

Business Beyond Borders Episode #9 – Sheba Nandkeolyar, Multicultural Marketing Expert

Presenter: Cynthia Dearin

Guest: Sheba Nandkeolyar

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Cynthia Dearin: Sheba welcome to the Business Beyond Borders podcast.

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Thank you Cynthia, I am very pleased to be here today.

Cynthia Dearin: I wanted to start with a question about India and India's economy because that is where you are from. As you know, the Indian economy has gone a bit through a rough patch over the last 18 months with the introduction of GST and with demonetization, but as you look at the press today the predictions are that the economy is going to grow 7% this quarter. My question for you is, is that really realistic against the background of what we have seen over this 18 month period?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Thanks Cynthia that is a great question to start the interview with because I truly believe that India is turning around. Yes, the 7% is going to be achievable, everything that we see is pretty much all about progress. When we look at the World Bank rankings, India has already come up, within this short span of one year, despite the demonization and the GST people feel that it is something that has actually pulled India back but I actually do believe that it has actually put India in a great roadmap to move forward specially with international business. Look at demonetization, it is all about corruption, so on and so forth, how do we really get rid of all those middle men and make it a lot more simpler economy? That is what demonetization tries to do. Looking at GST, the complexities of taxes, it is very hard to go to India, there 201 taxes. Guess what? Now with GST, it is going to become a lot simpler for people to do business in India. And of course there is going to be teething problems when you implement something as radical as these new initiatives that have been introduced, but then from all practical perspective we find that there

is actually progress happening. Look at the World Bank rankings, they show that within a span of 12 months India has gone up 30 spaces, 30 spots, in the rank for the ease of doing business in India.

Cynthia Dearin: What do you think is driving that?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: I would say definitely a couple of things: Number one, a great Prime Minister and his vision which is very, very progressive and forward looking. A vision is not just about policy and keeping it up there with just officials. But it's a vision that goes beyond and very inclusive, it actually touches the grass root so you know there is a grassroots engagement happening with the farmers, with sections of society that politicians would have never thought about accepting for default backs. But here is somebody who is desperately looking at "How do we involve people who are going to make the difference in years to come?" For example youth, he has really reached out to youth, young students it's just amazing. For example, a lot of poor people never had bank account because the banks would not allow them to open an account without certain terms and conditions, let's put it that way, and here's a Prime Minister, that has gone out and ensured that the banks are open to opening up accounts for poor people, to the poor people and the farmers have actually shown their faith and come ahead and opened accounts and deposited money. There is some huge advantages and progress that is happening in the economy. I see it definitely going beyond 7%, if you ask me.

Cynthia Dearin: Yes. We are going to be talking a quite a bit today about women in business, and that is one of the key reasons I got you on the show today. While we are in the topic of the Prime Minister and the Indian economy, can you tell us a little bit about what the Prime Minister has done in that space of women and women's empowerment?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Sure, and I assume you are talking about the Indian Prime Minister.

Cynthia Dearin: Yes.

Sheba Nandkeolyar: So the Indian Prime Minister has actually got a very strong agent when it comes to women, that is women's empowerment and there have been several initiatives which have been implemented and across various industry sectors and radicals, where it touches the lives of women. Whether it is banking, financial services, micro-financing, health, education, it has gone over and beyond. That is one of the really strong milestones he believes which is going to turn around the country and basically lead the country to further progress.

Cynthia Dearin: I think he is probably right, you know where you educate women and empower them, they then transfer that to their families.

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Absolutely. You know from the AIBC end we help a couple of members who are actually there in India, who have step up their businesses and, businesses which are actually encompassing women and women from villages. They are getting skilled, they are getting trained, not only in terms of the technical skill, but in terms of social entrepreneurship where they are showing them how to become more independent, how to save, how to use their own money and how to have more control over their money, so some great stuff is happening. I can tell you that Australia is involved with it too, through AIBC and our members.

