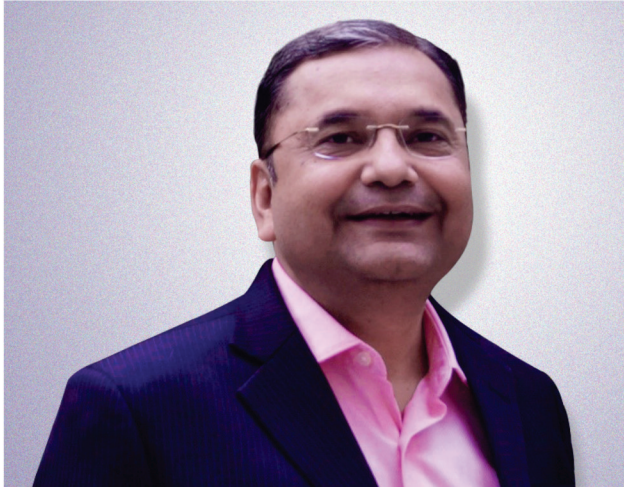


Strategic Growth Advisors: Driving Strategic Value - Enabling good governance - Delivering Strategic Investor Communications

Dr. Pallavi Banerjee • The CEO Magazine



Samir Shah,
Managing Director, Strategic Growth Advisors

The Global economy of twenty-first century, witnessed an extensive transformation of business landscapes. Not to mention, these shifts have vigorously jolted the investment sector resulting in a series of transformational developments. These include implementation of formal processes, stringent regulatory policies and subsequently intensifying expectations of investors. In such a backdrop, Investor Relations has emerged as a strategic role beyond just facilitating generic investor communication. It is instrumental in helping businesses realize their true potential and steer their way to sustainable growth.

Strategic Growth Advisors (SGA) has an expert team equipped with strong professional competencies in this domain and has marked its presence as a leader in Specialised Advisory having enabled its clients with enhanced strategic corporate value.

SGA consolidates its leadership with excellent capabilities in effective business positioning of clients that leads to enhanced investor confidence and value building. Through its exclusive bouquet of services, SGA acts as a pillar of support to its clients across various practices encompassing Investor Relations, Investor and Capital Market Communications, Strategic - cum - Corporate Financial Advisory, and Financial Public Relations. This establishes the brand as one of the most preferred destinations to go to for creation of sustainable value.

Nonpareil Approach

The breakneck competition brought forth by escalated globalization of markets has led to perpetual evolution in corporate governance practices. In today's aggressive

business environment, the term 'corporate governance' has become synonymous with a business' credibility in the market and demonstrates its un-compromised adherence to transparency and strategic consistency. Today, governance tremendously influences investors' will, to put their trust in the business. The companies empowered with dynamic communication strategy succeed in building a reputation in the market and are entitled to solid corporate governance, which not only boosts their market capitalization but also contributes significantly towards their sustainability.

As a leader in this space, SGA brings proven excellence in enabling its clients with robust governance with its peerless consulting, advisory and strategic implementation services. SGA's distinctive capabilities include developing effective communication strategy for clients to promote their successful interaction with investor and analyst communities.

Throwing light on SGA's unique approach towards creating maximum value for clients, Mr. Samir Shah - Managing Director at Strategic Growth Advisors shares, "Principally, SGA fuses its balance sheet understanding, analytical capabilities and sectoral insights to design an investor relations blueprint, customized as per business needs. This forms the very basis of correcting the mismatch between reality and perception. Thereafter, SGA makes it possible for its clients to interface with investors (existing and prospective) and analysts. This interfacing is more complex than one would assume; it comprises the pitching of the corporate story at just the right audience, preparing periodic performance updates, addressing specific queries and helping the investor understand a company beyond its stated numbers. In short, SGA helps its clients communicate clearly and consistently. SGA's enduring focus is to improve the perception of its client; benefiting not just the client but its entire family of stakeholders."

Key differentiators

- Brings an ethical discipline guided by the principles of trust, integrity, honesty, agility, creativity, accountability and credibility
- Driven by a team of experienced professionals with proven credentials and over combined 100 man-years of knowledge
- Optimization of management time
- Available at all times
- Structured communication methodologies for its clients
- Strong capabilities in positioning a company distinctively in the minds of the investor community
- Updating investors and analysts on quarterly corporate performances and provides explanations for deviations

The leadership behind the success, Samir Shah, Managing Director at SGA has been one among the few experts in corporate finance and investor relations in India. An eminent Chartered Accountant, Mr. Shah brings with him a collective experience of more than three decades rooted in wide range of verticals enveloping corporate finance, capital markets, investor relations, business strategy and planning. Prior to incorporating SGA, he has served as Head - Investor Relations & Corporate Finance at Suzlon. During his stint with the company, he managed the Private Equity fund raise, the large Initial Public Offering and then the investor engagement process for the large complex Indian MNC with operations across the globe.

