



# Man of Strength

PUNEET DALMIA, MD, DALMIA BHARAT LIMITED

**P**uneet Dalmia joined the company in 1997 when liberalization was in its early stages, Gautam (his elder brother) and Puneet, inherited an incredible legacy and platform build over 84 years. The companies were highly profitable, balance sheet was super strong with zero debt and the reputation and credibility was absolutely stellar with all stakeholders.

Given the incredible growth opportunities India offered in a liberalized economy where pricing, distribution, licensing all was decontrolled, they had the

opportunity to scale up rapidly. Over the last two decades, they have grown the capacity from 1MnT to 43 MnT and are now amongst the top four companies in the Indian cement industry. "We have been the fastest growing company in the industry, over the last 20 years," states Puneet Dalmia, MD, Dalmia Bharat Limited. During this phase, he changed the operating system, keeping with the times. "We changed our management structure from Family led to Professionally led, we changed our corporate structure from Diversified conglomerate to Pure play companies and we changed our shareholding

structure from closely held to more Institutional and retail shareholders," adds Dalmia.

"While each decade has been no less than a transformation, the next decade comes at a time when India is in a sweet spot, things are looking up for our cement sector and we are at the cusp of scaling our company from a mid-size company to becoming a pan-India pure play cement company," observes the optimistic third-generation leader.

Being a big believer in empowering and collaborating, Dalmia believes in attracting the smartest people to build deep partnerships. Stating one such example, he says, "One of our plants, which made a profit of Rs 50 lakhs/day was down for a 3 week maintenance. We told plant head you work out a plan to reduce the maintenance time and take decisions as an owner of the company. One of the causes of delay was the time taken to move a large crane around the three km long boundary wall of the plant and position it at the place of maintenance. His team came back with a simple yet brilliant, which reduced the shutdown time drastically - to break a boundary wall and then redo it at a cost of Rs.70,000 and save 2.5 crores." He is a strong proponent of empowering people to drive innovation and ownership.

"When the pandemic hit in March 2020, I remember that everybody was scared, there was so much uncertainty. We pulled down all the credit lines we had in 48 hours, to create immediate liquidity and a war chest."

Talking about how Covid was a test of his leadership, Dalmia remembers, "We had a town hall with all our people and told them that we can survive two years with zero revenue. I repeat zero revenue not zero profits! It gave everyone a lot of comfort and confidence. I told our team that, the first hit will be taken by the company, and every quarter we will review the situation. Progressively, if the hard situation continues, the senior management, then the middle management and the rest of the organization will have to collective share the burden and make some sacrifice." This gave immense security and strength to all. When lockdown was lifted, they were the fastest to bounce back and the very next quarter profitability was the highest ever in their history.



## Fact File

- Age: 50
- Year of joining the current organization: 2006
- Total team size: 5600+
- Turnover of the organization: Rs.13540 Cr