

BLOG

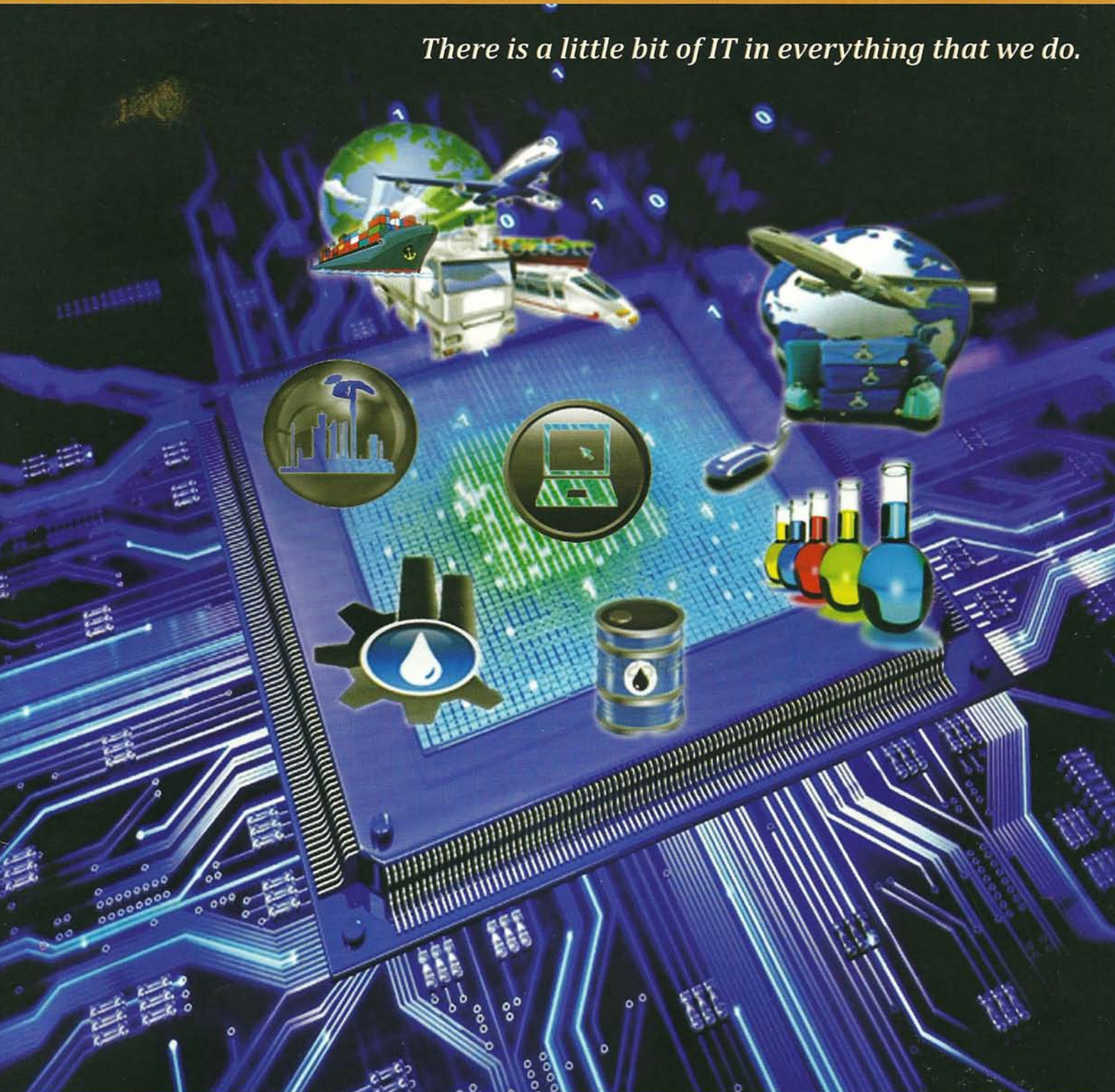
People
&
Business

Balmer Lawrie
Organisational Gazette

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February 2015

There is a little bit of IT in everything that we do.



EDITORIAL

Balmer Lawrie's uniqueness lies in its 'Diversity' and no mass communication in this organisation can be complete if it doesn't capture the various facets and hues of this diversity. BLOG was introduced in October 2011 and through the various issues it has highlighted different businesses, organisational initiatives, sustainability and CSR activities, and people centric programmes. However, you'd agree with me that today we would not have been a successful conglomerate if we didn't change with time and keep pace with the changing technology landscape. If today our businesses are working in synergy and leveraging each other's strengths, Information Technology (IT) has a great role to play. I feel happy to say that our IT Department has acted as a catalyst to integrate the various businesses and support functions together on one platform and has translated the 'diversity' into 'the power of one'.

This issue of BLOG is dedicated to Team IT and while you read on, you will know how this team is constantly supporting the Company to improve business processes, achieve cost efficiencies, enhance customer satisfaction, drive revenue growth and stakeholder integration and help the businesses to maintain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Bill Gates once said - *"Information technology and business are becoming inextricably interwoven. I don't think anybody can talk meaningfully about one without talking about the other."*

We will soon step into the next Financial Year. Hope the businesses will be able to create more opportunities in the new financial year and bring in better top line and bottom line growth for the Company.



LEADERSHIP SPEAKS



Mr. Viren Sinha

Chairman &
Managing Director

I recall that in the early 80's Balmer Lawrie was one of the first companies to have installed an IBM Main Frame. It was a showpiece of sorts and was given uncanny names such as 'EDP Department' or 'Electronic Data Processing Department', 'MSD' or 'Management Services Division' etc. It was a department where primary focus was on, "automating" the accounting process. At times, they would bring out the odd report which in today's context is pure garbage. With time, the department evolved and developed our own home grown ERPs such as GLIOS, IPIOS, BLLMS, CFA etc. While we changed the name from 'MSD' to 'Information Technology (IT)', the basic focus for quite some time remained on the department churning out information which at best could be labelled "slightly more than accounting".

Over the last 3 years there has been a sea change from the department being manned by clumsy old Data Entry Operators to a cool and geeky centre with a young team that is not only ensuring that IT is used as a key business enabler but it is also helping leverage organizational knowledge and analyze data to make strategic business decisions.

Significant portion of our businesses now run on world class business system call 'SAP' and some others on tailor made ERPs. We must take this opportunity to thank all our colleagues in the IT department who have relentlessly worked 24/7 to bring about this tectonic shift in how we handle information across the organisation. This process of transformation has been tough and challenging and the various new initiatives that are in the pipeline will require even more efforts as it involves not only process and system changes but also a major shift in our work culture.

Today's business environment is evolving at a very fast pace requiring business to innovate and respond at lightning speed, handling mammoth amount of data. The challenge before any manager is to be able to handle this data so that we can remain competitive and create value for our customer. I am confident that IT in Balmer Lawrie will shape the future of how we leverage appropriate technologies and emerge as leaders in our business segment.

LEADERSHIP SPEAKS



Prabal Basu
Director [Finance]

The Company has been passing through very challenging times over the past couple of years. Although there are definite signs of growth in economic activities in the country since the change of Government in May'14, the Company is faced with stiff competition in the market place for all its products and services leading to severe pressure on margins. In this highly competitive environment, the only way to survive and grow profitably, in my view, is through technological interventions and making the various processes more automated / technology enabled. There is a strong need to have data analytics, information about the customers / markets in a structured form, making our production processes more technology enabled to make the products superior in quality than competitors as also to enable cost reduction, etc. So, Information Technology, in my opinion, has a very big challenging role in BL in the coming years.

The Company has tremendous expectation from the members of the IT department and I am quite confident that our IT department is capable of rising to the occasion and will help this Company achieve greater heights in the future. We had started the journey of getting into SAP in 2012 and are fast approaching the completion of first phase of implementation of SAP in BL. I have spoken to various experts in this field about our experience / progress in respect of SAP implementation and I am glad to inform you that they have all been quite impressed with the progress that we have made in this regard given the complexities of our operations. However, I must admit, that this is only the beginning of the journey and we have a very long way to go. There is a lot of work to be done in this area and we need to implement our various ongoing projects like MIDOFFICE for SBU: T&V, Defence portal for T&V, new operating package for LS, SRM, operationalising our own mail messaging system, Disaster recovery site at 39 BC Road, etc.

However, I assure all members of the BL family that our IT department is fully geared up to meet these challenges. The IT team has a perfect blend of youngsters and people having long experience of working in BL and I am confident that together they will facilitate the Company to achieve its growth targets in the coming years.

My best wishes to the entire team.

EVOLUTION OF THE IT FUNCTION AT BALMER LAWRIE

Forty years of Information Technology in Balmer Lawrie

Balmer Lawrie has been an early bird in adopting Computers for business needs in the country and started off with the Hollerith Punch Card systems in **mid 70's**.

