

Developer with a Difference...

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Whenever I look at my home and its building plans, I feel immensely satisfied and gratified. Satisfied because, even after five decades, it is a standing like a rock and I feel gratified to the Chartered Engineer (Licence No 88 of 66-67), under whose supervision my home was built – **Shri Anil Ratilal Shah**.

While talking about satisfaction, I am not the only one! Today, more than one lac twenty five thousand people are also feeling gratified to this engineer, for he has created well designed, ultra modern and strong houses for them!! Lacs of office goers are happy with his planning, buildings and construction quality because, he has created commercial spaces, par excellence!!!

Today, his company strives to give innovative and qualitative homes and work places to people from all segments, within and outside Gujarat. Today, this engineer is like an institution in Gujarat, whose company is standing tall on a strong foundation of trust! In fact, for close to six decades, he has been preaching his colleagues - "Since trust is the foundation of any business relation, it is important that you honour the commitment you make. Only then, people will trust you".

This has really worked well and his company has today, become synonym for trust and quality!!

Despite such a strong reputation and credence, today nobody recognises this engineer, Anil Ratilal Shah! Now, this humble simple man is better known as...

A close-up portrait of Anil Bakeri, an elderly man with grey hair and a mustache, looking slightly to the right with a thoughtful expression. His right hand is raised near his face, with fingers slightly curled. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white.

Anil Bakeri

DEVELOPER WITH A DIFFERENCE...

Anilbhai started his professional journey from Vanakbori Canal Project, after obtaining a degree in Civil Engineering but he could not continue for long, there. Soon, he joined Mumbai Municipal Corporation as Junior Engineer. But he was destined to do much more than becoming a faceless engineer in a monolithic bureaucracy of MMC. Even while working with MMC, he was in a dilemma because, his father wanted him to serve the government sector while his mother wanted him to be a businessman. With these two opposites, came a new dimension - likelihood of separate Gujarat State, with Ahmedabad as its capital! It is at this juncture, the engineer in Anilbhai saw business opportunity in Ahmedabad and he resigned from MMC, to lay foundation of Bakeri Group in Ahmedabad in 1959. The rest, as they say, is history...



But to create a history was not easy for him. He had entered in a business, which is today also, having an infamous reputation for unethical practices! But he was determined to change this notion amongst the masses because, he believed in the proverb- "Wake up with determination - go to bed with satisfaction"! This was indeed, a long as well as lone battle for him but he did not think for a moment to bow down. He continued his struggle and continued his projects. But then came a setback. The Bangladesh war broke out in 1971, which resulted into a steep rise in the prices of building materials like cement, steel etc and few of his schemes were under construction. All other builders increased their property rates and shifted their financial burden to the buyers but not Anilbhai! He insisted that he will handover the property to buyers at the original rates, without any escalation in cost despite the fact that building material prices had gone haywire. But this principle resulted in a loss of ₹ 20 lacs! I am not sure, what it will be worth today against ₹ 20 lacs, forty five years back. But it was certainly a big blow for Bakeri Group, but he never thought of deviating from his principles. When asked at that time, why you are bearing such a huge loss, he replied candidly - "In business it is not that you always make profit, you have to be prepared for loss, as well. If

you insist on doing right even if everything wrong is happening around you, people would tend to trust you".

This was a loud and clear message in the market that he is a 'Developer with a difference' and that clicked in the marketplace because, buyers wanted someone to rely upon while buying the property and they found one in Anilbhai! Apart from trust, he also provided so many things to the buyers as a package. Because, his schemes

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meant, apart from state-of-art architecture, appropriate ventilation, systematic tree plantations, lavish green areas, rain water harvesting systems, efficient water management and heat resistant extra thick slabs / terrace flooring and so on. All these on the foundation of trust, transparency and ethical practices have brought a formidable reputation for the Group.

In 1991, Anilbhai brought another 'first' in Ahmedabad where 'Shops at ground floor and Offices on top' was

the normal practice. But he came out with a concept of a corporate commune, where entire building was all-office complex, with a hotel like front office! His first such building - Sakar on Ashram Road was an instant hit! Encouraged by its success, the Group continued with a sequel and today Sakar IX is already in place! In fact Bakeri Group was the first developer in India to be awarded the highest PA-1 rating by CRISIL for SAKAR-III project in 1995!!

Similar was his another initiative of launching a project of Shrinand Nagar, to provide affordable houses in Ahmedabad! The whole project was created keeping in mind lower middle class in mind. The 1/2 bedroom kitchen flats here were sold almost on cost basis! This was Anilbhai - a developer with a difference, who did not look at money and profit alone, but very well understood social responsibility, as well! He may not have earned sufficient profit from this township but, he certainly earned huge confidence and blessings from thousands of people, whose wish to buy home could be satisfied, thanks to this novel initiative.

Environment Conservation has always remained an important consideration for every Bakeri project. Because he believes to operate within the confines of nature. As regards the





Achal Bakeri



Pavan Bakeri

construction practice, right from the norms on proportions of sand and cement in construction to a smallest matter, the Group is very cautious and careful. His team believes in precise and perfect planning so that any over-run, be it in cost or in terms of time, can be avoided. The after-sales service is just unbelievably efficient. He was the one who started the trend of accepting entire payment by cheque and he always ensured that the titles of property are clear and marketable. As a result of all these precautions, Bakeri Group today enjoys a phenomenal confidence

amongst property buyers and they virtually are willing to buy property, blind folded!

With such phenomenal trust and confidence, Bakeri Group to its credit has more than 17 million sq.ft of constructed area and more than 25 million sq ft of plotted area to its credit and more than 1.25 lac members are part of the ever-expanding Bakeri Parivar!

And the work ethic doesn't end at work. It carries on in to the social sector with the Bakeri Group's commitment to The Jivraj Mehta Hospital

and to other causes in the field of health, education, assisted living (Jeevan Sandhya Vruddhashram), environment and the arts.

While concluding this piece, I would like to quote a quote on customer satisfaction, I read long back and I quote - " If you work just for money, you will never make it, but if you love what you're doing and you always put the customer first, success will be yours"... While reading and re-reading this quote, I felt as if it was written keeping Anilbhai in mind! What do you think? 