



# AUSTRALIAN (SYDNEY) CHAPTER OF ICAI



PRESENTS

## 13<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

# STEP INTO THE FUTURE

PRODUCTIVITY

ECONOMIC VALUE

TECHNOLOGY

STRATEGY

**Thursday, 26 September 2024**  
05:00 PM - 08:00 PM

**Friday, 27 September 2024**  
09:00 AM - 05:00 PM

Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand,  
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Campus, 169 Macquarie Street, Parramatta NSW,  
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## Dear Members and Friends,

I am delighted to welcome you to the Chapter's 13th International Conference!

We have a two-day agenda encompassing relevant and insightful sessions, with a diverse line-up of speakers. The theme for this year's conference is STEP into the Future – with Strategy, Technology, Economic Value and Productivity being the four pillars of successfully stepping into the future! As accountants, we are best placed to leverage these four pillars for the success of our organisations! The conference will witness several sessions on these topics from industry thought leaders and subject matter experts!



**Tanuja Bissa**  
Chairperson

Each year we bring speakers and topics that are contextual, relevant and touch on the flavour of the season! Our passion to bring our women members to the forefront and further enhance the diversity of the Chapter has been strongly supported by the Management Committee team, our members, volunteers and partners. This year's conference is a testament to the Committee's vision to strive towards holistic development and growth of our members.

Recently, we hosted the IFSCA GIFT City Delegate along with the ICAI Leadership team through an engaging and informative session about the latest BATF Regulations. This event was a showcase of our strength and the critical role the Chapter's ECTA working Group has played in the growth and strengthening of the bilateral relationship between India and Australia.

It gives us immense pride to also share that the Chapter received its first ever Overseas Chapter's award as the second-best Chapter in the category of large Chapters! Another solid 'proof in the pudding' moment as we got recognised by the parent body for all the work and success of our committees and volunteers over the last few years! This year, the Chapter will have organised over 32 successful professional and social events to cater to our wide-spread memberships-base. The Chapter also launched an AI series in partnership with TCS that has seen two successful batches of workshops specially curated to meet the needs of accountants through AI, with a third batch scheduled in the last quarter.

It would be remiss of me not to thank our ICAI Leadership team – our President, CA Ranjeet Agarwal and Vice-president CA Charanjot Singh Nanda who have shown immense support and appreciation to the Chapter and the Management Committee! They have been very generous with their time and provided opportunity for our members to meet them during their visits to Sydney twice this year.

I also take this opportunity to thank our sponsors, partners and volunteers, who have all worked tirelessly to support this growth and journey of the Chapter. We would have not been able to achieve the above milestones, including this 13th International Conference without their support and generosity! We thank our venue and strategic partners - Chartered Accountants – Australia and New Zealand, Western Sydney University, our premium sponsors - HSBC, Silverhall, and our strategic partners CPA Australia. Also, our newest talent partners for the conference, Hays!

We hope you enjoy and immerse in our 13th International Conference, and our best wishes for the upcoming festive season!

Yours in service,

**CA Tanuja Bissa, Chairperson**

**On behalf of the Management Committee**

**The Australian (Sydney) Chapter of ICAI Sydney**

# OUR SPEAKERS

Thursday, 26/09/2024



**CA Ranjeet  
Kumar Agarwal**  
President, ICAI

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President Message



**Geraldine Magarey FCA**  
General Manager  
International Development,  
CA ANZ

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CA ANZ Welcome Address



**Jay Watkinson**  
Assistant Director, Centre for  
Australia-India Relations

---

Australia-India Trade & Investments



**Holly Stiles**  
National Head of Corporate Finance,  
M&A Partner - Sydney and Brisbane,  
Grant Thornton

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Diversity, Equity & Inclusion -  
Business Case and Proven Strategies



