

## Business Excellence Convention

### **Business Excellence Convention 2025: Strengthening Leadership in a Changing World**

The Business Excellence Convention (BEC) 2025 commenced on December 16 at Taj Lands End, Mumbai, bringing together around 350 participants in person, with over 5,000 colleagues joining virtually from across the Tata group. The two-day Convention featured inspiring guest speakers, well-deserved recognitions, and the Group Chairman's address, reaffirming the Group's long-standing commitment to excellence, learning and leadership development.

Alok Shahapurkar, Senior Manager, TBExG, opened the Convention, welcoming participants and setting the context. He highlighted December 16 as a day historically associated with breakthroughs, from Guglielmo Marconi's first transatlantic signal in 1901 to the invention of the transistor at Bell Labs in 1947, drawing parallels with the spirit of experimentation and perseverance that underpins business excellence journeys.

#### **Lessons from the Mountains: Tashi and Nungshi Malik**

The first guest session featured pioneering mountaineers Tashi and Nungshi Malik, the youngest twin siblings to complete the Explorers Grand Slam, including the Seven Summits and expeditions to both the North and South Poles. Through a personal narrative, they traced their journey from a nomadic Army upbringing to some of the world's most extreme climbing environments.

The sisters spoke about the role of safety, preparation and discipline in mountaineering, drawing from experiences across the Himalayas, Everest, and Denali. They reflected on the importance of small, consistent actions such as acclimatisation and safety checks, and shared a guiding principle that shaped their decisions on the mountain: *no summit is worth a life*. Drawing parallels with leadership under pressure, they emphasised teamwork, collective responsibility and the idea that resilience is built steadily over time, long before moments of crisis.

#### **Recognitions**

Following a networking break, recognitions were presented for Tata Business Excellence Model (TBEM) Assessment Teams, Data Excellence Assessment Teams, Deep Dive Teams, and initiatives under the Tata Best Practices Programme. Recognitions were also presented for Star Assessors, Rising Stars, Star Deputy Leaders and Star Teams across Data Excellence, Cyber Excellence and TBEM Assessments.

The day closed with a vote of thanks by Alok, followed by a cocktail dinner.

[Click here to see the BEC 2025 photographs](#)

[Videos showcased at BEC 2025](#)

[Click here to see the list of recognitions in BEC 2025](#)

#### **Day 2: Reflections on Excellence and Leadership**

Gautam Gondil, AVP, Group Safety & Health, TBExG, welcomed participants back on Day 2. He pointed to the Convention's role as a forum unique to the Tata group, one that enables reflection on the assessment journey of the year gone by, recognition of contributions across companies, mentors and assessors, and renewed focus on the TBEM.

Drawing from past BEC speakers, Gautam highlighted recurring themes of resilience, leadership, learning and teamwork, linking them to the evolution of the TBEM movement over the years.

#### **Leadership under Pressure: Col Rajeev Bharwan**

The first guest speaker of the day was Col Rajeev Bharwan, Indian Army veteran and former commander of elite airborne units, who shared lessons on leadership drawn from over two decades of operational experience across India and overseas missions.

Framing leadership as ownership rather than position, Col Rajeev reflected on leading teams in high-risk, uncertain environments where clarity, accountability and trust matter more than hierarchy or slogans. Drawing from counter-insurgency operations, airborne missions and peacekeeping deployments, he emphasised the need for decisive action in chaos, often with limited resources and no margin for excuses.

He spoke about leading from the front, being the first to step into risk and the last to step away, and highlighted empathy over sympathy as a critical leadership trait. While contexts may differ from battlefields to boardrooms, he noted, the fundamentals of leadership remain unchanged: being grounded in values, learning continuously, giving clear direction and standing accountable for outcomes.

### **Designing for the Future: Dr Susmita Mohanty**

The second guest session featured Dr Susmita Mohanty, spaceship designer, serial entrepreneur and space diplomat, who offered a perspective on leadership, innovation, and long-term thinking through the lens of human spaceflight.

Drawing from her experience across NASA, Boeing and multiple space ventures in India, Europe and the United States, Dr Susmita spoke about designing for environments where nothing can be taken for granted. Whether working in microgravity or on planetary surfaces, she noted, success depends on anticipating uncertainty, planning for failure and building systems that are resilient by design.

Reflecting on global space programmes and collaborations, she highlighted how technological progress often mirrors geopolitical shifts, and how sustained capability-building takes decades of consistent effort. She also spoke about entrepreneurship as an extension of problem-solving: challenging established models, questioning assumptions and integrating disciplines such as science, design, business and diplomacy.

### **Snapshot of the Excellence Journey: Sanjeev Singh**

Following a networking break, Sanjeev Singh, Head, TBExG, shared an update on the Group's excellence journey over the past year. Reflecting on the people-led nature of the movement, he noted: "The true driving force of the excellence journey is our excellence evangelists: people who mentor, assess, collaborate and act as change catalysts. When nurtured well, they become a powerful asset in every organisation's transformation journey."

In 2025, 13 companies participated in TBEM assessments, supported by 193 assessors from 48 companies, with women constituting around 20% of the assessor pool. Participation of subject matter experts increased, particularly in areas such as AI, data analytics, cyber security and customer experience. TBExG also introduced GenAI-enabled analytics to enhance assessment insights. Sanjeev shared updates on focus-area assessments across safety, data, cyber security and social themes, as well as the growing role of certified practitioner and assessor programmes in building leadership capability. He concluded by emphasising the need for holistic organisational excellence plans aligned to strategy, capability development and impactful continuous improvement.

### **Recognitions**

Following the update, Group Chairman N. Chandrasekaran, along with Sanjeev, presented recognitions to Tata companies for their contributions to the Business Excellence journey.

Under *Significant Impact through Learning and Sharing Interventions*, Tata Power and Tata Realty and Infrastructure were recognised. Recognitions for *Significant Impact through Competency Development Interventions* were presented to Tata AutoComp Systems and Tata Consulting Engineers. The *Active Promotion in TBEM Award* was presented to JCAPCPL (Jamshedpur Continuous Annealing and Processing Company Limited) for crossing the 500-point milestone for the first time.

### **Group Chairman's Address**

In his address, Group Chairman N. Chandrasekaran thanked the speakers, CEOs, mentors, assessors and the TBExG team, noting that the Business Excellence movement continues to grow in relevance each year. He highlighted the need to prepare for a world marked by sustained geopolitical complexity, rapid technological change and heightened risk.

Underscoring the priorities for leaders across the Group, he said: *"We have to prepare to operate in a world that is dynamically changing. What is true today may not be true tomorrow. Safety, customer experience, resilient supply chains, and coordinated approaches to AI and cyber security must be at the top of every leader's agenda."*

He concluded by emphasising that excellence is built through rigorous processes and repeated discipline. TBEM, he said, must continue to raise the bar through uncompromising assessments, enabling organisations to achieve extraordinary outcomes through ordinary people.

Gautam closed the event by delivering the vote of thanks.