80's:

Personal Computers came into operation and Applications were written in-house using BASIC program for Financial Accounting (single entry system) and programs were developed using dbase III for the Cargo Division. 8" floppy drives and spool tape drives were used for backups. Line printers came into existence in the late 80's.

90's:

The Company had the then latest IBM compatible PCs. Multi-user, time-sharing systems (servers) using UNIX based operating systems were procured. Networking using serial ports came into being for connecting dumb terminals and PCs to these servers. Multi-user programs were developed using COBOL for Financial Accounting, Payroll, Travel, Cargo, IP, G&L and PC. 5 ¼" floppy disks were used for backups along with tape cartridges. Remote computers were connected using modems & multiplexers wherever required.

In the mid 90's, the Company embarked on a major journey towards change by introducing RDBMS platform and selected Sybase in this regard. Various Applications were developed jointly by external consultants and the company's in-house team, both for SBUs and Support Functions - G&L (IBOAS),

EVOLUTION OF THE IT FUNCTION AT BALMER LAWRIE

Financial Accounting (FINACT), Non-officers Payroll (NOPS), Perquisite system (MPSYS), T&T (BLTRAP) and LS (CMS).

Local area networks were upgraded from serial connectivity using line drivers to a concept called structured cabling using Hubs, Switches & appropriate panels / connectors. Optical fibre cables were introduced for external cabling. 3" floppy disks replaced the 5¼" disks and compact tape drives replaced the cartridge tape drives.

GUI (Graphical User Interface) based front-end application development tool was introduced and this gradually replaced the initially developed non-GUI based applications, and the Dumb Terminals were gradually replaced with the latest PC's (available at that point of time). IPIOS for SBU: IP was the first to get developed using this GUI. This development was done with the help of external consultants jointly with the in-house team.

2000 onwards:

IAS for SBU: PC was the first complete 'in-house development' using a GUI and this was followed by TRIO for SBU: T&T, GLIOS for SBU: G&L, BLLMS for SBU: LS, CFA for Financial Accounting and CPAY for Payroll & Perquisites. All these in-house developed applications had integration with CFA. Along with these the first package for CFS was also developed and this was with the help of external consultants. The function which was called as Management Services Division (MSD) was named as Information Technology (IT) Department.

Software as a consultancy business was tried out and the software that was developed for a Logistics client using MS-SQL & VB was subsequently adopted at our LS division with necessary modifications / improvements. This first and only project, apart from giving us good software (which is in operation till date) gave us a decent profit also.

The Company's data centre was set up at the Corporate Office and centralised data storage and application deployment were established and the local networks were integrated into a single company wide network using leased lines. This centralization helped in phasing out the SBU wise servers and also in standardizing the MIS which eventually helped in the subsequent companywide IT initiative that was to follow.

Some of the other major initiatives / milestones that were achieved during this period are as follows:

- The Company's Website was launched and the official mailing system using "balmerlawrie.com" was standardized during this decade.
- e-Procurement using outsourced agencies was started in the Company.
- A Disaster Recovery (DR) setup was implemented with the DR centre at Delhi.
- RFID / GPS based container tracking system for SBU: LI was implemented at all the CFS's.
- A vendor registration & evaluation portal was launched.
- The Company embarked on ERP implementation.

- Inputs from T S Sankar, Binayak Biswas and Ujjwal Pachal

THE FUTURE

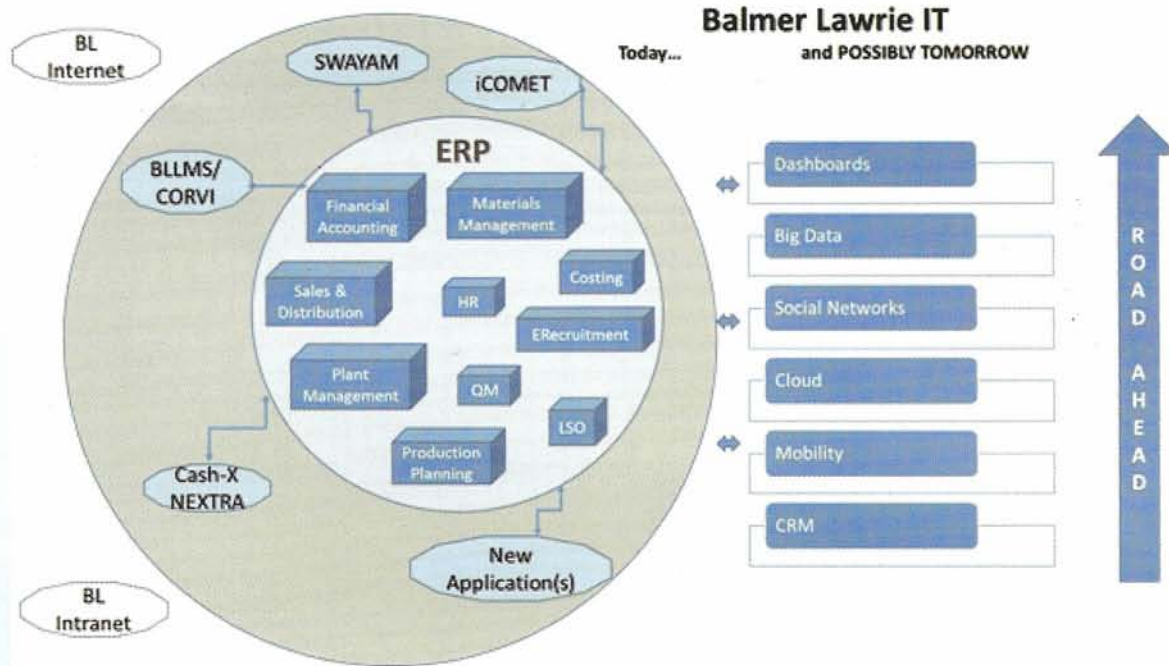
Balmer Lawrie Keeping Pace with Information Technology Headway

Balmer Lawrie has made significant progress in the last few years in implementation and adoption of IT in various SBUs/functions. User centric applications are running all aspects of business and are channelling data to and fro with core ERP system. The diagram on Pg.-5 illustrates as to where we are and what could be the possible direction as we go forward.

Business Dashboards – Will provide snapshots of key performance indicators across SBU's and Functions.

SBUs and Functions will generate transaction data, social media data, mobile data, complaints/grievances data, employee data, assets data etc. which fall into unstructured and structured data categories. Churning this data to understand will require **Big Data Analytics**.

THE FUTURE



Balmer Lawrie has understood the huge reach of **Social Networks** and has already established a *Facebook* presence. We will have to enhance our focus on these platforms to achieve diverse objectives ranging from brand building to providing information through social networks. The vacations business will possibly embrace these technologies most as it reaches out to end consumers.

Cloud Computing – Essentially means one can lease/rent shared assets and will not have to take the cost/effort of owning and maintaining it all. We can immensely benefit from this model where it will allow our manpower to conserve energy on running businesses instead of managing infrastructure. We could explore some low risk Cloud Deployment for an initial understanding. We also need to ensure that we are complying with Government guidelines for leveraging cloud services.

Immediate demand for information and ability to manage critical business functions from anywhere is driving **Mobile Computing**. Our Logistics businesses are already using handheld applications for real time business communication. Retail business of G&L, Employee-related applications and Travel Portal are likely to leverage mobile computing using smart phones, tablets etc .

Services SBUs may be early adopters of **Customer Relationship Management** applications to ensure a homogenous customer experience – irrespective of the communication channel. A 360-degree view of the customer – immediate transactions, leads generated, status of invoices – will be the intermediate stage. The end state will be to ensure *Analytics* can leverage these for enhanced Customer Satisfaction leading to retention and profitability.

SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES

Milestones covered in the recent past (2011 – till date)



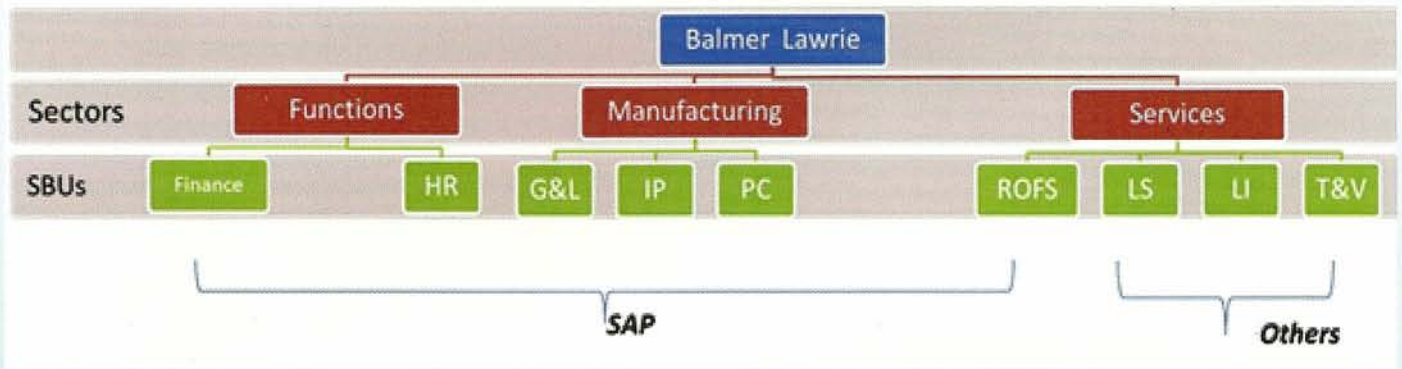
ERP Implementation:

ERP was envisaged as the Enterprise Software and a feasibility study for adopting an ERP was done. As an outcome of this study, a management consultant was selected and SAP as the ERP Software along with the implementation partner was chosen. Core committee was constituted by taking members from each SBU / Function. The as – is & to – be studies were done with GAP analysis so that the required customization was appropriately taken care of. SAP HR module started from April 2013. SBU: IP went live on SAP from 1st Aug 2013 along with the SAP's financial module called FICO for all the SBU's including those on legacy packages / systems. On the 1st of April 2014,

SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES

SBU: PC went live on SAP and the exercise on G&L is currently underway.

