CMA DIGEST

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ED VOICE – From the Editor's Desk

Dear Readers!

Greetings once again from the editorial team of CMA Digest!

The month of August is the cusp of two zodiac signs – Leo and Virgo. Leos have natural leadership traits, whereas Virgos tend to be the thinkers of the world. Any company that boasts of people with these qualities can reach the top in their domain. Although we live in a world driven by technology, especially Artificial Intelligence, these human qualities will always remain an integral part of any successful organisation.

This month saw the conduct of an interesting event ***"Pioneering Women: Breaking Barriers"***, a joint event hosted by CMA. The details are highlighted in this issue.

We hope to add more and more value-added articles of relevance to our newsletter, and as usual, we request you to mail in interesting write-ups to bring in more meaning and purpose to our endeavours.

Mr. K. Seetharam
Editor
CMA Digest

COIMBATORE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Monday Musings

Monday Musings – 04th August 2025 Speaker: **Mr. Dhanesh PK**

From Classroom to Boardroom: The Journey

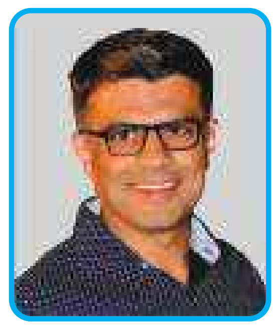
The session started with the welcome note. Mr. Dhanesh explained about different mind-sets - Academic vs. Professional, Active Contribution, Discipline & Accountability, and Growth Mind-set.

He also explained the essential skills for the corporate world which comprise of Communication, Leadership & Teamwork, Problem Solving, and Digital Fluency. In order to build a personal brand, we need to define our values by clearly defining our unique value as a future professional, showcase our work by highlighting showcase projects, certifications, and experiences), have a LinkedIn presence by maintaining a strong profile with achievements and endorsements, and develop a strong and effective elevator pitch.

He concluded the talk by stating that we need to overcome some common challenges such as Time Management, Self-care, Mental Strength, and the Imposter Syndrome.

The session ended with the Q & A session and thanksgiving to the speaker.

Monday Musings – 11th August 2025 Speaker: **Mr. Hetal Sonpal**



Influence of Technology on Leadership

The session started with the welcome note. He stated that technology significantly influences leadership by enabling remote collaboration, data-driven decision making through AI and analytics, and increased communication and transparency, which foster innovation and agile work environments. However, he also talked about challenges such as information overload, cyber security risks, and the need for leaders to develop skills for managing virtual teams. Effective modern leaders must embrace technology to stay competitive, guide their teams through digital transformations, and cultivate a culture of continuous learning and adaptability.

The session ended with the Q & A session and a thanksgiving to the speaker.

Monday Musings – 18th August 2025 Speaker: **Ms. NA. Sujatha**

Psychology of Marketing – in organised Retail

In this session, the speaker explored how consumer behaviour and brand preferences are deeply influenced by sensory experiences. Marketing today goes beyond product features and pricing; it taps into human psychology by creating memorable encounters that connect emotionally with customers. Sight (Visual Marketing): colours, lighting, design, and visual cues shape first impressions, influence mood, and drive purchase decisions. Retail layouts, packaging, and displays create visual storytelling. Sound (Auditory Marketing): Music, jingles, and soundscapes set the tone for shopping experiences. Background music can slow down or speed up shopping behaviour, while brand-specific sounds build recall. Smell (Olfactory Marketing): Scents evoke memories and emotions instantly. Pleasant aromas in stores, hotels, and cafes enhance brand perception and increase customer dwell time. Taste (Gustatory Marketing):

Sampling strategies in food, beverage, and even wellness industries create powerful brand trust. Taste ties directly with satisfaction and loyalty. Touch (Tactile Marketing): Textures, product handling, and interactive displays build a sense of ownership. The ability to touch and feel increases consumer confidence and attachment.

Key takeaways:

When brands integrate all five senses, they create immersive experiences that lead to stronger emotional connections, improved recall, and higher customer loyalty. This is the essence of experiential marketing, turning products into stories and shopping into memorable journeys.

Monday Musings – 25th August 2025 Speaker: **Prof. Dr. Ajith K. Thomas**

Marketing communication strategies during the pandemic: A case analysis

The session started with the welcome note. The speaker explained the strategies during the pandemic, i.e., KFC suspends" Finger Lickin Good" advertisement after receiving coronavirus related complaints. HUL distributes 3500 litres of Lifebuoy hand sanitisers to Mumbai Police. Adidas, the world's second largest sports shoe brand retweet Nike's tweet. He explained that its one of the finest display of solidarity.

