



One for All, All for One

THE PERSONAL BOARDS STORY



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Hear from TiE Chennai.

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needs a village.*

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Foreword

In July 2020, at the height of the pandemic, TiE Chennai launched an experiment that would go on to reshape hundreds of entrepreneurial journeys.

The idea came from C.K. Ranganathan, then President of TiE Chennai. It began with a simple observation. Entrepreneurs carry immense responsibility, yet many carry it alone. Behind every business decision are questions that cannot always be discussed openly, even with employees or family members. What if entrepreneurs had a trusted circle that challenged them, encouraged them and walked alongside them as fellow builders?



That question became the ***Personal Boards programme.***
Over time, it grew into a movement.

From the beginning, this was never intended to be another networking initiative. It was built on a simple belief that lasting business transformation begins with the entrepreneur. Every business eventually reflects the person leading it. As founders grow in clarity, courage, discipline and self-awareness, their organisations begin to reflect those same qualities.

Over the years, successive leadership teams, the TiE Chennai Secretariat and the Personal Boards facilitators have built a structured learning ecosystem around this vision. TiE Catalyst, workshops, proprietary frameworks, guidance from subject-matter experts, accountability systems and continuous reflection have created opportunities for entrepreneurs to learn, reflect and grow together.

None of this would have been possible without the extraordinary trust of our entrepreneurs. At Personal Boards, they speak openly about difficult decisions, failures, uncertainty, relationships and aspirations. That trust is both a privilege and a responsibility.

This book is our attempt to honour that responsibility. It is intended to understand, with humility and honesty, what has changed, where meaningful impact has been created and where we still have the opportunity to improve.

To every entrepreneur who chose to be vulnerable, every Personal Boards Director who generously shared their wisdom, every facilitator who nurtured these conversations, every member of the TiE Chennai Secretariat whose quiet dedication kept this movement alive, and every leader who believed in this vision, thank you. This book belongs to all of you.

AKHILA RAJESHWAR
Executive Director, TiE Chennai



From the Personal Boards Champion

We saw that it is lonely at the top for entrepreneurs. They build successful businesses but often have no one they can trust to speak openly about their struggles — whether in business, family, or personal life.

During the COVID pandemic in 2020, when TiE Chennai was limited to around 200–300 members in the city, we initiated the Personal Boards. By moving online and keeping membership affordable, we were able to reach entrepreneurs across Tamil Nadu. What began as a small effort has now grown into a powerful movement with more than 100+ Personal Boards.

The impact has been truly heartening. Each Board consists of 8–10 non-competing entrepreneurs who meet online every alternate week and physically once every quarter. Through our daily Catalyst voice messages and structured learning from many powerful books, entrepreneurs are experiencing real mindset change and personal transformation.

We are seeing remarkable success stories. Many Personal Boards Directors who started with just 5 employees have grown to even 200 employees. Some who began with a single retail outlet have expanded to 40–50 outlets. We track their employee count, turnover, and profitability every year — and the growth has been impressive.



More than business numbers, what makes us happy is witnessing how Directors are becoming better leaders, better spouses, better parents, and better human beings. They have started looking at life from different angles and are learning to become value-driven.

This initiative is creating responsible entrepreneurs who are generating more employment and inspiring others in society. These success stories are proof that there is no shortcut to success. The more you do the right things, the better you grow.

We are very proud that this movement, which started in Chennai, has now spread across Tamil Nadu.

C.K.RANGANATHAN

Past President, TiE Chennai



From the President

At TiE Chennai, we have always believed that our role extends far beyond creating networking opportunities. Our responsibility is to create an environment where entrepreneurs learn, challenge one another, grow and, in turn, strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem around them. Personal Boards have become one of the strongest expressions of that belief.



Our mission has never been limited to helping entrepreneurs build larger businesses; instead seeking to help them become better leaders and stronger contributors to society. When entrepreneurs grow in character, judgement and perspective, their businesses grow with them. More importantly, they create organisations that generate employment and contribute meaningfully to the communities they serve.

What began as an idea during one of the most challenging periods for entrepreneurs has today grown into a vibrant community built on trust, learning and shared accountability. It is a reminder that some of the most meaningful breakthroughs happen when entrepreneurs are willing to listen, question, support and learn from one another.

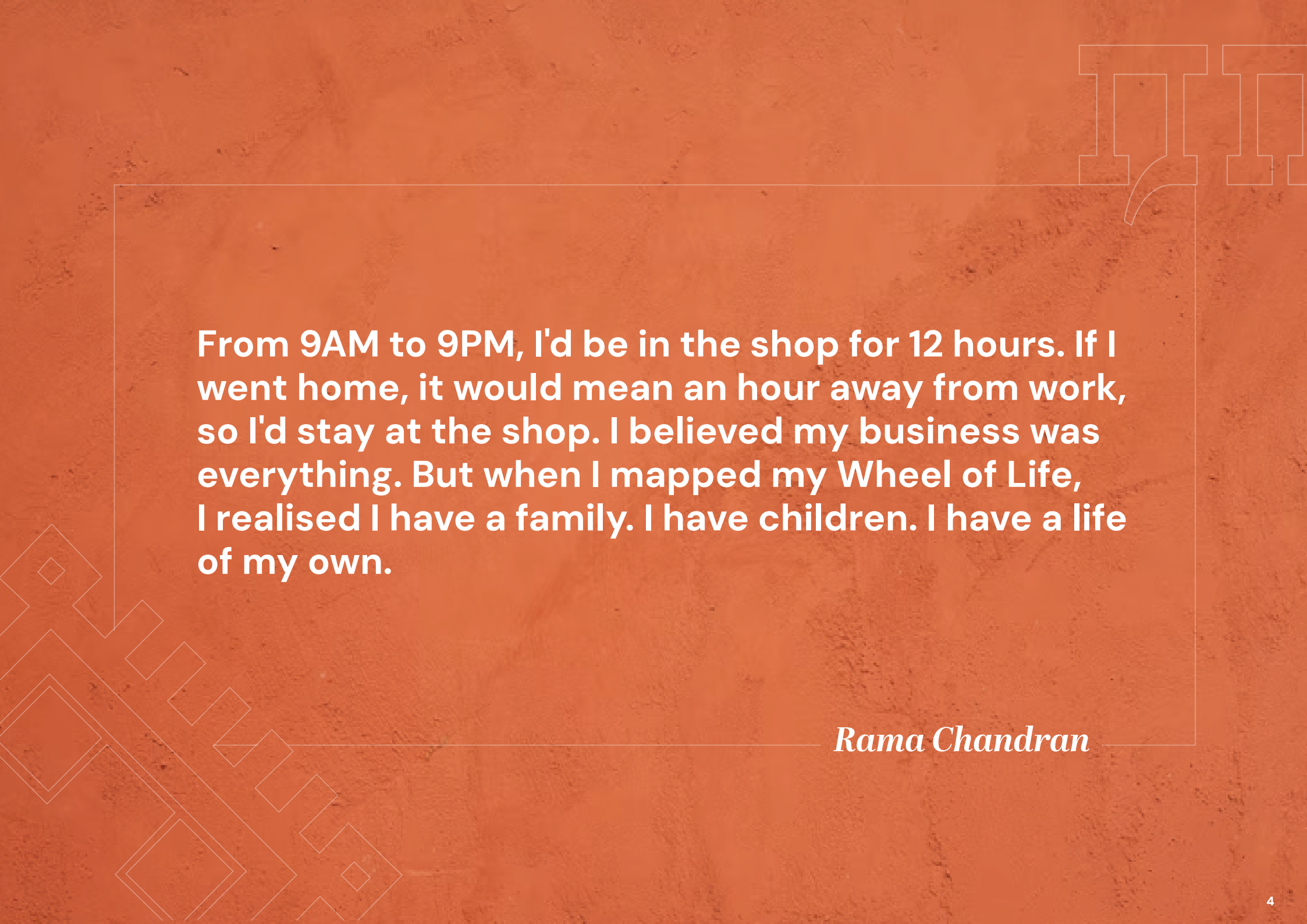
This book reflects the collective efforts of many people over the years. It acknowledges the vision that gave birth to Personal Boards, the commitment of successive leadership teams, the wisdom generously shared by our Personal Board Directors, the facilitators who nurtured these conversations, the unwavering commitment of the TiE Chennai Secretariat behind the scenes and, above all, the trust placed in us by our entrepreneurs.

As an organisation, we believe that meaningful initiatives must continue to evolve. As we look ahead, our commitment remains unchanged. We will continue to strengthen Personal Boards, deepen learning and create spaces where entrepreneurs grow not only their businesses, but also themselves.

I hope this book reflects not only the impact of Personal Boards, but also the spirit of TiE Chennai – entrepreneurs helping entrepreneurs.

MURUGAVEL JANAKIRAMAN
President, TiE Chennai





From 9AM to 9PM, I'd be in the shop for 12 hours. If I went home, it would mean an hour away from work, so I'd stay at the shop. I believed my business was everything. But when I mapped my Wheel of Life, I realised I have a family. I have children. I have a life of my own.

Rama Chandran

Chapter 1



Who are the entrepreneurs of Tamil Nadu?



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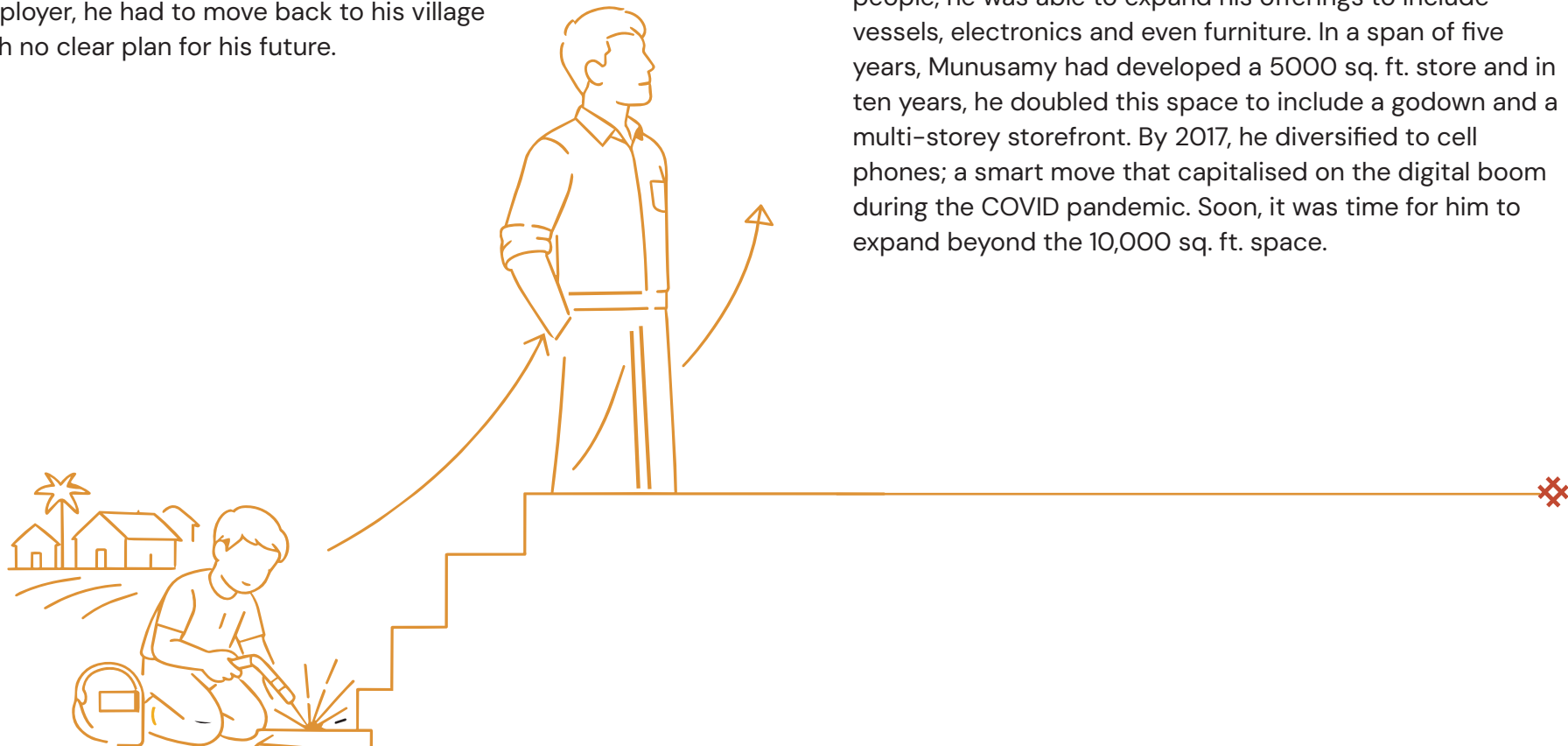
*If I cannot do well in the classroom,
I need to atleast learn a trade.*



Munusamy K began his career as a welder in 1988 at the age of 14. A Grade 8 drop out from a small agrarian village in Tamil Nadu, he worked his way up from a salary of ₹2 to ₹17,000 within a decade.

However when things soured with his employer, he had to move back to his village with no clear plan for his future.

Even amidst the uncertainty, Munusamy was never one to miss an opportunity. He began selling home goods to locals by offering an installment-based payment plan. He ran his first store out of a cramped 10x10 space and within six months, had expanded to include the store next door as well. As a local who was well-versed in the needs of his people, he was able to expand his offerings to include vessels, electronics and even furniture. In a span of five years, Munusamy had developed a 5000 sq. ft. store and in ten years, he doubled this space to include a godown and a multi-storey storefront. By 2017, he diversified to cell phones; a smart move that capitalised on the digital boom during the COVID pandemic. Soon, it was time for him to expand beyond the 10,000 sq. ft. space.



On the surface, Munusamy appeared to have it all. He had fought against circumstances and naysayers and built a thriving business that brought him respect and admiration from the local community. He seemed to be growing from strength to strength.

Yet, below the surface, the foundation was shaky. Employee attrition was high due to competitors offering better benefits and work environments. His accounting practices and internal processes were not systematic, and he ran the business purely on instinct and judgement. Additionally, his wife, always a strong pillar of support, had a request of her own; a home to call hers.

Even though he was aware of these issues, Munusamy found himself struggling to address them. At this juncture, a wellwisher pointed him in the direction of TiE Chennai.



In 2021, Munusamy joined TIE Chennai's Personal Boards. By the end of FY 2022–23, he had repaid all his business loans and laid the foundation for what would be his family home. In 2023, he put down the deposit for a new store front, doubling his store's area yet again to 20,000 sq. ft. He started eating healthy and spending time with his family. It seemed that his pain points were getting ironed out but the hardest turn was yet to come.

Challenges emerged in the lead up to the new store inauguration. Bureaucratic obstacles with acquiring necessary electricity approvals meant that the store lay shuttered for eighteen months. Two crores worth of goods were locked in. Munusamy was at a loss. Emotionally, professionally and financially, too much was tied to this expansion.

How could he recover?

With his house also built, how could liquidity be managed?

Where could he turn for clarity, advice and guidance?

The goal on the horizon was as clear as ever. The steps ahead of him had never been more vague.

Munusamy's business is one of the 57 lakh MSMEs of Tamil Nadu¹, a key driver of the state's economic growth.

Behind each of these businesses is a person; an entrepreneur who took the leap and built something from the ground up. Tamil Nadu's entrepreneurs are often known for their instinct and work ethic. But just as often, they find themselves unsure of the path to take when they hit a crossroads. Should they deepen their current footprint or expand? Is it wise to take a business loan and if so, how much? How does one manage cash flow, cement team culture, and build competitive advantage simultaneously?

Amidst these questions and this uncertainty lies the desire for legacy, pride and satisfaction. With no peers or superiors, entrepreneurs rarely have anywhere to turn for the answers. Soon enough, they realise they are limited by their own experiences and exposure, often exaggerated by a lack of external accountability.

Much like Munusamy, thousands of Tamil Nadu's entrepreneurs are in search of clarity and community.

¹Source: Guidance TamilNadu, as on July 19, 2026; other sources peg this number at 40–47 lakhs

MSMEs in TN

15%

of India's
micro enterprises



1.4+
crore people
employed



30%

of the state's
industrial output

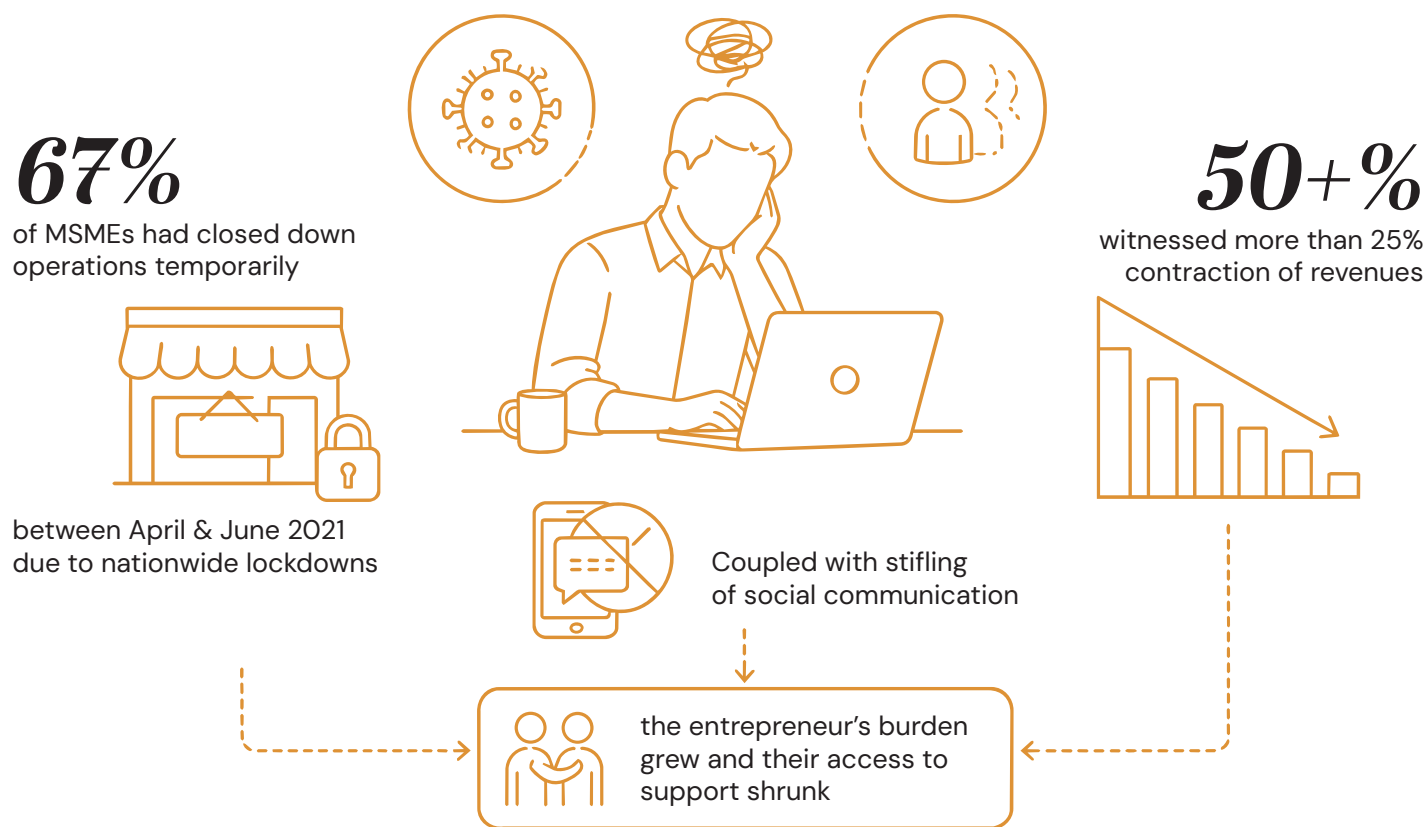


10L+

enterprises helmed
by women



A survey by Small Industries Development Bank of India²
showed that the COVID pandemic exacerbated entrepreneur's loneliness & desire for guidance.