The IT landscape as given below shows that Post ERP implementation the Manufacturing Businesses will be on SAP and the Service Businesses will have their own applications which will be integrated with SAP.



SBU: Logistics Infrastructure

- "iCOMET", a web based application software solution for our CFSs was implemented in 2012 - 2013 and keeps track of the operations right from gate-in to billing and also maintains a decision support system with built-in MIS reports.
- A RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) based Solution along with an Application was implemented in the year 2012-2013 which helps in locating / identifying containers stacked in the yard quickly and at an accuracy level of +/- one container.
- A Customer Interface Portal (a Mobile Application tool) was implemented in the year 2013-14. This web based tool enabled our customers to handle a whole gamut of operations by themselves that they needed and which were crucial to them.

SBU: Logistics Services

- Mobile Application to capture status of Air Import and Air Export operations implemented on 1st March 2014
- A new project has been launched to implement a package (CORVI) to replace BLLMS

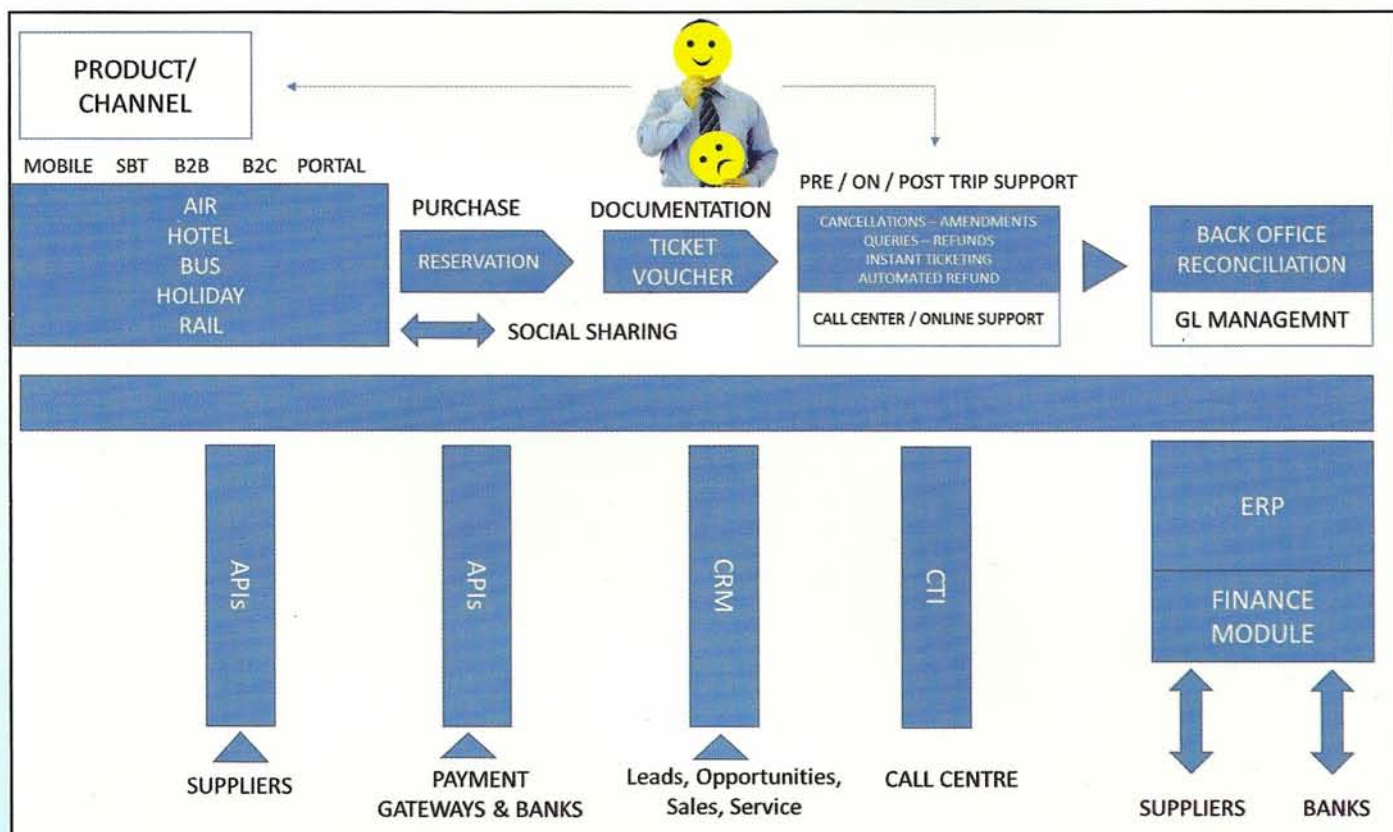
SBU: Travel & Vacations

- A Back-Office Application called "CashX" was implemented on 1st January 2012. This has enabled the SBU to generate invoice along with ticketing and simultaneous accounting.
- A travel portal for Flight and Hotel functionalities was implemented on 1st April 2012.
- A self-booking solution that enables Corporate and Travel Management Companies to integrate all the elements of their travel has been implemented for several marquee corporates.
- A mid-office application called "NEXTRA" is under implementation to take care of the B2B and B2C business. This has all the above facilities / features in-built into it and will be replacing the above applications / tools for T&V as and when it gets implemented. The Figure on Pg.-7 depicts the solution footprint of NEXTRA.

Infrastructure:

- The data centre at Corporate Office has been modernized / upgraded with more powerful blade servers and storage devices like SAN & DLT's.
- Implementation of a Mail Messaging Solution is in progress.
- A disaster recovery site is being set up at 39 BC Road, Kolkata.

SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES



NEXTRA solution landscape

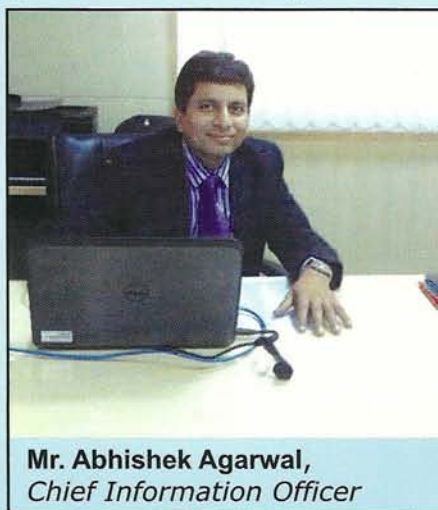
TEAM IT

"Technology is nothing. What's important is that you have a faith in people, that they're basically good and smart, and if you give them tools, they'll do wonderful things with them." - Steve Jobs

All of you would agree that the IT Function is all about People. Team IT is lead by Mr. Abhishek Agarwal, Chief Information Officer who joined Balmer Lawrie on 9th February 2015.

A seasoned professional, Abhishek did his B.E.(Computer Science) from BIT, Mesra, Ranchi and M.S. (Software Systems) from BITS, Pilani. During the various stages of his career, Abhishek acquired certifications in Sun Microsystems (SCSA/SCNA), Cisco (CCNA), Service Management (ITIL), Quality (CIQA) & Oracle (OCP-DBA). He is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) since 2008.

Abhishek started his career in 1995 at Ashok Leyland Information Technology (ALIT), Bangalore as Program Analyst. He joined Institute of Systems Studies & Analyses, Defence R & D Organization (ISSA, DRDO) at Delhi as a Scientist in 1996. 2004 onwards, he worked with Maruti Suzuki India Ltd., Bharti Airtel Ltd., Wipro Ltd. in various capacities. His last stint was with Vodafone India Ltd., Pune as Head - IT for a period of three years.



