

Symbipreneurs



Inspiring Entrepreneurial First Hand Narratives of 14 Graduates
from **Symbiosis College of Arts & Commerce, Pune**

Praise for the Best



I am glad that Symbiosis College of Arts & Commerce has come out with its first edition of *Symbipreneurs*, a compilation of the journeys of those alumni who have dared to tread a different path by choosing to be entrepreneurs.

The reader will experience vivid entrepreneurial journeys in the pages ahead and this book will surely prove to be an inspiration to gen next encouraging them to start their own enterprise.

Congratulations to the editorial team of *Symbipreneurs*!

With best compliments.

Padma Bhushan - Dr. S. B. Mujumdar

President, Founder Director
Symbiosis

I shall be telling this
with a sigh
Somewhere ages and
ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a
wood, and I

-

I took the one less
traveled by,
And that has made all
the difference.

- The Road Not Taken
(By Robert Frost)



FOREWORD

With the growing importance of entrepreneurship in our country and to give a push to the job creators, we at Symbiosis College of Arts & Commerce, introduced Entrepreneurship as a specialisation subject under the B.Com program. We also initiated an Entrepreneurship Development Cell to create a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in the college and provide an encouraging environment to the budding entrepreneurs.

I'm glad to announce that the cell has come out with a book painting a word picture of the journeys of various alumni entrepreneurs. It is not only an attempt to boost entrepreneurship but also I am sure that the book will carry a message of motivation to all the readers. It is a learning experience for all by getting an insight into the lives of entrepreneurs, who have been our students. We sincerely believe that this book takes one small determined step towards making new young entrepreneurs.

The last few years have been amazing for Symbiosis College of Arts & Commerce, Pune. There is joy at the way things happening and jubilation at the way are making them happen. "Let go of certainty. The opposite isn't uncertainty. It's openness, curiosity and a willingness to embrace paradox, rather than choose up sides. The ultimate challenge is to accept ourselves exactly as we are, but never stop trying to learn and grow." - Author Tony Schwartz. This book is one of the example of joy and jubilation. I get immense pride in witnessing our alumni becoming entrepreneurs. It's a pleasure capturing their thrilling entrepreneurial journeys in this book.

I am grateful to our mentor Padma Bhushan Dr. S. B. Mujumdar, Founder President and Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar, Principal Director of Symbiosis Society, for their constant encouragement and support to all our endeavours. I acknowledge the contribution of all the entrepreneurs, writers, editors and designers for making this book so exciting.


All these entrepreneurial stories of our alumni have been captured by the present (recent graduates of SCAC, Pune) under the guidance of EDC Chairperson Dr. Sharayu Bhakare to create a powerful repository of inspiration for the future generations. Congratulations to editorial team of Symbpreneurs.

Dr. Hirshikesh Soman

Principal

Symbiosis College of Arts & Commerce, Pune

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK



To get a feel of the journey of an entrepreneur, it is essential to indulge oneself in their lives.

Symbipreneurs is an attempt to unveil the roller-coaster like lives of select successful alumni entrepreneurs of Symbiosis College of Arts & Commerce.

Condensed from their own words, the experiences, memories, inspirations, failures and teachings of the alumni entrepreneurs who have been a part of the Symbiosis College of Arts & Commerce are well elaborated in this book. The interviews are taken by the students of the Entrepreneurship Development Cell, (batches 2014-16). The seed of the idea of publishing this book was sown in the first Alumni Entrepreneurs meet held in the year 2014.

The journey of an entrepreneur is very different. The thrill of converting an idea into a startup, the fun and the pain is something that excites the most and is a journey worth experiencing. The satisfaction derived out of it is heavenly and living one's passion enhances the beauty of life.

All the stories serve as extrinsic motivators for all the budding entrepreneurs and give the message "Be Different. Be an Entrepreneur."

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FIRST ALUMNI ENTREPRENEURS' MEET



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Create goodwill. When you create goodwill, money will follow you. Deliver your commitments and you will automatically be rewarded by an ever expanding customer base. And be punctual always.

Manoj Banthia
Confur systems

THINKING BEYOND THE TIMES

Symbiopreneurs

Manoj Banthia, Founder - Banthia Graphics, Co-Founder - Confur Systems

Year of Graduation : 1986

A capitalist entrepreneur by work, but social from the heart. At the age of 50, Manoj is associated with NGOs like Bhartiya Jain Sangathan and CRY. He donates money for education. He believes education opens and enlightens the mind. It stimulates innovation.

Manoj is always keen on learning new things. He believes that's how a man grows. He's now working with a new technological company, Confur systems.

He says, "As time changes, I too want to grow and adapt to technological changes and start a new generation business."

Manoj and his brother started Banthia Graphics in 1992. When his brother was studying in Germany, he realized computer stationery still hasn't reached India. That's when they decided to begin with the trading and printing of computer stationery. At that time there were only two suppliers in Pune and Banthia Graphics was the first in supplying computer stationery.

Manoj loves listening to classical music, reading, trekking and spending time with family.

Innovation-The Essence of Enterprise.

"Innovation helps you to pitch different products and ideas to your client. the ability to Innovate can be generated by visiting different places like exhibitions, seminars and exploring different cultures. This helps in expanding knowledge and thinking differently."

Being a pioneer in starting this business in Pune, the Banthia Brothers knew they had to give quality products. Being different and standing out from the rest is what they believe in. Thus, they imported two machines from Germany for the quality that they provided. At that time, other suppliers in Pune had

Indian machines that didn't provide that kind of quality . Thinking beyond the usual is what they wish to do.

