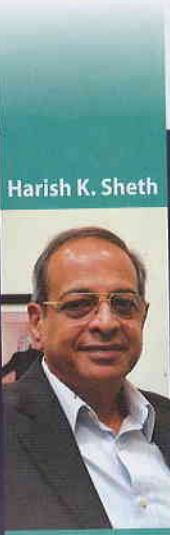
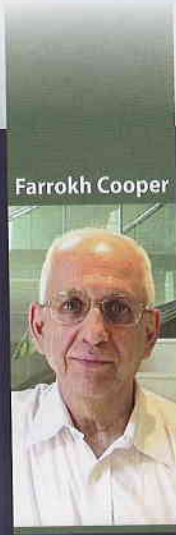


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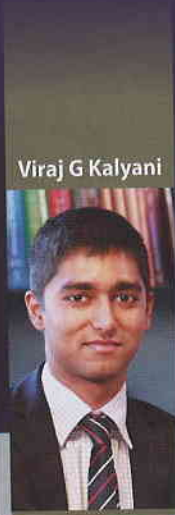


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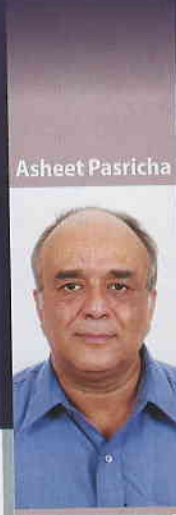
The ACE LIST

Leadership is playing a huge role in the Indian auto components industry's rise to the next level. Therefore, we at **The Machinist** thought it pertinent to understand the vision and aspirations of a set of top management representatives from this dynamic industry. While this list is far from comprehensive, it certainly reflects a very interesting and insightful cross section of this sector. We started the ACE List last year featuring some of the leading entrepreneurs from this industry. This year we have extended the scope of the list beyond entrepreneurs (people who started their own organisations) to include other top management guys. This is in recognition of the fact that while some of them may not have established the company, their role is equally entrepreneurial in growing it.

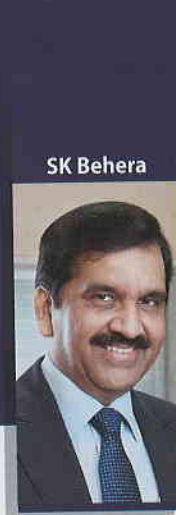
By Niranjan Mudholkar



Viraj G Kalyani



Asheet Pasricha



SK Behera



Thimmaiah NP



Gaurav Motwane

Why they are on 'The ACE List'

- ✓ They are all big on manufacturing.
- ✓ They are expanding.
- ✓ They are either Tier 1 suppliers or are single source suppliers.
- ✓ They are focused on innovation and excellence.
- ✓ They are either diversifying or acquiring new businesses.
- ✓ They are big on exports.

**The term 'ACE List' is an exclusive editorial property of The Machinist magazine. We do not claim this to be an exhaustive list and are well aware that we may have missed out on many names. But this is a beginning and we will be building this into a strong editorial platform in the times to come. - Editor*

Thimmaiah NP

Managing Director & CEO,
Meritor India

Thimmaiah NP, MD & CEO, Meritor India, is responsible for Meritor and its joint venture activities in India including - Meritor Heavy Vehicle Systems, Automotive Axle Ltd, the India Technical Center and Global Sourcing Office. And he sees this opportunity to create an environment that inspires continuous improvement across all business areas, is what drives him.

“Being responsible for complete oversight of the businesses’ different facets, driving the organisation towards growth and world class manufacturing capability, and delighting the customer excites me. My biggest strength is being able to span the often polar opposites of strategy and execution. I always look for the next level of performance and drive the organisation towards it. I love doing new things and I enjoy taking calculated risks. I believe that people make the difference and having the right people who understand what is good for the



organisation and work towards organisational betterment are key factors for success. At the end of the day I want to look back and see what have I contributed. Have I created something lasting and of value for my people and the organisation and industry; am I leaving behind a strong legacy?” he says.

Meritor Heavy Vehicle Systems and Automotive Axles Ltd are joint ventures between Meritor Inc. USA and the Kalyani Group, Pune. It has been the largest independent rear axle drive manufacturer in India for close to 35 years. After more than two years of downturn the market is looking up since the last few quarters. “We continue to grow significantly faster than the market with our new product development and new business vertical strategies. The last one year was exciting for us as we continued to launch many new products and will continue to ramp

“At the end of the day I want to look back and see what have I contributed. Have I created something lasting and of value for my people and the organisation and industry; am I leaving behind a strong legacy?”

up this year as well,” Thimmaiah says. The company’s annual turnover is approximately Rs1,000 crore. “We have an ambitious target to grow multifold by 2020, the strategy and execution plan are in place to grow the business exponentially,” he adds.

Meritor India has recently expanded its current facility at Mysore to produce high end specialty axles which are used in mining, off-highway and military axles. The new plant is a world class facility spread across 3,600 square meters and has the capacity to manufacture 9,000 axles per year. “The plant has the unique ability to manufacture a special axle weighing 10 tonnes used for a 100 tonne dump truck. We have also built a new factory at Jamshedpur for brakes and tag axles.”

Thimmaiah’s personal vision for his organisation is three-pronged. Firstly, he wants to grow



of the people is extremely challenging and important, communication is a very important factor, and I always ensure that I am transparent and over-communicate to make the organization aware of the dynamics, requirements, performance needs," he says.

Thimmaiah feels that the Indian auto component sector needs to invest in upgrading manufacturing processes and capabilities to deliver high quality products and a reliable supply chain. "Most of the time it adds to capital investment, but the challenge is you do not get compensated for the same, we are caught in this vicious cycle. Everyone says that volatility is here to stay and we have to learn to deal with volatility. I agree that this is the fact but according to me it is impossible to deal with volatility in an effective manner – serving a volatile customer demand adds to cost in the supply chain. Many people may not agree to my point but when you have 100 suppliers spread across the country with a logistics lead time varying from 1 to 7 days and manufacturing throughput of many days, it is impossible to produce and ship per daily variation. I know it is very difficult because the ultimate volatility comes from the end customer and it's our endeavour to serve the customer in the best possible way. Consistent quality and delivery performance are still going to be the main factors to take the Indian auto industry to the next level," he shares.

"Consistent quality and delivery performance are still going to be the main factors to take the Indian auto industry to the next level."

the business profitably faster than the market - through highest level of performance to the customer while continuing to invest in new products development, venture into new business lines, agencies related to its product line. Secondly, he wants to create world class manufacturing - this includes factory and organization culture. And third, he wants to have highly motivated employees.

Thimmaiah says that aligning people towards a common goal is the biggest challenge. He believes that it is very important that leaders should support each other in the organization to seamlessly execute upon one strategy and one vision, and that is the challenge. "You need to be constantly communicating and ensure they do not drift. I also want to say that I have been lucky throughout my career to have excellent teams in each organization I have worked for. I want to emphasize that at my current organization the team is excellent and among the best I have had, and that makes my job very easy. Market downturns are extremely challenging, identifying what should and should not be done during a downturn is very important," he says.

He also believes that a leader needs to keep both short term and long term objectives in mind and make decisions. "Making decisions about what should and should not be done to avoid hurting the long term objectives of the organization is the most difficult thing to do. Also keeping up the motivation