



Place in the New World Order

HOW INDIA INC. SEES BRAND INDIA REPUTATION



Foreword by Ashwani Singla

Founding Managing Partner, Astrum | Knowledge Partner

We are delighted to partner with PRCAL, to conduct this study and discover how India's business leaders view our nation's place in an evolving world order. The voices of 123 CEOs across six cities reaffirm that India's best days are ahead. Under the Prime Minister's leadership, India is asserting itself on the global stage with strategic resilience, anchored in its demographic dividend, digital infrastructure, and entrepreneurial energy.

What emerges clearly is that India is no longer seen merely as a soft power, but as a power to reckon with. From shaping technology and trade to driving climate and security dialogues, India is reimagining its diplomacy to go beyond geopolitics, building strong commercial arms, forging strategic partnerships, and sharpening its global narrative. Yet, CEOs remind us that the path to 'Viksit Bharat 2047' might be a bumpy one. Investments in structural reforms, ease of doing business, and a confident global storytelling strategy are vital to accelerate Brand India's ascent.

From the President's Desk

Kunal Kishore, President, PRCAI

Reputation is not just about perception - it is about trust, credibility, and sustained influence. As I reflect on the insights of this report, India's Place in the New World Order, I see reputation as the thread that binds every data point, every sentiment, and every ambition expressed by India Inc.

India's economic rise, digital infrastructure, and demographic strength have given us a solid foundation. Yet, it is how we curate, protect, and project Brand India's reputation that will decide whether this foundation translates into long-term global leadership. Today, CEOs no longer see India as a soft power alone; they see it as a decisive force in shaping global trade, climate action, security, and technology dialogues. That shift is not only economic - it is reputational.

But reputation, like capital, needs constant investment. The report rightly highlights the dissonance between India's potential and its on-ground realities. Basic civic issues, safety, environmental concerns, and foreign media biases continue to create reputational vulnerabilities. These are not just governance issues - they are perception issues. Left unaddressed, they risk overshadowing the extraordinary progress we have made in entrepreneurship, innovation, and diplomacy.

As PRCAI, we view reputation as a strategic national asset. It is time we approach Brand India with the same discipline as corporations manage their own corporate reputation: with clear narrative building, proactive communication, stakeholder engagement, and a sharp focus on trust. Strategic communication, once seen as an enabler, is now central to nation-building itself.

This report reaffirms a truth we in the communications industry know deeply - Reputation is the new currency of power. India's journey to Viksit Bharat 2045 will be defined not only by GDP charts or innovation milestones, but by whether we can convert progress into influence, and influence into leadership.

PRCAI stands committed to enabling this transformation by advancing the standards of communication, fostering ethical practices, and shaping the future of public relations as a cornerstone of India's global reputation.



The CEO Perspective

Deeptie Sethi, CEO, PRCAI



The Public Relations Consultants Association of India (PRCAI) is proud to host the 2nd edition of PRana. For PRana 2025: India RISE Story, it will convene India's finest reputation icons to tell what it takes to build Brand India's reputation on a global stage. PRCAI commissioned a pivotal study that captures the views of India's of Corporate Inc. on the country's growing influence in a rapidly changing global landscape. Insights from 123 CEOs, across six major cities reveal a resounding belief that India's most dynamic years are still ahead, as 84% of respondents believe that 'India's Best Days' are ahead of us and 89% showed confidence in the 'India growth story'.

India, under the Prime Minister's leadership, is advancing strategically, leveraging its youth, tech prowess, and startup energy and vibrant ecosystem. 93% felt that the Central Government has been effective in enabling India's global rise. The message from Corporate India is clear that the country a rising global force, shaping conversations around technology, trade, climate action, and security.

What stands out from the findings is not just optimism, but a further call to action. CEOs recognize that India's path to Viksit Bharat 2047 will require more than ambition - it demands systemic reforms, an improved ease of doing business, and a powerful, coherent global narrative. Global economic slowdown, AI related risks, data security threats, competitive pressures, policy unpredictability, and geopolitical risks are some of the key areas of concerns shared by respondents.

While India is known for culture, civilisation and soft power, now we need to build a combined narrative of commerce with diplomacy. And in that path India can leverage strategic communications to shape its global image very effectively.

