

## **“Staying Relevant after 100 years”**

by Mr. Ajit Bedekar, Director, V. P. Bedekar & Sons Pvt. Ltd.  
webinar held on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020, 5.30 PM

*During the webinar on “Staying Relevant after 100 years” Mr. Ajit Bedekar, Director, V. P. Bedekar & Sons Pvt. Ltd. gave an insight about the journey of how the four generations in the Bedekar family carried forward the legacy of the 110 years old business of spices(masala). He explained about the many challenges faced and innovations implemented during the various generations to stay relevant and flourish in spite of stiff competition in the traditional family business. He emphasized on their motto of Combining Modern technology with traditional Wisdom.*

The Key Strategies that he spoke about were:

### **Advertisement**

Right from the Pre independence era, connect was established with the customers by creative advertisement strategies in the most relevant media platforms prevalent in those times. The advertisements evolved over time and it ensures that it always made the right connect with the customers, particularly the women home makers who specialized in pickle making. Making life easy for women by assuring them quality spices was conveyed through these advertisements. For them another implication of their brand was-COMFORT. Their advertisements were simple yet very catchy.

### **Modernization**

Bedekar brothers were instrumental in expanding, distribution network and exploring beyond retail shopping. With the expansion of business, the family adopted modern automated systems for bottling and sealing. They expanded the workspace and venture into the markets need for frozen foods and adapted themselves to cater to the modern generation requirement. Mr. Ajit’s generation faced a tough challenge in the form of competition from other local as well as international brands. They accepted this challenge and improved the trade strategies, also built a well-planned distribution network not only in India but also in America, Canada, Australia, and UK.

### **Innovation**

The innovative thinking of replacing the tedious process of ‘Besan Ladoo’ with a ready mix was a breakthrough idea which gave the customers the satisfaction of making ‘Ladoos’ in pure ghee without too much of hard work. Also introduction of ‘Ukdiche Modak’, a very homely Maharashtrian sweet, in the frozen food category was an innovation which had no competition. Introducing traditional authentic Maharashtrian food in a platter, all over the world, is also another innovative thought in pipeline. In addition to this, they standardized the procedures, used only branded and excellent quality raw materials, insisted on standard and traditional recipes, and controlled the process.

### **Brand Depth and Relationship**

Emphasis on Authentic Traditional taste, Maintaining the Consistency and Standardized procedure for procuring raw material, Standardization of recipes for spices and process controlled from pan size to heat capacity, with loyal workers has ensured 110 years of Brand Depth and Relationship with Customer.

Winning Awards for their pickle brand for years together conveys the benchmark of Quality and Authentic taste of Bedekars.

### **Research and Development (Walk the Talk)**

He mentioned that all the Research and Development, trials of new recipes do not take place in any Catering Institute but in his own home kitchen. He and his wife try various recipes. The fifth generation is now into developing and starting an e-commerce, in which his daughter, who is a graphic expert, is about to start the new website by this Diwali.

### **Vision and Focus (Living the Dream)**

Right in pre independence era, IPR registration for the Bedekar brand, importance of entrepreneurship at a time when people were service oriented, indicate a very bold and broad family vision. Understanding the need for traditional 'Ukadiche Modak' demand in 2007 in a foreign country and keeping the target to provide it in 2019 and taking all possible efforts towards it, shows their dedication and undeterred commitment. The strategy of having a vision and ability to take risk and enter the cadre of Frozen foods, is a key strategy for expansion and business wisdom. Very shortly their restaurants will start where they will sell the frozen products and packaged food. It will be based on franchise model.

### **Social Initiatives**

To return back to society who has so much faith in them, Bedekars organize various cultural programs and social welfare schemes regularly for the underprivileged people. They started with the lecture series of renowned personalities in Girgaum from where the name Bedekar originated. They organise the "Margashirsha Mohotsav" where they provide platform to new upcoming artists, who do not have any avenue to show case their talent. This include, especially the middle-class society. They also have initiatives like Gyan daan and Vyaspeeth under which they have organized 80 to 90 lectures on different topics such as literature, Poetry, Sculptural art and many more. While doing this they have no personal intensions of any profit or promotion of their brand. In this pandemic period, they arranged for labor camps with facilities for their worker force.

The mantra of their sustained business is: Honesty, Commitment, Quality and Broad Vision.

In the end Mr. Ajit appreciated the initiative of Vidyalankar Dyanpeeth Trust for organizing such events to give practical knowledge and insight to the students and staff.

Vidyalankar salutes the entire family of Bedekars for giving us an opportunity to understand the importance of Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Focus and Strategic planning for a Successful Business Venture.