

CMA DIGEST

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ED VOICE – From the Editor's Desk

Dear Readers!

Greetings once again from the CMA Digest Team!

The month of July is also associated with the Tamil month of "Adi", normally associated with super shopping deals for consumers. Businesses are not far behind in exploiting this sentiment, and come up with attractive offers and discounts. This is also a time they try to dispose of their existing stock and minimise losses. Philosophically speaking, this can also be the time for us to let go of our negative thoughts and rigid ideas, and embrace new and fresh ideas for both professional and personal growth.

It has been a routine month for CMA, and more events are in the pipeline in the ensuing months. We look forward to hearing from you to help us to improve the quality of our newsletter, and also, to expand its reach to more and more discerning readers.

Mr. K. Seetharam

Editor
CMA Digest



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COIMBATORE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Monday Musings

Monday Musings – 07th July 2025

Speaker: **Dr. Dhamayanthi Arumugam**

Crafting Winning Research Proposals

The session started with the welcome note. She explained the basic components of research problems and objectives, review of literature, scope and significance of the study, methodology, bibliographic references, etc. Proposals can be written for different purposes, namely, academic research, government research or policy projects, industry research, seminars, workshops or training, international grants, and institutional developments.

She also informed that the title of the research should be concise, descriptive, informative, and catchy. Titles should clearly indicate independent and dependent variables. The

beneficiaries would be Women employees in the IT industry, training and supportive workplace practices, IT companies HR Managers, Educational Institutions, and STEM programs.

The scope of the study should explain the overall extent and boundaries of the research, showing the topics, areas, dimensions, and aspects. She encouraged the audience to interact with her, and the session concluded with a Q&A session. The session ended with a thanksgiving to the speaker.



Monday Musings – 14th July 2025

Speaker: **Mr. Sethuraman Sathappan**

Export Marketing – The Digital Way

The session started with the welcome note. He explained the digital way of Export Marketing. He explained that data is the new oil, and that data in the 21st century is like oil in the 18th century. He also collected data and showed the India's current export level. With regard to exports, he said that all items are freely exportable, except a few items appearing in the prohibited/ restricted list. After studying the trends of exports of different products from India, proper selection of the products to be exported may be made.

He spoke on Export Credit Insurance, Export Credit Guarantee Corporation, Unique Insurance Company, Implementation of

the new export credit insurance scheme "Nirvik", offering lower premiums and faster claim settlements, and Insurance cover guaranteed to cover up to 90 percent of the principal and interest, which and will include both pre and post shipment credit.

He encouraged the audience to interact with him, and the session concluded with a Q&A session. The session ended with a thanksgiving to the speaker.



Monday Musings – 21st July 2025

Speaker: **Mr. Pradeep P**

Founders Paradox : The Hidden Forces that make companies stagnant or even fail

The session started with the welcome note, and the speaker said he was happy to discuss about "Founders Paradox" and how it affects the success or failure of companies. Founders are

most passionate people with respect to ideas, products, and technology; then why do start-ups



fail at an alarming rate of 80% as opposed to 20% success? Even Venture Capitalists look for 20% successful exits.

He also spoke on working hard versus working smart, emotional attachment versus strategic delegation, and resistance to hire A + level players. The US employee engagement is less than 35%, and in India, the employee engagement is 19% in 2025. What could be attributed to the low employee engagement despite all the sincere efforts of the

management? The underlying secret is critical success factors of people which is neglected by the management due to lack of self-awareness. If you analyse the critical success factors of companies, it can be classified into people, processes, and systems. While processes and systems constitute 20 %, it is people who constitute 80%. He talked about key success stories and lessons that successful founders took. Finally the session ended with the thanks giving to the speaker.

Monday Musings – 28th July 2025

The Power of Perspective: Reframing Failure, Rejection and Identity

The session started with the welcome note. In a meeting of the heart and mind, "The Power of Perspective", counselling psychologist and co-founder Devadharshini led participants through a deeply insightful exploration of how we process disappointment and how shifting the way we interpret these moments can transform our internal narrative.

The session opened with a grounding reminder: failure is not the opposite of success—it is an essential part of the process. Most people don't fear failing; they fear failing publicly. This fear leads to hesitation, risk avoidance, and the tendency to internalize rejection as evidence of unworthiness. Drawing from principles in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, she illustrated how our thoughts quickly turn into narratives that shape our identity. A failure at work, a missed opportunity, or a moment of rejection often becomes more than just an event—it becomes a label we silently carry.

Speaker: **Ms. Devadharshini**



One of the most powerful tools introduced was the "Not Yet Rule"—a subtle yet impactful mindset reframe. Instead of viewing setbacks as endpoints, participants were encouraged to see them as pauses in progress. Rather than saying "I failed," the shift is to say, "Not yet. I'm becoming." This small change in language signals to the brain that growth is still possible and that the story is still unfolding.

