I was courageous at pivotal times, says Dell's Vinita Gera

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When Vinita Gera looks back to the early days of her career, she recollects one moment that was nothing short of "filmy." This was when she was 24, travelling in a car in Pune with her family. Vinita saw the office of Veritas Software, and proclaimed that one day she would work for the American data management company.

Veritas Software was one of the first MNCs to open an office in Pune, and a job there was highly coveted. And Vinita succeeded. And spent eight years in the organisation.

The road to Veritas, however, was not smooth. The organisation she was in before that had to shut its Pune office, and Vinita lost her job.

Vinita had been a quintessential sincere student in her school days. So, this job loss came as a massive shock. "It was probably the lowest point of my professional and personal life because I had just signed up for a home loan. Apart from the financial difficulty it posed, losing a job was a stigma. Layoffs were not common then. I took it very personally," she says.

But it didn't take Vinita long to bounce back strongly. She started applying to all possible places. And that's when she bagged the job at Veritas. She grew well in the company, and was promoted to the role of a manager right after returning from maternity leave in 2000. "After eight years in Veritas, I thought I was in a comfort zone and doubted if I would ever be able to work in any other company," she says. But she decided to challenge herself, and started looking out again. That took her to BMC Software, the US enterprise software company.

At BMC, she held leadership positions, headed product engineering teams, built products from scratch. In 2017, she moved to Dell Technologies as GM at the India CoE (centre of excellence). "While I did engineering for 22 years, the maximum joy I have derived is in my India CoE leadership role. It was my dream job," she says.

Two months ago, she switched to a new role, as senior director of IT Infrastructure. She leads enterprise infrastructure services, focused on enterprise infrastructure and reliability engineering.

Vinita says she was an "engineer by accident". She had started attending classes in a BCom course when she heard that she had got admission into an engineering college. She decided to change course.

Today, this engineer is bullish about automation and cloud technologies. "Automation is not just about robots, it is about technology as well as processes. It is a faster way of doing things with less errors, and that is why it excites me so much," she says.

INSPIRATION

> Young techies must be courageous. I have been courageous at pivotal times, like leaving a very happy job at Veritas, or to switch from engineering to leadership roles. And even when I lost a job, I did not give up on my career. When I say courageous, I also mean you must not be working to keep your job, because the moment you work just to keep your job, you will never feel secure.

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