CMA DIGEST

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From the Editor's Desk



Dear Readers,

Greetings from CMA!

Good leadership begins with getting the basics right. This issue returns to those basics: protecting the data we hold, managing our money wisely, understanding people, and staying connected to the human side of business.

Our *Monday Musings* sessions offered valuable insights into a range of contemporary business issues. One highlighted why data protection must be viewed as a leadership responsibility rather than merely an IT function. Another explored how financial independence is shaped not simply by how much we earn, but by how wisely we manage and invest our resources. A third introduced an ad-free digital platform that seeks to create a more equitable space for small businesses and independent creators to gain visibility.

Our featured articles carry these ideas further. One examines the journey of growth through continuous change, emphasising the importance of conviction, commitment and consistency. Another reminds us that empathy, trust and reliable data must form the foundation of any meaningful technological transformation. A third shows how data storytelling works best when it builds a human connection.

Do take a moment to attempt this month's Management Quiz. We would be delighted to hear your thoughts and feedback.

Happy Reading!

Best regards,

Dr. Vandana Madhavkumar

Editor, CMA Digest

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CMA

COIMBATORE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Monday Musings

Monday Musings – 05th October 2026

DPDP Act for Business: Your Data, Your Liability



Speaker: **Mr. Maharaj M**



Speaker: **Dr. Venkatesan L**

Mr. Maharaj M, Founder and CEO of BCBUZZ Technologies, and Dr. Venkatesan L, President, JuzGoDigital, and Director, BCBUZZ Technologies, led an engaging session on **"DPDP Act for Business."** The speakers highlighted the implications of India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, for organisations and their responsibilities in safeguarding personal data. The speakers used the scenario of a missing HR laptop to show what the law expects. A breach must be reported within 72 hours, businesses stay responsible for their vendors, and penalties can go up to ₹250 crore. They also clarified that while companies do not need fresh consent to use employee data for routine HR work such as payroll and attendance, they must still keep that data secure and report any leak. The session also outlined a practical 90-day roadmap for organisations to prepare for compliance, emphasising that data protection is not merely an IT responsibility but a key leadership priority.

Monday Musings – 12th October 2026

Speaker: **Mr. Arunkanth Venugopal**

The Algorithmic Trap - Why Search Engines Favor Big Capital Over Business Ethics and How AI Must Fix it.



Coimbatore-based entrepreneur Arunkanth shared his vision of making digital visibility more accessible to businesses through **IndieMa.in**, an ad-free platform designed to connect Indians worldwide on a level playing field. Highlighting how search engine algorithms and paid promotions often favour larger players, he emphasised the challenges faced by small businesses and independent creators in gaining visibility without substantial marketing budgets. Founder of Infopluto Media Works Pvt. Ltd., AK Online OTT and Art.Knowledge Magazine, 2024 independent MP candidate for Coimbatore and a former visiting faculty member at PSG Institute of Management, Arunkanth advocates the use of AI that prioritises ethics over data scale. Through IndieMa.in, he aims to make digital communication and visibility more accessible, equitable and inclusive. His guiding motto: **Innovate – Implement – Inspire.**

Management Quiz October 2026

Q1. Which organisation is launching India's first blue bond worth 1,000 crore to finance sustainable maritime projects?

Q2. Reliance Consumer Products has entered India's ready-to-drink flavoured milk market with which brand, priced at 20, challenging players such as Amul and Cavin's?

Q3. The term "Looksmaxxing", recognised by Merriam-Webster, refers to _____

Q4. What is the name of Myntra's rapid delivery service?

Q5. Which Canada-headquartered financial services company is set to acquire a 60.72% equity stake in IDBI Bank for ₹52,800 crore?

Q6. The Government of India plans to roll out BS-VII emission norms for new cars from which date?

