

OTT - MOVERS & SHAKERS

As part of profiling some of the Movers & Shakers in the global media industry we have attempted to showcase some of the names and highlight their personalities and contributions to the media industry

AMAZON PRIME - JEFF BEZOS

American entrepreneur Jeff Bezos is the founder and chief executive officer of Amazon.com and owner of 'The Washington Post.' His successful business ventures have made him one of the richest people in the world.

Entrepreneur and e-commerce pioneer Jeff Bezos is the founder and CEO of the e-commerce company Amazon, owner of The Washington Post and founder of the space exploration company Blue Origin. His successful business ventures have made him one of the richest people in the world. Born in 1964 in New Mexico, Bezos had an early love of computers and studied computer science and electrical engineering at Princeton University. After graduation, he worked on Wall Street, and in 1990 he became the youngest senior vice president at the investment

firm D.E. Shaw. Four years later, Bezos quit his lucrative job to open Amazon.com, an online bookstore that became one of the Internet's biggest success stories. In 2013, Bezos purchased The Washington Post, and in 2017 Amazon acquired Whole Foods. In February 2021, Amazon announced that Bezos will step down as CEO in the third quarter of the year.

Bezos was born on January 12, 1964, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to a teenage mother, Jacklyn Gise Jorgensen, and his biological father, Ted Jorgensen.

The Jorgensens were married less than a year. When Bezos was 4

years old, his mother remarried Mike Bezos, a Cuban immigrant.

Bezos graduated summa cum laude from Princeton University in 1986 with a degree in computer science and electrical engineering.

Bezos showed an early interest in how things work, turning his parents' garage into a laboratory and rigging electrical contraptions around his house as a child.

He moved to Miami with his family as a teenager, where he developed a love for computers and graduated valedictorian of

his high school. It was during high school that he started his first business, the Dream Institute, an educational summer camp for fourth, fifth and sixth graders.

After graduating from Princeton, Bezos found work at several firms on Wall Street, including Fitel, Bankers Trust and the investment firm D.E. Shaw. In 1990, Bezos became D.E. Shaw's youngest vice president.

While his career in finance was extremely lucrative, Bezos chose to make a risky move into the nascent world of e-commerce. He quit his job in 1994, moved to Seattle and targeted the untapped potential of the Internet

market by opening an online bookstore.

Bezos opened Amazon.com, named after the meandering South American river, on July 16, 1995, after asking 300 friends to beta test his site. In the months leading up to launch, a few employees began developing software with Bezos in his garage; they eventually expanded operations into a two-bedroom house

equipped with three Sun Microstations.

The initial success of the company was meteoric. With no press promotion, Amazon.com sold books across the United States and in 45 foreign countries within 30 days. In two months, sales reached \$20,000 a week, growing faster than Bezos and his startup team had envisioned.

Amazon.com went public in 1997, leading many market analysts to question whether the company could hold its own when traditional retailers launched their own e-commerce sites. Two years later, the start-up not only kept up, but also outpaced competitors, becoming an e-commerce leader.

Bezos continued to diversify Amazon's offerings with the sale of CDs and videos in 1998, and later clothes, electronics, toys and more through major retail partnerships.

While many dot.coms of the early '90s went bust, Amazon flourished with yearly sales that jumped from \$510,000 in 1995 to over \$17 billion in 2011.



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As part of Bezos' 2018 annual shareholder letter, the media tycoon said the company had surpassed 100 million paid subscribers for Amazon Prime. By September 2018, Amazon was valued at more than \$1 trillion, the second company to ever hit that record just a few weeks after Apple.

At the end of 2018, Amazon announced it was raising the minimum wage for its workers to \$15 per hour. The company has still been criticized for its working conditions and grueling pace, with workers protesting during Prime Day in July 2019.

In 2006, Amazon.com launched its video-on-demand service. Initially known as Amazon Unbox on TiVo, it was eventually rebranded as Amazon Instant Video.

Bezos premiered several original programs with the launch of Amazon Studios in 2013. The company hit it big in 2014 with the critically-acclaimed *Transparent* and *Mozart in the Jungle*.

The company produced and released its first original feature film, Spike Lee's *Chi-Raq*, in 2015.

In 2016, Bezos stepped in front of the camera for a cameo appearance playing an alien in *Star Trek Beyond*. A *Star Trek* fan since childhood, Bezos is listed as a Starfleet Official in the movie credits on IMDb.