Cynthia Dearin: That is really great to hear. I am very excited to talk to you today about your personal journey to become an international business woman and I think it would be great to start with some context. Can you tell me about what growing up was like, where you grew up and how that set the scene for what came later?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Sure. I actually grew up in India and India had been, very traditional values where family mattered, respect mattered. But also with my parents they were very particular about the fact that they did not spoil us too much and wanted us to really grow up very independently, valuing everything that we received. We did not come from a poor family, we were well off, but yet we were given things very sparingly to make us understand value of material objects. I will give you a small example: Every time we would be getting some toys our parents would make sure that within the span of two weeks we would be presenting those toys to some less fortunate children. They would make us do it and our hearts would break, but they would say "No, you are finished. Two weeks is enough for to play with the toy, and now I want to hand it somebody who is less fortunate than you, who cannot afford it."

Cynthia Dearin: Wow. What impact do you think that had on you as a child?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: I think compassion and pity, and also realizing that it is not just about you, realizing that there is a lot more to life that just material acquisitions.

Cynthia Dearin: Yeah.

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Yeah, I would definitely say

Cynthia Dearin: What did your parents want for you when you grew up? Do you think? If they had thought about where you would be in life right now when you

were a small girl, would they have thought you would be doing what you are doing?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: I don't think they would have thought that I would be where I am, nor did I think that I would be where I am. I am really extremely appreciative of all the opportunities that have come my way and for me to have gone around and made use of them, but I think they did want me to become someone who is fairly independent. In India the tendency was, on those days, to get you married and depend more on the husband, but right from day one my dad and mum made it very clear that we want you to be educated and did not spare any amount in education and to ensure that you should be in a position where you would always be in a position where you could always be able to be economically independent.

Cynthia Dearin: So tell me a bit about your education, where did you go to school, what was it like, did you enjoy it?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: It is very interesting and then again, my dad was in a transferable job, he was in the government, and we would transfer to so many different places, states and rather than staying in one school he preferred to take us around with him, with my mom and dad. So I studied at 9 schools, a lot of people ask what does that mean, actually what it meant was huge amounts of flexibility and adaptability which would lead to my personality and I think one of the reasons I am very flexible, open, adaptable to new circumstances, new technology, new ways of doing things is a lot to do with my growing up years, really. I think it played a huge key role in when I grew up. From school I went into college, Loretto College, and in school I must say I had mainly studied in Catholic schools, which is very unusual for being a Hindu person but my dad was very progressive. Yes we are Hindus but very progressive, very inclusive about all religions including Christianity. I studied in Catholic schools and I have a lot of those values in me still, I really really appreciate it and when I got the opportunity for my son actually when we came here, I actually put him in a Catholic school, though he actually passed exams for a selective school.

Cynthia Dearin: That is really interesting and that probably says something about the impact that that experience had on you. So you didn't really do the traditional thing, did you? You didn't, you know just go to school, and then get married and have a family, and settle down. Tell me a little about what happened after Loretto College.

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Yes, I didn't do the traditional thing at all and I know that many of my relatives felt pretty, they were really shocked when I said that I was going for my MBA and they said "How is she going to get married?" and I know there were quiet Chinese whispers going around, that now she will never going to get married being too educated, but my mom and dad stood

their ground and made sure that "No, if she wants to do her education if she wants to complete her business studies, she will." I finished my MBA, after my MBA I started off at a company called Clarion-McCann, it's a fairly large advertising agency, one of the largest in India and I had some great opportunities, so that is where my education took me and my parents were pretty much in one mind that I should carry on with my professional education.

Cynthia Dearin: I am not sure if I am allowed to ask this but, I think it is relevant because it is part of your entire story, how did you find somebody who was willing to marry a girl with an MBA, despite what everybody said?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: It is a good question, I found him in my MBA institute and we studied together but having said that we really did not consider getting together at that time, it was much later when I started working. The only thing that my parents asked me was, that if you do want to get married to somebody on your own, considering that at that time in India arranged marriages were very much the order of the day, you know. So they did tell me we want you to complete your education, we want you to work for your own too so that you know your own mind and then you can take your own decision and they backed me, then right away they knew that whatever decision I would take would be the right one.

Cynthia Dearin: That is fantastic they sound like very sensible and progressive parents. So, we are recording this interview in Australia today and not in India and I would love to know how you made the jump from living in India, getting an MBA there and completing all of your education, meeting your husband, to be there to suddenly finding yourself on the other side of the world.