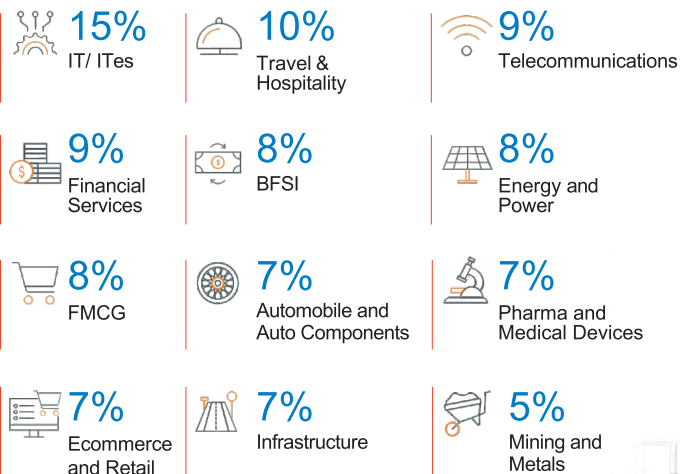
This is precisely where PRana idea convention becomes vital to shape a purposeful, resilient, authentic, nation-building narrative for India. PRana aims to harness insights like these to shape how India tells its story to the world. Together, this study and PRana by PRCAI reaffirms a shared goal to position India not just as a participant in global affairs, but as a defining force shaping the future.



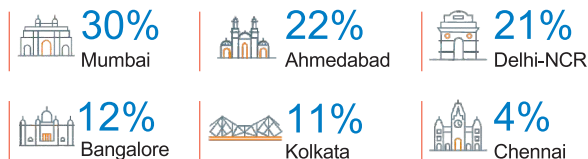
Insights from industry experts and corporate leaders

- 123 C-Suite interviews with Chairperson, Founders, Chief Executive Officers and Managing Directors
- 9 In-depth qualitative conversations

Industry/Sector



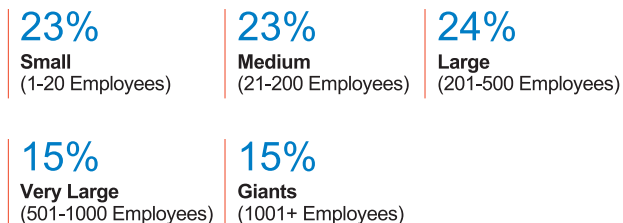
Market



Gender



Organisation Size



A Confident Resurgent India

84%

India's "Best Days Ahead"

89%

Confidence in the "India growth story"



“

Resilient, Reformist and Ready – that is what defines our country today which stands at a strategic crossroads in the global order. India's proven capability at the global stage continues to position it as a credible alternative in the Global South, be it diversifying a supply chain or enhancing the manufacturing footprints

Nadir Godrej,
Chairperson
Godrej Industries Group


”


A Country Whose Time Has Come

India's current standing in the world

54% 

Among the top global powers

 **35%**
Rising fast but not yet at the top

 **7%**
Respectable but behind leading economies

 **4%**
Lagging in key areas



Phenomenal achievement in the last 75 years

 **4th Largest Economy**

 **At the forefront of IT/ ITES**

 **Notable MNCs are heavy-lifting from India through GCCs**

 **Start-up Ecosystem is home to notable Unicorns**

 **Make in India has given a huge boost to local manufacturing**

 **Digital Public Infrastructure (UPI/ Aadhaar)**

 **Indian Origin Global CEOs**



“

India does more transactions per day on UPI, than transactions made worldwide on either MasterCard or Visa, every day. And they have been around for over 60 years!

**Lloyd Mathias, Investor,
Board Director**

”



“

Our Prime Minister is the salesman of India, creating curiosity and provoking attention worldwide. He has successfully marketed the 'India story'. Just like corporations have a China strategy, they now need an India strategy

**Adip Puri, India Country
Head, APACMed**

”

A Strong Foundation for Global Ambition



93%

Central Government has been effective in enabling India's Global Rise



92%

Prime Minister's leadership in positioning India in the World Stage has been Strong



In what areas has India done well in the last 5 years?



Economic growth



Digital transformation



Infrastructure development



Global diplomacy



Social development



“

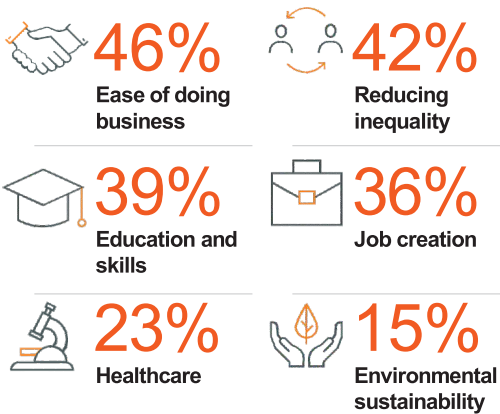
When I hear 'Brand India,' I instantly think of startups buzzing with innovation, our IT prowess, the global magnetism of Bollywood, cricket as a religion, vibrant youth energy, and the explosion of colours and culture during our festivals. It's a mix of hustle, heritage, and heart

Amar Kaushik
Film Producer, Director

”

