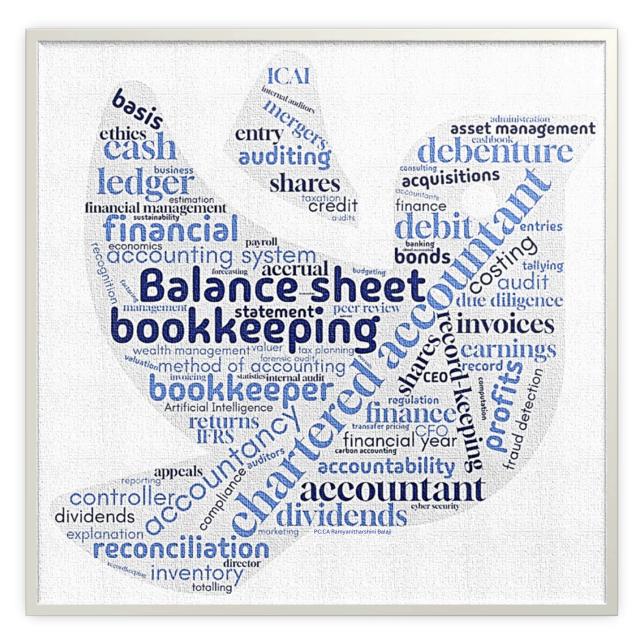
The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India The Netherlands (Amsterdam) Chapter





ICAI NL Newsletter Quarterly Edition Jul - Sep, 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Dear Members.

America innovates and develops, China imitates and exploits, and Europe oversees and regulates!

These were the desperate words from a senior EU official frustrated with Europe losing its edge in innovation and entrepreneurship.

We, the Indian immigrants in Europe – the hardworking community with "Suptheshu Jagruthi" genes - have an opportunity to contribute more actively to innovation. By doing so, we become more visible in the Netherlands and achieve the respect akin to the Indian diaspora in America.

This quarter, we celebrated CA Day on July 1, with a webinar led by one of our senior member CA Devendra Kamra on the subject "investment opportunities" sharing his insights with us. We also had a lively discussion on the "Union Budget 2024" on July 27,2024 led by our MC member CA Sunila Chanana and senior member from Mumbai CA Yogesh Mittal. They delved into key budget highlights and shared valuable insights relevant to NRIs.

At the Amsterdam chapter, we believe that we have been model immigrants in the Netherlands, and now we can be even more! We have been performers, but as the webinar on September 28 by the speaker brought out that we could do more with perception and image built over performance to increase our authority, influence with a powerful personal brand.

I met with Mr. Satya Pinisetty, the First secretary of the Indian embassy on September 27,2024 as part of our continuous dialogue with the Indian embassy on the reciprocal recognition of our qualification. And I took the opportunity to raise the issue of Box 3 where I see a flagrant violation of the DTA with India by the Belastingdiensts.

The future of the profession is intrinsically linked to the global movement towards sustainability and the time to act is now. In India, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is making strides with its Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) framework.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Here are a few articles that would be of interest to members with respect to the september 2024 issue:

- Balancing the Books of the Planet: Exploring the World of Carbon Accounting for a Sustainable Future by academician Ms.Jaya Gupta, amplifies the significance of CARBON ACCOUNTING.
- Rising Threats: Navigating the Complex World of Cybersecurity Attacks by CA Anjali Ganotra

From the next newsletter we are also introducing a new column called BLURB, inspired by the **Accountant's Browser** column of our Institute's journal. Fellow CA Kanav Goyal and I will be contributing regularly and we welcome few volunteers to join us. The purpose of the column is to scan the latest developments, articles, and insights, sharing highlights and recommendations from our reading that may interest our members.

The election to the Central Council and the regional councils of the ICAI has been announced and we have received our ballot papers which I encourage members to send back the same in the sealed envelopes provided to the Institute before December 13, 2024. I also request members to enroll to the WOFA (World Forum of Accountants) with an interesting theme Accountability meets Innovation (AI): For a Sustainable Planet to be held in New Delhi from January 31,2025 - February 2,2025.