During this period, changed attitudes and behaviour were due to consumers becoming life simplifiers, "degrowth" activists – the world is too much for us, climate activists, sane food choosers, and conservation activists. The session ended with the thanksgiving to the speaker.

Women Entrepreneurs Event - 20th August 2025

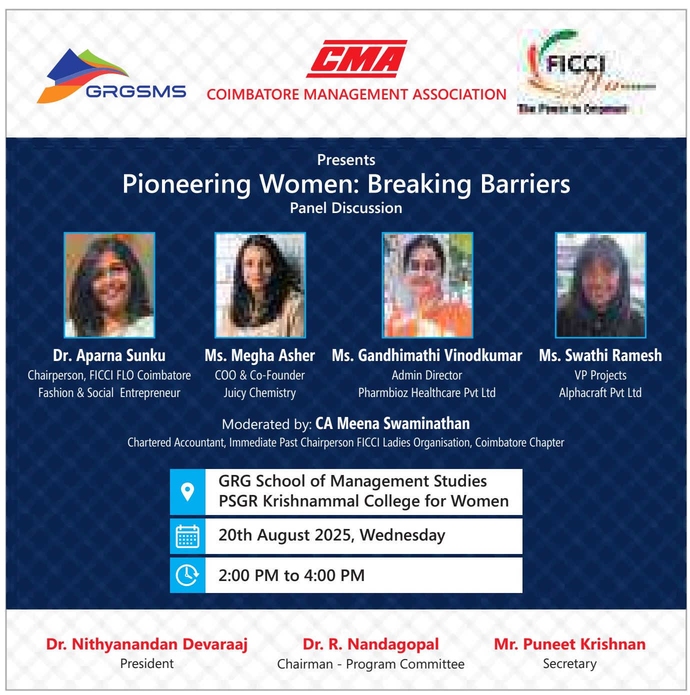
Highlights of the program **"Pioneering Women : Breaking Barriers"**

This was the first-of-its-kind program that sought to bring out the trials, tribulations and triumph of a group of Women Entrepreneurs of Coimbatore.

This program was a result of the collaboration between FICCI-FLO, GRG School of Management Studies, and CMA.

The four entrepreneurs who graced the program were:

- Dr. Aparna Sunku- Chairperson FICCI FLO, well known Fashion & Social Influencer
- Ms. Megha Asher- COO & Co-Founder, Juicy Chemistry
- Ms. Gandhimathi Vinod Kumar - Admin Director, Pharmbioz Healthcare Pvt. Ltd., and
- Ms. Swathi Ramesh- VP- Projects, Alphacraft Pvt. Ltd.



The program commenced with an invocation, followed by the Welcome Address by Dr. Sadhasivam-Director GRGSMS. Dr. Nithyanandan Devaraaj - President CMA, delivered the Inaugural Address, while Dr. Aparna Sunku delivered the Presidential panel discussion. CMA Treasurer, and FICCI FLO (Immediate past chairperson) CA Meena Swaminathan, took charge of the proceedings as the panel discussion moderator.

Ms. Meena set the tone and the ground-rules for the discussion, and thereafter, deftly handled the panel discussion in a manner that encouraged each of the panellists to share their life and professional stories without inhibitions.

While the panellists came from different backgrounds and business domains, the underlying thread that wove their stories was one that demonstrated sheer grit and risk-taking ability.

Each of them have faced different types of challenges and obstacles, but were able to overcome those through tenacity, resilience, and sharp business acumen.

The audience comprised of students as well as faculty members from the host institute GRGSMS, CMA MC members, CMA Secretariat, and representatives from other B-Schools. Two students of GRGSMS played the role of MCs and did a great job!!

Students and faculty members from the institutes listed below were also present in good numbers.

- Firebird Institute of Research in Management
- RVS Institute of Management Studies
- Jansons School of Business
- Sri Ramakrishna Engineering College - Business Management School
- Vivekananda Institute of Management Studies

After the panel discussion ended, the floor was opened up for Q&A. Enthusiastic members of the audience asked some incisive and thought-provoking questions and the panellists obliged them with insightful answers.