Sheba Nandkeolyar: That is a very good question. I was actually one of the very few people who never ever wanted to migrate. In fact, I am still passionate about India, my country of origin, I am so blessed that I am with the Business Council and even my work keeps taking me and keeps me connected with the country but it was really my husband's decision. He was at that time working with Disney and doing some Disney joint ventures and he had come to Australia and he loved the country, he loved the lifestyle and he came back and said that he would like to apply for permanent residency, in fact he got the residency within 15 days and I was not very much for it. But I think again I would like to say that the reason that I decided to go ahead was that coming back to a side which is very much typically South Asian, and a lot of other multicultural audiences would do that, they would do something which is right for the family, and my husband thought it was the right decision for the family, we had a young child, there would be great opportunities here, although my son

was going to one of the best schools in Delhi but I thought "OK, it is just the right decision for the family" and decided to migrate here.

Cynthia Dearin: So what was that experience of moving here with a young family away from all your support networks, and that very traditional family structure where there are always people around to living in Australia where you sometimes don't even know your neighbours very well and the nuclear family is a unit. What was that experience of moving cultures like for you?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Actually it was not very bad because I had my brother at that time here so at least we had somebody there. I had one or two other friends from my university and from my early advertising days which was also pretty good, but having said that yes you are pretty much starting life all over again, there is no help, you are right, there is no help around and my son although he was not very young at that time, but still not old enough be, you , there are some stringent rules that are up to a certain age you cannot let a child on his own in the house, so my workers were really good and would allow me the flexibility to go pick him up and bring him back to the office. He would be with me in the office until I get back home. It was tough days but I think all in all I had a great office, I had a great boss who gave me a great break, the Chairman and CEO of the company, and I reckon, Australia is a friendly country and our neighbours came around and generally it was a very, very nice experience settling down here.

Cynthia Dearin: So how did you restart your career when you came here, what did you actually do?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: It is really interesting because I had never really had to apply for a job because when I finished my MBA I got an offer from Clarion-McCann and I was pretty much with them for a long while, I had never ever done a CV in my life. When I got here I thought I would just call up two or three companies and establish contact and maybe ask them that I would come around and see them in the next few weeks, and during that period I would sit down and do a CV. So I contacted the first company and it was quite interesting, contrary to a lot of experiences that migrants have, I asked to speak to the CEO and the person who picked up was actually the CEO, I could not believe that it was him and I kept on telling him, "No please pass me to the CEO" and he said "Oh well it is me, if you don't want to talk to me then it is fine, I am leaving the phone." and I said "No! I do want to come in and see you." he said "Sure, within an hour." Within an hour?", I said, he said, "Well I am off to the US, if you want to see me it has to be within an hour. Otherwise for the next three weeks I am not here." and I said, "Oh my gosh I do not have a CV, he said well it is up to you if you want to come and see me." So I actually scrambled and managed to get there on time without a CV and all he

asked me was, "Don't worry about your CV, just tell me in one sentence how would you define yourself, how would you describe yourself?" And I said, "That is something that I can tell you very quickly", and he said "What is it?" and I answered, "I am somebody that can make the best of any bad bargain given to her" and that was it, he told me "You are in, you can start tomorrow."

Cynthia Dearin: And what did you do?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: It was a really good interview, hardly an interview, a chat, got my job and got started. Yes, it wasn't the position that I had, I used to be the Director of India of the company I was in, looking at a lot of international projects but here I started much lower, but it didn't take me long. I it took me within a minute to accept it because it is another thing a migrant has to realize, grab any opportunity that you get, don't be fussy because if you are good, talent will shine through and that is what happened in my case because in less than six months he told me take over as the General Manager of the company and in less than three years I was the CEO of the company.

Cynthia Dearin: Wow that is really impressive.

Sheba Nandkeolyar: I had a really good experience here.

Cynthia Dearin: So you did this thing in the corporate world in India and then in Australia, and then in 2006 you set up MGG with McCann World Group and that later became the company that you now own and run MultiConnexions, what was the catalyst for going out on your own and how did that happen?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: It is quite interesting because number one, I was almost 7 years in this company, well six and a half years, and I used to also have a lot of my clients often ask me Sheba, you're very entrepreneurial, because I move fast, I think fast, I implement fast because an idea is just an idea unless you implement it, the best of ideas. I did find at times the systems would be a little bit slower here but I would move pretty quickly and I think the clients saw the way that I operated and they said, "Sheba have you ever thought of starting something on your own?" And I think a lot of the catalyst happened from my clients end, who made me think that maybe I can do it and I did it.

