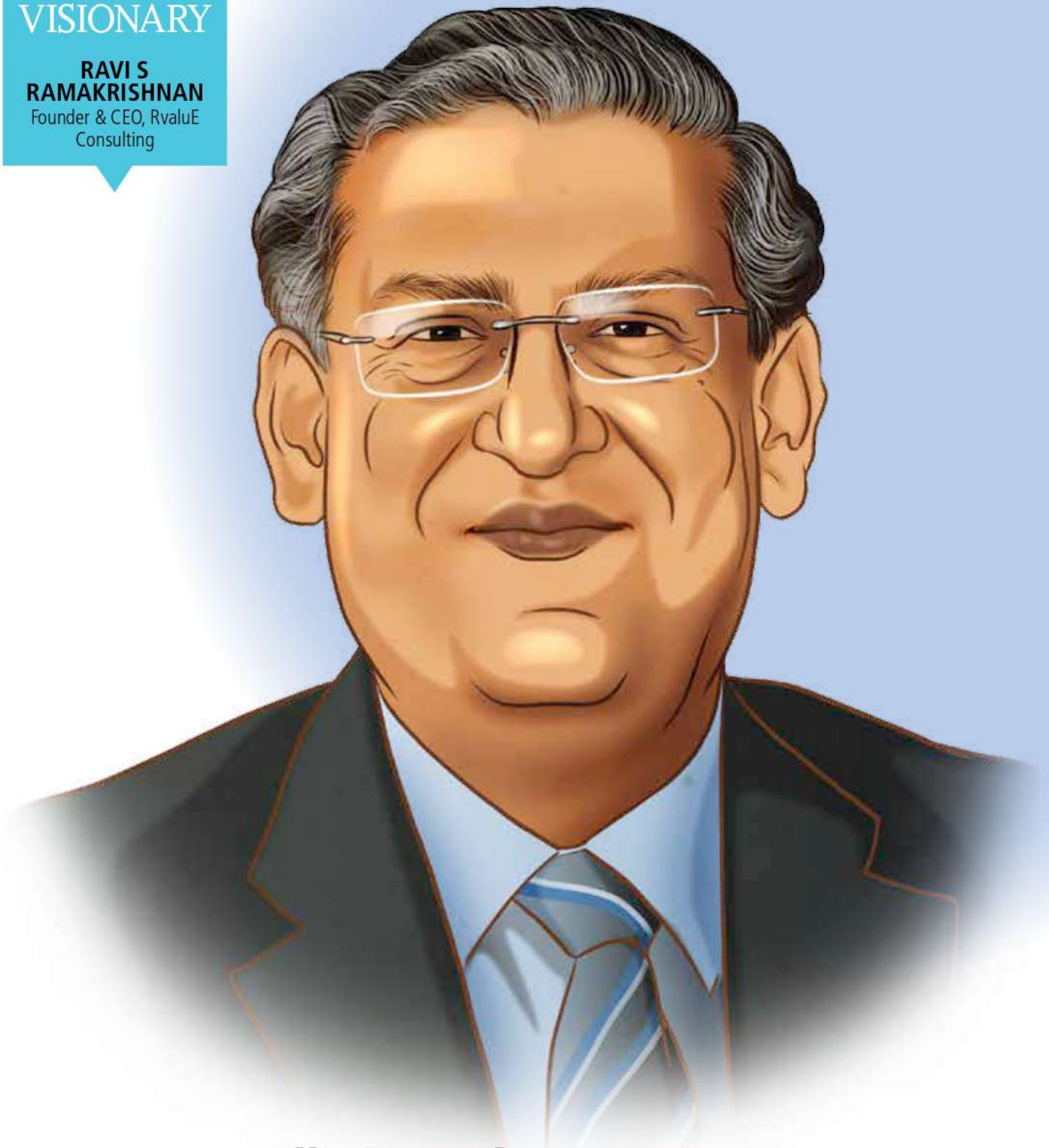


VISIONARY

**RAVI S
RAMAKRISHNAN**
Founder & CEO, RvaluE
Consulting



**“Rise above just
finance... become a Chief
'Focus' Officer”**

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he greatest value a good CFO brings, is closely working with the CEO and the board to ensure 'sustainable growth'. To

me, sustainable growth has two sides – profitability and business growth, and we can spot the contribution of a good CFO, when he is able to make the organisation achieve this unique blend, by playing an objective and collaborative role in today's changing Indian economic scenario.

Sustainable growth is much beyond enhancing shareholder value. It is achieved when the CFO is focused on two aspects of world class

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—Ravi S Ramakrishnan

finance – one, understanding and enabling the value proposition of the products/services delivered by the corporation and second, building and enhancing the robustness of the business processes that surround these products/services. I share these from my experience as a CFO, as well as based on my interactions with many CFOs.

The seeds of this learning were sown in my mind 1991, when I became the CFO to turnaround a medium size two wheeler enterprise called Enfield, and was well reinforced, when I subsequently got the opportunity to expand my role to become the CFO of Eicher Group. And, one of my biggest learnings from my global experience at American Express is that, 'business processes integrate the service functions with production functions', to drive overall economic value for the organisation. While the

CFO provides leadership support to business leaders on products and services, successful CFOs are in the best position to focus on the underlying functional and business processes to bring about this sustainable growth.

Going forward, the biggest expectation from a good CFO is the extent to which he or she can play the role of a 'strategic and business partner'. My way of articulating this expectation is through a '5+5' model. The strategic partner will require the emerging technical competencies of business knowledge, strategic thinking, risk management, acting globally and lastly, what I call 'connecting-the-dots'. And, the role of the business partner will require leadership competencies of strategic execution, leading change, persuasive and influencing skills, ethical behaviour and humility.

I can cite two good examples of Indian organisations – Hindustan Unilever and Dr Reddy's Laboratories. Having started my career at HUL, I continued my association with this exemplary organisation, and have observed that the CFOs have successfully played this role of strategic and business partnership. In recent times, Dr Reddy's have taken the lead to look at both core and non-core elements of business, with investments in the core of the business through expansion/acquisition while redesigning the business process management for effectively enhancing the capability and capacity of the organisation.

Today a good CFO truly needs to become a Chief 'Focus' Officer, to make the organisation achieve sustainable growth. **CFO**



FACT FILE

Ravi Ramakrishnan began his career with Hindustan Unilever and held senior management roles at Murugappa Group, was CFO of the Eicher Group and a part of the global leadership team at American Express. He launched Rvalue in 2004, an organisation he continues to lead successfully. Rvalue Learning Systems was formed for capability consulting and learning services.