The Vote of Thanks was proposed by Secretary – CMA, and the program ended with the National Anthem.

We wish to place our sincere thanks once again to Dr. Sadhasivam, Dr. Vandana, and the GRGSMS team for hosting the program, and to FICCI FLO (specially CA Meena) for conceptualising the program and persuading the panellists to participate.

CMA President, who had been the driving force behind such a program, hoped that such a format would now take root and become a signature program for CMA in times to come, just as some of CMA's other programs that have stood the test of time.

Overall, the program was a great success.

Management Quiz

Q1. Which food delivery platforms have launched 10-minute food service brands such as Café, Bistro, and Snacc?

Q2. Lululemon Athletica is partnering with which company to enter the Indian market?

Q3. "Labubu," a popular "ugly-cute" collectible, is a creation of which Chinese toy maker?

Q4. Recruit Holdings, the Japanese parent company, owns which two major job platforms?

Q5. Expand UVG, a performance metric often used in FMCG companies.

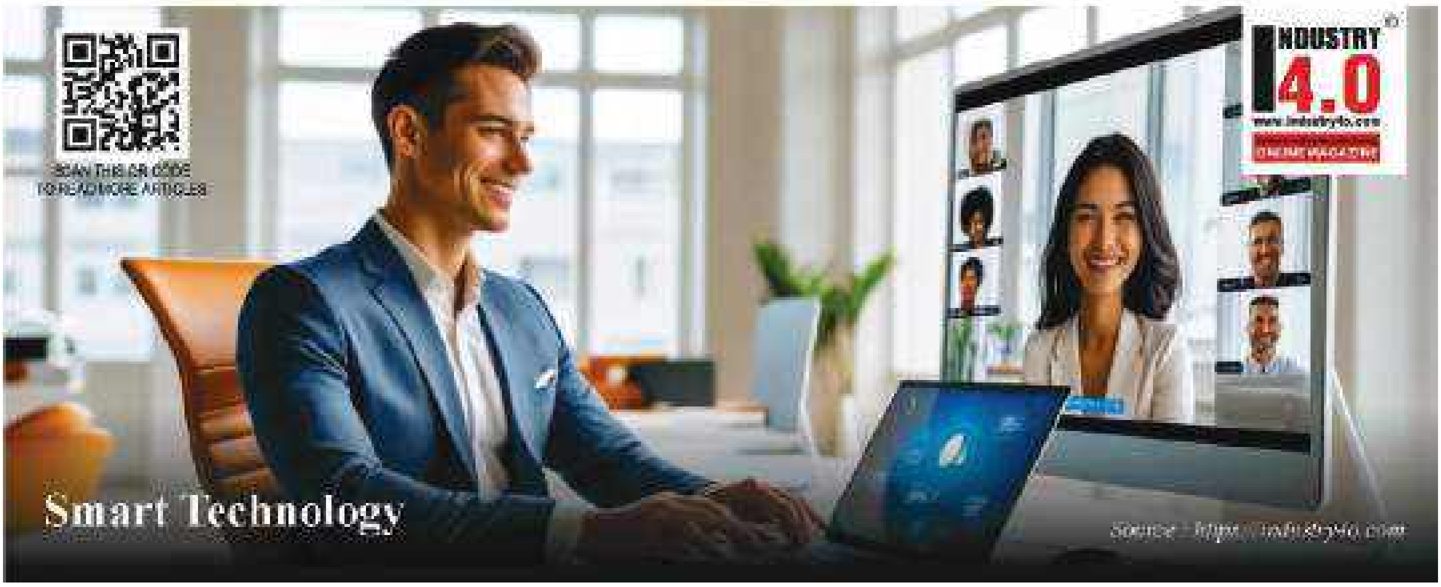
Q6. The Crown Basmati Rice brand is owned by ______________

Q7. In the insurance sector, CFAR stands for ____________

Q8. Which snacking brand has launched anti-hangover chips called Party Harder Chips inspired by Dr Vaidya's Livitup supplement?

For answers see page 06

How Service Firms Can Future-Proof Their Operations with Smart Technology



The Future is already here — but Most Firms Are Not Ready

Services Firms, whether in consulting, legal, finance, compliance, Digital Marketing, Development, technology, designing, etc., have always run on trust, depth of knowledge, expertise, and precision. But the world around them has changed dramatically. Today's clients expect real-time updates, digital collaboration, and personalized insights. Meanwhile, teams are stretched thin trying to manage rising complexity with outdated systems.