Mr. Abhishek Agarwal,
Chief Information Officer

Abhishek has diversified portfolio experience in businesses including Financials, Government / Defence, Manufacturing/Automotive, Telecommunications and Oil & Gas during his 20 years of professional career. His expertise lies in managing large Business Transformation Programs, Software Development, System Administration, Data Center Management, Program Governance & Management, Change Management, Contact Center Technology for Call Centers (CCT), CRM, Business Intelligence (BI) and SAP.

Some of his major professional achievements include development of Hire purchase & Lease system for Ashok Leyland Info. Tech., development and delivery of Geographical Information System and Weapon Simulation software for Indian Army, Architecting & delivery of Dealer Management System application and rolling out at 600+ locations in India, Network Designing & Interconnecting 750+ locations of Maruti Suzuki on MPLS, Implementation of Tracking system for

TEAM IT

the Maruti fleet of 2500+ trucks, Delivery of eCRM system at Bharti Airtel, Managing a large Outsourcing deal of Cairn Energy, Implementation of SAP in Cairn Energy India Ltd, Migration of Data Centers (Approx. 250+ servers, network devices & storages) with minimal downtime at Cairn Energy as well as Bharti Airtel, Call center Technology management for 80 Mn. Inbound and 20 Mn. Outbound calls at Bharti Airtel and Rolling out enhanced Pre-paid system for 140+ Mn. subscribers and Post-paid billing system of 3 Mn.

Subscribers in Vodafone India.

Abhishek was born in Kota, Rajasthan. His father is a retired Electrical engineer and mother a home maker. Abhishek spent most of his childhood in Kota, Jaipur and his professional career has been mostly in Delhi. He is married to Ms. Nitu, a Computer Scientist at DRDO, Ministry of Defence. He has two sons and his family is settled in Delhi. When free, Abhishek spends his time reading management books. He also likes travelling, photography and driving.



Glimpses from the IT Meet held in May 2014 at Vedic Village, Kolkata



The team is beautiful mix of talented and hardworking individuals representing Gen X and GenY. We got the opportunity to interact and chat with some of them.

Gen Y Speaks

We asked them how it felt to be part of the Corporate IT Team and the non-Kolkatans felt that the department was a home away from home.



My association with Balmer Lawrie is since June 2012 when I joined as an "Executive Trainee". I appreciate the work environment in my department. It feels like I am in a "Home away from Home". We work and enjoy like a family here. Due to the ongoing SAP implementation, many senior colleagues keep on visiting our department and we get a chance to interact with them. Working with our Implementation Partner and other service providers is helping us to enhance our skills and cater to the needs of the company, in a better way. I feel proud to work for a Company, which is going to complete 150 years of existence, shortly.

-Anurag Arora, Asst Manager [IT]



I joined Balmer Lawrie in July 2014. This being my first job I came here with new zeal, expectations and a little bit of fear and nervousness as I was entering in

the corporate world. But the warm welcoming nature of the people of this organization has really helped me in getting absorbed with the culture of this organization and makes me feel like another home away from home. I have truly enjoyed my stay here and I am looking forward to be a significant contributor in the progress and prosperity of this organization.

-Bhaskar Bharat, Executive Trainee, Corporate IT



I started my career with Balmer Lawrie in June 2012 and for the past 2 years, I have been working as part of the IT infra-

structure team. During this phase, I have always felt welcomed and found myself in a very conducive and a positive work environment. I have been entrusted with various important tasks which applies the latest information technologies in the market, and in course to achieve those tasks I have found support from all quarters of the department. Having a flat organizational structure has only accelerated the mechanism. So far it has been an excellent journey and I sincerely hope for many more exciting years ahead!

-Shrikant Yadav, Asst Manager [IT]



It has been a great time since I had joined Balmer Lawrie. I am a part of the IT Infra-structure team, which is responsible for running

Data Centre services smoothly. The job is challenging and requires attention at all times. I feel grateful for this opportunity right from the start of my career. Besides, we find here a lively and encouraging environment full of activities.

-Girish Chand Gupta, Asst Manager [IT]

Tete-e-tete with Mr. Partha Mitra, Chief Manager [IT]

How many years have you spent in IT and how has your experience been?

I joined BL in the IT Dept. in January 1988 at Delhi. I was looking after the entire IT installations at Delhi which includes Tours & Travel, Logistics and Co-ordination office. During this period I was engaged in implementation of Business Applications for SBU:T&T and SBU:LS. Then, I was transferred to Corporate IT in June, 1994. I worked till October, 2014 at Corporate IT. I was closely involved in the implementation of various applications at different locations. Initially I was engaged in development and implementation of Sybase based applications for SBU:TT, SBU:LS, Finance and Payroll. In the year 2004-05, I successfully lead the development project for first central server based application BLLMS for SBU:LS and implemented over private VPN. We handled various vendors and erected our Data Center to host central servers. We then successfully implemented an application BLTT for SBU:LS to connect six major foreign associates' systems and integrate with BLLMS system.

I lead another project for Central Financial System integrated with all business applications. We successfully implemented a back-office system CashX integrated with our Central Financial System for SBU:TT. I was engaged in the implementation of iComet system integrated with our Central Financial Accounting System for SBU:LI. On 1st August 2013 we successfully implemented SAP and I



Mr. Partha Mitra,
Chief Manager [IT]

lead the project to develop interface application to integrate business applications of all SBUs except SBU:IP. We also implemented Self Booking Tool application for SBU:TT. I was transferred to SBU:T&V from October 2014 to implement Mid-Office application. During the last 27 years I have gathered excellent experience in this organization. I have spent golden times with the stalwarts of the organization and cherished the achievements of IT.

How have you seen the IT function evolve over the period of time at BL?

I have seen various changes in technologies in this organization. Initially when I joined, it was central processing at Kolkata HO. The applications were written in BASIC. Then I have seen decentralized applications being implemented in COBOL. Then we witnessed a revolutionary change with the introduction of RDBMS platform SYBASE. All SBUs and corporate applications were developed with RDBMS as SYBASE.

Then private VPN and Central Server Based applications were implemented for all SBUs and Corporate Finance and HR. We established our own data center and disaster recovery site. Automated applications were implemented for SBU:LI and SBU:TT. In this process, we also procured packages from various service providers and implemented them. Now, we are in the process to implement Mid-Office application in SBU:T&V. Additionally, I am in a role to meet the customers and understand their technology landscape and convince them to adopt our Self Booking Tool solution.

What according to you is the biggest strength of IT?

I think the biggest strength of IT is to adopt technology evolution. Also, IT understands business need and delivers to meet customer satisfaction.

What steps are being taken to keep pace with the changing technological trends and provide best in class support to all the SBUs/Functions at BL?

We are always keeping us updated about technology trends and migrating our applications accordingly for all SBUs/Functions.

What will be your message for newcomers in IT?

We should always keep us upgraded to deliver applications on latest technology platforms. This will give our SBUs a competitive edge. We should continuously improve our skills and enable our organization to attain the defined strategic goal.

Tete-e-tete with Mr. Pradeep Thekutte, AVP [IT Infrastructure]

How many years have you spent in IT and how has your experience been?

I would be completing 26 years with Balmer Lawrie this April, during which I have not only evolved as a person but professionally progressed as a Manager. Being instrumental for introduction of computerisation in Mumbai based units, the responsibilities entrusted upon me was not just to set up computerisation practically at all Mumbai based units but also to guide, train and encourage wide computer usage amongst users.



Mr. Pradeep Thekutte,
AVP [IT Infrastructure]

My journey so far has been extremely challenging, satisfying and fulfilling and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the Company. Being placed at Mumbai during my evolving period has given me great exposure to work with almost all SBUs within Balmer Lawrie and has also taught me to lead, overcome challenges and partner with each SBU in leveraging business benefits.

How have you seen the IT function evolve over the period of time at BL?

IT in Balmer Lawrie has gone through immense changes and it

Tete-e-tete with Mr. Pradeep Thekutte, AVP [IT Infrastructure]

has been a truly fascinating experience to be part of this evolving process. IT has come a long way from being a decentralised architecture to a centralised one with its Data Centre at Corporate Office in Kolkata. Improvements in Network connectivity has led to Balmer Lawrie adapting to Virtual Private Network(VPN) and Internet for connecting various locations to the Central Data Centre.

The Centralised setup has immensely facilitated in standardisation of Business Applications packages across various SBUs. Business Applications software in Balmer Lawrie has moved from traditional legacy applications written in computer languages like COBOL, FOXBASE to RDBMS – SYBASE and MSSQL and later adaption to SAP.

What according to you is the biggest strength of IT?

It is the team of people which makes the difference and is the biggest strength of IT. The team is a blend of youth and experienced who have the right attitude and spirit, going the extra mile and making sure to drive business excellence by delivering the right quality of product. There are some extremely talented, hardworking

and efficient people within the department.

What steps are being taken to keep pace with the changing technological trends and provide best in class support to all the SBUs/Functions at BL?

