

21^{of} 100
Vilashni
Vandayar



Here to be Unapologetic

Breaking barriers, building women and leading authentically.

There is a particular kind of strength in refusing to fit into a single definition of success. Vilashni Vandayar understands this deeply. Over more than two decades in marketing and business leadership, she has built an accomplished career across leading FMCG organisations while also embracing the roles that matter just as much to her: wife, mother, mentor, daughter, friend and athlete.

For Vilashni, family is at the centre of her story. One of her proudest achievements happened not in a boardroom, but alongside her family, when they became the first family to simultaneously grade to Taekwon-Do Black Belt. The discipline, perseverance and resilience required to achieve that milestone have become lessons she carries into every aspect of her life and leadership.

Her journey, however, has not always been effortless. Behind the achievements are late nights completing presentations after the children have

gone to bed, weekends catching up on work and the constant negotiation required to be present across the many dimensions of her life. Like many women, she knows the feeling of being "always on". She has learned that balance is rarely perfect. Instead, it is about prioritising, adapting and allowing yourself the grace to be human.

Her experiences as a woman in leadership have also taught her to challenge expectations. She has found herself in meetings where women were expected to arrange refreshments while their male counterparts focused on business. She has navigated the scrutiny of how she dresses and the assumptions that can accompany ordinary professional interactions.

Rather than allowing these experiences to diminish her, Vilashni chose to embrace her identity. She realised that leadership did not require her to become "one of the boys". She could be feminine, ambitious, nurturing and assertive and still command the room.

That confidence has fuelled another important part of her legacy, which is mentorship. For more than a decade, Vilashni has supported female marketing students and young professionals, helping them prepare for interviews, strengthen their personal brands, assess career opportunities and navigate the complexities of professional life. Her greatest reward is watching young women step into opportunities they once thought were beyond their reach.

For Vilashni, mentorship is sometimes simply about being the person who believes in someone before they have learned to believe in themselves. Her story is ultimately one of possibility.

It is a reminder that women do not need to choose which parts of themselves are acceptable in order to succeed. They can lead boldly, nurture deeply, pursue ambition and remain authentically themselves.

Vilashni believes that when women own their voices, support one another and step confidently into their potential, they do more than break barriers; they create pathways for those coming behind them.

**Your
story
matters**