The speaker concluded with a metaphor that lingered with many: when we take a wrong turn, our GPS doesn't criticize us—it simply says, "Rerouting." Calm, nonjudgmental, and efficient, it redirects us toward the next best route. The same approach can be taken in life. A detour may not be a mistake—it may lead to new clarity, alignment, or an unforeseen opportunity.

Management Quiz

1. Which popular Korean biscuit brand is Lotte India introducing in India after the success of Choco Pie?
2. What does WGSN use to help clients stay ahead of trends?
3. Who holds the exclusive brand license for Thomson in India?
4. Which company's promoter family is selling a 32% stake to Multiples Private Equity?
5. Which home appliance brand has Reliance Retail recently acquired?
6. With which company has Bisleri International partnered to up-cycle PET bottles into fashion products?
7. Which liquor brand's business division has Pernod Ricard sold to Tilaknagar Industries?

For answers see page 06

Over the Falls without a Paddle: The Perilous Thrill Ride of Ignoring Data Storytelling

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Bobby Leach fancied himself a man of daring. In 1911, he climbed into a steel barrel lined with padding, secured himself like a sack of flour, and plunged over Niagara Falls. He survived, albeit with a fractured jaw, smashed kneecaps, and a long stay in the hospital. Years later, after countless lectures and victory laps describing his reckless ride, Leach met his end not at the hands of nature's fury, but by slipping on an orange peel during a stroll in New Zealand.

The fall didn't actually kill Bobby, but here's my point: There's something remarkably poetic about this. Leach faced down a natural behemoth and lived. But the very ordinariness of his death is what gets people's attention. It's almost Shakespearean: a man who survived the unthinkable taken out by the mundane.

In 2013, Target launched itself into Canada in a fashion that would've made Leach proud. A hundred-plus stores opened nearly overnight. People watched, some in admiration, some in awe, and others with concern. There was momentum, media attention, and corporate confidence. It looked like a barrel headed for a record-setting splash, if you'll pardon the pun. By 2015, it was over. Stores shuttered. Employees laid off. Target Canada was officially out of business. Done. Finished. Kaput.

No catastrophic market collapse. No economic tsunami. Just a series of basic mistakes that no one had the courage (or the clarity)

to point out in time. Problems with inventory data, mismatched systems, supply chain snafus, and unrealistic expectations quietly festered. The company that looked fearless in its plunge didn't fall prey to competition. It, well, slipped on its own orange peel. Again, pardon the pun.

And behind all of this? A massive failure to communicate through data. Not a lack of information, mind you, but a failure to tell the right **story** to the right **people** at the right **time**.

The Launch That Looked Like a Victory Lap

From the outside, Target's entrance into Canada was textbook. The company moved quickly, acquiring retail spaces and aggressively opening locations from coast to coast. There was fanfare. There were commercials. There was confidence in abundance.

But speed turned out to be the enemy of sense. Their Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems weren't fully ready. The company tried to build out complex supply chain infrastructure while simultaneously onboarding thousands of employees and managing new vendors.

Most of the data that fed purchasing and inventory systems had been entered manually—by interns, no less. And in the midst of that whirlwind, no one paused long enough to ask whether the

numbers made sense.

The Small Mistakes That Became an Avalanche

Here's the irony: Target had ample data. Mountains of it. But their teams couldn't align those numbers with the broader business narrative. Product availability in the systems didn't match what was on the shelves. Distribution centres sent duplicate stock to some stores, while others went empty. Customers arrived expecting the "Target magic" they'd heard about from south of the border. Instead, they found barren aisles and mismatched pricing.

Customer confidence eroded quickly, and the disconnect between expectation and experience proved too great to mend. After being in the Canadian market for less than two years, Target decided to withdraw. The results were stark: 133 stores closed, almost 18,000 employees impacted, and the company incurred a pre-tax loss of \$5.4 billion. For a brand known for its precision and refinement, this downfall was both visible and expensive.

This failure cannot simply be attributed to bad luck or outside influences. The real issue that led to this collapse was a failure in the way insights were communicated and framed. Data trickled into different corners of the business, but it never cohered into a story that sparked alignment or foresight. Product shortages, system misfires, and unmet customer expectations—these weren't unpredictable. They were preventable, had the signals been woven together into a clear narrative.

Just like Bobby Leach's demise wasn't from a fruit peel alone. While walking through Auckland, he slipped and broke his leg. The injury led to gangrene, and ultimately, his leg was amputated. Despite surgery, complications ensued, and he died shortly after. The fall didn't kill him, but the consequences of unaddressed trauma did. In the same way, Target didn't fall from a lack of ambition, but from failing to read the signs their own data was waving in front of them.

The Story Never Told

What could've prevented this?

Good data storytelling isn't some decorative flourish at the end of a deck. It's the core mechanism that transforms raw figures into actionable understanding. It's the voice that stands up in a meeting and says, "Here's what these numbers mean."

