

ARUN SHUKLA

President,
JK LAKSHMI CEMENT

The President of one of India's top cement brands, JK Lakshmi Cement, Mr. Arun Shukla needs no introduction. He holds a BE in Civil Engineering, is an alumnus of IIM, Calcutta, and has completed a general management program from INSEAD, France. He is currently pursuing his Fellow Program (Ph.D.) in Management (EFPM), Strategic Management from IIM Ranchi and has close to three decades of rich experience in leadership roles across Steel and Cement industries.

Having started his career nearly three decades ago as a young engineer at Tata Steel in 1993, he has travelled to lead J K Lakshmi Cement, a Rs. 5000 crore cement company. His journey is that of grit, determination, and dedication.

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TradeFlock spoke to Arun to find out more about his journey and the expertise that helps him lead JK Lakshmi Cement from the front.

? Please elaborate on your professional journey, from Tata Steel to JK Lakshmi Cement.

I started my professional journey in the year 1993 with Tata Steel in the Central Engineering and Development Department and contributed towards the modernization phase 3 of the steel major. My next move was to Lafarge India Limited in 1999, where I spent nearly two decades of my professional life and held several key positions within the company ranging from Sales & Marketing, Manufacturing to greenfield and brownfield expansion projects. Subsequently, I worked as CEO for Lafarge RMC and was instrumental in turning it around within a short span.

Towards the end of 2018, I moved to Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Ltd. where I spent nearly two-and-a-half years as their Executive Director – Sales and Marketing. Post this, I joined JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd as their President in February 2021 and am responsible for their P&L, manufacturing, business expansions, sales & marketing, people growth, and much more.

? Tell us more about the traits that help you drive the company from the front seat.

I believe that I am a quick learner, a steady and efficient implementor, and an optimist to the core. I have keen observation skills that help me understand the situation and people better. My strategic

business sense and my passion for people development also enable me to make quick connections with people. Yet I am very disciplined, methodical, and focused.

I believe in the power of fostering collaboration, empowering performance, and driving excellence across business domains. This helps us deliver results in a constantly evolving business environment while creating a more positive and strengthened work culture.

? What are some of the key differentiators that set you apart from other leaders in the industry?

In my nearly three decades of professional life, I have held key positions and turned around businesses in a very complex and competitive environment. I have proficiency in setting up, turning around, and scaling up business performance in short periods. I believe in delivering on revenue, profitability, and operational targets. My strength lies in delivering operational excellence while maintaining and building strong relationships with channel partners, distributors, and internal & external stakeholders.

? How are you creating a culture of positivity and growth within the organisation?

According to me, believing in your employees and empowering them to make decisions surely provides them with a sense of belongingness towards the organisation. I don't simply narrate this but walk the talk. I have been therefore able to build and grow my teams and the organisations that I had been associated with.