Technology is a great business driver and could be effectively used to automate systems, drive efficiency gains and keep pace with quickly evolving strategic business goals. During the last few years, Balmer Lawrie has undertaken a series of initiatives to keep pace with the changing technological trends, one of its initiatives is introduction of SAP which would enable it to adopt best practices from the industry and at the same time integrate all business applications to generate Business Intelligence for decision making. Most of the Business application packages within the company is undergoing upgrade to meet the competing demand from the changing business scenario. One such technological adoption that has been in use is RFID based tracking and tracing of containers for SBU: Logistics Infrastructure which was introduced over 5 years ago and has immensely helped the business in cutting short the timelines in tracking of containers

within the yard.

There are few projects planned for implementation, one of them is MS Exchange Server, which will allow easy integration with in-house business applications, faster provisioning of new accounts. Future integration with Lync (unified communication platform) would enable user to have a consistent client experience for presence, instant messaging, voice, video and meetings.

Other project being planned for implementation is Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) which would centralise user desktop from local machines to central data centre and would enable user to access his/her desktop from any capable device like Desktop PC, Laptop or even smart phones apart from faster provisioning of user desktops.

What will be your message for newcomers in IT?

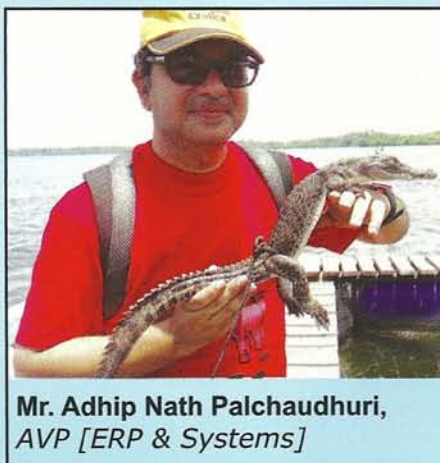
Balmer Lawrie is a wonderful place to work in. Strive for excellence, commitment, passion combined with hard work. Have a positive attitude and just grab opportunities that come your way. Nurture a good reading habit especially technology and industry specific articles and look for solutions to generate business value for Balmer Lawrie.

Tete-e-tete with Mr. Adhip Nath Palchaudhuri, AVP [ERP & Systems]

How many years have you spent in IT and how has your experience been?

I have spent over 18 years in the IT industry – though most of it in Consulting/IT Services outside Balmer Lawrie.

In the early days, we had the luxury of longer project execution time – that allowed learning to seep in deeper. The earlier era also allowed for other incentives like ESOPs, more overseas assignments etc. – making the industry a lot more lucrative for professionals. A lot of that has changed with increasing cost pressures on the IT industry and the fact that they have to do a lot more with a lot less. However, the industry has grown in stature and from the point where most of it had been support and maintenance – the top players are now in the big league and working with the latest technology and influencing business outcomes for Fortune 500



Mr. Adhip Nath Palchaudhuri,
AVP [ERP & Systems]

companies.

Speaking for myself, I have enjoyed the fringe benefits of working in the industry and have travelled to close to 20 countries. As a professional in the IT industry I have relished the experience of diversity – opening new accounts in new geographies, program managing BPO engagements, working in one of the

first few SAP implementations in India, scaling up revenue and delivery – all throughout being energized by the tremendous commitment of young professionals who, on a daily basis, go beyond their call of duty to work during ungodly hours for anonymous customers in unknown geographies.

How have you seen the IT function evolve during your tenure at BL?

My tenure at Balmer Lawrie has been relatively short with me joining with the commencement of the BLESS – ERP program in February 2012. However, the pace of change has been scorching with the last 3 calendar years seeing a virtual rehauling of our entire Applications landscape – with SAP ERP replacing the legacy applications of the Manufacturing SBUs and each of the Services SBUs, either implementing or

Tete-e-tete with Mr. Adhip Nath Palchaudhuri, AVP [ERP & Systems]

kicking off transformational projects for their operations. A set of IT infrastructure projects have also taken off – ensuring that we remain on newer platforms, in better control of security and service levels.

Quite a few youngsters have joined the IT function and that has brought in energy and freshness amongst the entire group. This period has also seen the BLESS ERP program being executed from the Corporate Office. The program structure - with SBU members spending considerable time as Core Team members - has resulted in stronger bonds between the IT function and business teams – which will hold us in good stead.

What according to you is the biggest strength of IT?

The strength of any Service function is the quality of people. And nowhere is it more evident

than the Balmer Lawrie IT function. As a lateral hire, I believe that the organization is blessed to have a team comprising the likes of Krishanu, Partha, Kaushik, Binayak, Hermeet and others. In an industry where job hopping is common, the bulk of the IT team has continued for a long period – ensuring very deep relationships with internal customers, rich insights about the businesses and strong technical knowledge. I am proud to be a part of this team.

What steps are being taken to keep pace with the changing technological trends and provide best in class support to all the SBUs/Functions at BL?

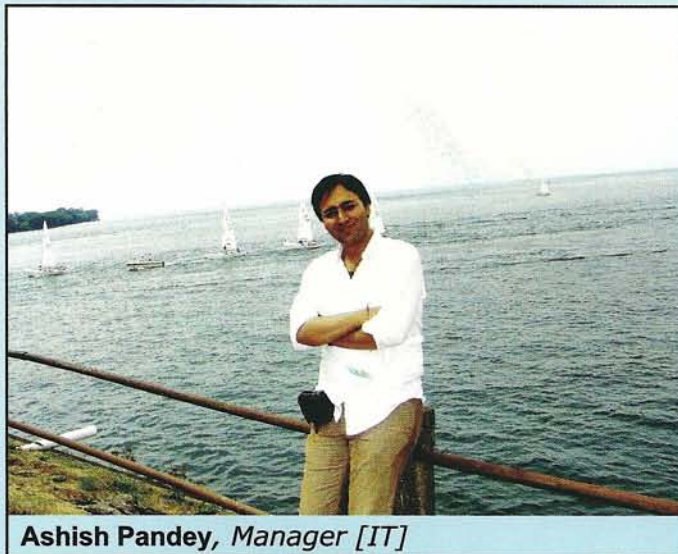
The paradigm needs to change from us providing support to the SBUs/Functions to us providing them with capabilities with which

they will be able to win in the market place. We can stay relevant only if we are able to add value in helping them either increase revenues or cut costs. In order to operate with this emerging paradigm, the team needs to be much more business aware and be articulate in conceiving IT projects with business impacts. Training on new technologies, investment in infrastructure and processes, recruitment of fresh talent – all these avenues are being pursued to ensure that we are able to maintain high service levels and act as Change Agents.

What will be your message for newcomers in IT?

I love cricket and have been fascinated by the talent and determination of the Waugh twins. My message for newcomers is “You have to be born Mark, but you CAN BECOME Steve”.

Know Your Fellow Balmer Lawrien...



Ashish Pandey, Manager [IT]

How long have you been working with Balmer Lawrie and currently what is your role/dept?

This January I will be completing around one and a half years here. I am working in the Corporate Office, as Manager in Corporate IT and I am mainly working on SAP platform and applications.

What do you like about Balmer Lawrie?

There is a deep sense of pride for the culture and camaraderie among people. People do try add a personal touch while working, which is rare to see in the current business environment. Reaching out to my reporting officers and discussing issues with them has been extremely easy which creates a positive conduit for work.

What is your most memorable moment in Balmer Lawrie?

I will say the IT Meet which we had at Vedic Village, Kolkata

was one of the best time which I got to spend at Balmer Lawrie. Interactions were livid with Senior Management and the IT Team. I learned about other SBU's and business in an easy environment and friendly banter.

Who is your inspiration in life and why?

I have derived inspiration from a lot of people ranging from my family, friends, colleagues and almost everyone who are good at something. My thinking is influenced a lot by my guide at IIT-R, Dr. BK Mishra who helped me to think logically and made me understand the close relationship between academics and industry. Another person who has helped me in shaping my career and goals is Martin Comroe, my Manager in my previous organization, IBM. He taught me basics of presentations, etiquettes, communications, handling the client and even guided me in my personal matters. I am deeply influenced by my mother's ability to be a rock solid pillar during difficult situations. As of today, I am influenced a lot by my wife and a wonderful kid who makes me do anything and everything.

What are your hobbies?

I am addicted to English TV Series and Movies in general. In my free time I read both fiction and non-fiction. Being in IT I am a technology enthusiast, so gadgets and reading about new applications is another thing which I love to do. Writing is another passion of mine and at times I write articles/satires and short stories.

Place you belong to and who all are there in your family?

My hometown is Rewa, MP. I have my 89 year old grandfather, mother, father, younger brother, wife and 2 year old son, Advik.

Any message for Balmer Lawrie employees.

It's not the end of the game but it's the journey which makes it breath-taking and interesting. We call it “The Race is on!”

Know Your Fellow Balmer Lawrien...

How long have you been working with Balmer Lawrie and currently what is your role/dept?

I am working with Balmer Lawrie for almost seven years now. I have been in Corporate IT throughout. Currently I am working in the Infrastructure team as Deputy Manager(IT).

