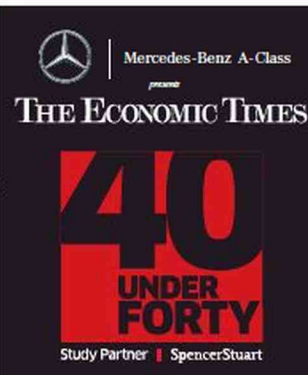


India's Hottest Young Business Leaders



Aman Gupta, 39
CO-FOUNDER, BOAT

Education: PGP from Indian School of Business (ISB), Chartered Accountant (CA)

Success to me is: Being passionate, yet being paranoid. One should love what one does and be passionate about it. It drives you. Developing a healthy sense of paranoia is also good for work. It keeps you active.

One achievement I am most proud of: I am most proud of the fact that boAt became the 5th largest wearable brand in the world. It was surreal.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT
As a startup grows, founders can't focus on everything themselves. Hiring individuals who share the same vision and values, investing in them, and empowering them is key to entrepreneurial success.

Shweta Shroff Chopra, 39
EQUITY PARTNER, SHARDUL AMARCHAND MANGALDAS & CO

Education: LL.B, University of Wales; LL.M, London School of Economics

Success to me is: Loving what you do, being with the people you love and creating an environment that enables everyone to thrive.

One achievement I am most proud of: Spearheading the Mental Health Programme at my firm; building awareness and normalising conversations around mental health issues in the legal profession.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT
The sun rises every day and you get to try again—so, be kind to yourself.

Sathya Prathipati, 38
SENIOR PARTNER, MCKINSEY & COMPANY

Education: PGDM, IIM Bangalore

Success to me is: Bringing new ideas to life.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT
Those who don't believe in magic will never find it (via Roald Dahl).

One achievement I am most proud of: That I'm still working with clients and colleagues from when I started 15 years ago.

Vamsi Krishna, 37
CEO AND COFOUNDER, VEDANTU

Education: B.Tech, IIT Bombay

Success to me is: Creating impact at scale and staying happy in life.

One achievement I am most proud of: Creating Vedantu. The category of LIVE classes, which we created in India, becoming mainstream is something which, as an entrepreneur, gives me immense satisfaction.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT
Always optimise for long-term happiness and success. Don't worry about the short term, both happiness and sadness are short-lived.

Shreya Deb, 37
DIRECTOR, INVESTMENTS AT OMDYAR NETWORK INDIA

Education: B.Tech, IIT Bombay; PGDM, IIM Ahmedabad

Success to me is: A life well lived, where I've made a positive impact in lives of people around me, where I've fulfilled my purpose, where I strive to be a better person.

One achievement I am most proud of: Supporting two entrepreneurs at an idea stage, one who went on to create 3,500 jobs for low-income youth, and another who helped 22,000 low-income families build better homes.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT
If you're going to do something, might as well give it your best; and if you only do what you can, you will never be more than what you are.

Radhika Gupta, 37
MD & CEO, EDELWEISS AMC

Education: B. S. Economics & Comp. Science, University of Pennsylvania (M&T Program)

Success to me is: Leaving a legacy. Having an impact on your customers, industry, and hopefully the country, with the work that you do.

One achievement I am most proud of: Leading a team that thinks big, fights hard and has achieved a lot of 'firsts' despite being a younger AMC.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT
You are unique and you are different. Don't copy anyone, tell your story honestly and the world will listen.

Saba Sharma, 39
CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER, HINDUSTAN COCA-COLA BEVERAGES

Education: PGDM (NITIE), B.Tech

Success to me is: To overcome challenges in pursuit of worthy goals, inspiring others to realise their potential and cherishing each moment along the way.

One achievement I am most proud of: Expanding the procurement footprint to new areas of business and creating value through forging strong external partnerships.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT
Take care of your people, lead by example and results will follow.

Nandini Khaitan, 40
PARTNER, KHAITAN & CO

Education: Master of Laws from Columbia Law School, New York

Success to me is: Maintaining equanimity in both good and difficult times. Teamwork is success in itself and goes a long way towards building a happy, progressive and productive workplace.

