

V connect

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The Employee Communication Newsletter of L&T Valves

April 2024

Integration to Differentiation





V connect

From the Editor

Hi,

There is a bittersweet feeling to this issue - Ends and beginnings, goodbyes and hellos. And I can't but remember the generations of co-editors and collaborators who added substance and style to the various avatars of our magazine. I thank all of them from the bottom of my heart.

Last year we launched Kanchee Connect, our KPM-centric supplement, and through our surveys and polls, made sure your voices were heard. This year we plan to launch a new communication channel - working title 'V-connect Lite' - that would focus on information that should not wait for a one-in-three-months newsletter. The focus would be on freshness of content, and actionable insights. 'Lite' will be mobile-friendly and interactive - a media that belongs to now.

We are building a team for V-connect Lite. If you have ideas and suggestions that would help build a better 'Lite', do mail kuriakoseb@Lntvalves.com.

In closing, I thank everyone who contributed to this issue - poets and photographers, traveloguers and interviewers, writers and designers, chasers and cheerleaders and one barista.

Thanks,
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v-connect@Lntvalves.com

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Message from the Chief Executive



Dear Colleague,

I hope this message finds you in good health and high spirits. I would like to thank each one of you for your hard work and dedication over the past year. We have surpassed our previous bests in order inflow and cashflows. We have successfully completed the integration of plants and met our commitment of producing 20% more than the combined output of both the plant in the previous year. Your commitment to excellence has been the driving force behind our success.

Transcend23, as you are aware, focused on pushing boundaries and achieving specific goals. Now, we are starting off on a new journey and at Transcend24, we commit to our goals and objectives for the coming year.

I would like to communicate a few key elements as we march into our journey of transformation.

Speed up execution: We are prepared for a great start with a healthy orderbook, our path and directions are clearly set. Now the task in our hand is to execute our plan in full swing.

Digital transformation and automation: Digital transformation is our game-changer. Digital tools streamline processes, eliminate delays and empower us to get things done quicker and smoother.

Plan and adherence to plan: Granular level planning and detailing is of paramount importance. We have transformed from planning for the quarter to planning for the month to planning for the day. We need to plan for the hour and minute and plan for each and every resource.

Discipline in following processes: Strict discipline in order amendments, procurement and material documentation will ensure zero tolerance for excess inventory.

Improving global portfolio and reach: Reduce dependency on single customer/ territory/ segment. Though we have reached a remarkable milestone in order inflow we should be aware about our dependency on oil & gas majors. Competition is getting intense, and we should spread our wings and establish our presence globally, especially in the Americas.

With the theme Onward and Upward (Pragti and Vriddhi), we are poised for a year of significant growth. By embracing innovation, meticulous planning, and a commitment to global expansion, the company is well on its way to achieving its ambitious goals. The journey forward will require the unwavering dedication of every team member, together. L&T Valves is poised to rewrite its own definition of success.

Regards,



S Kalyanaraman



Integration to Differentiation

Enough has been said about our Integration! Let us talk about how synergy of thoughts and action across domains and departments transformed our manufacturing capability into a definite competitive advantage and a differentiator

In April 2023, the integrated plant at Kancheepuram ‘officially’ began functioning. The forecasted output of the integrated plant was more than the combined output of the standalone plants.

Production had to be ramped up to address the order book of both plants and the new orders coming in. Also, it was vital that customer confidence on deliveries was maintained. In order to achieve both, there was a need to optimise the utilisation of resources.

Preparing Ground Zero

“Right from January, teams from plant engineering, production engineering, product groups and I started discussing on how to go about that, how to create a layout

that would accommodate all the assets coming in. This process went on for a couple of months,” says J Suresh, Plant Head - KPM.

Historically, plant layouts at L&T Valves were product-based - one shop for GGC valves, one for ball valves, one for butterfly valves and so on. However, with space being a constraint, conventional layout was not an option.

The paradigm shift came when the team began exploring the possibility of a process-based layouts. We decided to create a central machine shop equipped with high-end machining centres that would cater to the requirements of all product groups - thereby maximizing the utilisation of assets and avoiding duplication of efforts.



"This, we believe, is the first time the concept of a central machine shop is used in the valve industry. The central machine shop works as a feeder unit for all product lines," Suresh shares with pride.

In addition to the central machine shop, 'A' Building today houses Special Projects Cell, Trevisan line, clean room, R&D shop and the standards room - and is a benchmark for future layouts.

"The ISO 7-qualified clean room we built is massive, equipped to handle valves up to 24 inch. I don't think any other manufacturer in India has such a facility," Suresh adds.

Ramping Up

The real challenge lay in ramping up production to meet the new targets. To achieve this, in August 2023, the management initiated 'Doubling the Speed' or 'DTS' - an effort aimed at scaling up manufacturing capability, with the view to achieve 100% on-time delivery. "Let's say, we get an order with a delivery of 24 weeks. Once the order comes in, it follows a path: enquiry management process, engineering, approval, design, bill of material, production planning, evaluation and release of purchase request, procurement, stores, manufacturing, then logistics to finally shipping out the product. In all of these processes, there are several potential bottlenecks. DTS looks at solutions to address these," says Mahesh, Head - Planning.

A two-pronged approach was put into place: One aspect covered the core material flow, wherein the material is physically converted and value addition takes place, and the other was information flow, including the processing of documents. Teams were formed and a brown paper mapping exercise was done to understand the 'as is' condition, so as to pinpoint pain areas.

When it comes to overall equipment efficiency on the shopfloor, the three key aspects to be looked into are availability, quality and productivity. To quote Suresh, "Quality and productivity are not major concerns, because by and large our people are good. Regarding availability, two factors that need to be addressed are breakdowns and set-up time. We are using a tracking software installed on all key machines to collect data about machine availability, idle and running time, breakdowns, set-up, and so on thus giving ample information for our improvement initiatives."

