



Headline	Building a career on values		
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In the second session of The Edge Billion Ringgit Club's 'Meet the CEO' series this year, Dutch Lady Milk Industries Bhd managing director Rahul Colaco shares his views on the importance of building a career based on social values.

# Building a career on values

by **Charlotte Chong**

**D**utch Lady Milk Industries Bhd managing director Rahul Colaco's journey in the corporate world has been guided by a set of values that benefits society.

During his career, he has always chosen to work in industries that are socially responsible and not focused purely on maximising profits. With such a life principle, it is no surprise that Rahul is at the helm of Dutch Lady.

"That is why I have never worked in a cigarette company or in an alcohol company," he said, adding that he would certainly not be working in any of them in the future.

Speaking at The Edge Billion Ringgit Club's (BRC) "Meet the CEO" talk yesterday, Rahul said such a principle applies even if he were to establish his own firm. "I am not sure about setting up a company on my own, but whichever company I join, I think it is really important to take up a role that can contribute to society."

Rahul joined Hindustani Unilever as a management trainee in 1997. After completing the programme, he stayed on with the company for six years in various roles — finance, procurement, and later, purchasing and supply chain management.

Rahul even turned down a scholarship offered by the Indian School of Business in order to pursue his Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Switzerland for the wider exposure. This is something he has never regretted. "Investing in yourself is the best investment you can ever made," he said.

After completing his MBA at the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) in Switzerland, he rejoined Unilever in Europe where he spent another six years.

While working in the Netherlands, Rahul came across Friesland Campina, the parent of Dutch Lady. Keen on returning

to Asia, Rahul joined Dutch Lady in 2010 as marketing director.

Having been its managing director since 2012, Rahul is perhaps the proudest employee of Dutch Lady. For instance, he is proud of the fact that Dutch Lady was one of the first private companies to extend paid maternity leave to 90 days from 60 days previously.

Dutch Lady, a leader in the dairy industry, takes corporate social responsibility (CSR) as seriously as its bottom line. Some examples of its CSR initiatives are its Dairy Development Programme (DDP), which has helped local farmers to produce more and better quality milk, while ensuring a sustainable milk supply.

Dutch Lady has also tied up with the Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS) to give aid to the needy. It has even mobilised its own "Dutch Lady Blue Brigade" unit and "Dutch Lady Doing Good" teams to reach out to communities in spreading the goodness of milk.

At the company level, it has the ongoing "Blue Goes Green" campaign as part of an awareness programme to encourage employees to be environmentally responsible.

Rahul believes that striking the right balance between work and life is an integral ingredient to corporate success. "The most important thing is prioritisation and identifying what is more important to you. Time is the most critical asset that you have," he said, adding that everyone should manage their time to have more free time.

Rahul said the younger generations could do more to improve the state of society, adding that it is very important for Generation Y and Generation X to complement each other. "Gen Y knows a lot more about technology and they will be thinking outside the box and wanting to change," he told the university students



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at Sunway University's campus yesterday. Sri Liew Kee Sin kicked off the series last month. Initiated last year, CEOs who have taken part in the series are CIMB Group Holdings Bhd group CEO Datuk Seri Nazir Razak, former Malayan Banking Bhd president and group CEO Datuk Seri Wahid Omar, former Petronas Dagangan Bhd CEO and managing director Amir Hamzah Azizan and QL Resources Bhd managing director Dr Chia Song Kun.

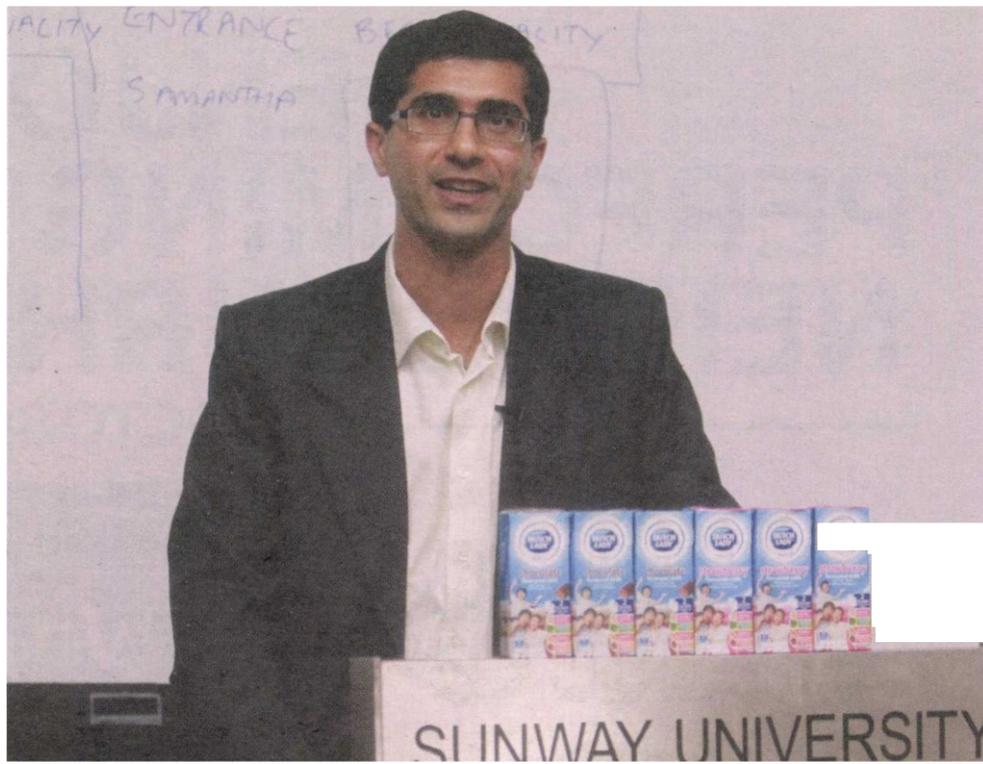
S P Setia Bhd president and CEO Tan



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