For answers see page 07

Monday Musings – 26th October 2026 Speaker: **Dr. G.B. Sabari Rajan**



From Salary to Wealth: Financial Mistakes Young Professionals Must Avoid

Dr. G. B. Sabari Rajan served as the resource person for the Monday Musings session held on 26 October 2026 and spoke on the topic, "From Salary to Wealth: Financial Mistakes Young Professionals Must Avoid." The presentation focused on the importance of financial discipline and the transition from earning a salary to building long-term wealth. Key topics included lifestyle inflation, excessive dependence on EMIs and credit cards, the importance of emergency funds and insurance, investment decisions driven by the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), delayed investing, and the impact of inflation on purchasing power. Practical examples and financial calculations were used to explain budgeting, the benefits of starting investments early, and the importance of goal-based financial planning. An interactive salary-allocation challenge encouraged participants to consider how they could manage a monthly income, prioritise financial commitments, build emergency savings and invest systematically. The session concluded with a question-and-answer segment, providing an opportunity for participants to clarify their queries and reinforce their understanding of personal finance. The programme ended with a formal vote of thanks. The session emphasised that financial independence depends not merely on how much one earns, but on how wisely one manages, saves and invests money.

Data Storytelling – A Bridge between Hard Numbers & Human Experience

INDUSTRY 4.0® Technology E-Magazine

WE COVER LATEST TECHNOLOGIES AND TRENDS IN MANUFACTURING



The Quiet Power in a Baby's Laugh

Sometimes, in life, you get a moment of insight so strong that you almost experience the world turning in front of your eyes in a new way. For me, that moment arrived recently courtesy of someone who weighs less than a bag of groceries and has been on this planet for less than five months. I'm a brand-new grandfather, and my grandchild has just begun smiling -those early, slightly wobbly smiles that seem to say, "I'm still figuring out how to operate this face." And now the giggles have started, tiny bursts of sound that feel like pure sunlight. I've spent decades immersed in the world of data storytelling, yet nothing has reminded me of its essence quite like hearing that first sound of a laugh.

It's no surprise that babies react this way. Long before they can speak, they figure out that a laugh is more of a message than a reaction. Researchers have watched infants develop from involuntary grins (those fleeting expressions that appear even in the womb) to intentional social smiles around the six-week mark. As the months pass, those smiles develop into full-bodied laughter that's sparked by familiar faces, gentle surprises, and moments of connection that mean

something even if the baby can't say what. At least not just yet. While the scientific community describes these early giggles as part of how babies learn their social world, I see something else woven into the pattern: a blueprint for what makes data storytelling thrive.

After more than thirty years guiding organizations through the maze of data, plus another decade as an educator, I've come to appreciate how laughter, of all things, can illuminate essential truths. As a matter of fact, I dedicated five chapters of my third book (published in 2025) to this interaction between form, function, and human understanding. And now, thanks to one particular little member of my family, I'm seeing those lessons much more clearly.

Early Signals Matter

A baby's earliest smiles aren't deliberate. They're reflexive little flickers that happen long before social awareness kicks in. In data storytelling, we also encounter preludes: stray observations, oddities in a dataset, faint signals that catch the corner of your eye. They may not mean anything yet, but they invite curiosity. They're the starting point from which sharper understanding eventually grows.

When babies reach the stage where they smile in response to human interaction, everything becomes more intentional. Those smiles say, "I'm here," "I see you," "I recognize you," "I need you," all without a word spoken. Data stories need a similar shift from noise to meaning. Raw data doesn't communicate until we give it a voice. The initial spark, whether it's a visual, a pattern, or an unexpected comparison, signals that we're engaging with our audience rather than simply broadcasting information. As analysts, our earliest interpretive efforts function much like those early social smiles. They're humble beginnings, but they're the bridge from observation to insight.

The Social Purpose of the Story

Today's developmental psychologists all know that laughter is more of a social mechanism in humans than anything else. We laugh to bond, to show involvement, to demonstrate empathy, and to enhance ties. Babies do this by instinct. Their laughter says, "I trust you," "I'm delighted," or "Keep going." I've seen the same phenomenon unfold in boardrooms, classrooms, and conference stages across the world. Data, by itself, can't form a connection. The storyteller does. When people laugh, lean forward, or relax their shoulders, they show that they trust you enough to follow where you're going. Rapport, not mind-blowing visuals, leads to true engagement.

That's where the art of data storytelling comes to life. All the technical skill in the world can't replace human connection. And this connection isn't fluffy or optional. It's the anchor. Just as a baby's laughter builds connections with the caregiver through common joy, a good narrative will build connections between the analyst and their audience. When people feel connected, their understanding and retention improve, leading to decisions that are more collaborative than confrontational. The science of the story matters, but the relationship matters more.

