

[Award Winning Criteria]

Pawanexh Kohli arrived into the Indian cold chain scenario as recently as 2007. He came from the global cold chain backdrop which included 15 years with Dole Food co. and experience of managing and operating the storage and transportation of perishables, literally from farm gate to consuming wholesale centres across 5 continents. Initially dismayed at the status of India's cold chain, he has since lead visionary initiatives in this domain – through highly innovative applications in thermal management, fresh perishables care and cold chain infrastructure.

Focused initiatives: Capt. Kohli propounds low carbon footprint technology in the highly energy intensive cold supply chain. He was sole designer and guide in developing a passively cooled vehicle that could service just in time deliveries of chilled food products (in 2009). These vehicle types are since, in active use with Dominos Pizza and allow the supply lines to be dynamic in response to variable demands.

His concept of the dual supply line mechanism in the agri-business space was adopted as base for the Asian Development Bank's prominent Infrastructure development project. Here, he was the prime mover for devising a viable and sustainable network of cold chain logistics and infrastructure, in the states of Bihar and Maharashtra. He devised scalable and modular infrastructure for implementation in this multi-donor PPP project (in 2009-10). During project development, he also helped design agriculture marketing infrastructure that directly impacts the agri-food supply system and the farming community.

In another initiative in last year, he was the sole application advisor to the hybrid solar thermal powered chilling system developed by Institute of Energy Studies of Anna University. This is a low energy consuming cooling solution which is the crying need for both industry and rural farmers.

Taking internal as well as external customers along: Recognising the call for small parcel load service in the cold chain, in his recent avatar as Chief of cold chain in Gati Ltd, he is initiating the development of a nationwide distribution network that synergises with Gati's existing operating trunk routes. Developing such a hub spoke model entails massive investment and involves continual buy-in from fellow management and interested partners.

This same investment bottleneck has compromised a fledging and inefficient cold chain, one that detracts from the very essence of the care and excellence that is unique to this supply system. Given the nature of apprehension, Capt Kohli innovates to mesh technologies to create solutions that lower energy consumptions and adds sustainability to the cold chain, both across the storage space as well as in surface transportation; requiring core understanding and clear persuasion with both internal and external customers.

His open style of leadership is inclusive and promotes innovative thought process. This ensures his team internally stays excited about the business and operations. His domain knowledge and habitually sharing nature, ensures that the external customer also engages willingly to participate in new ideas and concepts.

Impact on and contribution to the wider service users' industry: White papers and other discussion documents written by Capt. Kohli have been forthcoming in providing valuable insight into the cold chain industry. These contributions include innovations in equipment utility, mobile thermally managed vending platforms, IT implementation in road transportation, food catering in railways and alternative power in maritime industry.

Given his decades of experience in storage and transportation of fresh produce, he understands the importance of factors other than pure temperature control. The very inherent problems that arise from the base cooling mechanism is another factor that he has repeatedly communicated and implemented. Through innovative changes, like in heat recovery from air-purge systems, humidity preserving design changes he has brought energy savings and better quality to the farmer's produce.

His recent thrust on systems implementation for reefer transport not only adds profitability but enhances transparency and will streamline the cold supply lines in the country.

Socio-financial impact: Of particular note is the leadership role he played in developing thermally managed food carts for street hawkers. These street vending platforms designed through India's most acclaimed industrial design house (Design Directions), provided a hygienic, retail platform to the urban poor whilst deploying low carbon footprint passive cooling mechanisms. The concept cart was first launched in NCR region by the State's chief minister Mrs Sheila Dixit. Capt. Kohli also supports the Kaushalya Foundation as advisor in Bihar's unique farm-to-fork supply chain which retails fresh produce off such street vending platforms. These street carts provide a modern platform that elevates the street hawker to entrepreneurs and completes the cold supply chain upto the last mile.

In his current role as Chief of Gati's cold-chain arm, he is leading another innovative project that drastically reduces the distribution cost of medicinal supplies in the country. He continues as advisor to IL&FS and is an active member of the CII National Task Force on Cold Chain Development.

Keeping socio-economic situation of the Indian farmers in mind, he is constantly working on innovating and in developing of low cost alternatives for the agri-produce sector.