CMA DIGEST

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ED VOICE – From the Editor's Desk

Dear Readers,

Welcome once again to CMA Digest!

Here's wishing all of you a Happy New Year 2026. This time of the year always brings in joy and hope for most of us; it is a period of introspection of the year gone by, and a time to reassess and set new milestones for our personal and professional lives in the coming year.

Despite continuing wars and conflicts across the globe, it is going to be exciting times for India. The historic FTA has been signed with the European Union, and Indo-US talks are at a final stage of negotiation. If this goes well, India is all set to dominate the world economy in the coming year. Let's keep our fingers crossed!

The Monday Musings series is chugging along strongly, as usual. This month featured a student representative from one of our student chapters as the speaker. The presentation was well received and attracted a lot of appreciation. This augers well for the future, with the younger generation showing a great interest in being part of the activities of CMA. Fresh energy and new ideas are always vital to the growth and development of any organisation.

Two big events and some interesting programs are coming up in February, and it would be my pleasure to cover those events in detail in the next issue. On that happy note, let me sign off for now!

Mr. K. Seetharam
Editor
CMA Digest

CMA
COIMBATORE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Monday Musings

Monday Musings – 05th January 2026 Speaker: **Ms. Prathiba Sivathmika**

The Importance of Language in a Competitive World

The speaker, Ms. Prathiba Sivathmika, spoke about the importance of learning global languages in today's competitive world and how language can become a powerful tool for both personal and professional growth. She shared her own journey—studying in India, pursuing higher education in Scotland, and working in the aviation and business sectors—and explained how language played a crucial role in building confidence, creating connections, and opening international opportunities.

She emphasized that, while everyone today holds a degree, it is the additional skills that truly differentiate a professional in the job market. Among these skills, communication and language proficiency stand out as game changers. A global language is not just about speaking -- it is about expressing ideas clearly, negotiating effectively, building trust, and presenting oneself with confidence in multicultural environments.

She also highlighted how learning a new language improves adaptability, cultural intelligence, and leadership skills—qualities that modern organizations actively seek. Finally, she encouraged students to invest in learning at least one global language, reminding them that this single skill can multiply their career opportunities, broaden their mind-set, and give them a strong competitive edge in the international business world.

Monday Musings – 12th January 2026 Speaker: **Ms. Raksheni Shamyuqktha S**

Brain to Brand Building: Neuro-Driven Advertising

As part of CMA's Monday Musings No. 597, Ms. Raksheni Shamyuktha S., Final Year MBA student at Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education and Marketing Intern at Walkaroo International Pvt. Ltd., delivered an insightful session on "Brain to Brand Building: Neuro-Driven Advertising."

The talk explored how modern marketing is shifting from assumption-based strategies to neuroscience-backed decision making, especially in a world where consumers are exposed to thousands of brand messages every day. The session began by addressing the growing challenge marketers face, not just being seen, but truly mattering to the consumer within milliseconds of attention.

A key highlight of the session was the distinction between stated preferences and actual consumer behaviour. Traditional research often measures only the conscious 5% of decision-making, while the remaining 95% is driven subconsciously by emotions, sensory cues, and neural responses. Neuro-driven advertising bridges this gap by measuring biological and neurological reactions rather than relying solely on surveys or self-reported opinions.

The talk emphasized how the human brain processes sensory inputs such as sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste almost instantly, shaping perception before rational thinking begins. Real-world examples illustrated this impact — from audio branding like McDonald's iconic jingle, to scent marketing by Starbucks, tactile product experiences by Apple, and packaging redesigns by brands like Campbell's and Frito-Lay.

The session also highlighted how branding can literally alter sensory perception, citing the classic Coca-Cola vs. Pepsi blind taste test, where brand awareness influenced taste experience at a neurological level. Case studies from FedEx, anti-smoking

campaigns, and global FMCG brands further demonstrated how neural engagement often predicts consumer action more accurately than traditional metrics.

The discussion concluded with practical applications of neuro-marketing in ad testing, packaging design, UX optimization, rebranding, and conversion strategy, along with insights into the rapid growth of the global neuro-marketing industry. The shift from vanity metrics to predictive, brain-based insights, marks a strategic evolution in how brands connect with consumers.

The session offered valuable takeaways for marketers, entrepreneurs, and leaders, reinforcing the idea that the future of branding lies not just in creativity, but in understanding how the brain truly decides.