In early 2018, The Seattle Times reported that Amazon had consolidated its consumer retail operations in order to focus on growing areas including digital entertainment and Alexa, Amazon's virtual assistant.

Amazon released the Kindle, a handheld digital book reader that allowed users to buy, download, read and store their book selections, in 2007.

Bezos entered Amazon into the tablet marketplace with the unveiling of the Kindle Fire in 2011. The

following September, he announced the new Kindle Fire HD, the company's next-generation tablet designed to give Apple's iPad a run for its money.

"We haven't built the best tablet at a certain price. We have built the best tablet at any price," Bezos said, according to ABC News.

In early December 2013, Bezos made headlines when he revealed a new, experimental initiative by Amazon, called "Amazon Prime Air," using drones to provide delivery services to customers. He said these drones would be able to carry items weighing up to five pounds and be capable of traveling within a 10-mile distance of the company's distribution center.

The first Prime Air delivery took place in Cambridge, England, on December 7, 2016.

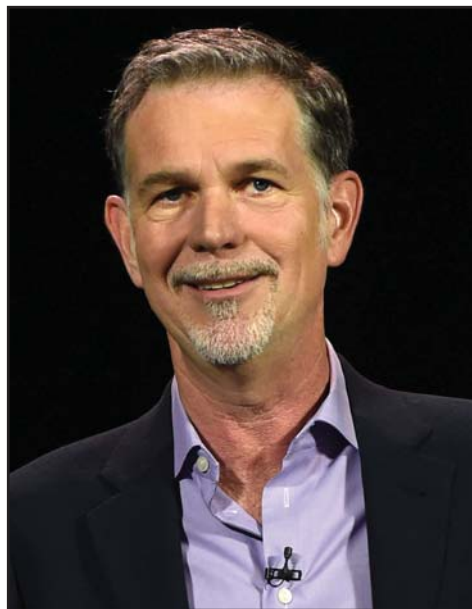
Bezos oversaw one of Amazon's few major missteps when the company launched the Fire Phone in 2014. Criticized for being too gimmicky, it was discontinued the following year.

Bezos had been eyeing the food delivery market, and in 2017 Amazon announced it had acquired the Whole Foods grocery chain for \$13.7 billion in cash.

The company began offering in-store deals to Amazon Prime customers and grocery delivery in as little as two hours, depending on the market. As a result, Walmart and Krogers also began offering meal delivery to its customers.

NETFLIX - REED HASTINGS

Reed Hastings, in full Wilmot Reed Hastings, Jr., (born October 8, 1960, Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.),



American entrepreneur who was cofounder (1997) and CEO (1998–) of Netflix, a media-streaming and video-rental company.

Hastings studied mathematics at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1983. After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, he spent two years with the Peace Corps, most of the time teaching math in Swaziland (now Eswatini). He returned to the United



States and went to Stanford University, where he received (1988) a master's degree in computer science. Subsequently Hastings became a software developer, and in 1991 he founded Pure Software (later Pure Atria Corporation), which he sold in 1997 for a substantial profit.

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In 1997 Hastings conceived the idea of a subscription-based movie-rental service, after he incurred a large late fee when he failed to return a store-rented videocassette. DVDs were new to the market, but Hastings felt that they would travel well through the mail. He and business partner Marc Randolph (who left the company in 2004) incorporated Netflix in California in 1997 and started mail-order DVD operations in 1998. Hastings became the company's CEO later that year. At first customers were allowed to rent each DVD for a seven-day period, but by December 1999 subscribers could pay a set monthly fee to rent an unlimited number of DVDs. Although they selected DVDs and controlled their accounts via the Netflix Web site, DVDs (up to three at a time) were sent and returned by mail. Once a DVD was returned, the next movie on the customer's account list was automatically mailed.

Hastings expanded Netflix through movie studio partnerships and aggressive marketing campaigns, emphasizing Netflix's catalog of indie films, documentaries, and other movies not easily available through other services. In February 2007 Netflix shipped its billionth DVD. Meanwhile, the company launched applications that permitted customers to access movies and TV shows through streaming downloads. Hastings made a rare misstep in 2011 when Netflix announced that it would increase rental prices and split the company in two, with the DVD service rebranded as Qwikster. He downplayed the resulting loss of customers and plunging stock price, but the company backtracked and canceled the Qwikster spin-off plan.