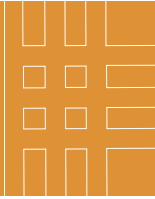


²Source: Understanding Indian MSME Sector, SIDBI, June 2025

The need for community, guidance and a collective approach to enterprise-building had never been stronger.



The Birth of Personal Boards



Having experienced the value of this peer community throughout his own entrepreneurial journey, C.K. Ranganathan, Past President of TiE Chennai recognised the difference such a space could make. His own leadership had benefitted from a circle of people who could question assumptions, offer perspective, and challenge decisions without judgement. He believed entrepreneurs building MSMEs deserved access to the same kind of support.

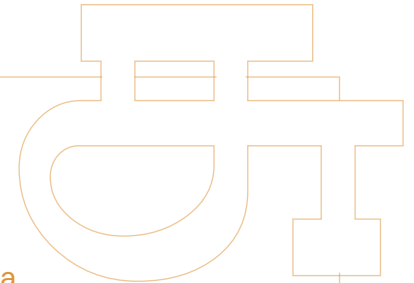
The idea evolved in conversation with TiE Chennai's Executive Director, Akhila Rajeshwar. They translated the intent into a structured programme built around peer learning, accountability, and continuous growth.

What began as a simple belief – that entrepreneurs grow better when they grow together – became TiE Chennai's Personal Boards.



The leader at the top is lonely. You cannot share everything with everyone. TiE Chennai's Personal Boards fills that exact void, giving us a place where we can truly speak.

Suresh N



Everyone has access to raw information, but the difference here is having peers who hold your hand and walk the path with you. Within the Board, everyone actively supports each other's growth, and true accountability is created automatically.

Vijay V

No two businesses are alike, but TiE Chennai's experience with entrepreneurs reflected that many had remarkably similar challenges. These challenges were not isolated business problems, but patterns that shaped the way entrepreneurs led, made decisions, and planned for growth. The Personal Boards initiative was created to address these very challenges.

Most Common Entrepreneurial Challenges



Launched in 2020, TiE Chennai's Personal Boards is a structured peer-learning programme for entrepreneurs.

Each Board brings together 8–10 non-competing entrepreneurs who meet twice a month in confidential, facilitated sessions to discuss challenges, exchange perspectives, and hold one another accountable. Between meetings, members work towards agreed action points, applying their learnings to both their businesses and personal lives.

Built on the principles of peer learning, accountability, and continuous reflection, the programme offers entrepreneurs something many have never had before: a trusted circle of peers who understand the realities of building and growing a business.

What began as an idea has evolved into a community where entrepreneurs challenge one another's thinking, navigate setbacks together, celebrate progress, and grow as leaders.

Every Board is bound by one shared belief: **businesses transform when entrepreneurs transform.**



Since its launch in 2020, the Personal Boards initiative has gained traction across the southern states, with participation from 37 out of Tamil Nadu's 38 districts as well as parts of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

NUMBER OF DIRECTORS

800+

NUMBER OF BOARDS

100+



INDUSTRIES IN PERSONAL BOARDS



TiE Chennai has played a huge role in helping me reach where I am today. My Personal Board has been invaluable. When I made mistakes, they pointed them out. At one point, I was running a showroom that was making heavy losses, but I couldn't bring myself to shut it down. My Board came to my showroom, helped me weigh the pros and cons, and guided me through the decision. Only after I closed it was I able to build something much bigger. As entrepreneurs, we often believe that whatever we are doing is right. My Board helped me step back and see what I could not see on my own.

Muthukumaran A

Chapter 2



*Every entrepreneur needs
a village.*



Everyone knows that entrepreneurship is a lonely journey. Usually, peers are seen as competitors, and family and friends as distractions. When challenges arise, entrepreneurs may put in longer hours, take fewer risks, and cut back on large teams. Everyone deals with difficulty differently, but the common factor is feeling like they must do everything themselves.

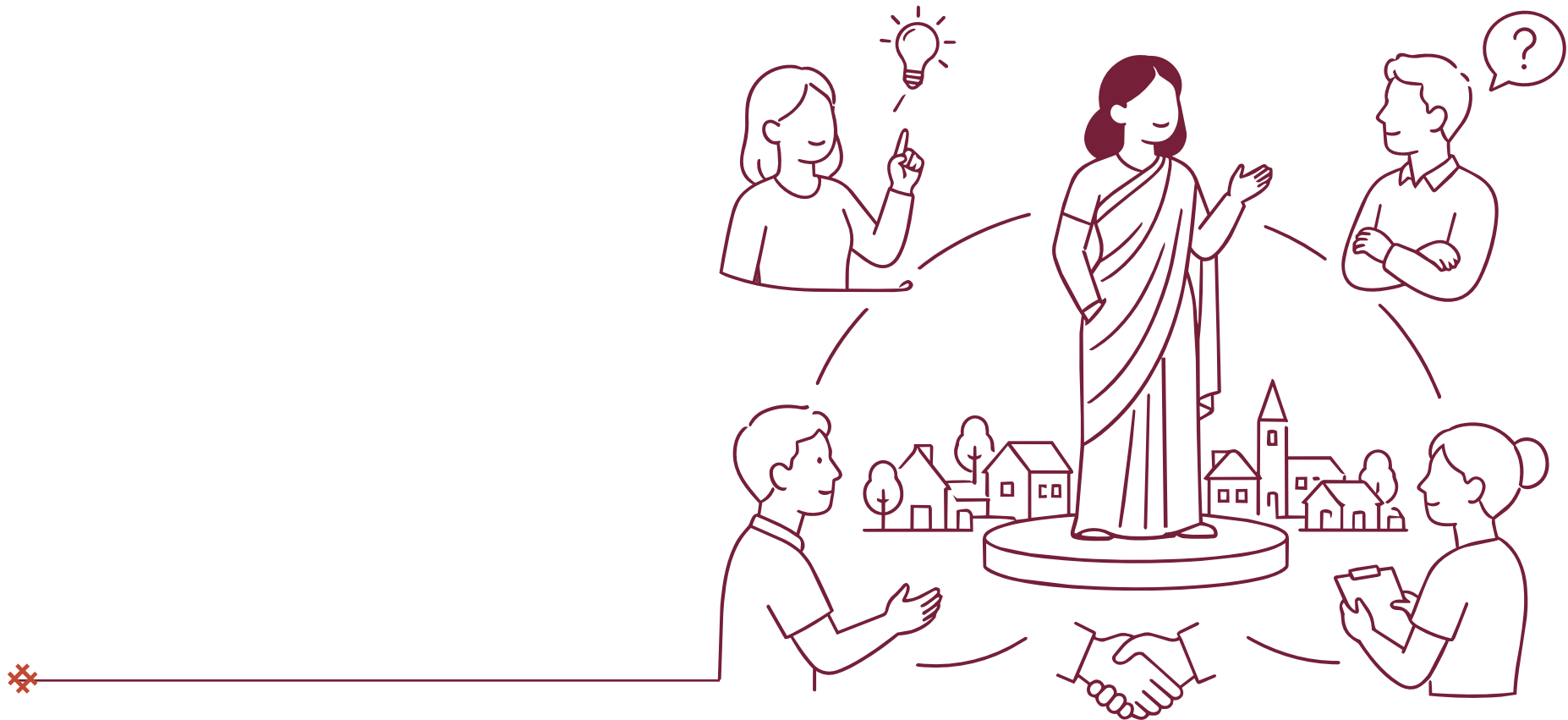
While knowledge today exists at the click of the fingertips, entrepreneurs are rarely able to benefit from it. Business courses demand concentrated effort and may not recognise the realities of entrepreneurial responsibility. Networking circles feel intimidating. Books require consistent motivation and very high self-discipline. Most importantly, all of these avenues feel impersonal. All of them address the enterprise; none prioritise the entrepreneur.



When the TiE Chennai team envisioned the Personal Boards, they were clear on their core principles. Businesses could not transform as units if entrepreneurs did not transform as individuals. And for entrepreneurs to transform, they needed to be supported and guided by a community.

Over the years, Personal Boards have evolved into a platform of contextual knowledge, accountable community and focused implementation. The Boards are a living community adapting to Directors' needs and harnessing the power of collective knowledge to build a dynamic support system for the MSME ecosystem of Tamil Nadu.

Every entrepreneur needs a village –
to guide, support, challenge and question.

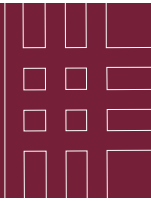




TiE Chennai is like a premium business buffet. It offers a wide variety of opportunities, insights, and connections. What you choose to take and what you leave behind is entirely up to you. No one is going to feed you. You have to help yourself.

Sreevatsan

Anchored in Support



The Boards are built on the vision articulated by C.K Ranganathan, Past President of TiE Chennai. This vision was brought to life by Akhila Rajeshwar, the Executive Director, and is kept running by a team of facilitators, who actively manage each Board and build relationships with individual Directors. Through them, every entrepreneur is heard, helped and encouraged.

For Personal Boards Directors, their facilitators are their most consistent interaction with TiE Chennai. They keep the Boards aligned, ensure everyone adheres to the shared values and commitments of the initiative, and build individual relationships to understand their needs. Especially at the beginning of every Board's journey, they act as the glue that binds the group together, bringing diverse entrepreneurial experiences and voices together towards the shared goal of collective personal transformation.



The facilitator is the backbone and coordinator of the Board. They ensure participation, follow-up, accountability and meeting discipline. Facilitators also bring valuable cross-learning from multiple Boards.

Leo Ananth Joseph



While this constitutes the regular functioning of the initiative, the TiE Chennai team is consistently seeking to improve. The initiative has grown to use technology as an enabler, integrating a Learning Management System to help entrepreneurs track transformation and share learnings. Over the years, workshops have also evolved from paper-and-pen offerings to digital-first interactions that generate reports, identify data-driven trends, and ensure key takeaways are always just a click away. In more recent times, a pre-Personal Boards gateway was introduced to act as a stepping stone for interested entrepreneurs, helping both TiE Chennai and the potential Director ensure culture fit. The dynamism of Personal Boards is fuelled by these many layers of support.



Rooted in Values

These layers of support converge at one point of conviction – empowering the entrepreneur is a canvas larger than just strengthening the enterprise.

Often, when business gets stressful, entrepreneurs feel compelled to prioritise work over personal life. Time with family is the first to take a backseat. Within the Personal Boards, challenging this is a priority. Directors understand early on that a rich personal life contributes to a successful career.

Entrepreneurs introspect and discuss many important personal questions. What are my personal limitations? Do I know what I do not know? Am I confident in my strengths? Perhaps most importantly, what are my governing values? Are my actions aligned with them?

For Personal Board Directors, these questions precede presentations on profit and loss, revenue targets, and growth charts.



A community that prioritises the personal sphere is one that champions vulnerability and honesty. The Personal Board becomes a space of transparent, open conversation that supports Directors through difficult situations, struggles with consistency and self-discipline, and dreams for the business.

It is a space defined by generosity. TiE Chennai pours into the entrepreneur through TiE Catalyst, the fortnightly meetings, access to workshops, and one-on-one conversations as needed. Directors are generous with their time, often speaking every day among themselves, using TiE Catalyst as an anchor for conversation. Co-Directors invest in each other without holding back, and the professional relationships within the Personal Boards ecosystem run far deeper than the formal structures of a professional community.

Every individual within the Personal Boards universe embodies the motto that marks the beginning of every Personal Board meeting – ***One for All, All for One.***



Our Board has remained stable from the beginning, creating deep trust and openness. The Catalyst exercise is the fulcrum that keeps our Board together. Daily discussions around positive thoughts and life lessons has created consistency and connection. This closely-knit peer environment has normalised conversations about growth, numbers and accountability.

Vivek Rathinavel



Built for Holistic Growth

This culture of generosity, vulnerability and honesty is built on a strong foundation of the Personal Boards curriculum that caters to businesses of all sectors, sizes and scales. Developed by TiE Chennai, it is a rich curation of strategies, frameworks, experiential wisdom and nuggets of implementable tools that entrepreneurs can access at all times.

CORE COMPONENTS OF PERSONAL BOARDS

- ◆ Bi-weekly Board meetings
- ◆ TiE Catalyst, a proprietary audio series that breaks down complex business strategies and traditional wisdom into accessible, relevant nuggets
- ◆ Access to deep-dive workshops that help sharpen strategy and address specific business pain points
- ◆ Access to the larger TiE Chennai ecosystem of learning events, mentors and networking opportunities

I often say my life started at the age of 40 because Personal Boards fundamentally changed how I think and live.

Saravanan A S

At the centre of the Personal Boards curriculum is the Wheel of Life, a framework that asks Directors to map their life against eight spokes, identify where they would like to be on each parameter and articulate goals to achieve this growth.

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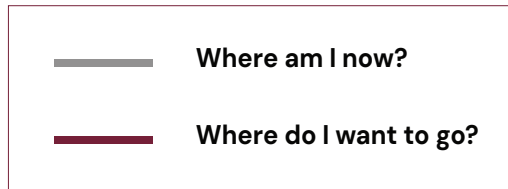
The Wheel of Life framework helped me holistically assess different dimensions of life. It is very concrete and helped me gain clarity on where I am and where I want to be. It allowed me to think more deeply about questions that were not on my radar. It gave me a way to be more comfortable with myself.

Yashasvini Rajeshwar

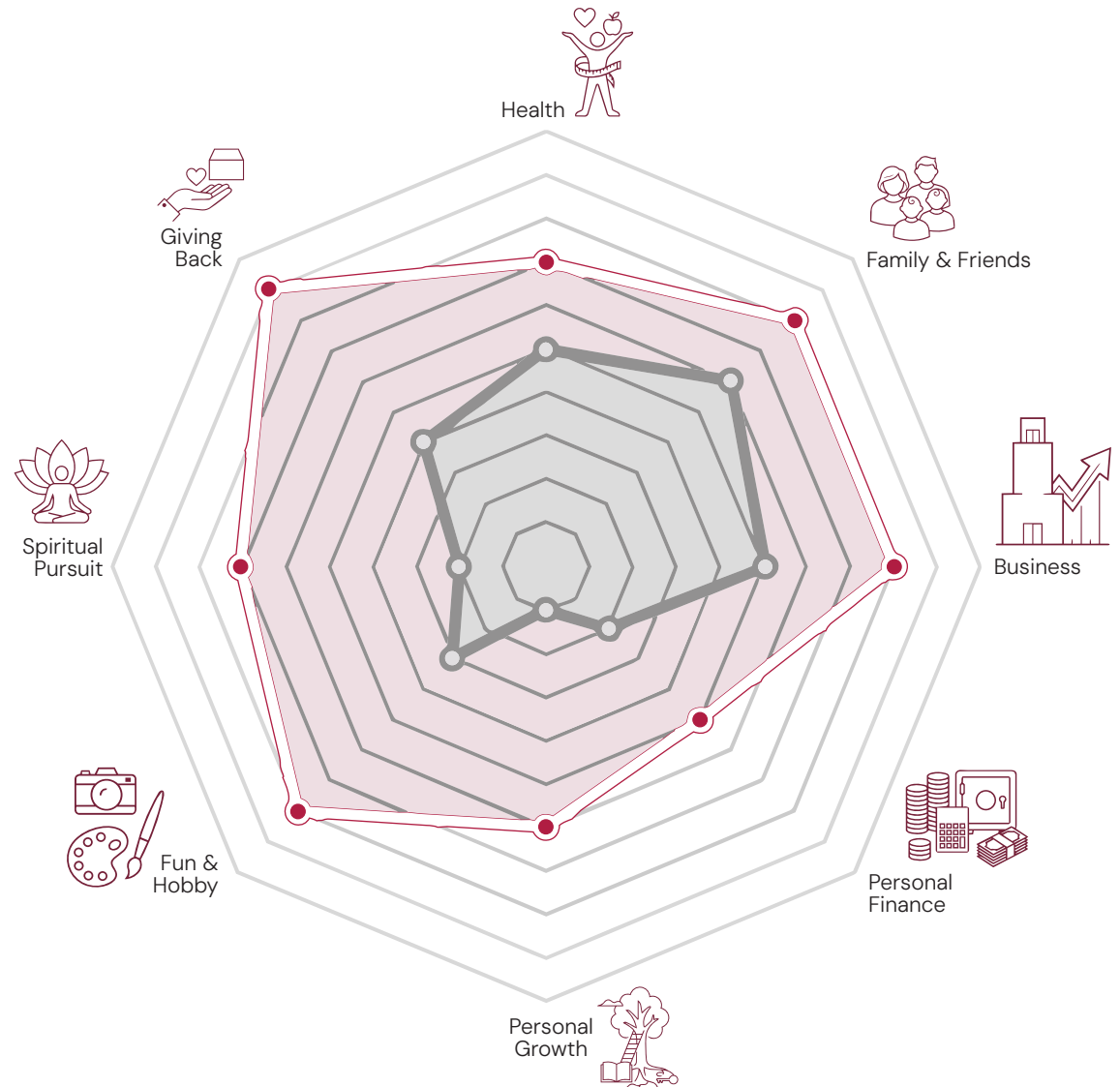
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Through Personal Boards participation, entrepreneurs begin to see value in work-life balance and see dimensions of their growth as interconnected and holistic.



The Wheel of Life



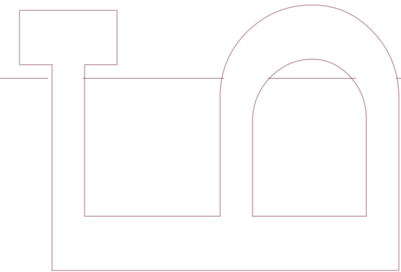
The Wheel of Life is followed closely by the Wheel of Business, a similar exercise seeking to provide a zoomed out perspective on every Director's entrepreneurial experience. It asks Directors to identify key business functions, map where they are and where they would like to be, and finally articulate the goals to achieve their targets.

Together, the Wheel of Life and Wheel of Business become the guiding frameworks that drive transformation. Directors revisit their goals regularly within and outside official meetings, and commit to short term goals that propel them towards fulfilling their targets. Through these frameworks, lofty goals are transformed into implementable actions.



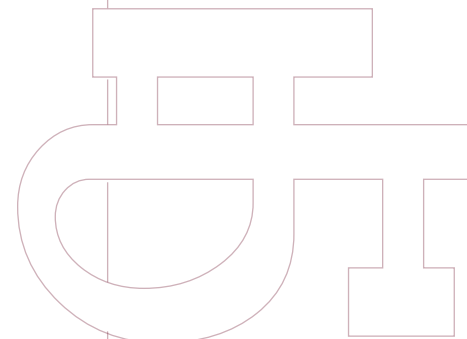
The biggest learning from the curriculum was that a business needs vision, purpose, culture, systems and processes.

