

# Building trust with sincerity is key to easing governance

Over the years, I have observed that the most potent force in any relationship — whether between individuals, institutions, or nations — is sincerity. It does not generate noise or seek attention; rather, it subtly shapes everything that sustains: Credibility, collaboration, and trust.

Having spent a considerable part of my life at the nexus of business and public policy, I have witnessed how sincerity can transform dialogue into partnership and intentions into progress. Trust, after all, is not constructed through announcements or documents; it is nurtured through consistency — in our verbal expressions, actions, and listening practices. When sincerity is present, progress transpires naturally. Conversely, when it is absent, even the most innovative ideas lose momentum.

In India's dynamic and rapidly evolving policy environment, trust remains our most valuable asset. It delineates the dynamics between government and industry, facilitates citizen engagement with institutions, and engenders public confidence in reforms. However, trust cannot be imposed; it must be earned — through sincerity of purpose and clarity of action.

For me, sincerity has consistently encompassed authenticity—the alignment between words, intentions, and outcomes. It is not about projecting an earnest demeanour; rather, it is about being genuine. When sincerity guides our interactions, dialogue becomes open, feedback constructive, and collaboration becomes instinctive.

I have witnessed this phenomenon repeatedly. The most successful partnerships I have observed — in trade, investment, or social progress — have flourished when both the government and the private sector approached each other with openness and trust. When the government demonstrates empathy and the private sector responds with responsibility, trust deepens. Once that trust is established, even the most challenging reforms gain support.

In the initial phase of liberalisation, both the government and the private sector were establishing their footing. The government was progressively opening doors to novel possibilities, while the private sector was gradually learning to navigate through them responsibly. Presently, this relationship has matured, characterised by enhanced dialogue, mutual respect, and a shared understanding that India's success is a collective endeavour.

Public engagement characterised by sincer-

ity is a subtle yet potent strength. It demands that we actively listen before reacting, comprehend before making decisions, and cultivate humility by acknowledging the need for rethinking. It also requires courage to remain steadfast in one's principles even when faced with challenges.

As India strives to achieve its \$10 trillion aspiration, sincerity and trust will serve as the driving forces behind its growth. Our focus on facilitating business and living should evolve into a culture of trust, where predictability, fairness, and speed define governance and service delivery. Intelligent governance transcends mere technological advancements and efficiency; it encompasses reliability and intent—the ability to fulfil promises, both large and small.

In the era of global competition, sincerity emerges as a strategic advantage. It enhances credibility, sustains investment, and instills confidence. The most competitive economies are not just efficient; they are also trustworthy.

Sincerity, therefore, transcends the realm of moral ideals; it is a fundamental growth imperative. It imbues words with substance and gives meaning to partnerships. It transforms ambition into tangible achievements and facilitates dialogue into profound understanding.

I have consistently held the belief that sincerity is not about achieving perfection but rather about the underlying intent. Individuals can discern genuine engagement across various contexts, whether it is during negotiations, policy discussions, or even casual conversations. This sense of authenticity fosters trust, which is the cornerstone of strong relationships and nations.

For India, sincerity in engagement will define the credibility of its forthcoming chapter of growth. As we enter an increasingly interconnected, technologically advanced, and globally assertive era, the quality of trust between the government, business, and citizens will determine the inclusivity and resilience of our journey.

Ultimately, sincerity is not a strategic approach; it is a way of being. While it cannot be manufactured, it remains the most powerful strategy of all. Trust — between individuals, institutions, or nations — is not a pre-designed concept; it is a lived experience, manifested daily through sincerity.



Ajay Khanna

Ajay Khanna is co-founder, Public Affairs Forum of India, and co-editor, The Policy Pivot. The views expressed are personal