Hastings subsequently oversaw Netflix's foray into content produced specifically for its streaming

service. Its first such offering was the episodic drama series *House of Cards*, which debuted in 2013. Such content was hugely successful and became a major focus of the company. During this time Netflix also began producing films. In 2020 it was announced that Ted Sarandos would serve as co-CEO with Hastings.

A noted philanthropist, Hastings devoted part of his time to educational issues, notably charter schools. From 2000 to 2004 he was president of the California State Board of Education.

DISNEY + HOTSTAR - K MADHAVAN

Star and Disney India has a new

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He joined Star as South Head in 2008 after Star acquired Asianet. Madhavan is also Director of IBF and the President of Kerala Television Federation.

Not many know how the man single-handedly transformed Asianet from a regional entity to a global brand. In 1999, when he joined Asianet, the regional brand from South India was on the verge of closing down. He then took over the responsibility to turn the tide for the network.

Turning a struggling regional channel into a media powerhouse, Madhavan ensured that the Asianet bouquet of channels became the undisputed market leader in Kerala. But he didn't stop there. The channel joined hands with Star India in 2008

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ventures of Star in the four southern states and a portfolio of regional channels in Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil and Telugu.

In this new role, all functional heads will now report to Madhavan who will be reporting to Uday Shankar, President, The Walt Disney Company, Asia Pacific, & Chairman, Star and Disney India.

Though Madhavan comes with over a decade of TV experience, his immediate focus could be getting a hang of the Hindi GECs. Also, the industry is going through a consolidation phase and in such a scenario taking Star India to greater heights is likely to be on his agenda.

High hopes ride on Madhavan as the industry vouches for the sincerity of the man.

“Madhavan has been instrumental in transforming Asianet as the undisputed leader in Malayalam by acquiring more than 50 per cent of the market share. Under his trusted leadership, the channel has reached more than 100 countries. Madhavan believes in the entrepreneurial culture. His vision has led us to set benchmarks in quality programming in the South, which is now being replicated throughout India,” said one of his former colleagues from the media fraternity.

Industry leaders believe Madhavan was the natural successor. “He has been in the company for over a decade. He has been the investor himself in Asianet. Though Madhavan was appointed as MD of South Business in 2016, he has been with Star India since 2008. He is a natural fit since he comes with close to two decades of knowledge of TV business,” said another senior level executive in Star India.

Madhavan is known to enjoy a good rapport with his colleagues in the

organization. “He is a great guy and good with people. Also, he has been a part of all important decisions since he has been in the top management. He knows the system well and even the work culture at Star which becomes a bit of a problem for some outsiders. An outsider would take time to settle down, but for Madhavan the transition to the big role will be swift,” another of his colleagues from the company told exchange4media.

While Madhavan takes off in the new role as a natural fit, whether he continues to have the Midas Touch as Star’s new Country manager is something only time will tell.

SONYLIV - N.P. SINGH

Networks India (SPN) in 1999 to CEO in 2014. He brings with him over 39 years of varied experience in the corporate world and in his current role, NP is focused on building leadership equity of Sony Pictures Networks India. During his long innings at SPN, he has also served



as its Chief Operating Officer (COO). Equipped with a deep understanding of the media and entertainment space, NP is insightful about the role SPN could play by bringing rich diversity in content to broaden the television and digital viewership base, globally. NP’s leadership has led SPN to successfully tap into the broad spectrum of audience preferences, in

urban and rural areas, alike. Before joining SPN in 1999, NP held several leadership positions across Finance and Operations in leading organizations including Modi Xerox and Spice Telecom. Presently, besides being the MD and CEO of Sony Pictures Networks India, NP is Director of Indian Broadcasting Foundation and a Director on the Board of Bangla Entertainment Private Limited and Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC), India. An alumnus of the Delhi School of Economics, where he completed his Master’s Program, NP holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Commerce from the University of Delhi. A rank holder of The Institute of Cost Accountants of India, Singh was honoured with a Certificate of Merit by the Institute for his meritorious performance.



NP is an earnest indophile with a special interest in Indian cuisine, music and movies.

Currently, the thing that sparks the most joy for Singh is the success of Scam 1992, SonyLiv’s tentpole show that has proved to be a gamechanger for the streaming platform.