Maheśwaran S



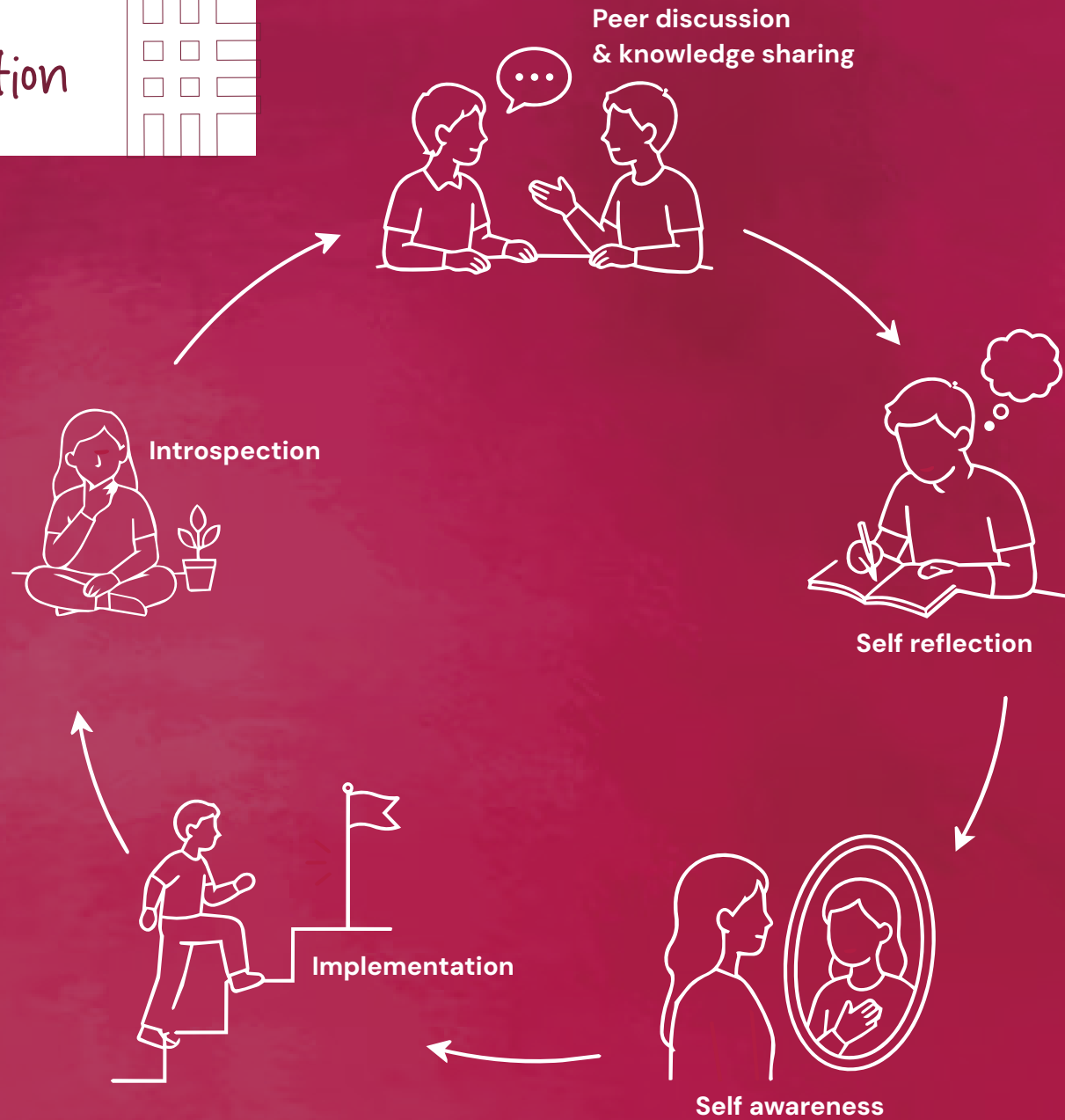
Wheel of Business forced confrontation with what was and was not being attended to — not by external pressure but by the act of writing it down.

Sunil Kumar*



*Name changed to protect privacy

Cycle of Transformation

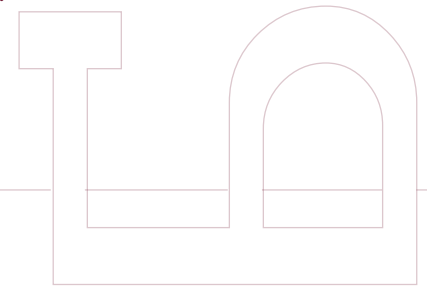


Through this cycle of transformation, Personal Boards ensure that entrepreneurs do not get caught up in the pursuit of mastery or perfection, instead focusing on implementation, introspection and continuous learning.

“

My Co-Directors do not say you should have done it this way. They just hold the mirror. They ask me to think about whether or not I am doing the right thing.

Manikandan Muthu

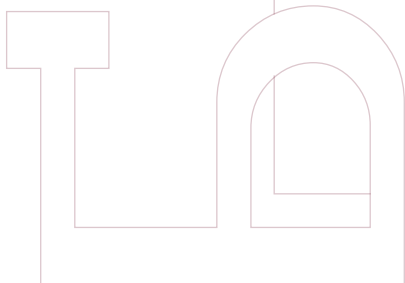


“

By holding up a proverbial mirror, the programme makes reflection a habit and creates a space where ideas are challenged.

Before joining TiE Chennai's Personal Boards, decisions were made without seeing the big picture. Now, the big picture is visible, and decision-making is clearer. That clarity is the biggest transformation I have seen, and I do not think we would have gotten there without Personal Boards.

Malli Saravanan B



On a scale of 1 to 5



Before Personal Boards



2.6

Clarity about business



After Personal Boards



4.1



2.4

Control over business



3.9



2.7

Self awareness



4.2

United by Inspiration

While the curriculum is holistic and all-encompassing, the heart of the Personal Boards initiative lies in its people.

For many entrepreneurs, C.K. Ranganathan (CKR), Past President at TiE Chennai, is an entrepreneurial inspiration from early in their journeys. Manikandan had been watching him on television since 2013. Farook had been following his work for years before an interactive session organised by TiE Chennai offered him his first direct access. Balaji had admired him from afar before joining. These relationships were seeded years ago, but sprouted through the Personal Boards.

Personal Board Directors interact with CKR most regularly through TiE Chennai's monthly "Q Time," a session bringing together Past Presidents CKR and Sriram Subramanya, Current President Murugavel Janakiraman, and Executive Director Akhila Rajeshwar. For two hours once a month, Directors interact with these leaders, asking questions ranging from personal time management to business wisdom, from efficiency tools to leadership strategies. The interactions often mirror Personal Boards' values – approachability, reflection and a commitment to transformative growth.

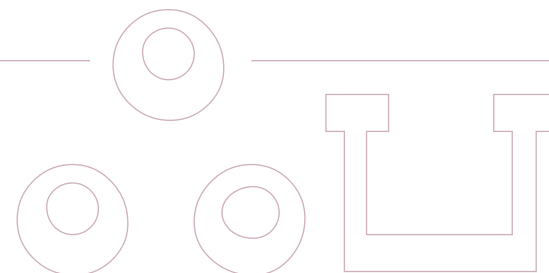


I asked CKR – “What attitudes should I look for in potential employees?”

I got a question in return – “Have you defined your value systems first?”

I immediately understood where we were lagging. First, I made changes to address that. Once I derived those values, it became clear to me what attitude people should come with. It was a big eye-opener.

Farook Beeran



Akhila Rajeshwar, Executive Director at TiE Chennai, is the glue that binds the Personal Boards ecosystem. Entrepreneurs recall that she makes them feel seen in ways that are uniquely hers. “She is like magic” they say. Akhila is seen as a positive taskmaster; a source of support, strength, and inspiration, all while holding up a mirror to the entrepreneurs.



For many Directors, their “daily dose of Akhila Ma’am” comes in the form of TiE Catalyst. Christened by CKR and implemented by Akhila, this is an audio message series structured as daily exercises spanning business strategy, personal growth, leadership lessons, and contextual learnings from global management wisdom. As of July 2026, the initiative has been live for 2000 consecutive days, listened to by thousands of entrepreneurs across Tamil Nadu and beyond.

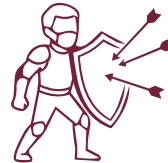
Key Catalyst Concepts



Respond, don't react



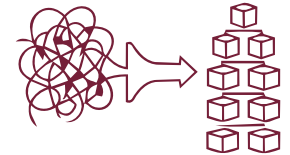
Assumptions
vs. Reality



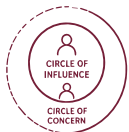
Prevention over cure



Focus creates
momentum



Simplify to scale



Circle of Influence
vs. Circle of Concern



Clarity before action



Look in the mirror,
not out the window



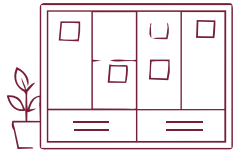
SMART goal setting



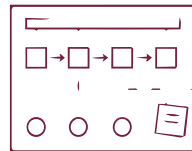
Root cause thinking

For situations and challenges that need more engagement, Directors attend one of several workshops hosted by TiE Chennai and facilitated by Akhila. These workshops deep dive into specific aspects of running a business, helping entrepreneurs identify and engage with the root cause of their challenges. Many workshops provide personalised reports that speak directly to individual business contexts as well as the opportunity to interact with and learn from Akhila directly. The TiE Chennai team also wields technology strategically, using in-house platforms to scale workshop participation.

TiE Chennai's Workshops



Business Model Canvas



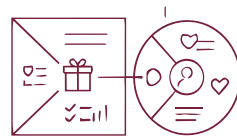
Business Blueprint



Cracking the Talent Code



Business Alignment Model



Value Proposition Canvas



The Third Angle

Together, the TiE Chennai team bring expertise, wisdom and discipline to the programme. Entrepreneurs trust them and therefore, trust the curriculum they have conceived. This relationship, based on mutual respect and a commitment to collective growth, is the engine driving Personal Boards' success.



Bound by Language

One of the most striking features of the Personal Boards initiative is its vocabulary. Within minutes of speaking to Directors, shared vocabulary emerges almost like code. The language is specific and always met with understanding nods and engaged responses. Beginning from TiE Catalyst, this vocabulary has embedded itself in Board meetings, workshops and even social interactions between the Directors.

The key feature of this language is its relevance and approachability. TiE Chennai's proprietary curriculum is developed for the context of MSME entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu. It draws from global business wisdom and observations of entrepreneurs' experiences, contextualises it with local examples, converts the vocabulary into an accessible Tanglish and is delivered in a non-threatening, approachable style. Thus, business and self-help jargon are simplified, and entrepreneurs begin to internalise the content and speak the vocabulary of change. Armed with the vocabulary, entrepreneurs now clearly name their challenges, identify relevant course correction mechanisms, and commit to accountability checks.

“

Everything that TiE Chennai says may not be relevant at every point in time, but somewhere down the road, it becomes relevant. When we absorb these ideas and they settle inside us, they come in handy when we need them. TiE's language from Catalyst is particularly helpful. It grows on you and shapes the way you think.

Jayaprakash Janardhanan

I try to expose as many team members as possible to TiE for Future Leaders³ because it helps them understand the same language and concepts that I use in the business.

Dheenadayalan Selvaraj

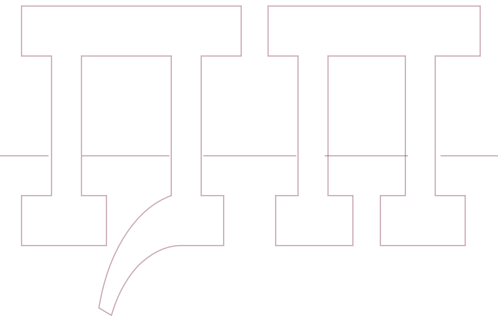
³TiE for Future Leaders is a TiE Chennai initiative catering to employees of Personal Board Directors, to expose them to the ideas and vocabulary Directors benefit from in the Personal Boards.

Ensuring that the language of Catalyst plays a pivotal role in the Personal Boards meetings as well helps build a culture of accountability. Directors learn about relevant frameworks and strategies in Catalyst, deep dive into them through presentations and discussions in the Personal Board meetings, and make commitments towards implementation. These commitments are then a collective responsibility, with Co-Directors and facilitators asking for updates and celebrating achievements.



The combination of Catalyst and Personal Boards, with their accountability and implementation discipline, has created lasting change in our business and leadership culture.

K Thiruppathi Rajan



Through a shared commitment to personal transformation, unshakeable trust in its leadership, a common vocabulary of implementation, and an unwavering culture of 'one for all, all for one,' TiE Chennai's Personal Boards ensures no entrepreneur is ever alone.



The Village's Frequently Used Vocabulary

Workshops	What it does & What they say
Value Proposition Canvas (VPC)	Helps understand customers, their pains and gains, and ask whether the business is solving the real problem. <i>"How can we scale up our revenue with different customers? What customers should we start communicating with first? How can we start negotiating? I learned that in VPC."</i> – Ramakrishnan Paramasivan
Business Model Canvas (BMC)/ Business Blueprint	Helps entrepreneurs see their whole business as one connected picture instead of scattered pieces. <i>"When I first attended the BMC, [I did not know] how many channels we had. Which was giving us more revenue? What is marketing and what is branding? I learned all this there."</i> – Subbiah Raman
Business Alignment Model (BAM)	Divides the business into front end, back end, and enablers — then maps people, process, and technology across each. Used to diagnose where problems actually live. <i>"BAM helped me analyse strategy, structure, people, process and technology across every business function. Through BAM, I introduced weekly reviews, operational reviews, sales reviews and structured business monitoring."</i> – Sudharshan M

Ideas from Catalyst	What it does & What they say
Respond, not React	Differentiates between reacting immediately from emotion and responding deliberately after reflection. Named as a personal and professional shift by entrepreneurs across sectors. <i>"If I had reacted in that place, different kinds of problems would have come. I have avoided all that by responding." — Ila Sithanathan</i>
Circle of Influence vs. Circle of Concern	Distinguishes what is within an entrepreneur's control and what is not — and redirects energy away from what cannot be changed. <i>"Without knowing what the circle of influence is, I used to go to the circle of concern and intervene. Now I have learned what the boundary is." — Meignana Prakasam B</i>
Looking in the Mirror Vs. Window	Encourages introspection by asking entrepreneurs to look inwards before assigning blame on external factors and look outwards with positive reinforcement. <i>"I learnt that, when a mistake happens, we should look in the mirror and when praising, we should look through the window. So if any mistake happens, now I think it must be a reflection of me and I try to correct it." – Rama Chandran</i>

Skills	What it does & What they say
Budget/ Financial Discipline	Regular P&L tracking, cash flow review, and annual budgeting — often the first time entrepreneurs formally differentiate between their personal and business finance. <i>"Until then, my profit and loss would only be in my mind. I used to manually make bills." — Subbiah Raman</i>

Spotlight

S P Arunmozhi Varman is a Chartered Accountant who came to TiE Chennai after his father passed away, seeking a larger community and business support. A dedicated learner, Arunmozhi found that every aspect of the TiE programme spoke to him and his business. He respects his facilitator and enjoys being held accountable when he strays from his goals. He shares a deep bond with his cohort, who show him support by pushing him towards his goals. For Arunmozhi, TiE Chennai is his extended family.

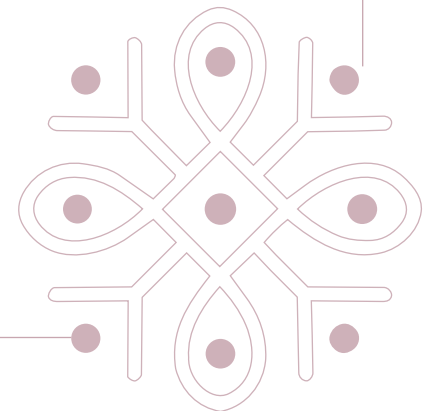
Very quickly, he embraced every aspect of the programme. He attended the BMC workshop three times, trusting that it would teach him something about his business. Finally, he was able to segment his business based on customer needs and not service segments. His clientele grew, and he began to earn higher profits from his consultancy. He trusted the process. He built systems and a team. In a span of a few years, his team size grew from 3 individuals to 24. With the help of the Cracking the Talent Code workshop and wisdom from Catalyst, he was able to manage his team which grew in independence. Now, his company is driven by dedicated people and clear processes.

Arunmozhi's story is an example of what happens when you trust the process. He does not stop reflecting, and continuously brings more people into the TiE Chennai way – he recommends new directors for the programme, and takes home his learnings to his family.



During most of our family drives, we listen to catalysts. My wife, children, and cousin also like listening to them and ask for it on most of our drives.

Beyond the business, he took personal development very seriously – he began to read books, sleep early, spend time with family, and let his business grow through structures and processes that worked for him. Today, he enjoys a full life.



Meet Manikandan

Manikandan Thilagaraj expanded his family business in an unexpected new direction.

With the Supreme Court's restrictions on fireworks along with growing environmental and social concerns about the industry, Manikandan, a Sivakasi-based entrepreneur was at a crossroads. How could he uphold the legacy of a five-decade-old family business while also responding to the realities of present markets? With the COVID pandemic becoming an added stressor, he found himself grappling with diminishing demand for his products, without a community or guidance to turn to in this period of flux.

Conventional business wisdom pointed Manikandan in the direction of diversification. But many questions remained. What would that look like? How would that affect his family's legacy as fireworks entrepreneurs? Was this expertise even relevant elsewhere? This search for answers and guidance led him to the TiE Chennai Personal Boards in August 2020.

The Personal Boards' curriculum encouraged him to question his approach to his business. As a Personal Boards Director, he participated in two key workshops – Business Blueprint and Value Proposition Canvas. Relevant frameworks, personalised feedback and dedicated time to strategise helped him regroup and look beyond his existing customer base. Instead of focusing on trying to fix the immediate problem and sell more fireworks, he began engaging with a far deeper question. "What is the need my product fulfills?" The answer came from an unexpected place.



The curriculum *changed my mindset* from diversification to building opportunities within my existing business.



In articulating the need he could fulfill with the skills and expertise he had, Manikandan identified an entirely new market. He realised that airports use specialised pyrotechnic products adjacent to fireworks to deter birds from entering aircraft flight paths. While the technology was similar to his existing expertise, the customer segment, buying process, and value proposition were completely different from the traditional festive fireworks market. It was an opportunity to deepen his family legacy by diversifying the company.

Once the market had been identified, Manikandan realised the need to build his own skills to take advantage of them. Listening to Catalyst everyday built a virtuous cycle of reflection and implementation. His Co-Directors consistently challenged his thinking, helping him move from instinct-based decisions to structured problem-solving. His Board evolved into a testing ground for his business decisions, providing a framework of accountability that allowed him to both finetune his strategies and fix what was not working.



Revenue of
₹11 crores
in 2021 to
**₹26 crores
in 2026.**

Today, Manikandan's company supplies bird-scaring pyrotechnic solutions to 7–8 airports across India. He continues to listen to Catalyst, participate actively in his Board, and seek opportunities to expand his horizons.

Meet Dinesh & Keerthana

This entrepreneur couple grew as founders and in their relationship.

Dinesh Kumar and Keerthana D K, a couple united by their love for food, founded Tiny Dots Foods in 2018. They began by supplying honey to retailers across Tamil Nadu, and quickly found market traction. However, they were unable to convert their sales peak into sustained growth. By the end of FY 2021-22, the company had incurred losses of nearly ₹40 lakh.

Like many first-generation entrepreneurs, their immediate reaction was firefighting. The business demanded all of their attention, leaving little time for themselves, their family or strategic thinking. Soon, they realised that all their conversations tended to be about the business. They knew this was not a sustainable way to build a growing business or a young family.

Seeking guidance and support on how to manage their business, Dinesh discovered TiE Chennai's Personal Boards programme. He was drawn to the combination of consistent learning and implementation offered in the form of a structured curriculum, an accountability culture, personalised feedback, and a community of entrepreneurs facing similar

challenges. Recognising the value of learning from different perspectives, both Dinesh and Keerthana enrolled into separate Personal Boards. Each had their own space of learning, their own set of Co-Directors and their own set of goals to achieve.