**CA Prakash Sharma**  
ICAI Central Council Member

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ICAI Initiatives

# OUR SPEAKERS

Friday, 27/09/2024



**Professor George Williams AO**

Vice-Chancellor and President,  
Western Sydney University

Welcome to Western  
Sydney University



**Professor Meg Smith**

Interim Dean Business School,  
Western Sydney University

Western Sydney  
University Initiatives



**Dr. Andrew Charlton MP**

Federal MP for Parramatta,  
Government of Australia

Welcome to Parramatta



**Wayne Stokes**

President, CPA NSW &  
Non-Executive Director

CPA Welcome Address



**Elinor Kasapidis**

Interim Chief Learning &  
Innovation Officer,  
CPA Australia

Future of Accounting



**Gina McNamara**

Regional Chief Financial Officer,  
Asia Pacific and Japan,  
SAP

Empowering Business  
Through Financial Leadership



**Dr. Kaushik Sridhar**

Founder & CEO,  
Orka Advisory

The ESG Opportunity



**Caroline Edwards**

Business Director,  
HAYS

Productivity & Economic Value,  
the Correlation



**Mahātria**

Founder, Infiniethism

Ethics & Leadership



**Sameer Asher**

Global Digital & Technology  
Director, CBRE

Technology & Transformation



**Anchal Saxena**

Vice President,  
CBRE

Technology & Transformation



**Darshak Mehta OAM**

Entrepreneur & Philanthropist,  
Chairman Chappell Foundation

Batting for Success:  
Indian Passion Meets  
Aussie Pragmatism

# PANEL DISCUSSION:

## Entrepreneurship & Startups - Challenges & Opportunities Panel Discussion



**Janet Salem**

Founder, FootprintLab



**Elaine Starkey**

Founder, upGrad GSP



**Naby Mariyam**

Founder, Coverhero



# MEET OUR TEAM



**CA Tanuja Bissa**  
Chairperson



**CA Shantilal Jain**  
Vice Chairperson



**CA Priya Kannan**  
Secretary



**CA Mahesh Agarwal**  
Treasurer



**CA Sandeep Saini**  
Head of Social Events



**CA Suneet Jain**  
Head of  
Professional Events



**CA Ritesh Lekhak**  
Head of Memberships



**CA Dilip Girglani**  
Social Events



**CA Savita Agarwal**  
Secretarial



**CA Devang Jain**  
Treasury

# CONFERENCE TEAM:



CA Surendra  
Joshi



CA Ganesh Iyer



CA Utkarsh Khandelwal



CA Manu Michael



CA Samir Mehta



CA Nandini  
Krishna Kumar

# MASTER OF CEREMONIES



CA Mina Khandelwal



CA Nimish Matani



CA Komal Mehta

पीयूष गोयल  
PIYUSH GOYAL



वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्री  
भारत सरकार  
MINISTER OF COMMERCE &  
INDUSTRY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

## MESSAGE

I am delighted to learn that the Australian (Sydney) Chapter of Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) is organising the 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference from 26<sup>th</sup>- 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2024 in Sydney. The occasion will also see the release of a souvenir.

The Australian (Sydney) Chapter of ICAI serves as a vital platform for the professional development of its members, who contribute extensively to both the Indian and Australian economies, strengthening the economic ties between the two countries. Through its commitment to integrity, knowledge sharing and collaboration with other accounting bodies, the Chapter embodies the core values of ICAI and sets a standard of excellence in the global accounting profession.

Under the dynamic leadership of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, India is shaping a stronger and more strategic partnership with Australia. By enhancing trade, investment, and economic collaboration, the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) has opened new avenues for professionals and businesses to thrive. The Chapter plays an active role in promoting this agreement, maximizing outreach and supporting increased trade between India and Australia.

This conference promises to be an enriching platform for exchanging ideas and fostering new opportunities. I congratulate the Australian (Sydney) Chapter of ICAI for organizing this conference and wish the Chapter success in all its future endeavors.



**Piyush Goyal**

**PIYUSH GOYAL**



# Message from CA Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal, President, ICAI 13th Annual Conference organized by Australian (Sydney) Chapter of ICAI

**Long range planning does not deal with the future decisions but with the present of future decisions - Peter F Ducker**

The world today is ever dynamic and ever evolving. Today when the whole world is a global village, it is imperative that the trends that dominate the future are harnessed by the professionals of today which would give the shape to the future. In this regards, I would say that we should devise a proper strategy, capitalise on the technological advancements and take a lead globally amidst the thriving global competition.



**CA Ranjeet Kumar  
Agarwal**

On this context, it is a pleasure to note that the Australia (Sydney) Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) is organizing its 13th Annual Conference on September 26-27, 2024 on the theme "Step into the Future: Strategy, Technology, Economic Value, Productivity".

The theme of the conference of this year is both timely and relevant. As we navigate an era defined by rapid technological advancements, strategic innovation, and an ever-evolving global economy, it is crucial that we equip ourselves with the tools and knowledge to enhance productivity and generate economic value. Further I would say that the Chapter's unwavering dedication to fostering professional development and creating a vibrant networking platform for Indian Chartered Accountants in Sydney is truly commendable. This year we have our vision DRISHTI wherein 'S' signifies as Skill-Building and such conference is a tool for the furtherance in achieving this vision, as these contribute to skill-building of the members.

The sessions of this Conference have been meticulously planned, keeping in mind the present and the emerging needs of CA members overseas.

At ICAI, we are committed to empowering our members not just with skills but with the strategic vision necessary to shape the future. The challenges we face today are opportunities in disguise - opportunities to redefine our approach, embrace technology, and drive economic growth. I am confident that our members will continue to excel on the global stage, contributing to a more dynamic and productive world.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the entire Management Committee of the Australia (Sydney) Chapter of ICAI for their tireless efforts in advancing the profession. Your initiatives have greatly contributed to the stature of the Indian Chartered Accountancy profession internationally.

I wish you continued success in your future endeavours.

Best wishes,  
CA Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal  
President, ICAI

**Parliament of Australia  
House of Representatives**



**Andrew Charlton MP  
Federal Member for Parramatta**

## **Institute of Chartered Accountants of India 13th International Conference - September 2024**

### **Welcome to Parramatta for the 2024 International Conference.**

You're on hallowed ground here in Parramatta. The Burramattagal people have been here since time immemorial, living off the incredibly fertile lands around where freshwater creeks meet the saltwater river, and where the eels lay down to breed\*. Indeed it was these fertile lands that sustained the first European settlers a few months after their arrival in January 1788.



**Dr. Andrew Charlton MP**

May you find our City equally fertile for the cultivation of your ideas, your client advocacy and your connections with each other. Parramatta is also the home of the Centre for Australia-India relations, an initiative of the Albanese Labor Government opened in 2023 to support and facilitate greater collaboration and engagement with India.

As I said in Parliament to commemorate the Indian elections earlier this year:

Australia's relationship with India has never been stronger. Last year, Prime Minister Modi visited Australia, becoming the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Australia twice during their premiership. Last year, Prime Minister Albanese visited India twice, becoming the first Australian Prime Minister to visit India twice in one year. No fewer than 13 Australian ministers have travelled to India in the last 12 months, already a record.