On the back of Scam 1992, the platform has seen an uptick in the

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number of paid subscribers, said Singh. And because it was SPN's own production house Studio NXT which produced the series, this success tastes all the more sweeter to him.

Singh highlighted that apart from working on premium originals, the platform is working towards bringing in live sports content. SonyLiv currently streams the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League.



When asked about SonyLiv's revenue model, whether it will be a subscription-based or hybrid model (AVOD vs SVOD), Singh explained that the network's primary focus is to deliver a subscription-driven platform that also offers AVOD content. Said he: "After the relaunch (in May 2020) we have introduced a premium plan of ₹ 999 for one year. It is completely SVOD and has all the content that we can offer to subscribers. We have also brought out two new annual subscription plans – Liv special and Liv special+ which are priced at ₹ 199 and ₹ 399 respectively. The plan offers access to all shows at the same time as TV, downloading of episodes, and live sports preview up to 10 minutes. It is completely AVOD. So, yes we are sharply focusing on both SVOD and AVOD models."

During the conversation, Singh shed light on how the media and entertainment sector is coping with the disruption caused by the pandemic. With the unlock phase the sector is beginning to see early signs of economic revival. As far as the network is concerned, he stated that SPN's ad-revenues have reverted to the pre-Covid2019 levels.

ZEE5 - PUNIT GOENKA

Mr. Punit Goenka, a young and dynamic professional with a strong entrepreneurial background, started his career with Essel Group, a vibrant conglomerate with diversified business interests in media & entertainment, infrastructure, and other leading sectors. Being the Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited, Punit has been extremely successful in enhancing the company's performance and in driving the company towards its set goals.



Under his leadership, ZEE has achieved scores of milestones and prestigious awards, elevating the brand to a global cadre. Dun & Bradstreet Corporate Award 2015, IMC Fusion Award 2013 for Excellence in Media, Businessworld Infocomm ICT Award 2012 are some of the many such awards bagged by ZEE during Punit's

tenure. His futuristic vision and sharp acumen in the new media domain, has led the company to a global stature today. Punit is also responsible for expanding the company's international presence across 171 countries, and its reach to over 1 billion viewers.

Punit is listed amongst the top 100 CEOs of India, in a study published by Business Today in 2015. He has received MIPTV's prestigious MÃ©daille d'Honneur Award, Economic Times '40 Under Forty' India's Hottest Business Leaders Award 2014, the 'Young CEO Award' by CEO India magazine in 2015 and the prestigious IAA Leadership Award 2014 under the category of 'Media Person of the Year Award'. Punit has also been recognized as the 'Entrepreneur of the Year' during the



Asia Pacific Entrepreneurship Awards 2014. For his immense contribution to the media and entertainment industry, Punit was felicitated as the 'IMPACT Person of the Year' in 2014. Going forward, Punit envisions ZEE to be ranked amongst the top global media brands.

As the Managing Director and

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CEO of Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd., Punit has been extremely successful in enhancing the company's performance and in driving the company towards its set goals. His futuristic vision and sharp acumen in the new media domain, has led the company to a global stature today. Punit is also responsible for expanding the company's international presence across 173 countries, and its reach to over 1.3 billion viewers.

Punit was also listed amongst the top 100 CEOs of India, in a study published by Business Today. He was conferred the 'Outstanding Contribution to Media' award at the Managing India Awards hosted by AIMA & bagged the prestigious IAA Leadership Award under the category of "Media Person of the Year Award". Punit has also been awarded the esteemed Medaille d'Honneur Award at MIPTV.

He plays an active role in shaping the future of the M&E industry as the Chairman of BARC India. He also serves as a Board of Director for the Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF).

VOOT - AJIT ANDHARE

As chief operating officer of Viacom18 Studios, Ajit Andhare has established Viacom18 Motion Pictures as an abode of differentiated and meaningful cinema. His sharp observation and meticulous planning has garnered the studio phenomenal

critical and box-office success through films like Padmaavat (2018), Toilet: Ek Prem Katha (2017), Bhaag Milkha Bhaag (2013), Drishyam (2015), Queen (2014), Mary Kom (2014), Gabbar Is Back (2015), Manjhi: The Mountain Man (2015), Margarita With A Straw (2015), Manto (2018), Pyaar Ka PUNCHnama (2011), Kahaani (2012), Gangs Of Wasseypur (2012), Madras Cafe (2013) and Special 26 (2013). Andhare's vision for the brand marries profitability with engaging original content for both Hindi movies and Paramount Pictures International Marketing & Distribution in India. Under his aegis Viacom18 Motion Pictures has also successfully ventured into



