LEADERSHIP

SPOTLIGHT

Three Decades Guarding Fortune 100 Enterprises. Now He Is Building India's Next Generation of Guardians.



"Old keys cannot unlock new doors. AI is opening new doors. You have to develop new keys."

VIJAY K BANDA

Cyber & AI Strategist · Author · TEDx Speaker

Founder, BuildMyCareer.org, BuildMySkills.AI & IECN.IN · Board Advisor, SynRadar

Oracle · Deloitte · Qualcomm · TCS

30+ Years · 3 Continents · 100,000+ Mentees · 3 Books



EDITOR'S OPENING

He Spent Thirty Years Protecting Data. He Is Spending the Next Thirty Harnessing Potential.

Most careers in cybersecurity are measured in systems protected. Vijay K Banda measures his in people.

For three decades, he built and led security and technology operations for some of the world's most demanding enterprises. He ran a 24x7 Global Command Center for Oracle's global cloud. He built a 500+ member global team at Deloitte. He led cybersecurity across 60,000 assets at Qualcomm. He brought AI into enterprise security operations at TCS. His work spanned Detroit, Austin, Plano and Hyderabad.

Along the way, he kept noticing the same thing. The biggest bottlenecks of the digital era are rarely technical. They are human. Mindsets that once worked had stopped working, and nobody was teaching the new ones. It became the thesis he now carries to every stage: old keys cannot unlock new doors. AI is opening new doors, and every professional has to develop new keys.

So he moved from running technology to unlocking the potential behind it. Today he is the author of three handbooks and the founder of a free mentoring platform that has reached more than 100,000 young people across 5+ countries. He also founded a citizen governance forum for technology leaders, and is a board advisor building a Made in India cybersecurity product for the world.

His guiding idea runs through all of it: true success is collective success.

This is his story.

> *"Every professional has three things. The earnings go to the family, the expertise goes to the company, and the experience must go to society."*

THE FOUNDATION

A Telugu-Medium Classroom. Two Bouncers. A Lifelong Habit of Reinventing Himself.

Vijay's story begins in a government school, studying in the Telugu medium until Class 10. School meant sports, friends and an easy comfort zone. Then came the 10+2 programme in English medium. Every exam, every lesson and every textbook was suddenly in a new language. It was his first real test of adaptation, and he passed it by refusing to stay comfortable.

He loved machines. He took apart bicycles and bikes, got injured fixing them more than once, and chose mechanical engineering because he wanted a career in automobiles. His final-year project in 1992 was a robotic arm, a fantastic experience that showed him how much computing was about to matter, even to mechanical engineers.

He followed his passion to the world's Motor City, Detroit, Michigan, for a master's degree. In his very first semester, he spotted a shift that would define his career. The US automobile industry was moving offshore, and computer science was rising. He switched lanes. Life's "second bouncer," as he calls it, became his biggest break.

He specialised in databases, worked as a LAN and lab technician through college, and in 1995 joined Ford as a database consultant. Oracle followed soon after.

> *"In the first semester itself I realised the automobile industry was moving out of the US, and the industry that was coming up was computer science. That was my second bouncer in life."*

The Value That Carried Him

Krishito nasti durbhiksham.

For the one who works hard, there is never scarcity. Vijay credits this Sanskrit principle, and a humble upbringing, for everything that followed.

THE OUTSIDE-IN YEARS

In America, He Learned That Trust Is Built Ticket by Ticket. Then a Film Called Him Home.

At Oracle USA, from 1995 to 2002, Vijay managed service-level agreements between Dell and Oracle across Detroit and Austin. Dell generated thousands of support tickets every month. His approach was simple and unusual: complete transparency. He told the client's leadership exactly which issues were resolved, which were stuck, and where the team was hitting a wall.

That honesty taught him the principle he would later build entire security programmes around. Integrity creates trust, and trust creates the ability to influence.

At the US Department of Veterans Affairs, he led technical architecture for Oracle ERP and CRM suites serving the country's veterans. He watched a government put its citizens first, process their claims with care, and use technology to cut through bureaucracy. A seed was planted. Technology, used well, could serve a nation.

After a role leading technology delivery for public-sector health systems at MAXIMUS, the pull grew stronger. After 13+ years in the US, inspired in no small part by the film *Swades*, he decided to come home.



