

Aditya Mittal

Brand Metallica

He is the 28-year-old dynamo powering the phenomenal growth of Mittal Steel Company NV, the world's largest steel producer. Meet the man of mettle, Aditya Mittal, Member of the Board of Directors and President and Chief Financial Officer of the biggest metal making business on earth.

First, he engineered an IPO on Wall Street. Then he stormed into Kazakhstan, Romania, Algeria and South Africa before invading the US. His razor sharp business acumen makes Aditya Mittal a force to reckon with in the global corporate arena. The recent acquisition of steel giant LNM Holdings NV by the even larger magnate Ispat International NV, for \$13.3 billion, led to the formation of Mittal Steel Company NV. "The idea is that both of these operations are complementary to each other and create the platform for the strongest steel company in the United States," says the Wharton alumnus. And as CFO of this combined entity, Mittal Jr. flexes steel production exceeding 50 million metric tones for top notch clientele including Ford Motor, General Motors, Maytag and Whirlpool.

Eleven mergers old, he telescopes Mittal Steel's penetration with amazing ease. "In Europe, we have recently been awarded exclusivity for Huta Czystochowa in Poland and we are very interested in the privatisation of Erdemir in Turkey. In North America, we will shortly be completing our acquisition of International Steel Group and the immediate priority for this market will be on integrating ISG with our existing US operations. In China, we have formed an equity partnership with the Hunan Province. This is our first step into China and we are hoping that it will act as a platform for further growth in this important market," he elaborates. "Our immediate priority is to complete these transactions, which will be very beneficial in helping us further achieve our strategic ambitions."

What has been the biggest challenge so far? "October 2003, Poland. I think Polski Huty Stali was one of the most satisfying. We were bidding against US Steel. This really was central to our European strategy and cemented our position as not only the leading producer in the CEE, but also the second-largest in Europe as a whole," says the man who was born in India, brought up in Indonesia, educated in the US and now lives in London. And how does life roll for this jet-setter? "I feel comfortable in many cities in the world, including Mumbai and New Delhi. I travel a lot as part of my work, so you soon get used to different cultures and locations. I like living in London a lot as it is a very cosmopolitan, multicultural city and always feel very much at home in the US," says he, adding, "And most importantly, and most tellingly, I only carry an Indian passport."

His presence at the helm of affairs is infusing fresh zeal into Mittal Steel. Aditya has his sights firmly fixed on intensive research and development. "R&D is key to enabling us to meet our customer needs. We operate two state-of-the-art research and development operations, one in Chicago, US, and one in Gandrange, France. These operations are very important to us as it is from here that our scientists liaise with our customers to discover what type of steel they require, which enables us to work towards meeting their demands," he says.

The scion is clearly the new face of the global Indian. Apart from achieving key milestones, the promising turk is creating ripples through

his nomination as one of the Young Global Leaders proposed to attend the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos in June this year. "It is important that the world recognise the new generation of leaders," says Mittal Jr., reacting to the news. "We already had our first meeting in Davos back in January and I think our proper meeting, to be held later this year in Zermatt, is going to be very stimulating and informative. I look forward to interacting with all members of the forum, including, of course, those from India. I have no real advice, but I would say don't hold back, explore every single option and never lose hope."

Countering the expression 'heir apparent', Aditya says nonchalantly, "My father has never told me I am the heir to his empire." Meanwhile he is well on his way to shaping the contours of the world's largest steel business, the Midas way.