Praise for the Book

"How to convert adverse situations into opportunities for the bank is very lucidly written by Mr Gokhale in various episodes. The anecdotes narrated and the tips given by him at the end of each episode as 'Take Away' would be found quite useful by practicing bankers."

Rajeev Rishi
Chairman and Managing Director,
Central Bank of India

Shri Waman Gokhale, who retired as Deputy General Manager of Central Bank of India after over 40+ years of service, has brought out this publication aimed at branch bankers. He has explained the lessons learnt in banking from various anecdotes drawn from his career. Learning based on such anecdotes, in my view, is an extension of our 'Karma Parampara' tradition and effective considering the target audience of this book. The book conveys what needs to be conveyed to a banker at a branch or at the controlling office seeking to enhance the overall efficiency of his / her branch. It addresses different dimensions of branch banking – Customer service, operations and internal housekeeping, branch management, etc.

I am sure that this book will be useful to bankers and is an addition to the library on practical banking.

S. Sridhar
Former Chairman and Managing Director
Central Bank of India and National Housing Bank

Banking Beyond Books

Stories of a Successful Banker

BANKING BEYOND BOOKS

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WAMAN GOKHALE

Diamond Publications

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Waman Gokhale

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Foreword

Perhaps this is the second occasion that I am writing the foreword of the book written by Mr. Waman Gokhale, on his banking experience of over 40 years and I assure you that I am equally fascinated to do so. His first book was 'A Kit on Documentation', which was in respect of credit facilities sanctioned by banks and was for internal use of the organization, Central Bank of India. That book is still being very actively used as a 'Bible' by staff at 4700+ branches of Central Bank of India. The present book, **'Banking Beyond Books,'** unfolds in a story- telling mode the important aspect of Human relationship in banking and how to apply various Managerial skills on the job. The real life stories are very enchanting and have strength to continuously keep the reader spellbound. Every story is different from the other and is a kaleidoscope showing the various situations faced by a banker. The chapter on 'Customers' gives insight how to create a bridge of confidence between a banker and its customers, so as to wow! the customers. The various incidences written in the book on difficult situations and difficult customers, gives incite to the bankers, how to handle such situations successfully as well how an adversity can be converted into opportunity. The chapter on 'Social Engineering' reflects how a Banker while working can play a vital role of helping the society. The story, Unity in Diversity, is a good example of social engineering. The deft handling of extremely difficult situation of loss of 81 cheques is a real stunner. The author has shown how through planned efforts and team work the collection of 81 duplicate cheques was achieved in the record time of three months and that too without any loss. In fact the adverse situation was leveraged to develop new relations resulting into the growth of business for the branch. As the Chairman and

Managing Director of the bank, I was a close observer of the event of renovation of '**Monumental Heritage Building' of Mumbai Main Branch during the Centenary Year 2010-2011.** The stupendous task was carried out very efficiently by the team headed by Mr. Gokhale. His knack of dealing with the people and societal centricity, along with his ability to converge with opposites could make him successful.

The various episodes reflect how through the team work the difficulties can be over ridden and converted into opportunities. The author has shown through his example how the edifice of any successful banking business stands on the pedestal of interpersonal relations and trust.

Mr. Gokhale has proved that the knowledge and the skills acquired during his career as a faculty can be very effectively applied on the job. He had in real sense walked a talk. The **Take Away** at the end of each story is a real value addition to the book, as they are the tips for the practical applications of various soft skills required for everyday management.

I can assure the readers that this book would be a great addition in understanding the soft skills and would be very useful guide even to the generation 'y', while fulfilling their managerial responsibilities. From an academic point of view, this book is a treasure trove of attributes: attitude, humility, behavior, and empowering style those are necessary to become a successful leader.

The author has humbly and very rightly given all the credit of his success to his colleagues, management, customers and to his great Institution.

I congratulate Mr. Gokhale for his excellent Book, on his Banking Experiences and I am sure that it will be very well received by the Banking fraternity, management students and the readers in general who would gain by addition to their knowledge bank.