Cynthia Dearin: Wow, that's amazing.

- Sheba Nandkeolyar: I can tell you one thing Cynthia, someone of those clients are still with me, I can say one of the clients who was my first client in Australia was Tesltra, and they still continue to be with me.
- Cynthia Dearin: That is fantastic. Tell us a bit about what MultiConnexions does, because a lot of people wouldn't really understand when I say MultiConnexions, so just unpack that a little bit for me.
- Sheba Nandkeolyar: Sure, MultiConnexions is an integrated marketing and advertising agency, it's very much what a lot of other advertising companies do, but it is a lot of companies combined into one. For example, in a mainstream context you have your PR company, your digital, your social media company, your creative company, so think of all those companies rolled into one. That is the integrated advertising and marketing company that we have, so we offer strategy and resource solutions, digital solutions, social media solutions, above the line advertising, PR and expediential programs but the only difference really is that we tend to just focus on multicultural audiences. So that is the only difference, that the focus is on multicultural audiences. Sometimes we do mainstream too, for example there could be a client where they find the majority of their target audience is multicultural and a few mainstream audiences, then we might do the whole bit, so it's really an integrated marketing and advertising agency.
- Cynthia Dearin: You work for clients in Australia but there are also clients in other markets too that you work for. Right?
- Sheba Nandkeolyar: Absolutely, so one of the reasons that you asked me what was the catalyst for me to move from MMG, McCann to MultiConnexions, one of which was of course the clients which got me started, but why did I move from MMG to McCann? Transition really happened when I realized that as a company we were global minded we realized that targeting audiences in an isolated manner in Australia is not good enough, multicultural audiences, because they have huge links to their countries of origin. I always wanted to promote diaspora marketing, which means the influences of these audiences are huge even in their country of origin, as well as here so there is an offshore marketing concept and an onshore marketing concept. Now a lot of mainstream agencies did not understand that which is one of reasons which is very important to us to go totally 100% independent and really focus on what our core mission is, which is really working not only onshore but also offshore, that is how the global and international bit came in.
- Cynthia Dearin: And how did you go about creating that international clientele? Was that all linked to the fact that you already had an established network and a base in India, or was it something entirely separate from that?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: I would say there are two things. Number one, yes there was a base in India but I think it went beyond that because my stint, even when I was in India, took me to Europe, to Berlin, Frankfurt, took me to the US, UK, to Asia, Singapore, China. I have travelled a lot and a lot of my projects were international and when you move around you find that really seriously cultural influences play such a strong role in kind of impacting your marketing and business objective. If you are not careful, for example, I was also handling Coca Cola at one point in time as an international brand person and then I realized that you know, you cannot just roll out the same brand with a one foot strategy for all markets. You don't change the brand, you don't really play around with the brand but what you do is you connect it through insights which matter to these audiences. It could be cultural insights, it could be something else but whatever it is, so the love for cultural marketing and the love for understanding that very market is so distinctly different and that you need to really need to find new thinking and strategies to be effective in that market is what led me to start looking to internationalization and building those relationships that already existed because I was already moving around in this market.

Cynthia Dearin: So did people come to you, or did you pick up the phone and say, "Hey, we started our own company and we would like to do some work with you even though you are in another country"?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: I would say a lot of people have been contacting me directly, I would say singularly lucky where people have asked me how do you advertise yourself and how do get business but everything has been word of mouth and I strongly believe that if you are true to the product and to the service that you are offering and you are true to your clients and customers, they will come back to you over and over again, but not only come back to you they will talk about you to their friends and business associates, and that is how the business has grown.

Cynthia Dearin: I was reading some press about you before we got together to chat and I noticed that last year in the press you made a statement that multicultural was the new digital and I thought that was fascinating and I wondered if you could explain that for me?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Sure, I think the reason I say that was because when you look at Australia, Australia is a hugely multicultural country today; you know it is just unbelievable the way the numbers and stats have changed. I will give you a small example, if you look at Australia, one in five speak a language other than English, if you look at New South Wales it is one in four, in Sydney alone the new census says one in two! That is huge, now the problem is that a lot of traditional marketers don't want to adopt what they see as a future trend. This is exactly what happened with digital,

when digital came everyone wanted to back away from it. Automation's going to take away my job, this is going to happen, that is going to happen so digital was the black sheep. I would say with multicultural marketing, a lot of the marketers do not realize that they can make so much more in terms of their revenue and market share if they started targeting them in a more dish manner. And that is why I say multicultural marketing is just like digital, it has all the potential to make you grow and it is the future but yet people quite haven't got it.

