

CEO: COLOURFUL ECLECTIC OFFICER

CEO and CFO are passé. So are managers and consultants. We're not referring to the people, but the nomenclatures. From creating new jobs to what-does-it-mean designations, even funny ones, corporate India is flaunting zany calling cards and titles

BY SULEKHA NAIK

I am a Chief Mall Mechanic
Susil Durgarwal, founder, Beyond Squarefoot Advisory Pvt. Ltd (a mall advisory company), Mumbai

I am a Chief Trafficker
Suresh Saroj, Games2win India Pvt. Ltd, Mumbai

I control all the traffic of Games2win. So it means sending 20 million folks a month to the right places (games or websites) and constantly changing what they see and where. For example, Games2win.com appears differently in 20 countries on the basis of which games are doing well there. The same goes for Chimpoo.com and GarageGamers.com. Now, the advertise-

ments that people see also change dynamically on the basis of who is clicking what. Finally, all the sites are in 20 languages—so the right people need to be sent to the right destination. In the US customs, it's fun to show my designation—the officer usually spends a long time more in jest and quizzes me about what I really do. My family members often ask me if I work for the Mumbai traffic police!
What I really do: Make sure that the massive traffic across all Games2win sites moves smoothly.

I am a Serial Entrepreneur
Alok Kejriwal, Zulu Group, Mumbai

I come across an idea, I figure out a business plan, then go about setting up a team, pitch with venture capitalists, execute, create value and then sell the company. After which, I start all over again. Just like a serial killer! To know how insane I am, it would be better to look at the crimes. I started five companies, managed to sell two and have incubated three. My co-conspirators are venture capitalists

people and the operations are from across cities in India, such as Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, and internationally, from New York and San Francisco.

The term serial entrepreneur comes from Silicon Valley because in the Valley businesses are bought and sold and that is the trait of a beast (in the Valley). If I hold on to a business for too long, I deplete its value. It is like running a relay, and if I refuse to hand over the baton after the first 100m, I will be dead by the time the relay race is over!
What I really do: Create companies and

I am a Chief Belief Officer
Devdutt Pattanaik, Future Group, Mumbai

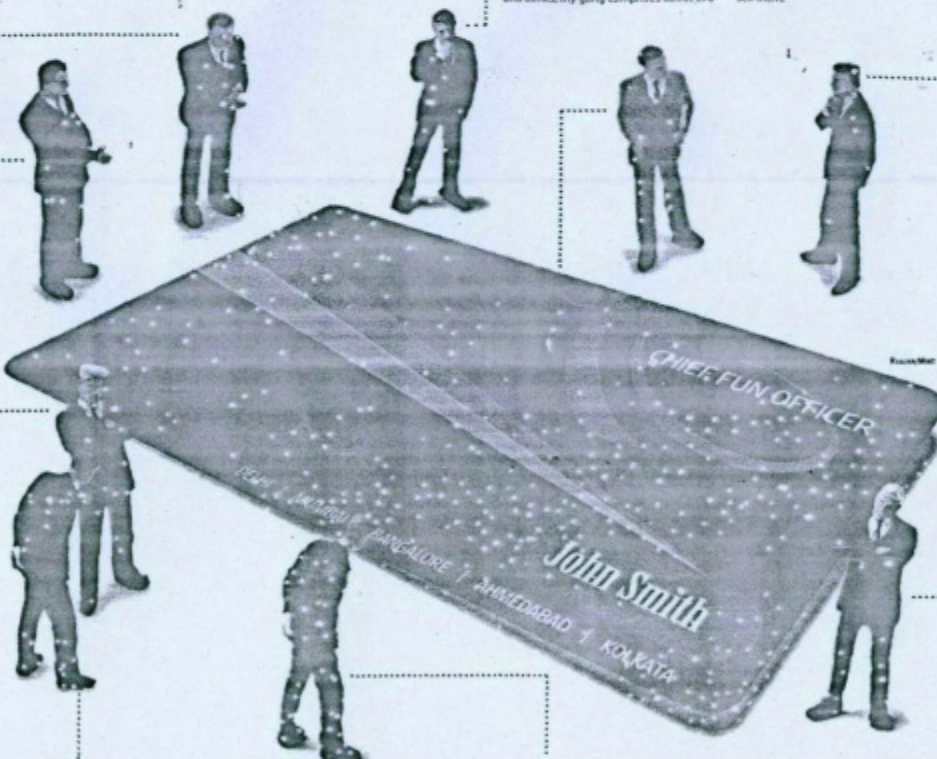
This designation is based on a principle that business depends on how people behave and behaviour depends on their beliefs. I explore the beliefs of people to understand why they do what they do.