India's population is so young and its growth so rapid that, by 2050, it will be larger than China and the United States combined. India also has the world's fastest economic growth, faster than any major economy. It recently overtook the UK and Germany, and it will soon overtake Japan to become the world's third-largest economy. India has the second-largest armed forces and the fastest growing military capability in the world. That's why, for all the twists and turns in India's history, that nation is about to come to an extraordinary point of promise, a point where it is undoubtedly a global superpower and, as a partner with Australia, a force for good in the world that contributes to the peace and prosperity of our region...

India is an extraordinary partner for Australia... India will shape Australia's future over the next century more than any other nation. And there is no more important relationship for Australia than India over that time horizon. [Hansard, 4 June 2024]

Once again, welcome. May your conference experience be most fruitful, fulfilling and yield important and valuable results for you and your clients.

Dr Andrew Charlton MP  
Federal Member for Parramatta

*\* Burramattagal is thought to be derived from the Aboriginal word for 'place where the eels lie down' to breed (within the Parramatta River).*

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# THE HON PETER DUTTON MP LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Parliament House CANBERRA ACT 2600

THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF INDIA

AUSTRALIAN CHAPTER

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



**Hon Peter Dutton MP**

On behalf of the Coalition, I congratulate the Australian (Sydney) Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India for your 13th International Conference.

Since its establishment in 2007, your Chapter has grown into a vital overseas extension of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), reflecting your unwavering commitment to excellence and professional growth. The mutual recognition agreements between ICAI, Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, and CPA Australia underscore your profession's collaborative spirit.

The theme for this year's conference is timely: STEP into The Future – Strategy, Technology, Economic Value, Productivity. All four areas warrant consideration as democracies strive to generate prosperity in difficult economic times and a more precarious world.

Under the previous Coalition Government, Australia and India's cooperation and friendship reached a new height with the hugely successful signing of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in June 2020 and then the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement in April 2022. These undertakings are the foundation of new endeavours for both our nations.

The conference's spotlight on the bilateral relationship will play a crucial role in furthering trade, business and investment between Australia and India.

May this conference be a resounding success. My best wishes to the organisers and attendees.

Hon Peter Dutton MP  
Leader of the Opposition

September 2024



# Hon Mark Speakman SC MP

## Leader of the NSW Opposition NSW Liberal Leader

I send my best wishes to the Australian (Sydney) Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India as you convene for the 13th International Conference here in Sydney.

"STEP into The Future" (Strategy: Technology: Economic Value:Productivity), is both timely and forwardlooking, capturing the essence of what is required to navigate the complexities of the modern financial landscape.

This conference is a vital opportunity to explore how cutting-edge technologies and innovative strategies can be harnessed to drive economic value and productivity in the broader context of the growing bilateral trade relationship between Australia and India. As two vibrant democracies with complementary economies, our nations are uniquely positioned to collaborate on a range of initiatives that can foster sustainable growth and create mutual economic benefits.

The Indian accounting fraternity in Australia, represented by the members of this Chapter, plays a crucial role in strengthening the economic and cultural ties between our two nations. Your expertise and dedication are instrumental in advancing trade and investment opportunities, ensuring that businesses on both sides can navigate the complexities of international commerce with confidence.

I wish all delegates safe travels and a successful and stimulating conference.

**Mark Speakman**



**Mark Speakman**

## **Professor Meg Smith** **Interim Dean, School of Business** **Western Sydney University**

On behalf of the School of Business, Western Sydney University I am delighted to welcome the Sydney Chapter of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India to the Parramatta City Campus. I would also like to acknowledge your distinguished guests. I trust that your work with the conference also provides an opportunity to engage with the School of Business and the University.

The School of Business is one of the largest at Western Sydney University. The School holds international accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the longest standing, most prestigious form of global accreditation that a university and its business programs can earn.

Fewer than 6% of business schools worldwide have earned this prestigious endorsement. The School offers globally recognised undergraduate and graduate accounting and financial planning programs with accreditation from seven professional bodies.

We are Western's flagship school for industry integration and community engagement. We work closely with industry and community partners to ensure that our range of professionally accredited and industry recognised courses help prepare our students for outstanding careers anywhere. Employers attest that our graduates are confident and work-ready when they enter the professional world. They have future-proof skills and are prepared to challenge existing norms to succeed in the jobs of the future.

In these globally challenging times however, we ask more than that - of ourselves, our programs, and our students. We seek to ensure our students are resilient, agile and entrepreneurial in their response to disruption. The requirement to do so is no more evident than in accounting as we respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by artificial intelligence tools and the requirements of ESG reporting. We strive to inspire them to consider their social responsibility, and to be responsive to community needs. Through our practice we prioritise culturally awareness and inclusivity. We urge them to use their life skills and educational accomplishments with a positive impact as they move toward their future careers.



**Professor  
Meg Smith**

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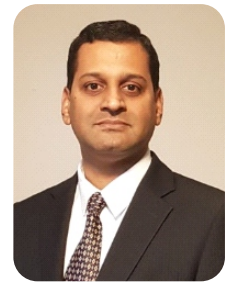
# About the Author

## CA Venkat Narayanan

is a business advisor with many years of experience in diverse industries, including FMCG, retail, IT services, architecture, and engineering. He is the Principal of Value Driven Consulting Pty Ltd, which provides commercial advisory and virtual CFO services to small and medium businesses. Venkat maintains a blog on his website – [www.valuedrivenaccounting.com.au](http://www.valuedrivenaccounting.com.au) – where he provides practical ideas on sound business management for business owners.