Despite investing in CRMs, workflow tools, task managers, communication tools, and client portals, many firms still struggle with:

- Fragmented processes across platforms
- Inconsistent client communication
- Manual work in billing, compliance, and reporting
- Poor visibility into project and financial health

The cost isn't just inefficiency - it's missed growth, lower client retention, and burnout among key talent. The firms of the future aren't just digitizing—they're becoming **smarter.**

What "Smart" Means in Modern Practice Management

Smart technology isn't just about going paperless or moving to the cloud. It's about:

- **Context-aware automation** that understands your workflows and adapts
- **AI-powered assistants** that summarize documents, suggest actions, and forecast risks
- **Real-time collaboration** across clients, teams, and departments
- **Decision intelligence,** not just data dashboards

Think of it as moving from a toolbox to a **firm-wide operating system** — one system or product that connects your operations, clients, teams, documents, and financials into a unified, intelligent whole.

1. Workflow Automation that Works (Without Code)

No more relying on memory or sticky notes. With smart workflow builders, firms can now – Drag and drop approval flows, Trigger automatic task assignments based on deadlines or client type, Set up SLA-driven reminders, escalation paths, and auto-notifications, track time and effort at every step.

Best of all, no IT team or developer is needed—these platforms are designed for partners and managers to configure themselves.

2. Integrated Communication: One Inbox for All Channels

Clients don't wait – and they don't care if your WhatsApp, email, or Zoom account isn't synced.

Modern firms now use platforms that unify – Email threads, WhatsApp conversations, In-app messaging, video calls and screen sharing, automated nudges and reminders. Best of all – every message is logged, searchable, and linked to the client or case—so no context is ever lost.

3. Document Management that Thinks for You

Smart document systems now offer – Auto-extraction of data from invoices and contracts, Version history, e-signatures, and audit trails, AI-powered summaries of multi-page reports, Secure, permission-based sharing with clients and teams. No more manual chasing for the "final version" or wondering if a document was sent.

4. Financial Intelligence with Forecasting Built In

Finance is no longer just about looking back. The most advanced service firms are using tools that – sync with Xero, Zoho Books, QuickBooks, or in-built ledgers, offer variance analysis against budgets, predict cash flow bottlenecks, alert you on client billing delays or revenue drops, generate executive summaries in plain English, etc. With AI in the loop, decisions are faster, and risks are visible before they become problems.

5. Next-Level Client Experience

Client loyalty isn't driven by lower fees – it's driven by **clarity and confidence.**

Leading firms are offering clients – self-on-boarding portals, real-time project status dashboards, secure chat with the team, instant access to bills, documents, and action items, smart suggestions on what clients should do next, etc. When clients are empowered, they trust you more, feel more connected to you — and stay longer.

6. Built-In AI That Elevates Everyone

AI is not replacing professionals – it's **amplifying** them. In future-ready service firms, access to AI is like giving every team member their own smart assistant.

7. The Smart Firm Mindset

Technology is only one part of the equation. What really future-proofs a firm is a mindset shift:

- From **manual hustle** to **strategic automation**
- From **isolated tools** to **intelligent platforms**
- From **gut-based** to **data-informed** decisions
- From **reactive service** to **proactive guidance**

Firms that embrace this change don't just become efficient. They become magnetic – to clients, to talent, and to new opportunities.
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Let's reimagine how professional firms operate in 2025 and beyond Smart Technology.

AIMA - Upcoming Events

11 September 2025
AIMA Technology & Innovation Day 2025
Returning to London for its 2nd edition, register now to secure your place!

22 September 2025
ACC Private Credit Investor Forum 2025
As part of Sydney Alternative Investment Week from 22-26 September 2025 - Save the Date!

24 September 2025
AIMA Australia Annual Forum 2025
As part of Sydney Alternative Investment Week from 22-26 September 2025 - Save the Date!

Quiz Answers

1. Zepto, Blinkit, Swiggy
2. Tata CLiQ
3. Pop Mart
4. Indeed & Glassdoor
5. Underlying Volume Growth - It's a key performance indicator used to measure the increase in sales volume, factoring in changes in product mix but excluding the impact of acquisitions and disposals
6. DRRK Foods
6. DRRK Foods
7. Cancel For Any Reason
8. Too Yumm