Digitalisation of key functions in the shopfloor was identified as a need to ensure sustained increase in production in the long run. In this regard, the L&T Valves IT team is working on various shopfloor digitalisation initiatives.



In terms of manufacturing sub-processes, old practices were reexamined and revisited to improve time and manpower efficiency. One of them related to the testing of the valves. “Earlier, for hydrotests, manually fixing the test plates and pressurisation used to take 2-3 people and couple of shifts. Now with automated test bench, the whole process can be completed by one operator in a fraction of time”, explains M Vijayarangan, Head - Quality Assurance.

Once the valve is loaded on test bench, the operator scans a barcode on the valve to access all test requirements from the cloud thus eliminating manual data entry and associated issues.

The automation initiative was greatly appreciated by one of our major clients, says Suresh and then adds, “Going forward, we have lot more plans...”

Valve Passport



'Valve Passport' is an innovation that ensures that customers will always have access to quality documents and manuals related to a valve.

The information can be accessed by scanning a QR code attached to the valve, using a smartphone app. The Passport can also be used to confirm the genuineness of the valves.

Valve Passport was launched in a major market in the Middle East and would be rolled out across the globe in phase manner.

The Secret Sauce

"Underlying all these efforts was the unanimous understanding that handling the human capital was a vital first step," said Srihari, Head - HR & IR.

A month-long detailed induction and training programme was instituted to ensure that each employee was well equipped for the task at hand. Toolbox training was conducted every week, and monthly reviews were held.

When the third shift was introduced to ramp up production, management ensured that the wellbeing and comfort of the operators and staff assigned to the third shift were given top priority.

Safety being a prime concern, all employees were strictly instructed to wear appropriate PPE. Employees were encouraged to report unsafe acts or conditions through an online portal, or by emailing a photo. Monthly data was collated and shared with the safety officer to make sure that no gaps were left unaddressed. There were zero accidents and zero hours lost through the whole year. A worthy achievement indeed.

We executed one of the smoothest integrations in the L&T group, and maintained employee performance and morale high.

Over the year, the monthly output of the Kancheepuram plant grew manifold and has exceeded the combined output of the standalone plants.

We asked J Suresh, Plant Head - Kancheepuram about his secret formula for success...

We do not direct our people on what they need to do. If we want to work as a team, we have to respect their pride, their sense of ownership. We encourage them to find solutions. When they come up with some novel idea, we ask them what kind of support they need.

We enable them, we support them. Then, we succeed as a team.

J Suresh, Plant Head - Kancheepuram



Manufacturing Upgrade Wishlist



“

What?

Collaboration and partnership with customers, research institutions and technology providers.

Why?

To ensure we stay abreast of new manufacturing trends.

Bharath Kumar Badari, Pre-Sales



“

What?

Poka Yoke/ Error-proofing in production process

Why?

Increase productivity

Gopinath D, GGC



“

What?

Real-time production monitoring with IoT

Why?

Improves resource allocation, ensures timely deliveries and ultimately customer satisfaction and loyalty

Nagaraja P, Sales



“

What?

All department should work on one user-friendly platform.

Why?

SAP is best suited for people who are experienced, and is difficult for new joiners.

Praveen B Karajagi, CMT



What?

Present Full Kit to Quality one day in advance

Why?

To ensure all requirements are as per GAD and customer requirements

Raja Chacko, Quality



What?

Have designated point of contact for different issues that arise during project completion

Why?

Avoid communication breakdowns. Allow people to find solutions without a hassle.

Sruthi A, Pre-Sales



What?

Process compliance without QMS deviations

Why?

Avoid rework and compliance issues

Vijayarangan M, Quality



What?

Automate repetitive tasks and integrate smart systems for monitoring and control.

Why?

Optimise resource utilisation and achieve higher levels of precision and consistency in our manufacturing operations. Boosts output. More flexibility to adapt to change.

Vivek Durairaj, Sales

Raja Kaiya Vacha...

That day in 1992, MS Rajaraman has two options. Watch India - England ICC World Cup match or attend a walk-in interview at L&T Eutectic. Looking back today, Raja feels "the match was really worth missing"

After 14 years with Eutectic and a brief stint at the corporate HQ, MSR joined Valves in 2008 - going against the advice of some of his seniors! The robust manufacturing capabilities of Valves as well as the strong presence in domestic and international markets were what made MSR take the plunge. Over to Raja...

How do you leverage your diverse skills, qualifications, and experiences to excel in the current role?

'Keep learning new skills and practice what you have learnt' is my favourite quote by one of my gurus. The learnings have come from institutes like BITS Pilani, SPJIMR Mumbai and Indian Academy of Training & Development, Chennai and they have helped me perform my work better and address new challenges with confidence. But business and society teach what is not taught even at Harvard. I keep leveraging my learnings and skills at my work, which I am sure will take care of me and my organisation as well.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

I believe my greatest achievement is yet to come.

I have moved with the flow and have not missed any opportunity that came my way, whether it was a change of location, change of role, change of domain, etc. I have taken up 13 transfers to 10 different locations so far.

I feel everything that I have done so far is just preparation for a substantial achievement in the years ahead.



How do you ensure that L&T Valves has a competitive advantage over other players in the valve industry?

L&T strongly believes that people are the prime movers and more valuable than technology and infrastructure.

People in L&T Valves have a blend of knowledge and enthusiasm to perform, that is a cutting edge for leading the domain and leaving the rest to follow. With the combination of knowledge and enthusiasm, we keep trying for new materials, solutions and tap the first mover advantage in all possible opportunities to sustain the competitive edge that is created for ourselves.

What are the biggest challenges that you faced in your position? And how did you address them?

