

# ABRAHAM ALAPATT

President & Group Head, Marketing, Service Quality, Financial Services & Innovation, Thomas Cook

#TheInspirationCode

## DAVID OGILVY FOR INSPIRATION

### INSPIRED START



Abraham Alapatt discovered marketing early on in life – at school, when an assignment during a communications class introduced him to the autobiography of **David Ogilvy, the father of advertising.**

### CAREER PATH

1995

He was pretty clear about what he wanted to do after his MBA in from a **B-school that specialised in communication** – SCMS Cochin School of Business: he started career immediately as a management trainee with a small ad agency in Chennai called **Goldwire, a breakaway from Lintas.** The agency was largely handling a single client, a major one: MRF

2000

He became **Client Services Director at O&M,** the firm established by his icon.

2005

He was appointed **Head of Marketing, of Reliance ADAG MF business, with no experience nor investment in Mutual Funds.** He actually picked up a *‘Mutual Funds for Dummies’* book at the airport on his way from Chennai to his recruitment interview in Mumbai.

2008

He became **Vice President - Marketing & Communication, DCB Bank**

He was appointed **Senior VP & Head, Brand & Corporate Communications, Future Generali**

2012

He joined **Thomas Cook as Head of Marketing,** and took on the role of Head of Customer Service. Currently, he is also the Head of Innovation.

## ‘NEW-AGE MARKETING IS A COMPLETELY CRAZY WORLD’



### LEARNINGS

- Even a product in an extremely boring category – tyres – can be made to look glamorous, macho, sexy.
- Nothing is unimportant.
- Discipline and hard work pays



### THE INDIVIDUAL

- Passionate about travelling
- He runs, nearly 5km a day, enjoys sports like tennis & badminton
- Likes motorbikes



### PASSION FOR A CAUSE

- Heads the Fairfax Charitable Foundation, actively engaged in one of its biggest projects that seeks to deploy nearly 1,000 dialysis machines country-wide, especially in the North-East owing to acute shortage there.

## WHAT ABRAHAM ALAPATT SAYS ABOUT...



**AI** A positive force for people



**Marketing** Marketing is not an industry; **it’s a specialisation** Tech, analytics, data-driven decision-making, AI/ML are all coming together. We’re going to have customers making completely irrational decisions, making it difficult to predict. One thing that’s not going to change: Customer-centricity



**Marketers** The biggest CMO very often not recognised as CMO is the CEO – S/he is marketing the organisation at its highest level



**ROI** If you’re spending money, you better be accountable for it



**Data-driven marketing** Earlier the problem was you didn’t have enough data to rely on. Now you have too much data and you don’t know what to look at



**Chat bots** Careful what you use it for and how – it’s relevant to specific business functions; cannot replace a human being



**Top 3 areas of focus for CMOs today** Analytics | AI | Increasing productivity



**Future of marketing:** The customer will be ruthless

## KEY QUOTE

Today I think the marketer’s real challenge is not information, lack of it or having it organized. It is truly being able to sift the noise from the real. And then being able to marry the heart and the brain in some sense.