Mohan Tanksale,
Chief Executive, Indian Banks Association and
Ex. Chairman and Managing Director, Central Bank Of India.

Preface

I have an immense pleasure to present my 40+ years of banking experience in a book form. It includes the days while working with Central Bank of India, one of the apex Public Sector Banks. I dedicate this book to my beloved late Mother and Father, but for their continuous encouragement a humble person like me who Joined Bank as a clerk could rise to the post of Deputy General Manager. Of Course, I am extremely thankful to my Branch Managers, Officers, Executives; Colleagues and Subordinates who had a great share in my making. My esteemed Institution Central Bank of India has given me all the opportunities one can get in his career. **I was bestowed with a rare honour to be a Branch Manager of the glamorous Mumbai Main Office the fountain head of the Bank and that too during 'The Centenary Year of The Bank'. At the same, I feel very proud while telling you that I had a very rare opportunity to occupy the very Chair, Table and the Cabin once adorned by our beloved founder, Sir Sorabji Pochkhanawala**. I was the last Branch Manager who got this life time reward from the Bank Management and I have no words to express my gratitude for this recognition. We have a wonderful array of customers of all creed and caste, rich, middle class and poor spread across the length and breadth of the country, who extended their unstinted support throughout my career and hence I could become a successful banker. Similarly I must thank the leaders of all the unions for their positive support .I will fail in my duties if I do not mention the name of my loving wife Mrs. Smita who had very ably handled all the family responsibilities as I was away from the family for quite a long period. It is because of her I could pay

my full attention towards the banking career. My daughter, son as well as brother and sisters also had their silent contribution. The preface will be incomplete without mention of two of my wonderful colleagues who joined the bank along with me more or less at the same time in 1972-1973. I was the junior most in the branch, a direct recruit straight from The Institute of Science, not knowing even A, B, C of banking. My friend Shri Hemant, a Gold Medalist, Post Graduate student of Commerce had an uncanny art of teaching. He taught me right from fundamentals of double entry book keeping to the higher accountancy, various commercial laws and hence I could obtain proficiency in banking. After working at various offices for about 15 years we teamed again at Zonal Staff Training Center as faculty. There again he helped me a lot to develop myself as an expert faculty. The other friend Shri Madhusudan Tarkas who has mastery over English, also was instrumental in my career as a professional banker. He is a person with a magnanimous heart. He had a wonderful memory and could recollect the folio numbers of the client even after a year. I am fortunate that our trio has a close relationship even more than earlier days.

I loved to be amongst the people right from my school days. I was known to everybody in the colony and had an easy access in all the 110 houses. This had helped me in my Banking career a lot. In branches I always used to move in various departments and amongst the customers, knowing what was going on. This customer and staff connect had an immense effect on mobilization of business and effective management. In fact this was the Managerial theory propounded by Tom Peters known as 'Management by Walk Around'. I always followed an open door policy thereby I was a very approachable and available person to one and all. I got an opportunity to work in over 30 different offices / branches in three different States. I could easily make good friendship with very poor customers as well very affluent Billionaire customers because I am having an affinity towards human beings. This had helped me to easily win over several

customers for the bank. I may quote an indelible incident; on my retirement day one of the liftmen requested me to hand over my Mobile phone for half an hour and while returning it, told that he had recorded 50 odd Marathi old songs in the memory chip. Sir, 'This is a small gift from me at your retirement.' I was overwhelmed by his gesture and I swore it was the most **Cherishable gift** of my life.

Whatever success I could achieve during my 40+ years of banking career, was the result of reliable staff, customers and a bridge of faith built between us. The other reason was that throughout my career my style of Leadership was Democratic except maybe at one or two emergent occasions.

I was motivated to write this book so that the managers working in financial institutions will find a guide to refer and arrive at a solution while confronting the difficult situations.