Patience is the key to excelling in my current role and I found it very difficult initially! I am interested in seeing results then and there, and it was not feasible due to the client profile and critical nature of the products. Patience to keep working for the future is something I consciously practice now.

What are some of the projects your team is working on?

Following are some of the exciting projects that Special Projects Team is working on:

- Valves for nuclear sector – both for Indian fleet-mode projects and small modular reactors globally
- Valves in exotic materials such as Titanium and Nickel Aluminium Bronze for surface ships and conventional submarines.
- New developments for classified projects of MoD

Something about your family

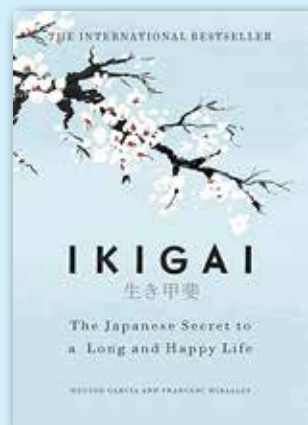
Very small in size, just three of us. My wife Mythili sacrificed her IT career and remained homemaker to accommodate my transfers! She is a passionate spiritual follower and engages with many teaching and learning activities online. My daughter Shobhita is doing BSc Psychology at SRM College, Chennai.

What is your favourite movie and why?

'Sindhu Bhairavi'. It was a musical treat, a fusion between Carnatic music and light music that resonates with my passion to mix genres and create synergies.

Top Shelf

*Reading lists and recos from the leaders,
A glimpse of the key ideas shaping the
future.*



I recently read Ikigai by Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles that "explores the Japanese concept of finding one's purpose in life by analysing the habits and beliefs of the world's longest-living people".

I found one of the chapters very interesting, 'Find Flow in Everything You Do'. I understand that achieving flow is very important in making your personal and professional lives a success, and would like to share an excerpt.

Seven conditions for achieving Flow:

- Knowing what to do
- Knowing how to do it
- Knowing how well you're doing
- Knowing where to go
- Perceiving significant challenges
- Perceiving significant skills
- Being free from distractions

Enabling and Empowering

A strong team with a diverse set of skills and capabilities launches the organisation into the trajectory of growth

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs presents a five-tier model of human needs. A sense of belonging is one of the basic needs in this hierarchy. Only when basic needs are met do humans perform their best in any environment. The well-being of an employee benefits the organisation, and the growth of an organisation benefits the employee.

A survey conducted by Gallup showed that 42% of the workforce preferred an organisation that exhibits/ promotes diversity and inclusivity.

Another survey by GoodFirms where employees were asked to rate job qualities from most to least important, Fair Treatment at the workplace was one of the attributes rated as most important by 60-70% of the respondents.

So, how do we ensure fair treatment at workplace? This is where DEI comes in.

DEI stands for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Diversity is what makes us unique. It could be in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, sexuality, and many more facets of life.

Equity is about providing everyone with what they need to succeed. For example, assigning the same task to everyone irrespective of their experience and capacity does not guarantee the same output from all. With equity, we assign tasks tailored to everyone's profile and proficiency. This ensures that each individual performs to the best of their abilities, and grooms everyone equally.

Every employee is equally important, valued, and welcomed into the team from Day 1, and this is the essence of inclusivity.

Maintaining DEI drives improved performance, aids talent attraction and retention, and enhances organisational reputation and brand image.

From my experience at L&T Valves as a Training Lead and DEI champion, I can strongly vouch that Learning and Inclusivity

are two factors ingrained in our legacy. For generations, L&T Valves has fostered this culture, and the result is evident in our strong workforce, where 50% of our employees have been with us for over 10 years.

DEI is not just about numbers, it is about equal opportunities for all employees to display their caliber and develop their skills, while growing with the organisation.

As a part of developing our female employees into strong leaders, we have an in-house initiative called Bharathi. The programme aims for personal and professional enrichment, to enable women to emerge as leaders and assume leadership positions in the organisation.

As a part of this development initiative, Ms. Bhargavi Lingineni and I were nominated to attend a Leadership Programme at IIM Mumbai. The program explored various aspects of development, focusing on our ambitions for the future, effective communication strategies, on dealing with stereotypes and microaggressions, and many more.



Bhargavi and Nagajothi receiving certificates at the IIM.

International Women's Day

Our latest milestone on the DEI journey was the International Women's Day celebrations in March. Our leadership team, as always, supported our staff and recognized their efforts and growth over the years, while encouraging our budding engineers to aim for the stars.

We had a guest lecture from Ms. Abi Shankari, who commenced the session by engaging participants in an activity, emphasizing the limitless nature of ambition and the importance of hard work in achieving one's maximum potential. Throughout the session, she prompted reflection on individual talents, passions, and weaknesses while offering insightful strategies for overcoming challenges.

With adept articulation, she underscored the parity between men and women, addressing ways to enhance productivity and combat procrastination, as well as delving into the unique hurdles faced by women and the underlying factors contributing to decreased productivity. Additionally, she facilitated exercises geared towards improving concentration, fostering a comprehensive approach to personal and professional development.

