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# Hindu Business Line

## When and how to 'seize the moment'

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*Here are the golden rules to be followed if one wants to taste success as a high-performance entrepreneur.*

Seventy-hour workweek, and an average 140 days of travel. A way of life in MindTree, writes Subroto Bagchi in *The High Performance Entrepreneur*, from Penguin Portfolio ([www.penguinbooksindia.com](http://www.penguinbooksindia.com)).

Daunting? But hard work like this comes with a great incentive, he assures: 'the ability to work unsupervised', which is 'a critical requirement' of entrepreneurship. "As a paid professional, often someone can blame the system for not providing either the direction or the resources. As an entrepreneur, you no longer have that latitude. You have to work hard, very hard."

The book brings together 'golden rules for success' such as this that Bagchi gleans from his experience.

"I have been an entrepreneur thrice," he writes. "Once, as a small kid, I sold balloons. As a grown-up, at the age of 28, I had my first taste of serious entrepreneurship. It lasted all of three years. At the age of 42, MindTree happened and it continues to happen."

It all begins with a special moment, Bagchi reminisces. You get an inner call that says, 'You are designed to create something new.'

To aspiring entrepreneurs who struggle internally to decipher if their special moment has come, Bagchi's message is simple: "Look around and read the signs. Who knows, you may be the next big success!"

To those who are afraid, he advises: Let not failure weigh on your mind so much that you become tentative in your search for success. "Failure cannot be an option when you raise money from others or take on employees who work to make the shared vision a reality."

While profiling the entrepreneur, 'self-confidence' comes top in Bagchi's list of required qualities. Next is freedom, which entrepreneurs value; but they are also very disciplined. "I like taking instructions from more competent

people and my customers. But I do not like someone telling me how to go about doing my work. I work best when I am given what is called a 'porous boundary'," declares the author.

Freedom, according to him, is not "deciding for yourself when to come and go, who to serve or not, how much to pay yourself, how much to be able to spend on entertainment, choosing the hotel you want to stay at or accounting for a personal trip as official." Freedom is 'an inner need for space' in which you can 'create greater value without interference'.

One other attribute of entrepreneurs is flexibility, even as they recognise 'the power of emergence'. In 1999, when MindTree started, the vision was to focus on two businesses, viz. IT consulting and software services, and R&D services. "The former was for building Internet-based applications, and on the R&D side, we wanted to work on providing solutions in the telecom domain," recounts Bagchi. "In just about a year, there was a dotcom bust and the telecom domain just about vanished."

What happened then? The company moved rapidly into other areas, such as 'supply chain, data-warehousing, mainframe-based application management services (AMS) and enterprise resource planning (ERP)', though none of these existed in the original business plan.

"On the R&D side, we created new verticals such as semiconductors, appliances, industrial automation and avionics, storage technologies, and consulting platforms. Again, these were things we never thought we would dabble in."

Writes Bagchi: "Nine out of ten companies born at the same time as us, anywhere in the world, do not exist today. Entrepreneurship requires the ability to read patterns on the wall, flexibility and an uncanny ability to seize the moment."

Candid and compelling read.

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