What do you like about Balmer Lawrie?

I have started my career with Balmer Lawrie. So I am emotionally attached to the organization. I like the fact that BL cares for its employees and that our leaders can be approached by one and all for voicing concerns.

What is your most memorable moment in Balmer Lawrie?

I have had my share of personal ups and downs while working



Hermeet Kaur Bhangu,
Dy. Manager [IT]

here. I remember a particularly low phase where my colleagues had been extremely supportive. I can never forget the warmth I

received during that time.

Who is your inspiration in life and why?

I am deeply inspired by my Dad. He has set an example for me by following two things- Giving your hundred percent in whatever you do and how we should always try to help the less privileged in life.

What are your hobbies?

I like painting and reading.

Place you belong to and who all are there in your family?

My hometown is Rajgangpur, Orissa. There are six members in my family- My grandfather, parents, brother and sister-in-law.

Any message for Balmer Lawrie employees.

Every little contribution in our work matters. So let's make the best of this time and opportunities that are being provided to us.

Tete-e-tete with Mr. Manash Mukherjee

Your journey at Balmer Lawrie

I have been associated with the organization for 21 years 8 months and during my journey with Balmer Lawrie, I have come across some beautiful minds and some great leaders. Great ideas were expressed and we had to give shape to those ideas with the application of Information Technology. My journey at Balmer Lawrie was exciting as we were always in search of something new, implementing and getting that adopted by the users. Bringing change was never smooth, but with the support of my seniors and the team beside me, it was possible and enjoyable.

Your personal and professional achievements

During my tenure in Balmer Lawrie, I have seen a sea change in the area of Information Technology. I joined here with the knowledge of RDBMS from my prior employment in Dunlop India Ltd. I was entrusted with the responsibility of changing the software platform from COBOL to Sybase (RDMBS) along with the IT team. The transformation was an achievement and it was carried out successfully across all SBUs. This was done with the help of a



Mr. Manash Mukherjee
superannuated as SVP[IT] on 31st January 2015 after successfully completing around 28 years of service. We spoke to him to know about his journey at Balmer Lawrie and his post-retirement plans.

team who adopted the new platform and put that to practice. Online systems were built up and made operationally working for each SBU and integrated with centralized financial accounting system. All Balmer Lawrie locations were connected by VPN and locally by LAN. Web based systems balmerlawrie.com, mailing systems, intranet etc.

were implemented. ERP implementation was conceptualized and for doing that a Management Consultant, Implementation Partner and SAP as the ERP flavor were selected. Frankly speaking I will like to share these achievements with the team which was a part in this journey.

Your most memorable moment

In April 1996, the first online Financial Accounting System started on RDBMS, which was a memorable day for me as huge effort both technical and managerial went in to see that go live in BL. Another memorable moment was in 2013 when SAP was operationally used, since it was a fruit of huge effort put in by the organization and I was a part of the project since its inception.

IT function is all about people. Your thoughts on Team IT...

Yes, Information Systems requires two types of people - one who makes it and the other who uses it and both are equally important part of the system. Information Technology is perhaps one of the technology fields which is evolving at a very fast pace with high degree of

Tete-e-tete with Mr. Manash Mukherjee

obsolescence. Hence, people who make it have to keep on learning new technology quickly and put that to practice, while the users have to keep on adopting new applications in their areas of working. The IT team that way has to perform the role of a change agent to a large extent.

Who all are there in your family.

I have my mother, wife, two sons and a daughter in law in my family.

What do you plan to do post retirement?

There is no end to learning in the field of Information Technology and Information Management. I

wish to be in touch with the academia post retirement.

Any message for Balmer Lawrie

Look forward, adopt new technology and be a part of the change that will make Balmer Lawrie a technology driven company.

KKR Walks Down Memory Lane...



Krishanu Ray, AVP [Applications], Kaushik Biswas, Chief Manager [IT] and Ritu Mittal, Sr. Manager [IT]-KKR- joined Balmer Lawrie in the IT department and have spent around two decades together. They took time off to walk down memory lane.

KK: We joined BL in 1990 just a couple of months apart. The recruitment advertisement had come up in one of the local English dailies and both of us had applied for the post of "Computer Programmer". The recruitment process consisted of a written-test (about 100 candidates) followed by a series of interviews before we received the final appointment letter. To be selected as a part of a Public Sector organization was indeed a happy occasion. Strangely, even today, I (Kaushik) still have the paper-cutting of that particular advertisement against which we had applied and been selected.

Ritu: My journey in BL started in April 1996 against a recruitment advertisement. When I joined there was a lot of resistance and had very strange experiences; thankfully I could overcome it with the cooperation of the seniors. 1st project was officers' payroll. The payroll was to go-live for grade E4 and above and that too in November, the month of my wedding. I was working to meet the target before my marriage on 24th November. However, one evening closer to the date, when we were reviewing the checklist I found that the server had crashed as someone had deleted the operating system file. In the process I couldn't take even a day's leave before the

Balmer Lawrie & Co. Ltd
(A Government of India Enterprise)

We are a professionally managed fast growing company with proven track record in manufacturing and marketing a wide range of industrial products and services all over India. To sustain our rapid growth, we are looking for the following personnel.

Post Location	Scale of Pay Emoluments p.m.	Qualification/ Experience/Age	Job profile
1. Programmer - Calcutta	Rs.825-50-1825- Rs.1050-50-1750- 60-2110 Max Rs.2372/2796 Max Rs.4085/4458	Graduate in any discipline with minimum 2/3 years experience in COBOL and PC Software, such as dBase-III, Lotus 1-2-3 etc. Exposure to UNIX environment will have an added advantage. Age : 24 - 28 years.	The incumbent will be required to write programs for development of various applications software as per users' requirement. He will also undertake the responsibility of implementation and operation.
2. Executive (Systems) Dy Manager (Systems) Cochin	Rs.1760-60-1940-70- 2460/Rs.1700-70- 1980-75-2655 Max Rs.3488/3925 Max Rs.5147/5712	Graduate in any discipline with about 7 years relevant experience in various applications - finance and data base management system. Working experience in COBOL and UNIX is desirable. Knowledge of 'C', DBMS and CADD package will be an added advantage. Age : Around 30 years.	The incumbent will be responsible for running the EDP Section independently and assisting user departments in design, development and implementation of computerised systems.

GENERAL

(1) The above emoluments consist of Basic, DA, Ad hoc, HRA and CCA only. Besides, benefits like medical assistance, reimbursement of Goodie/Car running expenses, productivity linked incentive, gratuity, CPF, Post-Retiral Medical Assistance, Leave Encashment, LTA are admissible as per rules of the Company. (2) Selected candidates will be placed in the appropriate scale depending upon experience, qualification etc. (3) All Govt directives including relaxation of age by 5 years in respect of SC/ST candidates shall apply. (4) Outstation candidates will be reimbursed to and fro 1st Class/AC 2 tier Rail fare by the shortest route on production of travel proof. (5) Candidates working in Govt/Semi-Govt/PSUs either should apply through proper channel or produce NOC at the time of interview failing which no reimbursement of fare will be made. (6) Company reserves the right to reject any and/or all applications without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Candidates fulfilling the above requirements should only apply and send complete bio-data within 15 days from the advertisement date superseding the post applied to General Manager (Personnel), Balmer Lawrie & Co. Ltd., 21 Netaji Subhas Road, Calcutta 700 001.

(A member of the IEP Super Large Group of Companies) AS/HR

wedding, which was fortunately on a Sunday.

Kaushik: My initial posting was in IP, Kolkata and in September 1997, I was transferred to Corporate Office. There were some ongoing issues with computerization initially and I was asked by the union not to take up any jobs and just log in my attendance.

Krishanu: I started my journey from G&L Kolkata in July 1990. At that time most of the factory operations like invoicing, stock ledger, etc. were maintained manually. So my job was to develop systems to convert these manual operations into computer based systems and processes. It was great fun and a new learning process for everyone present. The

people in the line function of business played a vital role, particularly.

Kaushik: I still remember the way EDP used to function in those days. Hard-copy documents from the units would be sent to the EDP department and all sorts of codes would be put on them. Data-entry operators would key in this data in the system. This would be followed by processing, steps of which were kept written on copies. Outputs was printed and sent to the units along-with the base documents. Our appointment at the two Kolkata units was probably the

KKR Walks Down Memory Lane...

first step to de-centralize applications in Kolkata.

KKR: In one instance when our server crashed, the whole team in the Corporate Office stayed back with the engineer. Once the machine was up, we stayed back the whole night to recover databases so that people could do transactions the next day.

Kaushik: One incident that comes to my mind was during the development of an Attendance Monitoring application. This application absorbed data from the time recording machines. The time administrator used this data to provide inputs for preparing salary. The first day this was to be made operational, I was picked up from my house early morning and I reached office before 6 AM when the shift was scheduled to start. Sadly, due to some understanding problems with the union, the employees refused to use these machines. However, things got resolved over a period of time.

