

Corner Suite Exits on the Rise as India Inc Pushes for Growth

Diverse opportunities, challenging business environment cited; CEO churn suggests cos are gearing up for a lot of changes: Experts

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Mumbai: CEO exits have surged in the past several months across India Inc's listed and unlisted companies including startups on the back of diverse growth opportunities in manufacturing and challenging business environments especially in the IT and technology sector.

CEO exits surged 18% from 141 in CY 2021 to 166 in CY 2022. In 2023, for the first 3 months of the year, CEOs who left their posts stood at 43, according to data compiled by Primeinfobase.

The numbers are expected to rise significantly in the coming months, say leadership specialists. The jump in CEO exits in Februa-

ry suggests companies are gearing up for a lot of change in the coming months, either expanding or restructuring for growth, top industry officials said. The sectors that saw several CEO exits include banks, IT, financial services, manufacturing and retail. After a dream 2021, the year 2022 turned out to be a difficult one for the Indian startup companies which saw several top level exits, amid the funding winter and the global economic slowdown.

Some of the top CEO exits this year include South India Bank MD Murali Ramakrishnan, TCS MD Rajesh Gopinathan, United Breweries MD Rishi Pardal, Bosch MD Soumitra Bhattacharya, ICICI Prudential MD Kannan Srinivasa, Mahindra Lifespace Arvind Subramanian, LIC Raj Kumar accor-

ding to Primeinfobase data. "It's a growth story across sectors, particularly in the tech, manufacturing and start up space which has seen recent CEO exits. With more opportunities available, these sectors see large scale expansion which is leading to a lot of hiring, said Navnit Singh, Chairman and Regional Managing Director of India for Korn Ferry.

Some CEOs also stepped off their posts having completed their retirement.

"There is a war for top quality leadership talent. This is reflected in the ever increasing remunerations of CEO/MDs as well, said Pranav Haldea, MD, Prime Database group.

"Many of us held fort during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021 as

the need of the hour then was stable leadership. Post Covid, organisations have restructured and reorganised leading to exits and new opportunities" said CEO of a consumer facing entity seeking anonymity.

Indian IT industry is witnessing many changes in boardrooms of late. Several senior executives of large and tier-II IT services firms

are making moves that have surprised the market and industry watchers. While Infosys has seen two senior level exits in recent months, the resignation of the CEO of India's largest IT firm Tata Consultancy Services, Rajesh Gopinathan, has taken investors off-guard. A former president of Infosys, Ravi Kumar, has joined Cognizant as its new CEO. Similarly, Mohit Joshi, the ex-president of Infosys' BFSI (banking, financial services & insurance) vertical, will join Tech Mahindra as its next CEO.

Many leaders with 20 plus years of experience are keen to take on a CEO's role and are unwilling to wait too long to be given a chance, said the HR head of a top tech company which has seen senior exits recently.

Top-level Changes

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