We are celebrating Diwali on the November 9, 2024 in Uithoorn and I encourage all members to save the date and register for the event. We are expecting around 100 participants, making it a good opportunity for networking.

For the first time in over three decades of living here, there is, as Dutch news describes, a growing sense of worry and insecurity among immigrants. However, this moment also presents an opportunity for us to requalify and prepare ourselves to offer the kinds of new services that Dutch society will need. We are, and should continue striving to be, net contributors to the just and fair society that the Dutch uphold.

Warm Regards

Ashok Dorairaja October 1, 2024

MANAGING COMMITTEE





CA.SAROJ KASAT VICE-CHAIRMAN



CA.RAMYANITHARSHINI BALAJI SECRETARY

"The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team."







CA.NILANJAN PAUL



CA.INDRAJIT GHOSE



CA.MEENAKSHI SHARMA





CHANANA
SUPPORTING
MEMBER

MEET & GREET



From left to Right: Mr.Mark
Simon F.Benjamins (Business
Manager - Port of Rotterdam),
CA Vikas Chaturvedi, CA Anuj
Jain (Director.Finance, IOCL),
Mr. Ajay Sinha (Chief General
Manager-Finance IOCL,
CA Ashok Dorairaja

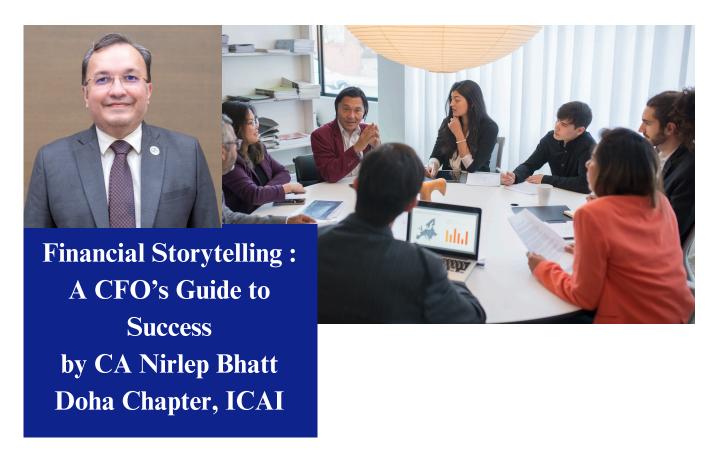
On September24, 2024, an Executive dinner was held at the Holi restaurant in Amsterdam in honour of the chief guest, CA Anuj Jain, Director of Finance, Indian Oil corporation Limited, India. The event was attended by several distinguished dignitaries including Mr.Mark Simon F.Benjamins

(Business Manager, Port of Rotterdam),

During the evening, the chairman of our chapter CA Ashok Dorairaja, presented a bouquet of flowers to the chief guest as a gesture of welcome.

Throughout the dinner, a variety of topics were discussed, including the promotion of India-Netherlands trade relations, enhancing the presence of the Indian CA brand in the Netherlands and improving employment opportunities for CA professionals in the Country. Another key point was ensuring reciprocity in the recognition of qualifications between the two nations. The conversation also touched on the facilities and grants available from Indian Oil Corporation Limited in the field of renewable energy.

TECH CORNER



Executive Summary

In a rapidly changing environment we are witnessing, CFO's role has been expanded significantly, beyond number-crunching. As business partners, they are leading transformative initiatives & are driving formulation of strategies which are pivotal for organizations that aspire to scale greater growth or navigate changes. This in turn requires an ability to analyze, articulate & communicate vital information to wide ranging, internal & external stakeholders, with whom they are interacting. This article attempts to provide insight into one of the most important new age skills for finance professionals, which is "storytelling".