Surprise Has a Role

One of my favourite things about babies is the way they find delight in harmless violations of expectation. Peekaboo wins awards for comedy in the infant world because it's just surprising enough to be funny without causing concern. A face disappears and reappears. A sound comes from a place it shouldn't. A cup transforms into a hat. In developmental psychology, these are called benign incongruities.

Data storytelling needs its own version of peekaboo. When you come across an insight that defies some assumptions without undermining the status quo, people listen. This can mean finding out that a well-known trend is in fact inverted or that a widely accepted assumption about consumers is not true. When handled carefully, these insights add energy to a narrative.

Many of the most successful stories I've told include a point that makes the room pause… then lean forward. The insight is unexpected but safe enough that people can explore it without getting defensive. That's the sweet spot. As with babies, surprise sharpens awareness. It triggers engagement. It makes the brain pay attention to what comes next. And just like a good laugh, the right surprise can transform information into experience.

Experimentation and Play

Around the six-month mark, babies begin experimenting with humour themselves. They blow raspberries, knock over block towers, or repeat actions that made adults chuckle earlier. Eventually they make jokes, bend some minor rules, and engage in activities called "clowning" by some scholars. You might not think of data storytelling as being playful, but the most skilled storytellers experiment all the time. They explore multiple ways of displaying information. They test different narrative structures. They try combinations of visuals, analogies, pacing, and emphasis until the story makes sense.

In my own career, I've spent countless hours trying to restate the same insight to see what version connects more deeply. The most amazing ideas often come through the process of iteration where a restatement seems almost childlike; that is, trying out something strange, playful, surprising, or contradictory to make an audience understand an idea in a different way. Of course, some people may think such attempts are ridiculous, yet they are very constructive. Babies use humour to understand others. Data storytellers use creativity to understand audiences. Both are learning how expectations function. Both test boundaries to see what sparks connection. And both benefit from a willingness to embrace a little playfulness.

Relationships Make Stories Work

Underlying every giggle from my grandchild is a fundamental truth: babies learn through relationships. Their laughter strengthens emotional bonds, encourages reciprocal interaction, and supports cognitive development. It's not merely cute, although I assure you it's deeply adorable. It's part of how they understand the world.

In data storytelling, relationships also drive meaning. When you tell a story effectively, you are both relaying numbers and shaping how people perceive their environment. You're building trust so your audience can explore uncomfortable insights. You're helping them

develop confidence to act upon what they've learned. This blend of cognition and connection is what makes data storytelling both an art and a science. It takes form (structure, technique, rigor) and it takes function (purpose, connection, empathy). Let one fade and the story weakens. Balance them and the narrative lands with clarity and staying power.

My grandchild doesn't realize it yet, but those tiny laughs are teaching me to revisit these fundamentals with fresh eyes. Laughter connects. Surprise teaches. Play experiments. Relationships transform. These ideas mirror the way the best data stories operate, and being reminded of that through the lens of new grandparenthood is its own kind of joy.

A Final Reflection

Every giggle from that little five-month-old feels like a reminder not to lose sight of what matters in communication. Data storytelling requires precision, but it rides on humanity. It flourishes when we recognize that there are both emotional and analytical aspects to how people interpret the world around them.

After decades of experience, countless keynote presentations, and many bookshelves full of research, I have come to realize that the real power comes from insight and connection. Numbers aren't enough. Neither is charm. But put them together wisely, and you make something that will stick—something that will help people understand, make decisions, and take action.

Babies can't talk; they just laugh. And somehow, those early laughs contain everything you need to know about telling a powerful story: show you see your audience, delight them when you can, surprise them gently, invite them to explore, and build relationships that give meaning to the message. In my line of work, that's a lesson worth hearing again. And thanks to one very small teacher, I get to hear it every time that wonderful giggle fills the room.

On Change & Growth…



Dr Nithyanandan Devaraaj

Managing Partner – SAAE Enterprises

Independent Board Member/

Technical Due Diligence & Capability Assessor.

According to the Accounting Principles, an organization is to be construed, conceptualized and carried-on for Perpetual Existence – in colloquial terms, everlasting & never-ending for generations to come. In reality, however, businesses may exit for strategic, tactical or, sometimes, business-condition-induced reasons.