The Trust Equation

1. Transparency
2. Integrity
3. Trust
4. Influence

"When you show high integrity to a client by being transparent, you build trust. And once you have trust, your ability to influence certainly goes up."

FROM BACK OFFICE TO CAPABILITY CENTRE

India Was Seen as the Back Office. He Helped Prove It Could Run the Front Line.

500+

Global team at Deloitte

under an hour

To address a Priority 1 incident

Returning to India in 2006, Vijay joined Oracle India to lead the 24x7 Global Command Center, monitoring security events across Oracle's entire global cloud infrastructure. The stakes were extreme. A Priority 1 incident had to be addressed in under an hour, and an escalation could travel straight from the CEO's office to his phone. He carried two phones and a pager.

Yet the hardest part was not technology. It was people. Running round-the-clock operations meant honouring what Diwali means to an Indian team while meeting global priorities. It also meant negotiating with colleagues in Germany and Florida to share the load, just as India covered for them over Thanksgiving.

In 2011 he joined Deloitte, where he spent nearly eight years transforming the firm's internal IT into a high-performing Global Shared Services model and leading a global team of 500+ professionals. He defined Deloitte's Shared Security Controls Strategy from the ground up.

He faced two kinds of resistance. Stakeholders abroad were cautious about trusting India with higher-value work, so he proved it one iteration at a time. His teams in India had to build the confidence to speak directly to global customers. His own workday ran from 11 am to 5:30 pm, a short break, and then US calls until midnight.

Giving Back, Inside the Firm

At Deloitte, Vijay led impact programmes in schools and colleges. That work led him to start his own mentoring NGO in 2016. Deloitte, he says, taught him that good success is collective success.

> *"Earlier India was talked about as a back office. Now we talk about capability centres. I definitely played a role in moving India up that value chain."*



ON THE CYBER FRONT LINE

Threats Used to Live at the Perimeter. AI Has Moved Them Into the Logic.

In 2019 Vijay joined Qualcomm as Senior Director of Cyber Security, directing global SOC operations and leading end-to-end Identity and Access Management across 60,000 assets worldwide. From 2023 to 2025, he was Cyber Security Advisor and AI Strategist at TCS in Plano, Texas. There he helped Fortune clients bring AI-powered anomaly detection, ML-based vulnerability triage and automated compliance into their security operations.

60,000

assets under IAM at Qualcomm

From that vantage point, he offers three insights for every enterprise leader.

1. Beware the Zombie Accounts

Employee accounts get switched off when people leave. Service accounts, the hidden connectors between systems, often do not. Many of them live on in the background with access nobody is tracking. Vendor access is the same blind spot. Vijay sees enterprises underestimating this even today.

2. Threats Have Become Logical and Contextual

Threats were once physical and perimeter-based. With AI, they are logical and contextual, which makes behavioural analytics and the right guardrails essential.

3. Motive Is Now Enough

Every attack needs means, opportunity and motive. AI now supplies the means. Attacks were once limited to state actors and a few organised clusters. Today anyone with bad intent can turn it into action.

> *"Earlier, attacks were limited to state actors or certain clusters. Now anybody with a bad motive can operationalise his thoughts through AI. The attack vector has become far more versatile."*

FROM CYBER LEADER TO STRATEGIC GUARDIAN

The Boardroom Does Not Need a Hero. It Needs a Guardian.



After nearly 1,000 mentoring sessions, Vijay has identified the most common gap between a technically brilliant cyber professional and a boardroom-ready one. He calls it the hero mindset.

Heroes jump in to fix everything themselves. Boardrooms reward something else: consensus, collaboration and fluency in business risk. Too many security leaders still speak in firewalls rather than in growth and innovation. Vijay is equally clear that innovation without security by design will not succeed. He devotes four full hours of his masterclass to shedding the hero mindset alone. It is the heart of his book, *Developing the CISO Mindset*, written especially for India's small and medium enterprises. It also anchors the monthly workshops he runs through the Cyber Leadership Academy.

Compliance Theatre

Getting audit-ready a week before the auditor arrives. Compliance as an annual event, not a discipline.