Storytelling in Finance: A CFO's Guide to Success

Introduction

There has been a paradigm shift in the role of Chief Financial Officer (CFO) over the years, thanks to the ever-increasing digital transformation, cross-border expansion & transactions, thrust on sustainability and growing gamut of regulatory requirements. CFOs are sagacious strategists & value creators to charter future roadmap of the organization and are required to keep an eagle eye over both external environment & internal operation. Further, due to multiple stakeholders & complex business models, demystifying numbers & presenting its contextual understanding for better analysis & insight, have been of paramount importance. The skills which are required for the same are as crucial as skills which are required to generate the numbers. Hence, performance & language, as represented by numbers & narratives, have given rise to an important skill - financial storytelling.

Storytelling in finance – A vital skill

In a simple term - Financial storytelling means identifying "why" behind your numbers. The process involves extracting value from financial metrics and parameters & communicating them effectively across the company and with stakeholders, with the help of narratives & visual aids. It's an art that transforms hard facts & cold data into financial information not only accessible but also engaging, impactful & everlasting.

Reasons why storytelling is one of the most sought-after skills for finance professionals

Overload of Data

The data driven decision-making process is a cornerstone of the success of any organization. In the digital era for organizations, having access to data is not difficult, however often there is an overload of data, owing to which organizations tend to lose focus on the correct & timely course of action. Storytelling in Finance has become an important theme, because of this phenomenon. The quality of their decisions directly depend on the relevance & quality of data. One way for finance professionals to add more value and insight to quantitative data is through storytelling. Storytelling translates complex data into digestible information by compelling narratives.

Interpretation of Numbers

For any analysis to be more productive, presenting numbers alone will not be helpful, but analysis, interpretation & defining outcome & benchmarking the numbers, will make presentation more action-oriented and futuristic. Numbers & Data needed to be filtered so as to produce logical insight & pragmatic course of action, with an analytical approach & discernment.

Diverse set of Stakeholders

Storytelling skill has gained prominence in the wake of the requirement to convey information, ideas & thoughts and to lay future roadmap to stakeholders. Further, the objective of each stakeholder may not be identical. It's imperative to translate the numbers & even non-financial details into a lucid manner. Here, Knowing Your Audience (KYA) is very important.

Internal Customers

By way of nature of job, finance professionals have a significant interface with other executives who are in non-financial domains. There are important deliverables (e.g. yearly budget, rolling cash forecast) which require collaboration & deliberations. To serve the interest of the organization, it's crucial that information & data are presented not only in a lucid form but also in a way that help them perform better and beat Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

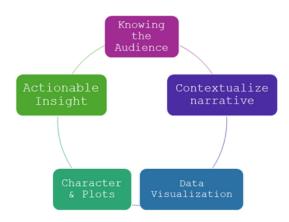
Cascading of information

Often it happens that end-users of the financial information are not in direct interaction with CFOs and departmental heads cascade the financial information to their team members. (e.g. General Manager Marketing passes on financial information received from CFO to the Salespersons). To achieve & exceed departmental goals, the "user & consumer of the information" should watch, listen, digest, understand, ask questions wanting to know more, act on it and share further (i.e. to their teams)

Humanizing the Finance Function

Rather than just presenting hard facts & cold data (e.g. risk, process, numbers, performance), storytelling attempts to engage the users, helps build rapport, encourages questions and as such strengthens goal congruence with-in the departments & organizations.

Components of Story Telling



Knowing the Audience

The first step is Knowing the Audience. Before crafting a financial story, understand the audience's level of understanding of financial concepts, familiarity with technical terms, their interests and concerns. Adapt the storytelling approach, contents & delivery style accordingly. It pays to speak in the manner the audience understands & avoid jargon, acronyms or technical language. Because the purpose is not impress the audience but to inform by making an impact. E.g. while addressing HR – connect the financial performance with employee turnover. While addressing marketing executives, explain the benefits fetched from the marketing & branding campaign.