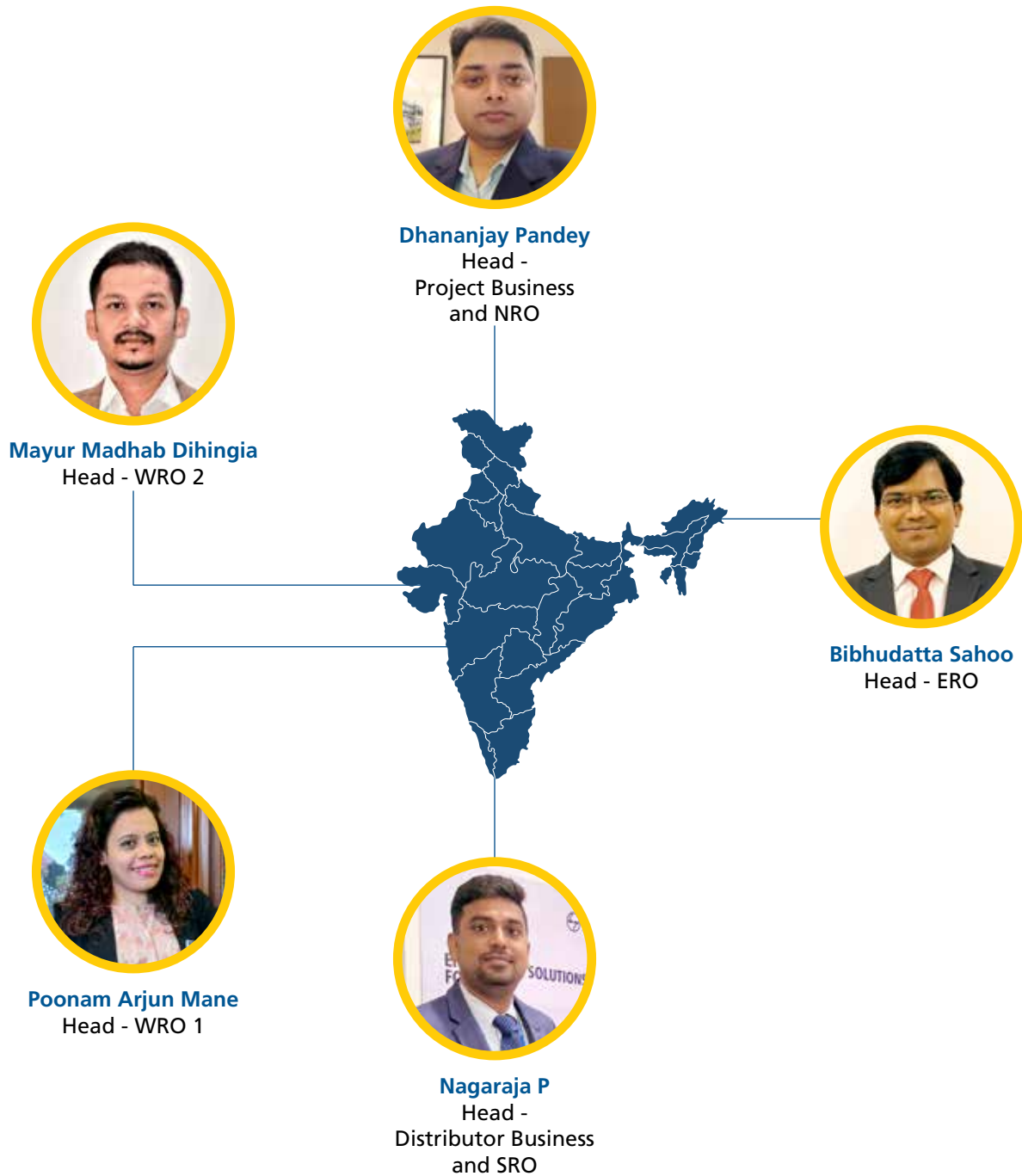
Our journey in DEI is deeply rooted in our organisational values. In the upcoming year, we plan on strengthening our workforce and upskilling our workforce through a myriad of training activities. The focus shall be on both hard and soft skills, such that we have a holistically developed team capable of handling all situations.

- Nagajothi J, HR



Presenting Team India

We wish the team great success and happiness



Building A Better Tomorrow

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world - Nelson Mandela.

At L&T Valves, we take this saying to heart. Through our CSR activities we constantly strive to uplift communities around us by investing in infrastructure for education, health and sanitation.

On 19 February 2024, Mr S Kalyanaraman inaugurated phase 2 of the school building at Vaiyavoor, a village three kilometres from KPM. In September 2021, we had constructed a two-storied building at Vaiyavoor Government High School that addressed space constraints in the old structure. Phase 2 added an extra floor and 4 new classrooms.

We hope the new facility would increase student performance and have a positive impact on the community.



L&T is in my blood

Raghavendra Hande, Managing Partner of Dhananjaya Enterprises, Bangalore and former L&T-ite talks about his long-standing relationship with the L&T group.

Tell us about the move to Dhananjaya Enterprises

The company was established in 1982 by Mr N Kannan. He was also an ex-L&T man – he worked with the packaging division and then moved on to establish his own company.

When I joined L&T in 1993, my posting was in Baroda. I got married in 1995. In 1996, I moved to Bangalore. Mr Kannan was then in his late 50s. Once, he told me that his children were not keen on the family business. I told him that the company that he had built up over the years should not rest its future on family members. Some days later, he called me and said that, at any point, if I was keen on a change, I should consider joining him.

The same year, my wife (who was in IT) went to the US on an assignment. Our daughter was around 6 months old, and I was looking after her. L&T asked me to move to Chennai because they felt Bangalore was not a high-potential area. Due to my daughter's young age, I couldn't move and decided to switch jobs. L&T was reluctant to let me go, but they couldn't help as well. On hearing about this, Mr Kannan put forth his offer again, and I joined him as a partner.

What are some major business successes that are close to your heart?

In 2001, we got our first project order for L&T Valves – this was a big deal for us! Also, we were able to work with L&T Valves to execute projects for two major power OEMs, Greenesol Power and TD Power Systems. We executed 100 project orders for them, between 2005 to 2013.

We have worked with all the defence units in Bangalore, including NAL, ISRO and IISc. In 2010, IISc had aircraft component testing, which happens in a high-pressure line. We were the first to supply L&T Valves products for their hypersonic test facility. It was a proud moment for us.

