



**Karishma Swali,
CEO & MD, Chanakya International**

A graduate from the National Institute of Fashion technology, Karishma holds a master's in Business administration from the Narsee Monji Institute of Management studies. Inspired by her parent's spiritual values and passion for craftsmanship, Karishma began her career by collaborating with various luxury fashion houses in Italy, as well as with an in-depth training with the internationally acclaimed fashion house of Alberta Ferretti. She spearheads Chanakya as the CEO and has led the company to many artistic partnerships and collaborations with the world's leading fashion houses.



We are proud to represent our country's finest craft heritage and work towards its preservation and innovation

KARISHMA SWALI

INNOVATING INDIAN MASTER CRAFT TO PRESERVE INDIA'S INCREDIBLE CRAFT LEGACY

The fashion industry has always remained distinguished from other industry verticals owing to its prismatic features which include captivating trends, dynamic demands, and challenging projects. Reflecting the image of a society in terms of style and physical representation of individuals, the charismatic fashion industry undergoes numerous evolutions almost every day and is often considered a dream career destination for various young aspirants. Passionate about India's diverse craft legacy and its preservation, Karishma spent the early part of her career designing contemporary master crafts along with artisans across different craft genres and geographies to retell the story of craft and the innate wisdom it holds. Karishma also spent time collaborating with different fashion houses in Italy and France to understand their eye for detail and their values for handmade craftsmanship. This reaffirmed her belief that master craftsmanship is in fact what defines luxury and she returned to India with a stronger love and commitment towards Indian craftsmanship and resolved to establish India as the most revered destination for master hand craftsmanship in the world. As the CEO and MD of Chanakya International, she is currently engaged in building superlative relationships with global brands where design houses rely on Chanakya not only for their research and innovations in craft season after season but also for world-class surface ornamentation of the most impeccable quality.

CEO Insights initiates an interactive session with Karishma, to know about her seamless guidance and strategic leadership skills which led Chanakya International to become an inspiring destination for Fashion Design houses around the world.

What inspired you to venture into the fashion industry? How has your journey been so far?

Inspired by my parent's spiritual values and passion for craftsmanship, I was always artistically inclined and knew that I would be in Fashion. I began my career



at Chanakya by collaborating with luxury fashion houses in Italy and France- designing luxury textiles and surface ornamentation.

Over the last two decades, Chanakya has emerged as an established leader in hand craftsmanship, excelling in the Innovation and preservation of the crafts. Working with artisans across many genres of the Craft, we are proud to represent our country's finest hand craftsmanship, both in design and impeccable quality. Chanakya has won many international certifications like the ISO- 2015, the SA 8000 for social compliances and International Quality management systems as well the India SME award for excellence in the small and medium-size enterprises category. In the year 2016, we established a foundation and a non-profit school of craft dedicated to craft, culture, and women's empowerment. Today, the school had educated over 300 women, giving them autonomy over their lives and their future.

As the CEO & MD of Chanakya International, what different roles & responsibilities have you been undertaking in the company? What strategies do you follow while setting up goals and reaching up to the company's vision and mission? –

Committed to our ancestors' legacy of exceptional quality, savoir-faire and uncompromising values, our Philosophy at Chanakya is to combine the finest material with impeccable craftsmanship to consistently deliver world-class textile design and surface ornamentation.

This legacy besieges us to singularly focus on building relationships, internally and in the world of fashion. As our close family of clients over the past three decades will testify, we believe in strengthening bonds with our partners and journeying with them through the years. At Chanakya, it is imperative for us to continually learn and update our know-how of this expertise. Our inclination towards innovation excites us and propels us to stay ahead while also ensuring we are preserving our craft heritage.

Having prominent international brands as clients including Gucci, Balenciaga, Chloe, Fendi and many more, tell us about your various client requirements and how do you satisfy those requirements?

Integrity, Innovation and Quality are the cornerstones of our work Culture. Our astute management, robust infrastructure and effectively streamlined processes ensure precise creations and prompt deliveries. Super quality is a cross-pollination of people, processes, technology, and infrastructure. At Chanakya, our mission is to adopt a 360-degree holistic approach in continually evaluate our position and evolve to offer the best version of ourselves! For each of our clients, the creative process each season is never the same – and maybe this is what is the best part. Each season our inspirations are varied, and we present a new collection of textiles and embroidery at the start of a new collection. What follows is a very organic process that leads to the collaborative creation of crafted collections.



Tell us about the various fashion collections across which your company manufactures and what is the flagship product/service of your company?

At Chanakya, we create both women's ready-to-wear garment collections and accessories as well as Haute couture bespoke collections. As creators of luxury, we are inspired by passion and curiosity about the intricate nature of objects, the potential of materials and complex techniques. The making of luxury is concerned with the extraordinary and the exclusive. At Chanakya, we are always working on artistic expressions, through embroidery and textiles with different international fashion houses across the world.

Tell us about your most challenging project till now? What are the key strategies you adopted to execute it?

One of the most challenging projects was our recent collaboration with Christian Dior and French artist Eva Jospin towards the creation of a room entirely created and crafted with hand embroidery. The project was as technically challenging as it was exciting, and the result was a museum-like experience of a

three-dimensional embroidered room of 350 square meters of hand embroidery representing a mystical landscape- allowing viewers an internal exploration while still being captivated.

Tell us about your fashion design team, and their experience. How do you encourage creative thinking among your employees, and push them forward to new design patterns?

Chanakya is a global leader in the master craft space – we are proud to represent our country's finest craft heritage and work towards its preservation and innovation. At Chanakya, we believe in creating the ideal environment to fuel innovation. Our design archives have over 150,000 textile archives and we seek the best talent in the world. Research and innovation form the cornerstone of our work culture. Our research and design team works closely with master artisans to breathe new life into heritage techniques each season. We love to push our boundaries and experiment with form and design to innovate and preserve the craft. Our close-knit design teams traverse the length and breadth of far-flung territories for inspiration and to learn the finest embroidery and textile techniques as well as raw material innovation. [CEO](#)