The curriculum challenged them to rethink their business strategy and within it, their individual roles. One of the earliest lessons was on the need to reduce founder dependency and the direction of how to do so. Encouraged by their Co-Directors, they took a leap of faith and hired a few employees during a period of financial uncertainty. What felt like a big risk soon became their biggest reward. Having employees meant that they were able to build out separate functions, delegate responsibilities and move away from a business model that necessitated their daily involvement for survival. Soon, they grew from a team of eight employees to an organisation of 32 people, built on better delegation, stronger systems and a culture of trust.



When something went wrong, my instinct was to ask “how could this happen?” Now, I choose to trust my team and *fix it together*.



The workshops also helped **sharpen** the company's strategic direction. After attending the **Value Proposition Canvas workshop** twice and discussing extensively with their respective Boards, Keerthana and Dinesh identified new avenues for growth. They would strengthen their white-label manufacturing business for established brands and also launch their own direct-to-consumer (D2C) brand. The business would get diversified and their brand identity would strengthen.



FY2021-22: ₹40 lakh loss
FY2025-26: ₹3.8 crore turnover

The transformation has been remarkable. Tiny Dot Foods has moved from a loss of approximately ₹40 lakh in FY2021-22 to achieving a turnover of ₹3.8 crore in FY2025-26 while returning to healthy profitability. However, the impact that the entrepreneur couple holds the most dear is that the stress of their business no longer defines their personal lives. Delegation at the workplace created time for reflection at home. They found the time to invest in their relationship and were able to build the mindscape for intentional parenting. Quality time in the family was prioritised without any compromise on their business.

For Dinesh and Keerthana, Personal Boards taught them a simple and powerful lesson, echoed by the programme's philosophy – when founders grow, their businesses grow with them. By transforming the way they lead, they transformed both the company and the life they were building together.



When I joined Personal Boards, I had a desire — to build a global product, to do something bigger — but if you asked me whether I had clarity on how, the honest answer was no. After spending time with my Co-Directors, listening to their experiences, something shifted. My mind began processing differently. Now, instead of looking at things only emotionally, I can step back, look at them practically, and with more empathy.

Nivethitha Chi





Through the Personal Boards, TiE Chennai gave me a structure to convert ambition into action.

Sriram Shankar*



Chapter 3

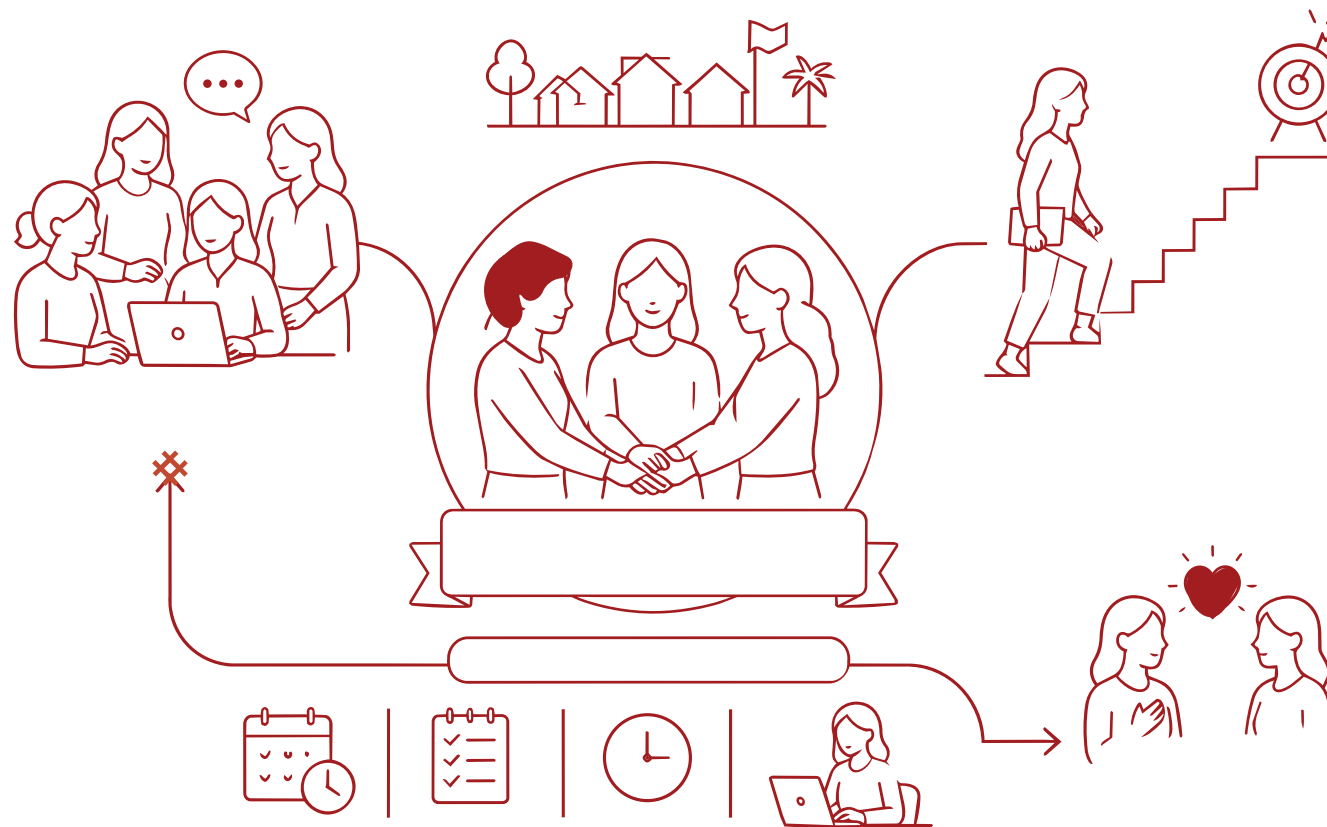


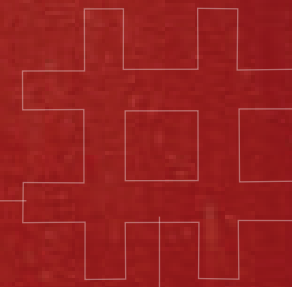
*Every village is made of
its people.*



Every vibrant community is made up of diverse individuals who come together for a singular cause. Communities for entrepreneurs are no different. The Personal Boards village is bonded by values; it cultivates intention and implementation. Each entrepreneur is expected to show up for every meeting; prepared, on time, and fully engaged. This shows respect, and through this respect, they learn to put people first.

In Personal Board sessions, the facilitators and entrepreneurs celebrate small wins and daily acts of discipline. Similarly at work, entrepreneurs are urged to build accountable teams who exhibit high ownership and a shared culture. At home, they are encouraged to carve out quality time with their families. As a Personal Board Director, they learn to identify priorities that outlast business crises.





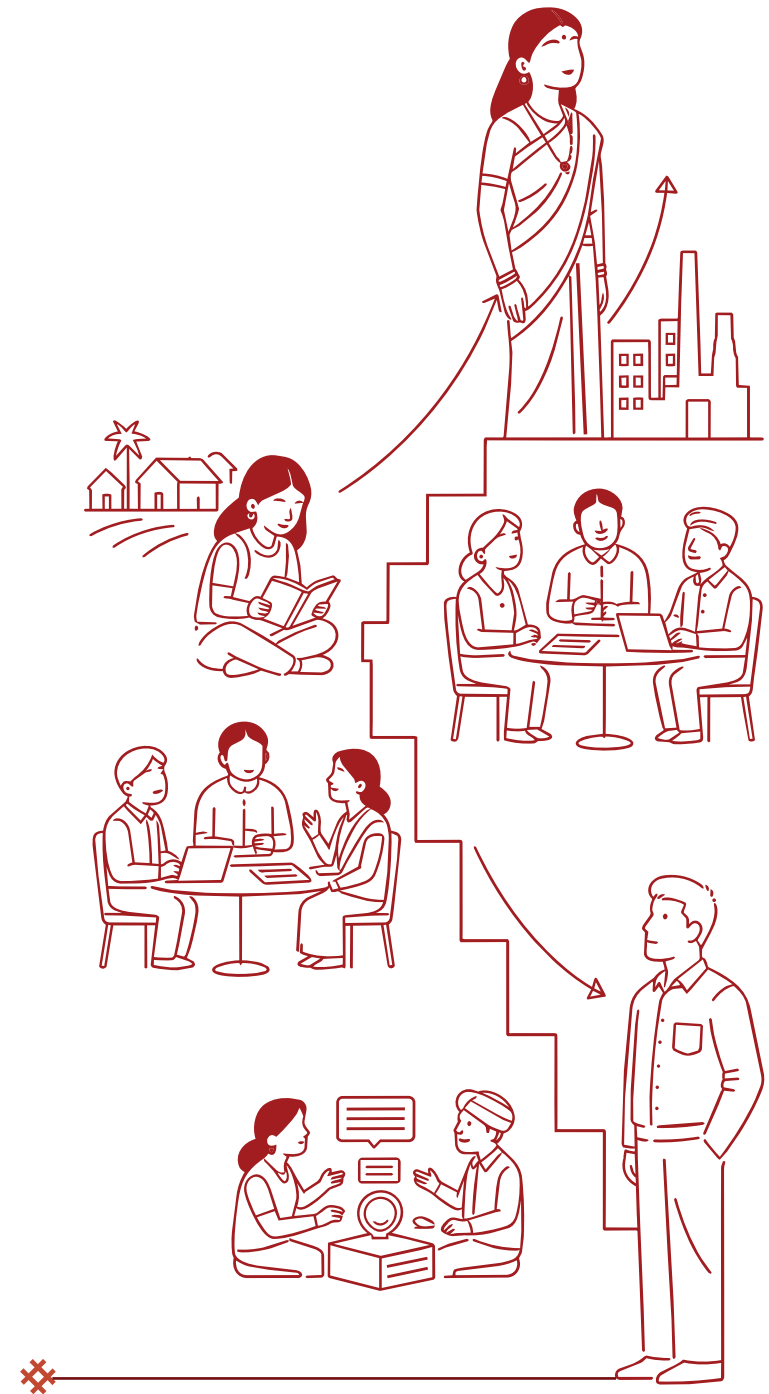
It has had a real impact on my personal life. Earlier, if I lost my temper with someone, they simply would not come to work the next day. After coming to TiE Chennai's Personal Boards — after listening, reading, absorbing — I changed. I had never been a reader before. Now I am. And every year, we go on a foreign trip — our entire Board, together. All of us bond like a family.

Durai Palanisamy

For the Personal Boards, TiE Chennai **hand-picks entrepreneurs** who display a **keen openness** to change and grow. Once enrolled, they participate in regular group discussions, collaborative learning sessions, and meticulous accountability systems. And thus, they begin their journey of personal and business transformation.

Slowly, they get to know their peers, open up about their businesses and personal lives, and build relationships with their Co-Directors. They work together to achieve the fundamentals – a clear picture of the state of their business, well-defined targets, and active personal lives. The continuous culture of reflection and self-analysis has helped entrepreneurs identify problems, set goals, and build habits that help them achieve these.

Consistency and time bring out every entrepreneur's individuality. How do they want to take their business forward? How would they like to contribute to society? Each entrepreneur identifies their unique vision and values to the community, making their village an interesting, dynamic, and personalised space. Through discipline and structure, these entrepreneurs begin to dream their dreams together.



Spotlight

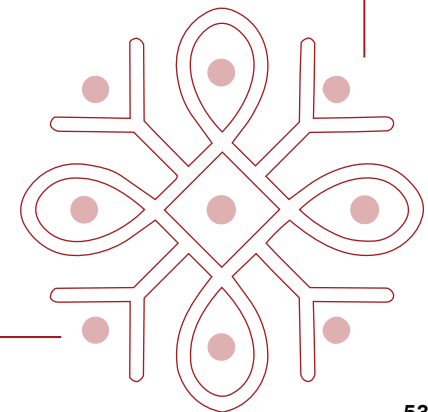
A fifth generation entrepreneur whose family has been in business since 1919, P Tharun Kumar inherited a legacy company working in multiple retail markets. Their reputation was enviable but internal systems and processes did not reflect this legacy. When unplanned tasks came up, they hustled, managing on the strength of their brand name. Tharun knew this was not sustainable.

Tharun participated in the Personal Boards in earnest, absorbing the frameworks and ideas. He implemented changes, both big and small, to his company. He realised that his unique value proposition was offering a memorable service, and thus, began focusing on curating an experience around his restaurant business.

Located in a Tier III town, he now offers opportunities where customers can dine against the background of live music. He hosts everyday specials that help reiterate his brand. Under his leadership, his restaurant grew from a place to eat to one people enjoy spending time in.

Parallel to this business growth, Tharun imbibed the personal transformation values of TiE Chennai in spirit. He recommitted to giving back to society, planting 1000 trees as a starting point to his goal of reducing local temperatures by 1°C to battle climate change. He has also committed to owning 200 country-bred cows by 2025 as a means of promoting local, sustainable agriculture.

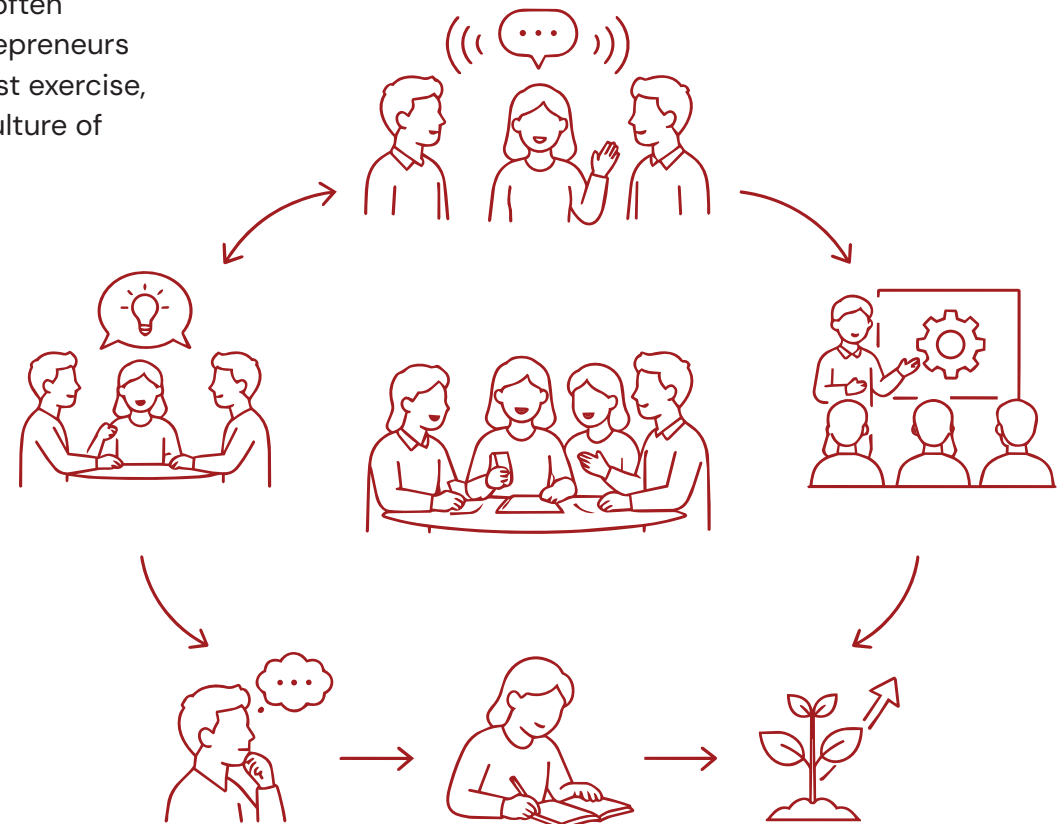
Inheriting a business with a deep-rooted history, the Personal Boards curriculum and platform gave Tharun the tools and the space to begin building his own personal legacy. Today, he is paving his own path at work and within his community.



Listening, Learning & Changing

Most entrepreneurs are busy firefighting and often do not engage regularly with employees, customers or even family. TiE Chennai recognises that listening is the first step to learning; an integral component of personal transformation.

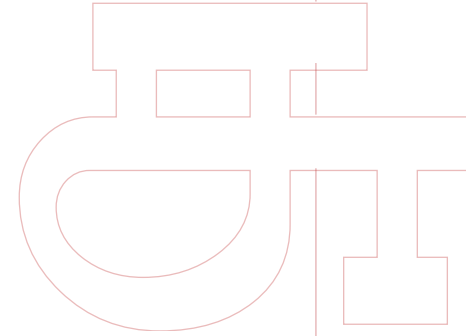
The structure of the Personal Boards – regular calls, access to workshops, and Catalyst discussions – prioritises consistent listening. This listening often snowballs into reflection, triggering growth and change. Several entrepreneurs recall that their Boards choose to meet daily to discuss each Catalyst exercise, complete the reflection questions, and interpret the content. This culture of rich discussion makes them active listeners and learners.



“

The Catalyst is a wonderful thing. When we listen together as a Board and discuss it every morning, each Director gets a different perspective based on the same content. Eight people, eight perspectives. And somewhere in those perspectives, there is always something you think about and adopt.

Sukumar Karunakaran



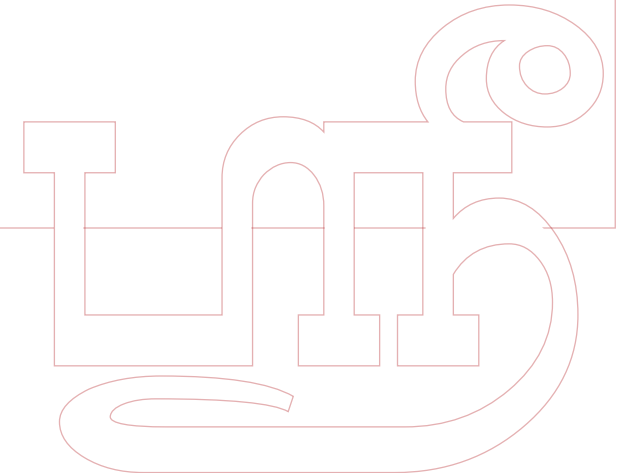
Consistent exposure to fresh perspectives transforms the way entrepreneurs engage with the people and information around them. Despite their busy schedules, they are more present in every moment, and reflect on what they can learn from others.

“

As far as I'm concerned, Catalyst is an asset — like the *Thirukkural**. Even if you listen for just two minutes, there is something to take away. After those two minutes, the effect of Catalyst only grows. For everything you may be facing, Catalyst has the solution.

Sripathi Dinash

*Thirukkural is an ancient Tamil classic written by Thiruvalluvar comprising 1330 couplets describing a virtuous life.



Spotlight

In 2021, Baskar Kasinathan turned his passion for food into his profession. He opened a food products company, but struggled to turn a profit. He hoped to understand why, and thus joined the Personal Boards. Although he was a trained professional in food technology, business was new to him. He was open to critique from all members and explored their advice in good faith. The exposure to different businesses helped him ask the right questions around the market gaps, companies' revenue strategies and his own product.

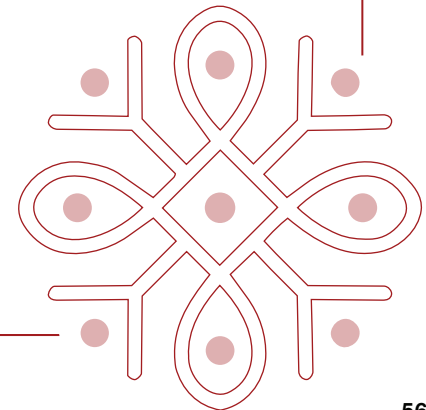


Everyone has problems. But when you bring a problem to the Board, you do not get one perspective — you get many. Four people, four solutions. Left to myself, I would only have what I think is right — and sometimes my ego tells me that is enough. But hearing how others have approached the same challenge, from their own experience, is where the real learning happens.

