

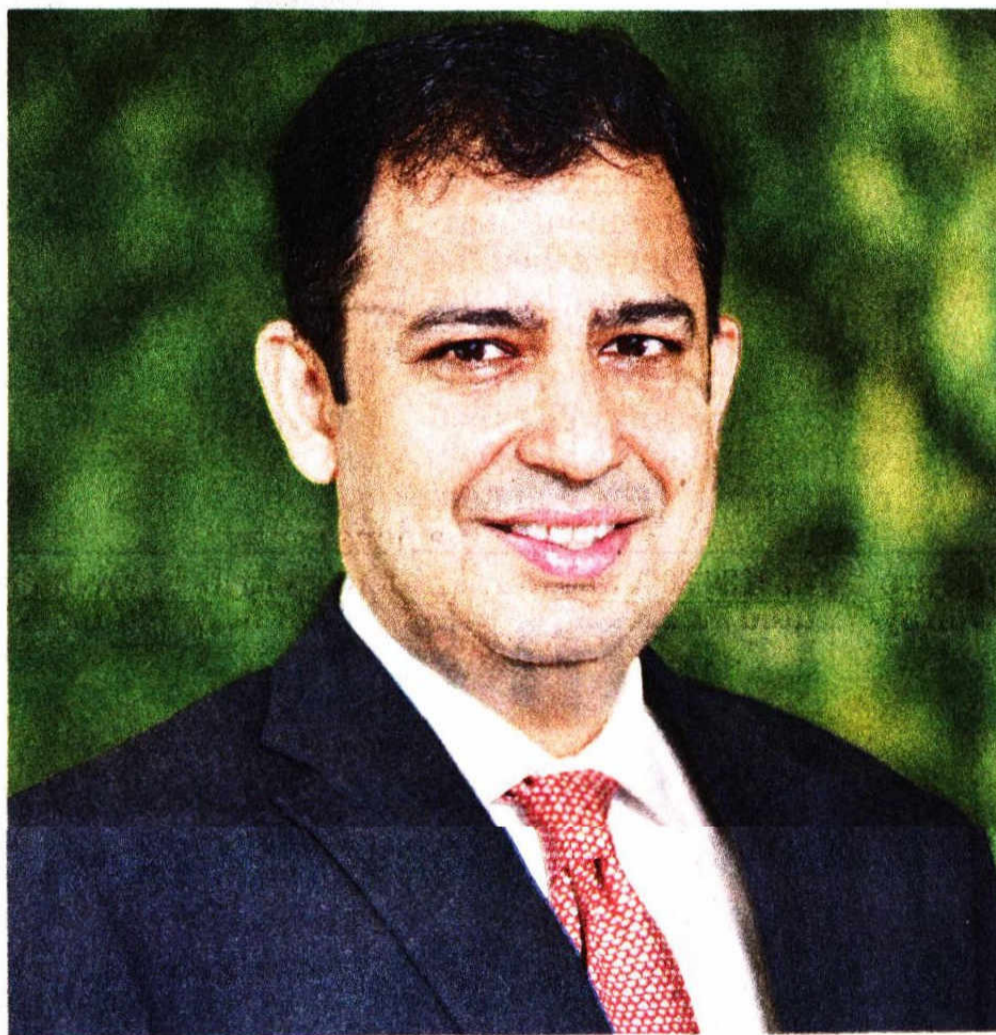
# “Digital Infrastructure will drive our market leadership”

**Sundeep Sikka, ED & CEO, Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management, gazes into the crystal ball and outlines critical factors for success**

**Under your stewardship, the company has embraced digital innovations fully. Talk to us a bit about this thinking, and what else is in the pipeline.**

>> Asset Management Industry in India is in a growth phase with tremendous potential. Currently only 3-4% of the population invests in MFs and this is rising rapidly with increasing financial awareness and availability of digital communication. We have been able to pick up the trend early and have invested behind it consistently. Today we are widely recognized to be at the forefront in terms of Digital services and innovation. We have a complete suite of assets across website and mobile apps for both investors and distributors. But this is just the first step for us as we roll out further initiatives such as voice-controlled transaction services on app. The idea is to provide wealth creation opportunities across the country and strive towards higher financial inclusion. Currently more than a third of our transactions are coming through our own Digital assets and this is set to grow in the future as more tech-savvy investors join the Industry.

The main focus area going forward, therefore, will be on effectively connecting the AMC, the Financial Advisor and the Investor. With this in mind, RNAM has been building its digital infrastructure to connect the dots and provide a transaction and ser-



vice platform across devices.

**Heading into 2019, what are the leadership lessons you have learnt from 2018 that you will apply on a day-to-day basis?**

>> 2018 was a year of turbulence. There have been rapid changes and volatility across capital markets, economy, and investment patterns. There were disruptions in several business models which has contributed to a bias towards short-term view. However it is important in such turbulent times, to focus on the longer term and be cognizant of opportunities. Rather than apprehension towards short-term

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challenges, the long term opportunities will decide the fate especially for growing industries like financial services in India.

At the core, your mindset

determines the outcome in the longer term and this is the focus for development. It is important to cultivate a mindset of ‘playing to win, not playing to not lose’. One is about optimism in the face of difficulties and the other is about caution. Put simply, the optimistic mind finds it much easier to not only overcome obstacles but also set exciting targets. In day-to-day decisions, this mindset cascades into steps like:

- Confronting reality
- Defining the winning situation
- Promoting intelligent failure
- Cultivating courage.

**In your decades long professional journey, what have been some of your most memorable moments and biggest lessons?**

>> I believe one makes the best decisions while looking ahead, and not while looking into the rearview mirror. Gradually, yesterday’s motivators become today’s hygiene factors, both for employees and customers. In financial services and other industries as well, there have been large companies that have suddenly found themselves behind the curve and going down the path to irrelevance. Often when the industry is being disrupted by a new entrant, it takes time for this change to be noticed and taken seriously. It is therefore crucial to keep evolving and keep looking ahead for new opportunities.