Continuous Proof

At SynRadar, where Vijay serves as board advisor, an AI engine (SynerGenie, built with IIIT Hyderabad) automates 128+ regulatory requirements, including SEBI-CSCRF, RBI and ISO. If a single ISO 27001 control drifts out of compliance, the company knows within 30 minutes.

SynRadar at a Glance

40%
year-on-year growth ·

25+
major BFSI enterprise clients ·

90%
faster risk closure ·

A Made in India product built for the world

> *"Not just getting compliance-ready one week before the auditor comes, but staying continuously compliant 365 days a year. That is the cyber guardian mindset."*

THE NEXT-GEN MINDSET

Degrees Will Not Cut It Anymore. A New Mindset Will.

At Deloitte, Vijay sat in World Economic Forum sessions on Industry 4.0. Then he walked into college campuses and saw the gap. Students still believed that marks, degrees and final-year projects would carry them into careers. Most were following the herd. He realised what was missing was a mindset shift, not more training.

That conviction became BuildMyCareer.org, founded in 2016 as YesMentor.org. It is completely free. Every mentee chooses an industry mentor and is supported between sessions by an AI companion on BuildMySkills.AI. The platform has reached 100,000+ mentees across 5+ countries with 30+ industry mentors, and it is working toward 1 million. A free AI mentor that answers career questions in any language received an AI for Good award from the Government of Telangana.

His books carry the same message. *Skill Up India* (2020) was written during the pandemic. It became *Hello Future Skills* for a global audience after he found the same skill gap in US colleges. This Vijayadashami, he released Edition 3.0 in 12 languages as an AI-powered pocketbook for youth in tier-two cities and small towns. All proceeds from his books go to the trust.

100,000+
mentees

1 million
the goal

12 languages
Edition 3.0

The 4 A's for the AI Era

1

Increase Self-Awareness. What AI cannot do lies within you. Discover the innate human strengths that complement automation.

2

Develop Industry Awareness. AI is transforming every industry. Align your strengths to emerging technological shifts and future job markets.

3

Be Adept with AI. Learn with AI as your companion. Build fluency with AI tools to amplify productivity, skill readiness and continuous growth.

4

Fungible Attitude to Adapt. Be ready for the rapid changes of the AI era. Cultivate unlearning and mental agility to remain perpetually relevant.

Naya Soch

Invigorate a new mindset. Inspire new actions. Align to the future of work. This is the message behind his TEDx talk and every workshop he leads.



THE ECOSYSTEM MINDSET

Not the Left. Not the Right. The Righteous Way.

In 2019 Vijay founded the India Empowered Citizens Network (IECN.IN) on one belief: India's technology leaders should be active guardians of governance, not passive observers. Its three-step civic architecture educates professionals on Indian polity, engages them as policy stakeholders, and equips them with evaluation toolkits to hold standards. It works alongside public-policy bodies such as the Federation for Democratic Reforms.

Why technology leaders? Because good governance needs metrics. If a budget is allocated to education, citizens deserve to know how much was used and what it achieved. KPIs and KRIs need data, and data needs technology. Vijay is optimistic that technology can be the great equaliser.

Ten years ago he believed he could change everything himself. Today he believes in joining hands. Every initiative he builds is framed as a collective effort.

Indian at Heart, Global at Thought

To Vijay, the phrase means three things: simple living and high thinking, the dharmic value that giving is receiving, and a definition of success that includes your family, your society and your nation. Offered roles paying in crores, he chose to give back.

"Achievement is what the world counts. Fulfilment comes only when you start giving back."



Rapid Fire

- Boardroom or classroom? **The classroom of young mentees.**
- Most overused word in cybersecurity? **"Risk."**
- His SOC team's word for him during an incident? **Focused.**
- AI in governance? **Transformative.**
- The Oracle lesson he repeats to every mentee? **Stay personal. Don't be a boss, be a leader.**
- A true Strategic Guardian is someone who... **protects all states of data without compromising innovation or growth.**

INDIAN ACHIEVERS' AWARDS
India's Most Coveted Award
Recognizing Achievements since 2000
www.iafindia.com

THE RECOGNITION

Seven Years. Eleven Honours. One Mission: People Before Systems.