In many companies, where we have replaced China-made valves with our triple-offset butterfly valves, customers have noticed a massive improvement in performance timelines. Where they last between 6 months to a year, our valves have held up for 10 years! This is matter of pride for us.

What would you say is your company's USP?

There are two sides to our business – one is the supply for a project, and the other is maintenance. In both aspects, we don't go and present our product catalogue to a customer, and then sell them what we have. We reach out to the customer, identify and understand their needs, and then sell the relevant products.

We constantly try to value-add to the customer, seeing if we can replace any existing damaged valves with our products. I can say with pride that we have not received any major complaints for the valves we have supplied over all these years, but that is only because we pay close attention to ensuring that it fits our customer's needs from all aspects.

Also, we are as focused on our employees as we are on clients. We have about 15 staff members, and they have all stayed on for more than 20 years. Both men and women are given equal powers and responsibilities, and we ensure that each employee is well cared for.

You have an unbroken relationship with L&T Valves for close to 30 years. What is the secret behind sustaining a relationship for so long?

L&T Valves has one of the best distribution networks, but what is really noteworthy is that they don't add distributors for the sake of doing so. They only pick and work with distributors who are able to match their values, and maintain consistent value-add in terms of product quality.

Also, they treat all their distributors very well, with trust and dignity. This is not commonly seen in our industry. This is one reason why their distributors have long-standing relationships.

On a personal level, even though I worked with L&T more than 25 years back, my bond with the people there is still very strong.

Tell us a bit more about your automation initiative.

We have been doing automation from 1996 onwards, and we have built a world-class facility, including testing facility, where even third-party members can come for testing of the valve.

We combine L&T Valves products with relevant actuators for our clients. Depending on the customer's requirements, we combine valves and actuators – without compromising quality in any form.

What are some major changes you have observed in the industry over the years?

There is a strong decline in brand loyalty. In previous decades, loyalty was very high – from both employees and customers – towards a company.

Earlier, when we used to take up projects, our approach was to build something that lasted a lifetime. Up until the late 1990s and mid-2000s, there were few major players, and they all competed on the basis of quality. Then, there was an influx of competitors who went for aggressive pricing, and all the contractors started to favour lower price points.

Today, contractors give a guarantee of anywhere between 12 and 18 months. They are not interested in procuring items that are of high quality, that will last decades. They are willing to spend money on maintenance but not willing in investing money in the foundation stages.

When it comes to employees, the values and outlook of the younger generation is very different. They have to come into an organisation and spend sufficient time to understand its pulse – only then can they imbibe its culture over time. But a lot of younger people keep switching jobs very quickly, so they fail to grasp what the organisation is all about.

We have to keep up with these changes and adapt ourselves as best as we can.

Given your long-standing association with L&T Valves, what are some areas you would say they should pay greater attention to?

L&T Valves are global suppliers of valves, so their approach is to make a product that is acceptable to companies around the world. I would say, a sharper focus on domestic needs is something they should look into. Indian companies have their own unique requirements, so value engineering to produce valves specifically suited to their requirements is needed.

More frequent dialogues with customers – in traditional forms and through modern forms like social media – is also an area to look into. Rather than just supplying products and then conducting after sales service, companies have to now engage with customers in a proactive manner. They should also share the new developments that the company is making, new products they are coming up with and so on.



Lastly, I would say is that L&T Valves should focus on timely delivery. Their products are excellent, and if these aspects are given some more attention, they will definitely capture much market share.

On a personal note, tell us about your family.

My wife was in the IT sector even when we got married. She worked with Sonata, and then moved to Dell where she became a Director. Today, she is a Director with Walmart. My daughter has completed her Masters in Computer Science in the University of Southern California and she is working in Seattle. I have not really broached the topic of her joining the business – I feel she should find her footing in work and life before I put forth this idea.

Nobody Does It Better

A conversation between Ms Charulata Shah of CRS Marketing, L&T Valves distributor in Mumbai and Ms. Kiruba Karani of CMT who handles India Distributor segment - two ladies who created quite a few benchmarks last year.



Charulata Shah



Kiruba Karani

Ms Kiruba: Please tell us a little bit about CRS Marketing.

Ms. Charulata : CRS Marketing was started by my husband Mr. Chandrakant Shah in 2004. In 2015, after my husband's demise, I started managing the business. Today, along with my son Sagar Shah, I lead a strong team at CRS.

Ms Kiruba: Can you share a few memorable moments from this journey?

Ms. Charulata : We started off as a small company, with a turnover of 60 lakhs. Today, we have a turnover of over 40 crores. This journey has been very exciting and rewarding. Of course, none of this would have been possible without our team. We have a team of 18 members; we work together like a family and we enjoy the work we do.

Recently, we were having a tough time with a major order. Luckily, at the last minute, we were able to finalise the Rs 4 crore order with the support of L&T team. I consider that a very special and memorable moment.

Ms Kiruba: I am so glad that I could also be a part of this success. Being a woman, do you face any difficulties in managing a business? How has it been for you in the distribution business so far?

Ms. Charulata : Valves are required by every industry and distributors ensure smooth functioning of industries by providing critical components when urgently required. The prospects for upcoming years are good, and with our good network and strong team, we should be able to perform well.

As a woman entrepreneur, it was not easy for me in the beginning - but now we are doing good business and I enjoy my role as a woman distributor.

Ms Kiruba: Great. What do you think strengthened your relationship with L&T Valves?

Ms. Charulata : I receive a lot of support from L&T Valves on a day-to-day basis. You are always ready to help and this immense support is what strengthens our relationship as well as the business.

Ms Kiruba: What do you think is the secret to success in the distributor business?

Ms. Charulata : Maintaining good relationship is one of the most important factors to survive in the market. We need to be responsive to customers and should avoid delays to stay ahead or be on par with our competition. At CRS, the customer comes first. We respond to customer requirements immediately and make sure to take the necessary action.

