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From the Editor

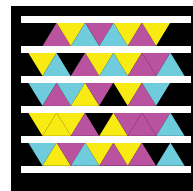
I once knew a Chief Financial Officer who took a course in 'interpersonal skills'. Asked why he needed to learn to get along better with his colleagues, he said: "Because I want to learn to say 'No' with a smile." Bean counters have always been feared for their attention to budgets, line items, and headcount. Some of them have become well known for less admirable reasons. Andrew Fastow of Enron and Srinivas Vadlamani of Satyam are both doing jail time after their companies vaporised in spectacular fashion, leaving thousands of shareholders holding worthless scraps of paper.

The CFO of any modern corporation is right up there beside the Chief Executive Officer in power, responsibility and accountability. The British got it right a long time ago – the Chancellor of the Exchequer lives at No. 11 Downing Street, next door to the prime minister. No wonder many CFOs make an effortless transition to the chief executive's office, for instance Anil Singhvi, who moved from CFO to CEO at Gujarat Ambuja Cements, or Akhil Gupta, currently Deputy Group CEO and Managing Director of Bharti Airtel.

T.V. Mohandas Pai, who won his share of Best CFO awards before moving to greater challenges at Infosys, notes that Indian CFOs are among the best in the world but constrained by the tools they lack compared with their peers in the West. We all know that a good CFO matters very much in devising the right strategy for a company. Pai says Indian CFOs score high on compliance, but "the bigger issue is that their ability to be active in the market is smaller"; they can raise capital but at a steeper price, and they can hedge only so much because of the lack of capital-account rupee convertibility.

Nominations for this year's *Business Today*-YES Bank Best CFO Awards, the fourth time this honours list is up in lights, were vetted by a very finicky jury. The winners' numbers stack up impressively, but the twelve men and one woman have interesting lives, as you will find when you read their profiles starting on page 58. Yes, women are a minority in this community, too, but don't miss our excellent analysis of why there aren't more of them on page 88.

Business Today has its head in the clouds, in a manner of speaking. If you haven't already, go see www.twitter.com/bt_india and www.facebook.com/businesstoday. Over the past few months, I'm sure you have noticed a growing number of links on our pages to audio clips and full interview transcripts on our website. This fortnight, we launch two spin-offs that will make the magazine more interactive and exciting. If you scan this Microsoft tag, a new kind of bar code, your mobile phone will automatically open a web page (in this case a photo gallery of CFOs). Our multimedia reportage does not stop there. Starting from this issue of *BT* you can click on prominent links to view video shot by our writers. Soon you might be able to virtually visit our humming office, dear reader, with just a #beam hashtag. You never know.

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