He took a business-first approach and focused on strengthening every part of his company. His people management skills sharpened. Rather than tolerating mediocrity out of the fear of attrition, he learned ways to communicate his feedback to employees, make them feel valued, and build an accountable team.

Simultaneously, he started paying more attention to accounts and set up effective processes for finance. His business clarity was soon reflected in the balance sheet and his revenue jumped from Rs. 1.2 crores in 2021 to Rs. 12.5 crores in 2026. Based out of a Tier III town, his company is now listed in the Top 5 in the Rest of Tamil Nadu category on Zomato and Swiggy.

His transformation started with the day he embraced new ideas and different ways of running a business. Ever since, Baskar has become a leader who is open to ideas, quick to listen and committed to growth.



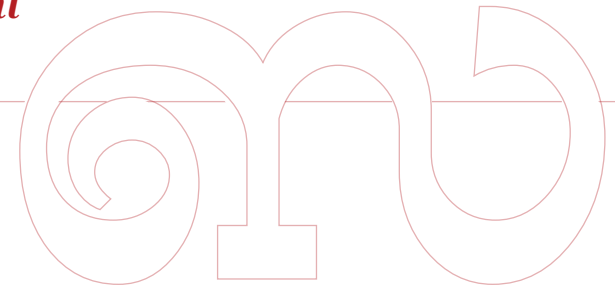
Beyond the benefit of multiple perspectives, Personal Boards also offer the opportunity to build tangible knowledge and skills. Through the workshops, fortnightly meetings, other TiE offerings and Catalyst, Directors explore every aspect of business – culture creation, team building, strategic vision and clarity, finance and budgeting, establishing systems and so much more.

If conversation with Co-Directors provides perspective, the Personal Boards curriculum builds confidence. Together, entrepreneurs are able to strengthen knowledge, sharpen skill sets, and become more open to feedback.



For nearly 17 years, I was a one-man show with little time for strategy or scaling. After joining Personal Boards, learning, unlearning and relearning became part of my lifestyle. I built systems, structure and second-line leadership instead of handling everything personally. I also became more confident as an entrepreneur.

Sakthivel Palani



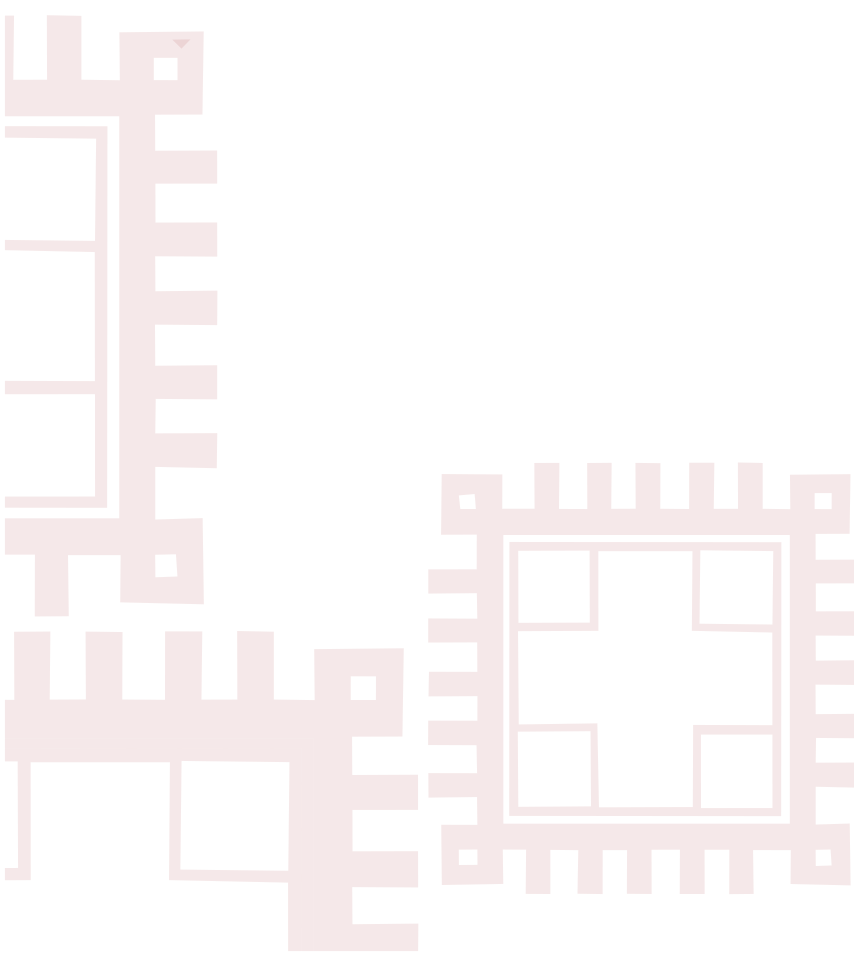
At Personal Boards, entrepreneurs learn that genuine feedback is valuable. Feedback is shared with respect and careful consideration for the peer's success. Entrepreneurs are encouraged to speak in "if I were you" sentences, modelling mutual respect in every interaction. In return, every entrepreneur learns to receive feedback through active listening, consideration, conversation and follow through. It is a culture that pushes the entrepreneur to rise to their potential.

“

Every session leaves me with a takeaway, and I try to implement at least one from each one. For example, I stopped micromanaging and started giving my employees space to learn. As a result, they have taken on more ownership of solving problems. We pull each other up whenever someone feels low or loses momentum.

Bhargavi R

”



This culture of feedback throws up many opportunities for cross-learning. Among the first questions asked of the Personal Boards model is whether entrepreneurs from different industries and sectors can even provide useful feedback to each other. Yet, time and again, entrepreneurs recognise this very feature as being crucial to their growth.

Despite being from different sectors, entrepreneurs understand the fundamental contexts and challenges of building businesses. When they put their heads together to brainstorm a sales strategy or marketing puzzle for a Co-Director, they are able to benefit from the pool of shared experience, break past the limitations of blinkered perspectives, and unlock significant growth. For entrepreneurs without strong support systems otherwise, these inputs make the difference between overwhelm and confidence, confusion and clarity.



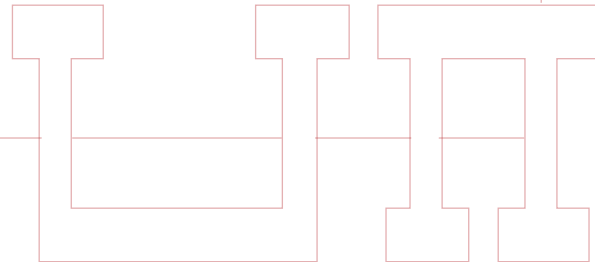


This virtuous cycle of listening, receiving feedback and implementing it fosters a deep bond between entrepreneurs. A culture of trust is rooted and entrepreneurs grow genuinely invested in each other's growth.



I speak very openly even about my profit and loss, and same for the others in my Board. This helped us devise perfect strategies to cut costs.

Balamurugan V



Beyond the business, they grow to discuss personal issues as well. Whether marriage or parenting, cultivating hobbies or getting healthier, the Boards become a safe space for entrepreneurs to step out of their business shoes and be seen as people.

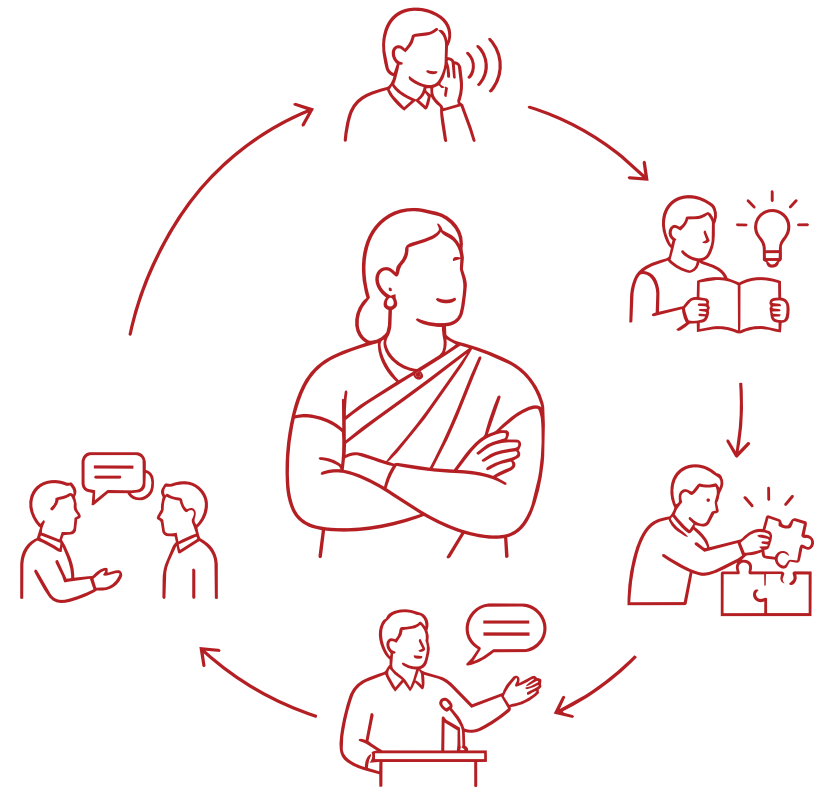
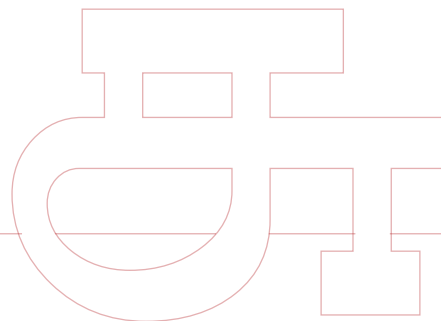
Thus, the skills of listening, learning and changing have shaped them – as astute business owners, sensitive people, and respected leaders. Directors often also become better speakers. The habit of introspection translates into their communication, articulating their vision, value and path ahead more clearly.



There is a conception that entrepreneurs are focused only on profits and not employees.

Through Personal Boards, I recognised that people may feel this way, and I took that as a point to learn and grow from. I had to think about my employees, and what I can do for them. This changed my leadership approach, and the way I speak to my employees.

Surendar Babu Sundarajan



TiE Chennai's Personal Boards builds a virtuous cycle of listening, learning, changing, speaking and seeking feedback. Directors become dynamic leaders who absorb and respond to the information around them, both within and beyond the workplace.

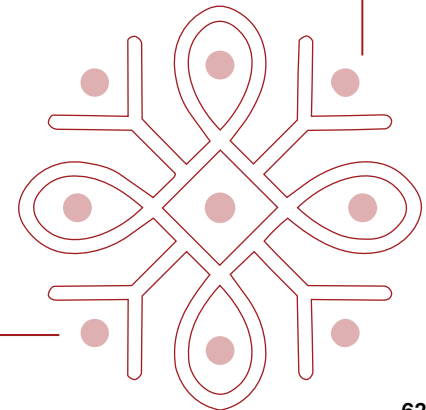
Spotlight

Jeyaram Gandhi spent seventeen years mastering the art of sales before starting Mangayarkarasi Pharma in 2009, catering to the wholesale market. He knew how to move a product, negotiate margins, and close a deal. But after beginning his business, he realised his responsibilities went beyond product sales to running and scaling an organisation. "I could not go beyond a certain level," he recalls. "I did not even know how to think about it."

Accustomed to operating alone, Jeyaram Gandhi's main hurdle was learning to trust his employees, his business, and himself. He was insistent on doing everything alone, and afraid that delegation would breed competitors. His Co-Directors challenged him and helped him grow in confidence. "So what if someone opens a competing business?" With greater faith in himself, Jeyaram worked on his product, its availability and its pricing. Once he began delegating responsibilities, it also freed up time for reflection. He identified a major untapped market – retailers. That expansion unlocked significant revenue growth for the business.

Change found its way to his home as well. He was easy to anger and his opinion was the only voice in the house. The family had never travelled beyond temple visits. With introspection, reflection and feedback, he realised that a culture of communication was important at home. Today, he encourages everyone to speak, and when they do, he does not allow his mind to wander. He is present, physically, mentally and emotionally.

Today, Jeyaram is a more successful entrepreneur and a more present parent. Whether at home or at office, Jeyaram is now committed to the power of listening.



Pursuing Habits, Health & Happiness

Ask an entrepreneur about their biggest constraint and the answer will likely be time. They put in long days, and the little energy they have left is split – between taking care of themselves and being present for their families and friends. All too often, self care and personal goals are deprioritised, and the mental and physical toll start to build.

In the Personal Boards, the entrepreneur is the heart of the enterprise. Helping entrepreneurs build habits of care, consistency and commitment, the initiative believes, will directly result in more robust, successful businesses.

Habits are built from reinforcement. What starts as an external structure – a meeting, a workshop, a presentation, a review – slowly becomes an internal rhythm. Entrepreneurs begin to observe themselves, and they transform as they review more carefully, listen more openly, and act with greater intention. These strong habits, then, help them overcome survival mode, invest in personal transformation, and recognise the importance of a rich personal life.

We asked:
**How impactful has
Personal Boards
been in your overall
personal
transformation?**



Many entrepreneurs enter the programme carrying years of instinctive practice. They have built businesses through effort, intuition, and personal sacrifice. However, those same habits eventually limit growth, often at the cost of the entrepreneur's wellbeing.

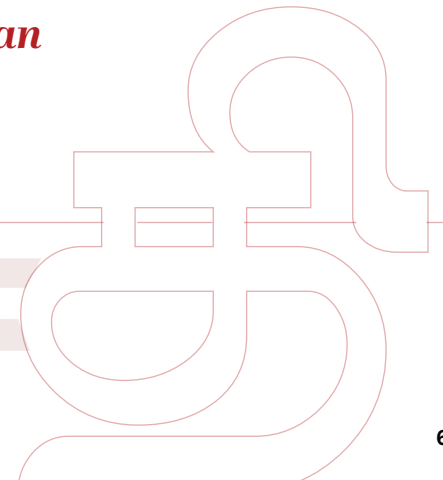
Through regular Board discussions, entrepreneurs learn to reflect before making decisions. By presenting real challenges, questioning assumptions, receiving peer perspectives, and committing to clear actions, they begin replacing instinctive reactions with more considered responses. Over time, this reinforcement changes how they run their businesses and how they carry themselves through difficulty and crises.

Habits of review, planning, discipline, and accountability begin to anchor them.



The first time I entered a TiE Chennai Personal Board meeting, they asked me to present and gave me feedback on my presentation. I realised that I dedicated all my time to business and had no time for my family. From what I have learnt, I am now consciously dedicating time to my family. Similarly, before Personal Boards, I never read books for my personal growth either. Today, I give importance to my personal transformation, and allocate time for that too.

Thinnappan Rajendran



While habit forming itself is a significant focus, Personal Boards pay specific attention to entrepreneurs' health. Directors are encouraged to adopt holistic health goals and hold each other accountable to their commitments. For many of the Directors, the Board is the only voice reminding them to prioritise their own wellbeing amidst myriad responsibilities to family and work.

The goal is not to achieve an idea of perfection but to make healthy choices a part of the entrepreneur's routine. Every fortnight, Directors are encouraged to commit to a personal goal and are held to their commitment at the next meeting. Several entrepreneurs begin walking, using that as a way to exercise while also reflecting and planning. Many also speak of improving their eating habits – ordering in less, eating on time, cutting down on sugar, and so on. Over time, entrepreneurs not only grow more confident in their business strategy, they also have the health to see their dreams through.



I improved my health significantly by eliminating sugar and maida, walking regularly and reducing my HbA1c to 6.8.

Senthilkumar Chandran



There is a dam near my house — Thirumoorthy Malai Dam, about half an hour away. Every morning at 5:30, I go there. That time is mine. No phone, no one to answer to. I get my thoughts in order, do my physical activity, and come back clearer. It covers both — physical health and mental health — in one go.

Vignesh S



Spotlight

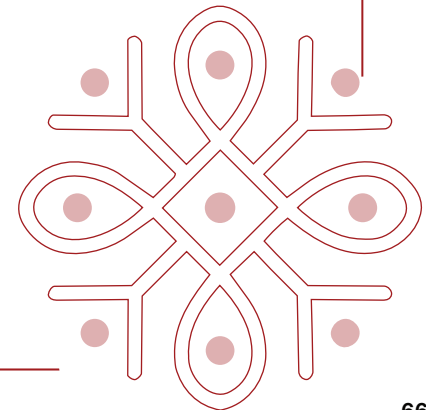
Durai Palanisamy left a 15-year career in banking to build Toplight Brands, a company based out of Tiruppur, that manufactures innerwear for men, women and children across Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Alongside this, he also built Utmost, an athleisure brand centred on movement and performance. Like many first-generation entrepreneurs, his entrepreneurial journey was built on instinct rather than formal frameworks.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the market shifted. Customers were increasingly turning to the convenience of online shopping. At the same time, margins tightened and costs increased. Durai could no longer run the business the way he once had.

The Personal Boards programme gave him a structured way to respond to this shift. Workshops such as the Business Model Canvas, Business Alignment Model and Value Proposition Canvas helped him define the company's strategy, clarify its value proposition and develop its first vision and mission statements. Sales reviews that once happened monthly became a daily affair. He could now track both outcomes and the actions behind them. Durai also describes a significant change in his leadership style, moving from "a dictatorship" to a more collaborative way of managing people. These changes directly impacted revenue. Since joining the Personal Boards three years ago, his annual revenue has grown from ₹5 crore to ₹10 crore, and he attributes much of that growth to the programme.

The changes extended to Durai's personal life as well. Realising how much he had neglected his health while building the business, he committed himself to exercising every day. Today, he spends 45-60 minutes exercising and runs five kilometres every day without exception. As the habit became part of his routine, he began looking for ways to bring the same discipline into Utmost. He launched a 100-day challenge encouraging customers to walk or run at least five kilometres every day. As an incentive, he announced that participants who complete the challenge would receive a Utmost t-shirt.

Since its launch, nearly 2500 customers have taken part. They no longer simply purchase sportswear. They make a shared commitment to physical activity, and in the process, build a relationship with the brand. For Durai, selling a product evolved into cultivating collective habits.



The focus on habit building finds its way into every Director's family as well.

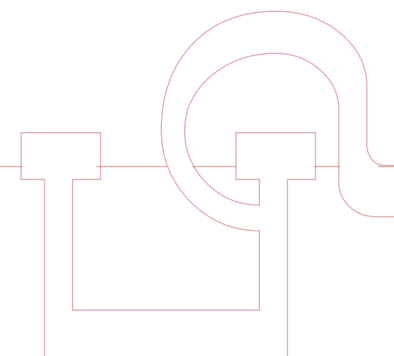
Engaging with the 'family' spoke of their Wheel of Life brings Directors face to face with the impact of their business on their loved ones. The Boards hold space for every Director to introspect on difficult questions. Is it enough to eat dinner with the family? Is it enough to drop your children to school? Is sharing household and childcare responsibility enough?

Equipped with the ability to recognise problems, listen actively, make changes and habits, most entrepreneurs set out to transform their personal lives.



I realised that my family is not looking for my time; they are looking for me. This insight changed how I think about presence, relationships and family engagement. I am consciously working on being emotionally present rather than simply allocating time.

Pradeep Kumar V C

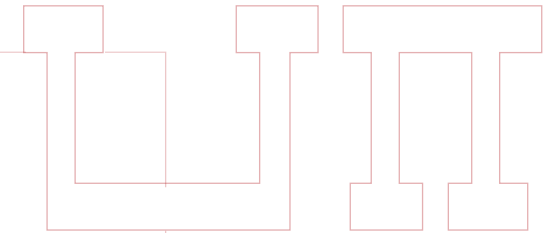


With time, entrepreneurs come to relationships with a sense of curiosity and openness.