When **Exits are planned and structured**, as in the case of Strategic and Tactical Decisions, it's very controlled and the impact of which is carefully taken into consideration prior to implementation. In the 3rd case, **Business Conditions induced Exits** are usually uncontrolled and therefore are undesirable, resulting in People Issues and Emotional Conflicts, Business issues apart. As the famous adage goes, "Today, you need to run to remain in the same place. **To succeed, you need to run faster than the fastest."** The same applies to businesses. To maintain their position, they have to move at least as fast as the industry grows.

And if they are **to Grow, they have to run faster than their competitors** – as growth comes only by acquiring market and business share.

One of the essential aspects of Growth, is to change constantly, consistently, and continuously. Just as change and growth are inseparable, they are essentially people-dependent and, therefore, leadership-oriented. Apex-level changes are strategic and lead to compounded results. Operational-level changes are tactical and lead to incremental results, while execution-level changes contribute to sustainable results.

It's all about 3Cs - Conviction, Commitment & Consistency.

Growth essentially depends on an organization's ability to adapt to changes brought about by SPELT (Social, Political, Economic, Legal and Technological) factors. Another way to manage Change is to create one. Such strategies also define Market Leaders, Followers and Laggards. There are both merits & demerits to being any one of these.

Lag Vs Lead Indicators

Businesses thrive on Revenues, Profits and Cash Flows. Prudent leaders will recognize that these are outcomes based on past performance and facts. Certainly, these are required for Business continuity and therefore entrusted with Executional Level. Growing Organizations usually focus on influencing SPELT environment to their advantage. The focus then shifts to market share, business share, new businesses, new customers, new markets and new products.

Failures as stepping stones to success

Growth-oriented leadership encourages change despite the risk of failure. It's important to accept that there is always a **50% probability to succeed if we try**, which otherwise is zero. Successful Organizations actually **celebrate failures** by encouraging people to discuss,

understand and analyze them so that they are not repeated. This is essentially helpful when its 100% transparent and practiced organization-wide. Learning from Failures then becomes a part of the Business Process, well documented and widely accessible.

Actions and Inactions

Actions can be Predictive, Proactive, Reactive and Responsive. Each of these has its own consequences – while being Predictive and Proactive may be choices that induce Change and thus Growth, Reactive and Responsive are essential to sustain businesses. Failure to act, or to act appropriately at the right time, may have irreparable consequences. Of course, waiting and watching is also an action, but it has its limitations and can sometimes become a liability when overused.

Fundamentals

Many effective Leaders who are Change Makers believe in questioning the Fundamentals. This is certainly necessary in a dynamic, fast changing Business Environment. For business sustainability, even when changing the fundamentals, it is important to understand and appreciate the existing fundamentals in order to determine what needs to change and what should remain unchanged. Change for the sake of Change has to be avoided and therefore **Change & its impact should be measurable**. Reliability is a result of repeatability, which in turn depends on processes and people's capabilities.

Learning & Growing

Growth stems from an organization's ability to learn and lead. This means that people who are part of the change and growth process should be willing to learn and grow, thereby contributing to the growth of the organization. Just as people and processes are inseparable, so are organizations and people. When the same principle is applied to people, it means moving beyond old knowledge and habits (the comfort zone) to acquire new knowledge and skills.

Jai Hind!

– Nithin

Reinventing the Wheel… While Preserving the Axle

"Why management needs empathy and clean data before advanced tech"



Mr Dhanasekhar Sennaiyan

CEO & Founder, **GCC Kovai**

Co-Founder & Curator - Luxury Living,

East Coimbatore Living Spaces

It was a regular Tuesday Evening in the Land of the Cavemen

Picture a beautiful, balmy evening back in the era of the Flintstones. The day's hunting was over, the campfire was crackling near the mouth of the cave, and a couple of the older adults stood leaning on their wooden clubs, watching the sunset.

But down the hill, the kids were doing something entirely different. They weren't practicing their tracking skills or throwing spears. Instead, they were huddled around a crude wooden cart, laughing hysterically and pushing a round, chiseled piece of stone. One of the elders nudged his partner, furrowed his brow, and grumbled, "Look at these kids... addicted to tech."

It is a funny visual—the invention of the wheel being treated as a brain-rotting distraction. But it highlights a stubborn trait about our species. For thousands of years, every generation of adults has looked at new advancements with deep suspicion, convinced the latest tools will ruin our humanity. Today, replace the stone wheel with generative AI, automated agents, and "dark factories," and our corporate anxiety sounds identical.