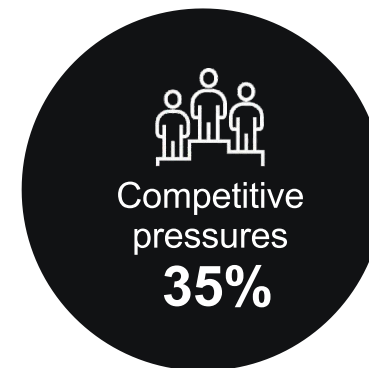
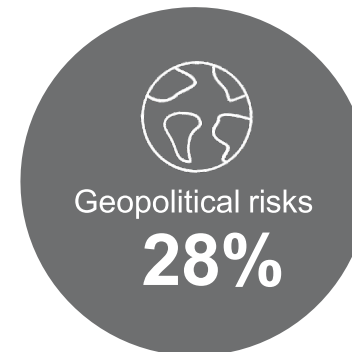
What Got Us Here will Not Get Us There

Areas India could have done better in






- 
- 1** Economic Growth but concentrated in the big 8 Urban Centres
 - 2** Lot has happened on ease of business, but a lot of reforms still needed
 - 3** Lot of MSMEs but they are struggling for access to finance
 - 4** Demographic dividend, but how many have spending power
 - 5** Independent Judiciary but need to speed up the judicial process
 - 6** Strong Indian Brands but inward focussed

What is Keeping the CEOs Awake?



Need to Clear The Roadblocks For Business To Thrive

	< 200 employees	> 200 employees
 Strong Support for INNOVATION	Small-Med 33%	Large 58%
 Support for SUSTAINABILITY and GREEN GROWTH	Small-Med 38%	Large 62%
 Support for ENTREPRENEURSHIP & START-UP	Small-Med 43%	Large 68%





“

We are the fourth largest economy , but how many of our consumer brands command global recognition? How do we create the support system for our brands to go global?

Sairee Chahal
Partner,
Appreciate Capital

”



“

India has to become a destination people want to do business in, not just a low-cost processing hub. Build on the application areas of frontier technology to innovate, drive manufacturing excellence, optimise operations and build resilient supply chain.

Karan Singh
MD, ACG,
World's Only
Integrated Capsule
Solution Provider for
over 6 Decades

”



“

India's global image will be shaped not just by economic milestones, but by ideas that solve for scale and sustainability. Reputation management and strategic communication are no longer optional- they are nation-building tools, turning progress into influence and trust into leadership. The world is watching. India is ready to lead.

Cassio Simoes
Managing Director Tetra
Pak South Asia

”

CEO's Priorities Over Next Two Years



Digital transformation

50%



AI Integration into business

42%



International market entry/growth

33%



Domestic market expansion

29%



Supply chain resilience

29%



Talent acquisition & retention

27%



Sustainability & ESG integration

26%



Cost optimisation & efficiency

23%



New product/service development

20%



Imperatives for Viksit Bharat



“

Viksit Bharat - inclusive, innovative and environmentally resilient, is a generational commitment and not just a goal. And to realize this vision, there is a need for collaboration and courage

Nadir Godrej
Chairperson
Godrej Industries Group

”



Strategic Imperatives:

01

Policy & Regulatory Reform

- Simplify regulations
- Empower MSMEs
- Invest in skilling and digital tools, especially in agriculture

02

Equitable and Inclusive Growth

- Broader wealth distribution to expand middle class and drive consumption
- Optimise the potential of smaller cities beyond the top metros

03

Technology for Transformation

- Ownership of tech IP and fostering research through institutional support and capital
- Build infrastructure and capabilities in semiconductors, AI, and critical raw materials

04

Climate Resilience

- Decarbonize supply chains
- Scale renewable energy
- Promote water-efficient and regenerative farming

05

Infrastructure & Competitiveness

- Build robust infrastructure and digital connectivity
- Enhance export competitiveness and self-reliance
- Efficient public transport modelled on global best practices (like Japan)

06

Education & Skilling

- Massive investment in foundational education and future-ready skills

07

Public Health

- Building robust health infrastructure to support a healthy population

08

Investor Confidence

- Aggressively pursue and support investors, akin to Singapore's proactive model
- Create conditions that make India a genuine destination for business, not just a low-cost processing hub

Shaping India's Story for Global Reputation



India needs to be known for more than culture and civilisation

Story needs to go beyond

Culture *Yoga*
Oldest Civilisation
Bollywood
Poverty *Spirituality*
Indian Diaspora
Violence
Natural calamities
Communal Differences



Global media presents a *pre-liberalisation* view of India

How often do our *brands feature in these publications?*

How often do they *do positive stories on India?*



“

India's digital transformation, scientific progress, rising unicorns, and globally recognized brands are reshaping the narrative of innovation and leadership. We must boldly step forward and speak with confidence - backed by data, driven by integrity, and united in pride for the emerging India story

**Sridhar Venkat, CEO,
Akshaya Patra**

”

