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Context to the nugget

Rama has been a solo-advisor for several years now. She talks about how she has thought about her portfolio of work and how that has evolved over time.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): If you could give us a sense of what you do and more importantly why you do what you do?

Rama Bijapurkar (RB): I have always operated with the portfolio so one part of what I do is my Boards, so if it is a Board season which is about a week in a quarter the it's a 100% of my life, there is consulting, there is teaching and there is for lack of better words I am calling it the buckets of just meeting everybody who has anything interesting to say, who wants to meet me for whatever reason, it could be someone like you I have already learnt enough from this conversation, it could be somebody whose VC has said why don't you go and check these plans through her, it's just not really paid or billed consulting, reading, writing so I put that into the sort of knowledge and refresher bucket, so at different points in time it will be different, so during my course at Ahmedabad, I spent a lot more time changing material, figuring out what to do? Maybe actually teaching even if I actually don't teach, I like to think of it not as a pie chart of time so my mental image is many channels, and windows whatever is the right thing. So many channels are beaming simultaneously sometimes, which is when you exhausted, so during teaching time, the teaching preparation work channel is in full flow, so I will read much more HBR at that time, I will start looking at my old notes but it will be on a war footing if it's a board season I think it is much more making notes of what I have heard and said little bit of preparing for them, most certainly it's also talking and networking a lot to board colleagues to if someone's come in previous night to sort of chat and figure it out, so it's hard to say, if you take away the pie chart might be hard to say how many channels are beaming but.

DJ: So how has that changed significantly over time? I remember you talking about this shifting significantly over a seven eight year horizon so talk to us a little bit about how that portfolio has evolved and have there been points in time where that's been big shifts?

RB: So I have changed my consulting portfolio now to much more of a monetizing knowledge rather than the retailing time, so I am really saying that, I used to have an old Nany who used to say, it sounds better in Telegu, but it basically says, If don't die forward and backward you don't know the way to the Smashan, so, I think that that's the value I bring to the clients, that I have died a couple of times in many other contexts like this and so I know the way to the Smashan. So if I can get tell you to the way to the Smashan in three minutes I don't see why should I get paid less than somebody

who will get you to the Smashan over three months also I think because I sit with much more data and so on and so forth I am able to vent that much more significantly this of what's of that? So the shifting of that basically means that you do shorter work but you do smarter work and you should be able to come on much more work for an hours talk on what is the mid-market of India like? Or what is customer value or how is the digital changing the customer value? So I am monetizing the fact that I think a lot more about it so that's really the kind of change. Yes I added one more baby to my portfolio some time ago I setup a Not for Profit think tank its hold people research on India's consumer economy, so the last time we saw any data on households in India was with NCAR which is in 2002-3 something like that, after which they stopped doing it for variety of reasons and so what I did was took the team and the person who would pioneered it form their and partnered with him and we have set it up in Delhi and we have already had two three rounds of data coming out, so we engaged with policy makers, so that's an interesting experience for me because I want to put more and more art in the public domain to become the industry standard and still try and make money in the private domain so there are times when that takes up a lot of time, so I actually now decided, so I look at the environment and decide, which of these portfolios makes sense, if I saw for example that there was a down turn in the economy, I will actually offer to do more advisory boards because that's steady income, steady advise nobody wants to experiment with new stuff, right now I feel that with competition with regulatory shock and regulation and so on I feel that there is, everybody is now actually finally discovering the customer again, I think the demand question is no longer taken for granted so I now actually want to go back and reclaim the heart land of consumer insights, strategies, so I want to scale down boards and I want to scale up as I said the heart land of my consulting, so I remember hearing the word ages back that the heart land's surface is whiteness and why did you give it up and go looking for economy and all the other measures, so I think the heart land of mine is consumer insight and leveraging it to shape business directions, so I want to go back to the heart land so this whole data piece is also goes back to my heart land which is, consumer, consumer insight, evidence based insight and so on, so that's how each of them changes overtime.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Couple of takeaways for me here. First is the transition Rama talks about from retailing time to monetizing insight. That is an interesting insight to reflect on in the context of maximising return on invested time as a solo-advisor. How do you structure pieces of research to create IP that is contextual, that is of value is great way of looking at the opportunity. The second is the notion of altering your portfolio depending on market conditions. She talks about doing more Advisory Boards during a downturn or getting back to capturing the heart-land of consumer insight as she says.

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End of nugget transcription

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Rama Bijapurkar - Nuggets

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About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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