Contextualize Narrative

Build up compelling narrative, by preferably using what is called "reverse narrative technique" – i.e. you may like to use real-life case and paint a picture of the macro environment or competition landscape & then move into agenda, so audience can relate well. e.g. - whether is it conveying variance in the budget or is it to discuss finding by the internal auditor or to deliberate Quarterly Performance. If the downward trend in revenue of FMCG co. is to be discussed, then it is more logical to present the same with a narrative about the reduction in disposable income of the consumer. Another way is to begin with an anecdote to captivate the attention. Also, it's essential to adopt a "helicopter view" that highlights key factors in financial data rather than getting stuck in minor details.

Data Visualization

Rather than plain data & numbers, it is advisable to paint vivid picture with infographics, graphs, diagrams & trends with appealing colors but without making it jazzy. The technique called "Compare & Contrast" to iron out any ambiguity & bring out right perspective may also be utilized. It's said that "You can present something without visuals, but visuals will not present themselves". Any visual is there to complement contents, structure & delivery and not to substitute the same.

Characters & Plots

Characters in financial storytelling context could be business segments, presence in various regions or different product lines. Plot can be how these characters performed historically, which factors drives the changes and what's the inter-connection or cause & effect relationship between various characters. It may be a good idea to include regular customers, prominent suppliers or dedicated employees. Humanizing the narrative can make it more relatable and memorable.

Actionable Insight

In conclusion, the goal of financial storytelling is not just to inform, but to give focused direction towards future action, within a time bound manner. If there is a discussion on a problem, suitable alternatives for solutions should also be suggested. Whether it's expansion of business vertical or divestiture from a subsidiary, the story should lead to a clear call to action.

"Four What" Strategy

Delivering an impactful financial story, goes down to the "Four What" strategy, a potent tool to convey action-oriented message: explain "what happened" and why, discuss "what are the implications", present "what if scenario" and conclude with "what actionable" steps can be taken.

Ancillary skills to sharpen financial storytelling

It's suggested that to develop and sharpen financial storytelling skill, any finance professional must also have creativity, critical thinking and conflict resolution skills, as these are foundational requirements to present an effective financial story to internal & external stakeholders.



Conclusion

It's quoted by Soufyan Hamid that "Storytelling will help CFOs and Head of finance to convince their business partners about what's happening, why it happened, and what can we do about it."

Financial storytelling is about designing a narrative that makes numbers speak in a language that everyone can resonate, digest, understand and appreciate. With storytelling techniques in deliverables, CFOs can transform numbers into compelling narratives, engaging their audience and providing deeper insights into not only current financial situation but also future of the business. Broad spectrum of finance function is not just about presenting data; it's about conveying information behind the data, with a story that informs, engages, educates and inspires.

TECH CORNER



NFRA vs. ICAI
The Debate on
Oversight and the
Future of Indian
Auditing Standards

By CA Kanav Goyal



PC : Lee Charlie /Shutterstock

The accounting and auditing landscape in India is undergoing a significant transformation with the establishment of the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) in 2018. This regulatory body has taken over certain oversight responsibilities from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) to enhance governance and ensure alignment with global standards. However, this shift has sparked debates regarding the role of NFRA, its relationship with ICAI, and its impact on the auditing profession in India. A particularly contentious issue is the proposed revision of SA 600 (Standard on Auditing), which could have major implications for smaller audit firms.

This column explores the key issues surrounding NFRA's emergence, its regulatory approach, and whether ICAI's self-regulation might still be the better route for the profession.

The Role of NFRA and Its Impact on ICAI

The establishment of NFRA in 2018 marked a watershed moment in the regulatory oversight of accounting and auditing practices. Previously, ICAI was the sole regulator, responsible for setting standards and ensuring compliance across India. NFRA was introduced to provide independent oversight in response to corporate scandals and to better align India with global regulatory practices. NFRA's primary role is to regulate and monitor the quality of audits and financial reporting for public interest entities. This includes addressing complaints, ensuring compliance, and investigating misconduct in the accounting profession. Additionally, NFRA has the authority to impose penalties on auditors and firms for negligence or unethical behaviour.

