

Publication: Deccan Herald

Date: 27 Oct, 2013

[View Print](#)

# Treasure trove of business tricks



**THE ELEPHANT CATCHERS**  
Subroto Bagchi  
Hachette  
2013, pp 248  
₹ 499

Subroto Bagchi needs no introduction as a manager, and most certainly not as an author. His earlier books have been bestsellers and one suspects this one might be as well.

What is the book with the catchy title all about? It is all about scale that any start-up needs over a period in time if it wishes to be a force to be reckoned with. Bagchi has been there, done that, and he shares his successes and failures in equal measure, which in itself is a rare quality. The tendency of most people in management is to subtly guide discussion and critical acclaim to their successes and quietly sidestep their failures. Not so in this case, as Bagchi talks about his own company MindTree's experiences with both failure and success. The book is readable, written as it is in Bagchi's simple, practical style.

It is often conversational, referring to current industry leaders like Ashok Soota and Azim Premji. Bagchi is generous in his praise of the people he worked for, and his learning from them.

The book makes eminent sense for an entrepreneur. "How and when to use consultants" is something that has been of concern to many companies. They need consultants and are yet in awe of them, which prevents them from making the best use of them when the opportunity presents itself. The need to refurbish and redesign the brand with time is something that he speaks with great confidence on.

He shares the experience of the design of the logo of MindTree by a child suffering from spasticity and goes into detail on why the company approached a brand advisory firm to redesign the logo so that it would make the company competitive in large, global bids. There is a lot of advice to young entrepreneurs too on the importance and value of the company's equity and how the owners should hold on to it for dear life. He speaks of the concept of "private treaties" floated by a successful newspaper with disdain and how the real success strategy is to build a strong, robust business model rather than 'get rich quick'

methods of valuation and funding.

The book has equal relevance to people who are working, as it gives them an overview of business and some of the issues that confront it when it attempts to grow. The need for people with different skill sets in organisations—from the 'rain makers' who get you business to the lazy blokes who wait for business to fall into their lap. He also talks about pitching strategies for acquiring large businesses, which is often the difference between the wannabe company and the real achiever. Bagchi also throws light on handling the media which is becoming increasingly im-

portant in today's world in making and marring corporate reputation.

*The Elephant Catchers* is a must-read for anyone in business, as it gives a simple listing of the various issues that are likely to confront someone who wishes to grow both personally and professionally. As someone who is struggling to scale up my own enterprise, I can only say that I found it revealing and wish this book had come out a lot earlier. On a personal note, I must admire Bagchi for his candour and his desire to share his rich and diverse experience with the rest of the world.

**RAMANUJAM SRIDHAR**