One achievement I am most proud of: Consistently working towards increasing access to justice.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT
Integrity is what you do when no one is watching—from my father.

Sandeep Singh, 38
MANAGING DIRECTOR, ALKEM LABORATORIES LTD AND CO-FOUNDER BLUETRIPE FOODS

Education: Bachelor of Commerce

Success to me is: Getting what you want and wanting what you get.

One achievement I am most proud of: I am humbled by everything and proud of nothing.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT
Keep doing what you are put on earth to do irrespective of failure or success. Treat the two imposters—failure and success—the same.

Saurabh Sancheti, 36
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, JIO PLATFORMS LIMITED

Education: PGDM, IIM Ahmedabad; B. Tech, IIT Roorkee

Success to me is: Success is a journey. It's about striving to be the best version of oneself—revising hypotheses, charter uncomfortable terrain, learning from and embracing failure, and not quitting.

One achievement I am most proud of: Being part of incredible Jio journey, which has put India on global map. It has transformed India for better for all strata of society in all walks of life.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT
Man is only limited by his thoughts and boundaries created in mind. Break mental barriers, be curious as a child, laugh off your own mistakes and never stop observing and learning.

Mukesh Gulraj Mehta, 40
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR, THE BLACKSTONE GROUP

Education: Chartered Financial Analyst (C.F.A. USA) and Chartered Accountant (CA)

Success to me is: A trusted, long-term partnership. Happiness and contentment from being trusted by my team, partners and investors. I win when others around me win.

One achievement I am most proud of: Making my mother and wife proud is my biggest achievement, given the sacrifices they have made to get me where I am.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT
Don't ever lose money for your investor! This is the number one investing rule from Blackstone chairman, CEO & co-founder Steve Schwarzman. It reminds me to objectively assess the risk in every opportunity.

Chirag Negandhi, 41*
JOINT MD & CO-CEO, AXIS CAPITAL

Education: BBA in Finance & MIS - Purdue University

Success to me is: Bouncing back. Staying true to one's path when you're written off and going at it collectively with grit and determination. Success is not about the end result, but the journey.

One achievement I am most proud of: Being able to make a difference in the lives of others—founded a trust to help underprivileged girls attain an education, new opportunities and a chance at a better life.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT
To celebrate every success—especially the little ones, with the people instrumental in achieving it. It motivates us towards the next goal and a simple thank you goes a long way.

Pulkit Bhandari, 39
HEAD-GROUP CORPORATE FINANCE, RPG ENTERPRISES

Education: Chartered Accountant

Success to me is: Spreading joy and adding value to a larger purpose. A leader is as good as his team, so helping the team win should be the key objective for long-term success.

One achievement I am most proud of: Having dealt with diverse sectors, their opportunities and challenges over the last 15 years, I can now bring in different perspectives in a strategic discussion.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT
One, dreaming is good but always stay connected with the reality. Two, active listening is important to give an impactful solution. Understand the intent and not just the words.

Ankush Sachdeva, 27
CEO AND CO-FOUNDER, SHARECHAT

Education: B. Tech, Computer Science, IIT Kanpur

Success to me is: The ability to impact millions, and transform their lives towards a better future, through the power of technology.

One achievement I am most proud of: Today, we have built an internet company out of India that can compete with any global technology company.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT
You build your roof when it's not raining—My father always told me this to get me to prepare for exams during leisure time, and not at the last minute. I continue to adhere to this teaching even at ShareChat, as I have worked aggressively towards strengthening our company's foundations during peacetime.

Building Businesses - Lessons from Young Leaders

REKHA JACOB KOSHY & DEBOLINA CHAKRAVARTY

India was grappling with a slowing economy when the pandemic hit, adding challenges to an already complicated macroeconomic landscape. Indian businesses have seen some extraordinary times over the last year, where some organisations have thrived and grown against all odds while others have struggled. Within this context, we spoke to some of the past selected leaders of ET 40 Under Forty—Ameera Shah, Neel Raheja, Punit Goenka, Rahul Ansari, Rajesh Kamat—who have navigated these times effectively to understand and learn from their personal and professional journeys.