Monday Musings – 19th January 2026

Know Your Spine

Speaker: **Dr. Vijay Alagar D**

The speaker, Dr. Vijay Alagar, explained that chronic back pain due to spinal problems will lead to limitation of activities, job dissatisfaction, sleep disturbances, leading to the lack of ability to carry out personal, professional and recreational activities. Invariably, chronic back pain will lead to increased stress, causing emotional distress. Conversely, emotional distress will cause chronic back pain as well. People need a solution without painkillers or surgery.

Most people take better care of their car than their spine, which is at the core of our well-being. Our culture does not make it easy to take care of our health. With a rapidly changing pace of lifestyle, most people are not aware of their spinal health until it is too late. The reality is, everyone is at risk of developing back pain.

The main causes of developing a backache are: sitting all day at the desk, riding long distances on two-wheelers, lifting very heavy objects, leading a sedentary lifestyle, consuming highly processed food, and having trouble getting a good night's sleep.

He suggested the following steps to prevent back pain:

1. Erect posture and deep breathing
2. Stand and move
3. Flexibility, strengthening and right moves
4. Diet and water
5. Adequate sleep, meditation and positivity

Management Quiz

Q1. Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) acquired which male grooming D2C brand for 450 crore?

Q2. BMW Motorrad refers to which division of BMW?

Q3. Which of the following companies offer premium smartphones on a subscription-based model in India?

Q4. What does the term Acquihire primarily mean?

Q5. Titan entered the lab-grown diamond (LGD) jewellery market under which brand?

Q6. In 2022, Titan invested $20 million to acquire a 17.5% stake in which US-based LGD retailer?

Q7. What is the approximate market penetration of Flat Panel TVs in India?

Q8. Which household appliance category has less than 10% market penetration in India?

For answers see page 09

CMA Student Management Day 2026

The CMA Student Management Day 2026 was hosted at Happy Valley Business School on the 30th January. The HVBS campus off Palakkad highway was a great setting for the event. About 90 students from 11 institutes turned up for SMD. The host, HVBS, literally laid out the red carpet for the participants with heart-warming hospitality. This year's edition of SMD was designed imaginatively with multiple teams comprised of students from different institutes. This was designed to draw out the students from their comfort zone and have them collaborate with strangers to accomplish different tasks. The tasks tested the students' adaptability, resource identification, and allocation (right person for the task!).

There was a mix of physical activities and business management case scenarios. The event commenced at 10 am and concluded at 5.30 pm. Dr. Annamalai -Vice President, ICCI, was the Chief Guest for the valedictory function. The teams were very close to each other in terms of points earned. Each participant scored points that were rolled up across the segments for the aggregate team points. Prizes were awarded (Gold medals for winner and silver medals for runners up mixed teams). Apart from the team prizes, the points were rolled up institute-wise to arrive at the winners of Champions Trophy and the Challengers Trophy. Coimbatore Institute Management & Technology won the coveted Champions Trophy, while the Firebird Institute of Research in Management won the Challengers Trophy.

One of the students was awarded the Champion of Champions trophy in recognition of his overall performance, as well as grooming. CMA profusely thanks the management, (Dr. Kanakaraj-CEO and Dr. T. Bina-Principal), faculty, and students of HVBS for the clockwork manner in which the SMD was conducted. CMA was represented by Dr. Nithyanandan Devaraaj-President, Mr. Puneet Krishnan-Secretary, Dr. Sadasivam, Chair of CMA Student Chapters, Ms. Sujithra Vadivu-Sr. Executive Officer, and Mr. Sundaranarasimhan - Executive Officer.

Report on 16th Industrial Visit to M/S. Britannia Industries Ltd, SIPCOT, Perundurai, Erode, on 3rd January, 2026

The 16th Industrial Visit for the Management Committee members and faculty from Students Chapter Institutions was successfully arranged by the Coimbatore Management Association (CMA) to M/s. Britannia Industries Ltd, SIPCOT Industrial Estate, Perundurai, Erode, on 3rd January 2026. The visit was organized with the objective of providing practical exposure and managerial insights into the functioning of a large and well-established manufacturing organization.

A 19-member delegation was taken to the Britannia Industries manufacturing facility on the same day. Britannia Industries, which carries a rich legacy of over 130 years, is widely recognized for creating snacks that combine quality, taste, and nutrition. The foundation of the company was laid in 1892, when a group of visionary businessmen in Kolkata established a biscuit manufacturing enterprise. Over the decades, the company's product portfolio has been significantly expanded to include a wide range of biscuits, cakes, and snack products that are consumed and appreciated by people across the country. At present, more than a billion consumers across India are served on multiple consumption occasions, addressing diverse preferences and age groups.

