

AT THE BREWERY:

Cobra's bottling plant in Burton-on-Trent, England, produces the equivalent of one million 620 ml bottles of beer a week.

Another key element of our success has been integrity. Throughout the life of Cobra, I have been surrounded by loyal partners, employees, and family—especially my wife, whom I met one year after I started the business. They stuck with me and the company through thick and thin, and I am immensely grateful. As a group we have also always adhered to strong moral principles. Even when others didn't play it straight, we did. In my opinion, it's better to fail doing the right thing than to succeed doing the wrong one.

Now that we're a part of the Molson Coors family, I continue to stoke the same fires: vision, creative flexibility, and integrity. Cobra has won 101 gold medals at the Monde Selection competition over the years, and we now export to nearly every European Union country, along with Japan, Canada, and Australia. Because Anheuser-Busch has the King Cobra brand, we've wrestled with trademark restrictions in the United States.

Although a large company can be bureaucratic, I still push for innovation, adaptation, and a fast pace. In 2018 we launched Cobra Malabar, a blond IPA. It comes from a complex, top-fermented recipe, and it took us two years to deliver. But we got there in the end, and now Cobra has the whole Molson Coors machine—finance, marketing, and distribution—behind it.

I continue to focus on building strong, trusting relationships across the company. Because Arjun and I spent the early years of Cobra doing everything, from setting up production to negotiating with restaurants to hiring employees, I can visit every part of this American-Canadian-British-Indian



business and identify with what people are doing. At the executive level I've gotten to know Pete Coors, the Molson family, and the global and UK leadership teams personally. Churn is inevitable in an organization as big as ours, but there's no reason we can't cultivate the same loyalty we had in Cobra's start-up days—and endeavor together to always do what's right.

For the past decade and a half I've also become involved in the broader UK business and political community. I have served as deputy lieutenant of Greater London, and in 2006 I was named an independent crossbench life

peer in the House of Lords. I've tried to bring my entrepreneurial experiences and approach to these roles, too. Over the past few years, for example, I've been quite vocal about my opposition to Brexit. I'm sticking my neck out because I believe this is so important—not just to Cobra and other UK-based businesses but also to future generations of citizens. We are better off remaining in the European Union. This is yet another situation outside the world of music and art that calls for vision, creativity, and integrity. But I believe that I, my team, and my adopted country are up to the challenge. © HBR Reprint R1806A