voot

regional films across languages like Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi and from the South. Apart from accelerating footprints into the Hindi and regional space, Andhare's current focus includes building Tipping Point as a brand for digital content production. Tipping Point's offering includes web-series like 'X Ray: Selected Satyajit Shorts', a 12-part series presentation directed by National award-winning filmmaker Srijit Mukherji; She, a crime thriller created by Imtiaz Ali; Jamtara, a story about a small district in Jharkhand, known to be India's phishing capital, directed by Soumendra Padhi; and Best Days, a psychological thriller by Abhishek Sengupta of the web-series Lakhon

Mein Ek fame. Before Viacom18, Ajit Andhare founded Colosceum Media Pvt Ltd along with Capital18, which produced several franchise television properties such as MTV Roadies, MTV Splitsvilla, Jai Shri Krishna for Viacom18, Wheel Smart Shrimati for

Unilever and the Master Chef India series for Star India. He has also worked with Unilever plc in India and the Asia Pacific region for over 12 years across sales, general management and marketing functions. Ajit Andhare is a Bachelor of Technology (BTech) from the Regional Engineering College, Rourkela, in Orissa and holds an MBA from the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad. A voracious reader, he is rarely seen without a book in hand. An intense film is a close second when he has time off!

ALTBALAJI - EKTA KAPOOR

Ekta Kapoor is an Indian television producer, film producer and director who works in Hindi cinema and soap opera. She is the joint managing director and creative head of Balaji Telefilms Limited, which was founded in 1994. In 2001, Balaji Motion Pictures

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was launched as a subsidiary company of Balaji Telefilms Limited which is a film production and distribution company. She launched ALT Balaji in April 2017.

Kapoor was honoured with the Padma Shri in 2020 for her work in the field of arts.

With a career stretching back two decades, Kapoor transformed the Indian TV landscape with Balaji Telefilms. Now the largest TV content producer in South Asia, the BSE Limited-listed company has been pumping out everything from

soap operas to reality shows to films, creating some 800 hours of TV and releasing three big-ticket movies in the past year alone. Recently listed among Fortune India's 50 most powerful women in business, Kapoor is making her presence felt in the hugely competitive Indian OTT market, with her ALTBalaji platform taking on the likes of Disney's Hotstar, Netflix and Amazon Prime. Launched in 2017, it's among the leading native players in the Hindi SVOD space, behind a lineup of 62 original shows. And like many

streamers, the prolific ALTBalaji thrived while lockdown kept people at home.

Ekta Kapoor started her career at the age of 15, interning with ad and feature filmmaker Kailash Surendranath. After obtaining financing from her father, she decided to become a producer.

Kapoor has also

Paanch, Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi, Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki, Kaahin Kissii Roz, Kasautii Zindagii Kay, Kahiin To Hoga, Kasamh Se, Pavitra Rishta, Bade Acche Lagte Hain, Yeh Hai Mohabbatein, Jodha Akbar, Naagin, Kumkum Bhagya, Kasam Tere Pyaar Ki, Kundali Bhagya and several others that were credited with starting a new wave on Indian television, leading to her being known as the "Czarina of television" and "the Queen of Indian Television".

She ventured into Bollywood movie production in 2001 beginning with Kyo Kii... Main Jhuth Nahin Bolta. Kucch To Hai and Krishna Cottage are based on supernatural themes, followed in 2003 and 2004. The 2005 Kyaa Kool Hai Hum featured

her brother Tusshar Kapoor. She then went on to co-produce Shootout at Lokhandwala with Sanjay Gupta. This was followed by Mission Istanbul and EMI - Liya Hai Toh Chukana Padhega in collaboration with Sunil Shetty.

Between 2010 and 2014, she produced many films, including Love Sex aur Dhokha, Once Upon a Time in Mumbai, and Shor in the City.

In 2012, Ekta Kapoor started the Institute of Creative Excellence, a media training school through her production house Balaji Telefilms. ■



created and produced more than 130 Indian soap operas under her banner Balaji Telefilms Limited. Some of her most popular and top shows are Hum

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