

## SPECIAL MESSAGE

# Fall in Love with the PROBLEM, not the solution

*\*Mr. Uri Levine*



I am humbled and honoured at your invitation to give a message on your coming up with a special issue on 'Independent Directors'. I hope what I say would be of some value to your readers.

Having spent years in the corporate world during my early career, I drove business most of the time looking at sales, customers, and profitability. It was - when I look back - a fairly fulfilling experience. I learnt so much in those years from everyone: My colleagues, bosses, and most importantly my customers. Then I believed - rightly or wrongly - that growing business and increasing profitability was the *raison d'être* of our company, and I was a part of that journey. However, with age and experience, I felt there must be something more to it than just driving business and chasing profitability. While I was trained to focus on how to do business to win in the marketplace, how to do it the 'right way' was still not clear.

Then I moved to academia and my focus shifted to teaching how to do business - and in the right way. I realized the bigger responsibility of a teacher. Moulding young minds and preparing them to go out into the world, equipping them with the right knowledge, skills, and the attitude to apply them responsibly.

Then my knowledge and experience were sought by companies first to advise them, and later as an Independent Director. I have served and continue to serve as an independent director on several boards. It is a

different responsibility. I realize that at the end of the day, what a company makes and sells is secondary to how it does it. To ensure that a company does well in its business, and more importantly, does it in the right way is what independent directors are mandated and expected to do. Independent directors are the ethical guides, mentors, and gatekeepers that must show the company the right way to conduct business, sans pressures, prejudices, and any pecuniary or other temptations, that too constantly.

'Ears to the ground, eyes on the ball, and always on the watch' is our leitmotif. As the world is changing, the way business is done too is changing. More than ever, companies, and how they conduct their businesses are under the lens sharper than before. That's where we as Independent Directors have a bigger role to play and much more responsibly than before. ■

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**Mr. Uri Levine**

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not the solution (January 2023)  
(the author is based in Israel)

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