The work Vijay began as a mentoring NGO in 2016 has drawn steady recognition from industry, media and civic forums. The honours span his two worlds: the security leader who protects enterprises, and the mentor who builds the next generation of guardians.

Global Accolades and Milestones, 2020 to 2026

2026

Bharat 2.0 Conclave 2026
Leadership in Career Mentoring, presented by Dr. Kiran Bedi Ji.

CToday Awards 1 OCTOBER 2026
The Global Cybersecurity & Social Impact Leader of 2026.

ET Enterprise Security Awards 2026 JUNE 2026
Certificate of Excellence for BuildMyCareer.org, ranking among the highest-scoring entries.

The Enterprise World JANUARY 2026
Featured among the "Most Innovative Leaders Shaping the Future To Look For in 2026", with the article "Vijay Banda's Blueprint for Turning Cyber Compliance into Business Enablement".

2025

Passionate Magazine 2025
Featured article, "Best in Class: Building AI-Driven Cyber Resilience With Purpose".

2024

CToday Grand Legacy Awards 2024 OCTOBER 2024
Honoured with the Grand Legacy Award celebrating leadership and innovation.

The CIO Today, Best in Class SEPTEMBER 2024
Featured profile, "Mr. Vijay K Banda: On a Mission to Mentor 1 Million Youth on Future Skills".

Just AI Awards 2024 SEPTEMBER 2024
YesMentor.AI honoured in the "AI For Social Good" category.

Global Technology Leaders Award 2024 JUNE 2024
"Social Enterprise of The Year, Information Technology", by Bizox Media Network.

2020 to 2021

Passion Vista Magazine 2021
Recognised among "Men Leaders To Look Up To".

Indian Achievers' Award 2020 OCTOBER 2020
Award for Excellence in Social Service from Indian Achievers' Forum & CSR Times.

> *"When I build BuildMyCareer, when I build IECN, I never say it is Vijay. It is a collective cause."*

THE ROAD SO FAR & THE ROAD AHEAD

From a Telugu-Medium Classroom to Three Continents. Every Road Has Led Back to India.

Journey at a Glance

1992:	Mechanical engineering; robotic arm final-year project
Early 1990s:	Master's in Computer Science, Detroit, Michigan
1995:	Database Consultant, Ford
1995 to 2002:	Technical Support Manager, Oracle USA (Detroit and Austin)
2002 to 2004:	Technical Architecture, US Department of Veterans Affairs
2004 to 2006:	Systems Manager, MAXIMUS (Austin)
2006:	Returns to India; Director, Oracle Cloud Services, Global Command Center
2011 to 2019:	Vice President IT, Deloitte; 500+ member global team
2016:	Founds YesMentor.org, now BuildMyCareer.org
2019:	Senior Director, Cyber Security, Qualcomm; founds IECN.IN
2020:	Publishes *Skill Up India*
2023 to 2025:	Cyber Security Advisor & AI Strategist, TCS (Plano, Texas); *Hello Future Skills*
2025:	Board Advisor, SynRadar; *Developing the CISO Mindset*
2026:	*Hello Future Skills 3.0*, in 12 languages; launches *The Vijay Indian* podcast

Three Principles for Aspirational Professionals

1. **Build New Keys.** Old keys cannot unlock new doors. Unlearn before the world forces you to.
2. **Shed the Hero.** Leadership is consensus, collaboration and a collective approach, not a solo rescue.
3. **Give Your Experience Away.** Earnings for the family, expertise for the company, experience for society.

Vijay has made one round trip after another between India and America: for a degree, for a career, for his children and for his parents. Each time, the pull of home won. Today, his message to every successful CXO and CISO in The 365 Circle is direct. India needs you, and you need India if you want fulfilment and not just achievement.

The Next Chapter, A Full-Fledged Nation Builder

Vijay is now focused on becoming a full-fledged nation builder through his podcast, *The Vijay Indian*, driving impact across three vital pillars:

Samardhata: Awakening capability, skill readiness and true potential in youth and young professionals.

Samagra Palana: Pioneering transparent, metrics-driven and data-backed civic governance.

Bharatiya: Anchoring every action, technology and policy in timeless Indian ethos and collective responsibility.

> *"Old keys cannot unlock new doors. AI is opening new doors. Let's join hands and develop new keys, together."*