He can be reached at [Venkat.narayanan@valuedrivenaccounting.com.au](mailto:Venkat.narayanan@valuedrivenaccounting.com.au)

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**CA Venkat  
Narayanan**

## Want an Effective Business Strategy? Make it Boring

The one ubiquitous word in business is strategy. Whether it is reporting financial results, raising capital, or embellishing the performance of the new CEO, no business passes up the opportunity to exhort the potency of its business strategy.

Strategically Aligned As You Think It Is?” Vikas Mittal, Alessandro Piazza, and Ashwin Malshe, Harvard Business Review, May 2023] found that, on average, only 23% of employees were aligned with their company’s strategy. Separately, Gallup’s 2024 State of the Workforce report reports global employee engagement levels sitting consistently below 25% in the last decade, with 2024 numbers at 23% (Australia at 21%). That’s more than ¾ of an average organisation’s workforce that is not engaged in the work they do! Even though the Gallup report does not directly equate low employee engagement to poor strategy, it does allow this question to be asked - how can organisations that struggle to motivate their workforce expect to deliver their strategy effectively?

## So what the ails strategy in the business world?

There is, firstly, a lack of a fundamental understanding of what strategy is. Strategy (“how?”) is an action plan to realise an organisation’s vision (“where are we going?”) in the organisation’s pursuit of its core purpose (“why?”). Successful companies did not just rely on a grandiose vision; they had a credible and potent plan to achieve it. Google and Facebook garnered a share in the digital advertising market, Nvidia released a new 3D chip every six months (when the industry norm was 18 months), and Tesla delivered batteries at scale. Too often, CEOs take the easy route and reduce the vision to a tagline.

One top ASX20 company, a household name, states its core purpose: ‘We create better experiences together for a better tomorrow’. Where are the uniqueness and specificity that distinguish this company’s purpose from any other business in Australia? And without a nuanced understanding of the core purpose, what is that company’s strategy meant to achieve?

Most organisations also suffer from a strategy foundation that lacks rigour. For example, it is very common for CEOs to set strategic goals with a ‘stretch’ – a tactic attributed to Jack Welch of General Electric (GE). Taken in context, Welch first ensured that the GE divisions had a competitive advantage within their industry before he set stretch goals for them. Welch was also not hesitant to remove underperforming divisions from the GE portfolio.

Further, there is a disconnect between strategy and day-to-day operations. What is done is different to what is said. Burberry, the fashion retailer in the UK, lost its premium appeal by chasing volumes, especially in China, at discounted prices. Qantas, once known for its customer experience, faced a lot of criticism for chasing revenue post-pandemic and ignoring customer service levels.

Finally, strategy is shaped heavily by the culture of the organisation –summed up aptly by Peter Drucker: “Culture eats strategy for breakfast”. Recent examples of poor organisational behaviour at Boeing US.

Creating an effective business strategy requires analytical rigour and disciplined execution underpinned by competent leadership– all qualities that make the process boring, not glamorous.

Strategy formulation requires hard choices and trade-offs. For example, an architectural firm can simultaneously choose between expanding geographically within the country, expanding internationally, or diversifying into a new sector within their existing markets. Choosing all three is impossible due to the lack of resources (financial and managerial) to drive them successfully. In this case, making a strategic choice requires a rigorous process of understanding the market requirements of each choice, the internal capabilities available (or lacking) and the financial investment needed to implement the strategic choice.

Making such strategic decisions requires a competent leader – someone who is able to absorb the data, create a mental picture of the possible future, understand the limitations they are trying to overcome and come to a conclusion of what might be the best strategic choice for the firm. Success, by no means, is achieved just by making a strategic choice. There has to be a clear plan of action (which is the ‘strategy’- the how?) that leverages the organisation’s existing capabilities and sets out a clear map for acquiring those that the organisation is currently deficient in but necessary. Strategy is then cascaded through the organisation and divided into functional areas such as sales, delivery, procurement, people, and finance. Frameworks such as Balanced Scorecard and Objectives & Key Results (OKRs) help by resolving conflicts between functional goals and prioritising actions. This needs to be supported by clear communication with all levels of the organisation, so employees know how their tasks relate to the organisation’s purpose.

Underpinning these is a strong emphasis on the right behaviours, even in the face of adversity. The boring qualities that make strategy effective can drive significant results - even if your business is not the superstar of its industry. Gallup report notes that businesses that ranked in the top quartile of their industry for employee engagement reported, among other measures, higher productivity in sales (by 18%) and profitability (by 23%) compared to their peers in the bottom quartile.

### **Conclusion**

Treating strategy formulation as a cosmetic, slogan-driven exercise that emanates from an annual off-site of the top management is to lose sight of its valuable advantage. Instead, the focus should be on making the process analytical and rigorous, identifying and making the strategic choices, and focussing efforts on its delivery. This sounds boring but will (literally!) pay dividends in the long run.



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## Why is **SELLING** a must-have skill in this competitive landscape?

Consider the word – "Selling"!

What emotion does the word bring to you?

For most people, it creates irritation, anger, and frustration.

It reminds us of the salesman who persuaded you to change your electricity provider or the random real estate agency who repeatedly called to check if you wanted to sell your home.



