

Tata Consultancy Services: One Integrated Community

Organizations shouldn't let the global scope of their operations interfere with their ability to think and act like much smaller, more nimble and communicative companies, according to **Subramaniam Ramadorai**, managing director and CEO of **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)**, who spoke in the *Rotman Integrative Thinking™ Seminar Series* in November.

The Mumbai, India-based, unlisted TCS is part of the 126-year-old **Tata Group**, led to this day by the Tata family. The Group is one of Asia's largest conglomerates and includes power generation, automobiles (in 1999, **Tata Motors** launched the Tata Indica, India's first indigenously-designed and manufactured car), financial services and hotel management under its vast umbrella.

TCS was established in 1968. After earning a master's degree in Computer Science at **UCLA** and a brief stint at **NCR Corporation**, Ramadorai joined TCS in 1972 and was elected CEO in 1996. In the interim were many upward moves (and geographic ones between India and the U.S.), the most significant of which was to remain with TCS when a **Tata-Burroughs** joint venture siphoned off many TCS activities and employees in 1977. "Some of

us decided to find our own destiny [with the redefined company]," Ramadorai recounted. "We all thought that failure was not an option."

TCS "pioneered the offshore delivery model for IT services," and today provides software solutions and technology consulting to a variety of sectors, including banking and financial services, retail, manufacturing, and health care. TCS generates approximately \$2 billion in annual revenue and counts six members of *Fortune's* Top 10 among its clients.

Despite the staggering scope of the company's operations, the notion of a "community" is prominent in Ramadorai's thinking and TCS' corporate culture. "We connect with our people very actively," he says. Shared learning is a primary tactic in the company's community-building strategy. TCS employs a platform called the "web of participation" that enables its 36,000 employees spread over more than 30 countries to communicate best practices and innovative solutions. "Collaboration, connectivity and community go hand-in-hand," he adds.

A prime example of knowledge transfer occurred when TCS required new corporate facilities in Hyderabad and New Delhi. TCS hired the acclaimed Swiss-



S. Ramadorai, Tata Consultancy Service (Canada)'s Mukesh Gupta, and Dean Roger Martin.

Italian postmodern architect **Mario Botta**, who was then paired with an Indian understudy who would not otherwise have had the opportunity to learn from one of the great designers of the last quarter-century. TCS employs this practice throughout its global operations, says Ramadorai.

India's offshore sector is undergoing a sea change, he says. "The model of India as a destination for offshore activities started off driven by cost, and in the future will be driven by value." He identifies prolific growth opportunities in health care and life sciences, and forecasts monumental change in manufacturing and telecommunications. To keep pace, TCS is recruiting highly-flexible talent in every corner of the globe. "Mobility is the key," he says. "That attitude must be there for global managers of the future."

by Matthew Fox

Rotman Celebrates International Women's Day



Sally Armstrong

March 8 marked International Women's Day, and the Rotman School celebrated by hosting a lecture by human rights activist, documentary filmmaker and award-winning author **Sally Armstrong**. Armstrong, the editor-at-large of *Chatelaine* magazine and a contributing editor at *Maclean's*, spoke about improving women's economic status, eliminating violence against women and achieving social justice. Armstrong has covered

stories about women and girls in zones of conflict around the world. From Bosnia and Somalia to Rwanda, her eye witness reports have twice earned her the Amnesty International Media Award. Her book, *Veiled Threat: The Hidden Power of the Women of Afghanistan*, was published in 2002. The Lecture was sponsored by the **AIC Institute for Corporate Citizenship @ Rotman**.