We exhaust ourselves trying to guess what will change next. We race to reinvent the wheel every time a new technology gets introduced. But real, lasting leadership requires looking at the piece that holds the cart together—the axle. In his book Same as Ever, Morgan Housel points out that the smartest move you can make is to build your foundation on the behaviors, flaws, and human traits that never change. The wheels roll us forward, but the axle of human and soft skills keeps us aligned.

Moving fast, sinking faster

When we focus entirely on the speed of technology, we accidentally build systems that are incredibly fragile. Look at what happened to the Swedish warship Vasa in 1628. It was built to be the most technologically advanced, heavily armed flagship of its era—an engineering marvel meant to terrify rivals. But late in production, political pressure and executive ego forced the builders to add an extra deck of heavy cannons, ruining the ship's center of gravity.

The shipbuilders saw the danger. They knew it was unstable, but they were too terrified of the hierarchy to voice their concerns. On

its maiden voyage, a minor gust of wind tilted the hull, water rushed into the open gun ports, and the invincible ship sank just 120 meters from shore in front of a horrified crowd.

The Vasa didn't sink because of faulty engineering calculations; it sank because of a complete failure of communication and psychological safety. When we rush to upgrade our tech or automate workflows without fixing the human loops underneath, we are building modern versions of the Vasa. We are fashioning high-tech wheels for a cart with a broken axle.

The real turnaround strategy

Surviving these massive technological shifts requires an internal reset. When Satya Nadella took over Microsoft, his turnaround strategy wasn't driven by a new code repository or a breakthrough device. He famously called it a "Hit Refresh" moment – a cultural transformation rooted in empathy.

As software and algorithms take over the heavy lifting of data analysis, what's left for us? The premium shifts completely to what cannot be automated. Empathy isn't a soft corporate buzzword; it is a highly practical, non-automatable skill. It's the ability to understand what actually motivates your team, navigate complex human dynamics, and create a culture where people feel safe enough to speak up and innovate.

Tools will change, interfaces will get upgraded, and business cycles will fluctuate. But human psychology is exactly the same as it was in the Stone Age. Teams will always need trust, clients will always want to be heard, and partnerships will always live or die on integrity. If you preserve that axle, you can adapt to any wheel.

Finding your anchor

The goal of modern management shouldn't be to run faster on the technological treadmill, but to anchor businesses in timeless human behaviors. If you build your career or your company entirely around predicting the next tech trend, you're building on shifting sand. But if you invest in the skills that don't have an expiration date—like clear storytelling, active listening, and ethical clarity—you build a resilient culture that can survive any disruption.

Let the tools evolve. The future won't belong to the smartest algorithm, but to the leaders who use technology to scale their reach, while using their humanity to anchor their impact. The next time you feel overwhelmed by a new tech trend, take a breath, think of the cavemen standing by the wheel, and just hit refresh.

Summary: The 3-Step Strategy for Evolving Enterprises

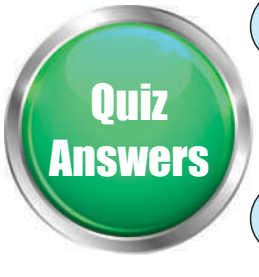
For today's enterprises—especially MSMEs currently trying to navigate the complex world of modern tech—implementing shiny new systems too quickly without a solid foundation can completely wreck established business workflows.

To ensure your organization navigates technological disruptions successfully rather than being overwhelmed by them, prioritize the following structured roadmap: Digitize and clean your foundation: Do not rush into advanced algorithms or complex AI modules straight away. Start by shifting from paper or messy legacy formats to organized digital records, and invest heavily in rigorous data cleansing and data quality. This builds a bulletproof information layer.

Secure the human axle and upskill: Build strong psychological safety, open communication, and institutional trust across your teams. Train your existing workforce to step up from data operators to system orchestrators, ensuring your people understand the data before technology tries to interpret it.

Adopt advanced tech at a sustainable pace: Treat cutting-edge automation and AI as localized experimentation pilots on top of your clean data foundations. Ensure you never automate core customer-facing or internal bottlenecks faster than your underlying data quality and organizational culture can absorb.

– Dhanasekhar Sennaiyan



1. Sagarmala Finance Corporation
2. Joyland
3. Improving one's physical attractiveness, sometimes through extreme or dangerous measures
4. M Now
5. Fairfax Financial Holdings
6. April 2029