

Running with CEOs

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MUMBAI: Running a marathon and a business are very alike. Both need proper planning and strategy. But some leaders of India Inc, who are also long distance runners, have learnt much more than this lesson from the long distance running they have dabbled in.

Gagan Banga, the 36-year-old CEO of India Bulls Financial Services Limited, was forced to run by his doctor because of medical reasons a few years back. He was gasping for breath after a few hundred metres on the treadmill on the first day. Today, he can wake up before sunrise, run 32 km, attend a board meeting and take an evening flight for his next meeting in another city and not feel stressed or tired.

"For me, running is meditation. I cleanse my mind and my system when I go out to run," Banga said. Banga has run several full marathons and has started running groups at India Bulls offices in various cities.

Hindustan Unilever Ltd's (HUL) executive director Hemant Bakshi started running to be able to keep up with his wife Roshini Bakshi, vice-president at Walt Disney India. Roshini is a vigorous runner and a fast one at that. "I never start before her because she always catches up and leaves me behind," said Hemant, who would have been playing competitive sports instead of running had it not been for Roshini.

For both of them, running

MANAGEMENT RUNNERS

Anand Mahindra

(MD and vice-chairman)

Mahindra Group

N Chandrasekaran

(CEO) Tata Consultancy Services

Shekhar Bajaj (CMD)

Bajaj Electricals

Anant Bajaj (Executive

Director) Bajaj Electricals

Richard Fiddis (MD)

Experian

Vikas Sharma (Sr. MD,

President and CEO) Nomura

R K Rangan (President and

CEO) Nomura services

Rashesh Shah (Chairman

and CEO) Edelweiss

has held valuable lessons that they now apply to work. "I learned patience from running. Also, you are continuously competing with yourself in long distance running," Roshini said.

"Like in running, if you realise your potential and keep performing at that level you will finish the race. That's exactly how we work at HUL," added Hemant.

Like Hemant, Standard Chartered's general manager for wealth management, India, Vishal Kapoor dabbled in several other sports but never running. After he joined StanChart he ran for the first time in the Mumbai Marathon in 2008, and surprised himself by finishing the half marathon in 2 hours 40 minutes without any practice. "It was a foolhardy thing to do but it was also a case of mind over matter," he said.