

CONGLOMERATE

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MAGAZINE

India's ^{Most}
Impactful
LEADERSHIP
VOICES OF 2025

Brigadier
Sushil Bhasin

Military Inspired Leadership and
Team Building Facilitator
SB Consulting

Creating Leaders
The Not Followers
Revolutionary
Impact of Military-Inspired
Corporate Training





Brigadier Sushil Bhasin

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I've been called a trainer, speaker, coach, and mentor—but if I were to choose one phrase, I see myself as a transformation enabler who empowers leaders to create ripple effects across their teams and cultures.

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The Defining Moment: How a pencil sparked a legacy of leadership.

It wasn't a medal. It wasn't a trophy. It was just a pencil—yet it ignited a fire within me that burns to this day.

In the corridors of corporate training centers across India, there's a story that has become legendary. It's the story of a distinguished Army officer who walked away from a promising path to Lieutenant General rank, choosing instead to transform lives through leadership development. But this wasn't a decision made in boardrooms or strategic planning sessions. It happened in the most unlikely place: a school event, with a gift shaped like a pencil, displaying pure emotions of students of Classes 9-12.

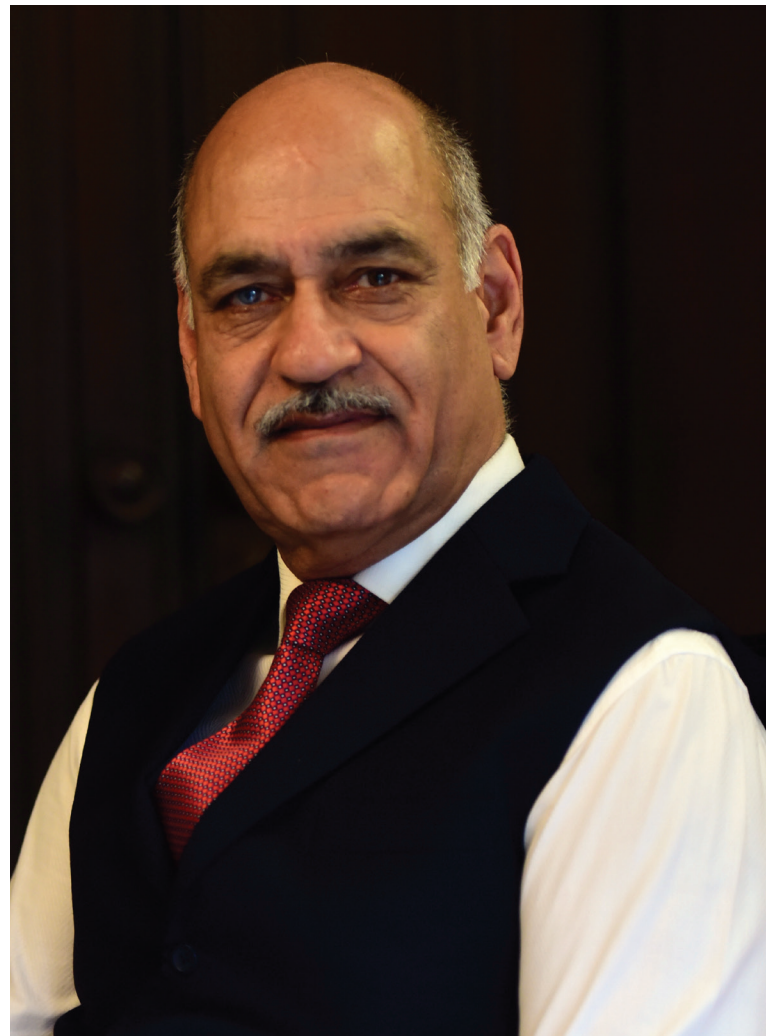
Brigadier Sushil Bhasin's journey from commanding troops to coaching executives began with what seemed like an ordinary assignment in 2002. Posted as Chairman of Army School Bareilly, he found himself in unfamiliar territory. Education wasn't his domain; logistics was. The school was struggling, hemorrhaging students as five principals had come and gone in just two years. Local families were pulling their children out, leaving behind mostly the children of jawaans who couldn't afford alternatives.

"I felt deeply responsible," Sushil recalls. What followed was six months of dedicated transformation. Working with his team, they turned the school around so dramatically that students began returning, local newspapers featured their success story, and the General Officer Commanding expressed his delight.