ICAI, with its longstanding history, has traditionally enforced high standards through its Code of Ethics and disciplinary mechanisms. But the pressing question remains: Is an external body like NFRA essential to improve audit quality, or can ICAI's self-regulation, given its deep understanding of the profession, suffice?

Global Examples of Independent Oversight: Lessons from the Netherlands

India is not alone in moving toward independent regulatory oversight. A similar transformation can be seen in the Netherlands, where the NBA (Koninklijke Nederlandse Beroepsorganisatie van Accountants) oversees the profession. Unlike ICAI, NBA has incorporated leaders from non-audit backgrounds, such as Kris Douma, whose expertise is in politics and social responsibility rather than traditional auditing.

This shift illustrates how external oversight bodies can bring fresh perspectives, promote objectivity, and foster greater accountability—similar to NFRA's goals. However, the Dutch example also suggests that collaboration between regulatory bodies and practitioners is key to effective oversight.

The Controversy Around SA 600 Revisions: Implications for Small Firms

A flashpoint in the NFRA-ICAI debate is the proposed revision of SA 600, which concerns auditors' responsibilities in group audits. NFRA aims to align this standard with international norms, but ICAI has raised concerns about the timing and potential impact on smaller audit firms

Key Change: Principal Auditor's Accountability

NFRA proposes that the principal auditor, typically responsible for auditing the parent company in a corporate group, should be fully accountable for the work of component auditors (those auditing the subsidiaries). Currently, principal auditors can rely on the work of component auditors without being held liable for their errors.

This revision would significantly shift the burden of responsibility. Principal auditors would be required to oversee component auditors' work closely, potentially enhancing audit quality but also raising questions of fairness and practicality.

Outcome: Potential Clashes Within the CA Fraternity

Presently, all Chartered Accountants (CAs) are considered equally qualified to handle audits. However, under the proposed changes, the principal auditor would essentially become the "kingpin", responsible for judging the competence of auditors managing subsidiary audits. This could create friction within the CA fraternity, as principal auditors gain more power over their peers.

Moreover, smaller audit firms, which often handle subsidiary audits, could face diminished opportunities as the group auditee might prefer to avoid duplicity of audit work and fees and will assign group audit including subsidiaries to single large, well-established firms. This could lead to increased market consolidation, threatening the diversity and competitiveness of India's audit landscape.

Self-Regulation or External Oversight: Striking the Right Balance

The ongoing tension between ICAI and NFRA raises a fundamental question: Does India truly need an independent body like NFRA, or could self-regulation under ICAI be a better fit for the profession?

Proponents of NFRA argue that external oversight brings greater accountability and transparency, particularly when dealing with large corporations and public interest entities. NFRA's power to impose penalties and investigate misconduct acts as a deterrent to audit failures. The rise in debarments of audit firms under NFRA highlights the seriousness of its enforcement.

Conversely, ICAI's advocates suggest that self-regulation fosters a more collaborative, growth-oriented environment. ICAI's long-standing frameworks aim to enhance audit quality without imposing excessive penalties that could stifle smaller firms' innovation.

A Path Forward: Collaboration Over Conflict

By working together on standards such as SA 600, they can ensure that the Indian audit profession maintains global competitiveness while upholding the highest standards of ethics and quality.NFRA emphasizes transparency and accountability, which is crucial in a globalized economy, while ICAI highlights the importance of nurturing smaller firms within the domestic audit ecosystem. Taking inspiration from the NBA's approach in the Netherlands, the future of Indian auditing may depend on how well NFRA and ICAI can collaborate, balancing global best practices with the unique dynamics of the Indian market. The proposed SA 600 revisions should be approached with caution to avoid alienating smaller firms, ensuring that all audit firms, regardless of size, have opportunities to grow.