His strategic insights enabled him to identify the existing gaps in this space and the forceful need for responsible investor relations. This led to the ideation of Strategic Growth Advisors (SGA) in 2010. His profound knowledge and deep expertise has been driving force towards the emergence of SGA as one of the fastest-growing Investor Relations and Communications consultancies in India.

Today, SGA serves over 85 clients across a diverse range of industries under all the business practices. The cumulative market capitalization of its clients for its Investor Relations practice is upwards of USD 30 billion. SGA is truly an Investor Communications Powerhouse.

The CEO Magazine interviews Samir Shah

TCM: What are your responsibilities as the chief driving the helm of SGA?

Samir Shah: My principal responsibilities as a leader are focused towards growing the firm consistently adopting the global best practices with strict adherence to knowledge and client centric focus. I strongly believe that the key to success in the financial markets lies in conducting business with utmost integrity and honesty. As we are knowledge service providers, I keep driving the team's efforts and make sure that the firm stays ahead of the curve in acquiring skills and domain knowledge to assist clients. Ability to understand the Client industry and business and then positioning the proposition right to the capital and financial markets is the hallmark of SGA practice. As a team, it is our constant endeavor to excel and simplify the businesses for the capital and financial market participants.

TCM: What does it take to be a CEO?

Samir Shah: It was challenging transition to become a CEO after being an employee for over 25 years, since I started relatively late at the age of 45. Today's business environment is dominated by very young CEOs, who have the luxury of failing a few times before they can finally succeed. I did not have that luxury; for me failure was not an option having started out that late. I was constantly driven by the passion to succeed. Moreover, my experience of working very closely in the various earlier jobs with the Promoters, Board Members and Senior Management team helped me to get a holistic perspective of businesses and gain a 360 degree view. This really helped when I started out as a CEO.

I believe that one's ability to constantly manage the ever-changing and evolving external and internal dynamics under VUCA times is the key to be a CEO.

TCM: What describes success for you?

Samir Shah: Success is never a destination but a journey. It is an ever changing goalpost; for us it is this journey of capturing milestones along the journey which determines success.

TCM: To what and whom do you attribute your success to?

Samir Shah: At this very core and centre of our success have been the team, and the leadership within the team. *I believe that leadership is all about the ability to transfer - patience, perseverance and passion to the people.* I believe that the ability to build a leadership pipeline is key to success. Our Group COO, Ms. Payal Dave, who has been part of the leadership team since the company's inception and her contributions, have been integral towards reaching where we are today.

TCM: What's the next big thing planned for SGA?

Samir Shah: India will definitely grow from a USD 2 trillion economy many times over in the next few decades and seemingly the Capital Markets will evolve with better and greater depth. The fact fortifies increased significance of investor relations and communications as well as governance for companies and businesses. It is in this light we seek to expand and increase our services in the coming years with strategic outlook to our scale and range of business with a Global tie-up.

TCM: What was your journey like to get where you are?

Samir Shah: My entrepreneurial journey began in true sense of terms when my ex-employer supported the start up and signed up as our first client. As a start-up, one of my key resolve was to attract top talent. I ensured that I put aside a year's employee salary cost in a bank fixed deposit. For me, their confidence and security was the key driver to the success of the start-up. To this day I believe in the same principle and it has served the business in good stead.

The formative years were very difficult as the Capital Markets was bearish from 2011 to 2014. We worked brick by brick adding clients with Top Quality Servicing. This empowered us to build up our reputation as a "Different Agency" in the market place. We were successful in metamorphosing the landscape of the Investor Relations Practice over time. From a Process Oriented practice, we have been able to establish ourselves as the leader in this business by focusing on the unique conditions and requirements of our clients and keeping a specialized approach for serving each of them.

TCM: If you had one piece of advice for someone just starting out, what would it be?

Samir Shah: Do not start something for the sake of it; just because that's the trend. Money will get scarce and ideas will be quickly replicated; think long term and Unique business model.