Ritu: In 1997-98, when MS Office was introduced in BL, since I had prior knowledge, I was chosen to impart training to the users. I was given the project to develop Travel system using PowerBuilder. I had no prior knowledge of PowerBuilder. The new system was designed and developed by me under Mr. Niraj Gupta and Mr. Manash Mukherjee. My Delhi trips for user inputs were very interesting. This package was used till CashX was introduced and was the first in-house developed GUI based application.

Kaushik: Another interesting incident that is still afresh took place when IPIOS was being implemented at Thurbhe. Till then, BL users had never used GUI based applications and some of the users (ones in the higher age group) had great difficulties in tackling the mouse. It was a great struggle – bringing the mouse to point to the required field.

KKR: Those days BL had distributed servers across the country. Effecting changes in these applications was a

great challenge. The way it was managed in those days looks very primitive in today's parlance. Modifications / additions were done centrally and documentation used to be prepared. These would be sent to the locations for necessary incorporation. There would be understanding issues and implementation differences were the call of the day. But in the end, these got sorted out.

KKR: Occasionally we would have to login to the remote servers and make changes. This connection was done over STD which was costly in those days. MSD had one STD connection for doing this and which was kept locked to avoid misuse. We all shared this as per requirement. A register was to be maintained with the details of the usage.

KKR: We were all part of one particular system that was in vogue at that time in the department. Mr. Niraj Gupta was the Head of IT. There used to be a register in which all of us had to sign to record our attendance. After 9:40 am, the register would be taken and placed in his cabin. Late comers had to go into his cabin and sign. This itself was a deterrent. To top it, a fine had to be paid for late comings of more than three days. The amount so collected was used for partying at the end of the month.

KKR: With e-mail still in its nascent stage, data was sent to and fro through floppies.

KKR: Y2K was a hyped episode. Lot of precautions related to Y2K compliance was initiated. On 31st December 1999 we stayed back in office till midnight and checked all the systems. In fact all the team members across locations were in office. We brought in the New Year peacefully for BL and all was in place in spite of the big hype created globally.

KKR: We had an eventful stint till now and we look forward to the journey ahead which we are confident would be strewn with memorable moments to cherish.

Padhee's Passions



Sanjeev Padhee, Sr. Manager [IT] is a person who can't be ignored. When not working Padhee nurtures hobbies like photography, biking, running and many more. Padhee loves exploring nature and enjoys trekking and camping; he never forgets to carry his camera on these jaunts. He loves to capture nature, people and moments that tell a story, with his lens. As a child, the 1st camera he experimented with was a Yashica A with TLR (Twin Lens Reflex) owned by his father. Over the period of time, he upgraded to DSLR (Digital Single Lens Reflex) and the model is Nikon D5200 with DX format. He has few Nikon F mount lenses like 35mm, 55-300mm and 18-55mm. A photography buff, Sanjeev has attended few training sessions, organized by Nikon India.

Padhee owns a B' Twin Cycle and the model is Riverside 3. This is a hybrid cycle, which is meant for 70% on road cycling and 30% off road cycling. Till now, his best performance is 74.72 KM in 4 hours and 26 minutes with an average speed of 16.8 KMs/Hour from Sanpada, Navi Mumbai to

Dodhani. In a single day, he had once completed 96KMs. Padhee has also completed two half marathons of 21 KMs, one in Mumbai and the other in Kolkata. In the Kolkata Marathon held in 2013, he completed 21 KMs in 2 hours 59 mins. An animal lover, Padhee loves to spend time with Goku and Tia, his dogs. Goku is a "Pug" and Tia is a "Shih Tzu".

Know Your Leader...

1. Your corporate journey prior to joining Balmer Lawrie

Prior to joining Balmer lawrie in 2015, I was working as General Manager (Lube Complex), and was in charge of Indian Oil's Lube operations in Southern India.

I joined Indian Oil as a Management Trainee in 1983 with a Bachelor's Degree in Chemical Engineering and an MBA in Marketing. After rigorous training in various disciplines, such as – Operations, Aviation, Technical Services, Lubes, LPG, Retail and Direct Sales, I was initially posted to manage a POL installation in Salem in Tamil Nadu and thereafter was transferred to the Lubes & Technical Services group. My journey in Indian Oil has been mostly in the Lubes & Technical Services Group at various places, such as – Chennai, Madurai, Bangalore, Pune and Colombo.

Between 2006 and 2009 I served as Senior Vice President at Lanka IOC PLC, Colombo, an overseas venture of Indian Oil in Sri Lanka. During this period I also served as the Director on the Board of Ceylon Petroleum Storage Terminals Ltd, which is the common user facility for petroleum storage and distribution in Sri Lanka.

2. How does it feel to be part of the Balmer Lawrie family?

It gives me a wonderful and pleasant feeling to be part of the Balmer Lawrie family that prides itself for its Professional Managerial skills and Visionary Approach. I look forward to an exciting and abundant future working in the Balmer Lawrie family.

3. Significant professional and personal achievements

During my stint as Zonal Retail Manager for southern region, I spearheaded the business process re-engineering of the Lubes group and was instrumental in the development and nurturing of channels of distribution, supply chain management, distributor development, retail market development, brand management and capability building.



Mr. D Sothi Selvam took over as Director [Manufacturing Businesses] on 2nd January 2015. A perfect gentleman and a highly professional person, Mr. Sothi Selvam is a leader who leads from the front.

During my three year tenure with Lanka IOC PLC, I played the lead role in setting up a modern lube manufacturing plant with a state of the art laboratory in Sri Lanka besides establishing the lube manufacturing operations and the lube business in Sri Lanka. I also played lead role in establishing the bunkering business and bitumen business in the island.

During my tenure at Karnataka from 2009 to 2012, apart from steering the retail, institutional and OE sub-groups, I held the office of Central Public Information Officer under the RTI Act.

During 2012-13, I headed the largest lube manufacturing facility of Indian Oil Corporation and was accredited for bringing in a culture of total quality management through a world class quality management system.

During my early career, I was instrumental in business tie-ups with leading automotive OEMs, such as – Hyundai Motor Corporation, Mitsubishi, Skoda, Bajaj Auto, TAFE, Kinetic Honda, Tata Motors, ELGI and also played a lead role in many long term business tie-ups with major industrial units.

4. Who all are there in your family?

My family consists of my wife and two children. My wife is working as Assistant Director with the Government of Tamil Nadu. My daughter is currently pursuing her Doctorate in Pharmaceutical Bio-Technology at the University of Illinois in Chicago, USA and my son is presently doing his BE in Electronics and Communication Engineering at Anna University, Chennai.

5. Who is the person who influenced you the most and why?

I cannot single out any one person. There are several persons; however, my parents, my wife, my Maths teacher in School and my first Divisional Manager in IOC come on top of my mind. This is because they were deeply interested in my well-being and taught me self-discipline, ethics, honesty, empathy and made me a confident person in my life.

6. What is your favourite one liner?

Attitude is everything.

7. What are your hobbies?

Playing Cricket, Table Tennis and Shuttle Badminton, Reading and Watching Television.

8. Which is your favourite travel destination?

Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu.

9. Two things that you would want your colleagues to know about you

(i) I believe in collaboration and team work rather than command and control.

(ii) With normal actions you get normal results and if you want extraordinary results, you must take some extraordinary actions.

10. Your management style or mantra

Vision without execution is simply day-dreaming. In this time of challenges, there can be no substitute for strategic thinking and tireless, relentless execution.

11. Message for all Balmer Lawrie employees

I am truly honoured by the opportunity and responsibility of

Know Your Leader...

becoming the Director [Manufacturing Businesses] of such a great organisation. I am aware, there are lot of expectations from me. I am absolutely confident that despite challenges in our SBUs and

in the environments in which we operate, our Company with its strategic vision is incredibly aligned to face those challenges and to maintain the growth trajectory. I believe in Team Work and with

the support of my fellow Balmer Lawriens, I am confident that together we can convert the challenges into opportunities and take our organisation to newer and greater heights.

Tete-e-tete with Anand Dayal, ex-Director [Manufacturing Businesses]



Mr. Anand Dayal superannuated on 31st December 2014 after successfully completing 38 years of service. It was pleasure talking to him and knowing about his vision of the manufacturing businesses.

Your journey at Balmer Lawrie...

I joined Balmer Lawrie on 1st December, 1976 in the Travel Division at Mumbai and after four years I moved to the Container Division. The stint there was a very short one as I had to move back to Travel again. In September 1984, I got the opportunity to join Container Division as Marketing Manager and after 3 years, in 1987 was moved to Director(B)'s office to co-ordinate for the manufacturing businesses with the Oil Co's who constituted 80% to 90% of IP and G&L business. This stint gave me a deep dive into both these businesses. Thereafter, after my movement back to Containers, Bombay in 1991 since then my work life was centered on the Industrial Packaging Business of the organisation. I spent significant years and was fortunate to be associated with several firsts. However, I would rate the introduction of lightweight spiral seam steel drums of 20 gauge thickness as a substitute for 18 gauge double seam steel drums, the launch of the Valerex 20 and 200 plastic drums as significant achievements during that time. In the year 1991 we successfully launched the Valerex 20 litre drum and in 1994 the Valerex 200 lite drum was launched. Maintaining market leadership for steel drums and achieving market leadership for Valerex 20 and 200 was particularly satisfying, especially transcending from 80% Govt./PSU sector business to 80% private sector business for steel drums.