It was apparent from these discussions that successful organisations have leaders at their helm who focused on building a solid foundation to adapt to dynamically changing environments. Many of these leaders have broken away from the tradition, where required, and have patiently led from the front.

Many leaders are gravitating towards an entrepreneurial journey with two different generations driving this trend. On the one hand, we have leaders who, after reaching the top of their game in the corporate world, are taking the plunge into entrepreneurship. On the other, we



have young entrepreneurs in their 20s who are setting up innovation-led businesses disrupting status quo.

Entrepreneurs who have seen their startups scale to large organisations have prioritised building a professional leadership team and a strong board much earlier in their journey.

At the core of this success has been a strong team that is culturally aligned and cohesive towards achieving a common goal. They have given their teams space to contribute and innovate while building on their strengths and learning from their failures. Gender diversity and inclusion, in particular, have been an integral part of

the strategy, and a culture where meritocracy is the basis of building future leaders has been key to their success.

Every entrepreneur has a unique story and what is consistent is the incredible amount of hard work required to get a venture up and running. The proposition of leaving a personal legacy behind has been a strong motivation. With ideas constantly bubbling in their heads, many entrepreneurs prefer to leave the dedicated work hours of the 'safe' corporate world to be the masters of their destiny.

Unafraid and agile, these leaders have focused on taking quick decisions, being calm and thoughtful in the face of uncertainty. One of the leaders stated, "Paranoia plays an important role in decision making. Difficult situations or challenging conflicts can make us apprehensive about a competitor, an environment, or a policy. That paranoia could either scare or veer us towards making better decisions."

The pandemic has accelerated the digitalisation journey, bringing it to the fore in an all-encompassing

way. Companies are focused on hiring people with differentiated skills while re-skilling/upskilling their current workforce as business strategy and operating models evolve.

This shift across platforms required organisations to redesign their offerings accordingly. One of the 40 Under Forty alumni said, "Even during the lockdown period, we stayed agile and ahead of the industry by keeping consumers entertained and well-informed. We followed a work culture that was collaborative, tech-enabled and dynamic with a firm 'work-from-home' and 'work-for-home' balance that encouraged everyone to deliver most productively."

The pandemic taught us that evolution is a way of life. While organisational cultures need to evolve depending on the environment, it is equally important to ensure the right guard rails are put around it to treasure what is precious to the organisation and retain the "heart" of the organisation.

Koshy anchors Spencer Stuart India's Media and Consumer practices, and Chakravarty anchors Professional Services and Legal, Compliance & Regulatory practices



How We Did it

Spencer Stuart and The Economic Times partnered for the seventh consecutive year to arrive at a final list of India's top 40 leaders under the age of forty. The study began by assembling a panel of highly accomplished jury members, tasked with identifying the crème-de-la-crème of India Inc.'s young, up-coming leadership. The methodology consisted of two phases—primary research and detailed assessment.

An initial list of 800+ leaders was drawn up using the Spencer Stuart database and recommendations from India's corporates. This was condensed on the basis of in-depth market referencing and due diligence to a long list of 127, which was presented to the jury.

The age cut-off for the 2020 list is March 31, 2020; the candidate

should not have completed 41 years as of this date.

The long list comprised a diverse mix of business professionals, entrepreneurs and owner professionals across a variety of industries. A rigorous and systematic assessment process was carried out on the long list using criteria predefined by the jury that focused on three primary areas—business impact, contribution to the ecosystem, and relative position in the industry.

At the jury meeting, each business leader was profiled and discussed in detail. For the first time, the jury meeting was held virtually, and a digital portal was used to capture all the information on the shortlist as well as the views of the jury. After careful evaluation of these high-quality profiles, the jury arrived at the ultimate list of the most deserving 40 Under Forty.