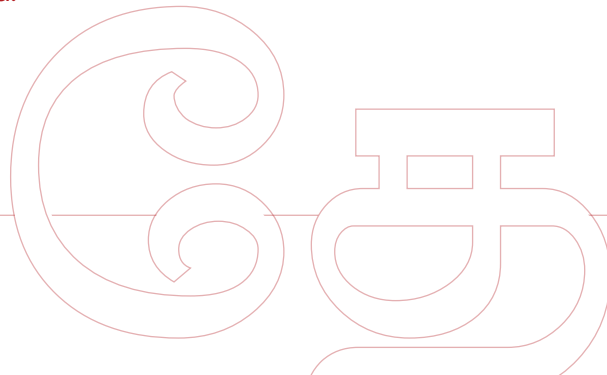
Before, I would not listen when my daughter spoke to me. I would sometimes ask her questions, but I would often answer them myself before she could respond. Now I have started listening patiently – not only to my daughter but to everyone who speaks to me.

K M Balaji*



One of the major changes my husband made after listening to Catalyst was learning to say no to his father. I faced a few restrictions in my home, and my husband did not know how to support me. Now, he supported me to join the company and my father-in-law also respects me as a professional. I have brought changes to the business too. Today, we have built better processes that help us be independent and organised.

Devika Shekhar*



This commitment to listening, especially to family, has transformed their notions of success and happiness.

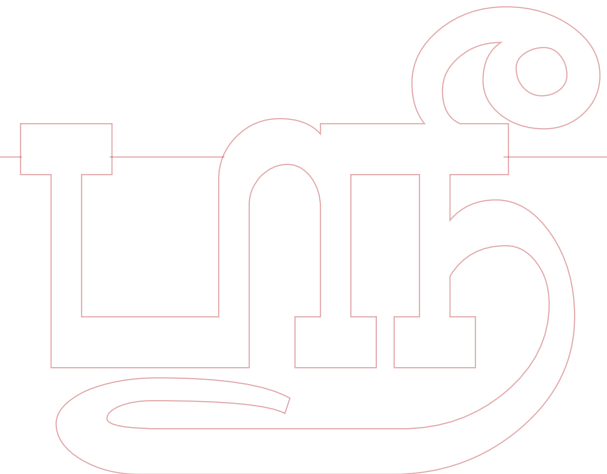
Strengthening communication and relationships at home has also brought about an important realisation for many Directors – that their families can be partners in their journey of entrepreneurship. Many bring family members into the business even as they strengthen their relationships outside of work.



My wife received a Women Entrepreneur Award from the Coconut Development Board (CDB). We went together to receive it in a convention hall, and the room was mostly men. There were 20-30 of them, with only four or five women present. A minister was there. At one point, the minister turned to the women and requested one of them to speak about their business.

Most of them were hesitant, but my wife stood up. Because she is in business, she had something to say. She spoke to four or five challenges we had faced, clearly and directly. The minister appreciated it. My wife came home happy.

Srinivasan



Spotlight

Prakash Velliappan* joined the Personal Boards to focus on his business and pick up strategies for revenue growth. But he found that the Personal Boards journey left him a changed man, transforming how he engaged with what mattered the most – people around him.

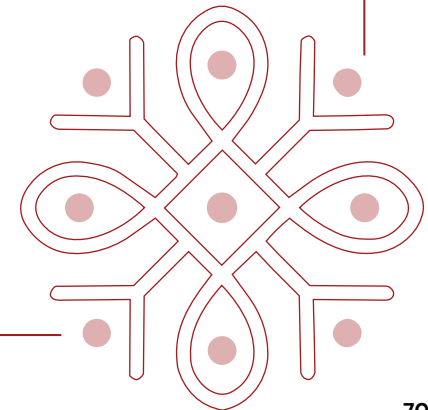
Family is the first thing you need to take care of, before business. You are doing business for your family and your own satisfaction. It takes time to understand this.

He realised that getaways with family are important for quality time, and began taking small trips with his wife and children. At home, he realised that unproductive time was crucial – teasing his children and making jokes with his wife. He found that a little playfulness was healthy for a family with kids.

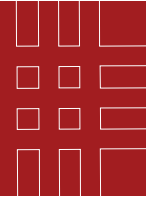
While quality time was appreciated, Prakash's family needed more from him. His older son was diagnosed with ADHD, and during the pandemic, they lacked resources to diagnose and manage it properly. His son was lagging in school and struggled with behavioural issues. When he shared this with his Board, one of them told him to wait half an hour. "I will make a call," he said. In the next thirty minutes, he was connected to an institution which offered his son a seat in a special needs programme that helped integrate children in need of support with their peers. Now back in school, his teachers say that his behaviour has improved. Next year, they can focus on academics.

Through Personal Boards, Prakash found a community that goes above and beyond to care – about him, his business and his family.

*Name changed to protect privacy



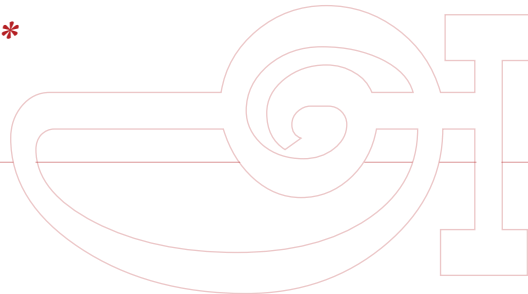
Growing with Intention



I have seen a remarkable change in him. The programme gave him greater direction and structure in his business, but it also changed the way he values his relationships. He is more patient now and far more intentional about spending time with our children. Earlier, he was physically present; today, he is emotionally present too.

Ananya Rekha*

*Name changed to protect privacy



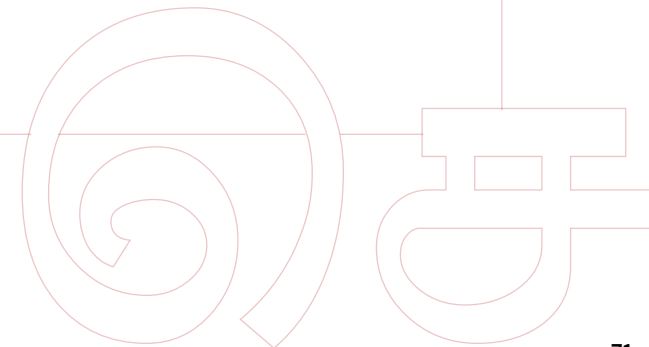
Listening, seeking feedback, building positive habits, and being a more present family member – each of these behaviours contribute towards a key goal of the Personal Boards. In this community, every Director is supported to articulate their personal values.

Moving away from abstract lists and vague posturing, Personal Board Directors engage with difficult questions. If you had to choose between an important meeting and a promise to your child to pick her up after school, what would you choose? How would you respond to scope increase on a project? What if it happened regularly? What if the colleague responsible was in the middle of an emergency? By thinking through such situations, Directors learn to articulate their own values sharply. What are they and how much do they really matter?



I spend significantly more time with my family today. One turning point was choosing a dinner commitment with my son over a government meeting. I learnt to honour commitments at home as well as at work.

Senthilkumar Chandran

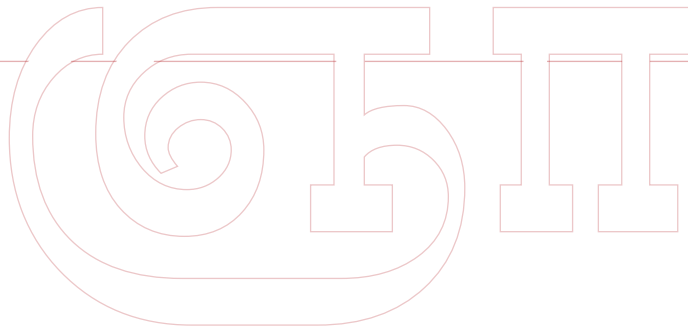


For Directors, knowing their personal values leads to entrepreneurial confidence. Some learn the value of transparency, recognising that gatekeeping information does not strengthen the business. Others recognise the strength of innovation and implementation, reaffirming their willingness to see ideas through. Many have embraced vulnerability and honest feedback in an effort to grow. Several learned to take bigger risks in business, build and nurture teams, and create supportive working environments.



I have become more empathetic in how I deal with customers, vendors and employees. My communication has become calmer and more deliberate. I see my growth in management skills as the biggest outcome of this journey.

Gnanavel P*

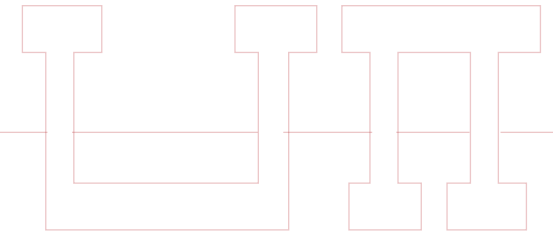


This focus on personal values gives rise to another virtuous cycle of impact. Clear personal values create confident entrepreneurs who build organisations that reflect these personal values.



They often say that the entrepreneur's character is what reflects the business. So, only if the entrepreneur develops, the company will develop. If he does not develop and the company goes forward, it will not work.

K M Balaji*



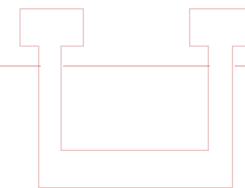
While a value-driven business is built on strong foundations, Personal Boards also recognise the need to consistently strengthen them. The fortnightly meetings are anchors for Directors to track the implementation of their values and commitments. With these structures of support well established, principles regularly convert into practice.

For some, revenue grew. For others, SOPs helped teams grow in confidence and accountability, in turn strengthening employer-employee relationships. For many, growth involved establishing strong systems and independent teams. Personal values slowly become business culture.



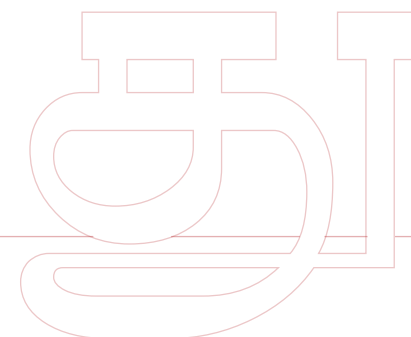
I asked CKR what can be discussed in an open house meeting. He said 'Everything. Profit, loss, all of it. Tell everyone, even employees who are not involved in strategic decisions. Their trust will increase. Try it.' The next month, we held our first open house meeting. By the second and third months, the bonding had increased. For the first time, issues from below the frontline manager layer reached me directly.

Farook Beeran



My business has grown every year. I have had a year-on-year growth of about 20 to 25%. When I joined TiE Chennai, my revenue was ₹5 crores, and now I am making ₹10 crores.

***Durai
Palanisamy***



Spotlight

Amutha Bharathi N D, one of the youngest entrepreneurs in the programme, is a fresh graduate brimming with brilliant ideas. During the COVID lockdown, he started up with a niche idea – plastic recycling. The business cost crores of investment, and Amutha Bharathi came to Personal Boards seeking innovative ways to develop it. What the programme gave him instead was the permission to fail.

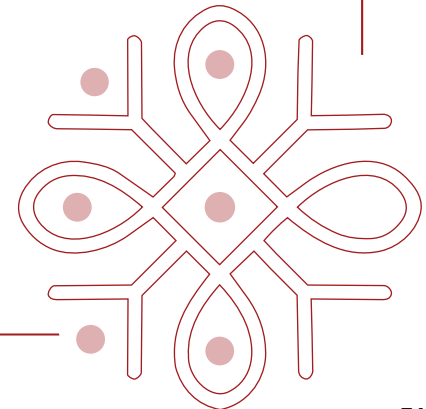
Through workshops and in conversation with his Co-Directors, he relooked at the financials to see if his plan was truly viable. Price wars, a fragmented market, and the lack of production capacity were factors that he could not change, and would limit his entry into the market. With the support of the Personal Boards ecosystem, he found the strength to shut down his business venture and move onto something else. Without this guidance, he is sure he would have struggled for several more years, losing more money before making the same decision.



The biggest impact is the decision to close my first business. Dropping our business is a big call. We invested in crores, we lost in lakhs. I will say it strongly. This decision was because of inputs from the TiE Chennai ecosystem.

Entering the real estate industry and still leaning on the support of his Board, Amutha Bharathi hit the ground running. This time, he could access nuanced conversations spanning finance, marketing, and SOPs from the beginning. With a community to lean on, his thought process evolved as well. Problems were not failures but rather challenges to solve. Messy situations were not met with quick reactions but rather careful consideration. Perhaps most importantly, personal and business transformation were two sides of the same coin. In his second stint as an entrepreneur, he was more organised, made time for healthy eating and exercise, and spent more time with his family.

Despite being a young businessman in this field, he embeds the values of TiE Chennai's Personal Boards and has matured into an entrepreneur who is quick to introspect, confident in his decisions, and committed to growth.



GROWTH IN TEAM SIZE FOR DIRECTORS



 *Manufacturing*
100%

 *Services*
482%

 *Trading*
144%

REVENUE GROWTH FOR DIRECTORS



 *Manufacturing*
120%

 *Services*
158%

 *Trading*
127%

Meet Balamurugan

Balamurugan V grew from running a business to becoming an entrepreneur.

As a first-generation entrepreneur, Balamurugan V established his business against all odds. Sales, production, purchasing, customer relationships, and operations; it was all a one-man show. The clothes manufacturing business grew steadily but was entirely dependent on him. Singlehandedly running a business is often romanticised but can be damaging to both the person at the helm as well as the organisation. In Balamurugan's case, it showed up as high employee attrition and a lack of financial systems.

Balamurugan realised that something had to change. If he was going to build a sustainable business while also prioritising his own wellbeing, he would need to transform from a business owner to an entrepreneur. This desire led him to attend the Business Blueprint workshop hosted by TiE Chennai. In that room, he realised that, to transform his business, he would have to transform himself. He enrolled as a Personal Boards Director.

Through the curriculum, Balamurugan developed a practice of regularly reflecting on his business and his own attitude. Soon, those reflections translated into small but consistent actions. He started delegating responsibilities more intentionally, treating employees with genuine care and empathy, and consciously building a workplace culture rooted in trust and ownership. Through Catalyst exercises, he strengthened his sense of accountability to himself, his family, his business, and his employees. The transformation into an entrepreneur had well and truly begun.



Nobody spoonfeeds answers here - in Personal Boards, we are taught to continuously reflect, which helps us solve our own problems in the long run.



His growth as an entrepreneur soon started impacting the business as well. The company grew to have dedicated sales, production, dispatch and telemarketing teams; each with their own processes and reporting systems. Employees reflected a deep sense of ownership and accountability, and Balamurugan's bandwidth opened up to focus on strategy. Through the Value Proposition Canvas workshop, he doubled down on the business' growth strategy. From a textile business, he narrowed his focus to supplying only corporate uniforms. This decision was crucial to transforming an intuition-driven business to an intention-driven enterprise.

At the core of many of these changes lies the art of listening – to guidance and to feedback, to mentors and to employees. Even as he set up systems and processes to enable organisational growth, Balamurugan realised that listening to his staff was an essential step in addressing many consistent challenges.

He knew attrition among women staff was high but he did not know why. Until he asked. In those conversations, he learnt that women left because of poor sanitation conditions and a difficulty in managing care responsibilities outside work. Balamurugan ensured women employees had access to clean bathrooms and ensured they logged off by 6:30 PM every day.

All employees also received ESI and PF benefits, enabling them to take better care of themselves and their loved ones. His personal growth into a listener had resulted directly in business betterment.

Today, Colour Land Clothing LLP has expanded from serving localised areas in Tamil Nadu to operating across southern India, with active business plans to enter markets in western India. The company Balamurugan built all on his own now supplies uniforms to major corporate clients. Fuelling this growth is a team of invested employees led by an entrepreneur who no longer does it all.

Meet Govindarajan

By replacing urgency with systems and planning, Govindarajan Karuppannan built a business ready to scale to success.

For nearly three decades, Govindarajan Karuppannan built his tyre business in the engineering sector through in-depth technical expertise, valued industry relationships and consistent hard work. Since establishing the company in 1996, he has supplied tools, accessories, and specialised equipment to the tyre repair and retreading industry, serving clients such as MRF, Sundaram Industries, the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation, and dealer networks across India.

Even though his business had seen significant successes, Govindarajan realised that he was running it largely on instinct. Every challenge demanded his immediate attention, and decisions were driven by urgency. The scope of scalability was limited by Govindarajan's involvement in the company's day-to-day operations; and there was little time to think systematically about the future growth of the business. Looking for ways to scale his company, he joined TiE Chennai's Personal Boards programme in January 2025.

Although his initial goal was to transform his business, he soon realised that it would be impossible to do so without changing himself personally. Through Catalyst exercises, Govindarajan developed a habit of reflecting on his thinking before reacting to situations. Instead of immediately responding to problems singlehandedly as they came up, he built the habit of asking his employees what the next step should be. This seemingly small shift in behaviour yielded great results. His approach to people became more thoughtful, his team started seeing him as more collaborative and as a result, his style of leadership improved. A particularly powerful concept introduced by the curriculum was on how to identify organisational bottlenecks. By systematically spotting constraints and introducing prompt automations, he improved productivity, boosted employee morale, and created an efficient workplace. Regular reviews, structured tracking, and involving employees in decision-making helped create a more organised way of working while allowing him to spend more time on long-term strategy rather than day-to-day firefighting.

Govindrajan embedded data-driven decision making in his company's daily operations and introduced structured roles and responsibilities across his business units. The Personal Boards curriculum equipped him with tools such as the Business Blueprint and Business Alignment Model that gave him practical frameworks for breaking larger business objectives into achievable, actionable goals. Rather than chasing multiple priorities at once, he started defining clear goals, reviewing progress regularly, and tracking implementation through structured assessments.

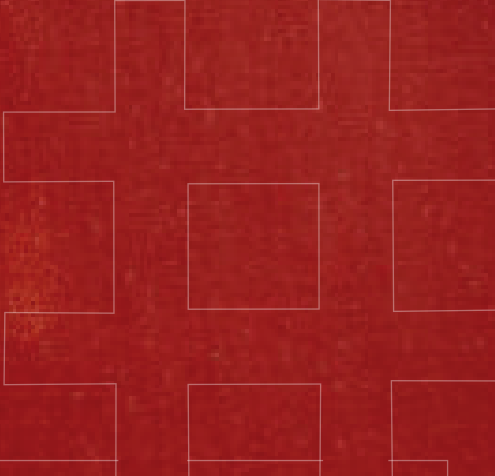


For me, the main thing is a changed mindset. It feels completely different from before. I have gained confidence and my employees' approach to me has changed. Through this, I have been able to transform my business for the better.



His Co-Directors also encouraged him to think beyond his factory walls. He began making more factory visits and industrial visits to observe how other businesses operated, treating each one as an opportunity to learn new processes and management practices. Thus, exposure to fellow entrepreneurs further strengthened his strategic thinking, encouraging him to ask not just how the business was performing today, but where it needed to go over the next several years.

Govindrajan's renewed perspectives have already begun translating into business outcomes. By replacing urgency with process, instinct with planning, and individual effort with shared accountability, he has transformed both the way he leads and the way his business is positioned for its next phase of growth. With guidance from his Board to refine his business presentations, he successfully secured an exclusive supplier agreement with a German firm, thus establishing himself in international markets. He now collaborates with global manufacturers to serve a growing customer base across the United States and Europe. Through Personal Boards, Govindrajan was able to fulfil his dream of scaling up his business while enabling his own personal transformation.



Personal Boards gave me access to high-calibre thinking and mentors. It functions like a sounding board where people ask questions from lived experience. I learnt that transformation requires structure, reflection and accountability.