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**From Military
Command to Corporate
Transformation: Four
Decades of
Purpose-Driven
Leadership**
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But the moment that would reshape his entire life's trajectory came eight months later during a school event. The Head Girl took the stage and presented him with an extraordinary gift: a large scroll crafted by students to look like a pencil. Each of the twelve senior classes had contributed an A4 sheet filled with handwritten notes of gratitude and signatures. At the top, a pink eraser bore the inscription: "No organization ever changed without good leadership. Thank you for your leadership." At the bottom, forming the pencil's lead, they had written: "Sir, we love you. We'll never forget you."

"That gift pierced my heart," Sushil reflects. "It was an overwhelming moment of realization. The profound satisfaction of transforming lives, the love from the children, and the pride of contributing meaningfully made me see my true purpose. The titles and perks of becoming a general felt less significant compared to the opportunity to impact people's lives."



This defining moment led him to make one of the most difficult decisions of his career: stepping away from 34 years of military service to follow a new calling. Initially dreaming of opening a school, financial realities led him to launch adventure-based experiential learning camps, blending education with outdoor experiences to teach life skills. This pivotal chapter, which he later shared in his TEDx talk, didn't just change his career but gave him his life's purpose.

The Evolution of a Thought Leader

Today, Brigadier Sushil Bhasin stands as one of India's most respected voices in leadership transformation. Through his consulting firm SB Consulting, established in April 2015, he has conducted over 700 corporate programs, working with industry giants like Mercedes, Microsoft,

and EY. His journey from a logistics officer to a Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) who has graced platforms like TEDx and JOSH Talks represents a masterclass in purposeful reinvention.

His transition wasn't merely about changing careers; it was about translating four decades of military wisdom into frameworks that could transform corporate culture. "Military leadership isn't necessarily the 'best' form of leadership, but it is certainly unique," he explains. "Only in the armed forces does a leader carry the responsibility of deploying troops into the most hostile terrains, under extreme weather conditions, with the possibility of facing enemy fire and risking lives. This is why I often call military leadership the 'mother of all leaderships.'"

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**The key principle
is trying to do the
right thing for my
customers at all
times. This is not
always easy,
especially if you
feel the customer
is doing
something wrong,
but as a
consultant, you
need to be able to
bridge this gap.**
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Bridging Two Worlds:
The Battlefield To
Boardroom Philosophy

Sushil’s signature approach, “Battlefield to Boardroom,” represents more than a catchy phrase. It embodies a sophisticated understanding of how military principles can be adapted for corporate environments without losing their essence. His methodology recognizes that while the contexts differ dramatically, the fundamental human elements of leadership remain constant.

“At its core, leadership is about influence,” he explains, citing John C. Maxwell’s definition. “If a military officer can influence soldiers to charge into danger, where the natural human instinct is to run away from death, that’s perhaps the ultimate proof of true leadership influence.”

However, Sushil is careful to distinguish between wholesale application and thoughtful adaptation. “Military leadership principles cannot be applied wholesale into corporate settings. The principles remain the same, but the applications are different.” This nuanced understanding, developed through 34 years in uniform plus four years of cadet training, and refined through nearly two decades of corporate application, has made his approach both authentic and effective.

The Blind Spots
That Bind: Common
Leadership Challenges

Through his extensive corporate work, Sushil has identified three critical blind spots that consistently plague leaders across industries: trust, communication, and collaboration. These observations, drawn from

over 700 corporate programs, reveal patterns that transcend individual organizations or sectors.

“In the military, we’re taught that a leader has two fundamental responsibilities: first, to accomplish the mission at all costs; and second, to ensure the welfare of the troops,” he explains. “Balancing these two can feel like walking a tightrope. The same principle applies in the corporate world.”

Trust, he argues, is the invisible glue that binds teams together. But it’s bidirectional, requiring leaders to both trust their people and demonstrate trustworthiness themselves. When trust exists, the focus shifts from individual achievement to collective success, creating unity and shared purpose.

Communication failures represent another critical vulnerability. “One of the biggest reasons organizations fail to execute effectively is gaps in communication,” Sushil observes. “Unless information flows freely from top to bottom, bottom to top, and laterally across departments, the leader’s intentions often don’t reach those executing on the ground.”

