



## REMEMBERING OM WADHWA

As the founder of JV Electronics, Om Wadhwa spearheaded India's electronics export drive at a time when the country's electronics industry had just begun to take shape. His vision and leadership turned the company into a top exporter of electronic components to the US and Europe.

By EB Bureau

Ajay Prakash Sawhney, secretary, MeitY awarding the late Om Wadhwa the Special Jury Award for his Lifelong Service to the Electronics Industry at the ELCINA-EFY Awards 2017-18.

The year 2018 ended on a sad note for the Indian electronics industry, as the news spread about the passing of Om Wadhwa, chairman and managing director, JV Electronics, and a highly revered veteran of the industry. He passed away peacefully on the morning of December 29, 2018 at 7am at his residence in New Delhi. The late Om Wadhwa (1938-2018) was a visionary and a trailblazer in the field of India's electronic components exports – and this was at a time when the nation's electronics industry had just begun to take shape. His leadership and efforts made JV Electronics one of the top exporters of electronic components to the US and Europe.

A successful entrepreneur and a philanthropist, Om Wadhwa once told the *Electronics Bazaar* team that his journey of life had been one of pure luck, for he strongly believed that whatever he had achieved was because of meeting the right people and doing the right things at the right time.

### A defining career

Born in 1938 in Malakwal village, in pre-Partition Punjab and what is today Pakistan, Om Wadhwa's life was full of surprises and dramatic upheavals. From being the son of a rich zamindar in undivided Punjab, he was reduced to being a refugee in India, post-Partition. He did his education in Delhi and began his professional career at Mercury Travels at the age of 16, earning Rs 150 per month, which helped him support his studies. In 1961, his life took a turn for the better when he met an American couple who offered to pay for his higher education in the US, as they were on the lookout for young and deserving people from around the world whom they provided scholarships to. Thus began his American Dream, in the course of which he was exposed to an international culture.

In 1971, he started his professional career with Associated Commodity Corporation (ACC). In 1974, ACC worked out a partnership with Sangmo Electronics Inc., a subsidiary of the multinational firm, Schlumberger, which wanted finished goods like mica capacitors from India. To meet this demand, Om Wadhwa started his own company called JV Electronics in Faridabad in Haryana, in which he owned a 60 per cent stake and the American company owned the remaining 40 per cent. Becoming the managing director of JV Electronics at the age of 36, he helped his company get the first President's Award for electronics exports. At a time when nobody actually knew what electronics exports was all about, his company became the first 100 per cent export-oriented firm, and then went on to expand its business operations from the US to Europe, and then to Japan and other countries.

Throughout his professional career, Om Wadhwa partnered closely with a large list of reputed brands, including the likes of Sony and Samsung, empowering manufacturing and production of electronics from within the country. After building a reputation in the US and Europe, he concentrated on expanding JV Electronics in a big way. He also kept on introducing new products like LED lamps and EMI filters into JV Electronics' product range, in addition to the initial mica capacitors business. In 2018, the industry once again recognised Om Wadhwa's tireless work and immense contributions to the Indian electronics ecosystem, awarding him the prestigious Special Jury Award for his Lifelong Service to the Electronics Industry at the ELCINA-EFY Awards 2017-18.