One of the most significant contributors to the company's long-standing success has been identified as the widespread availability of its products across urban and rural markets. A clear vision to become a Responsible Global Total Foods Company has been articulated by Britannia. Continuous and systematic efforts are being undertaken towards the development of exciting and innovative products catering to all consumer segments and consumption occasions.

Innovative offerings that align with evolving consumer preferences are being consistently developed by the company's dedicated Research and Development team. A strong belief that innovation forms the cornerstone of sustainable success has been firmly established, and this has been regarded as a major driver of Britannia's leadership position in the market. The extensive product portfolio includes a variety of biscuits, cakes, and snacks that are enjoyed by consumers of all age groups. Well-known brands such as Good Day, Marie Gold, and 50-50 have been firmly established as household names across India.

A large and well-established business conglomerate with long-term market presence was thoughtfully selected by CMA for this industrial visit. Throughout its long journey of growth and achievement, the organization has encountered numerous peaks and troughs, experienced challenging business environments, and successfully navigated multiple economic and industry cycles. These experiences were viewed as valuable learning opportunities for the delegates, offering insights into resilience, strategic decision-making, and sustainable business practices.

Although only production activities are carried out at the Britannia plant located in SIPCOT, Perundurai, several complex management challenges are being tactically addressed by a team of experienced professionals led by the Plant Head, Ms. Saranya Mohan. It was explained that workforce retention remains one of the most critical challenges in food manufacturing units, particularly when operations are conducted within clusters of textile, light engineering, and heavy engineering industries. In addition,

disparities in government-declared minimum wages across different industries were highlighted as a major concern, as the minimum wages prescribed for engineering industries are higher than those applicable to the food industry.

Under such highly competitive industrial environments, additional employee welfare and labour relationship measures are being consciously implemented. These measures include encouraging employees' families to visit the factory premises, periodic visits by company officials to employees' families, and the provision of free transportation facilities. It was further noted that approximately 60% of the workforce consists of migrant workers, while local workers constitute about 40%, thereby intensifying managerial challenges. To address this, strategically designed induction and orientation programmes are being conducted to help migrant workers—particularly those from northern states such as Odisha and West Bengal—adapt to the local culture, work practices, and living conditions.

Another major operational challenge identified at the manufacturing plant is the optimization of capacity utilization, with cost efficiency being adopted as the guiding mantra. Since market demand for food products is largely seasonal, plant utilities and production levels are being adjusted in alignment with market conditions while ensuring optimal cost control. Capacity planning is carried out based on LTCP (Long-Term Capacity Planning), after careful analysis of seasonal consumption patterns, such as higher demand during school reopening periods and festival seasons, and relatively lower demand during summer months.

Subsequently, the delegates were taken on a detailed plant tour, during which a round-the-clock, semi-automated manufacturing facility operating under uncompromising hygiene standards and stringent quality control measures was observed. Mr. Vignesh, Head – HR, explained how employee loyalty and commitment have been systematically nurtured since the plant commenced operations in 2015. It was highlighted that wages higher than the statutory minimum are being paid, product gift hampers are distributed during important family occasions of employees, and all statutory compliances are strictly adhered to, with 100% coverage of employees under ESI and PF. It was also proudly noted that a healthy gender balance has been maintained at the plant, with a male-to-female ratio of 45:55.

The smooth availability of raw materials required for the manufacturing process was identified as another operational challenge. This challenge is being effectively addressed through a centralized procurement system, which ensures timely and uninterrupted supply of raw materials to more than 30

manufacturing plants across the country, including both company-owned units and contract manufacturing facilities.

Strong emphasis is also being placed on corporate social responsibility and community development. Through various CSR initiatives, a positive impact has been created on the lives of thousands of people across India. Programmes related to education, health, and nutrition are being implemented in close coordination with local communities to ensure that support is meaningful, sustainable, and impactful. It is strongly believed by Britannia that organizational success should be measured not only in terms of financial performance, but also by the social and environmental value created. Several initiatives are being championed to reduce the environmental footprint, including the adoption of renewable energy sources, reduction of packaging waste, and promotion of sustainable and responsible sourcing practices.

With its rich legacy and unwavering commitment to innovation, sustainability, and responsible business practices, Britannia Industries is widely recognized as a company that serves over a billion consumers across India and abroad by providing products that are both delicious and nutritious. Through continuous focus on research and development, operational excellence, and sustainability, high leadership standards within the industry are consistently upheld.