**CA Shilpa  
Kulshreshtha**

And this bias is, unfortunately, keeping you stuck! Most chartered accountants are nerds – well, with the kind of success rate a CA degree entails, we had to be. This means we are good at doing our work but not selling it. And our inherent revulsion of "sales" makes it doubly hard.

When I transitioned from a job to an entrepreneur, I was in the same boat. I was excited to pursue my passion, but I struggled with selling myself. I learned that it's not about being pushy but about having meaningful conversations that lead to fair compensation for your work.

What was coming in the way was my internal resistance to "Selling" Result: I ended up broke in 2019. Cornered badly, without any liquid cash, I decided to take the much taboo-ed "selling" head-on. Reading books to finding masters who helped me with what it takes to be someone with gravitas, sincerity and persuasion, I learnt that, at the core, it was my own mindset towards sales. And that's when I learnt to ask for my worth unapologetically.

### **Consider this:**

Right from the day we are born, we are selling ourselves. A newborn knows to cry its heart out unless picked up. We sell our knowledge to get marks in school. As young adults, we put our best foot forward to attract the best potential partner. In jobs, we sell our contribution to speed up promotion. We sell the idea of a certain kind of future to our children. We are constantly selling, selling, selling.

So, any revulsion, opposition, or resistance has to be removed. I need you to open your mind to the fact that sales aren't some sinister thing that makes people buy the garbage they don't need. You need to change your internal dialogue and start looking at it as a means to serve people with the highest integrity. Some lessons that I learnt in my journey from being someone who sucks at selling to now being a natural

### **1. Sales is a process of value creation**

I wrote this article using part voice to text, part my phone, and part my MacBook. Each tool simplifies my life today, and I needed someone to sell it to me in the past. If you start thinking of sales as a value-creation process, you will see how critical it is to be good at it. If I am taking someone from A to K, I must keep winning my "sales" from A to B, then to C, D, etc. At each step, I must learn to create enough value for the other person for the process to be authentic.

### **2. Selling is a Service of the Highest Order**

Your ability to sell comes from believing in your capability to deliver. Our CA degree already stamps that we are the best of the lot.

So, if you know that you are the best at what you do, you are serving others by selling yourself and gifting them the best. It creates a win-win- accelerating their growth and your outcomes.

### **3. Money Mindset**

From childhood, we have been conditioned to believe that money is evil. The comics we read as kids, the fables we heard as teenagers, and the movies we grew up on always featured a rich bad guy and a poor man with a heart of gold.

It's time we got that right. If you are making an impact, adding value, and simplifying lives, it feels amazing to make money. And you rightfully deserve loads of it as a by-product of your contributions.

Your growth reflects your ability to sell. Package yourself powerfully and authentically for interviews, promotions, deals, and clients. Sell your ideas, dream projects, products, services, and thoughts. Selling enabled me to create a multi-million \$ business out of a conviction that was "a thought" 5 years back!

#### 4. Learn the ropes

Selling has an inherent structure. Getting the other person to see the value you bring requires some core skills.

Do yourself a favour by attending a sales training. Even a basic one will do. You'll learn the little nuisances you never thought were important but which would make all the difference.

Even if you NEVER sell in exchange for money, it will enable you to showcase value to your stakeholders at a level you never imagined.

#### 5. Build your Reputation.

Listen, you may be selling "nirvana," but if you never talk about it, how will the world benefit from it or even know about it?

You need more than just word of mouth if you dream of building wealth from your craft. You must create a trail of proof that you are an authentic, heart-centric individual whose ability to create value surpasses all others.

Today, being someone who can bring a total U-turn in people's careers no matter their past, I have created that identity and nurtured it consistently for years with dramatic results for the people who trusted me. My intentions reach the newsfeed of people every single day through open media. And it has created abundance beyond my wildest dreams.

The history-making leaders (for example, Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Indra Nooyi, Narendra Modi, etc.) made it big because they knew what they were good at and told the world about it.

Embrace selling unapologetically to communicate the value you bring to the table. Because if you don't, no one else will!

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## Productivity Tips That Add Efficiency to Your Busy Schedule

How can we get more done in the same time frame? For an accountant: The challenge is greater as compromising accuracy and deadlines is not an option. Add the challenge of hiring and retaining staff, and we can see how necessary it is to improve our productivity continuously.

The tips are nothing new; however, a tip or two can be implemented to move the productivity needle upward by a notch or two.



**CA Sandeep  
Gupta**

### 1. Develop a High-performance Team

Teams make us or break us. Building a high-performance team is an investment; it takes patience and deliberate effort. Google's Project Aristotle research determined that what mattered most was how the team worked together rather than who made up the team.

This is the secret sauce! What do we look for when recruiting new members? The mutual trust in the team is more important than an individual's brilliance. Does a member feel safe to be themselves? Will the new member enhance or imbalance the environment of safety and trust?

For the curious, here are some other ingredients for a high-performance team – SMART goals, values of the team aligned with company values, clear expectations, openness to continuous learning with humility, delegation of decision-making, and partners in the career/life growth of members.

The high-performance team does all the heavy lifting. They come up with innovative, productive solutions. They handle the day-to-day fires, leaving the manager free to progress toward the department and company goals. Use the Eisenhower matrix to empower the team. They will value the work experience and the demonstration of faith in their abilities.