Being able to think on your feet and take quick decisions at the right time is also necessary. On-time delivery makes a huge

difference in this segment. Having a good inventory plays a major role and our inventory at CRS is our strength. We take pride in our inventory management and maintenance which puts us ahead. Quality is one another factor we focus on.

Ms Kiruba: How do you maintain a balance between work and family?

Ms. Charulata : A business is a 24-hour job according to me. If you enjoy what you do, then you can manage it well and it is always a pleasure. My son is also in the business with me and doing it together as a family with a strong and supportive team makes it much more enjoyable.

Ms Kiruba: What is a message you would like to share with the younger generations as well as aspiring female entrepreneurs.

Ms. Charulata : You need to have 100% devotion if you want to do a business. For ladies, it is a greater challenge because apart from work they are also expected to take care of their homes. My message is believe in yourself and your business - you cannot stop the waves, but you can learn to surf. Every day, there will be new problems, be dedicated to finding solutions for each of those.



Sagar Shah

Words of Wisdom

from Mrs Hina Gandhi,
Director, SAEngineers Grp

My association with L&T Valves began 50 years ago, and it's been like a family ever since. I cherish the constant support that this family has given us in all the ups and downs of my life.

Secret of Our Success

Support from L&T Valves has helped us achieve growth year-on-year and has helped us make inroads into various large companies.

Advice

My advice to all entrepreneurs, men or women, is to give it your full and you will surely succeed.



DSLR for Dummies

A quick guide to DSLR camera construction, working principles and types.

A Digital Single Lens Reflex, i.e., a Digital SLR, is a camera that seamlessly integrates the mechanics and optics of an SLR, with a solid-state image sensor, where the latter records the image. The 'Digital' part of it needs no explanation, but the other components do.

Before SLR cameras, virtually all cameras had two optical light paths (either Twin Lens Reflex (TLR) type or Rangefinder type), one for viewing the would-be image and the other for capturing the image. They relied on intersection of the two light paths on the subject. Such a configuration was beset with framing errors, especially at close range, owing to parallax.

The term 'Reflex' simply implies the presence of a mirror or prism, which enables the user to view the image through the 'taking lens' itself. The working principle will be explained as we move ahead.

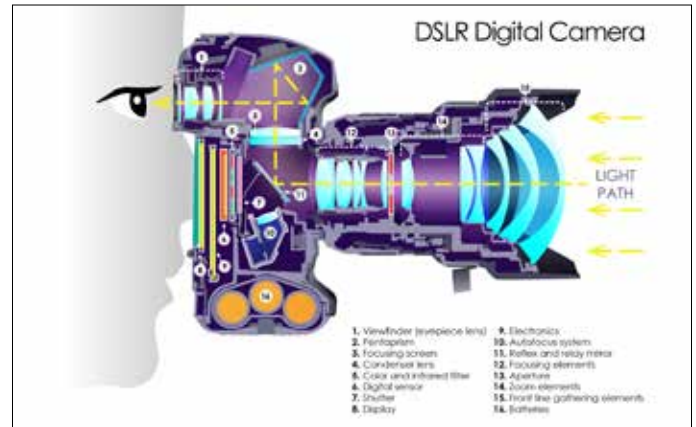
Before moving on to DSLRs, a brief introduction to its successor, a Mirrorless Camera, would be beneficial. Like the name indicates, a mirrorless camera is essentially a DSLR without a mirror, wherein it utilises the actual camera sensor to show the to-be captured image. They have an Electronic ViewFinder (EVF), unlike an Optical ViewFinder (OVF) in DSLRs, which is essentially yet another small LCD or OLED screen. Advantages include 'First Time Right' image capturing, since the EVF updates (w.r.t photo parameters) real-time, and they are compact, lightweight and quiet.

Back to DSLRs now. A DSLR Camera = Lens + Camera Body.

A zoom lens consists of 100+ parts, such as threaded rings, spacer rings, nested barrels and sleeves, and most importantly, the optical groups. There are 4 groups in a lens - 3 mobile and 1 stationary. Each group must be coated adequately to ensure proper light transmission and prevent aberrations and internal reflections or lens flare.

To briefly explain groups and their job roles:

- Focus Group – Focuses the lens
- Variator Group – Varies the focal length, effectively varying the magnification or zoom
- Compensator Group – Maintains focus while zooming
- Master Group (the stationary group) – Positioned closest to the sensor, relays the variable magnification onto the focal plane, and corrects aberrations from other groups



The aperture diaphragm controls the amount of light that reaches the sensor. It is situated either directly in front of the master group or within it. The construction of the lens and configuration can vary based on the complexity, type of zoom and focus, type of lens itself etc.

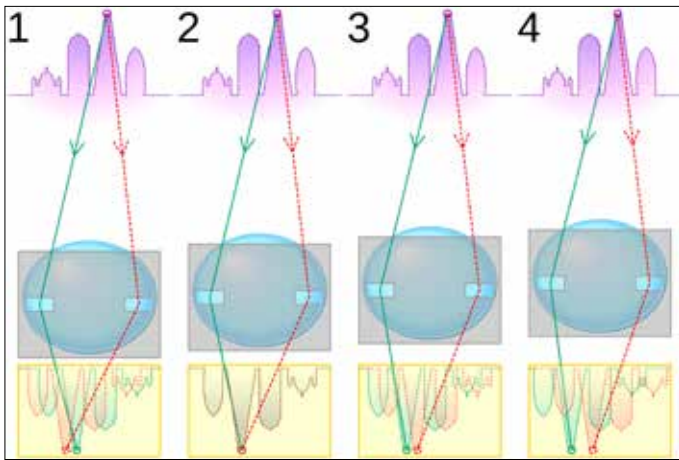
The camera body has numerous parts as well (no surprises there), but the most significant ones are the reflex mirror, focal plane shutter, the sensor and the pentaprism/ pentamirror.