The third blind spot, collaboration, draws from one of his most powerful military analogies. At the Indian Military Academy, the “Confidence March” involves twelve companies competing in a grueling 40-kilometer overnight march in full combat gear. The winner isn’t determined by the fastest cadet’s time, but by when the last member crosses the finish line. “A team’s strength is defined by its weakest member, just as the strength of a chain depends on its weakest link,” he explains.

The Salute Framework:
Systematic
Transformation

Sushil’s Leadership Transformation Framework, known as SALUTE, represents the culmination of his military experience and corporate insights. This systematic approach has driven measurable results across diverse industries, providing leaders with a clear pathway to excellence.

Strategy forms the foundation, emphasizing the need for clear strategic vision in both team development and personal growth. Awareness follows, drawing from military situational awareness principles to help leaders stay attuned to market dynamics, stakeholder needs, and team morale.

The “Less is More” principle reflects

military training where achieving the most with the least becomes a force multiplier. In corporate settings, this translates to clear, concise communication that drives action rather than confusion.

Unstoppable represents the resilience and determination that military training instills. Business leaders face crises, market shifts, and personal setbacks, requiring an unstoppable mindset that views failure as a teacher rather than a defeat.

Tactics bridge the gap between strategy and execution, translating big ideas into actionable steps. This includes practical skills like structuring effective meetings, managing time wisely, and aligning resources with objectives.

Energy serves as the final component, recognizing that leadership presence and passion often inspire teams far more than directives alone. In military contexts, energy is a force multiplier vital for maintaining morale and momentum.

Building Tomorrow’s
Leaders Today

One of Sushil’s most powerful insights concerns leadership pipeline development, an area where he sees significant organizational blind spots. Drawing from a story shared by his mentor Marc Sen, he illustrates how true leaders create other leaders rather than followers.

The story involves a marketing professional who approached his boss about a long-overdue promotion. When offered a vacation to Goa, the employee protested that he couldn’t leave during a crucial product launch.

His boss then revealed that the envelope contained only blank sheets of paper, delivering a profound lesson: “If you can’t spare yourself for one week, and you believe your team can’t function without you, then how can I promote you? Come back for your promotion when you’ve trained someone to take over your role.”

This narrative captures an essential truth about leadership development that Sushil emphasizes in his consulting work. Organizations must embed leadership development into daily work rather than treating it as a separate program. Leaders should be encouraged to mentor and coach future successors, create opportunities for emerging leaders to handle real responsibilities, and be rewarded not only for personal performance but also for how well they grow others.

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Time Is Life,
Leadership Is
Legacy:
Transforming
Organizations
Through
Human-Centric
Excellence

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Where Battlefield
Discipline
Meets Boardroom
Excellence:
The Sushil Bhasin
Approach to
Leadership

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The Conscious Relationship With Time

Time management represents another cornerstone of Sushil’s philosophy, reflected in his book “Million Dollar Second.” His approach goes beyond traditional time management to what he calls “time investment,” emphasizing that time isn’t money but life itself.

“While money lost can be earned again, time lost is gone forever,” he explains. “Leaders and professionals must move from merely managing time to investing time. This shift in mindset is transformational.”

His methodology involves understanding the value of every second, distinguishing between activity and productivity, and building time awareness into decision-making processes. Leaders should ask two

critical questions before making decisions: “Is this the best use of my time right now?” and “Is this task something only I can do, or should I delegate it?”

This conscious approach to time creates what he calls “time ROI,” where every hour invested should yield value for either the individual or the organization. The concept extends beyond mere efficiency to encompass energy management, ensuring that critical tasks are scheduled when focus and energy are at their peak.

The Authentic Voice: Zindagi Unplugged

Sushil’s podcast “Zindagi Unplugged” represents another dimension of his impact, reaching audiences beyond corporate boardrooms to touch the lives of young people seeking direction and purpose. Created in collaboration with the talented anchor Shruti Bhola,

the podcast emerged from his book “Design Your Life” and evolved into a 48-episode series addressing real-life concerns of listeners.

“The inspiration for Zindagi Unplugged came from a realization: today’s youth are overwhelmed by information but starved for clarity and direction,” he explains. “They face crucial decisions, like choosing a career path as early as Class 10, without fully understanding their own strengths, interests, or life purpose.”

The podcast’s success stemmed from its authentic connection to listener needs. When feedback channels were created, responses poured in from people sharing not just career confusion but personal struggles, family pressures, and questions about finding life purpose. This interaction transformed the podcast from a one-way broadcast to a genuine dialogue addressing real-world challenges.

