Ajay Kapila has over 23 years of industry experience, working with large Fortune 500 global and Indian organisations, primarily in the consumer durables (electronics, appliances, automobiles) and retail industries. Currently, as head, retail business line, MTS India, Kapila is responsible for overseeing the growth and operations of the company's branded retail network. The key challenge before him is to make MTS branded stores a natural choice for consumers looking for a one-stop destination for telecom products and services. "It is my endeavour to ensure that the retail business achieves stand-alone viability," he says. "The idea is to break the commonly held myth that telecom branded stores are necessarily cost centres. I am also working to build sustainable partner relationships with franchisees, which will help in the growth of MTS's presence in the country."

What excites Kapila about his current assignment is the fact that despite being a young telecom operator, MTS reflects maturity and transparency. "It is a great place to be, where we believe in the will to do it," says Kapila.

Having worked in diverse scenarios and with diverse teams, Kapila believes that it is strong work ethics and integrity that pay off. A focus on quality, strategic execution and organisational goals are other important aspects. He strives to build consensus, organising resources and aligning capabilities with expectations. As a leader, Kapila feels that his biggest strength is his ability to identify the positives in team members as well as the negatives. "It has been great to see them achieve the deserved success and an evolved state of mind. I feel it is important for a leader to add value and give direction to young talent," he says.

Identifying the trends that are likely to dominate the telecom industry going forward, Kapila says, "The telecom industry will move from intense competition to consolidation and rationalisation. With teledensity nearing saturation levels in the urban markets, telecom companies need to remain focused on moving the customer up the value chain, improving ARPUs and customer life-cycle value."

Data, he adds, will be the next big thing and in time to come, broadband access, quality and affordable devices will play a big role in the growth of the industry.

Kapila calls his family his sanity keepers. His family comprises his wife and two children. “I make sure that I spend all my spare time with my family,” he says. As for his favourite pastimes, he says, “Music keeps my spirits up, reading keeps me grounded and cooking makes my children happy.”

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