

MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR'S DESK



Dear Readers,

It gives me immense pleasure to present the Special Commemorative Issue of Creative Horizons, FDDI's quarterly magazine, celebrating 40 years of an institution that has grown with India's footwear and allied sectors. The milestone commemorates FDDI's registration as a Society on 21 July 1986 and its recognition as an Institution of National Importance in 2017

Forty years are more than a measure of time. They represent a legacy of vision, perseverance, institution-building and collective achievement. This legacy gives us pride, but it also places upon us a responsibility: to remain relevant, responsive and prepared for the opportunities of the future.

From its beginnings as a focused initiative for the footwear sector, FDDI has evolved into a nationally respected institution serving the footwear, leather goods, fashion, retail and lifestyle ecosystem. Its contribution is reflected in generations of graduates, skilled professionals, industry partnerships, research, testing, innovation, entrepreneurship and outreach across the country.

The most meaningful way to honour this journey is not merely to preserve what has been built, but to renew it.

FDDI is therefore steadily modernising its academic systems, curricula, laboratories, digital infrastructure, pedagogy, governance and student experience. Greater emphasis is being placed on interdisciplinary learning, experiential education, faculty development, technology-enabled delivery, research, innovation and measurable outcomes.

Vision 2030 provides the strategic direction for this transformation. Under the guiding theme 'Empowering Today, Transforming Tomorrow', FDDI is working to emerge as a globally recognised, future-ready institution distinguished by academic quality, industry credibility, innovation, sustainability, skilling, testing and sectoral leadership. The vision connects our proud inheritance with a clear programme of institutional renewal.

The programmes of the future must prepare learners not only for today's occupations, but also for careers that are still taking shape. FDDI is consequently developing and reimagining programmes around design and technology integration, digital product creation, emerging technologies, sustainable materials, circularity, advanced manufacturing, retail analytics, entrepreneurship and new business models, while retaining the strong domain foundations for which the Institute is known.

Industry relevance will remain central to this endeavour. Curriculum co-creation, live projects, internships, apprenticeships, industry-led studios, continuing education, applied research, consultancy, testing and cluster engagement are being strengthened so that learning remains connected with real production systems, markets and consumer needs. Our objective is to create graduates who are capable, adaptable, employable and ready to lead change.

We aspire to build an institution that is agile yet grounded, technology-enabled yet human-centred, nationally rooted yet globally connected. A futuristic FDDI must be student-first, quality-driven, inclusive, sustainable and continuously learning - an institution that anticipates change rather than merely responding to it.

This special issue of Creative Horizons celebrates the people, partnerships and milestones that have shaped FDDI, while also presenting the direction in which we are moving. I extend my sincere gratitude to our students, alumni, faculty, staff, industry partners, academic collaborators, government institutions, contributors, readers and well-wishers. Together, we will carry forward the legacy of the past four decades and build an FDDI worthy of the decades ahead.

*Vivek Sharma, IRS
Managing Director, FDDI*