Adapting Across Industries: The Consultant’s Craft

Sushil’s ability to work across industries from pharmaceuticals and automotive to IT and banking demonstrates his sophisticated understanding of organizational dynamics. His approach involves custom-creating every session, starting with a blank sheet rather than delivering generic modules.

“My military experience is a powerful tool, but it’s just one tool in a much larger kit,” he explains. “Even during my years as a senior officer, I was studying leadership in other armies and exploring how those principles might translate into civilian contexts.”

His unique perspective comes from running an outbound training resort where he didn’t just lecture leaders for a few hours but lived with them for two or three days. This immersive approach provided holistic insights into corporate life, challenges, and culture across sectors.

Investment in continuous learning has been crucial to his adaptation. Training with global experts like Tony Robbins, Brian Tracy, Jack Canfield, and Marshall Goldsmith, he didn’t just attend sessions but joined inner circles and sought mentorship to understand nuances of human behavior and corporate leadership.

The Evolution Of Leadership Philosophy

Sushil’s leadership philosophy has evolved significantly from his military days to his current role as a corporate coach. In the Army, leadership was about command, clarity, and absolute accountability. Orders had to be crystal clear because in battlefield conditions, confusion could cost lives.

“Back then, I viewed leadership as leading from the front, setting the example, and ensuring flawless execution,” he recalls. “It was intensely mission-focused, often requiring rapid decisions under extreme pressure.”

His corporate experience reshaped this understanding. While core principles of integrity, clarity, and resilience remained constant, he learned that corporate leadership is less about command and more about influence, collaboration, and coaching.

Today, he defines leadership as “the art of inspiring people to become the best versions of themselves while aligning their growth with the organization’s mission.” This evolution reflects a shift from issuing orders to asking questions, from carrying burdens alone to creating shared ownership and empowerment.

The Foundation of Excellence: Self-Discipline and Mindset

Self-discipline forms the bedrock of Sushil’s leadership philosophy. He defines it as “doing what you ought to do, even when you don’t feel like doing it, and when nobody is watching you.” This simple concept captures a profound truth: leadership begins with leading yourself.

In high-stakes environments, self-discipline becomes even more crucial. “External chaos can only be managed if there’s internal order,” he explains. “A leader who can control their emotions, resist impulsive reactions, and stay focused on priorities is the one who inspires confidence and steadies the team.”

His military training taught him that under pressure, leaders don’t rise to the level of their goals but fall to the level of their discipline. This principle applies equally in business contexts, where disciplined leaders maintain clarity when others panic, make tough decisions swiftly and rationally, and inspire trust through consistency and composure.

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I believe a leader’s legacy is measured not by how many followers they have but by how many new leaders they’ve helped create. That, to me, is the true mark of impact.

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Emerging Trends: Leadership In 2025

Working closely with senior decision-makers across industries, Sushil observes clear trends shaping leadership, team building, and business agility as we progress through 2025. Leadership is becoming deeply human-centric, with teams expecting leaders who bring empathy, emotional intelligence, and authenticity to their interactions.

Team building is evolving toward psychological safety and diversity of thought. Organizations recognize that high-performing teams thrive when people feel safe to voice ideas, admit mistakes, and challenge the status quo without fear of punishment.

Business agility has become a strategic imperative as leaders navigate constant change, whether geopolitical uncertainties, AI disruption, or rapid market shifts. “In times of uncertainty, clarity and adaptability become your competitive advantage,” Sushil notes.

Another significant trend is the fusion of technology and human judgment. While AI tools become ubiquitous, leaders realize that technology cannot replace human intuition, empathy, and ethics. The most successful leaders of 2025 combine digital tools with deeply human capabilities.

The Ripple Effect: Transformational Success Stories

One of Sushil’s most transformational success stories involved a large manufacturing organization facing serious leadership and performance challenges. Despite excellent technical expertise, their leadership culture was fragmented, with departments working in silos, low trust levels, and middle management hesitant to take ownership.

His intervention began with a comprehensive leadership assessment, not just through surveys but through immersive conversations and observing teams in action. The breakthrough came when he introduced the concept of ownership over blame, sharing the military principle that “a leader is responsible for everything his team does or fails to do.”