What's causing a dent on our Global image

The contrast between India's potential and on-ground realities creates dissonance

- 1 **Basic civic issues**
Undermine the perception of progress
- 2 **Safety for Women**
Is a persistent concern
- 3 **Environmental Challenges**
Pollution in air, rivers, and seas
- 4 **Walk and talk gap**
Execution Gap due to bureaucratic hurdles

GETS
AMPLIFIED
BY

- 1 **Foreign Media Bias**
Due to lack of nuanced understanding
- 2 **Diplomatic Resources**
Due to fewer foreign service officers
- 3 **Idealism vs. Realpolitik**
Non-alignment and hard stance may limit strategic influence
- 4 **Centre-state harmony**
Fragile due to democratic churn

Diplomacy 2.0: Beyond Geopolitics to Selling the India Narrative

India is using strategic communications to shape its global image very effectively

54%

India's influence in global decision-making has increased significantly

46%

Geopolitics + Commerce + Storytelling

"India has followed strategic autonomy as a **policy** to forge strong **bilateral relationships**"

"US Tariffs and current geopolitics are **short term headwinds** and the long term view is positive."

Beyond the confines of Embassy to push the Industries

01
SUPPORT GROUPS

02
PR AND COMMUNICATION

03
LOBBY GROUPS

04
COMMERCIAL ARMS

Prioritise for deeper economic and strategic partnerships



Europe
45%



North America
26%



Middle East
12%



Southeast Asia
11%



Africa
6%

Glidepath to shape India's image



Merit-Based Influence

Leverage business scale and military strength, not just principles and ideology



Strategic Alignment

Shift from non-alignment to multi-alignment



Mindset Shift

From passive opportunity to active facilitation of investment



Positioning Shift

To cutting-edge, not just cost-efficient



Communication Channel most influential in shaping global image

Business and industry leadership voices

32%

International media coverage

21%

Government diplomacy and official statements

20%

Digital and social media

18%

Cultural exports (films, art, literature)

8%

Leveraging diaspora as global brand ambassadors

1%



Indian Icons Defining The Rise Story

Reputation through Innovation, Sustainability, and Entrepreneurship

STORYTELLERS



Smt. Smriti Irani

Fmr. Cabinet Minister



Shri Jayant Sinha

Fmr. Union Minister of State for Finance and Civil Aviation & President, Eversource Capital



Shri Pushyamitra Bhargav

Mayor, Indore



Aditya Ghosh

Co-founder of Akasa Air, Founder of Homage Advisers, Business Leader & Changemaker



Anvita Dutt

Filmmaker, Screenwriter & Director



Chetna Gala Sinha

Founder, Mann Deshi, Foundation



Gaurav Gupta

Creative Director, Gaurav Gupta Studio



J. Sai Deepak

Senior Advocate, Delhi High Court



Kaamya Karthikeyan

Indian Climber



Manish Sabharwal

Co-founder & Chairman, TeamLease Services



Naina Lal Kidwai

Chair, Rothschild & Co India & India Sanitation Coalition



Dr. Sangita Reddy

Joint Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals



Suresh Khadakonavi

CEO, Digi Yatra Foundation



Suresh Narayanan

Fmr. Chairman & Managing Director, Nestlé India Limited



Vaishali Nigam Sinha

Co-founder, ReNew & President, UN Global Compact Network India

STORYWEAVERS



Aabha Bakaya

Founder & CEO, Ladies Who Lead:



Nandini Bhalla

Editor-in-Chief, The Word. Magazine



Rajeev Masand

COO, Dharm Cornerstone Agency & Leading Film Critic



Rekha Balakrishnan

Lead Editor, HerStory & SocialStory, Your Story Media



Vikram Chandra

Founder, Editorji Technologies



Amish Devgan

Managing Editor, News18 Hindi



PRCAI is India's most credible and influential communications body, dedicated to advancing the public relations industry for almost 25 years. Through collaborative efforts, it has built a strong and skilled community focused on the greater progression of the profession. Its commitment lies in raising the bar by strengthening the PR industry's codes of conduct and providing guidelines to elevate industry standards and collaboration.

Contact Us



Kunal Kishore, President PRCAI
president@prcai.org
+919899797809



Deeptie Sethi, CEO PRCAI
ceo@prcai.org
+919811101383



Astrum is India's first science based multi-disciplinary strategic communications advisory that uses the Science of Persuasion to understand and shape public opinion ethically. Founded by Ashwani Singla, in 2015 as the next progression for public relations, Astrum is leading the way in rooting creativity in science to offer 'research-based multidisciplinary strategic communication solutions to sustain and protect reputation & license to operate.

Contact Us



Ashwani Singla,
Founding Managing Partner
ashwani.singla@astrum.in



Sharada Sharma
Co-Founder &
Chief Science Officer
sharada.sharma@astrum.in