In this book I have shared more than 51 different episodes; those had an impact on my Banking life. The book is sub divided into nine chapters and in each chapter there are stories/episodes depicting various situations where managerial skills, techniques, and leadership qualities were tested extensively. The chapter No. 3 containing 'Mentors in my Banking Career' gives an insight into the art of mentoring the people who are working with you. This is explained by quoting the example of Ex CMD of Syndicate Bank and Bank of India, late Mr. K. V. Krishnamurty, who was the then Branch Head where the author was working. The tips embodied in the chapter no. 3 on 'Administration' will be an excellent guide to the persons working in HR department. It explains by quoting the live examples of negotiating skills, reconciliation and method of tactfully handling difficult situations. The heart of banking, 'The Customer Service' elaborated in chapter number 4, how the author could get 'The Wow from the customers' by slightly tweaking rules and regulations, creating faith and confidence in the minds of the customers and winning them over for the institution. The Human angle of the banker is reflected through various experiences in the stories such as 'Free Lance

Marketing Officer, 'How Are You Concerned?' and others. The author has shown by his own experience that while social responsibilities are fulfilled, simultaneously the Institutional well being can also be taken care of. Reading chapter no. 6 'The difficult situations faced' gives an insight how an important thing not attended on time translates into an urgent one. It teaches how to get over the difficult situation by tactfully handling it while keeping oneself absolutely cool. The inference drawn from the chapter is that, in difficult situations you are always alone and have to wade through and find your own path with grit. The episode, 'Operation, 81 Cheques' is a real stunner, in the sense how so many instruments go mysteriously missing and how such a difficult situation was handled with a cool mind. The skill, the grit, the empathy towards the staff, the team work, planning, execution and the perseverance required for obtaining the duplicates of all those missing cheques and that too without any complaint from the customers, is exemplary. Similarly, transforming the rustic old branch into a branch with all modern facilities having a look of a Heritage Branch with the help of the General Administration Department of Central Office was a daunting task, full of hurdles right from convincing the staff, staff unions and that too without a day's discontinuity in work as there were 125 work stations to be shifted to and fro from one building to the other. The task was handled deftly with a professional touch without disturbing the Customer Service. It is a success story how one should work in a team by application of all management skills right from motivation to preparation of a plan, delegation, communication, time management and what not? Reading the book one will understand how all Managerial responsibilities can be fulfilled keeping the thread of human relations at its heart/ central place and weaving the net work of the customers for the ultimate benefit of the Institution. I trust it will be an insightful and inspiring handy book to the Managers working not only in the Banks but also in other financial services and other service industries where human relationship is involved. Similarly the

students of management will find it extremely helpful to basically understand the principles of management propounded in various management theories and their practical applications.

I am sure that a common reader will find these stories interesting because of the flow of narration, lucid language and the social dimension as entwined by a practical banker.

Thus this book contains both 'The knowledge acquired' and 'The knowledge experienced' which would be of immense help to the reader.

Waman Gokhale

Acknowledgements

I have been inspired and helped by many colleagues for writing my experiences in the form of a book. I acknowledge the major contributors to my endeavour. While writing this book Mr. Tarkas my old pal was a great help suggesting the cast of the book, dimensions to be included and appropriate words to suit the different situations. Sitting at Akola, a far off place from Pune, we were in constant touch through the mobile even at odd hours. I am thankful for the silent contribution from his wife Mrs. Nandabhabi. I am equally grateful to English professors Mrs. Shubhangi and Mr.Nitin Jarindikar from Kohlapur, who had very painstakingly corrected the manuscript, suggested the modifications to be carried out so that the book will have a real value addition in the practical field of management. I got valuable suggestions and encouragement from Mr. Ashok Kumar from my parent bank for which I am thankful. I would be remiss in my debt in my not acknowledgement to my family members Smita, Snehal, Sameer, Shridhar and Surbhi. Lastly, I express my thanks to Shri Dattatraya Pashte of Dimond Publications and their staff particularly to artist Mr. Shamkant Bhalekar who had transformed my ideas into a wonderful book.

Waman Gokhale

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