Conclusion

The creation of NFRA has undeniably shifted the dynamics in India's auditing landscape. While its strict regulatory approach promotes greater accountability, the concerns of smaller audit firms and the potential limitations on ICAI's self-regulatory role must be addressed. The ongoing debate surrounding SA 600 is a prime example of the need for a balanced approach—one that improves audit quality while safeguarding opportunities for smaller firms.

As Vishesh C. Chandiok, CEO of Grant Thornton Bharat, aptly puts it: "A regulator needs to be strict but should also show balance. While NFRA is working towards this balance, I would urge them to adopt a more remedial approach to help the profession enhance audit quality."

The future of auditing in India depends on how effectively NFRA and ICAI can leverage their respective strengths to shape a robust, accountable, and inclusive profession.

MEMBERS CORNER

Welcome Aboard!

A new column focuses on the CA members who have recently joined the group, describing their education, experience, hobbies and what they expect from the ICAI NL chapter.

I am currently working with IAC Audit and Assurance, The Hague and residing in Amsterdam, having relocated to the Netherlands with my family in February 2024. Alongside, I am a part time entrepreneur with my venture, Arte Vista House, which specializes in the Jewellery segment. I immensely enjoy the work culture in the Netherlands, which teaches us to have a good quality family time along with our professional pursuits.

I am also honoured to be part of the Editorial Board of the ICAI NL Chapter.In my free time, I enjoy travelling and cooking. Although I am new to the country, I encourage new members to focus on building professional and personal networks, as these helps to settle in the new country. I am grateful to the senior members of our fraternity who have offered guidance and support, in my professional journey in the Netherlands and made it seamless.



CA Tisha Aggarwal tishasinghal29@gmail.com



CA Rishav Bhutoria rishavbhutoria@gmail.com

I completed my academic and professional education in Kolkata before beginning my career at PwC Kolkata office. After four years, I was transferred to the PwC Sydney office, where I spent 8 years in the assurance department, specializing in global financial services asset management clients. My work involved auditing of funds, corporate entities of asset managers, group reporting, compliance assurance, integrated audits (SOX, PCAOB) and ISAE 3402 audit.

In 2019, I moved to the PwC Netherlands office, and in 2023, I joined Shell Asset Management Company in the Hague as an Operations Due Diligence manager. I now lead the Governance, Risk and Assurance department.

I enjoy reading spiritual books, practicing meditation and taking small vows of detachment. I am passionate about spreading Indian culture (Sanskar) and values to kids overseas through stories and discussions. The ICAI NL chapter is a great platform for participating in various webinars for learning & development and connecting with other CAs.

CPE EVENTS





Anniversary July 1, 2024 Celebrating Excellence

The chapter celebrated the CA day with a webinar on the topic "EXPLORE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES ABROAD" by our senior member CA Devendra Kamra. This webinar was delivered in a narrative style and the speaker discussed about the investments in shares, real estate, gold which are very popular modes of investments worldwide.

He shared his learnings on investing in shares, beginning with how he profited by participating in IPOs in the primary market. He mentioned about several platforms in Europe for investment and particularly mentioned about using the eToro platform, where investors can buy fractions of shares, such as 1/6th of a share, and even practice trades through virtual simulations.

For novice investors, he advised focusing on companies that have been established for 40 to 50 years, as these tend to be safer investments and also offer stability. He suggested spending a few minutes researching the business behind the shares, citing Unilever as an example of a stable, reliable company to invest in.

He also touched upon real estate investments both in India and the Netherlands and elaborated the legal aspects involved. The webinar was insightful and participants gained lot of information with respect to investments.

CPE EVENTS





The webinar on UNION BUDGET 2024 focussed on the direct and indirect tax changes and key insights focussed on NRIs.

The speaker CA Sunila Chanana, listed the changes in the direct tax reforms specifically aimed at NRIs.

