

Wipro Gears-up for Succession

India's third largest software company, Wipro is preparing up for leadership succession later this year. The company has adopted a CEO-COO combination for its top leadership structure. Following this, the CEO - TK Kurien would focus on future strategy and technology while the COO would manage the day-to-day operations. The choice for the COO was between Abid Ali Neemuchwala, the former head of TCS BPO, and Wipro insider Anand Padmanabhan, the energy and utilities chief. Wipro chose to appoint Neemuchwala as its COO, as he brings a fresh dynamism and energy. Kurien's five year term as a CEO will end by early next year but it is not clear whether Wipro will extend his term or replace him. Again the question is whether the next CEO will be an insider or and an external professional. Kurien's tenure has been a mixed bag. While Wipro's performance has lagged behind the industry growth rate, Kurien has made the organisation leaner and focused.

Commenting on Wipro's leadership succession plan, Professor Kavil Ramachandran, Executive Director, Thomas Schmidheiny Centre for Family Enterprise at the Indian School of Business said, *"I'm not too sure whether Wipro will bring in someone from outside like Infosys has done. Premji and the board, in the ideal scenario, would like to bring in someone that they trust and think is the right person to take the organisation forward."*

In a subsequent development, Rishad Premji, the elder son of Wipro founder Azim Premji was recently appointed on the company's board. He is to join the Wipro board with effect from May 1, 2015. Rishad, a Harvard Business School alumnus, joined Wipro in 2007 as a manager after a stint with Bain Consulting, a globally reputed consulting firm. In his eight years at Wipro, Rishad has been groomed through the ranks and presently serves as the company's chief strategy officer with responsibility of steering the company's corporate venture arm.

Source: The Economic Times, March 16 and April 21, 2015