### 2. Laser Focus

– Our 'To Do' list is always too long (there are supposedly other alternatives to a 'To Do' list, but that is not the subject of this article). The skill is to select the one item that will create the highest impact. Incidentally, this is also a practical application of the 80/20 Pareto rule (in accounting terminology, this would be the concept of materiality).

Now, become ruthless in discarding everything else that comes in the way. Of course, common sense is needed, and some fires may need priority to be put out. Say 'No' to other work that comes in the way. It is easy to get lost in the short-term gain at the cost of the long-term goal. Being a people pleaser, avoiding conflict comes at the cost of productivity.

The US navy seals have a mantra "slow is smooth, smooth is fast". Meaning, be deliberate so that our actions are accurate the first time and no corrective measures are needed. Be deliberate in building the team, the processes and taking actions so that it is not necessary to spend time in corrections.

### 3. Communication

This topic never gets stale. Changing our old habits appears to be a tough nut to crack. Admittedly, there are many nuances, and it is impossible to capture them in this article. Communication is established when what one person wishes to convey is understood by the other. Simplest way to check this is to ask for feedback on what has been understood, especially when it is to do with critical messages.

Communication is about relationships. Poor communication can ruin a relationship at work or at home. Productivity needs inspired leadership, and the right communication is vital to the inspiration. Don't shy away from conflict. The earlier we deal with a conflict, the easier it is to resolve. We nip it in the bud, as it were. Otherwise, the thoughts start taking root on both sides, and communication becomes harder. Be concise. Short, sharp messages are easier to understand than long ones. How do we react if we see a long message? Save time for feedback and discussions on the message. There is an exception. In some cultures, it is important to go through the niceties and get to the point later.

#### **4. Attention – There Are Several Sides to This**

One study has determined that a one-minute interruption in our work can cost us over 20 minutes to recover from the break in our attention. A minute spent taking a quick peek at our email or answering a call on our mobile will cost us at least 20 minutes in productivity terms.

Multi-tasking is a myth, and yet the corporate sector does not seem to budge from this requirement. It is unproductive to do tasks simultaneously, but it is fine to do several different tasks in a day, one at a time, focusing our full attention on the one we are tackling now.

#### **5. Discipline of Time – How We Use Time is Inherently Linked to Productivity**

Block the calendar as frequently as possible and as much as possible. This serves two purposes. It is the time you can focus on your main tasks with the least interference. It is also a buffer, enabling us to catch up on our goals for the day. If we jam-pack our schedule, then we are likely to be on the back foot. We need to be clear on which activities are goal relevant and which are not. Time is precious, so the time given to non-goal related activities should be minimised.

Like it or not, distractions will occur. Queries from team members, emails, etc. Allot times for these activities to extent possible. Email application can be shut down, so we are not tempted to keep checking.

#### **6. Meetings – This is a Big One for Many of Us**

Reduce meeting times by 10-20%. It saves time, avoids back-to-back meetings, and allows mental space. Skip some meetings that are non-essential.

Circulate the agenda and basic notes prior to the meeting. At the start of the meeting, remember to take a few minutes to explain the critical parts of the notes. Guide the meeting so the objective is achieved at the end. Avoid having another meeting on the same topic.

Keep 5 min at the end to recap conclusions, actionable items, responsibilities, etc. and ensure everyone is clear about the next steps.

#### **7. Procrastination**

Delaying decisions can often be counter-productive. For instance, waiting for more Information to reduce risks is not always a good strategy. Mulling over the situation for days may not add any value. Sometimes, it is just better to act, fail, learn, and act again. Don't be a victim of paralysis by analysis.

#### **8. Fitness, Physical & Emotional**

Our productivity is bound to be affected if we have back pain from continuous sitting, wrist pain from keyboard use, or even headaches from conflicts and meetings at work.

30 min a day for exercises, even light ones, release endorphins that reduce pain and stress, lift our emotional state, keep us fitter and more energetic, etc. Recommended essential daily routine for couch potatoes, too.

The better our energy, the better our emotional state, and the better our work output. Spend more time doing things that energize and less on those that drain. Become self-aware and recognize the triggers of negative emotions and the skills to master them.

## 9. Technology

We have been rapidly developing technologically. Imagine not using a laptop today. Do the research and become aware of all the new tools at our disposal – both hardware and software applications.

To conclude, one question to reflect on is when we are truly productive.

When do we do more than we have been doing within the same time span? Or when we end up doing what we have been really wanting to do for a long time but never quite got around to it.



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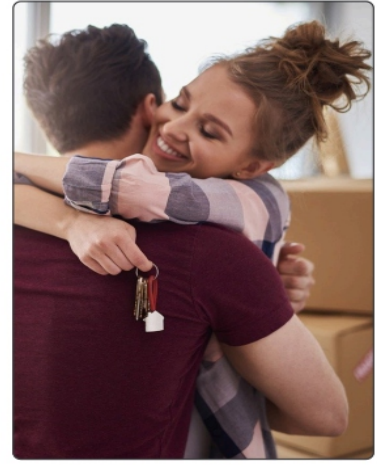
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## Transforming Tasks into Triumphs:

Essential Steps for Enhanced Productivity In today's distraction-filled world, maintaining focus is a challenge. Emails, social media, and other commitments often turn our days into mere firefighting, leaving us with little accomplished. This struggle impacts our efficiency, mental health, and enthusiasm for work. Here's a comprehensive guide to help you enhance your focus and productivity.