Sivaram Kaliappan

Chapter 4



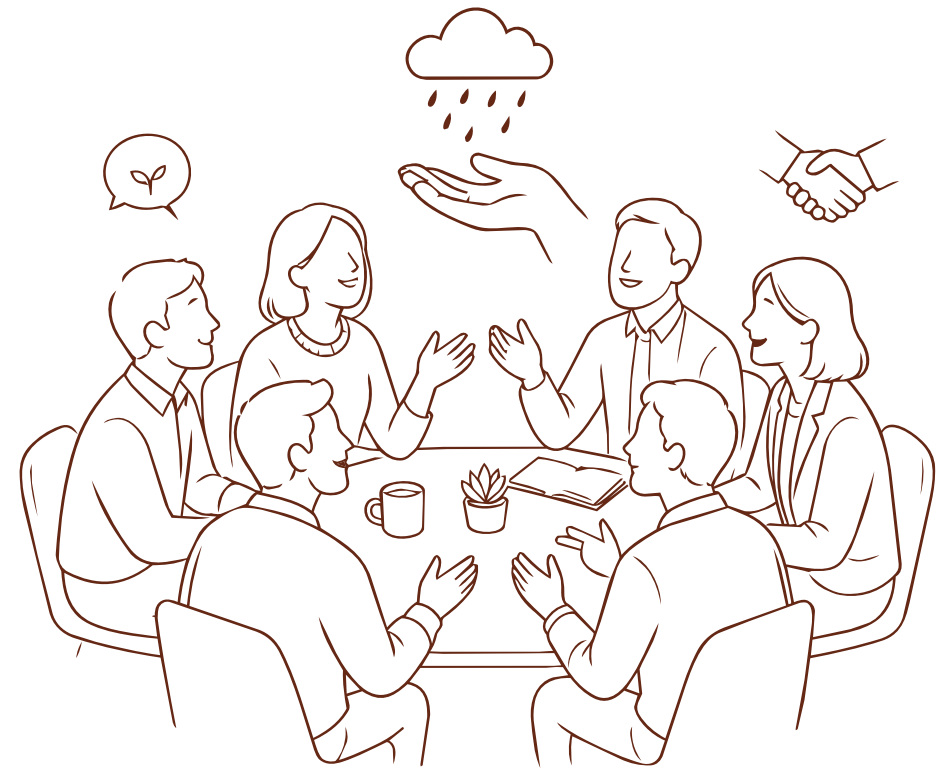
For a village to thrive, its people must support one another.

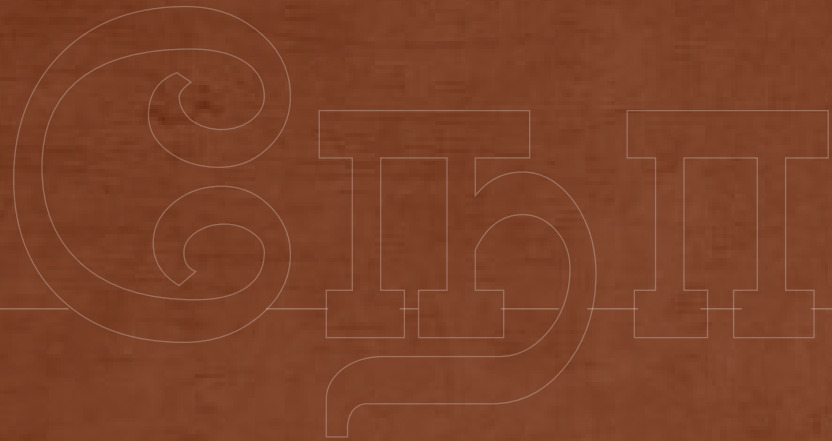


No enduring community is built on proximity alone. It is built on the people's willingness to consistently show up for one another. Entrepreneurs may enter the programme looking for guidance, structure, knowledge, or clarity, but what makes them stay is the way people stand by one another. For every entrepreneur, the Personal Boards programme has become more than a room full of business owners. It is a family of people that listen closely, speak honestly, notice when someone is struggling, and step in.

This matters because most entrepreneurs are used to carrying the weight of their businesses alone. Problems at work rarely stay at work; they affect confidence, relationships, health, and so much more. In their Personal Boards, that burden is shared differently. An entrepreneur can bring in a problem from their business or their personal lives, a hiring difficulty, a question about growth, a moment of uncertainty or a parenting confusion, and place it before people who take it seriously.

As trust deepens, each entrepreneur gains a circle that helps them think with more clarity, act with more conviction, and transform with greater steadiness.





The biggest strength of our Board is the absence of ego. Board members openly question, challenge and hold one another accountable.

Noyal Jerald M



A Promise to Care

For entrepreneurs often surrounded by well-meaning but passive circles, Co-Directors stand apart. They are attentive listeners who ask difficult questions, share hard-earned experiences, and stay with one another through periods of change. Over time, each Board becomes a small community where every Director carries a shared responsibility for the progress of the others.

For many entrepreneurs, this is the first time they are being observed so closely by people outside their family or business. For most of them, this is the first time they have to be answerable to someone else. The simple act of explaining their thinking to trusted peers brings greater clarity, discipline, and intention to the way they make decisions. Co-Directors notice patterns, identify blind spots, and demand clarity and consistency from their fellow entrepreneurs. They may question a commitment not kept, challenge an unclear presentation, or push someone to look again at a decision they are avoiding. That honesty can be uncomfortable, but it comes with an ecosystem of trust.

We asked:
**How valuable has
peer interaction
within your
Personal Board
been for your**

They said:

4/5

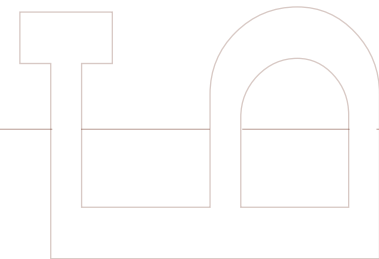


Entrepreneurs open up over time about their revenue and their business hurdles, but also about their fears, hesitations, health, discipline, personal lives and more. In these conversations and relationships, personal transformation meets business transformation.

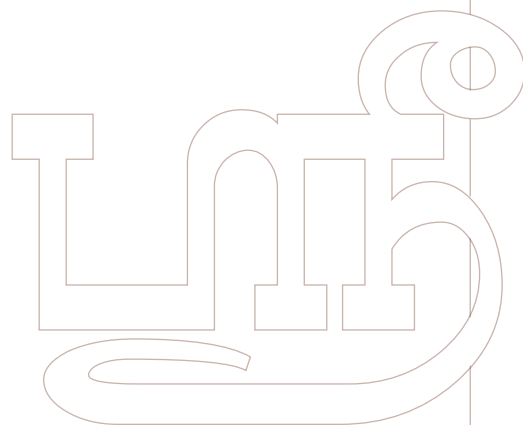


This is a family business. On paper, my mother is a Director, but in reality, there was no one to question me – no outside Board, no peers, no one to ask why I had made a decision or where I had gone wrong. Now my Personal Boards Co-Directors ask those questions. That accountability did not exist in my life before. It has changed the way I run my business.

Mani Ashok Kumar



This shared responsibility for one another's growth is what transforms a group of entrepreneurs into a village where every person's progress strengthens the community as a whole.



I joined because entrepreneurship can be lonely, and I felt this would be a good space to share ideas, brainstorm, and get honest feedback. We are a private limited company, but our Board of Directors meetings rarely host difficult discussions. To be honest, I also needed people who would push me.

Srinivasan Manickam

Around every Board is a wider circle of TiE Chennai leaders, mentors, and facilitators who guide discussions, encourage honest reflection, and help entrepreneurs remain accountable to their commitments. Their presence strengthens the peer community, allowing every entrepreneur to benefit from the collective experiences of the Co-Directors and experienced guidance of TiE Chennai.



After my Co-Directors came to my company and spoke with my team, something shifted. My staff listens to me more seriously now, because, for the first time, someone from outside was asking questions. When that happens, you start thinking twice about every decision. That accountability is there now.

T S Viswanathan



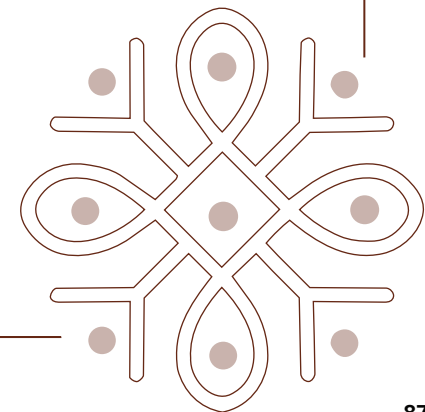
Spotlight

Parkkavee Santosh had always been interested in fashion and clothing, but she had never imagined turning that interest into a business. After her marriage, encouraged by her husband and in-laws, she started a high-end tailoring unit in Dindigul. Although the business was running smoothly for years, she felt her growth had plateaued. She joined TiE Chennai's Personal Boards to learn how to grow a business beyond a certain level. At first, she found it difficult to speak freely. Trusting the space and the people around her took time.

As she gradually opened up to her Board, they challenged her thinking with honesty and care, helping her recognise the changes she needed to make. They celebrated her successes, but they were equally willing to point out where she was going wrong. Rather than criticising her, they challenged her thinking and helped her find better ways forward. Over time, she came to rely deeply on their guidance. Today, she rarely makes even small business decisions without discussing them with her Board. Whenever she encounters uncertainty or setbacks, she returns to the Board for perspective, trusting their advice and the process of reflection they have built together.

The transformation extended well beyond her business. At home, her relationship with her daughter had long been marked by frequent arguments and opposing views. Struggling to understand her daughter's short temper, Parkkavee often responded with frustration of her own. During a Personal Board discussion, her Co-Directors encouraged her to stop blaming her daughter and instead ask what her daughter needed from her as a mother. The question stayed with her. Reflecting on her own teenage years and the emotions she had once struggled to express, she began approaching her daughter with greater patience, empathy, and understanding. Instead of reacting in anger, she consciously tried to see situations from her daughter's perspective and give her the attention and reassurance she needed.

The change transformed their relationship. One day, her daughter told her, "Amma, I did not like you before, but now I love you so much." For Parkkavee, that moment captured the deepest impact of Personal Boards. The programme had helped her become a stronger entrepreneur and a better mother.



The Ritual of Everyday Habits

Rituals are what sustain the Personal Boards community. They create a rhythm that brings entrepreneurs back to their commitments, to one another, and to the goal of becoming better leaders. Through repetition, these actions become habits, and those habits begin to shape the way entrepreneurs work, think, and relate to others.

Some rituals are built into the programme: showing up on time, preparing for meetings, presenting honestly, and listening to Catalyst. Others emerge within the Board itself—daily calls, shared reflections, regular check-ins, physical visits, and routines that keep Directors connected between formal sessions. These repeated practices create continuity. They ensure that accountability is sustained between meetings, reflection becomes regular, and growth is carried through everyday actions.



The biggest shift for me is not one dramatic change but the accumulation of several small disciplines that are slowly becoming part of my culture.

M Kannan



These rituals bring steadiness and stability to an entrepreneur's business and to their life beyond it. They create discipline around planning, review, budgeting, and follow-through, while also making space for healthier routines, stronger relationships, and greater self-awareness. They remind entrepreneurs that transformation does not come from one dramatic change, but from small actions that are consistently practised over time. In this way, habits become rituals. They are the quiet structures that hold the village together, helping entrepreneurs stay committed to their work, their lives, and one another.



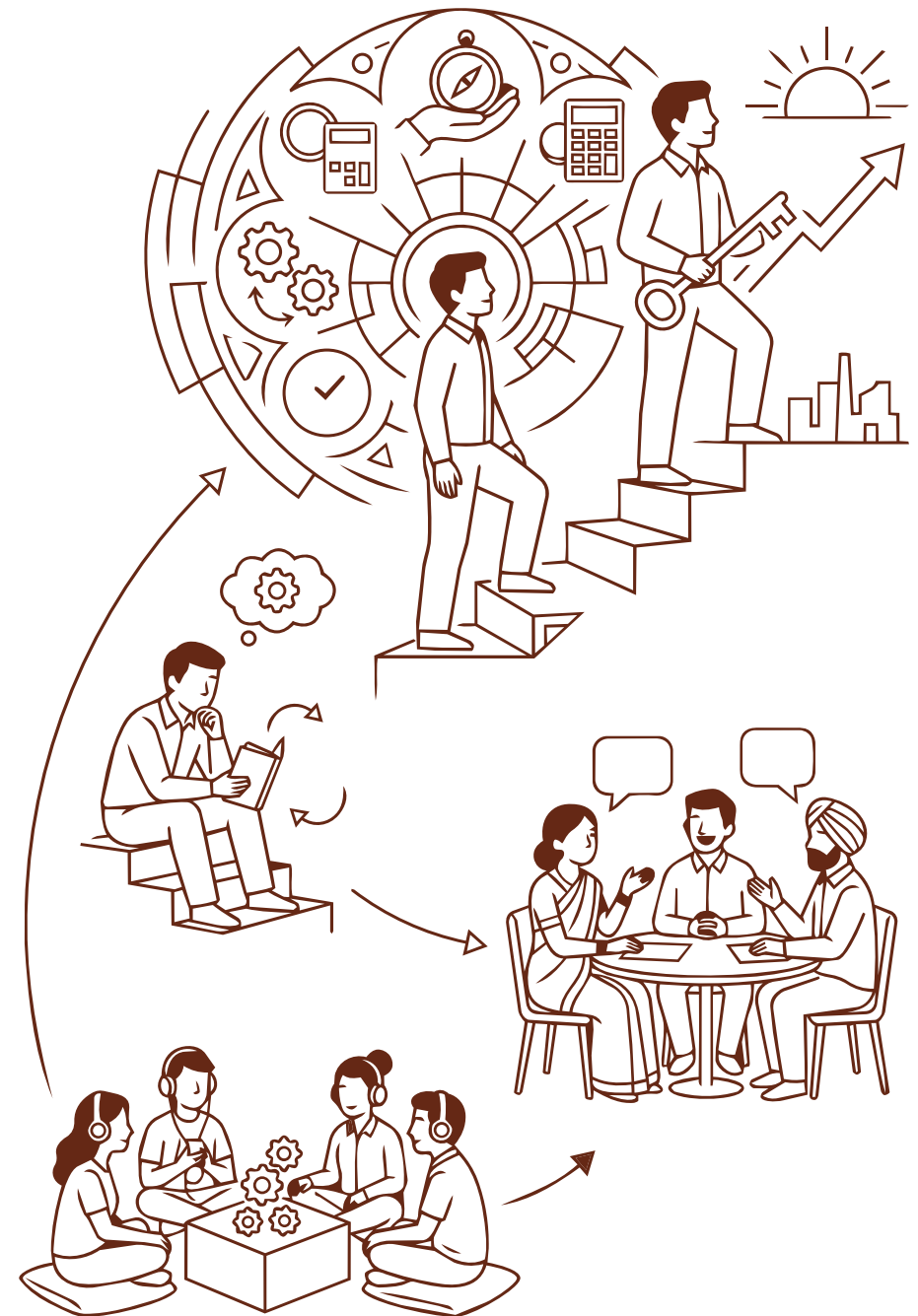
Catalyst exercises form the rhythm of the programme. Entrepreneurs return to it again and again – on their own, with their Boards, in conversation, and in reflection. What begins as listening gradually becomes a way of thinking. Its ideas begin to surface in how entrepreneurs speak about business, how they make decisions, how they manage time, and how they look at their own lives.

The value of Catalyst lies in repetition. The same entrepreneurs who may not have had the language for patience, discipline, self-awareness, or long-term thinking begin to absorb these ideas through regular exposure.

Over time, the Catalyst exercises tie the community together with a common vocabulary.

It helps entrepreneurs interpret their own experiences, question their habits, and learn from one another with greater depth.

The Catalyst exercise also travels beyond the meeting room. It enters commutes, morning calls, family drives, and everyday routines. People listen to it with their Co-Directors, discuss it with their families, and carry its ideas into work and home. In that sense, the Catalyst is not separate from the Personal Boards journey. It runs through it. It keeps the learning alive between sessions, strengthens the practice of reflection, and helps turn scattered insight into a more consistent way of living and building.

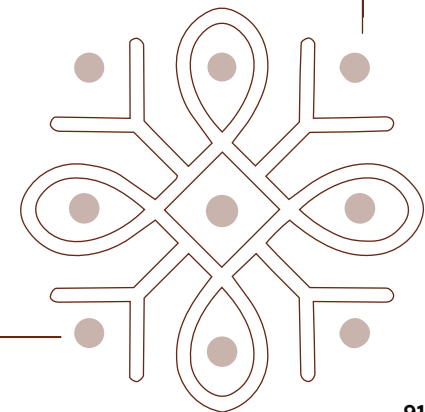


Spotlight

For Srikanth L, one of the biggest changes was in the way he began to think about people. Earlier, he often saw employee issues as shortcomings on their part – lack of seriousness, lack of ownership, lack of commitment. Over time, the programme pushed him to look in the mirror and not out of the window. If something was not working, the first question was no longer "why are they like this?" It became "what am I missing? What have I not explained? What environment am I creating?"

He stopped expecting employees to fit neatly into his way of working and began paying closer attention to their strengths, limits, and realities. A leave request was more than a paper on his desk, but a representation of his employee's personal time. A mistake was not always carelessness; sometimes it pointed to a gap in communication. This shift made him more aware of his employees and his business approach.

With these changes, ownership began to grow in the team. Employees listened more closely, responded with greater seriousness, and started engaging with the business more actively. For Srikanth, the transformation was a shift from complaint to responsibility, and from managing people to learning how to lead them.



Meet Ashok Kumar J

Building a business is easier when you have a community building alongside you.

As a second-generation entrepreneur, Ashok Kumar J inherited the responsibility of managing his family's specialty hospital employing 150 people. Although the hospital had grown steadily over the years, he knew that taking it to the next level required knowledge beyond operational experience. Scalability demanded new ways of thinking, better systems, and people who could challenge his assumptions. With faith in the mentorship of Past President C.K. Ranganathan and Executive Director Akhila Rajeshwar, he joined the organisation's Personal Boards initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through Personal Boards, he found a curriculum that would teach him how to scale his business, and the people who would help him do it. The experience became a continuous process of learning, implementation and accountability. Rather than attending workshops once, he repeated every workshop multiple times, believing that skills can only be enhanced if you practise them consistently.



If you do not sharpen the saw and you just do the same thing again and again, the results will also be the same thing again and again. Going for the workshops helps us sharpen the saw.



The diversity of his Board became one of his greatest sources of learning. Entrepreneurs from industries as varied as fire safety, plumbing and food processing approached the same curriculum through completely different lenses. Their perspectives challenged his assumptions and helped him rethink problems he had previously viewed only through the lens of healthcare. Beyond the formal meetings held twice a month, Directors spoke every morning through Catalyst calls, organised visits to one another's businesses every few months, reviewed budgets together, and openly discussed both successes and failures. The Personal Boards programme had built a space where there was no competition,; only a shared commitment to helping one another grow.

That spirit of accountability gradually became embedded in his own leadership. Inspired by the budgeting frameworks introduced through the curriculum, he began reviewing cash flow every day instead of only looking at financial performance retrospectively. The Business Blueprint workshop helped him redesign the hospital's patient journey, create sales and revisit funnels, understand the true cost of acquiring new patients, and introduce department-wise metrics that focused on improving quality of care rather than simply increasing revenue. Instead of tracking only sales targets, now every department monitors key performance indicators around patient experience, quality, revisits and operational efficiency.