Cynthia Dearin: I think that is a really interesting point and it definitely resonates with some of the experiences of that as I look around the market. I just want to go in a slightly different direction for a moment because as well as running MultiConnexions you somehow also manage to devote a lot of your time to being that Chair of the Australia India Business Council, which is a pretty big ask. How did you get to have that role because I think that you might actually be the first female chair that the council has ever had. And what is like, what does it involve?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Thank you, that is indeed a lot. Yes you are right, I am the first female chairperson in the 32 years that the AIBC has been in existence. It was actually started about 32 years ago when the then first Indian Prime minister Rajiv Ghandi visited Australia and Bob Hawke, the Prime Minister of Australia they realized there was a gap there was no particular council or organization in a bipartisan manner that was looking after the trade between the two countries that is how the AIBC was formed. Our role is primarily facilitating bilateral trade and investment between the two countries; we work with the government of India, the government of Australia and industry leaders in both countries. How did I get involved? I was singularly lucky because when I came in here I looked around and I saw a lot of community associations but I saw the only one business council and I thought "Ok, I am actually very business focused myself, I am in a business which is very much across borders and I believe that this is something that I can and want to contribute to as a member. I always think of it in the way that, there is a famous saying "It's not about what can the country do for you, but what can you do for the country" and that is exactly the mindset that I had, that how can I contribute to the AIBC. I became a member as soon as I came into this country and that is years and years ago, that is now 17 years plus. 17 years I have been a member, interestingly I was nominated first into the New South Wales chapter because it is a very strong body with chapters in every state, each state has their own management committee members so that is how I got nominated first into the management committee then got elected into becoming the Vice President of New South Wales then the President of New South Wales, went on to become the national Vice Chair and they are all elected positions where the members elect you, and finally the Chair. I would say that I really worked my way up and it's hard work, it

wasn't that I got into the council and expected to just get in there and just get myself elected. No that's not the way you contribute you built and if members think you're worth it, they nominate you and then you go ahead.

Cynthia Dearin: I am also interested in, and this is also a segue into a conversation about being a woman in the international business space. So do you think that being a woman has had any particular impact on your international expansion of MultiConnexions and you know your rise to become the National Chair of AIBC. I think what I am asking you here is: Do you think it would have been easier for you if you had been a man?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Yes, definitely. Without a doubt I can tell you because as a woman you need to work harder and as much as people may say that women's empowerment is here to stay. Yes we are still striving and we are still trying hard and it is for us women who manage to get into certain positions then to start mentoring and really putting your hand out to get more and more people up there along with you. It is hard and you have to remain very focused. There are several people who will always try to point out that your point of view is not the right one, if you believe it is the right one and you think it's the right one you have to stand your ground and at times forget that you are a woman, but you know, you are in a man's world, I am not saying you have to behave like a man I never behave like man. I think a woman has innate understanding of situations, sensitivities about situations, they are very good at relationships and I think you have to be tough as a man and as focused as men are because they can be very focused, singularly focused, but you also need to combine it with some of the innate qualities that women have they are culturally sensitive they are intuitively sensitive, they have very good relationship skills and combine the two and you have a winner situation.

Cynthia Dearin: I think that is true. You have successfully grown MultiConnexions over the last 12 years or so, I was wondering whether you could share with us some of the habits that you have followed that have helped you create that success, so maybe it is something that you do each day, or a pattern that you follow. Tell us a little bit about what a typical day in the life of Sheba looks like.