Some key changes discussed were:

Revised income tax slabs, the exemption limit for LTCG on listed equity shares and units of equity-oriented mutual funds has been increased, removal of indexation benefits and the speaker discussed an example as how it could be a better scenario if indexation benefits were removed. She also mentioned about the abolition of angel tax.

CA Yogesh Mittal spoke about the significant tax reforms that were introduced in the Union Budget 2024. He highlighted the key statistics of Indian economy like the projected growth rate, forex reserves, direct tax and indirect tax collections, Foreign Direct Investments and also the popular countries making investments in India. He mentioned about the efforts to simplify the tax code to make it easier for individuals and businesses to comply with the tax regulations. He shared the information on the sources and the uses of the funds which captured the attention of the participants.

He threw light on the focus sectors mentioned in the budget like the start-ups,e-mobility,renewable energy,defense,aerospace,electronics,R & D,sustainabiliy,waste management and several other sectors. He also pointed about the future prospects like significant allocations to education and skill development, highlighting a strong commitment to economic reform and growth and focus on urban development, energy, and next-generation reforms.

CPE EVENTS







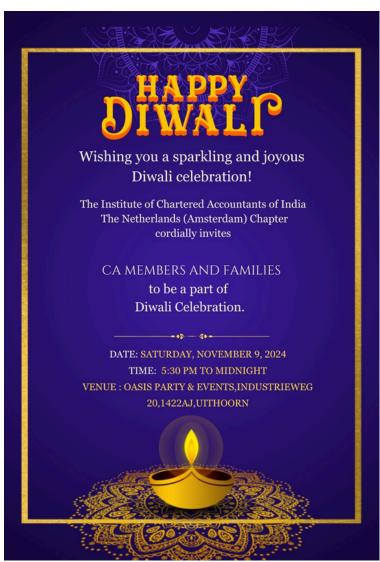
The recent webinar by Kaumudi Goda on "The trusted CA: Building Authority, Influence, and a Powerful Personal Brand" was a well attended interactive webinar and the speaker posed thought provoking questions to the members which fostered lively discussions especially creating a chatterfall.

Some of the main takeaways from this session were:

- 1. The speaker emphasised the importance of showcasing expertise in a focused area. Sharing knowledge through articles, speaking engagements, and consistent social media activity like linkedin can position an individual as a goto resource person. She mentioned about the Mckinsey Model of T-shaped skills.
- 2. Cultivate trustworthy, strong and long lasting relationships by being true and authentic.
- 3.Develop strong communication skills by clearly and firmly stating our opinions, while also being aware of our body language, as it conveys a lot.
- 4.Demonstrating likability and warmth is key to become successful and become an influential leader.

The session was both stimulating and enriching, offering valuable soft skills insights and offering much needed clarity.

UPCOMING EVENTS





WORD JUMBLE

Find the six finance words.

Arrange the highlighted letters to find the hidden word.

7	F	L	С	I	S
R	Т	G	0	w	н
С	Y	0	L	I	Р
G	U	т	В	D	E
G	A	E	_	ш	Ъ
G	A		C	П	K
С	E	Т	R	М	I

Solution: Next page

GET INVOLVED



If you would like to contribute articles to the next issue of the newsletter, feel free to submit them to icai.netherlands@gmail.com. The article must cover audit, accounting standards, regulatory updates, industry trends, or any other related topics to the profession. Anyone, whether experienced in writing or excited about a topic, is welcome.

Join us!

Become an integral part of the ICAI Netherlands (Amsterdam) Chapter.

Annual Membership cost - € 60

Please reach out to *icai.netherlands@gmail.com* for membership enquiries and information.

Word Jumble solution: FISCAL, GROWTH, POLICY, BUDGET, CHARGE, METRIC Hidden word: FORECAST

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank You!

Management Committee Members

Guest Contributors

CA Nirlep Bhatt

CA Kanav Goyal

CA Rishav Bhutoria

Newsletter Editorial Team
CA Tisha Aggarwal
CA Saroj Kasat
CA Ramyanitharshini Balaji