The reflex mirror sits at a precise 45 degree and directs light to the viewfinder, via a matte focusing screen and a condenser lens. The light goes through the pentaprism (in relatively expensive DSLRs) or pentamirror (uses three mirrors as an alternative, does the same task, although inferiorly). It gets reflected twice, thus eliminating lateral inversion, and reaches the viewfinder eyepiece.

When the shutter button is half -pressed, the image focuses, indicated both visually and via an audio cue. When the shutter button is pressed fully to take the image, the mirror flips up, the focal plane shutter opens (for a precise amount of time), sensor captures the image, shutter closes and the image is ready.

Autofocus is probably the most relied upon system in a camera, so a bit of information on that is in order. DSLRs, and cameras in general, have two types of autofocus. They are Phase Detection Autofocus (PDAF) and Contrast Detection Autofocus (CDAF).

PDAF utilises two sensors, which could be as simple as a linear array of photodiodes, per AF point and they have a micro-lens above them. A small portion of the light hitting the reflex mirror, passes through it, gets reflected by another mirror (the secondary mirror) positioned at 54 degree, and hits the PDAF sensor. The micro-lens splits the light into two parts, and they hit the two corresponding sensors. If the light intensity peaks are both at the centre of the sensors, the image is in focus. If not, the distance between the peaks is measured and the correct focal length is calculated.



CDAF utilises the actual camera sensor itself, wherein it adjusts the focal length in both directions, until the contrast/intensity between two adjacent pixels is maximized.

PDAF is practically instant focus, whereas CDAF takes time and will struggle badly in low contrast situations and/ or when photographing moving subjects. It keeps varying the focal length, but the image doesn't focus, and this continues for a long time. This struggle of the camera is referred to as 'Focus Hunting'.

There's a myriad of DSLR lenses, but they can be broadly classified in to three main types: Zoom Lenses, Prime Lenses, and Telephoto Lenses. To give a quick summary:

Zoom Lenses – Highly versatile, "Jack of all, master of none" type. Most common: 70-200 mm

Prime Lenses – Fixed focal length i.e., no zoom, designed for one task and excels at that. Image quality is far superior to those from a zoom lens. Most popular ones: 50 mm "Nifty Fifty" and 35 mm.

Telephoto Lenses – Typically of 100-600 mm focal length, cumbersome and very expensive. For wildlife, sports and astrophotography, where the subject is extremely far away.

Camera bodies are classified based on the sensor size. The two most popular ones are Full Frame (36 mm x 24 mm) and APS-C (23.6 mm x 15.6 mm). The sensor size affects the image quality, dynamic range, depth of field and effective focal length of the lens. Sensor sizes and their effects are a bit too vast to explain in this article. However, the 'Image Quality' part deserves an explanation.

A larger sensor, for a given no. of pixel, will have larger pixels. Larger pixels essentially imply higher light capturing capacity. Therefore, the images will turn out sharper, brighter (for a given ISO) and significantly lesser noise/ grain (if ISO is increased).

This simple fact explains why DSLR cameras will always be far superior to phone cameras.

Also, More Megapixels = Better Camera is a myth. An iPhone 15 pro has a 48 MP camera and a Samsung S24 has a 200 MP camera, but they are relatively small sensors. A canon 1DX Mark III (costs Rs. 6.55 Lakhs, body alone) has a 20.1 MP Full frame sensor, a Sony A9 Mark III (costs Rs. 5.3 Lakhs, body alone) has a 24.6 MP Full frame sensor. The mentioned professional cameras' sensors are not even close to the phones with respect to MP count, but undoubtedly, they take better pictures.

If you've stayed with me so far, chances are you are interested in photography, more than you know. Hence, I'd highly recommend you learn about the Exposure Triangle, it can potentially bring a night and day difference in your photos.



Sameera Vaikar

Holiday Hotspots

SINGAPORE

Madhankumar S



Sightseeing Options:

- Garden by the Bay
- Universal Studios
- Sentosa Island
- Marina Bay Sands

Outdoor Activities:

- Skyline Luge
- Hyperdrive (Go-Karting)

Food Spots:

- Chinese Food: China Town
- South Indian Food: Ananda Bhavan, Komala Vilas

Tips:

- Prepare a trip of at least 4-5 days.
- Good Metro service available connecting all major locations.

ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS

Saikrishna Gannapureddy

Sightseeing Options:

- Radhanagar Beach, Havelock
- Sunset at Laxmanpur Beach, Neil Island
- Cellular Jail, Port Blair (Kaala Pani)

Outdoor Activities:

- Sea Walk
- Scuba Diving
- Parasailing

Tips:

- Best time to Visit: December to April
- Opt for a local tour package
- Plan a 1-week trip to explore the islands



VARKALA

Paneer Selvam P

Sightseeing Options:

- Cliff View
- Street Shopping
- Beach View



Food Spots:

- The Beach Café
- Café Delmer
- Holyrabbit Café

Outdoor Activities:

- Kayaking
- Paragliding
- Beach Surfing



Tips:

- Best time to visit for fewer crowds and cheaper trip: Late August, September, and March.
- Monsoons (Jun-Aug) can be pleasant too, if you check the weather in advance and go in the weeks when the town is not sloshing with rains.



YERCAUD

Gubandiran M

Sightseeing Options:

- Kiliyur Falls
- Pagoda Point
- Anna Park – Flower Garden
- Shevaroy Temple
- Botanical Garden

Outdoor Activities:

- Lake View
- Boating

Tips:

- Best time to Visit: October to June
- In the month of May, there is a 7-day Summer Festival of flower shows, boating races, and dog shows.