At the conclusion of the visit, the delegates expressed their sincere gratitude to the President and Secretary of CMA for organizing such a highly meaningful, informative, and well-structured industrial visit. A request was also made for the organization of more such knowledge-enriching industrial visits in the future.

Dr. C. Guna Sekaran
Chairperson - CMA Industrial Visits

Smart Manufacturing and the Factory of the Future: A Pragmatic Path to Industry 5.0 and Measurable Impact

Executive Summary

Manufacturing is at an inflection point. Persistent supply chain volatility, increasing product complexity, workforce challenges, and rising sustainability expectations are exposing the limits of fragmented digital initiatives. Incremental automation and isolated digital tools are no longer sufficient. What is required is a more holistic transformation of how products are designed, produced, operated, and sustained.

Industry 5.0 reframes the manufacturing agenda around human centricity, resilience, and sustainability. Achieving this vision depends on Smart Manufacturing and the Factory of the Future, enabled by tightly integrated digital technologies, advanced analytics, and adaptive systems that connect engineering, supply chain, manufacturing & operations, quality & regulatory, and service. This article presents a pragmatic roadmap for manufacturers seeking to move from ambition to execution. It highlights the role of ET-IT-OT-AI integration, Digital Threads & Digital Twins as foundational capabilities, and the practical application of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, including Generative AI and Industrial AI, robotics, and the industrial metaverse.

Industry Context and Key Trends

The transition from Industry 4.0 to Industry 5.0 builds on connectivity and automation but extends the focus to collaboration between humans and intelligent systems, long term sustainability, and operational resilience.

- **Integration of ET (Engineering Technologies), IT (Information Technologies), and OT (Operational Technologies):** Engineering systems, enterprise platforms, and shop floor operations must converge to enable real time visibility and coordinated execution. This integration forms the backbone of Smart Manufacturing, ensuring that decisions made in design and planning are continuously informed by production and operational reality.
- **Digital Continuity across the Value Chain:** Digital Thread connects as-designed, as-built, and as-operated data into a continuous lifecycle view. When implemented through Digital Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) and Connected Manufacturing Operations Management (MOM), it enables traceability, faster feedback loops, improved quality, and more effective compliance management. Digital continuity also shortens the distance between innovation and execution.
- **Artificial Intelligence in Manufacturing:** Artificial Intelligence is moving from experimentation to scaled adoption. Predictive analytics improve asset reliability and quality performance. Generative AI accelerates design exploration, documentation,

and contextual knowledge access. Industrial AI applies these capabilities to complex production environments, enabling adaptive control, anomaly detection, and increasingly autonomous decision making. When combined with robotics, AI enables flexible production, precision operations, and safer, more ergonomic workflows.

- **Digital Twins and the Industrial Metaverse:** Digital twins provide virtual representations of products, processes, and assets that can be simulated and optimized before changes are made in the physical world. The industrial metaverse extends this capability through immersive environments that support collaborative planning, virtual commissioning, remote assistance, and workforce training.
- **Sustainability as a Core Manufacturing Imperative:** Sustainability is no longer a parallel initiative. Energy optimization, emissions transparency, and circular economy principles are shaping investment and operational priorities. Digital technologies enable real time ESG monitoring and predictive insights that allow sustainability goals to be embedded directly into manufacturing decisions.

Smart Manufacturing and the Factory of the Future

Smart Manufacturing and the Factory of the Future are not abstract concepts. Together, they represent an integrated, intelligent, and adaptive manufacturing ecosystem that seamlessly connects physical operations with digital intelligence.

Core Principles and Characteristics

- Connected operations ensure that machines, sensors, and enterprise systems share data across the value chain, enabling end to end proactive visibility.
- Closed loop feedback mechanisms use continuous monitoring and analytics to drive automated adjustments that protect quality and efficiency.
- AI driven optimization applies Industrial AI to predictive maintenance, dynamic scheduling, and process optimization, while Generative AI enhances design agility and documentation quality.
- Robotics integration introduces collaborative robots and autonomous systems that increase flexibility, throughput, and workplace safety.
- Digital twins and simulation enable proactive decision making, scenario planning, and faster commissioning of new products and facilities.
- Immersive collaboration through industrial metaverse platforms supports virtual commissioning, ergonomic design validation, and remote expert assistance.
- · Sustainable operations rely on real time tracking of emissions, energy, and resource consumption to ensure compliance and continuous improvement.
- · Human centric design uses augmented reality, AI guided workflows, and assistive technologies to empower workers, improve productivity, and reduce cognitive and physical strain.