This involves studying their stories and mythologies. Our business is primarily customer-centric. To understand what beliefs drive customers, you need to see beyond their—to understand what is the belief of India; what do Indians believe in. For this, my background as a mythologist makes it relatively easy. It enables me to reveal the wisdom of India, and what distinguishes it from other cultures. So at the macro level, my job is to ask the questions—why do people do what they do. While at the micro level, it is to understand why Indians behave in a particular manner. My job is rather abstract. I spend time chatting with leaders, and act as a leadership coach to help them open up their minds, to observe a situation using newer frameworks, so that they can solve problems and take more informed decisions.
What I really do: Find out how to make Indians shop more.

I could have called myself a CEO, but then I would have been another one in a crowd. This designation is very effective and clearly portrays what I do. A mechanic is the one you go to to fix things. The same ideology prevails here too. Initially, when I shared this designation with a few key members in the company, there was resistance. I had to convince them about how effectively it portrays what we do. We had a retail seminar and all of us (only key members with over 10-15 years experience have this suffix), with our new visiting cards, got positive reactions to our designations. Now, everyone in the company wants this suffix. What could be a better complement to our business, which is about innovation, than to have an innovative designation that stands out?
What I really do: Devise ways to make malls more attractive for customers and retailers.

I am a Chief Learning Officer
Abhijit Bhaduri, Wipro, Bangalore

"Haven't you finished your learning after so many years?" ask people when I tell them my designation. My answer is, "Actually there is a lot that I am still learning." My role is to assess and monitor the business environment, impact the choices that drive Wipro's strategy and to ensure that the leadership pipeline at all levels is future-ready through succession planning. To make that happen, the role involves impacting the processes in the organization so that they evolve to facilitate a continuously learning organization. The chief learning officer (CLO) had to choose from a mix of assessment development options to discover and groom leaders for the organization. The methods involve job shadowing, coaching and mentoring, different methods of training and developing leaders. Wipro felt the need for a CLO to make themselves future-proof by revisiting its approach to organizational learning and development. The role of the CLO is to tap into the different ways and options for learning that exist, whether planned or unplanned, formal or informal, individual or group-directed.
What I really do: Groom future leaders at Wipro.



I am a Gardener
Sudhroto Bagchi, MindTree Consulting, Bangalore

There is both symbolism and substance in embarking an unusual title like 'Gardener' in the MindTree context. The symbolism is in the fact that at a certain level, titles do not nourish you. I am sending that message to our leaders. My role in the years ahead would be that of nurturing our key leaders and our Communities of Practice at MindTree. When

we were looking at alternative titles for something like that, we all liked the idea of a Gardener for many reasons. The term best describes what I set out to do. Think of a gardener: first of all, he is a skilled person. He is very useful to the garden. He likes his work. He has an organic relationship with each plant in the garden. However pretty a garden may be, people come to see it, no one comes to see a gardener and he is okay with that.
What I really do: Spot talent, nurture it and create leaders.

I am a Growth Catalyst
Ashok Jain, Alia Group (a print and packaging, including pre-media services, company), Mumbai

Apart from the CFO functions, my primary responsibility rests in the growth of the organization from a business, financial and strategic perspective. Hence the designation. I am always asked about it and it is a point of

discussion. I also head a start-up, India Capital Advisors, and my job also includes being a growth catalyst. A Growth Catalyst title states that it is all about incubating and growing group interests in several projects. It aims to find out how one can have coordinated and structured growth. Basically, I play the devil's advocate.
What I really do: Make strategies for my company so that it is able to grow at a fast pace.

I am a Chief Nut Officer
Chirag Patel, NetNuts (a new media value-added service provider), Ahmedabad

Anyone who wants to enter this business has to be nuts. Since the company is called NetNuts, it is but logical to call the chief who is running it, Chief Nut. It is wacky, catchy and has instant recall. People love it and we get some funny reactions as well. I have met a lot of people on account of this wacky designation. Besides me, we have other nuts in our firm such as Tech Nut, Business Nut (business development), etc. All our computers are also called, what else, but Nuts! We have Brazil nut, cashew nut, pistachio nut, walnut and so on, until we run out of "nut"-y names. Our server is called Nutshell. A few years ago, our venture capitalist mentioned that we could be in sync with the corporate world with traditional designations such as CEO, for our business has widened from being aimed at internet users to mobile service providers. My business card now mentions CEO, but I make it a point to mention my earlier designation in every conversation that I have. It does not fail to elicit a smile and curious questions.
What I really do: Manage business within and outside the organization in keeping with the central vision.

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