



Confederation of Indian Industry
Since 1895



CII Manufacturing Innovation Conclave 2014 Report

Confederation of Indian Industries organised the [4th Manufacturing Innovation Conclave](#) with [BMGI India](#) as the knowledge partner. The theme of the conclave held on 20th June was “Innovation as a Key Differentiator”. Discussions revolved around various aspects of business like manufacturing excellence, customer delight, product development and the role of leadership in innovation.

The inaugural session saw Jayant Davar, Co-Chairman & MD, Sandhar Technologies Ltd agreeing with this website’s philosophy that “Jugaad” does not work anymore. While predicting that the fast would beat slow, he advocated innovation being a bottom-up process where the shop floor inspires top management. Naresh N Shahani, Founder & MD, BMGI India pointed out that only 7 of the 30 BSE Sensex companies from 30 years ago were still a part of the index. He went on to emphasise that consumers are adopting technology much faster leading to very short product life cycles. This necessitates building an ‘Innovation DNA’ by going back to fundamentals and supporting new ideas. These views were echoed through the remainder of the Conclave.

The Chief Guest, Ajay Shankar, IAS, Member Secretary, National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council, in his keynote took this further saying that our feudal culture often resulted in our delayed global integration whereas China zoomed ahead with 30% excess capacity across the manufacturing spectrum. Despite this Shankar felt India has the capability to be globally competitive, since most Fortune 500 companies continue to aggressively hire R&D staff at their India centres. He suggested that Indian manufacturing needs to think big while keeping in mind the capital constraints faced by most companies and thereby endorsed the concept of frugal innovation.

In the ‘Leadership and Innovation’ session Dr. Jitendra K Das, Director, FORE School of Management astutely put the onus of identifying an efficient path of innovation on the top management of companies. Bringing the customer into the innovation process, Subhankar Lahiri, Head, Manufacturing Vertical, Ricoh India, was of the opinion that engaging customers in the process of product creation was essential to brand building. According to Dr. Maghin Tamilarasan, Director, Rolls-Royce India, staying ahead in the innovation game means investing significant amounts in R&D and by partnering with research institutes. The key is having a clear vision for innovation and involvement of all employees in idea generation, he opined.

Providing an engineering perspective, Rahul Sehgal, Director, Siemens Industry Software (India) prophesied that “Cyber Physical Systems” or machine to machine (M2M) conversations would be the way forward as is being demonstrated by [Industry 4.0](#), a high-tech strategy project in Germany. Speaking about “Democratization in Innovation”, Rajiv Bajaj, Country Manager, Autodesk, was of the opinion that high-tech systems have more value when they are “democratized” as highlighted by [The Innovation Genome Project](#). This project aims to do make each person involved in a process, an agent of innovation. The spark for innovation is to realise that there is a better way to do things according to Bajaj.



A panel discussion focusing on “Measuring Impact of Innovation” with honchos from leading manufacturing companies sharing their thoughts on using processes like ‘Lean and Lag’. Pankaj Dubey, Country Head and MD, Polaris India felt lean innovation is the “core” innovation. Taking this thought forward Manoj Kumar, Exec VP, Ricoh India, insisted on monitoring innovative products during the gestation period since not all are instantly successful. Bringing the discussion back to the importance of the customer JV Ramamurthy, President & COO, HCL Infosystems, maintained that innovation was essentially driven by focusing on the “bottom of the pyramid”.

Vijay K Arora, Director, Amtek-Auto, provided the example of how Apple innovates to lead and not for survival which should be the mantra for innovation. On the prospect of India becoming a manufacturing hub like China, Vijay Arora felt our logistical challenges hamper efficiency that prevents us from achieving this goal and hoped that the new government will address these roadblocks.

“The Critical Role of Manufacturing – Innovation Excellence” was the topic of discussion for the final session of the Conclave. Shammi Pant, Sr. Director, WNS Global Services set the tone for this discussion by stressing the need to produce more with less use of raw material and with lower waste generation. She found agreement from Dr. Zubin Varghese, Sr. Director, Ingersoll Rand, who stressed on the need to explore innovative ways to ensure clean air, safe food and energy efficiency. He insisted on the need for discipline and rigour in the process of innovation

which includes validating ideas, prioritising and measuring them through milestones. This discipline includes courage to “kill a project” that does not meet expectations.

Speaking about “Product Innovation for New Product Development” within this last session, Ajeet Thakur, Manager, Creaform BU Ametek, India was of the view that as technology evolves it adds value to the customer and brings down cost. Part of this evolution is incremental advancement which happens when companies add features to an existing product.

Answering a question about India’s ability to compete in aircraft manufacturing Ashok Wadhawan insisted on the urgent need for Indian companies to form a consortium like China did for its new fighter jet since Indian companies lack the capability to execute such large projects alone. Dr. Varghese shared this sentiment when he said companies needed to collaborate and invite other companies to view their products and innovation in reply to a question about making open innovations. Thus the way forward for Indian innovation is through collaboration and cooperation.

Nimish Danani of BMGI India, summed up day’s proceedings with some key takeaways such as:

- The need to challenge existing best practices
- Change and consistency will need to co-exist
- The better CEOs are more innovative and more creative
- Collaborative innovation will take the day ahead
- The concept of smart factory and internet of things will influence manufacturing
- Innovations would not necessarily always come from a need just like touchscreen phones were not really a need but an added feature which was rapidly embraced

Danani wrapped up the 4th CII MIC conclave with the thought: if you want to achieve something you have never achieved, then you have to do something you have never done in the past.