



Executive Focus

A risk taker!

Pankaj Razdan

CEO, BIRLA SUNLIFE INSURANCE AND DY CEO, ADITYA BIRLA FINANCIAL, A DIVISION OF ADITYA BIRLA NUVO

Date of Birth: 16 November 1968

Qualifications: B Sc (1989); B Tech (1992)

Career: Karvy Securities: head, primary markets, June 1993-February 1997; Prudential ICICI: joined since inception in April 1998, as VP west & north zone; senior VP, sales & distribution (January 2001); deputy CEO (January 2003); MD (January 2004-July 2007). Joined as deputy CEO, ABN: July 2007; took additional charge as CEO, Birla Sun Life (January 2014)

A boxer has to be not only fully fit as well as agile and quick-footed, too. In addition, he has to think on his feet and find innovative strategies all the time. An analogy relevant to Pankaj Razdan, CEO, Birla Sun Life Insurance, and deputy CEO, Aditya Birla Financial Services, a division of Aditya Nuvo, who gets up every morning at about 5:30, jogs for 40 minutes and then practices boxing, kick-boxing and freehand martial arts with his trainer.

Smart thinking has been a key characteristic of Razdan, which has helped him considerably during his two decade career in the financial sector. After obtaining his engineering

degree, Razdan initially took up a job with NELCO.

However, Razdan was keen to understand the nuances of a business, including those just starting operations. As a result, he researched companies and made small investments in stocks. The first few investments paid off, possibly beginner's luck and managed to build a decent portfolio.

The Harshad Mehta scandal however, led to a sharp drop in the broader equity markets, and Razdan, like other investors also faced a setback. Razdan decided to leverage his experience in the market by taking up a job with Karvy Consultants,

and was involved in managing and distributing financial products.

It was this early experience gained in the financial sector, which enabled Razdan to outperform at ICICI Mutual Fund. Razdan had joined this mutual fund when it had just been set up in the late 1990s. Market pundits point to the operating environment at that time as similar to the "heady days of wild west" with lax regulatory oversight for mutual funds.

Razdan had played numerous important roles for his employer, first as zonal head and later as the deputy chief executive officer in charge of strategic planning, marketing and customer services. The results were