Through experiential activities requiring collaboration under pressure, leaders gradually shifted from fear-driven compliance to proactive ownership, from isolated decision-making to open cross-functional dialogue, and from purely task-focused interactions to genuine concern for their people’s growth.

The Confidence March simulation, adapted from military training, became a powerful metaphor they embraced deeply. Leaders learned that team success depends not on the fastest member but on ensuring the slowest doesn’t get left behind. This principle influenced how they handled performance gaps and talent development.

The transformation was confirmed when a senior leader commented months later: “Earlier, we only measured success by metrics. Now, we measure it by how many new leaders we’ve created in our teams.” Employee engagement scores rose significantly, decision-making became faster, and cross-functional innovation increased notably.

The Philosophy of Impact: Leadership Is Caught, Not Taught

Central to Sushil’s approach is the belief that “leadership is not taught, it is caught.” While leadership skills can be explained in classrooms, real leadership is absorbed through experience, observation, and example.

“In the Army, young officers didn’t just learn leadership from manuals or lectures,” he explains. “They learned by watching how their seniors behaved under pressure, how they made tough decisions, and how they treated their people with respect and fairness, even in the harshest circumstances.”

This philosophy shapes his experiential learning approach, focusing on creating immersive environments rather than theoretical sessions. Through activities, simulations, and storytelling experiences, participants don’t just learn about leadership but “catch” leadership qualities like courage, resilience, empathy, and strategic thinking.

His goal extends beyond skill development to transformation: ensuring that leaders don’t just know about leadership but become leadership. This contagious quality means that the way a leader speaks, behaves, and handles adversity sets the tone for the entire organization.

Measuring Legacy: The True Definition of Impact

For Sushil, impact transcends inspiration to encompass transformation. He defines impact as “the ability to create meaningful, lasting change in people’s thinking, behaviors, and lives.” True impact means audiences leave with new perspectives and tools they actually implement.

His measurement framework includes behavioral shifts, personal growth, cultural change, and perhaps most importantly, the legacy of leaders created. “I believe a leader’s legacy is measured not by how many followers they have but by how many new leaders they’ve helped create,” he explains.

Whether through his books “Design Your Life” and “Million Dollar Second,” his “Battlefield to Boardroom” programs, or “Zindagi Unplugged” podcast, his consistent goal remains helping people discover their potential, find clarity, and lead lives of purpose.

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**Creating
Leaders, Not
Followers: The
Revolutionary
Impact of
Military-Inspired
Corporate
Training**

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The Continuing Mission: Building Tomorrow's Leaders

As India's business landscape continues evolving, Brigadier Sushil Bhasin's work becomes increasingly relevant. His unique perspective, bridging military precision with corporate performance, offers a powerful model for leadership excellence in dynamic environments.

His journey from commanding troops to coaching executives demonstrates that true leadership principles transcend contexts. The discipline, integrity, and people-focused approach that made him successful in military service have translated seamlessly into corporate transformation.

Through SB Consulting, his speaking engagements, and his various platforms, Sushil continues building tomorrow's leaders today. His emphasis on creating leaders rather than followers, on catching rather than teaching leadership, and on transforming lives rather than just improving performance represents a fundamental shift in how we approach leadership development.

The pencil-shaped gift that changed his life's direction continues to inspire his work. Just as those students

recognized that "no organization ever changed without good leadership," Sushil's mission remains clear: developing leaders who can transform organizations, communities, and ultimately, society itself.

His legacy extends beyond individual consulting engagements to shape how we think about leadership, discipline, and human potential. In an era where change is constant and challenges are complex, leaders like Brigadier Sushil Bhasin provide essential guidance on maintaining effectiveness while preserving humanity.

The future of Indian business will be shaped by leaders who understand that true transformation requires both strategic thinking and genuine care for people. Sushil's career provides a roadmap for achieving this balance, demonstrating that principled leadership can drive meaningful change across decades of service, whether in uniform or in corporate boardrooms.

His concluding remarks were "Today, with over two decades of training behind me and countless transformations witnessed, I no longer measure success by applause or testimonials alone. True impact is when someone—months or years later—tells me that a single moment in one of my sessions changed how they lead, live, or love. That's the legacy I aim to build—not in volume, but in depth."

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**Leadership cannot
be poured into
someone through
lectures or slides—it
must be observed,
absorbed, practiced,
and eventually
embodied.**
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