



CONVERSATION WITH COMPANY SECRETARIES

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What encouraged you to become a CS?

A Company Secretary commands a high position in the value chain, and acts as conscience seeker of the company. Being a multidisciplinary professional, he/she renders services in various areas of the Company. It is a challenging and daunting role, which has entrusted the crucial responsibility of shaping the governance framework in India and worldwide. It also ensures abidance of the same, not only in letter but also in spirit. I was inclined towards the subject of CS course while pursuing my education, and being a part of this profession has ensured that my multiple academic qualifications, with focus in Secretarial, along with Finance and Taxation domain, are all utilized during my stint and association as a Company Secretary with all the previous and present organization that I am associated with. It is a highly responsible role and requires co-ordination with all functions in any organization.

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

Shareholders are one of the most important stakeholders of any public organization. I always go out-of-the-way to help my Company's shareholders that comes to me with grievances specially relating to their shareholding and related matters. I ensure to maintain healthy relationship with shareholders throughout the year and shareholders grievances are dealt on priority basis. Besides, fair opportunity is given to all shareholders to express their concern/ grievances, if any. In case any shareholder is unable to attend the AGM, or could not be given an opportunity to express his/her opinion, we ensure to send him/her an email asking for his/her feedback/ concern, as a matter of gesture and I try my level best to solve their queries/ concern.

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

Definitely, Independent Directors directly liaise with the Company Secretary for various matters and hence I feel it is of utmost importance to create relationship of trust and transparency with the Independent Directors. Fortunately I have always won trust of my Independent Directors with my transparent behaviour and luckily they have reposed confidence and trust in me. Before scheduling Board/ Committee Meetings, I ensure to check for the availability of time of all Independent Directors, and also post circulation of Agenda, I ensure to personally call them and also try to meet them whenever such occasion arises and explain the agenda items. In between Meetings, I ensure to be reachable and approachable to all Independent Directors, and keep them apprised of all important regulatory updates/ key events that need attention of Independent Directors. Having a relationship of trust and transparency with Independent Directors is also one of the desirable attributes in any Company Secretary.

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

I have always promoted highest standards of governance in any organization that I have been associated with. I have driven initiatives for awareness of key provisions of various important regulations applicable to the Company, including creating awareness on various compliances and in particular SEBI's Insider Trading Regulations, for which various activities were organised eg- quiz, user friendly and lucid presentations, coupled with posters at various office locations, WhatsApp and text messages, etc, voluntarily placing information before the Board of Directors, which is not mandatorily required to be placed, ensuring that I am directly and easily reachable to all the shareholders and keeping my contact information public, making voluntary disclosures to the Stock Exchanges and keeping various stakeholders informed, etc

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

It is challenging at times to strike a work-life balance. Prioritizing time is one of the biggest challenges of this profession given the nature of time-bound and sensitivity of transactions that require attention of a Company Secretary. My secret for time-management is to plan ahead of time so that justified attention can be given to events and transactions that have to be dealt with on an ad-hoc basis.

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