**CA Nandini  
Krishna Kumar**

### 1. Master Your Tools

Spending extra time dedicated to improving your skills with the most frequent tools used in your work will save you time in the long run. Whether it's Excel, Power BI, SAP Systems, or Xero, knowing how to accomplish the most common tasks with these tools quickly will allow you to complete larger volumes of these tasks in less time. This will enable you to focus on the bigger picture and allocate your time where it matters. Proficiency in these tools translates into less time spent troubleshooting and more time driving significant results.

### 2. Eliminate Distractions and Stay Accountable

Modern technology can be highly distracting. Research shows it can take 23 minutes to regain focus after a distraction. Moreover, the quality of your work can suffer from constantly trying to switch between multiple tasks. One way to tackle this is to use a system to remove distractions (such as your phone!) from your environment and stay accountable for your progress within a certain time frame. Virtual working spaces such as Caveday, Focusmate, and Flown enforce structured, distraction-free environments in which to work and provide a community to bolster motivation and increase the level of accountability for your progress.

### 3. Be Strategic and Prioritize

Not all tasks are equal. Collaborate with colleagues, managers, and family to prioritize the most important tasks. Continuously review and adjust these priorities. Once you identify urgent and high-impact tasks, systematically tackle them, leaving less urgent tasks for later. This approach, known as the Eisenhower matrix, ensures you deliver the maximum impact with your time. By aligning your daily activities with your long-term goals, you can avoid the trap of working hard but not achieving significant results.

### 4. Automate Judiciously

There are many opportunities to automate routine work. Software and AI tools like ChatGPT or Copilot can simplify these tasks. However, it's crucial to sense-check the outputs. While automation can save time, maintaining oversight ensures accuracy and reliability. Judicious use of automation can transform mundane tasks into efficient processes, freeing up your cognitive resources for more complex and creative problem-solving.

### 5. Tune Your Mind and Body

The other pointers in this guide can help you eliminate unnecessary distractions on your time and boost your productivity quickly. However, in the long run, there's no substitute for tuning your body and mind towards a state where prioritization and accountability become a force of habit instead of a conscious effort. Regular exercise, obtaining consistent sleep each day, employing meditation techniques, and creating rituals and routines are some ways to prepare your mind for focused work. These practices ensure that you have the mental and physical energy needed to sustain high productivity levels over time.



## Conclusion

A lack of productivity in our lives can be incredibly stifling – outcomes aren't achieved, and it comes at a cost to your mental health. By taking these first steps, you can transform your dreams into realities. Mastering your tools, eliminating distractions, prioritizing strategically, automating wisely, and tuning your mind and body will help you maintain a healthy relationship with your work. Embrace these strategies to enhance your productivity and enjoy a more fulfilling and balanced professional life.

By integrating these strategies into your daily routine, you can overcome the modern world's distractions and achieve your goals more efficiently. Focus and productivity are within your reach, and with the right approach, you can turn your to-do list into a list of accomplishments.



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## Interest rate pivot:

In today's distraction-filled world, maintaining focus is a challenge. Emails, social media, and other commitments often turn our days into mere firefighting, leaving us with little accomplished. This struggle impacts our efficiency, mental health, and enthusiasm for work. Here's a comprehensive guide to help you enhance your focus and productivity:



**CA Rishi Ketkar**

Federal Reserve finally sounded the dovish alarm in its FOMC meeting on 23rd August 2024 after 11 back-to-back interest rate hikes between March 2022 and July 2023. Most people would have forgotten that the Federal Reserve was holding its interest rate close to Zero per cent till 16th March 2022, just around two and half years before today. The Fed was simultaneously pumping billions of dollars into the economy every month as it tried to stimulate the economy in its post-GFC mode over 15 years. We have also seen record government debt being born over the same period.

Mark Twain wrote that 'history doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes '. It appears he might be right once again as the Fed begins its interest rate pivot and starts to support a struggling economy with interest rate cuts to begin in the last quarter of 2024.

## Factors considered in interest rate decisions:

The Federal Reserve has two broad mandates: to keep inflation in check and to maximize employment. While making interest rate decisions, it considers various factors, such as GDP, consumer spending, consumer sentiment, industrial production, and major macroeconomic events like financial crises, global conflicts, or supply chain shocks.

## Jackson Hole meeting of August 2024:

Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said, "We do not seek or welcome further cooling in labour market conditions", also adding, "The slowdown in the labour market was unmistakable," which underpins the importance of the 'maximize employment' mandate of the Federal Reserve. With the employment report on 6th September 2024 further signalling a clear weakness in the job market, one might easily assume that the rate cuts to begin as early as September 2024 would be at least 25bps, if not higher. Powell also commented that "the balance of risks to our mandate has changed and upside risks to inflation have diminished, downside risks to employment have increased". While inflation remains stubbornly higher than the two per cent limit, which the Fed would love to see, rising unemployment is the new shock the Fed is battling.

## Expectations for the rest of 2024:

One can expect a one-rate cut in the last quarter of 2024 to be followed by a sharp market rally higher than the Fed's preferred inflation rate and to prevail through the end of 2024. The Fed's message is loud and clear: They will react sharply to the faltering labour market and support it with everything in their control.

The natural question in our mind is, at what cost (of inflation)?'. The bond buyback may start again, pumping billions into the economy every passing month. Time will tell.

## Outlook for the Australian economy:

What happens in the US happens in Australia, albeit a few weeks or months later. We expect the RBA to follow suit with interest rate cuts as soon as the Fed cuts its interest rate.

