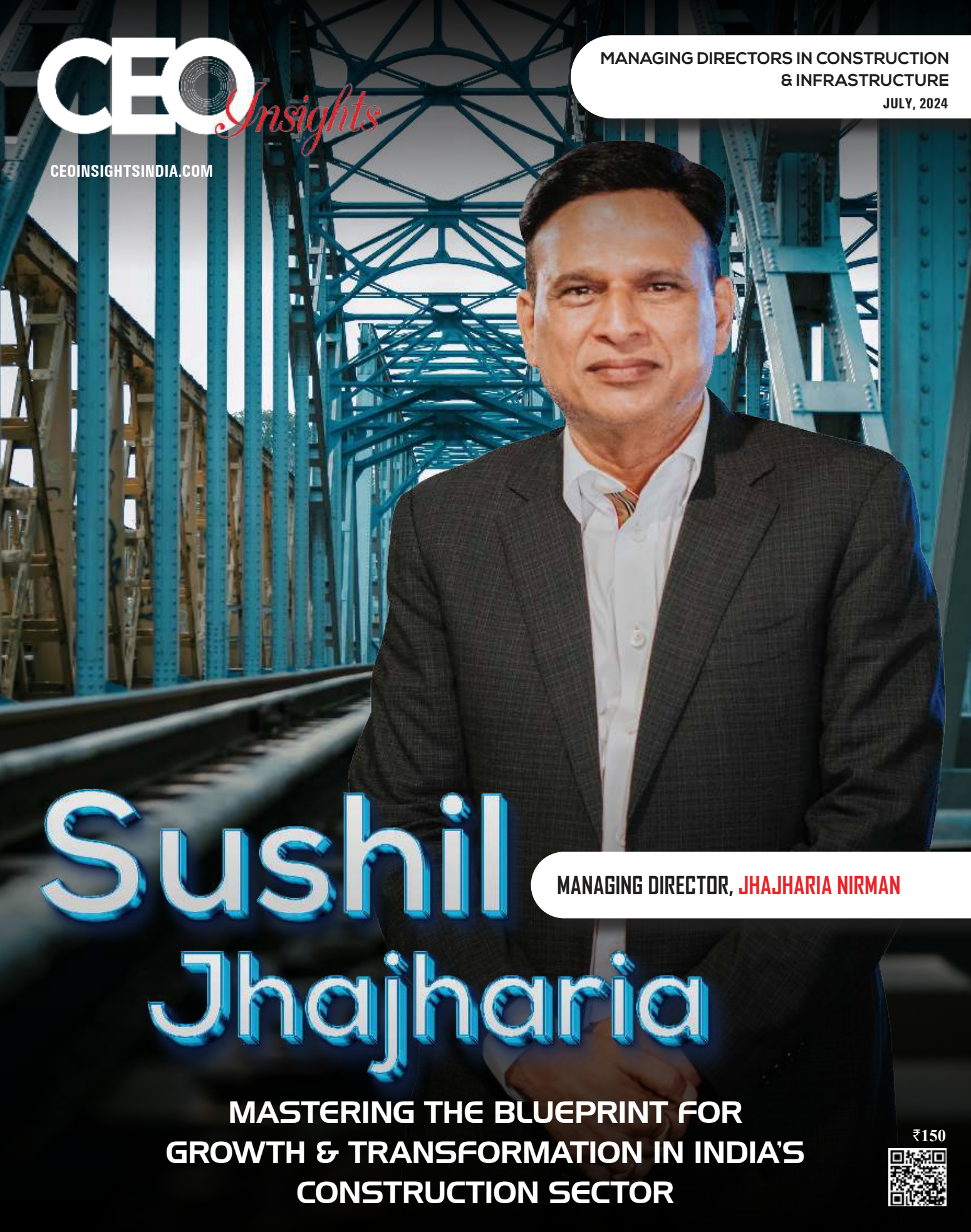
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MANAGING DIRECTORS IN CONSTRUCTION & INFRASTRUCTURE
JULY, 2024



Sushil Jhajharia

MANAGING DIRECTOR, JHAJHARIA NIRMAN

MASTERING THE BLUEPRINT FOR GROWTH & TRANSFORMATION IN INDIA'S CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

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> Our commitment to excellence & innovation positions us as leaders in the field, dedicated to improving health outcomes & fostering well-being across diverse populations

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MASTERING THE BLUEPRINT FOR GROWTH & TRANSFORMATION IN INDIA'S CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

BY TANUJA A AKKANNAVAR

In the Indian Construction and Infrastructure domain, a people-centric approach is paramount for sustainable success. This strategy strengthens the company's foundation and fosters a culture of mutual respect and dedication. Leaders can cultivate loyalty and motivation by valuing and supporting employees, driving long-term growth and excellence. Prioritizing employee welfare and engagement guarantees a committed and productive workforce, elevating the organization's overall quality and reputation. A leader who exemplifies this focus on employee well-being and loyalty is Sushil Jhajharia.

Sushil Jhajharia, the Managing Director of Jhajharia Nirman, is a distinguished entrepreneur and visionary leader in the construction industry. He has transformed his company into a multi-crore enterprise through steadfast dedication and strategic insight. Under his leadership, Jhajharia Nirman expanded across multiple states, integrating advanced technologies and maintaining a persistent commitment to quality. Sushil's people-centric approach has fostered a loyal and motivated workforce, driving the company to new heights and setting benchmarks in the industry. His journey is a testament to perseverance, innovation, and exemplary leadership.

