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CONVERSATION WITH COMPANY SECRETARIES

What encouraged you to become a CS?

To be very frank, CS happened by chance. Generally, people complete their CS along with their graduation, whereas I joined the same after my graduation due to some hiccups in life. After wasting three precious years of my career, I saw CS as the only opportunity which could be completed in the next 2 years (MBA was ruled out as that was not financially feasible to pursue). So I joined it with an aim to complete the same in the first attempt, and I did so. Someone said to me that it's the only course by which you can showcase your talents to the top management from the very first day. No other course gives you this opportunity. This struck me hard and today I believe that it's so so true.

How do you deal with shareholders grievances at the AGM (including those that could not be responded to during the AGM)?

We prepare an FAQ which covers most of the queries raised by the shareholders, and helps the Chairman to respond immediately during the AGM. For the unanswered questions, we respond to the concerned shareholder directly.

Is it important to connect with IDs between meetings? If so, how do you do it?

It is very important to be connected with IDs on a regular basis. We send regulatory updates to IDs on a monthly basis. We communicate with them to take their inputs on the draft minutes of last meeting, and for finalizing the date and time of next meeting(s). All information required by them is sent on priority basis.

Considering the increasing demands made on a CS, how do you manage your time?

Once you climb up the corporate ladder, you are expected to do multitasking. Nobody asks you to perform. The responsibilities on your shoulders make you perform. Sustaining your work pressure, and simultaneously keeping yourself updated, is the most important part for a professional, and for this, time management plays a vital role. Proper planning is the only way to manage your time.

I have bifurcated my daily routine in four parts- The first hour goes into self-study/ updation/ reading regulatory changes/ reading corporate announcements etc. Then comes a short team review - What is pending/ why it is pending/ support needed from my side. This helps in clearing backlog on daily basis. Then comes replying to all mails and delegation of work. Then comes the fourth part wherein I complete my assigned works/ vetting of work done by team etc. On every Saturday, a detailed one to one meeting is held with team members to understand their problems, do hand holding, motivating them etc. A well-motivated team always helps you and saves your time.

Further we maintain a checklist, which is bifurcated into 6 heads- Daily/ Weekly/ Monthly/ Quarterly/ Half yearly/ Yearly. This sheet details each and every thing which needs to be done by the department, on the said timelines, to have a strong internal control.

What good practices, not prescribed by law, have you put in place?

We issue press release and investor presentation after every Board meeting, arrange factory visits for shareholders, send NECS advises to dividend holders, send TDS certificates to dividend holders send reminders to shareholders whose dividends are pending, prepare FAQs for shareholders, undertake shareholders satisfaction survey, appoint more number of Independent Directors than statutorily required, all our NRC members are Independent, and we have a Lead Independent Director.

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