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INTERVIEW

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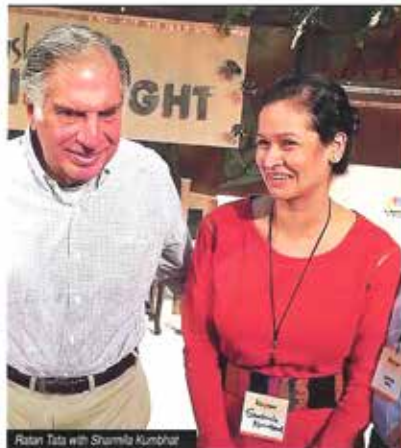
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PROFILE



In the ever-evolving business landscape, few leaders shine as brightly as Sharmila Kumbhat, Director of K-Lite Industries Pvt. Ltd. A pioneer in the lighting industry, she has successfully combined innovation with social empowerment. Her journey from a young entrepreneur to a visionary leader is a testament to her resilience and passion for excellence. With a focus on both technological advancement and empowering women in business, Sharmila is driving K-Lite toward a future of smart, sustainable lighting solutions.

Sharmila Kumbhat: A Changemaker Redefining India's Lighting Industry and Empowering Future Leaders

AU Staff | Mumbai

In the rapidly evolving world of business, few individuals stand out as beacons of both industry transformation and social empowerment. Sharmila Kumbhat, Director of K-Lite Industries Pvt. Ltd., Chennai, is one such figure—a visionary leader who has left an indelible mark on the lighting industry while breaking barriers for women in business. Her story is one of perseverance, innovation, and an unyielding commitment to excellence, with a journey that spans continents and industries, all driven by her passion for transforming the world around her.

EARLY BEGINNINGS: A DETERMINED PATH TO SUCCESS

Sharmila began her business journey at sixteen, working in Metal Craft, a fabrication unit, where she honed her technical and leadership skills. At nineteen, she earned the prestigious "Best Female Entrepreneur Award" from the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, marking a significant milestone in her career. Keen to expand her knowledge, Sharmila pursued design studies in New York. During her decade in the U.S., she founded and

operated two successful export-oriented companies, gaining deep insights into global business dynamics. Driven by a desire to contribute to India, she returned to Chennai to join her family business, K-Lite Industries, a leading manufacturer of luminaires and decorative poles. Sharmila introduced innovative design concepts and streamlined operations, transforming K-Lite into a modern, system-driven entity. Her emphasis on quality, modularity, and design excellence not



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only strengthened the company's position in India but also expanded its global footprint. Under her leadership, K-Lite has supplied custom lighting solutions to prestigious projects, including the Indian Parliament area, the Parliament complex in Cairo, and renowned religious sites like the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Ayodhya, and Varanasi. Her journey reflects her ability to blend design with innovation, driving K-Lite's success both locally and internationally. A cherished memory of hers is spending time with Ratan Tata, whose leadership and values profoundly impacted her.

A CHAMPION OF INNOVATION: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF SMART LIGHTING

Sharmila's visionary approach to business, led her to focus on smart lighting solutions, which are increasingly important as cities around the world move toward energy-efficient and intelligent lighting systems. Recognizing the role that lighting plays in urban planning and smart city development, she led K-Lite's expansion into this space. Her leadership resulted in the creation of K-Lite Europe in London, which serves the growing European market with advanced lighting solutions. This expansion has positioned K-Lite as a leader in smart lighting, catering to the evolving needs of modern urban environments. Collaborating with international designers and consultants, Sharmila continues to push the boundaries of what lighting can achieve. Her philosophy of "taking one step at a time and giving the best" has guided K-Lite's growth, ensuring the company to stay at the forefront of innovation while maintaining sustainable business practices.

EMPOWERING WOMEN: A VISIONARY LEADER WITH A COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY

Sharmila's impact extends beyond the success of K-Lite. She is a passionate advocate for women's empowerment and believes in creating equal opportunities for everyone. At K-Lite, over 50% of the workforce is female, which is remarkable in an industry traditionally dominated by men. Her commitment to fostering an inclusive work environment stems from her belief that everyone has unique strengths and potential. She leads with a



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collaborative and empowering style, encouraging her team to embrace creativity and innovation. Her own journey, marked by resilience and determination, serves as an inspiration to women across industries. By breaking barriers in a male-dominated sector, she has shown that, women can, not only succeed but also lead in highly competitive industries. Sharmila actively mentors young professionals, both within and outside her organization. Her leadership has become a beacon of hope for women aspiring to break into entrepreneurship and business leadership.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE: LEADING WITH PURPOSE AND PASSION

As she continues to lead K-Lite, Sharmila remains committed to innovation, excellence, and empowerment. Her vision for the future is clear - create lighting solutions that not only meet today's needs but also anticipate tomorrow's demands. Her work in smart city lighting, sustainable design, and global expansion has positioned K-Lite as a leader in next generation lighting solutions. Yet, what truly sets her apart is her unwavering commitment to empowering others and promoting diversity.

In a constantly evolving world, Sharmila's leadership is a reminder of what can be achieved through determination, vision, and a focus on both business and social progress. As she continues to expand her horizons, Sharmila remains a guiding force in the lighting industry and a role model for aspiring businesswomen worldwide. ■