Below is an excerpt of Sushil Jhajharia's exclusive interaction with CEO Insights magazine.





Could you walk us through the milestones you crossed and the lessons you acquired along those experiences so far?

Right after school, I started my construction business in the early 90s in Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh. I began with small quotation contracts like a cycle stand for the railways and learned to persist and aim high. In 2008, I amalgamated all the existing works and turned them under one roof, thereby creating Jhajharia Nirman, named after our ancestral village 'Jhajhar' in Rajasthan. We expanded from Chhattisgarh to other states, increasing our presence across India. Our growth was rapid, and our turnover crossed many milestones. We became a public limited company in 2013, which improved our reputation and scope. We diversified our projects to railway track construction, flyovers, bridges, and multistoried buildings. My children, both civil engineers, joined the business and brought new ideas and improvements. They helped modernize our administration and grow our business. Now, we have projects in 16 states, from Karnataka to Assam, with a strong workforce of over 2000 employees and a turnover of over Rs. 1200 crores. This journey taught me a lot about resilience, strategy, and the influence of relationships. Every milestone confirmed the values of hard work, innovation, and quality that make Jhajharia Nirman what it is today. We are committed to excellence and ready to face new challenges and opportunities on our way to success.

Under your leadership, how do you foster an innovation culture among the team?

Under my leadership, fostering an innovation culture among our team has been a top priority. Initially, our team was small, with around ten dedicated employees who are now project directors and hold key positions. This longevity highlights our commitment to valuing and nurturing each team member as a crucial pillar of our company. I'm proud that over 100 employees have been with us for over 20 years, demonstrating our strong organizational loyalty and stability.

Since 2015, we've embraced innovation by integrating advanced technologies into our operations. We introduced a custom ERP system that meticulously tracks project progress, purchases, expenses, and vendor activities. Our Technoton GPS sensor system also allows us to monitor over 500 pieces of equipment in real-time, ensuring optimal usage and preventing fuel theft. Furthermore, we've developed a mobile app that connects every employee and vendor, streamlining HR activities such as leave requests, salary status checks, and more. This technological integration ensures seamless communication and efficiency across the board.

Recognizing the future potential of artificial intelligence, we've begun incorporating AI for bidding, documentation, and legal drafting. By continually adopting cutting-edge technologies, we ensure timely project execution and maintain a competitive edge in the industry.

How do you attract the right market leaders for collaboration/partnership purposes, and what principles do you ensure the team follows for each project?

Attracting the right market leaders for collaboration and partnerships is central to our strategy. Rather than engaging in cutthroat competition, we prioritize a positive approach to bidding and tendering. We believe that quality and integrity should guide our actions, not the pressures of market competition. Our firm has established relationships with over 700 to 800 subcontractors across various construction verticals, reflecting our collaborative spirit and commitment to quality. Each month, we submit approximately 80 to 90 bids, totalling over 1000 bids annually. Our approach is simple: we quote fair, healthy rates without considering market competition. If we win a bid, that's excellent; if not, we move forward without compromise. This principle ensures we maintain the highest construction standards without the stress and potential pitfalls of destructive competition.

Quality is our cornerstone. We believe that compromising quality for competition only leads to dissatisfaction and tarnishes our hard-earned reputation. Our clients, including major entities like the Indian Railways, RITES, IRCON, DFCCIL, National High-Speed Rail Corporation, and more, have never expressed dissatisfaction with our work. This is a testament to our unwavering commitment to excellence. Further, to maintain these standards, we have a dedicated team for quality analysis, checks, and audits. We adhere strictly to our internal policies and the 'Jhajharia Standard,' ensuring that every project meets our rigorous quality benchmarks. By emphasising quality over competition, we safeguard our reputation and deliver exceptional results, attracting like-minded market leaders for fruitful collaborations and partnerships.

What is the future destination you are headed towards?

Looking ahead, our vision is to strategically integrate advanced technology across all construction verticals, empowering our workforce and enhancing efficiency. Contrary to the belief that innovation reduces jobs, I see it as a tool providing every employee a technical edge. Continuous learning and adaptation to new technologies are essential, and my entire team is instrumental in driving this transformation.

Our ambitious goals include achieving a top-line booking of Rs.5000 crores by 2028-29, with an order book exceeding Rs.10,000 crores. Financial health is a cornerstone of our strategy - we operate without bank loans, relying solely on our capital. This approach has proven resilient, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, where we maintained consistent growth and ensured timely salary payments to all employees. Moreover, we prioritize healthy-rated contracts over competitive bidding, which ensures quality and financial stability. Our economic independence allowed us to navigate the pandemic without setbacks, and we aim to sustain this trajectory. Similarly, we're exploring international contracts to expand our global footprint. With the dedicated support of my team the pillars of our success, I am confident we will achieve these milestones and continue to grow sustainably and responsibly.

> **Under my leadership, fostering an innovation culture among our team has been a top priority**

What would be a word of advice you would like to share with budding industry leaders?

I always believe that slow and steady wins the race. Many companies rush into the field, fueled by angel investors, chasing contracts at unhealthy rates. This often leads to compromised quality and missed deadlines. My advice is to focus on the quality of your work, as your reputation is built on the projects you deliver. Never compromise on quality or rush for rapid growth; sustainable success comes from steady

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