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Ok. Let me start with a typical day: A typical day in my life is, I do tend to get up very early, I am a very early person, it could be anywhere from 4:30am to 5:00am when I get up. This is something that not many people know but the first thing I do is meditation and that is quick 10-minute meditation and people will ask how, when, what. This was years ago, my mom and my dad took me to a transcendental meditation me, my sister and my brother and that really appealed to me and these habits are always formed early in life. I believe that every time I start the day with meditation I remain very focused, very calm, on top of everything and in

control. So that is how I start my day with 10 to 15 minutes of mediation. Then I actually check a few of my emails, so that there is not too much of a log by the time I reach the office. I am quite a social person so I am quite active on social media so I love to catch up on social media, what is happening, the news, maybe do a couple of posts in terms of what I love to share. Moving on, I get ready, I try to do some exercise and it is a very quick, but anyway I try. After I leave to the office. When you look at what it is that really makes my life and makes me who I am. I am definitely very passionate about what I do, and that is how we hire people, because if you are not passionate about what you do it is not a job. If you are passionate you will go over and beyond, you will constantly want to learn, you will want to stay ahead, you will track trends as never before, you will never be happy with what you have. So it is very important to be passionate so that you can give 110%, it is very important to be focused because there will be hundreds of things happening in your life and specially people like us, like yourself, visiting so many different boards. There are priorities and how you juggle and ensure on that particular day you are focused to those priorities that you have and there will always be priorities juggling. Focus is the next thing. Third I believe is positivity, I am a very positive person and I have no time for negative people. People who are whinging, cringing, complaining because it just shows that you are really not taking ownership and you are not being accountable for your decisions, trying to pass on the blame to someone else. Someone who is accountable will never be sitting and complaining, they will try and find a solution. I try to surround myself with positive people and even in our office we always ensure that we have a team that is very positive because positivity brings positivity, negativity brings all kinds of wrong issues in life. I would say passion, positivity, focus are the three things and finally relationships. I think that respect in relationship is so important, either an intern or a senior person provides a brainstorming idea is equally welcome. We do not believe in hierarchy, and yes hierarchy exists I always say for accountability but not for anything else. We have a flat structure where we really believe that relationships really matter and respect matters.

Cynthia Dearin: I love it. We were talking a little about this before we came on air, and I think I know what you are going to say to answer this question, but are there any

particular books that you would recommend to women that are thinking about expanding their business internationally?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: To be very frank, Cynthia, I know there lots of books out there and I read them too but if you were to ask me what helped me and that is what I would like to share I think nothing beats experience than a book, I would ask people, get out there. Very often you feel like, "oh do not I really need

to go out to that meeting, do I really need to go out for that business networking event that I have been called for?" You never know who you will connect with, who you will meet who can be a great mentor, who can share experiences that can completely transform your life. It has happened with me, so I would say getting out there meeting as many people, networking, meeting inspirational business leaders, as well as, women leaders, both, and more importantly I think that going for some of these programs, like I recently attended one of yours Cynthia, I think it was the International Business Accelerator. I know I could not complete it but I was so keen to see what it was like; I think I was there for 90% of the time. What I came back with was amazing because these are the kind of programs that you can see yourself breathing and living what you are going to be doing. There are actual true experiences that first-rate leaders are sharing with you and it becomes real, it is not something unreal or unreachable. I'll read it, I put it away and then I will think about how I am going to do it, this is too real, too practical, guess what? Even I can do it. Guess what? Even I can reach out and ask him or her if I have any clarifications, so I would say I would not recommend any books. Of course I would say to read as much as you can, I love reading. My end of the day ends with reading, a lot of people are on their phones but I actually love to read. My husband actually gets really annoyed because I have these piles and piles of books lying next to my bedroom side table but I love reading. All these programs such as yours and so many others who offer programs which are International Business Programs.

Cynthia Dearin: So really talking about learning by doing?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Absolutely, absolutely.

Cynthia Dearin: You have done some amazing things Sheba, what is next?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: What is next for me? Ok. So, yes I am very lucky. When I came in that is why I said focus because there are three things I wanted to do when I came into this country. First, I realized that I am a migrant and a migrant has to work a little bit harder, naturally, and guess what it is not because there is racism in this county, no, not at all. I am the one person that will say loud and clear that

Australia is a very fair and good country. It really respects talent and capability; it is I not about who you know but about what you deliver, so that has worked well. I would say that one thing I realized as a migrant was that I wanted to establish myself in the industry I was in, which was advertising. Secondly, I wanted to keep in touch with my country of origin and see how I could contribute. Those were two huge motivators for me and very often my son and my husband too often tells me, you spend so much time in the AIBC surely you can spend more time on yourself and

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you could be happier, but you know, it energizes me because it is to my country of origin that I am giving back.

