



# CONVERSATION WITH COMPANY SECRETARIES

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## What encouraged you to become a CS?

Actually, it was not about becoming a CS only...Envisaging the advantage of complementary qualifications in future work life, and especially in senior management roles, I chose to acquire three qualifications - CA, CS and Law simultaneously. My professional career, till a little over a year back, has been in managing various aspects of Finance, and it is only since March 2020 that I have moved into the Company Secretary role with Akzo Nobel. And this is despite that fact that I was amongst the top 5 All India Merit rank holders in the Final Examination of ICSI !

## 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 our most important stakeholders. We engage with them all through the year. Our attempt is to ensure that all questions get responded to during physical AGMs. However, during these unusual times, when AGMs are being held virtually, in case of paucity of time, we respond to the questions later by email.

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

As an organization which is transparent and follows good Corporate governance practices, we believe that it is important to connect with the Independent Directors on a regular basis, including in between meetings. These in-between connects are generally to apprise them of relevant regulatory changes or on significant actions taken by the Company. To illustrate, during these unprecedented times, we have kept them abreast of our COVID related initiatives and support for employees, their families and communities around us.

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

As mentioned earlier, I took over this role in March 2020, just around the time that the pandemic hit us. Despite spending most of my corporate career in the arena of finance, and moving into this role recently, I have focused on a few systemic interventions to further enhance the existing good practices. These include increased Investor and shareholder engagement, digitization initiatives etc. It is early days and I hope to continue to add value going ahead

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

By nature, I am an organized person and like to plan and prioritise my work. And my focus is on ensuring a balance between both short term and long term priorities of the role. Besides, there are several aspects of our work for which the schedule is well known, including statutory mandates related to the Board, Reporting etc, and putting systems in place for the same also enables management of time. I must admit that years of experience have taught me to follow the Eisenhower Matrix, doing what is urgent and important, and delegating what is urgent but not important!