My journey was greatly satisfying as I got the opportunity to continuously learn and work under the

tutelage of illustrious mentors and great leaders, who I acknowledged in my previous interview. I was fortunate to have moved through different businesses, learn the skills of varied areas and finally don the hat of a Director.

The unique culture of BL was successful in encompassing me in its warmth and care making my stint here a very memorable one, dotted with myriads of cherishable moments.

How do you see the manufacturing businesses evolve in the next 5 years?

Year 2014 was a very difficult year for all businesses. All the businesses saw profits going down. Let me explain businesswise. I'll begin with Performance Chemicals (PC). We enjoy market leadership in fat liquors in competition with MNCs like BASF, Clariant and others. Our USP is the indigenous technology of Sulpho Chlorination. When we ventured into the leather chemicals business, CLRI helped us with this technology. No other company in the country manufactures fat liquors using this technology. Since we had a quality edge over our competitors, the demand was very high. This led to constraint in capacity and we were finding it difficult to meet the demand by customers. The Board has approved the capacity expansion project and hopefully it will be commissioned by April 2015. This would help in fulfilment of the pent up demand.

In leather chemicals, we are in the middle segment that is the wet end. We are not into beam house (dehairing, cleaning) and the last end (finishing chemicals). Thus we are at a disadvantage as compared to MNCs because we do not provide end-to-end solutions. We have been exploring options to get the technology to manufacture chemicals in all the segments and we have been successful. We are in discussions with an Italian company for manufacturing finishing chemicals and beam house. We have tested their products and they are ready to give us the technology and buy 50% of the output. We will then be an end-to-end manufacturer of leather chemicals. PC was making losses; in October it broke even, in November it made losses but in December it broke even again and I am confident this will now be sustainable given that market conditions remain stable.

Tete-e-tete with Anand Dayal, ex-Director [Manufacturing Businesses]

Greases & Lubricants (G&L) embarked on the retail path and I feel this is the only way to increase volumes. It has taken us more time to reach the volumes we had thought of. We have enjoyed excellent credibility as a premium grease product supplier. We need to leverage this with the oils in the retail segment. We have strong potential backed up with strong R&D. G&L went on a tailspin from April to October. However, in November it broke even and December it was in the black and I am confident now onwards it will be making profits. Once again, I would temper this assertion with the caveat of stable market conditions. G&L is focused on distribution channel for growth in the retail segment. Our success will lie in implementing distribution channel network in 2015-16, as envisaged, there should be no looking back.

It has been a challenging year for the Industrial Packaging (IP) business. April to August were very good months; September to November were loss making months. As a market leader successfully getting over the MSME hit was a feather in the cap. We expect to do more volumes in this year than the previous year (market remaining stable) even with the loss of government business. Corrective measures on raw material procurement should bring the SBU into profit and sustain it in the months to come. The Sewri, Kolkata and High Throughput Plant (HTP) at Taloja are the three biggest challenges. In IP, Sewri discussions commenced with the collectives on closure and hopefully this will get resolved amicably. The Kolkata team is putting together a proposal for achieving breakeven and viability. As far as HTP is concerned, it has taken more time than expected to reach the desired level of productivity and efficiency. I am confident that it will be making profits in 2015.

The performance of the Refinery & Oil Field Services (ROFS) business is worse than the previous year but we have received new orders and this is indicative of us getting back to our desired performance levels. We are examining the area of sludge disposal. Today we only clean and we return the oil and the sludge. By working on sludge disposal, we can create a niche area for this business, as nobody does this in India currently.

Your most memorable moment at Balmer Lawrie...

PESB had announced my selection as Director in the afternoon. The next morning when I entered the Sewri factory, I was welcomed with bursting of crackers. All the workmen of G&L and IP were waiting to shake my hand and congratulate me. I met all of them and their love and affection was deeply overwhelming. I'm blessed that I could win over the good wishes of so many people across the

organisation.

Which is that one significant achievement that you would always cherish?

Seeing the high throughput barrel manufacturing plant at Taloja working from end to end and watching a vision and dream come true is something that I will cherish always. The quality of the barrels manufactured is par excellence and we have to continuously work towards fighting competition. The fixed cost of this plant is lower than that of Asaoti, which is our model plant for IP. This is remarkable as Asaoti is a contracted plant. Asaoti can make 2300 drums and HTP can go to 5400 drums in 8 hrs. So, on a per drum basis we are well placed competitively.

What are your post retirement plans?

The Company was very kind by nominating me to Balmer Lawrie Van Leer (BLVL), our JV Company. I will take some time off until I get government approval and then I will take charge at BLVL.

Message for Balmer Lawriens...

BL has been a company that cares about people. To my mind it is this feeling of being cared about, which inspires superlative performance. I do hope that everyone will be able to continue this tradition and wish everyone all the best and success.

TALENT UNLIMITED



Charcoal Sketches by
Prasenjit Roy,
Dy. Manager [HR]



THE 148th FOUNDATION DAY OF BALMER LAWRIE

It was an immensely honourable and proud moment for all the employees of Balmer Lawrie to be celebrating its 148th year of existence, which emphatically proves the fact that not many companies can survive for such a long period in the midst of such fierce competition in the today's world. The CMD of the company in his speech too, aptly endorsed the fact that not many companies are able to sustain and survive for so long. Indeed, it's a great achievement! Hail all the employees! An occasion and an event to remember: the stupendous and relentless hard work done unceasingly by a team of sincere young and senior employees of Balmer Lawrie, who put up an extremely flawless and organised show to commemorate this grand occasion, was noteworthy.

In the vicinity of Kolkata, in a venue called 'Swabhumi', all the employees with their near and dear family members assembled. A pretty and lovely compere with a husky voice enchanted the whole gathering and skilfully led us through the entire day's events ably supported by a gentlemen who had an enormous and witty sense of humour which sometimes made all of us grin, giggle and laugh. He was undoubtedly very good. The function was inaugurated by releasing green and white balloons (colour of the company) in the sky. Its abyss was unusually bright and clear as this day was without a single cloud and was filled with the brilliance of the sun's rays; symbolising the fact that growth and perfection has no boundaries. Beautiful white pigeons were released individually by the senior management to convey us the message of PEACE for all in this world.

Prior to this, breakfast was served and relished by one and all. The auditorium was decorated with green, white and blue balloons on all sides. The emblem of the company's logo in vibrant colours painted on a large canvas was placed vividly in the background. With everyone seated, the company's song was sung by ladies and gents, followed by the CMD's speech in which the accomplishments of the company and new ventures were announced. All the time references were made to the untiring efforts and hard work of all employees. Long service awards were given away and we all clapped proudly. It was a poignant moment for the families.

There was a song and dance performance by the children of the SOS village who are supported by Balmer Lawrie, followed by a talent contest in music and dance for employees' children. There was a drawing competition too for children of all ages. It felt very nice to see so much talent around. After a sumptuous lunch there were fun filled activities like just a minute game played by officers, their wives and children. It was hilarious to see people trying to complete simple tasks like blowing balloons, tying threads or sticking bindis in a minute.

With funny comments being made all along by our competent comperes it was sheer entertainment. Prize distribution was an integral part of the show for children and all who did well in the various fun-filled competitions organised. The prizes were handed to the contestants by the wives of the senior officers. To be on stage and present a prize is in itself a nice and warm feeling.

Last but not the least, the highlight of the entire occasion was an enthralling performance by Usha Uthup, an extremely talented and fairly famous singer in our country. She can sing in thirteen languages. Her deep, rich, baritone voice resonated the entire auditorium, while singing one hit song after another with her five man army (as she calls her musicians). Without them, she modestly proclaims she can't sing. She set the stage on fire and we all enjoyed it to the hilt. It was lovely, an evening to fondly remember.

While I conclude, I feel happy to say that the 148th Foundation Day of Balmer Lawrie was a huge success; thanks to the tireless work done by the employees and we should all raise our voice in unison and say 'AMAR RAHEGA HAMARA BALMER LAWRIE.'

Here is a toast to many more celebrations of Balmer Lawrie's Foundation Day and may the company grow in unity in all diversities!

- Shalini Gupta w/o Niraj Gupta, Director [Service Businesses]

data
consulting
resources
multimedia
study
integration
IT
relationship
business
implementation
installation
support
management
computer
development
application
customization
deployment
outourcing
solutions
infrastructure
systems

INFORMATION

TECHNOLOGY