If you ask me about achievements, when I came into this country I wanted to make sure that I would be able to contribute, to both these two industries and I have done so I was very fortunate and today I sit on, actually the Advertising Association Board, here in Australia, which is headquartered in New York, as well as chair the AIBC. Both of them have given me a lot of satisfaction, of what I set out for an objective for myself and what I have been able to achieve. I did not know I would be the chair one day, I just wanted to contribute to the AIBC but it happened along the way, so it's fantastic. Again, the same thing I did not know I was going to be sitting on the board of the peak advertising body today, and probably as a migrant woman too, and the only migrant woman, but it has happened along the way. I think if you are true to what you set out to do, everything falls into place. Now, what next? I have recently just started another company, which is a joint venture with WeChat Agency and we are going to be looking at a lot for WeChat marketing not just for corporate clients but also now we are going to move into the SME segment, it is realizing how do we help out a company that has a shoestring budget. A lot of start-up, they don't have large budgets and yet they want to go to China, they want to enter the international market. So now that we have the India side really wrapped well, along with some other countries we are doing like Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines and so on, Malaysia but this WeChat JV is going to be a big one for a lot of SME clients and I am really looking forward to getting this happen.

Cynthia Dearin: I think that is such important work because I see so much potential in that micro-to-medium space and I really look forward to hearing how that goes so I am going to be checking in back with you about that. I have just a couple more questions. The second to last question I've got for you is: How can people get in touch with you if they are inspired with what they hear on today's interview and they would like to know more about you, and get in contact, where do they find you?

Sheba Nandkeolyar: They could quite easily find me through my company details and if you Google, MultiConnexions will come up, for which the website is www.multiconnexions.com.au, and also through you. They can contact you and you can put me in touch and definitely I have got my Facebook, but rather than Facebook I would say LinkedIn, which is good for professional associations and relationships, my Twitter account which is @shebatweets and Sheba Nandkeolyar is my Facebook so it's quite easy.

Cynthia Dearin: So you are out there in the social media spear

Sheba Nandkeolyar: I am very, very strong in the social media.

Cynthia Dearin: Sheba, it has been an absolute pleasure having you on the show today and I have just been fascinated by some of the insights that you shared. I was wondering if you had any final words for people listening to this show, particularly women who are thinking about expanding their business beyond the borders of their own country and even more particularly, for migrant women who are in their second country rather than their country of origin and are thinking also about expanding their business offshore.

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Cynthia, I think that is a question that is very much a favourite question of mine I would say because at the end of the day I think women sometimes hold themselves back, and is it not people who hold you back because a lot of us lack the confidence and from an early age you see the boys have been given a lot of additional opportunities, additional appreciation, and obviously they have that extra sense of confidence which you don't normally see in women. I always tell women, confidence is really important. Number one: believe in yourself and do not allow anybody else to take that belief. Number two: realize that today you can reach out to so many contacts that you have across the globe as well as here in Australia, women's organizations, women in business like for example at AIBC I actually founded a women's chapter where women can get together. Where they could bounce off ideas to each other, reach out to other women in India, China, a lot of other places, there are a lot of opportunities today. Why? I am going to come back to the fact that it is a digital world. Can you imagine in the old days we used to go to the library to do our research when we were students, today a tap of a button and you have the whole world in front of you. So I would tell women that today you have the best possible opportunities, don't hold yourself back just go and even if you are migrant woman, consider it to be actually a huge advantage because you are bringing a rich fusion of two cultures. For example, let me take myself: My culture is all about respect for the family, the South Asian culture is about really adhering to what your parents want, and happily so. I don't just do it because they tell me to, but because I believe in it. They are not very confrontative, the Indians, they are more collaborative. And then you come to Australia and you see the tremendous sense of hard work, respect for any kind of work and it is amazing the work culture here, the business ethics here, so you know if you combine the two and the respect they have for each other, so I think we are in such a great place a migrant woman. Number one, you have your woman sensitivities, and the innate sense of relationships and how to do things, number two, as a migrant you would have the best of two cultures, then how could you not succeed? That is what I say.

Cynthia Dearin: I think that is great note to end on, it has been real pleasure to have you on this show.

Sheba Nandkeolyar: Thank you so much Cynthia, I really enjoyed talking to you