MAHABALIPURAM

Balamuthukumar G

Sightseeing Options:

- Sunrise
- Shore temple

Outdoor Activities:

- Windsurfing
- Horse Riding

Tips:

- Carry sunglasses and caps during the summer.

Food Spots:

- Original Moonrakers
- Fried fish on the beach



OOTY

Natarajan K



Sightseeing Options:

- Botanical Garden
- Ooty Lake
- Doddabetta Peak

Outdoor Activities:

- Boating

Tips:

- Evening is the best time for Doddabetta peak



People find different ways to share their emotions and thoughts with the world. I use photography to express myself.



*Jai Surya G
KPM*

What has Q4 ever given us?

*The February-born George Harrison for one - whose first solo work after the break-up of the Beatles in 1970 was titled 'All Things Must Pass'.
Presenting Joselin's last quiz for V-connect.*

1. The Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act was passed in February 1919 and came into effect on 21 March 1919 in British India. The Act permitted the imprisonment of persons without a trial. When people gathered on 13 April 1919 to protest peacefully against this act and against the arrest of Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr Satya Pal the British Indian Army open fired on the people after blocking the only exit. Name the act and the massacre.
2. 12 February 1809 is the birthday of this famous personality who is referred in this poem by Carol Ann Duffy. The poem reads like a fictional diary entry by his wife.
*7 April 1852
Went to the zoo.
I said to him—
Something about that chimpanzee over there reminds me of you.*
3. In this famous play, the titular character is warned many times 'to beware the Ides of March'. Identify the character who gave us a calendar and the 7th month of year.
4. This famous monument, named after its engineer and nicknamed 'Iron Lady' completed construction on 31 March. Though conceived as a temporary structure for 1889 World Fair, the structure still stands tall. Name the monument.
5. On 4 April 1949, an intergovernmental alliance was signed by 12 countries, in the aftermath of the Second World War. One of its article states that attack on one member constitutes an attack on all members. Its most recent member joined on 7 March 2024. Identify the alliance.
6. UNESCO choose to commemorate this day, as it marked the death anniversaries of Cervantes, William Shakespeare and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega and several other prominent writers. What is the day commemorated as and when is it commemorated?

Valves Brands Wall **Answers**

L&T Valves equity partners over the years

Serck Audco	BTR	Invensys	Flowserve
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L&T Valves technology partners

Crane	Nordstorm	Teledyne Farris	Worcester
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Valve brands

AMPO	Emerson	Neway	Valmet
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Valve brands, without their first letter

Core (Score)	Elan (Velan)	Ray (Bray)	Wick (Zwick)
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Only Durairaj S managed to scale the wall. Congrat!!



காஞ்சி Connect

V-connect Kancheepuram Special

April 2024

Beginning the year **with a bash!**



Kancheepuram. 1 April 2024. At Transcend 2024, Mr. Kalyanaraman, Chief Executive and Director unveiled the themes for the year - Pragati and Vriddhi. The terms translate to progress and growth, reflecting the ambitions and aspirations of the company in 2024-25.

SKN in his keynote address, delivered both in English and Tamil, presented the highlights, often to thunderous applause from a packed audience. He mentioned the successful integration, the growth in order inflow, the continuous and confident increase in sales and the reduction of inventory.

Transcend also celebrated Milton Danny, Umapathi A and Murugan K who crossed career milestones. Valves Xcellence Awards was another highlight of the event, where contributions of 15 individuals from various domains were acknowledged and honoured.

Congrats to winners of **Long Service Awards**



Milton Danny
Senior DGM, CMT

20



Umapathi A
Manager - TMBV

20



Murugan K
Assistant Manager - LSV

15

Congrats to winners of **Valves Xcellence Awards**



Arunkumar K
Best Performer - Estimation



Bharath Kumar Badari
Best Performer - Pre-Sales



Team Europe
Best Performer - International Sales



Vairaprakash N
Best Performer - CMT



Muthukumar CR
Best Performer - Design



Prashant Kadam (Kiruba Karani)
Best Performer - Domestic sales



Upendran KK
Best Performer - SCM



Kalaiyazhagan V
Best Performer - PED



Siva Balan S
Best Performer - PLED



Balakrishnan R
Best Performer - GGC/ SVG
(Production)



Anantharaj S
Best Performer - TOBFV/ VWS/ Ball
(Production)



Saravanan E
Best Performer - FG



Vinayak Sankar R
Best Performer - Finance & Accounts



A Govindarajan
Best Performer - Human Resource



Thangapandi N
Best Performer - Quality

Congrats to **Academic Achievers**



Deepak S (B.Com)
S/o M Sankar



Sandiya S (B.Com)
D/o M Sankar

உயிர் எழுத்துக்களில் அம்மா

அன்பின் அழகு அம்மா

ஆனால் ஆனவம் ஆதிக்கம்

இவளிடம் என்றும் இல்லை

சுன்றெடுத்தவளின் சுரமான பண்பு

உன்னை உருக வைத்து

ஊமையாக்கி விடுகிறது

என்னுள் எங்கும் நீ இருப்பதால்

ஐம்புதங்களை நான் அறியவில்லை

ஒருமுறை உன்னை வணங்கினால்

ஒராயிரம் வரங்கள் கிட்டும் தாயே

ஒளவை பேசிய அழகிய தமிழில் அம்மா



அந்தோணி ஜெயராஜ்

To celebrate the **International Mother Tongue Day** (21 Feb), we had invited literary works in your mother tongue, and **Antony Jayaraj J** responded with a soulful paen on Mother.

It's an acrostic (Google that).
Check it out, it's beautiful.

Blue-fronted Redstart
clicked in Zuluk, Sikkim
by Soumyadip Raha, Kolkata

