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GLOBAL INDIANS

MANOJ G TIRODKAR

Transcending humble beginnings and overcoming challenges, Manoj Tirodkar, has built the Global Group into a force to reckon with.

Date of Birth	: 5 October 1964
Father	: Gajanan Raghunath Tirodkar
Mother	: Snehalata Gajanan Tirodkar
Education	: Chikitsak Vidyalaya, Girgaum, Mumbai

EARLY LIFE

A firm advocate of shared telecom infrastructure, Manoj G Tirodkar was born to Gajanan Raghunath Tirodkar and Snehalata, on 5 October 1964. Hailing from the Sindhudurg region of Maharashtra, Manoj's upbringing was in Mumbai in a very modest and disciplined middle-class family. His schooling was in the Marathi-medium Chikitsak Vidyalaya, Girgaum, Mumbai.

Restless, with big dreams of doing something new and innovative, Manoj didn't follow through with college. Instead, straight after school, at the suggestion of an associate of his father's, he went to Germany as a management trainee to explore job opportunities and new life experiences.

CAREER

A first-generation entrepreneur, Manoj started his journey from scratch. His confidence stemmed from his belief that apart from talent and hard work, his passion, commitment and vision would empower him to achieve his goals. He didn't allow the lack of formal education beyond schooling hold him back. He joined the business arena when he was only 17, with an all-consuming desire to establish a global company.

Starting with just four employees in a 300 square feet office and borrowed capital of $10,000, Manoj Tirodkar established the Global Group. Its flagship company, GTL Limited, was set up in 1992, for the distribution of fax

machines and other telecom subscriber-end terminals. Over the years, the businesses grew and were consolidated to form Global Group, which has a revenue of $600 million and an asset base of $3 billion. The Global Group operates in India and across Asia Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East, through its subsidiaries.

BIG VISION

Manoj foresaw the seamless opportunities that emerging fields like Internet and telecommunications could create in India. As an entrepreneur, he was naturally drawn to it. In 1995, he set up a privately owned company, Global E-commerce, a pioneer in the e-commerce infrastructure sector. The company operated India's first private sector data network across major cities offering EDI, Email and Enhanced Fax Services, among others, in the B2B space. Global E-commerce aided leading corporates and banks to shift to a paperless, connected world, to tap the prospects in e-commerce in its very nascent days.

In the late 1990s, when the telecom sector was liberalized, Manoj envisioned his perfect role in the

telecom revolution of the country. In 1999, when Global E-commerce was monetized and its proceeds were ploughed back into the group, he planned to invest in the creation of telecom tower infrastructure, which the country sorely needed.

Manoj also realized that to proliferate mobile telephony in the country and remain economically viable at the same time, there would be a need to share telecom infrastructure. In 2004, giving a heads up to the industry, GTL Infrastructure Limited (GTL Infra) was established, a pioneer in the Shared Passive Telecom Infrastructure space in India.

GTL Infra is India's leading independent and neutral listed telecom tower company, with about 28,000 telecom towers operating across the 22 telecom circles in the country. Under Manoj's leadership as founder of GTL Infra, the company has grown from strength to strength. Today, GTL Infra deploys, owns and manages telecom towers and communication structures that are shared by all the Wireless Telecom Operators. This has facilitated in making India's mobile telephony dream become a reality.

Always one to gauge industry trends precisely and ahead of time, Manoj led GTL in the early 2000s into the enterprise networking space. It was among the first few companies in India to offer enterprise network services and managed services to medium and large corporates in the IT, ITeS, BFSI, Defense and the Hospitality segments. In 2007, GTL advantageously sold that business to Orange Business Services, the business communications arm of France Telecom.

In 2010, Tirodkar transcended his modest beginnings to claim the 74th place in the *Forbes*'s rich list. It was a laudable journey for a self-taught entrepreneur taking a small, single-subscriber end-telecom-equipment company to the global arena.

RESPONSIBLE INDIAN

As a person, Manoj remains deeply humble and believes in giving back to the society. Through Global Foundation, a public charitable trust of the Global Group, he channelizes the interests of the Group in the areas of education, health, disability, and community welfare.

Cleaner and greener environment is another cause that Manoj is impassioned about. For many years now, Global Group has been focusing on reducing the carbon footprint by investing in solutions that improve the energy efficiency in telecom operations.

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

Manoj Tirodkar is the recipient of several awards and recognitions for his contribution to industry and entrepreneurship. He is the first Indian to win the prestigious World Young Business Achiever Award 2000 (WYBA) presented by Worldcom Group. He has also received the Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII) Young Entrepreneur Trophy and Telecom Man of the Year Award in 2001. In 2016-17, Manoj was honoured by *The Economic Times* as one of the Most Promising Business Leaders of Asia.