

## Mary Francis

She is at the peak of achievement as the CEO of Ace-Biomed but yet down to earth

Life gives it all to some people—fortune, power and reputation. But no one gets it easy. Success never happens overnight and requires years of perseverance to reach there. "It was and is quite an exhilarating experience. It was challenging and sometimes taxing when I look behind," Francis reminisces.

And individual success is not the complete definition of success too. The prosperity of the company you are working for takes you to the top. But for a woman, every accomplishment is twice as delightful. "You grow as the organisation grows, not in terms of finance, but also with the feeling that a woman is behind all this. In today's scenario, not many women are leading the pharmaceutical sector as it is a very tough domain to be in."

### Women and pharma

Women were always commended for the services they rendered as nurses and moving forward to doctors. But their contribution has been a little lean when it comes to the knowledge intensive field of pharma. But great are those who make it in the toughest of the fields. And any job, when performed to the best of abilities, always seems easy.

But it is what you are that makes you the finest in the field you are in. And being in pharma is all about being up-to-date with the happenings and technology.

That's what Mary Francis does and advises the same to those who want to make it big in the industry. "I would confess that it is quite easy as long as you have good knowledge about the industry and regularly update yourself about the happenings in the industry."

One can do all that one is capable of doing. But there are some things, which are beyond human aptitude, which pose problems on the way. "Overall if you see, I would say that the job is not very tough, it only requires smart decision making capabilities and proper planning. But more so, it is the internal politics, which prevail in all organisations, which is tougher to handle."

### Men in woman's world

Usually men have a problem taking orders from a woman. "If we are talking of true and hardcore professional, I don't see any reason as to why not!!! Why don't we look at it this way...it depends on how you cultivate the working environment in your workplace."

In an ideal world, it should not matter who is the boss. But in a world, which is far away from idealism, the gender divide is bound to occur.

"To tell you frankly, it is not an easy job to be a woman placed at the top level and manage other male subordinates."

Thanks to the differential treatment, a lot of women leaders happen to get hard headed. Francis agrees, "Sadly speaking, it's a fact. At times you do have to be aggressive when you have some special breed of male counterparts who always seem to carry the 'I-don't-need-to-take-orders-from-a-female-boss' looks. It does take a toll and you will be termed a hardliner. But there are positive aspects to it as well!!" ■



### Boon and a bane

Being a woman in the top position has its disadvantages as well as advantages too. And the advantage is obviously the glamour that comes with being a woman which brings with it greater recall and the attention.

A woman in the corporate world adds the colour, the poise and the 'look'. Mary Francis accepts the compliments gracefully, "I would say...women are blessed with that and usually flaunt it when they are in the top position, and I second that! Glamour is one thing, which is part of women's quality and if she can carry that to her advantage then why not?" Glamour may turn eyes but the respect and the adulation factor comes in when there is a strong personality to support it. And it is this right mix that makes a good woman leader.