A Pragmatic Roadmap to Transformation

Transformation must be phased, outcome driven, and scalable. Successful manufacturers approach Smart Manufacturing as a journey rather than a single program.

- Assess current maturity by benchmarking capabilities against an Industry 5.0 maturity model and identifying gaps in connectivity, orchestration, and optimization.
- Build strong digital foundations by implementing Digital PLM and Digital Thread to unify product and process data across the lifecycle. Integrate manufacturing execution systems and IoT platforms to establish real time shop floor visibility.
- Enable ET-IT-OT convergence through standards-based architectures and interoperable platforms that connect engineering, enterprise, and operational systems.
- Activate Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI by deploying predictive maintenance, quality analytics, and dynamic scheduling use cases. Apply Generative AI for knowledge assistance and automated documentation and extend Industrial AI into adaptive control and optimization.
- Leverage robotics and automation by introducing collaborative robots for assembly, inspection, and material handling, and combining them with AI to support autonomous and precision driven operations.
- Adopt industrial metaverse capabilities by piloting immersive simulations for factory layout, robotic cell design, and workforce training, then extending to virtual commissioning and remote operations support.
- Embed sustainability directly into operations by integrating ESG metrics into operational dashboards and applying AI driven analytics to optimize energy and material usage.
- Empower the workforce through augmented reality guided workflows, collaborative robotics, and continuous upskilling delivered through immersive and experiential training environments.

Illustrative Examples

- A global manufacturer integrated manufacturing execution and IoT platforms, reducing downtime by 25% and improving overall equipment effectiveness by 15%
- A chemical producer used digital twins to simulate production scenarios, resulting in a 12% reduction in energy consumption
- A medical device company deployed augmented reality guided workflows and collaborative robots, reducing errors by 30% and significantly accelerating changeovers
- An automotive manufacturer applied Industrial AI models to predict equipment failures, cutting unplanned downtime by 40%
- A food and beverage company used virtual reality simulations for operator training, improving on-boarding speed by 50%

Outcomes and Value Realization

Organizations that embrace Smart Manufacturing and the Factory of the Future capabilities consistently report measurable business outcomes. These include cycle time reductions of up to 45%, defect reductions approaching 40%, operational cost savings between 15% and 30%, meaningful reductions in energy use and emissions, and improved workforce safety alongside faster skill development.

Conclusion

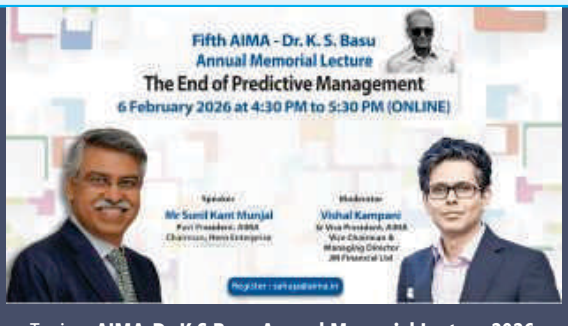
Smart Manufacturing and the Factory of the Future are no longer optional initiatives for manufacturers across discrete and process industries. They are strategic imperatives. By integrating engineering, information, and operational technologies, applying Industrial AI, robotics, and immersive technologies, and embedding sustainability and human centric design, organizations can achieve the agility, resilience, and competitiveness required in an Industry 5.0 world.

The path forward is pragmatic. Establish strong digital foundations. Scale intelligence and immersive capabilities where they deliver value. Sustain progress through continuous innovation and learning. Industry 5.0 is not about replacing people with machines. It is about building collaborative ecosystems in which technology amplifies human capability and judgment.

To explore practical research, frameworks, and real-world approaches for advancing Smart Manufacturing and the Factory of the Future, visit HitachiDS.com.

AIMA - Upcoming Events

Topic : **Global Procurement Summit 2026**
Date : **04th February 2026**
Venue: **Le Meridien, New Delhi**



Topic : **AIMA-Dr K S Basu Annual Memorial Lecture 2026**
Date : **06th February 2026**
Venue: **Online**

Topic : **AI & Big Data Retreat**
Date : **08th February 2026**
Venue: **Taj, GOA**

Topic : **9th Young Managers Simulation Championship**
Date : **12th February 2026**
Venue: **Online**

Quiz Answers

1. Muuchstac
2. Two-wheeler arm
3. BytePe and Cashify
4. Buying a company mainly for its employees' skills and expertise
5. beYon
6. Great Heights
7. 15–18%
8. Air-conditioners