



Dr. Sudheendhra Putty

Company Secretary
Cyient Limited

What encouraged you to become a CS?

The principles of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence, law and governance had fascinated me even from my childhood. Over the years, the fire in me to contribute to the nation and the economy in whatever little way, was blazing. I felt that the company secretary was a vital cog in the corporate milieu and the fulcrum of the corporate governance process. Here was a profession that ensured governance across the board and was a catalyst in the process of enhancing stakeholder value; a profession that helped abide by the law and enabled me to be a partner in economy/nation building. This also provided an opportunity to engage in academic philanthropy.

Company Secretaries' is a noble profession. It is a sentinel of good governance and as one among them, I am proud to have my muskets. It is as ennobling as it is humbling.

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

A cross functional team within the company is formed weeks ahead of the AGM and this team prepares a comprehensive and objective set of FAQs. This is based on the disclosures in the annual report, the company's performance, results and operations. Besides, we also look at contemporary happenings in the industry, economy and the regulatory landscape and outline our preparedness or responses to them, as the case maybe. The questions that are not responded to at the AGM owing to paucity of time are replied back individually to the shareholders concerned.

We work in tandem with the R&T agents and closely ensure the denouement of all grievances. We keep our channels of communication with the shareholders open and respond to them with alacrity.

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

Prioritising, delegating and leveraging technology are the key. Being systematic and punctilious in what is done is of paramount importance. It is important to strategize, organise and prioritize – that is my own definition of an SOP! Encouraging team work and having horses for the courses also helps. What this means is that iterative matters should not chew up time. The focus should be on the next level and taking governance one notch higher all the time. Outsourcing of non-core activities is an aspect that is often understated. This needs to be understood and leveraged appropriately.

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

It is absolutely imperative to maintain a regular connect with independent and non-executive directors. This might take the form of one or more of the following – updates on operations and performance, key business developments, impending changes to the regulatory framework, eliciting feedback on management support to the board and soft socialising such as for key events or festivals.

Strategy offsite meetings, global functional get-togethers and getting them to interact with other stakeholders like rating agencies, professional institutes and auditors also act as excellent forums for interacting with them.

In addition, independent directors are requested to interact on quarterly basis with the senior leadership and functional teams to share their experiences and expertise. Their words of wisdom often act as beacons for younger professionals.

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

Good governance means being a rung above the rest and better than the best. This translates into being at the forefront of voluntary compliance and constantly raising the bar on all matters concerning governance. The ethos that runs through is Values FIRST – Fairness, Integrity, Respect, Sincerity and Transparency. These values permeate the organisation and the lifeline of the operations in all our dealings with stakeholders. We have been pioneers in ushering in CSR, secretarial audit, adherence to secretarial standards and vigil mechanism much before they were made mandatory. There are numerous governance and business initiatives that we implement even though they are not mandated by law. An illustrative list would be as follows:

- Optimal leveraging of technology in board functioning – electronic board meetings and apps for board functioning
- Annual evaluation of the auditors by the key stakeholders
- Annual evaluation of the company secretary/governance functions by the board and key stakeholders
- Devising and implementing global governance policies
- Focussed board committees on strategy, diversity and inclusion and sustainability
- Publication of Sustainability (Environment, Social and Governance – ESG) report
- Biennial investor survey
- Globalising CSR

To hear what other Company Secretaries have to say

[CLICK HERE](#)

www.excellenceenablers.com