The culture of reflection extended beyond the business. Every Sunday, he reviews his Wheel of Life and Wheel of Business, updating goals that he has tracked and refined over several years. Personally, he has become far more intentional about building relationships within the organisation. Instead of spending entire days behind a computer, he has made it a habit to walk through departments, speak with employees, and ask himself each day whether he had meaningfully connected with someone. At home, he introduced a simple but consistent family goal of spending at least thirty minutes every day playing non-digital games with his children, creating protected time amidst an otherwise demanding schedule.

The community he benefits from also became one he actively contributes to. Having experienced the value of structured budgeting himself, he now insists that his Co-Directors complete their financial plans. He regularly follows up with entrepreneurs between meetings, reviews their budgets, and helps them implement what they have learned. For him, the strength of Personal Boards lies not only in its curriculum but in entrepreneurs collectively helping one another put that curriculum into practice.

The impact has been tangible. The hospital's annual revenue has grown from approximately ₹15 crore when he joined his Board to ₹25 crore in FY2025-26, with active business plans to reach ₹30 crore. The Personal Boards programme has reaffirmed some key beliefs – that entrepreneurs do not grow in isolation, that they require both mentors and peers, and that structured accountability sharpens both people and businesses.



FY 2020-21

Revenue of ₹15 crore

FY 2025-26

Revenue of ₹25 crore

Meet Sripathi Dinash

Sripathi Dinash transformed his business by replacing founder intuition with organisational discipline.

As a second-generation entrepreneur, Sripathi Dinash inherited and grew a manufacturing business employing nearly 150 people. By the time he joined TiE Chennai's Personal Boards, the company was already stable, generating around ₹18 crore in annual revenue. His challenge was not survival but scale. He wanted to take the business to the next level by making it more integrated, more accountable and less dependent on instinctive decision-making. Through entrepreneur friends and his association with Akhila Rajeshwar, Executive Director at TiE Chennai, he learnt about Personal Boards. He joined not because of an immediate crisis, but because he believed sustained growth required structured learning, peer accountability and continuous improvement.

The first shift came through the Wheel of Life and Wheel of Business, which fundamentally changed how he approached planning. Instead of measuring success solely through business performance, he began setting annual goals across health, family, finance and business, tracking them consistently and reviewing progress throughout the

year. This discipline extended into the organisation, where departmental goals, action plans and tracking systems became the norm. Rather than reviewing performance only when problems emerged, continuous measurement became embedded in everyday operations. As he describes it, the process ensured that "where attention goes, energy flows."

The Business Blueprint workshop gave him a structured way to think about strategy. Instead of making decisions based on experience alone, he began systematically examining fundamental questions: Who are our customers? Why do they choose us? Which activities actually create value? Which partnerships matter? This process exposed non-value-adding work that had quietly accumulated over time and helped the company redirect effort towards higher-value activities. Later, through workshops, he adopted additional analytical tools such as competence-versus-commitment matrices for evaluating employees and product-mix matrices to prioritise high-value, lower-effort work that could maximise revenue with existing resources.

Alongside these management tools came an equally significant mindset shift. The concept of the Circle of Influence versus Circle of Concern became deeply embedded in both his thinking and his organisation's culture. Instead of attributing challenges to external conditions or employee shortcomings, he learnt to focus on factors within his control. This changed how he led people as well. Rather than asking why employees were not performing, he began examining whether expectations, roles and systems were clear enough for them to succeed. Accountability shifted from blaming individuals to building better organisational structures.

Recognising that systems alone could not drive transformation, Dinash invested equally in people. He sent around twelve employees to TiE for Future Leaders programme to understand its true organisational impact. Participants returned with stronger ownership, greater willingness to solve problems independently and a better understanding of the employer's perspective. He increasingly viewed culture as the company's greatest competitive advantage, believing that, while strategies can be copied, culture takes years to build and sustain.



What we are doing is improving all the gaps that exist to transform a small-scale industry into a corporate one. Being a ₹100 crore company now feels achievable—it doesn't seem difficult anymore.

Today, the impact is evident both in the organisation and in its performance. Revenue has grown from approximately ₹18 crore to nearly ₹50 crore over the six years since joining Personal Boards. More importantly, the company now operates through clearly defined systems, accountable leaders and a culture of continuous improvement rather than constant founder intervention.



We do not have to be present for every decision anymore. Once I started delegating and built a second line of leaders, I trusted them to take ownership. They became more committed to the organisation, and we have built a culture of ownership, trust, and reduced founder dependency.

Indira Jagannathan*

Chapter 5



*The future of the village
lies in the transformation
of its people.*



The future of the Personal Boards programme does not rest solely on expanding the number of Boards or entrepreneurs it reaches. It depends on what every entrepreneur chooses to do with their own transformation. As entrepreneurs grow more reflective, disciplined, and capable, they begin to extend that growth beyond themselves.

By this stage in the journey, transformation is no longer limited to improving one's own business or personal life. Entrepreneurs begin asking a different question: How can I help others grow? They invest more intentionally in their teams, encourage ownership, create systems that empower people to make decisions, and make space for honest feedback and reflection.

This is how the village grows. Every entrepreneur who develops another leader, every organisation that becomes less dependent on its founder, and every person who carries these ideas into a new context strengthens the community.

The future of the Personal Boards programme does not rest on any one Board, facilitator, or framework. It rests on entrepreneurs who continue to learn, transform, and create opportunities for others to do the same. The village endures because its people choose not to remain where they began.

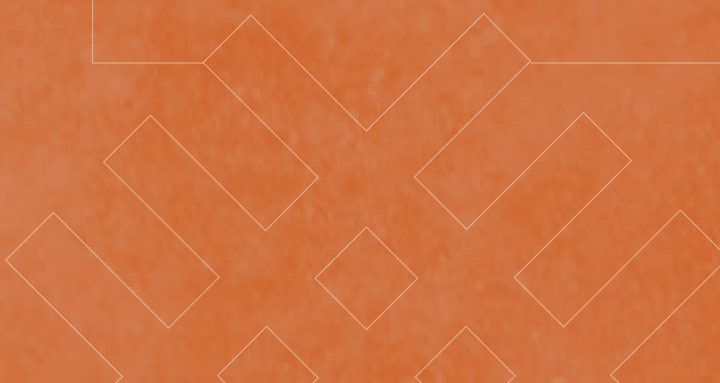
The village endures because its people choose not to remain where they began.





For nearly eighteen years, I ran my business with ambition, but without the systems, structure, or clarity to match it. TiE Chennai changed that for me. I moved from reacting to responding. I learned to listen better, to build people, to create ownership, and to trust systems over constant personal control. Over time, that shift changed the culture of my team as well. We brought in clearer roles, stronger accountability, structured reviews, better performance monitoring, and a more professional way of working together. Before TiE Chennai, I had growth in mind. After TiE Chennai, I had a path.

Srinivasan Rengasamy



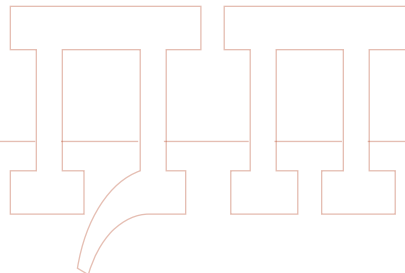
Strength in Sharing

As entrepreneurs grow within the Personal Boards programme, they begin to let go of the belief that they have to carry everything by themselves. What replaces it is a culture of collaboration, a way of working, learning, and building with others. People begin to share more openly, listen more carefully, and draw from one another's experiences without defensiveness. A problem that once felt locked inside one industry or one individual way of thinking is opened up by the Board for discussion.



The big problem with entrepreneurs is that we are the bottleneck. There is no one to question us. We need a person to question us; we need a team.

Ram Kumar

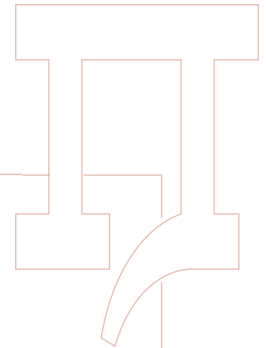


This openness extends beyond formal Board meetings. Entrepreneurs visit one another's businesses, exchange ideas, review strategies, and continue conversations through regular calls and interactions. They become sounding boards, accountability partners, and trusted advisors, united by a shared commitment to helping one another succeed rather than compete.



The Board has strong trust and openness. We travel together, take family trips together and have built deep personal relationships. The Board functions like an extended family rather than just a business forum.

Raveendran Lakshmanan



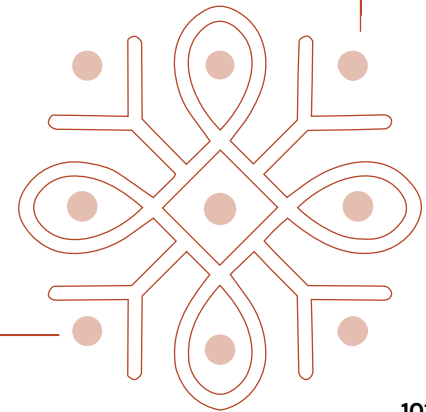
Over time, collaboration becomes a way of thinking. Entrepreneurs learn that their own experiences can unlock solutions for someone else, just as another person's perspective can reshape their own.

Spotlight

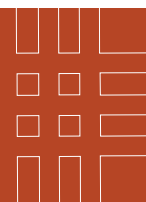
Priyanga Achutharao joined the Personal Boards programme looking for ways to grow as an entrepreneur. Although she came from a business family, she wanted to understand how other entrepreneurs thought, made decisions, and navigated uncertainty in current times. Through her Personal Board, she found guidance that broadened the way she thought about collaboration and the role it could play in her business.

With time, she realised that business did not have to be built on instinct alone. Frameworks and workshops such as Third Angle, Business Alignment Model, and Value Proposition Canvas helped her think more clearly about focus, alignment, and where to direct her energy. Catalyst exercises became a constant reference point, offering insights that she applied to personal and business situations. Her Board held her accountable, questioned her thinking, and encouraged her to draw from experiences beyond her own business.

That shift was reflected in the way she worked with others. She began to value collective intelligence, became more open to collaboration, and no longer viewed industry peers as people to guard against. Instead, she actively sought opportunities to learn from others who brought different perspectives. Within her own organisation, she became more intentional about building ownership and hiring people who were capable and eager to learn.



Carrying the Change Forward



The Personal Boards programme provides the structure for change, but the change itself comes from the entrepreneur. What begins as discussion, reflection, and accountability gradually becomes self-directed action.

These initiatives, while often modest in form, are significant in effect. Entrepreneurs wake up earlier, eat differently, return to exercise, protect time at home, read with greater seriousness, and finally act on things they have long postponed. Some begin tracking habits. Others become more deliberate about their health, their attention, or the way they spend time with family.



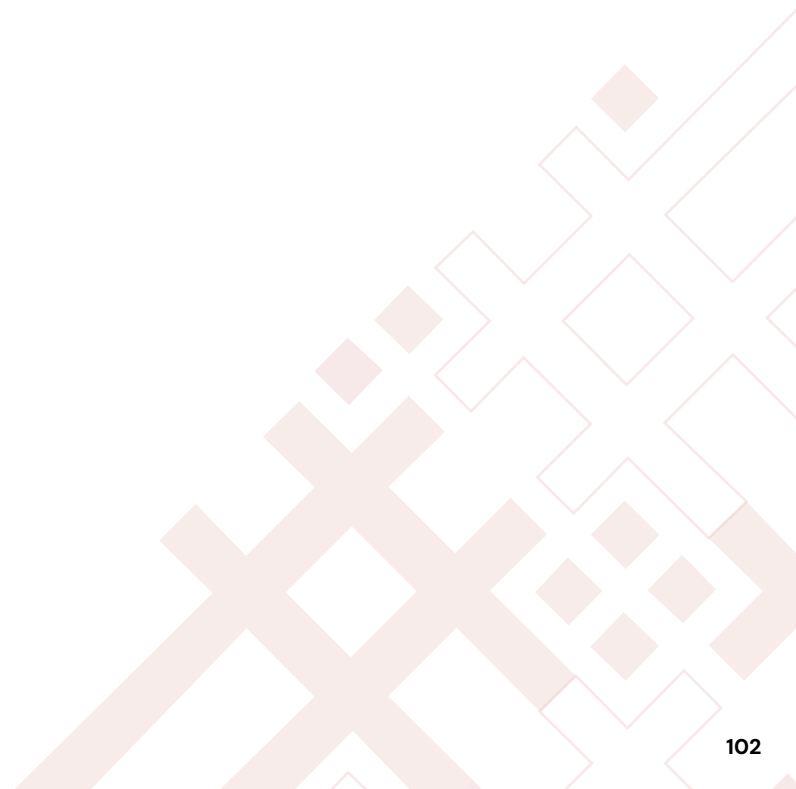
We have created a vision board for our family for 2026, and even my mother is part of it. There are five of us, and each person has set two goals. We regularly motivate one another, track our progress, and celebrate how far we've come. It has brought us much closer as a family.

Hitesh Thakkar



Incremental changes become a part of their daily routine, and that is what creates great impact on the lives of the entrepreneurs. The programme can offer language, frameworks, and support, but it cannot act in anyone's place.

Personal initiative is what carries transformation forward when the meeting ends, when the discussion is over, and when no one else is there to ask a follow-up question.



As entrepreneurs become more intentional about their own growth, they begin creating opportunities for others to grow as well. They build cultures where ownership is shared, feedback is encouraged, and leadership is developed at every level of the organisation.

For many, this extends through TiE for Future Leaders, an initiative that brings the Personal Boards philosophy to employees and emerging leaders. It extends the philosophy of Personal Boards to employees and emerging leaders within an organisation.

By equipping teams with the same language of reflection, accountability, and continuous learning, entrepreneurs create organisations that are less dependent on one individual and better prepared for the future. Others introduce regular reviews, encourage shared decision-making, or consciously mentor people beginning their own leadership journeys. The methods differ, but the intention remains the same: to create opportunities for others to grow.

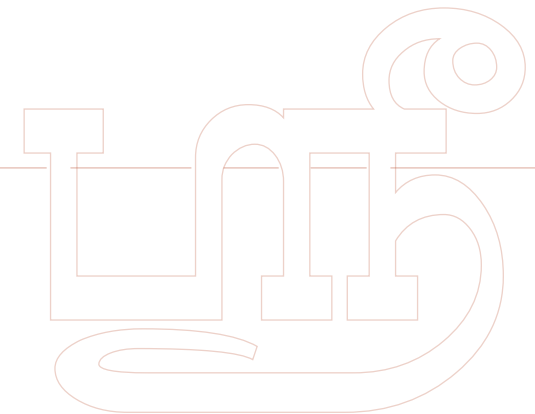
The village grows when transformation is shared. Leaders build businesses by building other leaders.



Employees who have enrolled in TiE for Future Leaders have fundamentally changed. They show ownership mindset and discipline. Now, I am asking them to present their learnings to the others as well.

Srijith T*

*Name changed to protect privacy



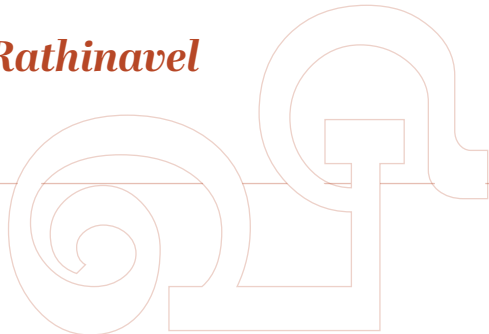
The Personal Boards initiative has never stagnated. As entrepreneurs have changed, so has the curriculum and community. New workshops, frameworks, Catalyst exercises, and methods of reflection have been introduced over the years in response to new needs. Every addition has strengthened the initiative while staying true to its core purpose of helping entrepreneurs become better leaders.

What has remained constant is the discipline with which Personal Boards is delivered. Entrepreneurs meet regularly, commit to honest conversations, review their progress, and hold one another accountable. While frameworks provide a common language, it is the consistency of practice that turns learning into action.



We scheduled short daily check-ins and weekly reviews. Over time, small corrections every week changed the company more than any single event could.

Vivek Rathinavel



The entrepreneurs in the programme come from manufacturing, healthcare, retail, textiles, hospitality, construction, technology, education, and more. Some are first-generation founders. Others inherited businesses built over decades. Their businesses differ in size, sector, and ambition, but the challenges they describe are strikingly similar. They speak about making difficult decisions, building teams, delegating responsibility, balancing family life, developing discipline, and finding people who will question their thinking honestly.

The Personal Boards initiative travels across sectors by teaching entrepreneurs to think critically, reflect consistently, and learn from one another. A discussion that begins with a textile manufacturer may help a hospital owner. A lesson from a retailer may change the way a technology founder approaches hiring. A challenge faced by a restaurant owner may inspire new ideas for a builder. Together, these experiences become a growing body of practical knowledge that continues to strengthen the Personal Boards, making it increasingly relevant to the realities of MSMEs in Tamil Nadu and beyond.

The stories in this book come from entrepreneurs who joined at different stages of the initiative. Their experiences are not identical, yet the patterns are remarkably similar. Reflection becomes a habit. Habits shape decisions. Decisions turn into discipline. Better discipline strengthens businesses.

Hear from Munusamy again!

Munusamy K is one of hundreds of entrepreneurs who benefited from this ecosystem.

By the time his bureaucratic challenges had resolved and the store was cleared for inauguration, he was facing a cash flow crisis. Around that time, he attended TiE Chennai's Business Model Canvas workshop in Yercaud and those two days lit the spark in him. He found the motivation to run further and the confidence to take a business loan.

Even as he made business decisions fuelled by this new confidence, his Co-Directors pushed him to focus on personal transformation. They checked on him regularly, helped him manage his stress, encouraged healthier habits, and reminded him to prioritise his family amidst it all. Not only does he now regularly eat with his family, he takes them on vacations and continuously discovers sides of them he never even knew existed.



I took my family to Goa and my mother swam in a lake. People took selfies with her because a woman of her age did such a good job. I never even knew she could swim. Apparently she used to swim in wells in her childhood. I learnt this about my mother only because of TiE Chennai.

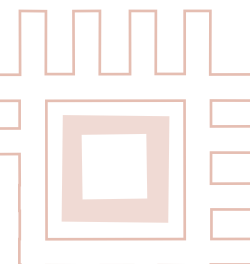


Today, Munusamy is a torchbearer for the belief that personal transformation drives business transformation. For events and conferences in English, he asks for permission to record them. Later, he asks his children to translate everything so he can imbibe the learning. On one occasion, he heard CKR say that it is okay to do what it takes to retain good staff, and he changed his approach to his team; increasing salaries for high performers and going out of his way to appreciate their contributions. He listens to Catalyst every day and from Akhila Rajeshwar, learnt the power of listening, waiting and not reacting. Today, he is not afraid to say “let me get back to you”, instead of reacting on instinct.

Since joining Personal Boards in 2021, much has happened in Munusamy's life. Through phases of worry and stress, uncertainty and overwhelm, he drew on the strength of the TiE Chennai Personal Boards community to rally, push past the challenges and transform. At every step of the way, his Co-Directors and TiE Chennai mentors stood by his side.



My business was doing reasonably well, but when problems arose, I broke. If I have now grown my business so much, it is because TiE Chennai saved me.



As entrepreneurs transform, so do the **people around them**. Their businesses become stronger, their teams take greater ownership, their families become part of the journey, and many begin mentoring fellow entrepreneurs.

The enduring strength of the Personal Boards lies in **transforming the person behind the business**. As entrepreneurs continue to build, lead, and help others grow, the village grows with them. In doing so, what began as a standalone initiative grows from strength to strength as a **movement**.

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AuxoHub is a strategic consultancy creating communications solutions rooted in clarity, collaboration and creativity. We work with value-driven partners to strengthen organisational memory, build contextualised action plans, and assist in their implementation and adoption.

To learn more about us and the methodology of the TIE Chennai Personal Boards Impact Narrative, please visit:

