time for fun. Fun would come in small moments at articleship when she and her colleagues would round-up for a game of UNO while the partner was away. The office boy was tasked to call out the moment he saw the partner entering the office when they would immediately stash the cards under the stack of files and papers and turn their chairs around quickly to work. Yes, they staged a 'Khosla ka Ghosla' long before the movie was made.

Another challenge Devi faced during her teenage was

stammering, which developed as post-traumatic stress of her father's loss. Stammering made Devi go from being an extroverted kid to a timid person. She only stammered outside the home, and not while being at home. It was an issue that her family was unaware of, and neither did Devi want to burden her family with more problems. Devi dealt with this issue on her own, and it sucked up her self-esteem quite a bit. Every moment she struggled to get words out, her confidence dropped a bit more.

As a young person, when her peers were living it up, Devi felt stuck in a life where responsibilities and expectations seemed gigantic. She remembers wanting to quit CA and taking up a small job to pay her pocket money to enjoy life. Save her mother's dressing down for thinking irresponsibly.

Tides turned when Devi took up her first job at KPMG. She credits the best days of her professional life at KPMG, where she met mentors and friends that set-in motion the path to a satisfying career. She worked hard to grow from Executive to Manager in just four years. Her job lifted her family up several notches financially. And her stammering miraculously disappeared as well. She learnt a life lesson that stress is

a rabbit hole, which is only as deep as you make it to be.

Despite having a clear path to becoming a partner in Big 4, Devi aspired to be running transactions rather than merely being an advisor. The opportunity came when JLL approached her for a role in capital markets. She took a leap of faith. She credits Ramesh Nair for placing importance on 'relevant skills' rather than 'relevant experience' in recruiting, which she implements in her own hires.

The first 1.5 years at JLL felt like being thrown into an ocean and being told to swim. She closed no deals and yet generated enough leads to keep her occupied and learn the trade. The first breakthrough came when she was involved in a portfolio divestment mandate for Standard Chartered Bank. Devi was recognized for her caliber and engaged in many more marquee investment banking deals subsequently.

When asked about gender diversity, she reveals gender bias exists; at times, it remains implicit. Devi recounts being in a meeting with a developer who refused to accept her visiting card and conversed with her junior colleague. She was just sitting

through the meeting as an observer. That was the day Devi happily realized how thick-skinned she had become. She also remembers being in another meeting forum, while at JLL, during the roadshows for Mumbai International Airport Land Divestment, where a developer sent out a message to JLL to exclude women in the next meeting. Devi doesn't get impacted by such incidents but follows a philosophy that she has the option to choose her clients, as much as the other way round. Mutual respect ranks highest in Devi's list of value systems.



Devi's aspirations and need to feel challenged took another level when she secured admission for an Executive MBA at The University of Chicago Booth School of Business. The two years' program was to be completed while being on the job. Devi was encouraged and

supported by Anuj Puri and Shobhit Agarwal to pursue the program amidst stiff resistance from her immediate reporting manager. Being headstrong, she went ahead and enrolled for the course that required her to travel 16 times in 21 months - to Hong Kong, London, and Chicago for week-long sessions. Devi passed the course with Dean's honors, making her mother shed tears in pride of her daughter's accomplishment while collecting the certificate in an elaborate convocation parade in the freezing Chicago winter.

Devi funded the course with a combination of her savings and student loans and is still paying up the loan. As much as Devi swears to never ever put herself through such a tormenting time again, she believes that the MBA program has been the most enriching experience of her life. She now boasts of friends from 43 countries and a distinguished and enviable professor and alumni network, which she leverages, to the last thread, for her role at ANAROCK. Devi's clients know her for her credibility and capability.

At work, Devi has been less of a manager and more of an elder sister mentoring her teammates to do their best. Her friendly leadership approach has ensured

her team's unflinching support during stressful and unrealistic deadlines, delivering client expectations. Invariably, she has been the go-to person for any career advice for her team.

After spending about 15 years at Navi Mumbai, she and her mother recently moved to the same apartment building as her elder sister at Thane. She now lives two floors apart from her sister, brother-in-law, nephew, and their puppy 'Leo.' When she is not playing with Leo or pampering her nephew, she spends time reading, traveling, learning kathak, participating in car rallies, photography - anything that can satisfy her creative urge. Life is not all about work. Devi is a staunch believer in work-life balance. She packs her bags at 5 pm every day, a practice she started at JLL 5 years ago.

With all her experiences, Devi believes that life can come a full circle, but in the end, it all happens for a reason.

Shobhit Agarwal,
(MD & CEO, ANAROCK Capital) **says:**

"I have known Devi for over ten years and worked with her in many avatars, both as a colleague and as a client. She is an extremely determined and diligent

professional, and I admire her ability to handle clients and assignments with utmost care. I am delighted to have her back in my team."



06

THE PATH FROM DREAMS
TO SUCCESS DOES EXIST.
MAY YOU HAVE THE VISION
TO FIND IT, THE COURAGE
TO GET ON IT AND THE
PERSEVERANCE TO FOLLOW IT.

Kalpana Chawla, Astronaut.



FATIMA SAIDI

Senior Vice President, Residential Sales, Mumbai.

Hers is an incredibly inspiring journey from attending SNTD college in hijab to becoming the “queen” of luxury residential sales. Innovation, mitigated risk, and foresight have proven to be the driving forces in Fatima's career and personal life.

Her personal and professional path has taken her on a global journey wherein her exposure to a thoroughly diverse group of family, friends, colleagues, and leaders has enriched every element of her life.

Born into a conservative, traditional Iranian family, Fatima, the youngest of 3 siblings, carved out her path in life fearlessly and knowing precisely what she wanted. Indeed, she often felt that her life had resembled that of a diplomat.

At a very young age, she was

forced to develop the ability to successfully negotiate various languages, cultures, environments, situations, and people. At the same time, she embraced the constant change and contrast, which might have overwhelmed others, gaining confidence in her communication skills and feeding a hunger for globalized knowledge. By the age of fifteen, she was fluent in five languages: Farsi, Hindi, English, Marathi, and Gujarati.

By the time she was 20 years old, Fatima was regularly contracted for assignments by newspapers, including TOI. She also won many awards for her photographs, some of which have been exhibited in various parts of the world.

Fatima knew she needed to move out of her environment to achieve something, so she applied to Universities in Canada. Once

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**Deliver 100%
and some more.**

- Fatima Saidi

admitted into the university, she had to figure out how to fund this move. She needed a kitty of Rs.10 lakh. She had some savings from her photography work, but that was not enough.



So, she did what we call “crowdfunding” these days; she collected the balance by going from funding organisation to funding organisation and convinced them to support her education. The Canadian University also awarded her the Dean's Special Entrance Scholarship.

She told her parents about her move only after she had got the funds organised and had her passport and visa in hand. What she did almost 20 years ago defines her fearlessness and self-motivation.

Her passion for education and drive for success saw her risk her family, community, and security as she completed a second

undergraduate honours program, as well as a Masters Degree in Environmental Studies, from Toronto, Canada.

After spending close to a decade in Canada, Fatima returned to India and decided to pursue a career in the rapidly growing residential real estate industry. She wrote to all major IPCs, with her first email going to Anuj in 2010. She was interviewed by all IPCs, including Pawan Swamy from JLL, Head of Mumbai at that time, but the interviews did not result in a job offer as she had no real estate experience.

To get her foot in the door, Fatima joined Panchshil Developers in Pune. This helped her gain an insight into the developer mindset, which proved invaluable in her role today. True to her character, Fatima did not give up her desire to work in residential brokering. She kept in touch with Mrunal, who acted as an informal guide and mentor to her in this process. Finally, in 2013, she was hired by JLL, and the rest is history. She learnt fast, proved her flair for luxury, and moved up the ladder to become the head of Luxury for JLL Residential and now ANAROCK.

Fatima is one of the most respected leaders in ANAROCK today. She is loved and respected by her team, her peers, and her seniors. She is fondly called "Mother Teresa" because of her soft-hearted approach as a leader. She is also an excellent mentor.

Her client-centricity clearly reflects in the amazing relationship she enjoys with her clients. Once they deal with Fatima, they don't make any investment decisions without her advice.

Her mantra in life is to deliver 100% and some more. Finally, if you ever need advice on how to dress perfectly, Fatima is the No. 1 person to go to at ANAROCK.

Rajkumar Singh

(City Lead, Residential Sales, Mumbai) says:

"Fatima is, in my opinion, India's most successful Luxury Broker. She has the knack for understanding her client's requirements thoroughly and closes the deal with panache. She has demonstrated the willingness to stick to a bold course of action, an unconventional business strategy for selling ultra-luxury homes even as the rest of the industry wonders why she is not marching in step with the status quo."



07

PRIORITIES NEED TO
CHANGE AT DIFFERENT
STAGES OF LIFE IF WE
WANT TO GROW AND EVOLVE.

*Apurva Purohit,
President - Jagran Prakashan Group.*



FIRDOS JETPURWALA

Associate, Residential Sales, Navi Mumbai.

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It's you who have to decide what you actually want from your life rather than giving the right to other people to decide what they want from you.

-Firdos Jetpurwala

Firdos grew up in Mumbai in a conservative Muslim family and her two siblings; an older sister and a younger brother. She started her schooling in Young Ladies School in South Mumbai, and when she was in the 8th class, her family relocated from South Mumbai to Navi Mumbai, where she was enrolled in MGM School close to her home. Firdos was a keen, enthusiastic student and was also good at sports. After her schooling, she joined National College, Bandra.

While her father was broad-minded and believed that girls should study further, her mother thought girls should be married off as soon as a "good" match is found. Her maternal side of the family is very conservative, and their views were a big influence on her mother. Firdos' elder sister was married when she

was just 16. When Firdos was 18 and was in her first year of college, a suitable match came along, and she was married. Being a simple, homely, and docile girl, she did not resist or rebel. Her only condition was that she be allowed to complete her first year of college; her in-laws agreed on the condition that she complete the year by correspondence.

Firdos got pregnant within the 1st year of marriage. She had a complicated pregnancy, but as she says, "by the grace of Allah," she was blessed with a healthy baby boy who they named Sharaf. Firdos was delighted. The marriage was never very great, but Firdos coped, assuming that all relationships have challenges and living in joint family's needs adjustment. The real problems in her marriage started after about four years when her husband

would stay out the whole night and come back home only in the morning.



He would come home, go to sleep, wake up at 2 pm, and then go to the office. When she started objecting to it, the physical abuse started. She appealed to his parents to help, but they suggested that the fault possibly lies with her. During this period, Firdos conceived twins, but she miscarried on account of all the stress and violence. Firdos then got to know that her husband was in relationships with multiple women. She kept trying to make things work for the sake of their son, but all her efforts failed.

After eight years of marriage in 2014, Firdos decided to walk out of the union for Sharaf's and her own sake. As per the rules of Muslim marriages, a woman gets nothing if she takes the call to end a marriage. She walked out without

a single rupee of support from her husband. When she was leaving, her husband stood next to her and taunted her that she could not earn even 10 rupees and there was no way she would be able to raise their son on her own. At that moment, Firdos decided she will show him and the world what a woman can achieve if she set her mind to do it. She would fend for herself and her child and prove that no one should dare take a woman for granted just because she adjusts and compromises to make things work.

Her parents, her brother, her sister, and her sister-in-law supported her decision and never let her feel that she is alone. She returned to her parents' home with Sharaf to start a new life. Her father is the real hero of Firdos' life. He was her biggest support in every way. He convinced her to think positively and move on with courage. Sadly, Firdos lost her father in a tragic accident a year after she returned home with Sharaf. It was like she was stuck in an awful dream, and everything seemed unreal.

This was the most challenging phase of Firdos' life. She says, "When my father left us, I tried so hard to be strong for my mom and every member of my family and show everybody how resilient and

tough I was. But without his presence, I always felt that emptiness in me. The toughest time for me was when I really needed to talk to my father for advice, and all that was left were memories. When life got tough, and I needed his strength and his guidance, I felt so lost and alone. Even today, and I confess this honestly, I usually know what he would say or want me to do even though he is not here to say it. He resides within me."

Firdos continued with her education by correspondence and started working at Percept Live Pvt. Ltd. as a Coordinator. This was her introduction to corporate life.

After graduating, she started work with Space India Pvt. Ltd., a Real Estate company. She began with tele-calling and gradually also started attending to clients. Her next job was with Green Bricks, where she joined as a Sales Agent, and she realized that she thoroughly enjoys meeting people and interacting with them. She was now clear that she wanted to grow in the Real Estate Sector.

Firdos' friend told her about ANAROCK and suggested that she interview for a job in the Navi Mumbai office. She says she is so

thankful to her friend for the suggestion because joining ANAROCK allowed her to work with great people and a fantastic team. She says, "the culture is truly inclusive, incredibly empowering, and the firm's core values align with mine. It is a pleasure to work for a company that is growing in the right direction and takes care of the employees."

There has been a happy development in Firdos' life; she recently married with her family's blessings. Entering a new relationship after what she has been through was both intimidating and exciting. She is older, more mature, and has been through so much. She knows what kind of relationship will work for her and has a clear understanding of her boundaries and the level of independence she needs.



Firdos says, "Today, I can confidently say that I am completely healed from my divorce. Now I am happy with someone who cares for my child and me; he makes me truly happy; he respects my past and motivates me to become more successful and challenge myself to do better each passing day. Thanks to the decisions I made, my son has grown up to be an understanding, happy and mature young 14 year old."

What is her advice to other women?

"If something doesn't sit right with you, it's important to know that it's okay to walk away and find something which suits you and

enriches your life. This may sometimes mean walking away from certain people, environments, or places. While this can be difficult at first, new beginnings can and often do follow challenging endings. It takes guts and courage to walk away from something which conflicts with yourself, but in the end, it's always worth it."

If you have a daughter how will you bring her up?

"I will educate her and allow her to make her own decision in life."

Your secret of success at work?

"Have confidence, work hard, be in constant learning mode and be ready to struggle and work hard."

Sachin Nivrutti Pawar,
*(Assistant Vice President, Residential Sales,
Navi Mumbai) SAYS:*

"It's a pleasure writing about Firdos. Her success is primarily due to her calm demeanour in every situation. She is quick to grasp new concepts and soon becomes an expert on the subject. She is extremely efficient and excels in whatever she takes on. Her charming and go-get-it attitude enables her to engage her customers brilliantly. I wish her good luck for her future."



08

AS YOU BECOME MORE SUCCESSFUL THE GENDER BARRIER DISAPPEARS. THE CREDIBILITY CHALLENGES THAT YOU HAD DURING YOUR GROWING UP YEARS START DISAPPEARING WHEN YOU START DEMONSTRATING SUCCESS.

*Kiran Mazumdar Shaw,
Chairperson and MD - Biocon Limited.*



GUNJAN CHAWLA

*Senior Manager, Strategic Advisory &
Valuations, Gurgaon*

Gunjan was born in a middle-class Punjabi family, where having a son is considered a must. She has an older sister who is a special child. Her father worked in the cement industry in a small village in Rajasthan called Gotan near Jodhpur, where her mom faced social stigma daily for having two daughters, one being a special child. Her parents fought against all the societal odds and were determined to give their daughters a nurturing and happy life. They motivated Gunjan to pursue her dreams vigorously, which has been the driving force for her throughout her life.

Since her father started life in the Navy, he encouraged Gunjan to take part in sports and extra-curricular activities in addition to focusing on her studies.

As a young girl, Gunjan's main aim in life was to excel in her studies and make her parents proud. In class 11th, she decided to pursue IIT-JEE. When she could not crack it, while in the 12th, her parents decided to send her to Kota for a year to prepare for the entrance exam.

Kota was challenging for Gunjan, being away from the family and coping with the gruesome pressure at the coaching centre. She managed to pass IIT-JEE but could not get a rank that could fetch her preferred choice of computer science. That was a disappointment. Meanwhile, she appeared for other exams and managed to secure a seat in Information Technology in PEC. However, her dream was to go to an IIT, so she joined IIT Roorkee in 2004.

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**Embrace change
and live life to the
fullest.**

- Gunjan Chawla

Exposure to a new world

Coming to Roorkee was the best decision of her life as she met the love of her life, her future husband, Prakhar, here; he was her classmate.



It was her first day in the architecture class, and the professor asked the class to draw straight lines in their drawing books. This exercise continued for the next week, and every student in the class was frustrated and wondering if they had joined IIT to draw straight lines after studying complex formulae for physics, maths, etc.!? However, gradually, things started falling in place, and she started liking the courses and made some of the best friends of her life. 4.5 years at Roorkee, especially in architecture, taught her some of the most important lessons of life, such as "load lena se kuch nai hota" (don't stress because of "load"), "be confident,

abhi toh raat ke teen hi baje hain, subah tak submission ka kuch na kuch to kar hi lenge" (the night is young, it's just 3 am, the submission will get sorted by the morning)

While she was studying at Roorkee, her mother suffered a brain hemorrhage and she actually lost her memory for some time. That was the most difficult and stressful phase of Gunjan's life as her mother did not recognise even Gunjan for a few days.

The beginning of a roller coaster journey

On graduating, Gunjan got a job in a design engineering consultancy firm in Pune, where she worked for a year. This was again a totally new experience for her because she handled the entire move to Pune independently with no support from her parents. Here, she got her first experience of working in the corporate world.

After a year of design engineering, she realised that this is not where her heart lies, and so she decided to get some practical exposure, which is when she joined JLL in 2010 in the Project Management and Development Services (PDS)

team. On her first day at the site, when her Project Lead asked her to take rounds of the site, the client came in and told her, “beta aap yahan se jao, aap se yeh labour control nahi honge... inse doosri bhasha mein baat karni padti hai” (you won't be able to control the labour at this site, they understand a language you won't be able to speak. It's best you go). That was a very depressing start, but her manager backed her and explained to her that she would succeed if she approaches her work with a professional attitude and sticks to doing what is right. There was no looking back from that day. She continued working at the same site and managed to earn the respect of the client's team and her own.

After a phase of doing site-based work, she decided to join the “Centre of Excellence” team of PDS, where she got tremendous opportunities to explore and implement new ideas, and along with her team, came out with various tools and templates which are widely used by PDS and the other teams even today.

Meanwhile, she got married to Prakhar in 2013. Her father was a little reluctant, as it was an inter-caste marriage, and she was the first one in the family who was

taking such a step. However, Prakhar and her friends from Roorkee pitched in and helped both the families understand each other.

While working in the Centre for excellence, she also got an opportunity to assist the Development Advisory Team, where she worked on the technical aspects of Greenfield projects. During this phase, she got a chance to explore the kind of work done to work with the Strategic Consulting team, and that's when she decided that Consulting is what she wants to pursue next.

She approached Gaurav Wahi to join his team; he was the North India head of consulting team at JLL at the time. He was a little apprehensive as Gunjan had no consulting background and hence gave her a feasibility assignment to test her. She put in her best to deliver the project and did such a good job that she got a role in Consulting. She was lucky to have Gaurav as a mentor who gave her immense opportunities to work on a range of niche real estate assignments.

Juggling multiple responsibilities

Her daughter Manasvi was born during this time. Consulting being a demanding role, she got support

from her team and got full support from her parents and in-laws. Her parents and sister moved in with her to help with the baby so that she could continue focusing on her career.

For all new mothers, resuming work six months after pregnancy is very tough. However, Gunjan was blessed with an amazing ecosystem that enabled her to work. There were times when she had to work late at night in the office, and her daughter used to visit her in the office.

After three years with the consulting team, she moved to Bengaluru as her husband changed jobs. That was a significant cultural change for her, both on the work and on personal fronts. Fortunately for her, her parents and sister moved with her, but Bengaluru did not work well for the family. One after the other – her mother, father, and sister fell ill. Gunjan struggled to manage work and home, there was a lot of stress, and she started thinking about quitting her job. However, Prakhar, who is always her greatest strength, supported her fully. He always supports her not only in achieving her professional goals but stands by her like a rock to fulfil her personal responsibilities of taking care of her parents and sister as well.

Riding on the wave full of new opportunities

When she heard that Gaurav had joined ANAROCK, she decided to speak to Gaurav to be a part of his team. She started work in the Bengaluru office, but as soon as her husband managed to get a job in Delhi, she moved back. Each day since then has been a pleasant challenge with unique opportunities. She feels lucky to be a part of ANAROCK, where everyone works as a family and understands each other's personal and professional commitments. She was also selected to be part of the ANAROCK mentorship program earlier this year. She says that her mentor Smita Agarwal helped her gain tremendous confidence, especially in dealing with clients.

Reflections: About gender

In Gunjan's experience, a woman has to put in much more effort than her male counterparts to prove her mettle and capabilities and break the bias against women in fields such as project management, which are usually considered suited only to men. In her 10-year career in real estate, she has witnessed multiple instances of discrimination, where gender is given more weightage than knowledge or experience.

There was one such project where an MNC client was not comfortable having her as the project lead; they thought the project was too complex for a woman to lead. The project was completed successfully, and the client was so happy that the project lead for the second phase was another woman from the team.

About growing up with a “special” sibling

Her parents, especially her mother, faced many challenges because the society was not ready to accept a special child like her sister. In her younger days, Gunjan was also shy and embarrassed in accepting her sister at times. She didn't know how her classmates would respond. However, her father never discriminated against both the daughters and inculcated the same values in her. He taught her to understand her sister's special needs and fight against the social stigmas.

On the personal front, Gunjan loves to do experimental cooking, likes to drive long drives, and explores new places with her family. In her free time, she likes to read books to her daughter and do some art and craft activities



Gaurav Wahi,
(Director, Strategic Advisory & Valuations)
says:

"Gunjan is a thoroughly seasoned real estate professional with in-depth expertise in niche real estate research and has a great passion for her work. She is gifted with excellent multitasking abilities, is always available for support, and leads the team by setting her own examples. She empathizes with her juniors and inspires them with her courage and strength of character. Her expertise, trustworthiness, and amicable nature make her a "go-to person" for guidance and support."



09

MOST OF ALL, LEARN, AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. THERE'S NO SURER PATH TO CONFIDENCE. AND WITH CONFIDENCE COMES BETTER PERFORMANCE; YOU AUTOMATICALLY MINIMIZE THE RISK OF FAILURE. EQUALLY.

Naina Lal Kidwai, Independent Director and Former Country Head – HSBC, India.



LACHMI THAKUR

Senior Associate, Residential Sales, Bengaluru

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I will grow and reach a position where I can lead a team.

- *Lachmi Thakur*

My parents played a big role in where I stand today. I am eternally grateful for all that they have done for me and pray to God that my parents stay strong and live long and healthy lives. My mother is the “iron lady” of the family and is my biggest source of strength. She taught me that being financially independent is the most important thing for a woman. She taught me to keep a positive outlook and know that there will be obstacles on the path to success.

My family belongs to Hamirpur in Himachal Pradesh, which is referred to as “DEVBHOOMI.” My father joined the Young Boys Army Bharti in the Indian Army in 1961 when he was just 14 years old; he fought as a soldier in Dogra Regiment in both the wars with Pakistan and retired in 1978 when he was only 30 years old. Immediately after retirement, my

father moved to Mumbai with my mother and my oldest sibling. As he did not have any job at that time, he started work as a security guard for 200 rupees a month. My two sisters and I were born in Mumbai. I am the youngest.

My mother had not managed to complete her schooling because she was 13 when she got married but managed to supplement the income of the house by sewing garments, a skill she was well trained in. My father then worked at the Ambassador Hotel in Churchgate in the security department for some time until he got selected in the security department at the Mumbai airport. After a few years, he got selected in the Fire Brigade department at the airport. After working for 25 years at the Mumbai Airport, he retired in 2007. Things were tough initially because my parents had to

support their four children and other responsibilities. My father being the eldest son, also needed to support my grandmother, his sister, and his physically challenged brother. My parents managed all this with the army pension, his salary, and my mother's earnings. My father would leave home by 5 am every morning and cycle to work for 2 hours to start work at 7 am.



Despite all these challenges, being the youngest child, I was always pampered by my parents and older siblings and had a good life.

Though my parents did not study much, they made sure all four of us went to English medium schools. I completed my schooling from St. Augustine High School in Nerul.

My brother and I are the only ones who went to college and graduated in Commerce. My sisters did not study beyond the 12th grade for various reasons. My older sister and I helped supplement the family income by

giving tuitions to our neighbours' children.

During the vacations, after my SSC exam, I did a job as an ICICI telecaller and was paid 1,200/- per month. When I gave these 1,200 rupees in my mother's hand, the smile on her face gave me immense joy and made me feel so proud that I was contributing to the family income. Throughout college, I made sure that I managed my own expenses from the money I made from tuition and other odd jobs. After my graduation, I did a diploma in "Tours and Travels" and worked part-time in a travel agency at a stipend of 5,000 per month. After that, I worked for SOTC Travels and Magic Holidays for a total of 5 years. I started looking for a change as I was not enjoying it very much, and I realized that my growth would be slow in this sector.

My next job with FANM (now named Homebazaar.com) as a pre-sales executive was my entry into the Real Estate sector. While working in pre-sales, I was very inspired to see the high incentives the sales team earned. I felt that it would be an excellent way to supplement the family income and

help my parents. So, after 1.5 years of doing the pre-sales job, I approached my seniors and requested a move to sales.

My manager agreed immediately as he was very impressed with my dedication and product knowledge. I was extremely proud that I was the 1st female in the FANM sales team. I made sure that I lived up to the faith that my Manager had reposed in me by giving me this opportunity. I was given prestigious projects in Dombivali like Lodha Palava, Marathon Nextwon, Runwal My City, and Marathon Nexworld. Marathon Nexworld turned out to be very successful for me; I did 55 deals in 4 months. I made sure I never asked for special treatment being the only female on the team. I put in long hours and did not leave the site if I was needed to close a sale.

In mid-2018, talks of my marriage were going on, and it was likely that I might have to move to Bengaluru. It was very clear that I would continue working after getting married, so I started finding out about Corporates in the Real Estate sector with a pan-India presence. One of my friends working in ANAROCK, Navi Mumbai office, told me about

ANAROCK and that they have offices all over India and that it is an excellent place for women to work in because of its culture. She told me about the Mandate Projects that ANAROCK does and that interested me very much.



After completing three years in FANM, I interviewed with Bappa Sir and Ankit Sir. At the interview, I was very open about the possibility of me getting married soon and would need a transfer to Bengaluru. I got the job.

I worked in the Navi Mumbai office from August 2018 and moved to Bengaluru after my marriage in January 2020.

I enjoyed my stint in Navi Mumbai and was quite successful too. I sold more than 40 apartments in Runwal. I'm doing well in Bengaluru too. I just received a letter from Santhosh Sir a few days ago congratulating me because "I alone have contributed 10% of the

expected revenue of the whole city." I feel so proud and delighted with what I have achieved.

I love working at ANAROCK because of its work culture and the equal opportunity provided to all with no discrimination whatsoever. Moreover, I love working on mandated projects as it gives me a feeling of being a part of the developer's team. ANAROCK is different from other companies because it provides a platform for solving any problem, personal or professional, one may have; we just need to speak up, and a solution will be found. The Amigo facility provided by the Company is also amazing.

I love working in the Real Estate sector and my aim over the next few years is to grow and reach a position where I can lead a team.

When I am not working, I love doing DIY arts and crafts, playing badminton, and some gardening. I also love surfing the internet.



Ankit Talreja,
(City Lead, Residential Sales, Navi Mumbai)
says:

"I still remember Lachmi's final round of interview; she was very confident, honest, and clear on her future (which I am happy to see her achieve). She has never shown any resistance to new challenges that came her way. She is very sincere with her work and takes 100% accountability. She moved to ANAROCK Bengaluru (which was also her plan since day 1) in Dec 2019 and still proves to be amongst the best talent we have. So proud of you, Lachmi."

Ashish Sharma,
(City Lead, Residential Sales, Bangalore)
says:

"Lachmi is a self-motivated and target-oriented girl. She is very focused and committed to delivering results. She is always willing to take on bigger challenges and makes sure she gets it right. She is highly competitive and ambitious, and with her hard work and sincerity, she is a great asset to any team. My best wishes for her."

10

THERE IS NO LIMIT
TO WHAT WE,
AS WOMEN,
CAN ACCOMPLISH.

*Michelle Obama,
American attorney and author.*



MARY TEDDY

Assistant Manager, Legal

Born and brought up in Mumbai, Mary grew up in the Railway Police quarters in West Bandra. Her father was a Western Railway employee (Head Constable in RPF), and her mother was a homemaker. Her brother is four years older than her. Her earliest memories are of her father having major health issues requiring frequent hospitalisation. Her father's health got worse when she was in the 10th grade. He became bedridden, and he was not in a condition to report for work. Around that time, he was transferred to Baroda, and though he did go, he had to return to Mumbai because his health deteriorated further.

Things got worse when they were asked to vacate the government's quarters since, as per the extant rules, he was not entitled to accommodation in Mumbai as he

was transferred to Baroda, a different zone. The family had to immediately shift to a single-room rented tenement with her bedridden father.

Life has taught Mary to be a strong person right from her childhood. She was 16 when they had to move from the house of her birth because of her father's illness, and it was then that it became clear to her that a woman must be financially independent and empowered. Mary was 18 years old when her father succumbed to his illness. Mary took on the mantle of earning for the family by giving tuitions while her brother tried to find a suitable job. She would start giving tuitions from 7 am in the morning, go to junior college and then give tuitions again from 4 pm - 9 pm after class. Her brother finally managed to get a job in the Railways on compassionate

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In my experience, life will always throw up challenges, but you can overcome any ordeal provided you never give up and always have faith that there will be a better tomorrow.

- *Mary Teddy*

grounds and continues to work there till today. While Mary was always an average student in school, she did well in extra-curricular activities. She was part of the hockey team at school and competed at the inter-school level. She was also good at dramatics.



Along with her graduation from the National College in Bandra, Mary also enrolled in Davar's College, a reputed college for "Secretarial" courses, to equip herself to get a decent job immediately after graduation. She, of course, continued giving tuition to help fund the family expenses. When Mary looks back on her life, she does not think of this phase of her life as difficult or traumatic because she had seen her family face difficulties right from her childhood. She had learnt how to cope with challenges that came her way from her early days. She says the Church helped her and her family a lot, both financially

and spiritually.

After graduation, Mary worked in several multi-national companies like Aditya Birla, Reliance, Johnson & Johnson, and Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) in the capacity of a Secretary/Executive Assistant. Her last job, before joining ANAROCK, was with HUL, where she worked for almost ten years. She says working at HUL was an extremely rewarding and satisfying experience for her. With a lot of hard work and dedication, Mary and her brother managed to buy a flat in Vasai, where her brother and mother still reside. Mary got married (it was an arranged marriage) in 2004 at the age of 31 and shifted to Wadala, where she lives even now. Her husband has a shore job in the Indian Navy (Naval Armament Inspection Organisation). They were blessed with a baby boy in 2005. Things were really going well for Mary, she loved her job at HUL, her mother moved in with her to look after her son, so she did not have to look for babysitters or daycare centres. Life was good!

Then, in 2017, came what Mary describes as the most challenging phase of her life. HUL, the Company she loved working for, decided to outsource the entire department where she worked,

i.e., the "Corporate Real Estate Department." Mary was made redundant. She was shattered because she was concerned about finding another job and how the family would survive. Her husband and her son were her main source of strength at that time. They assured her that things would be ok even though she will not be earning. She calls her husband and her son her "pillars of strength."

Around the same time, Mary's husband was diagnosed with a severe spinal condition wherein he lost his limbs' strength. He was advised immediate surgery (Anterior Cervical Discectomy and Fusion), which involved extracting the spinal disc and fixing suitable implants. For Mary, this was the most stressful time of her life, being without a job and her husband's debilitating condition. Mary's life got back on track again when her Manager from HUL, seeing the difficulties Mary was facing, recommended her to Mrunal Duggar at ANAROCK. She was hired in ANAROCK as an EA in the Corporate Divestment department. She says she will always be grateful to Mrunal for providing her the opportunity to join ANAROCK.

As luck would have it, her husband managed to avoid surgery and, with the help of alternate medicine, is doing all right, albeit with some impairment. After some months, Mary was moved to the Legal Department to support the Head of Legal. Mary was open to the challenge but was also very apprehensive because she had never had exposure to legal work in her 20 years of work. Today, she is delighted and full of pride when she says that she is enjoying her work with the mentoring and support she was given. The transition from being an Executive Assistant to almost a Paralegal has been more enriching and satisfying for her.



She attributes her success largely to the faith and trust that was reposed in her by her manager. She loves working at ANAROCK and feels as comfortable and valued as she did at HUL.

She says, "In my experience, life will always throw up challenges, but you can overcome any ordeal provided you never give up and always have faith that there will be a better tomorrow." She feels blessed to have a caring and supportive husband and a doting son who is now 14 years old.

Karma Bhutia,
(Director, Legal) says:

"Steve Jobs said, "Stay hungry, stay foolish." Mary T lives by this statement. She is a very keen learner and each time raises her bar. She doesn't like to settle for mediocrity. I'm delighted and excited to see her successful transition from a business to a legal vertical, which is tough and challenging with the success rate extremely on the lower side. She is extremely diligent and honest to herself, which have contributed to her success in both her personal and professional life."



11

WE NEED WOMEN AT ALL LEVELS, INCLUDING THE TOP, TO CHANGE THE DYNAMIC, RESHAPE THE CONVERSATION, TO MAKE SURE WOMEN'S VOICES ARE HEARD AND HEEDDED, NOT OVERLOOKED AND IGNORED.

*Sheryl Sandberg,
Chief Operating Officer - Facebook.*



MEGHNA GOENKA

Vice President, Residential Sales, Mumbai

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Life is what we want to make out of it,
and there is no shortcut to success.
No matter how you feel - get up,
dress up, show up and never give up.

-Meghna Goenka

Born in Bhagalpur, a small town in Bihar, Meghna is the 3rd among four children. She grew up in a large joint family where the men ran the family business, and the women of the house looked after the home and kitchen and had no role in the decisions that the men took. Studying in an English medium all girls' convent school was the only exposure to independent thinking.

Life, till the age of 15, was beautiful for Meghna. She calls it “a bed of roses.” But when her father passed away suddenly, everything changed after that – she grew up overnight. Since then, her brother (just over two years older than her) has been her rock and biggest supporter.

Meghna was sent to boarding school in Rajasthan to complete her +2 (junior college), and it was

while she was there that she decided that she will graduate from Delhi and work and pursue a career in Mumbai. However, she had no idea what field the career is going to be in.

She got admission to IP Delhi and soon realized that she needed to earn money to supplement her support from home because she did not want to burden her mother financially. She got a tele-calling job with the company “Yellow Pages” and earned a salary of 200 per day. She says that the 200 rupees a day that she made at that time gave her more joy and pride than the lakhs she has earned in salary and commissions after that.

She also tutored children in the building she was living in to earn a little extra. With a college that demanded good attendance and

the two jobs she was juggling to meet her expenses, life was not easy. She says she “lived every day as if it was her last day.” Her small group of friends and her brother were her pillars at that time.



Like most of her peers at the time, she had no clue about what she wanted to do after BA. So, she followed a small group of her friends and appeared for the NIFT entrance exams, which she did not clear. She was so dejected and confused that she had almost made up her mind to return home to Bhagalpur when she heard about the Pearl Academy of Fashion and got admission there.

The next challenge she faced was how to fund the fee for the course. She managed to take some loans from friends, and with her small savings, she paid the fee for the 1st term, but she had no idea where the fees for the next term would come from. That's when she found out that the Academy gives

scholarships to 2 students annually. Perseverance always pays, and it did for her, too; she worked hard and managed to win the scholarship. This is, again, a moment she looks back to with immense pride even today. This was a “high” phase for Meghna; she got her 1st international trip to Germany as part of an exchange program for three whole months. This is when she felt life could not be better.

Then came the next big decision – finding a job. Many retail brands came to the campus to recruit, but she was having a tough time getting a placement. Just as she was giving up hope, she was told that there is a real estate firm called Chesterton Meghraj coming for placement, and she was advised to try with them. Meghna approached it very cynically – wondering how it made sense to enter the real estate sector after studying Retail Management. Since there were not too many options, she took the Management Trainee option that she was offered. The exciting part was that she was given a choice between Mumbai and Delhi, and, of course, it was Mumbai for her. She was finally going to fulfil her dream of studying in Delhi and working in Mumbai.

And here started a whole new and amazing chapter of her life.

Mumbai came with its unique challenges of a higher cost of living, faster pace of work, and long commutes. She travelled every day from Bhiwandi to Worli and back by buses and autos.

She realised that she can't be selling real estate in a city without knowing it well. And that's when she started traveling by local trains, she would stand by the door and memorize the stations to understand the city and the commuting pattern better.

After her move to Mumbai, her brother and some cousins also moved, and together they rented an apartment in Borivali. She laughs and says, "this was when I learnt cooking – by experimenting on them!" Cooking, partying, sharing their work experiences, and comparing who did better in annual appraisals were the highlights of their lives!! It felt like old times again, just as before she moved to boarding school in Rajasthan.

There was no looking back for Meghna since then. A lot of hard work and a combination of the right organisation, the right bosses, and a suitable work environment provided the perfect formula for

success for her. She became an extremely successful retail broker and was recognised for her relationships in the industry. She also found her life partner, Pratyush, at work. What else could she ask for?

After Meghna and Pratyush got married, they had their little daughter, Myra, in 2014. Meghna took a break for almost two years and joined Reliance Retail as an experiment. Well, the experiment did not work, and within a year, she was at ANAROCK - back home! All it needed was to tell Anuj that she was ready to come back, and she was welcomed back.

Residential is a totally new sector for Meghna, and though she had her reservations, she went ahead and took the challenge. It was not easy at first – there was a lot of anxiety and self-doubt at first, but the resilient and persevering Meghna put her heart and soul into her role and is now totally settled and happy in her role.

With Pratyush and her both working at ANAROCK and little Myra, who loves visiting the office on weekends, Meghna often wonders which one is her first home.

For her, the journey from Chesterton Meghraj to ANAROCK has been a truly memorable one. Looking back at the last 16 years of her life, Meghna smiles with satisfaction and says, "If you have worked with leaders of this organisation, you wouldn't be able to work anywhere."



Rajkumar Singh,
(City Lead, Residential Sales, Mumbai) says:

"Meghna is very emotionally engaged in her work and is totally dependable. She has taken very little time to settle into her new role and establish herself in the business. She has managed to balance all aspects of her life beautifully, and I consider her to be one of ANAROCK's core assets. Meghna is a good friend and colleague, and I wish her all success."



12

WE KNOW THAT WHEN WOMEN ARE EMPOWERED, THEY IMMEASURABLY IMPROVE THE LIVES OF EVERYONE AROUND THEM - THEIR FAMILIES, THEIR COMMUNITIES, AND THEIR COUNTRIES.

Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex.



NEHA BHARTIYA

Assistant Vice President, Residential Sales, Mumbai

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The proactive approach to a mistake is to acknowledge it, learn from it and if possible, rectify it.

- *Neha Bhartiya*

Drive, determination, and diversity have been the leading forces in shaping Neha's character, career, and place in the world. For the first fifteen years of her life, her father's transferrable job with ONGC took her family from one city to another - from Assam to Ahmedabad, from Mahesana to Mumbai. By 10th grade, she had changed eight schools and four cities.

Neha's family has uniquely diverse individuals; her great maternal grandfather was a well-renowned lawyer, a religious scholar and a social worker. Her paternal grandfather, orphaned at the age of six, was deeply involved in India's Independence movement (which explains the family's taken last name – Bhartiya). At 91 years, he is still a curious scientist, an unconventional atheist, and a social activist. Neha's father studied engineering and business

and chose to work for a government organization as he wanted to live in India and contribute to her growth and development. Her mother holds a master's degree in Political Science, is a poet and a writer, and now works as Reiki Master and Healer.

Being exposed to such a diverse set of cultures, environments, experiences, personalities, and ideologies helped instill in Neha a deep sense of wonder to explore and engage with the world. As varied as these individuals and adventures were, they all ran a common thread – they encouraged and inspired creativity, questioning the status quo, had a strong work ethic, independent thought, and contribution to society.

Neha's professional and academic background mirrors and extends

her efforts to diversify her experiences, study communications in Toronto, Canada, and finish an MBA from XLRI in Jamshedpur, India. She has worked in diverse fields such as



executive education, training and development, consulting, and even setting up her own business, and real estate.

She has consistently sought out experiences that would impact her personal and professional development. These have ranged from social volunteer programs to school politics, from setting up a small business to meditating in a silent retreat. Neha loves to paint, write poetry, and is also considering to start a blog to share her learnings about life.

However, Neha believes it would be inaccurate to assume that all her decision and experiences have been carefully planned and thought through. Instead, they have been a result of staying curious and willing to learn from

her mistakes and take ownership of her actions.

A challenging situation presented itself right after completing high school when Neha enrolled in the Bachelors of Management (BMS) program, a three-year degree course offered by Mumbai University. She was only eighteen years old and was as undecided about what she would like to do as any other fresher would be. Within a year of joining the course, she started to realize the underlying incompleteness of her course.

Neha knew she wanted to pursue something that would be more challenging and rewarding for her, so she began to look elsewhere. This was not an easy decision as it meant leaving a degree course mid-way. However, she felt that the BMS program was a mistake and the proactive approach to a mistake is to acknowledge it, learn from it, and, if possible, rectify it.

She decided to apply to universities in Canada that offered her credits for the courses she had already completed in BMS. Neha's family always encouraged her to make her own choices if she was willing to take ownership and face the consequences of her actions.

Her parents agreed to fund her tuition only for the first year in Canada. Thus, she had to support

herself either through work or a student loan post the first year. This encouraged Neha to hold student jobs ranging from being a telecaller to being a Liaison Office at an Executive Education Institute. She sometimes worked more than 40 hours a week to support herself and pay her tuition while completing an honours degree.

After graduating, working as a Marketing and Brand Manager for a Consulting firm for over 4 four years in Canada, Neha moved back to India and co-founded a small business. Her company worked with 150-women artisans from rural India to market handmade products globally. Quitting her job and using her savings to set up and run a small business was an enriching and challenging experience. Neha believes that society only progresses when the women in the society progress. Founding and running a business helped Neha cultivate leadership and entrepreneurial skills. It also enhanced her ability to deal with setbacks and her willingness to accept calculated risks.

Neha always knew that she needed to pursue higher formal education and in 2013 decided to apply to XLRI, one of India's most

prestigious management institutes. She got admission and was also elected as the 'head' of the Students Placements Committee. In this role, Neha helped mentor, coach, and place over a hundred classmates while maintaining a full course load. This year-long leadership role continues to be a source of great pride and inspiration to her. In this role, she was allowed to excel in a leadership role and make a positive contribution to her school and community. She not only found a great network of people through this process but also found her closest friends.



Post her MBA program, Neha was keen to work in the real estate sector as it was a growing field going through a metamorphosis. This sector was getting bigger and organized and offered tremendous growth and learning opportunities for young professionals. She was quickly recruited, coached, and mentored by Raj Singh and Fatima

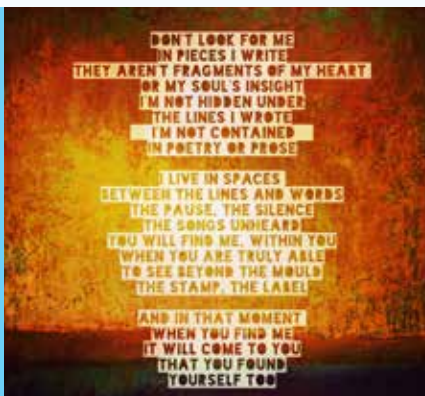
Saidi for the Mumbai Luxury Residential team at JLL.

This experience at the Exec. Education Institute was invaluable because her role involved attending all the programs meant for corporate executives and get paid for it while learning so much. Working and fending for herself helped her build a great sense of independence, discipline, responsibility, and self-confidence in herself - she considers this the most incredible gift her parents gave her.

She says, "As leaders, I could not have asked for more. They offer unending support to their team members; are willing to work with you through every obstacle, and their vision and ability to grab opportunities are unparalleled in the industry." Under their leadership, Neha quickly learnt the ropes of the business and became one of the most successful real estate agents in the firm.

A true twist of faith occurred when a couple of years ago, Neha was hit with a very challenging health issue that significantly impacted her ability to continue working in the traditional 9 to 5 setup. However, she was determined to keep going, and she considers herself "fortunate to work for leaders and for a firm that had the empathy and vision to accommodate her situation.

"During a personal one-on-one meeting with Anuj Puri, Neha says, "Anuj personally encouraged me to continue pushing through and motivated me to keep going and assured me that our firm lives by the mantra of "Values over Value." His empathy and encouragement were humbling and inspiring at the same time and made me commit to the success of the firm and focus on productivity and adding value for the firm even more." She adds, "Of all the experiences I have had, places I have worked for, and people I have met, I am the proudest of and the most grateful for being a part of this ANAROCK family. I love being a member of this dynamic firm, and I look forward to continuing to contribute to the success of my team and my company."



Neha regrets that due to her health issues, she has not been able to accept the responsibility of leading a team even though Raj and Fatima keep pushing her to do it. She would, however, love to mentor and coach junior team members.

In her free time, Neha loves to travel to new places; she is a voracious reader, enjoys painting, writing poetry and cooking a meal for her loved ones, hanging out with friends and family, and playing cricket with her younger brother.

Fatima Saidi,
*(Senior Vice President,
Residential Sales, Mumbai)* **says:**

"Neha brings a lot to the table. She is driven, mature, and has a strategic mindset. She has a calm and confident personality and can communicate well across all age groups and demographics, making her even more effective and resourceful. Above all, she is an excellent team player and a go-to problem solver."



13

POWERFUL WOMEN
CAN HELP CREATE AN
EQUITABLE PLAYING
FIELD.

*Rekha M Menon, Chairman & Senior
Managing Director - Accenture.*



NUTAN KHANOLKAR

Deputy Vice President, Business Marketing, Mumbai

Let Go. Let Be. Forgive & Accept. It will set you free. "Life as a journey takes one through so many phases; one meets so many different people, has so many experiences, several ups & downs.... what is important is to learn and move on. And that's the first lesson I learnt from "Aai," says Nutan.

Born in a nuclear family in Mumbai with just her parents & older sister, they enjoyed a simple middle-class life. Baba worked in a private company & Aai was a homemaker and a private tutor. Since her college days, Aai had started taking private tuitions as a hobby, which later became her profession. When Nutan was very young, her parents' marriage hit a rough phase that led to their separation. She was too small to understand what happened or even support Aai and her sister. But Aai was a

strong lady; firstly, she had no choice and secondly because she had an independent spirit. She did not look back, and with complete focus and dedication, she brought up Nutan and her sister. Nutan does not remember a single day when she had to compromise on her education, living standard, or comforts. Even today, at the age of 68 Aai takes private tuitions. Her journey continues to be a reminder for Nutan & her sister that women must always be independent and empowered.

Through school and college, Nutan was an average student. After completing B.Com from Sydenham College in 2005, Nutan was very confused on what to pursue next because of multiple career options. That's when she got the opportunity to work as a customer service/sales trainee at Chesterton Meghraj. During the 3+ years she worked at Meghraj, it transitioned

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Life as a journey takes one through so many phases, what is important is to learn and move on. And that's the first lesson I learnt from 'Aai'.

- *Nutan Khanolkar*

to Trammell Crow Meghraj and then to JLL.

Entering corporate life was a whole new world for Nutan. Everyone around her seemed so polished, well-spoken, and well-dressed that she felt nervous, out of place, and somewhat inferior. She had to learn everything from scratch, from writing e-mails to interacting with customers, peers, and seniors.

Nutan firmly believes that her favorite God, Ganpati Bappa (Lord Ganesh), was watching over her, and that's why she was blessed to have two wonderful bosses Raj & Sunita, as her leaders. She learnt the "abc" of real estate business from them; sq. ft. ready reckoner rates, stations, roads, legal documents, etc., all of it!



Gradually, she began to enjoy her work and the people and grew as a professional and a person.

After three enjoyable years at JLL, there were some structural

changes in the department that did not work well for Nutan, and though she tried her best to make it work, it reached a point when she decided to quit.

This was a challenging phase for Nutan. She was angry, broken, and felt let down. She had left her job without having any other opportunity in hand. The market was not doing well, and jobs were not easy to find. After six months of serious job hunting, Nutan managed to get a role with Lodha Group, a renowned developer.

Lodha, known to be an aggressive company, presented multiple opportunities for learning and growing. With Nutan's passion and eagerness to learn, she managed to move from sales and get a chance in BTL (below the line) marketing. Starting from zero was tough but very exciting.

Life got back on track again, and that's when she met her life partner Nikhil – it was an arranged match. Nikhil's honesty and simplicity are what attracted Nutan, and they were married soon after that. Nutan was now part of a wonderful new big family-parents, sisters-in-law, their families and new friends too.

Since the time Nutan got married, her mother-in-law has been her

biggest supporter and strength. Her mother-in-law's philosophy is clear: "My daughters also work, and if I expect that their mothers-in-law to support them so that they grow in their careers, then it's my duty to stand by my daughter-in-law too." There is so much to learn from these words of a simple homemaker. After she got married, Nutan got a better opportunity with Oberoi Realty and joined a similar role.

In the year 2014, Nutan & Nikhil were blessed with the birth of their son, Advait. Motherhood has a different experience altogether. Her maternity break was soon over, and she had to resume work. This phase of life was the toughest. The emotional stress & guilt of leaving her baby at home and going to work was unimaginable. Again, her mother-in-law's support helped her cope. Work at Oberoi Realty gave her the convenience and desired work-life balance, but it had zero growth opportunities or learnings, and Nutan began to get restless.

It was this time that she decided to explore opportunities at the recently formed ANAROCK. She was offered a role in off-line marketing for mandates which was new for her. She realized that this new role would be more demanding than her existing one

at Oberoi Realty and that work-life balance would be disrupted, but she took the challenge. Apt training and correct knowledge from her then-leader Vishal enabled her to sail through the roller coaster ride at ANAROCK. She now loves her work, and her morale is high because her work has been appreciated at multiple levels. From always working as an individual team member, she feels confident in leading a team and becoming a leader. Though the Sales team keeps trying to get Nutan to move from her current role to sales, she is clear she loves her current job function, and this is where she gets the most satisfaction. Her perseverance & patience has paid off, and she is in a happy place.



Though it can be emotionally draining trying to balance work and personal life, the flexibility that ANAROCK offers helps. She and Nikhil have worked out a good

rhythm to ensure that they focus on Advait and spend quality time with him.

In summary, Nutan feels that life keeps throwing up challenges. There were low life phases like her parents' separation, her father-in-law's demise, being jobless, dissatisfaction at the workplace, lack of acknowledgment, finding a perfect work-life balance.

However, it is the strength and support from her family and friends, especially from her mother and mother-in-law, that has helped her achieve everything she has so far. Salute to women's power.

Her mantra for success: Positive attitude, Acceptance, Belief in self and God, and managing emotional stress can take one a long way in life.



Rahul Phondge

(Chief Business Officer - Residential Services)

says:

"Nutan is strong and independent, a perfect role model who successfully wears so many hats in personal and professional life. She has a unique ability to inspire others to do better even in pressured situations and always carries a smile with positive energy. Being a quick learner, Nutan has achieved phenomenal success in mandate marketing and is a valued asset to the organization. She is popularly tagged as the 'blue-eyed girl' amongst clients and colleagues. With immense potential and the right attitude, Nutan will go a long way in her career."

14

WHEN WOMEN ARE
EMPOWERED,
A SOCIETY WITH STABILITY
IS ASSURED.

*A. P. J. Abdul Kalam,
Former President of India.*



PRIYANKA BHAGAT

Senior Manager, Warehousing & Industrial Logistics, Gurgaon

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A dream does not come easy,
but hard work will
seal the deal.

- *Priyanka Bhagat*

Here are some interesting,
thought-provoking quotes:

- I strongly believe that success is never owned, it is rented; and the rent is due every day. (Only a person who “lives” real estate would say that – right?)
- I work because I want to work not because I have to. Work keeps me going.
- I have realized that if I don't work I will be a bad mom.
- I don't try to be a Super Woman who “has it all”. I feel accomplished and secured in the knowledge that I'm doing my best.
- A dream does not come easy, but hard work will seal the deal.

The statements above are from Priyanka Bhagat and sums up what she is all about.

Priyanka got introduced to real estate very early in life. Her grandfather used to sell builder floors, and she used to accompany him on-site visits as a teenager. Is it any surprise then that she has been working in real estate for more than a decade now?

Born and brought up in a Punjabi business family in Delhi, Priyanka was raised in a protective environment. She was a headstrong yet obedient daughter who was able to navigate her way in every situation. Her childhood was her “happiest” phase, even though she saw her family go through many ups and downs. Her father has always been her role model who always wanted Priyanka to be financially independent. Although he passed away more than a decade ago, she feels he is constantly with her. Her mom demonstrated grit,

resilience, and wisdom and took charge of the family business single-handedly after his demise under challenging circumstances. Priyanka gets a lot of inspiration from her as well. She says her younger brother is the most loving, protective, and caring member of the family.



A graduate from SRCC and post graduate in finance from IMM, Priyanka has been a rank holder throughout. Committed to continuously improving her skills, she did her executive MBA after she started work and has recently completed a diploma course in Digital Marketing from Northwestern Kellogg University.

Post her masters, Priyanka bagged a pre-placement offer with Emaar MGF. While she was working at the research vertical in Emaar, she got married to Tarun. Her father passed away 20 days after her marriage, and it was the biggest loss for her. Always her Papa's daughter, it was

a challenge coping with the tragedy while getting adjusted to the new family. But Priyanka, being the strong person she is, did not sulk. Instead, she immersed herself completely into work and decided that the only way to make her father proud is to become the best in whatever she does. She is extremely fortunate that she is ably supported by her husband and both the families who have a similar vision for her in her pursuit of excellence,

Four years later, Priyanka joined BPTP in Corporate Sales. She left BPTP after over two years and had to take a sabbatical for a year due to health reasons. Her son, Aaryan, who is now five years old, was born during this time.

When Aaryan was six months old, she decided to get back to work and was fortunate to get an opportunity with JLL in the Markets (corporate leasing) division. But as luck would have it, her husband got transferred to Dubai, and she decided to move with him and had to, therefore, quit JLL.

As much as Dubai was fun and family-friendly, she was determined to work, but it was challenging as she had no Gulf experience. "Victory belongs to the most persevering," and that's exactly

what happened. She persevered and was hired by Sobha Developers LLC to manage their agency relations (corporate markets) and did exceptionally well.

After four years in Dubai, when her husband had to relocate to Delhi, she prioritized her family over everything else and made her move back to India with no job in hand yet again.

Finding a job after getting back was not easy. Whenever she was interviewed, the common feedback was that she had been out of the Indian market for too long. It was an extremely depressing time for Priyanka because many of her previous mates made promises and let her down.

Then one day, she got a call from Sukhdeep saying he had heard she is back in India and would she be interested in joining ANAROCK? Friends and well-wishers cautioned her that she needs to think before joining an "Indian" estate consultancy and that it is a big risk joining a "startup". She followed her gut, and based on the positive vibes she got when she interacted with Pratyush, she took the plunge and joined the "Industrial and Warehousing" vertical, which is a

part of Capital markets. She loves her job and is determined to succeed in this new field she is being exposed to.

Priyanka says Aaryan is the forcefield keeping the fire in her soul alive. She does not try to be a supermom. On some days, she can juggle every single ball in the air flawlessly; on others; those figurative balls come crashing to the ground. Accepting the reality that nothing is perfect allows her to be both confident and humble at the same time.

She feels lucky that ANAROCK values family life as much as it does about delivering targets. It means she is never afraid to put her son's needs first when necessary. At the same time, she knows when she must step it up at work. She feels great that she has supportive co-workers who trust her and help her learn with each day passing by.

In addition to everything, Priyanka is a yoga practitioner and loves to work out. She manages to hit the gym for an hour before work or simply do floor exercises at home. In her free time, it's either Netflix or playing board games with her son.



Pratyush Pandey, (President - WIL)
says:

"Priyanka truly reflects the personality of a multitasker with a very focused approach towards business and problem-solving. She demonstrates all the qualities of a true leader; ready to learn, delegate and collaborate at all levels. Priyanka is a great professional and a great role model for the other women at ANAROCK."



15

EVERY WOMAN'S SUCCESS SHOULD BE AN INSPIRATION TO ANOTHER. WE'RE STRONGEST WHEN WE CHEER EACH OTHER ON.

Serena Williams, Tennis Player.



PRIYANKA KAPOOR

Assistant Vice President, Research, Bengaluru

Priyanka's story in her own words.
"A hands-on mother, a workaholic, and a go-getter" – that's what I can proudly call myself today.

My firm belief in the fact that 'the glass is always half-full rather than half-empty reflects my positive attitude to life and all therein. Because when we consciously cultivate positivity in our mind, we can sail through the hardest of situations. It can starkly improve our work and personal life, physical and mental health, and definitely help build stronger relationships both at work and home.

But things don't come easy on a platter for most of us, so we have to juggle all our roles at every stage. Yet, if we have the will, there'll always be a way for us to achieve a good balance.

Learning the ropes early on

Hailing from a small yet famous 'city of attar (perfume)' - Kannauj in UP - my early childhood years were safely nestled in my parent's cocoon. They eventually brought wings to my tiny flight by sending me to a boarding school in Nainital at the tender age of six. Being a small town with no English-medium schools, my parents thought it the best option, and I was lucky to get an opportunity. But as they say, it's not an easy ride always. As a child, I had seen my father work tirelessly to establish the family business of perfumes to afford my elder brother's and my education fees at the premium schools. Yet, he never complained of the financial complexities he might have faced. My mother, on the other hand, who missed formal education via an English-medium school, was hell-bent on providing us with one.

“

Today my life's basket has a perfect blend of myriad experiences - that of a professional, a doting mother and wife and, above all, a woman who stands tall to face every challenge that comes my way.

- *Priyanka Kapoor*

And thus, was laid the very foundation of my independent, forward-thinking, and fearless attitude.

Living hundreds of miles away from my parents at a young age and meeting them only occasionally during the year was tough for both of us. Still, the major positive of it was that I learned to walk the tight-rope of life independently and nailed it with a perfect art of balance.

After completing Grade 12 from All Saints School, Nainital, I pursued English Hons. from Miranda House in Delhi University. As with any parent, there was an initial reluctance to allow me to live alone in Delhi and pursue my studies – given that Delhi wasn't considered a safe haven for girls that young. However, they gave in to my wish and my brother's assurance of all being good eventually for my professional career.

All I can say is that I was fortunate to have been raised in an environment where marriage and career held equal importance, something unusual in our Indian society for most girls. That said, it was no smooth ride for me at college as a few unwarranted hiccups time and again did try to pull me down. Coming from a

more secure and sheltered hostel-life environment, Delhi culture gave me the initial shocks, with eve-teasing being a somewhat usual norm all around. Not being one to give in so easily, I tried harder to bolster my confidence and stand tall to every challenge that came my way.



Communication becomes my 'key' to success

Being an ardent fan of Shakespeare plays, I often participated in theatre at college whose themes were either a replica of those written by the great playwright himself or often picked up from real-life incidents. My strong opinions on varied topics were also reflected in the several inter-college debates that I often partook in. One of the many positives of my active co-curricular life at college was my ability to build a strong network with like-minded people and thereby

develop a penchant for writing.

It was in college that I first began writing real-life stories to be published in a section of our local monthly college newspaper, which became the voice of the youth. Though the publication lasted only a year, it left behind an indelible mark on my professional journey and gave me a distinct vision for my future goals – using a pen as my sword. I pursued Mass Communication from YMCA in Delhi and soon thereafter joined the Asian Age newspaper as a sub-editor, totally clueless that people function so differently in the corporate world compared to the secured environment I was coming from.

On the one hand, I had a vision, was determined and ambitious, creative and innovative, so that I can excel in my career; on the other, I found that discrimination at every level – gender, position, etc. was the new normal. I was left high and dry to figure everything out on my own, but the hard way.

Even while I was excelling at my first professional stint back home, I was beginning to face my parents' averseness as my timings in my job were getting quite odd

with each new assignment.

Working in media is not a regular 9 to 5 job; rather, it stretched daily till late-night up to 1 am, something that was unnerving my parents. After coping with irregular office timings for almost two years, I decided to call it quits from the media world- definitely something I wasn't happy about.

At the behest of my parents, I even gave my GMAT and sought admission to an MBA school in the US, but as someone rightly said, the path to happiness is to trust your instincts and follow your heart. And that's what I just did by picking up my pen. Ironically, I hailed from a business family, but business was not something I ever wished to get into, and I had to forgo my parents' wishes to fulfil my own.

Despite getting admission to an MBA school, I eventually convinced my parents otherwise. I came back happily 'ever-after' to my world of writing in the media but with a clause of seeking a job where timings would not be so erratic. I joined Exchange4media group (a media house) in 2004, which was set to launch a monthly real estate magazine – and this was my stepping stone into the world of real estate. Call it a pure chance; my first media interview

with a real estate stalwart was none other than Anuj Puri. And ever since, there's been no looking back.

After a stint of 9 years at Realty Plus magazine, I joined the realty portal CommonFloor, which further enriched my real estate research experience.

My husband has been my pillar of strength in my professional life since the time we entered into marital bliss in 2005. Despite being an IT geek and an alien to real estate, he helped me build my 15+ years' experience in real estate writing, literally brick by brick. I also feel equally blessed to have a supportive family who tirelessly helped me manage my work even after the birth of my two beautiful daughters - Saanvi and Anika, currently aged 11 and 6, respectively. With due credit to all their collective efforts, I have been able to maintain a work-life balance with ease and élan over the years.

And, believe me, ANAROCK has only added to my professional comfort by giving me the flexibility and the convenience to work largely from home. It's been a little over a year since I joined ANAROCK, and I can affirmatively say that it's been the most

satisfying and fruitful professional journey so far. But working from home is not as easy as it may appear because it brings with it a greater responsibility to prove one's mettle. Being in the Research team and responsible for all media queries and articles, I have adhered to stringent deadlines and worked relentlessly on weekends and holidays, though within the confines of my comfort zone. The flexibility offered at work helped me bring forth the best of my capabilities, which eventually is benefitting benefitted the organisation.



Besides meeting my SoV targets at work, I love to swim or hit the gym regularly or spend quality time with my family and, if time permits, get my hands to do some gardening in my little balcony at home. I love to travel beyond boundaries and continue reading books because I firmly believe that I am still learning, something which is everlasting. But what I do know is that I don't have

to prove anything to anyone because it is my work that will do the proving.

Yes, no denying there has been sacrifices and compromises all through my journey - by way of pay-cut to earn more flexibility at work or even the guilt of spending less time with children when they are in vacation mode. Like any professional, I too wanted to accelerate my career growth, but the urge to balance home-life definitely put brakes time and again. That said, I'm happy that I made the given choices because today, my life's basket has a perfect blend of myriad experiences – that of a professional who is doing fairly well at work, of a doting mother and wife, and, above all, of a woman who stands tall to face every challenge that comes my way.

Prashant Thakur,
(Director, Research) says:

“Priyanka has set a very high standard of work ethic and is always eager to take up new challenging assignments. She is a great team player who takes numerous initiatives to train the junior team members and ensure that their reports meet the required standard. As her manager, it is an absolute pleasure working with her.”



16

WHEN WOMEN AND
GIRLS GET AHEAD,
EVERYONE DOES BETTER.

*Justin Trudeau,
Prime Minister of Canada.*



RASHI MARWAH

Senior Manager, Business Marketing, Noida

“

Always listen to your inner voice. Trust yourself the most. Most importantly, never shy away from voicing your opinion.

- *Rashi Marwah*

I learnt a few things at a very early age:

- Always listen to your inner voice
- Trust yourself the most
- Keep working hard
- Most importantly, never shy away from voicing your opinion
- The worst that can happen is that you can go wrong; it will just serve as a learning for doing better next time.

These were the mantras Rashi's Dadiji (paternal grandmother) taught her. Both Rashi's grandmothers have played a significant role in making Rashi who she is. They have been her mentors and guardian angels. Her Daadi was a state level-badminton player and had to give up once she got married. Her Naani (maternal grandma) is 80+ years

old and is currently the President of the Women's Cell Council in Punjab. Such amazing role models!!

Born in Pathankot, Punjab, Rashi is the only daughter in the entire joint family. She has one sibling; a younger brother. Rashi's Daadi was the family's matriarch, and she made sure that Rashi got a protected and safe environment to grow up in. Rashi's father's office staff, her brother's and cousins' friends were not allowed in the house. Rashi was always escorted by a maid even when she went for tuitions and other activities.

So much so that, once, when her Daadi was away visiting family, her mother allowed Rashi to go for a school trip. Rashi was brought home at midnight as soon as her Daadi got to know.



The family moved from Punjab to Noida when she was just in class 4, and Rashi was admitted to DPS – Noida. She was always good in academics and excelled in extra-curricular activities like skits, debates, and dance. Because all women in the extended family pursued medicine, it was assumed that Rashi would do the same. In fact, Rashi had also convinced herself that she would become a dental surgeon. In class 11, her teacher called her for counselling and asked her, “Are you sure about taking up medicine” to which she replied, “Yes,”; but the question kept bothering her after that.

She cleared her entrance exam in the 1st attempt and got selected in a renowned medical college in Pune. It was while she was standing in the admission hall that she turned to her father and said, “Papa, I don’t want to do this; let’s go back.” Her mother and the family tried their best efforts to change her mind, but she was

clear. She confesses that part of the reason she backed out of going to Pune was that she could not bear the thought of being away from home.

It was at this point that Rashi took charge of her life. Her father gave her wings to fly, and her mother ensured she remained grounded at all times. Her brother stands by her through thick and thin. He is even her house spy who lets her know whenever there is trouble brewing for her so that she can prepare herself in advance.

So, Rashi pursued a B.Sc. in Biotechnology at Amity University, followed by an MBA in International Business Management and Marketing. Throughout college, Rashi was equally active in doing debates & skits and learning foreign languages, etc.

She narrates an interesting incident about her multiple interests. While she was preparing for her B.Sc. finals, she got selected as a delegate for INBUSH (International Business Summit), which needed her to travel abroad within a week. She went ahead and participated in the Summit and even missed one exam. She won the 3rd best speaker award among 100 international delegates. Of course,

she got a compartment and had to reappear for one exam, but this little fact is still a secret between her mother and her. Rashi got placed at Decibel Media from campus, and she got permission to take up the job on the condition that she would quit after a year and join her father's business. This was a Sales job, and it meant that Rashi had to move around in the Metro and Autos during the day; this fact was again a secret between her mother and her. Thanks to great friends and colleagues, she managed to learn how to move around the city without her car and driver. This job taught her the basics of corporate life, and she was blessed to have great mentors. She left Decibel after 18 months because by then, she was clear that Sales is not her calling. She also managed to convince her father that she does not want to join his business and that she wants to be part of the corporate world.

For the next 4 ½ years, Rashi worked at PropTiger, which was a startup at that time. She was the sole member of the Marketing team and worked directly with the Founder. The highlight of this new role was that she would present the marketing plans to the Board of Directors. Gradually the

Marketing Department grew, and there were senior people recruited to head the department. The merger with Housing.com happened, and there was a lot of chaos. Rashi also started developing health problems at the same time. Rashi decided to take a break and recover and recharge her batteries.

After six months, Rashi was restless and wanted to get back to work, but she found it extremely difficult to find a suitable role. She felt her experience was just not being recognized. She was extremely demotivated and started feeling that her career was going nowhere.



Then she read about ANAROCK and that Rahul Yadav had joined Anuj. Strangely, she had a premonition from that time on that she would find a role at ANAROCK, and she was right. As luck would have it, Rahul Yadav did contact her for a role in Digital, but since it

was based in Mumbai and Rashi did not want to move, the conversation ended.

A month later, Vishal Sharma called her for a role in marketing. He did not know that Rahul had already reached out to her earlier. He got her name from a consultant. It was destined to be.

This is what Rashi has to say about working at ANAROCK: "My tenure in ANAROCK is only filled with multiple opportunities to grow. Every month, as a part of the business marketing team, we are gunning for winning new mandates across the cities I work in; it's a roller-coaster ride filled with the experience of a lifetime. What makes us strong is our "one team, one goal" attitude, be it sales or any other support function; they all are just a call away to discuss and resolve any challenge.

On being assigned as Maven for Noida & Ghaziabad, I got an opportunity to become a confidante for many young female colleagues and make friends with so many talented, bright sparks. Our Mavens meet is always an event we all look forward to, to celebrate womanhood. Our day is only full of music, food, dance, and many unheard stories.

Anybody who works hard and is dedicated to their task never goes unnoticed in ANAROCK; there are equal opportunities for all without any discrimination. We as an organization are always up to something new and innovative, trying to make a difference in the industry. Our routine is never monotonous. Every day there is a new task with all sorts of new learnings.

What makes ANAROCK different from my previous organizations is that everyone here is approachable irrespective of their designation and role, ready to guide and mentor. Since that's the culture at ANAROCK, I, too, am inspired to practice the same when anyone reaches out to me for any help or support. It feels like yesterday when I joined, even though I have completed three years; I still believe it's just the beginning, and I have a long way to go."



Rashi's interests range from fashion & accessories to gymming, music, and dancing. Everyone who knows her is aware of how her bright smile lights up a room when she enters.



Rahul Phondge,
(Chief Business Officer - Residential Services)
says:

"Rashi is an exemplary performer and a wonderful individual. She has the knack for understanding and finding a solution to the problem statements that need to be addressed. She has been an asset to the team; a top performer has always prioritized ANAROCK's culture in her work and dealings. She is a good help to cross-functional teams as well because of her groundwork and research across all projects in NCR."



17

I SALUTE EVERY WORKING WOMAN
& ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THEIR
SUCCESES HAVE REQUIRED A
MUCH GREATER AMOUNT OF
EFFORT THAN THEIR MALE
COUNTERPARTS.

*Anand Mahindra,
Chairman - Mahindra Group.*



RIDDHIMA BAJAJ

Senior Manager, Human Resources, Noida

Born in a Brahmin family, Riddhima grew up in the hilly, peaceful, serene environment of Nainital. With two older brothers, she was brought up under the strong influence of her mother and grandmother as she lost her father when she was just three.

At home and at her convent school, she faced no discrimination, while in the society where she lived, women were not encouraged to dream or have any career aspirations. At school, Riddhima was not only a good student; she was actively involved in debates, dances, singing contests, and sports. She was selected as cultural secretary of the school in 8th grade. After school, she faced a dilemma. She could opt to do medicine and spend 5+ years continuing to depend on her mother or study

along with work and become independent. Riddhima chose the latter. She did her research through newspapers (there was no Google those days) and packed her bags to move, but it took her six months to convince her family and fight the opposition at home before she was allowed to move to Delhi at the age of 17.

Her initial months were tough. The big city was overwhelming; the air, the people, everything about it. She started her undergrad studies in English Honours through correspondence and managed to get a job in a BPO as that was the best option available. She worked 18-19 hours, seven days a week. She did not let her family know how homesick she felt and how difficult life was because it was her decision, and she was determined to make it work.

“

My teachers called me overconfident,
my society called me a rebel,
my colleagues called me over ambitious.
All this negativity made my resolve to
succeed even stronger

- Riddhima Bajaj

Regardless of all the challenges, 17-year old Riddhima did exceptionally well at her work. In 2004, her salary in her 1st job was Rs.4000/- and she earned Rs. 20,000/- as incentives. At the age of 19, she led a team of 30, aged between 27 to 30. She made sure her bosses never told her team members her age.



Before joining JLL Residential in 2016, Riddhima worked with HCL, Barclays, Earth Infra, and Airwill Real Estate. She also did her MBA in HR by correspondence. She met her husband Ankit while working in HCL and managed to convince her family to allow her to marry a Punjabi – the 1st intercaste marriage in the family. She now has a 6-year old son Rian, who is the light of her life. Riddhima says that she has met amazing mentors through her career, and she calls them her saviours. The workplace for her has always been her second home. She takes a lot of pride in being associated with

ANAROCK and considers herself fortunate to be working with such great people and such inspiring leadership.

She wants to become a social entrepreneur in the future and has a business plan ready. In the long run, she aims to make money, but she also wants to make a difference in people's lives. She would like to do something in the area of fitness for women or skilling women for jobs in Tier 3-4 cities of India.

Riddhima's hobbies: Fitness – loves spending time at the gym and spending time with her son, and reliving her childhood through him.

Her message to fellow women colleagues: We are individuals first before we are daughters, sisters, wives, mothers, etc. Please invest in yourself. You will never be able to make the world happy if you are not. As a woman, we should never have to choose between family or career. We can choose both - it is difficult, but it is manageable. Make your own decisions, so your failure and your successes are your own. We need to be around people we respect, people who understand, respect, and value us.



Shuchi Choubey,
(Head HR, Residential Services) says:

“Riddhima has been a cornerstone of HR practice in ANAROCK. She has been part of the original team that laid down the foundation of this organization. It was she who helped set up not just Noida, but Gurgaon, Delhi, Ghaziabad and Kolkata geographies. Her clarity of thought and maturity are her strongest points - she is my go-to person when I am looking for some sensible advice. She has all the qualities one would want in a strong HR business partner.

I don't think I ever shared this with her and this may be a good platform to do that – Riddhima, I look forward to our “on the way to office” morning calls!!”



18

A WOMAN WITH A VOICE IS, BY DEFINITION, A STRONG WOMAN."

*Melinda Gates,
American philanthropist and
former GM - Microsoft*



RITVIKA SETHI

Principal Consultant, HVS-ANAROCK, Mumbai

“

I've learnt that goals improvise, and dreams constantly change.

- *Ritvika Sethi*

A big part of who I am and where I am today roots from my childhood. My parents worked with hotels and got transferred very often. We moved to new cities every other year, and it was very adventurous. I grew up watching them spend hours at the hotels they worked at and was always extremely fascinated with the operations behind the scenes. We lived in many cities across India, including Ooty, Madurai, Goa, Jaipur, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Gurgaon, and Mumbai. My sister Rhea was born eight years after me in Jaipur, and we adopted Brandy (our Labrador) from Hyderabad. I recall some of my best memories from when we stayed in Goa. We were put up in the hotel apartments for a whole year. That's where 7-year-old me had begun to understand the various departments that worked together in a hotel. I knew most of

the staff by names, I had met all the regular guests at the hotel, the beach next door was my designated play area, and the mini-bar snacks were my biggest weakness! It's safe to say that I had my very own "Dunston Checks In" phase for a while.

I had quickly learnt that hotels only seemed glamorous from a guest's point of view. It was hard work, busy weekends, and very long days for my parents. As a consequence of transferring to so many cities, I changed eight schools before finally going to boarding school in class 7. It was confusing to start new schools' mid-semester and leave my friends behind each time. I learnt and adapted to many different styles of curriculums, but it was only when I went to a boarding school that I had a stable school life. The best six years of my life.

By class 9, I knew I was going to work with hotels just like my parents did. Professionally the dream was to be a respected, successful, and beloved General Manager (GM) of countless hotels, much like my dad. Personally, I hoped to inherit my mum's strong and independent take on life and her charming personality. 14-year-old me had hacked it. My formula was basically a perfect combination of everything I knew of my parents. Soon, I was in college at the Taj Institute of Hotel Management in Aurangabad, pumped to take on the world as the next youngest female GM.

Once I got the hang of the theory part, and a couple of weeks of industrial training, my parents were convinced that I was enjoying what I was doing and was serious about my goals. To help me get a broader picture of the hospitality industry, they urged me to apply to École Hôtelière De Lausanne (EHL) in Switzerland, the best hospitality school in the world. So, I did, and when I got through, I knew this was the beginning of a whole new chapter.

The exposure at EHL was overwhelming. We were trained in every department of a hotel, including Front Office, Food & Beverage Service, Kitchens,

Housekeeping, Revenue Management, Events Management, Sales and Marketing, HR, and so on! My time there included 6-month internships in various departments. First at the Grand Hyatt Dubai as an intern with their fine dining steak house restaurant, second as a marketing intern in Belgium at the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group's headquarters, and third with the Four Seasons in Mumbai with the event management team.



My stint at Grand Hyatt Dubai was a great learning experience, but it was a hard life. I worked an average of 13 – 15 hours a day, with two 20-minute breaks, six days a week. I was constantly on my feet - waiting tables, taking orders, coordinating with the kitchen, and planning events. There were days where we'd work 15-hour shifts, sleep 3 hours and do it all over again the next day. It was exhausting and tiring. In a team of

17 (Service and Kitchen), we were only two girls, and by default, we were expected to take up hostess duties. I had to fight to learn the other aspects of the job as my team was hesitant to give me the heavy lifting and manual jobs. It took a while, but we broke those barriers, and eventually, I had done it all. Gender diversity is still a struggle in most operational roles, and I had to learn the hard way.

In my last semester at EHL, I wanted to explore the business side of the industry. I chose electives like corporate strategy, real estate finance, asset management, and so on. I had brilliant professors and excellent theoretical knowledge. This exposure played a vital role in my switch from operations to consulting.



Cut short, I graduated in 2017 and was recruited by the JW Marriott in Singapore as their management trainee. I finished my program in Singapore and worked with the



F&B Departments across their restaurants and the revenue and strategy team. It was Dubai all over again, but this time I knew what to expect! I was also involved in the pre-opening of four new restaurants at the Marriott, which was the highlight of my program. After completing two years in hotel operations, I was inclined to learn more on the hotel development front. I wanted hands-on experience in real estate finance and asset management courses that I took in my last semester.

When applying for jobs or internships, work visas were denied continuously because I had an Indian passport. It didn't matter that I had gotten a formal acceptance letter and met all the other job description criteria. Discrimination in one way or the other had become frequent, which was confusing and upsetting, but I was never discouraged.

Coincidentally back home in India, ANAROCK announced its

partnership with the global hospitality consulting company – HVS. The focus of which was brokerage, feasibility studies, operator searches, appraisals, executive search, and other hospitality sector consulting and advisory services throughout South Asia. This was the perfect opportunity for me, and I immediately applied. The most exciting part about finally joining HVS is, of course, the backing of ANAROCK and a chance to re-build the HVS brand from scratch as a startup. It also gave

me a chance to live with my family after 14 years.

Had I stayed on with hotel operations, I would have probably become a GM eventually; however, I also wanted to explore the consulting space and did not want to limit myself to one track. I've learnt that goals improvise, and dreams constantly change. I like to keep an open mind, and I don't have answers to where I want to be in the next five years. It's a complete mystery to me, but I'm very excited to find out.

Mandeep Lamba

(President - HVS-ANAROCK) says:

“Ritvika is a truly wonderful team player who has endeared herself not only to her colleagues at HVS but equally to the larger ANAROCK family. She carries an infectious energy along with a tremendous desire to take on newer assignments. She is our 'go to' person for “SPIDER,” which is the HVS global CRM and tech platform.”



19

WOMEN BELONG IN
ALL PLACES WHERE DECISIONS
ARE BEING MADE.

*Ruth Bader Ginsburg,
Former Associate Justice of the
Supreme Court of the United States.*



ROSY CONCESSO ANISHA

Senior Executive, Administration, Chennai.

“

Nothing is impossible.
We can make it possible.

-Rosy Concesso Anisha

Rosy is the most cheerful and loved member of the Chennai team. She spreads warmth and is “Aunt Agony,” who opens her heart and mind to listen to everyone’s problems.

Her life story is an example of how someone who has faced adversity and challenges through every stage of life, from the time she was born, has decided to make sure to do what she can to bring positive change to people’s lives in every way she can. You scratch the surface, and you discover the trauma and pain she has lived through.

Rosy Concesso Anisha was born in Qatar to a Malayalee Roman Catholic mother. Rosy’s father died before she was born. Her mother was alone working in a Government Hospital in Qatar. Due to financial constraints, her mother

brought Rosy to Chennai when she was just ten months old and left her with her mother and her two brothers. From then on, Rosy was brought up by her grandmother and her mother’s two brothers. Since they all lived separately, she kept being sent from one house to another depending on who was willing to keep her – that gave her the feeling of being “unwanted” at a very young age.

She met her mother once every 2-3 years and missed her terribly. Rosy was a very “good” child in every way. She was a part of the school and church choir and participated in all church activities. However, she felt extremely sad and lonely when her friends in school brought their parents along to meetings and events at the school.

When she was in the 7th grade, her mother returned to India, and her

grandmother forced her mother to remarry. Soon after her mother remarried, Rosy moved to live with her mother and stepfather. This was the worst phase of her life. The stepfather was an evil man who



was only interested in getting control of her mother's savings. Her mother needed to travel for work, and Rosy had to face her stepfather's abuse, temper & violence whenever her mother travelled. Rosy never told her mother anything because she did not want to come in the way of her mother's marriage. Rosy endured this torturous life quietly for nine years before she found her escape by marrying her neighbour at the age of 21. Rosy had only completed her class 12 exams at that time.

Since theirs was an intercaste marriage, they got no support from either of the families. In fact, her mother-in-law has never ever met her daughter Shreya, who is a

young lady today. Fate dealt a blow again when Rosy's husband died in an accident when Shreya was just two and a half years old.

Rosy was now left alone to fend for herself. She did small jobs and home tutoring. Realizing that she needs to educate herself to be financially independent and give her child a better life, Rosy did her graduation, M.A. in Public Administration, and MBA in H.R. by correspondence while looking after her daughter and herself.

In her spare time, Rosy started doing lots of social activities; she would visit homes of people in need, spend time with them and sit and listen to their life stories. She would counsel them and make them feel loved. The smile on their faces gave her immense joy.

In the meantime, Rosy's stepfather cheated her mother of her house and wealth, and she left him and moved to Aluva, a small town in Kerala. It was only after her mother left her stepfather did she share the abuse and violence she went through during her adolescent years. Rosy's mother died some years after she moved to Kerala.

After Rosy completed her studies, she worked in an IT Company for some years. In 2005, she joined Chesterton Meghraj and spent

seven years there. This was a very happy and secure phase for her. She says it was like her 2nd home. During this period, Rosy met some people who befriended her, but they too cheated her and made her go through a lot of mental and physical trauma.

Life changed dramatically for Rosy when, one day, Rosy's childhood friend approached her for help. She had three small children and was in desperate need of financial and emotional support. Ever ready to help people in need, Rosy took them into her home and adopted the three children, and started looking after them exactly like she looks after her daughter Shreya.

In 2012, Rosy left Meghraj and joined a Real Estate company run by a Teacher's Association. Here she looked after HR & Admin and also did some sales and marketing. However, GST and other problems led to a situation where she had to work without a salary for many months. It was again a time of severe hardship for Rosy and her four children. She almost went into depression. She was heart-broken and had nearly lost hope of finding a job when she saw a job posting on Naukri.com for an Admin. role at ANAROCK. She then got to know that Sanjay, who she knew from the Meghraj days, has joined

ANAROCK, and the rest is history. Rosy feels she has returned home and all is well with the world.

Rosy's children are the joy of her life, and she is so proud to share the progress they have all made in their lives. All her earnings are dedicated to educating and settling them.



Rosy's dream is to start an old age home and a children's orphanage. She wants to spend time living with them after retirement and after she has met all her commitments. Her dream is to see a society where no one is an orphan.

And what does Rosy do in her free time? She likes cooking and spending time with her children. She also gives free tuition to needy children at home and in government schools.

Priti Puri,
(Chief Administration Officer)
says:

“Rosy is a strong and determined woman. Though she has gone through a lot of hardships in her personal life, she has chiselled out to be an extremely considerate person. She has an immense quality of giving and embracing everyone’s dull moments to convert them into love and happiness. She is the fulcrum of the Chennai office and has got the entire team together. Her maturity to handle situations is commendable, and so is the warmth she envelopes around herself.”

Sanjay Chugh,
(City Head - Residential Services, Chennai)
says:

“I have known Rosy since the Chesterton and JLL days. Rosy is a sincere and hard-working team member and is always willing to support and help everyone in the office. She takes ownership of all responsibilities that are bestowed upon her and takes pride in her job.”



20

A WOMAN IS LIKE A TEA - BAG
YOU NEVER KNOW HOW
STRONG IT IS UNTIL IT IS
PUT IN HOT WATER.

*Eleanor Roosevelt,
First Lady of the United States
March 4, 1933 - April 12, 1945*



SANA NABI

City Lead, Residential Sales, Dubai.

Sana was born in a farmer's family and raised in Lucknow, UP. Ever since her birth, Sana's father has been a key influencer & motivator in her life. He has always had very big dreams for Sana.

Sana learnt some important life lessons very early in life. She was taught how to be competitive at the age of 7. Her father wanted her to study at La Martiniere Girls School, Lucknow's best girls' school, but she did not apply because her parents were interviewed as part of the process, and her parents could not speak English. Enter an angel, her Grade 1 teacher who helped Sana apply for the 2nd Grade competitive admission exam in which Sana got top scores and got admission directly without any interviews.

By the age of ten, Sana had an acute calcium deficiency and lost

movement in her right leg. That is when she realized the importance of not taking anything for granted in life. Through medication and rigorous physical training, she regained complete movement and got involved in as many extra-curricular activities as possible.

At 15, she started painting, and though many advised her to pursue art as a career, she decided to focus on her studies and let art be a hobby.

Her father has been the force behind her throughout her life. The first day he took her swimming, she was convinced she will drown. She even got her mom to persuade him not to make her swim. But he dragged her down two flights of stairs, put her on his bike, and took her to the class. If it were not for him, she would never have made it

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Life is Beautiful!

- Sana Nabi

to the school swimming team. Thanks to his determination, she excelled in academics and all extra-curricular activities. He always wanted his children to experience and enjoy all that he missed out on in life.



Her younger brother Amir is her friend and confidante, and they both support each other through thick and thin. He is younger but still mature beyond his years and a pillar of strength for her.

After topping the Grade 12 exams from La Martiniere in 2005, Sana felt that she needed to move out of Lucknow to make something of her life. She relocated to Pune to join Pune University, where she completed her Bachelors in International Business in 2008. She was the University Topper for the academic year and was also awarded the best outgoing student of the year award. Post that, she moved to Bangalore to complete her PGDM in Marketing.

Her father sold his car to pay her MBA fees.

Sana is the only girl in her entire "khandaan" who has studied so far and is pursuing a career. While her parents were advised that they should focus on getting her married, they knew she had potential and were clear that being independent was more important. Sana made her parents proud when she was recruited on campus while still doing her master's to join the Leela Group in Mumbai for their corporate sales division as an Account Sales Manager. After working at the Leela for two years, Sana joined Omkar as a Sales Manager, where she was one of the highest performers. And for her, the biggest achievement was to be able to buy a car for her dad at this point.

Because of her stellar performance at Omkar Mumbai, she was given the opportunity to open their 1st International office in Dubai in 2014 along with another colleague. She was instrumental in setting up operations and a network of channel partners for the GCC region. This helped her get an insight into the international real estate market, which is extremely helpful in her role today.

The timing of the move was perfect because this was when she met Aamir, her husband. As far as marriage is concerned, she was clear that she wanted a modern and open-minded husband who accepted her the way she was and who would let her define her own path and choices in life.

Sana's mantra for life comes from her mother. She taught her to be flexible and adaptable based on what a situation requires. And this mantra has helped her transition from Lucknow to Pune to Bangalore to Mumbai and to her current home, Dubai.

Her move from a developer to ANAROCK was a conscious decision because she likes the breadth of exposure she gets here. Being at ANAROCK has helped her expand her knowledge, and she enjoys managing her team. In fact, she has a great emotional connection with every member of the Dubai team. She feels she is the "Agony Aunt" of the office.

Sana was blessed with a beautiful baby girl, Zayra, at the same time that she got elevated to the position of the Head of the Dubai office. Sana and Aamir love to travel, explore new eateries, and watch web shows on Netflix at an astonishing pace. Sana still paints

when she gets the time and is a voracious reader. She loves fiction and thrillers. Her current favourite authors are B.A. Paris and Gillian Flynn.



Where does Sana see herself in the near future?

Hopefully, in a leadership role with even more responsibilities at ANAROCK. She says, Life is Beautiful! and her attitude makes sure it is true.



Shajai Jacob,

*(Chief Executive Officer - GCC & Country
Head – Apna Complex) says:*

“Sana is a diligent, responsible, and hardworking leader. In close to three years of our association, Sana willingly steps forward to bear responsibility for all sales and administration functions. She is the go-to for all in office. Her leadership skills of nurturing and guiding her team members are inspiring. She grooms her team effectively, to become better versions of themselves. Sana takes her business extremely personally, is very emotional about her people and her achievements. She literally gets sleepless nights, when unable to closely grasp her targets.

Even after being blessed with her daughter Zayra, her intensity has not diminished. Rather she came back with renewed vigour, even earlier than completing her maternity leave. She is also competitive, bold and aggressive in the pursuit of her plans. Her interpersonal relationships with clients are admirable. She has quite a good reputation within the Dubai real estate fraternity, with respect coming from all quarters - competition and clients. In my opinion, Sana embodies the soul and personality of ANAROCK in Dubai!”



21

THE BIGGEST BARRIER FOR
WOMEN IS THE THOUGHT
THAT THEY CAN'T HAVE IT ALL.

*Cathy Engelbert,
Former CEO of Deloitte*



SHABNAM SAYYED

Senior Associate, Residential Sales, Mumbai.

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Never shy away from hard work
and never do anything that is
unethical or unfair.

-Shabnam Sayyed

Shabnam Sayyed's mother is a role model for her three daughters. They have been inspired by the tough decisions she took at a young age to ensure a life of dignity and independence for herself and her daughters.

Married at the age of 14, Shabnam's mother walked out of a troubled, violent marriage at the age of 24 with three little daughters aged six years, three years, and eighteen months (the youngest being our Shabnam) and returned to her native place Harkul, a village in Maharashtra. She went against her brothers' and parents' advice that she should get remarried and took the decision to leave her daughters in the care of her sister to work in Bombay. She was clear she did not want to remarry and wanted to fend for her children independently.

Shabnam's Khaala (mother's sister), who was unmarried, uneducated, and physically challenged due to polio, devoted her life to supporting Shabnam's mother by bringing up the girls while their mother went out and earned to fend for them. Khaala brought up the girls with a lot of love but also disciplined them. They were never told that they could not do things because they are girls. They were even allowed to wear shorts and dress as they like in the village, they grew up in. Khaala passed away a few years ago.

Shabnam recalls that their father would visit them once or twice a year and come laden with gifts and goodies for them. She was in class 3 in school when they got the news that he had passed away.

Shabnam's mom started by working for Unilever as a salesperson selling detergents and

sanitary napkins door-to-door. After eight years, she moved to Avon as a supervisor and had a team reporting to her. Due to financial pressures and challenges in getting leave, she would visit her daughters just once a year on Eid and spend less than a week with them.

Shabnam and her sisters studied in an Urdu medium school and were very bright students and high achievers. Shabnam also excelled in sports like Kabbadi and Cricket; in fact, she was part of the Kabbadi team that competed at the district level in Maharashtra. Shabnam also sings exceptionally well, a gift she believes she got from her father; he was a great Mohammed Rafi fan.

After completing class 10, Shabnam and her older sister moved to Mumbai to stay with their mother. She enrolled in Kalsekar College in Mumbra, and the transition from Urdu to English medium along with a move from a village to Mumbai was not easy. When asked how she managed to start understanding and speaking English with the ease with which she does now, she says: "My first job which I started while doing graduation was at Kserve BPO Pvt. Ltd. where I started as a Customer Service Executive. That experience

and exposure helped significantly. Also, I started reading English novels and any books where the content looked interesting. Finally, a lot of hard work and focus was what made it happen." She was also awarded as a top performer at Kserve.

Shabnam's exposure to Real Estate started when she moved to Platinum One, where she began as a pre-sales executive for The Wadhwa Group. Because of her dedication and hard work, she was promoted to a Team Coach, where she got the chance to handle a team, a role she thoroughly enjoyed.

After she had completed over two years at Platinum One, a friend mentioned ANAROCK to her. What interested her was that her friend said the work culture at ANAROCK and incentives are very good. When she met the HR team at ANAROCK, she decided to accept the job offer when HR told her that if she works for ANAROCK and has it on her resume, she will never have a problem looking for a job in real estate again.

Shabnam enjoys her work at ANAROCK and is one of the high achievers in the team. She says that from the day she joined, she never felt like a newcomer. She

loves the teamwork and the positive environment. She says they all work as a big family and are incredibly supportive of each other.



Life is far more settled now for Shabnam and her family. Shabnam's eldest sister used to give tuitions while she was in school and later in college to help her mother financially. She then worked at Domino's Pizza and then got married and has two children, and is happy with her life. Shabnam and her middle sister, who works in an MNC, live with their mother, who is retired now, as the girls decided that she needs some looking after now.

Relations with her mother's brother continue to be strained because when Shabnam and her sisters grew up, Shabnam's mother was under pressure to get them married as soon as they finished school, but she was clear that her daughters have to study further

and get financially independent so that they never face the hardships she had to.

Both sisters now run the house and are saving money to buy a home for their mother because their mother is very clear that she wants to live independently once her daughters are married.

What does Shabnam want to achieve in life?

She is very clear she loves working in the Real Estate sector, and she wants to grow in the field. She wants to continue working even once she gets married. And, she wants to continue looking after her mother, her hero.

Some rapid fire answers from shabnam:

Q: Do you think being a woman working in real estate is a disadvantage?

A: On the contrary, I think it is an advantage because a potential client will never say an outright 'no' to a woman, so that gives an opportunity to continue the conversation and push the sale.

Q: Which book are you reading currently?

A: "Wings of Fire" by A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

Q: What's your favorite hobby apart from reading books?

A: Watching Hollywood movies. It helps me improve my English.

Q: What do you love about working at ANAROCK?

A: That I'm never afraid to ask even a silly question, I know no one will judge me.

Q: What are the life lessons your mother has taught you?

A: Never shy away from hard work and never do anything unethical or unfair.

Q: Your mantra in life?

A: Work hard, stretch yourself, be self-motivated, and have a positive attitude.



Ishaque Dossani

*(Vice President, Residential Sales, Mumbai)
says:*

"Shabnam is a shy, calm, and a composed lady who works with determination, passion, dedication, and focus. She has a winning attitude and an amazing zeal for achieving results and delivering customer delight. A great team player and a good friend."



22

BE THE CATALYST FOR
CHANGE. EMPOWERING
WOMEN, EMPOWERING
HUMANITY.

Farhan Akhtar, Actor.



SHRESHTHA PATEL

Senior Associate, Residential Sales, Pune.

Shreshtha has been part of ANAROCK since October 2017, and though this sector is totally new for her, she won the “STAR Achiever Award” within a year of joining.

“Work is worship but family first.” This is Shreshtha's mantra, and her story shows how she has always risen to take care of family responsibilities while managing to grow as a professional. That explains how and why this civil engineer moved from Real Estate Projects to teaching at an Engineering college to selling residences at ANAROCK.

The eldest of 3 children, Shreshtha comes from a family that prioritises education and strong values. The highlight of her baby days is that she won the “Best Baby of the Year 1988” when she was just eight months old.

She was a tomboy in school, and most of her friends were boys. An all-rounder, Shreshtha was at par with boys in sports, education, and every other sphere of life. This belief was and has been one of her biggest strengths.

Shreshtha did her schooling in different parts of the country because her dad was in a transferable job. She graduated as a Civil Engineer from Ahmedabad and that is where she met her husband, Dhiren Patel.

She graduated in 2009 when jobs were tough to come by but she managed to get a campus placement at Shapoorji Pallonji. Her 1st assignment was at the Lulu Mall project in Kerala. It was here that Shreshtha learnt how to cope with being alone as a young, working woman. It was tough because the environment around the site and the hostel where she

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**Work is worship
but family first.**

- Shreshtha Patel

stayed was not safe. She followed her father's advice to "never turn away from challenges" and managed to handle this phase bravely and learnt a lot in the process.



In fact, she told her father about the challenges she faced only after seven months when she was transferred to the Bangalore office. Her father was proud of how she had coped and apologised to her that she had to encounter "such men" in her life.

After two years of great experience at the Bangalore office, where she even managed to learn how to speak Kannada, she had to take a transfer to Ahmedabad to look after her ailing grandmother as her father was posted in Assam.

In 2013, Shreshtha got married to Dhiren, and since he was employed with Infosys, Hyderabad, she too took a transfer. However, they could stay in the same city

only for six months as Dhiren's mother fell sick and needed to be taken care of. Since Dhiren is the only child, Shreshtha offered to quit her job and move to Ahmedabad to take care of her mother-in-law while Dhiren continued working at Hyderabad.

It was her mother-in-law who advised Shreshtha to do M. Tech as she was not working during this phase. So, for the two years she stayed in Ahmedabad looking after her mother-in-law, she completed M. Tech and also taught B. Tech and M. Tech students at the same college. It was difficult managing household work, caretaking, and studies, but, being Shreshtha, she managed it all.

Finally, in 2016 she moved to Pune to join Dhiren, where he was posted. She took a well-deserved break for a year, settling into a "proper" married life. They travelled a lot, and she used the time to pursue her other hobbies.

She joined ANAROCK in 2017, and the rest is history. She has learnt really fast and is our star performer. She loves the work culture, the exposure, and the support she is getting. She is the maven and is a role model for the women in the Pune team.

When asked where she wants to be in 5 years?

She is clear – she would like to be heading a city as part of the Leadership team.



Aditi Watve,

(President - Investment Sales & REIT Advisory & City Lead, Residential Sales, Pune)

says:

"Shreshtha has been an asset to ANAROCK from the day she joined. She has the ability to take disappointment on the chin and soldier on to achieve results. This persistent, perseverant, and tenacious woman is a top performer in Pune. Beautifully managing her work-life balance, she is an inspiration to all of us."



23

YOU MAY NOT CONTROL
ALL THE EVENTS THAT HAPPEN
TO YOU, BUT YOU CAN DECIDE
NOT TO BE REDUCED BY THEM.

*Maya Angelou,
American poet and civil rights activist.*



SHUBHRA ROY

Assistant Vice President, Residential Sales, Bengaluru.

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We should surround ourselves only with people who are going to take us higher. If we praise and celebrate our life at every moment then life will give us more to celebrate.

- *Shubhra Roy*

She has always been told (more so by men) that she is too ambitious, and she cannot understand why they think it is a bad thing. She quotes Sheryl Sandberg, who said, "In future there will be no female leaders. There will just be leaders". She believes in this statement and is determined to achieve what she wants with great passion and compassion.

When she was born in Agartala, her mom looked at her face and said to her dad that this child would bring brightness to their life and gave her the beautiful name Shubhra.

Shubhra's mom decided to leave her job to raise little Shubhra as her dad worked with ONGC and travelled extensively. As an only child, the inputs she received from the parents were very different.

While her dad would get her toys like remote cars, helicopters and encourage her to play cricket, her mom would take her to dance and music classes. She made the most of both the inputs and was good at music, dance, debates, drama, and cricket. However, she was always much more connected emotionally with her mom.

When she finished school, her mom wanted her to be a computer engineer, her dad dreamed about her having her own clinic, and her relatives suggested that she should do a regular degree in Agartala and get married after graduating. But her champion, her mom, fought with all and decided to send Shubhra to Chennai, where she pursued what she wanted; biotechnology.

Leaving home was difficult for Shubhra, but today, she is

convinced that it was the best decision that her mom took for her, and she is grateful for the faith that her mother had in her. Her mother told her that "No matter what happens in life to always remember that she must do what she feels is right and that it's okay to fail again and again."



After her undergrad, Shubhra did her MBA from Chennai even though her parents were keen to go abroad for further studies. During placement time, a close friend said, "Hey Subbo, tomorrow American Express is coming for placement, but I don't think you should apply. Yaar, sales and that too credit card sales ladkiyon se nahi ho payega. You should apply in HR or Operations, and trust me you will do wonders."

This statement from her friend prompted Shubhra to take up the challenge and apply for the job. After five interview rounds, Shubhra joined Amex in June 2010.

She was so nervous on her 1st day at work that she called her mom 20 times. And what she kept telling Shubhra was, "hang in there - today is a wonderful day, and you have a great opportunity to prove everyone who doubts you wrong." AMEX was amazing!! Working there taught her to be strong, assertive, and focussed. What Shubhra loved most were the deal closure moments which gave her the adrenaline rush. Days were long, and life was hectic, but she learnt a lot.

Shubhra was having such a great time being successful and earning lots of incentives that she did not focus on taking care of herself at all. She went on working even though her body was telling her to slow down because she was afraid that she would fail if she reduced her pace of work. She was so scared of failure. This is where her mother stepped in and told her she needs a break and that she needs to return to Agartala to get fit again. After two years of a wonderful stint at AMEX, Shubhra quit her job & went back home.

After a much-needed one-month break, Shubhra joined a logistics company in Chennai as a business development manager. Things were very hostile and difficult for

her at this company for many reasons:

- She was the only female at the mid-management level.
- She had just two years' experience while her peers had more than 8-12 years.
- She suggested new ideas, and there was huge resistance to change.

The result was that she was constantly humiliated and made to feel incompetent. And the day came when her boss told her that she was not "fitting in" and that she should leave.

Shubhra was not one to be put down. She knew that she needed to speak up because she knew that it was her gender and age that was working against her. She went and spoke to the Country Head and shared her side of the story with him. He understood her situation and recognised that she had potential, but instead of speaking to his team and addressing their mindset, he immediately offered to relocate her to either Mumbai or Hyderabad. She took up the offer and moved to Hyderabad, a completely new city for her. Shubhra worked in Hyderabad for seven months and left because it was clear to her that the

organization's culture was not caring and nurturing for women. She is thankful for this experience because it only prodded her to achieve more and gave her the courage to always stand up for what is right.



What next in Shubhra's career?

Real estate was never a choice, but she got an immediate opportunity with Proptiger (Bengaluru) and joined as business development manager for their new B-to-B vertical selling their virtual reality marketing product. She worked in the Bengaluru residential markets for four years. She then moved to Square Yards for a new vertical - International Property Management which focused on Dubai, Australia, and London markets. She gradually fell in love with the industry and also learnt how to manage large teams. She learnt that as a leader, she must create more opportunities for her team and help them achieve their goals. All this time, her ex-boss from Amex

kept asking her to come back to his team.

During her Proptiger and Square Yards stint Shubhra started feeling unwell again – even climbing stairs was an effort for her. She took the advice the doctors gave - started going to the gym regularly and gradually. She now exercises regularly and is now fit and full of energy.

Then, ANAROCK happened in April 2018. One meeting at the ANAROCK office, and she knew this is where she wants to be. The 1st two months were tough, but now she loves, loves, loves the business model, and feels that it has immense opportunities. She has a team of freshers from campus and enjoys training them, and has a great emotional connection with them which she cherishes.

She feels “at home” in ANAROCK.

Shubhra believes that we should surround ourselves only with people who are going to take us higher. If we praise and celebrate our life at every moment, then life will give us more to celebrate. Shubhra loves reading and watching biographies of great people who achieved a lot in life and equally contributed to the

society. She also enjoys spending quality time with her close friends.

Ashish Sharma, *(City Lead, Residential Sales, Bengaluru)* **says:**

“Shubhra is an excellent leader who ensures that each team member achieves desired targets. She is a self-motivated go-getter who willfully takes responsibility and goes all out to deliver results. She is well respected and accepted by her team and within her peer group. She is a quick learner and handles clients maturely with full ownership. Her positivity and sense of humour are also admirable.”



24

HIRING AND PROMOTING
TALENTED WOMEN IS THE RIGHT
THING TO DO FOR SOCIETY – AND
IT'S AN ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE.

Carlos Ghosn, Chairman – Nissan.



SMITA AGARWAL

Group Chief Finance Officer.

Smita spent her formative years in a small town in Andhra Pradesh, where her father was posted. She and her younger brother were brought up as equals, with education getting the maximum focus. Knowing Smita, it is no surprise that she always topped her class in school and excelled in essay writing, elocution, etc.

Though life was relatively sheltered and protected at home, Smita's journey to independence started when she passed her 10th grade. She was clear she wanted to become a Chartered Accountant and not pursue engineering or medicine the way the rest of her extended family did. The inspiration to do CA came from a cousin of hers who was doing her B.Com and told her stories about the successful careers of CAs in India.

Her parents were disappointed because they too felt that "jisko kuch nahin aata woh commerce karta hai!" (those who can't do anything else opt for commerce.) They would have been delighted if Smita had said she wants to be a doctor or an engineer, but they trusted her judgement and respected her decision. Thereafter, Smita's single-minded focus was to qualify as a CA, and during this journey, her whole life changed.

After completing her 10th grade, Smita moved to Hyderabad to pursue Junior College. It was the first time she was leaving home, and though she was staying with relatives, it was extremely lonely, and the two years were tough. By the time Smita finished her 12th grade, her father had managed to get a transfer to Hyderabad, and the family was together again.

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**Life is not easy
but it is definitely
worth it!**

- Smita Agarwal

After graduating, Smita started her articleship with a CA firm, Laxminiwas & Co in Hyderabad. She handled the entire process of selecting the firm and the entire application process on her own. Interestingly, almost 30% of the article clerks at the CA firm were women. The firm's partners were very particular about their safety and made sure that they were assigned to the audit of clients where women will be respected and accepted.



It was at this time that Smita lost her father suddenly. Her father's loss was a huge emotional setback for Smita because she got a lot of her strength from him. Smita's brother was still in school at that time and her mother, who was a homemaker, took it upon herself to give both her children the best education in spite of the ensuing financial difficulties. She started a small business to supplement the family's finances.

Smita met her husband, Kamal, while at Laxminiwas & Co. He was also doing his articleship at the same firm. Once Kamal and Smita became qualified CAs, the topic of marriage came up. Smita is a Maharashtrian, and Kamal is Marwari, but fortunately for them, both families were totally accepting of the match, and with their blessings, they got married in 2005, and a new journey began.

In the meantime, Smita's brother completed his engineering from BITS Pilani and then went on to do his MS in the US, where he is settled now.

Smita had started working for an ITES firm before she got married while Kamal was posted at Saharanpur with ITC. Since it would be difficult for Smita to pursue a career with Kamal's job with ITC and a long-distance marriage was not what they wanted, Kamal moved to Cadbury and got posted in Mumbai, where Smita joined him and landed a job with JLL.

In the ten years that Smita spent in JLL, she grew from strength to strength. Starting with working on the merger with Meghraj to handling MIS, budgeting, incentives, etc., she did it all. Her boss and mentor, Parikshat Suri,

pushed her beyond her comfort zone and made her take on new challenges, which have shaped her to becoming the respected professional that she is today.

There was a phase when Smita was working such long hours and so hard that she was burning out. She decided to take time off to regain her balance. Though she wanted to resign, she was allowed to go on an "indefinite leave," and after some time, she was constantly persuaded to re-join. Thanks to Parikshat's persistence and Kamal's pushing, Smita got back to work, fully recharged and invigorated.

The move to ANAROCK was because Anuj was fully aware of Smita's capabilities and professionalism. One meeting with Anuj and the die was cast. Smita moved from a comfortable and settled work environment of an MNC and landed slap bang into a new and demanding role of heading a team in a "startup" environment. Every day since then has been a truly enjoyable challenge, and each day starts with new happenings. Smita is delighted that she got this opportunity and values the experience tremendously - it has added a new dimension to her life.

When asked about how it is to be a woman leader, she says that though she has been fortunate not to face gender discrimination at work, she sees it happening all around her. Women are scared to speak up, and men are not very accepting of women who have the courage to do so. At ANAROCK, Smita is one of the champions of the "Empower Diversity" program and keeps her ear to the ground to pick up any signals of non-inclusive behaviour.

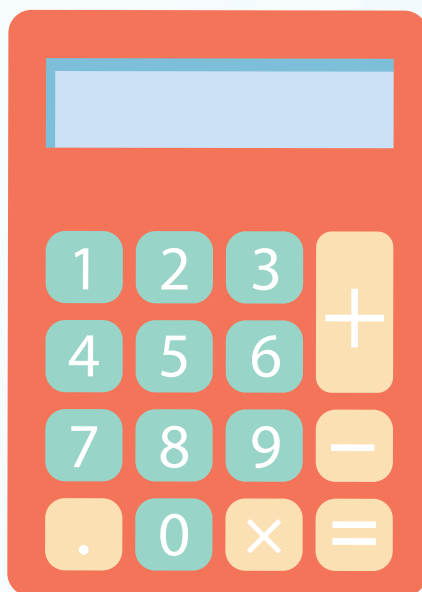
Looking back, Smita says that male mentors have played a significant role in getting to where she is today. Her job as CFO demands long hours, deadlines, deliverables, and the whole shooting match. There have been times when balancing work and family was a challenge, and there were phases during her career when she felt low and considered quitting. It was during these short phases that Kamal has been her biggest strength. His "we are in it together" mantra gave her the strength and confidence to go all out and pursue her dreams without any inhibitions and with renewed energy. Smita considers herself blessed to have a partner like Kamal.

They love to travel together, explore new cuisines, and live and celebrate life to the fullest. In the end, she says, life is not easy, but it is definitely worth it.



Anuj Puri, (Group Chairman)
says:

"Smita is a superbly methodical, intellectual, talented asset for ANAROCK. Always focused, well prepared with extremely good foresight and an ability to understand the matter/issue deeply and then work on it/resolve it proficiently; she impresses me every single time. She is an impressive leader who is always way ahead and on top of matters. An absolute delight to work with, Smita is a wonderful human being who is always there for everyone. Proud to have her as part of the ANAROCK family."



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GIVE A GIRL THE RIGHT PAIR
OF SHOES AND SHE'LL
CONQUER THE WORLD.

Marilyn Monroe, Actor.



STELLA THABITHA

Manager, Residential Sales, Hyderabad.

Stella grew up in Hyderabad in a middle-class family. She is the eldest of 4 children; she has two sisters, and the youngest is a brother. Her father, M.George was an army man, and her mother, M. Vandana was a teacher. Being in the army, her father was away on different postings most of the time, and her mother was the primary caregiver for the children.

Stella remembers how she looked forward to her father's home visits; he used to pamper them and shower them with love and presents. Being the eldest, she was also instrumental in raising her younger siblings and helping her mother with the household chores. The finer characteristics of love, caring, and sharing were instilled in her from childhood which have become an integral part of her nature today.

Post her father's retirement from the defence services; the family moved to Ramagundam in the Singareni Collieries, Andhra Pradesh. Stella's teenage years were now being shaped by the broad and bold vision of her disciplined father. She believes it was her father's influence that made Stella the brave and courageous woman she is and which equipped her to face all the challenges that life threw at her in her adult life.

Stella had great ambitions to study after school and also possibly join the armed forces, but it was not to be. Her mother fell very ill with a heart ailment that needed a valve in her heart to be replaced, and Stella had to stay at home and attend to her mother and her siblings. Once her mother recovered, and she was better, Stella had just resumed her studies,

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Courage and determination are the key ingredients of success.

- Stella Thabitha

her parents decided to get her married to Franklin.

So, she abandoned her studies, got married, and became a home-maker in Godavarikhani, a small town in the present-day Telangana. Within four years of marriage, she was blessed with the birth of her son, Chris Richards, and her daughter, Serena Vandan. All this before she was 23 years old.



After a few years, her husband moved abroad for work, and Stella moved with her children to live with her parents in Hyderabad. Her parents got her sister married soon after Stella returned home, and shortly after that, her mother passed away. Stella was now looking after her other sister and her brother, and her two children.

A few years later, Stella's father died too. Stella was now the head of her family. She managed, with support from the extended family, to get her 2nd sister married. Her brother still lives with Stella and her

2 children. Stella started work when her children started school. She followed her mother's footsteps and became a teacher in the same school where her children went. In this way, she was able to keep an eye on the children and experience life as a working woman.

Now that Stella had got a taste of economic and financial independence, she wanted to learn more and take on greater challenges. So, after two years of teaching, she joined Ramoji Film City in their Corporate Sales Division. Her tenure in this job was an induction into Corporate life. Within a year, she moved at a much higher salary to Aviva Life Insurance Company. It was at Aviva that she got the opportunity to interact with individuals who aspire to create a secure and wealthy future for themselves and their families. She learnt how to connect and interact with different types of clients across a wide social spectrum.

Gradually, she transformed herself from being an insurance salesperson to a financial adviser for her prospects and clients. After two years at Aviva, she was ready for further adventure. She had heard that working in the real estate industry is very lucrative.

This was when she got an opportunity to work with a developer, S&S Green Projects. Their project was amongst the city's highest value projects, and selling those apartments was the acid test of her capabilities. She learnt the art of presenting the project differently to customers according to their needs. Stella spent over five years at S&S and honed her professional skills.

Now she was ready to achieve her ultimate ambition of working for an MNC. Lady luck shined on her, and she was offered a role at JLL – an opportunity she jumped at. This was the start of the most fulfilling and enriching phase of her career. She was excited to be able to articulate and express herself and be given due credit for her ideation. The transparency and the open culture were like a breath of fresh air in her career. And then the migration to ANAROCK happened.

Stella feels fortunate to have been mentored by some of the stalwarts in the industry. She confesses that her success and standing in the Hyderabad real estate market is owed to many such leaders. She feels blessed and honoured to be part of a company that respects, recognises, and helps women to achieve their potential.

Today, Stella is a high performer at ANAROCK. She is a Maven and plays a big role in mentoring her team's younger members, whom she trains with utmost care and patience.

Stella has exhibited and demonstrated that courage and determination are the key ingredients of success. She believes that her vision, combined with the strength to tread on the path she has visualised with perseverance, is the secret of her success. Stella's children are now grown up. Chris is in College, and Serena is in high school. They are her pride and her motivation to keep growing and succeeding.

During her free time, Stella likes to do art and craft.



Karunakar Katti,

*(Assistant Vice President,
Residential Sales, Hyderabad) says:*

“Stella is truly an asset for ANAROCK. She is very strong and is a great role model. She manages to balance all aspects of her life, always eager to take up new challenges with a focused approach. A quick learner and a great team player, she has all the qualities of a true leader. Stella will go a long way in her career and has my best wishes.”



ANAROCK

VALUES OVER VALUE

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