The housing market in Australia will continue its 'Sticky and steady upward momentum' with every passing interest rate cut. House prices and financial markets will pop upwards sharply when interest rate cuts cease due to the fear of missing out on locking in lower interest rates (FOMO factor).

Our tourism and hospitality economy has rebounded smartly, with tourists, backpackers, and workers returning to Australian shores in droves. There will be no slowdown for most of FY25. Tourism might benefit and flourish more as runaway airline ticket prices begin to rationalize this year. The mining sector has seen a mini-boom thanks to the high prices of commodities and base metals, particularly gold and silver. The rally in bullion prices and industrial metals has been mouthwatering for our miners. We will see these gains continuing for most of this year.

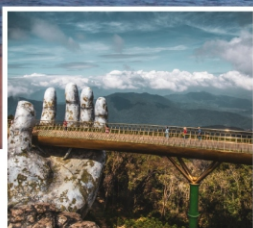
Australia is blessed with a commodity-backed economy that will emerge relatively unscathed from any short-term economic downturn, similar to our GFC experience. Regarding Western economies, I believe Australia will be the star performer in FY25, surpassing its counterparts in the UK, the US, and New Zealand by miles.

Australia shall once again be crowned **"The lucky country!"**.



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# Chapter Occasions

**Australian (Sydney) Chapter of ICAI**

CA Divaz League Presents

## WOMEN WELLBEING WORKSHOP

(FEMALES ONLY EVENT)

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024

From 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Western Sydney University  
1 Parramatta Square  
Room 26, Level 2  
Parramatta NSW 2150

Tea and Refreshments

Join us to participate in engaging discussions, celebrate women accomplishments, networking, fun and laughter

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**Australian (Sydney) Chapter of ICAI**

## WALKATHON

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10<sup>th</sup> May, Sunday 8:30am to 12:30pm

Westcott Bluebirds Park, Sydney Olympic Park

COST: Free event for members & their families.

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**Australian (Sydney) Chapter of ICAI**

## FRINGE BENEFIT TAX

23<sup>rd</sup> May, Thursday 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM (doors open at 5:30pm)

CPA AUSTRALIA, 111 HARRINGTON STREET

PAUL MATHER  
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**Australian (Sydney) Chapter of ICAI**

## UNPACKING THE AUSTRALIAN BUDGET 2024-25

18<sup>th</sup> May, Thursday 5:30pm to 8:30pm (doors open at 5:30pm)

Level 26, Tower 1, International Towers Sydney, 100 Barangaroo Avenue, Sydney 2000, NSW

2 CPD HOURS

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**Australian (Sydney) Chapter of ICAI**

TCS CSR Program

## CHARTING THE FUTURE WITH AI BASICS TO BRILLIANCE WITH TCS

SESSION 1: Understanding AI concepts and application in Finance.

SESSION 2: Building a Simple AI Model and real world case examples of AI adoption.

SESSION 3: Advanced AI techniques on complex AI project and discuss future trends.

3<sup>rd</sup> 10<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> May, Friday 2:00PM to 5:00PM

WSU Parramatta square campus is Peter Shergold building 1, Parramatta Square, Parramatta NSW 2150

Course Fee: \$89 per person

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**Australian (Sydney) Chapter of ICAI**

## INDIA ADVANTAGE ROADMAP AHEAD

30<sup>th</sup> April 2024 6pm-8pm

Chartered Accountants Australia & New Zealand (111 Erskine St, Sydney NSW 2000)

Chief guest: Dr. S. Janakiraman, Consul General, CII Sydney

Speaker: CA Aniket Talati, Immediate Past President, CICA

Speaker: Ram Gortamandala, Founder & CEO, Top Capital

Session agenda:
 

- Make in India program
- Startup India ecosystem
- GIFT city (IFSC)
- Australian perspectives on India

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**IFSCA Australian (Sydney) Chapter of ICAI**

## CONFERENCE ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR BOOK-KEEPING, ACCOUNTING AND TAXATION SERVICES IN INDIA'S MAIDEN IFSC, GIFT CITY

33 Erskine St, Sydney NSW 2000

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY **K. RAJARAMAN**  
CHAIRPERSON, IFSCA  
Monday, August 5, 2024  
15:00 - 17:00 Hrs

UPDATE BY ICAI INDIA AND DELEGATES FOLLOWED BY NETWORKING DINNER 17:00 - 18:00 Hrs

CONFERENCE DETAILS:
 

- CAANZ and ICAI Sydney Chapter are co-hosting a conference on the newly notified IFSCA (Bookkeeping, Accounting Taxation and Financial Crime Compliance Services) Regulations 2024.
- The Conference will highlight new outsourcing opportunities in GIFT IFSC for Australian Accounting Firms.

ABOUT IFSCA: The Government of India established the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) through an Act of Union Parliament. The IFSCA is statutory empowered to develop and regulate the financial markets in the IFSCs in India.

Key points:
 

- GIFT City houses India's 1st International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)
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## EMERGING RISKS

Lady Pastidjo, Director  
Adriano Marques, Associate Director

**KPMG**

will be running the presentation on Topical and emerging risks at Risk management trends & Governance

16<sup>th</sup> April, Tuesday 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM

CPA Australia

2 CPD Hours

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# 2024 - CPD Events



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Margaret, Owner

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**Last but not the least, we thank our members who are at the very core of what we do!**

*Thank you!*



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