

ET Q&A **HARISH MANWANI**
FORMER CHAIRMAN, HUL

'Leadership Is About Ensuring You Have A Followership'

Anyone can have a recipe, it takes a master chef to get it right," said Hindustan Unilever's former chairman **Harish Manwani**, about the country's largest consumer goods company's reputation of churning out great leaders over the years. People growth as much as business growth, early exposure to leadership, constant learning, focus on not just business parameters of leadership but also thought leadership and the secret sauce about bringing responsible growth into play are some of the ingredients in the company's leadership recipe, Manwani, whose 42-year-long career at HUL ended on Friday, said in a conversation with **Rica Bhattacharyya**. Edited excerpts:

What is your definition of leadership?

Leadership is not about just getting things done; it's about ensuring that you have a followership. In today's context, a leader manages two things—reputation and people. The role of leadership is to manage reputation and unleash the energy in people. The first bit comes out of ensuring that you create a certain number of non-negotiables in an organisation. It is all right for you to tell people what to do but it is also important that they should know what not to do. Do you have a culture in an organisation where people have a sense of moral compass? The role of leadership is to make sure that people know that a moral compass exists. Second bit that comes out of building reputation is around performance. Good leaders are able to combine great performance with good values. Also, growth is really important for anyone. But you need to make sure that the old model of growth was around the 3G model: consistent, competitive and profitable. The new model of growth is a 4G model—it is growth that is responsible.

What would be your word of advice to



AMRENDRA JHA

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the young leaders and entrepreneurs?

It is a great thing that entrepreneurship is now becoming the new career for a lot of people. When you are driving fast, it is important to have some guard rails—it is all about having the values, moral compass, having a sense of purpose and a vision. Just make sure you create the same degree of energy but also create some non-negotiables.

HUL is known as a leadership factory. What has been the secret sauce?

Globally connected and locally rooted is our formula for talent development. It is not just about growing our business, it is about growing our people. We give them early experiences in leadership. We have a constant learning programme where we develop our people and, most importantly, I really do believe there is an HUL way of doing things; this idea of always remaining relevant and yet rooted. We give people a big canvas in which we give them the scope to create things that we don't have today. That's what creates big leaders in our company.