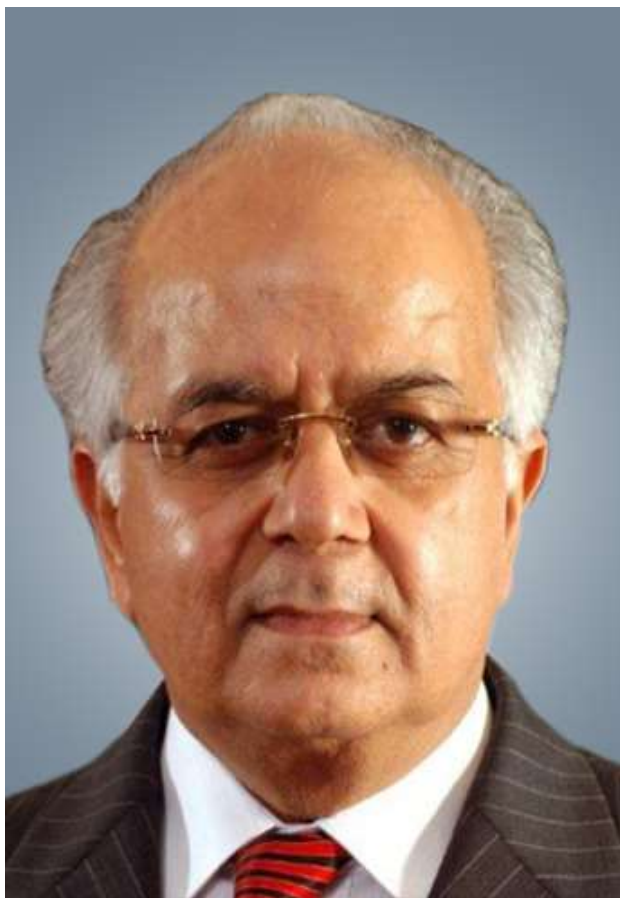


“Focus and finish, that’s my attitude !”

avers alumnus Corporate Leader Vijay Rekhi



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Vijay Rekhi

Founder **Unibev** and **Vizanar**

BA Eco Hons SRCC 1964

MD McDowell’s 1993-2011

Born in Lahore 1944, Rekhi was 3 when his grandmother clutched a parcel of gold ornaments, boarded a train with the rest of the family and reached Mussoorie during Partition. In September 1947, when it became too cold, the family migrated to Delhi, he recounts. His mother’s father was murdered at his home by his own employee in Lahore but his father’s family reached India unscathed. “I have no ill will or fondness.. Pakistanis are nice people outside their own land,” he says.

With a degree from Shri Ram College of Commerce in Delhi, he had an abridged stint at getting a master’s degree from the Delhi School of Economics before the IIM – A opportunity came about. He got in on his second attempt.

He returned to Bangalore in 1993 as the Deputy President UB Group’s Spirits division and three years later, became its President. “When I left in 2011, we were *the world’s largest Spirits company* – and I had a rollicking 15 years as Managing Director (of McDowell and Co.) and President.”

Between 2001-02 and 2010-11, for which data is available, USL’s annual profits grew from approximately R 16.5 crore to R 570 crore. “When I joined, the company was doing four million cases. When I left in 2011, **it was at 114 million.**”

After serving for three years as the Chairman EC on USL, Vijay moved on to start his own consulting firm, **Vizanar**, derived from the names of his family members, including sons Naresh and Rakesh. The company keeps him busy because he can't just "sit, read newspapers and watch TV", he says. He paints occasionally.

In 2015, Rekhi incubated the idea of a premium alcohol beverage (**alcobev**) **start – up**. Unibev launched L’Affaire Napoleon brandy last year 2017 and two premium whisky brands (Governor’s Reserve and Oakton) this year with premium rum, vodka and beer as possible future offerings. Even if the market is dominated by USL and Pernod Ricard, he says, there will be a space created for these brands where “Mr Rekhi became relevant”.

Vijay isn't your average individual. The maverick CEO is a rare breed in India - he has run companies in South America and other parts of the world. The former CEO built a business that churned out more than **a billion dollars** in revenues and took Indian liquor to the globe.

Vijay's impactful Corporate Mantra:

Whatever is my age in numbers, the mind has to be active and I still bring the same urgency to assignments. I can't faff around-focus and finish, that's my attitude.