Here's why it matters. Here's what we risk if we ignore it." It's the means by which observations become conversations—between functions, across silos, and within leadership ranks. It's a way of translating uncertainty into navigable terrain.

Organizations often invest in tools that surface performance metrics or trend lines, but rarely in frameworks that ensure those metrics are understood and acted on. The result? A warehouse full of barrels, but no direction on where the river is headed.

Target didn't suffer from a lack of intelligence. They suffered from a lack of insight translation. And insight that isn't understood isn't insight at all.

Storytelling Done Right: What It Looks Like in Practice **Context Is the Current**

Before Bobby Leach took his dive, the current had already decided part of his fate. The river above Niagara doesn't plunge suddenly, but rather, it accelerates in intensity, shaping the descent long before the drop begins. In much the same way, context isn't a backdrop in data storytelling; it's the current that determines whether your insights will glide or spiral.

Without context, data points drift aimlessly. Metrics pulled in isolation (like customer foot traffic, product velocity, or market share) may appear self-evident. But without understanding what shaped them (a new competitor, regional holidays, shifting consumer sentiment), those metrics mislead more than they inform.

A strong data storyteller is like a seasoned guide upstream. They see not just where the data is, but where it's heading, based on surrounding factors. That awareness lets them tell a story that doesn't merely describe, but anticipates; that is, one that's built on the nuances of timing, external forces, and system interdependencies.

Empathy Is the Harness

When Leach strapped into his barrel, he didn't rely on bravado alone; he used a harness, braces, and padding. He understood that survival meant working with the chaos, not pretending it didn't exist. In the same spirit, empathy is what secures your data story for the audience. It keeps it from becoming a hollow stunt and transforms it into a shared journey.

Too often, data presentations are crafted as if everyone in the room is equally versed in the same metrics or concerns. But CFOs, logistics managers, and regional directors all view the business through different lenses. The story has to meet each group where they are, using terms they trust and framing that fits their priorities. Empathy also demands clarity over complexity. Rather than simplifying the data, it involves respecting your audience's time and cognitive load. A cluttered dashboard or a jargon-laden report disengages people before you've even reached the point. Empathy guides you to present information in a way that affirms their role in the story and equips them to act.

Tension Drives Action

The moment before Leach went over the brink, I can imagine that there was silence. The crowds were still; watching the barrel edge toward inevitability. That tension gave the spectacle its power. You knew what was coming, but not whether he'd come out of it alive.

Guess what? Data storytelling thrives on that same dynamic.

Tension in a business narrative comes not from fear-mongering, but from contrasts: between the expected and the actual; between the current path and its plausible alternatives. Showing that customer churn has risen 15% is useful. But showing that churn is accelerating while satisfaction scores remain static? Now that's tension. It implies an unknown force at play, and compels decision-makers to ask "why now?" and "what's next?"

Effective data storytelling doesn't stop at surfacing risk; it sharpens focus on what's at stake when key insights go unheeded. When it's done well, it creates urgency without panic, clarity without oversimplification. It's the difference between watching a barrel float by and realizing you might be in one yourself!

Lessons from the Splash Zone

If Leach had had a rope tied to that barrel, maybe his ride would've been a bit less treacherous. By the same token, if Target had tied their strategy to a more grounded narrative; i.e., one informed by real-time insight and cross-functional alignment, they might still be standing in Canada.

Organizations don't need more dashboards. They need better storytellers. Leaders should invest not only in data infrastructure

but also in building a culture where insight travels fast, where anomalies trigger conversation, and where every initiative starts with one simple demand: "Tell me the story behind these numbers." What ties both stories together is this: vision alone isn't enough. It is how insight moves across an organization that determines whether bold actions turn into brilliant outcomes or embarrassing setbacks.

CONCLUSION: Final Word from a Fellow Storyteller

Over the years, it becomes easy to spot the inflection points where a project veers off course; not because the data was wrong, but because the narrative never reached the people who needed it most. Strong organizations unravel because they mistook analysis for understanding.

Don't be the company that barrels toward glory and trips on its own untied shoelaces.

Learn the craft of data storytelling. Teach it. Champion it. Because what you don't explain clearly today may be the orange peel that takes you down tomorrow. A good data story needs direction, a harness, and just enough tension to keep its audience awake. But most of all, it needs to be told. Because it's not the leap that ruins you. It's the silence that follows when no one hears the story that could have changed the ending.

AIMA - Upcoming Events



Topic : **AIMA Leadership Development Program**
Date : **01st August 2025**
Venue: **Club Mahindra Tungji, Lonavala**



Topic : **AIMA's 30th Annual Convocation 2025**
Date : **07th August 2025**
Venue: **Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi**



Topic : **Training Programme on Management of Contracts and Resolution of Disputes - A FIDIC Approach**
Date : **20th August 2025**
Venue: **La Estoria, Goa - IHCL SeleQtions**



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