

Sharat Chandra

President and Chief Operating Officer, GTL International

At a time when tradition is being threatened by fast moving global changes, Sharat Chandra, president and chief operating officer, GTL International, stands out as a proponent of continuity and cultural stability. Chandra comes from a family of renowned Sanskrit scholars and is determined that his children too should uphold the time-tested beliefs of his father and grandfather.

"There have been three President's Award recipients in the family and my father, Satyavrat Shastri, is a recipient the Padmashri. I am proud to say that there are strong Indian values ingrained in our family," he says.

Describing himself as an "intensely family-oriented man", Chandra regrets that his busy corporate life involving considerable travel does not allow him as much time with his family as he would wish. "It can become trying to maintain a steady balance and I end up wishing the day had more hours in it."

His responsibilities include enabling smooth integration of all acquired international companies and formulating a common business strategy to align all the business units of the GTL Group. He is also closely

associated with establishing the group's plans to gain new markets and enhance stakeholder value across all businesses.

To achieve these tasks, he relies on a participative management style. "I truly believe that excellence is delivered through teamwork. What can be achieved through a buy-in can never be delivered through mandates. In the telecom services space, where the GTL Group has a pre-eminent position globally, this style of management has been active and intensely successful," he says. This style of management has helped him throughout his 26-year career. He says: "My career can be best summed up as a unique blend of sales, engineering, strategic planning, business development and operations. I started my career with Philips India in 1981 and moved to Ballarpur Industries in 1989 to strengthen the company's diversification and corporate business development segment. There, I focused on identifying new areas of business in telecom/computers for the Thapar Group to enter into by suggesting a range of products and services and preparing business plans to support the recommendations. In 1993, I moved to Motorola." He says that his stint at Motorola is his most memorable assignment. "It (Motorola) is a great organisation with strong people values and business ethics."

When not formulating GTL's business plans, Chandra enjoys a game of badminton with his children. He also likes to surf the net to keep himself abreast of the latest happenings in domestic and international business. ▲

