

Shripad Ashtekar, Founder & Managing Director, Signpost India Ltd.



The son of an ex-serviceman, Shripad Ashtekar is a first-generation Indian entrepreneur, the founder & managing director of Signpost India Ltd., one of India's top independent and vertically integrated AdTech media enterprise. A self-taught enterprising go-getter, he turned his vision into reality by making a dent in the advertising industry and did not let his humble background and small-town beginnings to be counted as an obstacle. The only entrepreneur in the industry, who never envisaged the organization to be family-owned which is the prevalent organisation structure followed within this industry.

Emulating the proverb into action "One has to take a few steps back before taking a bigger leap," he astutely worked with smaller canvas of various formats of advertising opportunities, right from transit, conventional, and street furniture, by executing projects with a carefully engineered vertically integrated strategy to understand the nuances of trade that directly affects business matrices but have an underplaying role.

With a decade of learning, he has led exponential growth at Signpost within a short span of 5-6 years, powering Signpost India into one of the top three Indian companies in the domain.

Innovation and creativity come naturally to Shripad and it drives most of his day-to-day key decisions. Recognising that new ideas take shape in fresh efforts; he has made it a policy at Signpost to make investments in start-ups that are strategically aligned to the vision of Signpost. Growth has naturally steered acquisitions and mergers at Signpost at his behest. He is very well read and has first-hand experience is driving programmatic strategies in advertising completely convinced that smart devices that drive data assimilation and analysis as the future. Today all key decisions at Signpost are data driven with investment in ecosystems that generate credible business intelligence. Data has played a key role in client servicing as well under his aegis with pioneering proprietary ROI mapping of campaigns for the clients of Signpost for unparalleled transparency in client servicing which starts with data driven campaign planning assistance. Beyond advertising, he leverages his vision in infotainment, mobility & data with strategic investments – both in form of advisory and capital which is bringing differentiation within the trade.

Among the many FIRSTS he gave to the industry, the following novel pivots need special mention:

- India's first computer vision-based video analytics tool certified by IISc for traffic management and advertising intelligence
- India's first-ever airport with 70% digital media inventory
- Pioneering the concept of "hyperlocal programmatic advertising" to evolve individualistic character to media assets to bring about the demographic creativity unmatched even by print, smart phone or radio and set OOH is a parallel league
- Creating the largest digital billboard network in India in Mumbai showcasing hyperlocal programmatic content driven by defining first party real time data analytics
- First Indian company to develop app-based electric bicycle share mobility solutions operating in 3 cities with continued sustenance – a rare quality demonstrated in a difficult business vertical
- First Indian Company to design and deploy smart IOT data systems into DOOH, engineered to power creative impact successfully
- Largest digital canvas inventory across all the regions of the country
- Rated as the most innovative company winning accolades in India and abroad.
- Driving an out-of-home media agency, "Streetwork"

The step forward is to re-energize the offering with the proposed merger with Pressman Advertising Limited in the conventional formats and build experiential solutions for shoppers. Shripad's next charter is realising a vision to blend an offering around consumer journey in digital and traditional advertising for domestic and international clients with the experienced hands of Pressman.