



R J Jeyamurugan

**CFO and Company Secretary
Asian Paints**

What encouraged you to become a CS?

After finishing my Chartered Accountancy course, I completed my Company Secretary course. In the journey of shaping my career, I did not want to restrict myself to the Finance function. I believed pursuing CS along side will enrich my knowledge, and for me CS was not just about learning corporate laws, but becoming a multidisciplinary professional. A CS is the custodian of governance in the organization. He / She is the bridge between the management, the Board and the Stakeholders and plays a crucial role in establishing the governance framework in the organization, not only in letter, but also in spirit. All this enticed me to take up CS and pursuing the same benefited me to assume the dual role of CFO and CS in Asian Paints.

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

Shareholder engagement is a continuous process. At Asian Paints we have a dedicated team to look after the shareholders' grievances and redress them within the identified TAT.

We request shareholders to send their queries in advance so that the reply can be sent to them before the AGM. Further, at the AGM, we strive to respond to all the queries raised by the Shareholders, to their complete satisfaction, and all the queries which could not be responded to during the AGM, due to paucity of time, are addressed at the earliest.

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

It is of extreme importance to connect with Independent Directors between meetings, update them about the organization's developmental plans, seek their guidance & input, and to benefit from their expertise, skill and highly enriched knowledge. Role of IDs has transformed with the new Companies Act and SEBI Listing Regulations.

As a CS I ensure that the information and details sought by the IDs, to make an informed decision, is provided to them well within time. Further, I ensure that I regularly engage with them and keep them updated with the latest developments in the organization and in the regulatory space.

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

- Preparing ahead of time.
- Strong understanding of the business operations and regular engagement with business leaders.
- Developing a dedicated, technically sound and dependable team.
- Staying abreast with all the regulatory changes.
- Digitalization and automating processes.

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

At Asian Paints we have several industry leading governance practices, which are over and above the legal mandates. Listing below few good practices voluntarily adopted:

- Board evaluation by external consultants once in three (3) years, with a rigorous process of sharing feedback and follow up.
- Creating a Board and Committee meetings calendar, with complete visibility on agenda items to be discussed in advance for the entire year. In this digital era, to ensure focused discussions, the agenda is bifurcated into items which involve decision making, approvals, from the items which are to be noted by the Board. The items to be noted are circulated well in advance of the timelines as per Secretarial Standards, and questions from the members are sought as well as responded to before the meeting.
- Discussions are held before the meetings with the Chairman of the Board and the Committees to brief them on the agenda items placed before the Board and provide requisite clarifications.
- Detailed and continuous familiarization process.
- Ensuring focus of my CS colleagues in the team on understanding the business along with compliance matters. This ensure that they are abreast with the developments in the organization and can appreciate the questions from the Directors and senior management.

To hear what other Company Secretaries have to say

[CLICK HERE](#)