"Our USP was quality and quantity. In Pune market, when you buy computer stationery it's a pack of 1000 sheets, generally the rate is per thousand like say 300/- or 400/- per thousand and boxes are 3000/- per packing and therefore others traders in Pune used to sell less quantity. We conducted a market research and in this survey, we realized that the quantity people were actually receiving was less than 1000 even after being promised 1000 sheets. We stuck to our policy. So when we supplied the stationery, we used to give the 1000 sheets which was promised as we believe in ethics. I believe for the long run ethics plays an important role in your business. You can fool the customer once, but not every time. Customer retention is very essential for a business to succeed. We created the goodwill and trust in the mind and hearts of people by dealing ethically."

Kick Starting - Banthia Graphics

"We just wanted one office. Fortunately ,my family had built a complex at Laxmi road so we had four shops there out of which two were sold and the other two still belonged to us. Investment at that time for trading was two lacs maximum and then we imported the machines. In the beginning, we didn't have the money to buy the machines so we got our work done in Mumbai. Mumbai is cheaper as compared to Pune. So initially, we got our printing done from Mumbai. Then slowly we earned and reached our break even. Then, we imported the machines from Germany. At this point, we knew we had established ourselves and created our place in the market."

"We knew that the market had a lot of opportunities for us. Firstly, we were the pioneers in starting a business of computer stationery in Pune and to add value to this, my brother had done his masters in technology from Germany. So people believed us, and knew that our products would be of good, high end quality."

"Since we never relied on others for our business, we never faced dependency problems. My brother knew how to run the machine and slowly I also learnt it. So if sometimes, our operations workers weren't there, we could do our business on our own."

Hurdles,Failures and lessons learnt.....

"Our major hurdle was government permission. We had to get a NOC (No Objection Certificate) done. NOC is received from police and control board, but it wasn't applicable for our business because it was process indulgent. Our business was to take paper and then print. This caused no pollution but the government norms are such that a NOC was required.

Another hurdle was to find operations people. Later, the business required labor but we were unable to find employees with technological knowledge."



Did you think of being an entrepreneur when you were in Symbiosis?

"In the 11th and 12th standard I was in Modern college and it was a city based college. I did not like the environment there. That's when I decided that for my graduation studies I would go to Symbiosis. At that time, Symbiosis was new and the faculty was very young, so you immediately could connect with your professors. We were comfortable to share our problems with our professors and due to young staff we had many extracurricular activities. I was doing business while doing my degree, so immediately after graduating I decided to enter into the family business. Later, when my brother returned, we decided to venture out in the computer stationery industry because I knew this was the upcoming thing. You have to be able to think ahead of the time."

"It is because of my degree that I am a confident man today. Symbiosis has helped develop and enhance my communication skills. That's what the extracurricular activities do. They enhance your skills."

"Today, I think more dynamically. It's not the studies but the environment where you study. We were always made to think according to the changing times. I completed my marketing management from IMBR."

Thrilling and memorable experiences

"It's not the experience but, the achievement of satisfaction for my customers."

Once, State Bank of India gave us an emergency order. They told us that they'll give us the order on Saturday and that it should be ready on Monday. At that time, it was very difficult to print in such a short time. And plus Sunday was a holiday. But since we had given our commitment, we stuck to it. We worked on the holiday and delivered it. We fulfilled their urgent requirement, not only did this develop goodwill but we got the order from 6 divisional offices of SBI."

"Once, we were printing results for Muktagan School and they gave us wrong order. The requirement was for a different category and they gave the order for a different one. They had to declare results for secondary schools on Friday and all the parents were going to be there. Muktagan realized this on Thursday, and Thursdays witness no power supply. We could see it was a major crisis for Muktagan. So we promised them after 7 o'clock when electricity comes back, we'll print their results during the night and deliver it by 5 am in the morning. Exactly at 5 am, their result were ready. I always believe that a commitment given has to be fulfilled."

"We print stationery for AMBI VALLEY also. Nobody was ready to give them stationery at Lonavala, so every Friday their van would come to Pune to purchase stationery in Mandai. But their problem was that if they ran out of stock before Friday, then they would be in trouble. So, I decided to solve this problem and proposed my delivery services to Ambi Valley."



Inspirations

Manoj is greatly inspired by his uncle, Mr. Indrajani Sancheti, who is from Marathwada, but had came to Mumbai and after a lot of sweat capital, established three factories and also helps people in need. And he also admires his grandfather because of his humble and humane character."

Time Management?

"When asked how Manoj manages every thing even after such a busy schedule, he answers optimistically, In the mornings I go to Banthia Graphics. I'm there till 2 o'clock and then I come home. After lunch I go to Confur Systems. I am there till 5 pm, after that I go back to Banthia Graphics and work there till 7pm. Everything is possible, all you have to do is manage your time."

Budding Entrepreneurs, Ears Up !

Manoj advices the youth, "I would say that every person is an opportunity, see that if 10 people come to your office, among them only 2 to 3 are going to be your client, so you should treat all the 10 people on the same level. You should communicate with the people on your journey because you never know who can help you and who requires your help."

"Create goodwill. When you create a goodwill, money will follow you. Deliver your commitments and you will be automatically rewarded by an ever expanding customer base. And always be punctual"

"I would also advise them to take risks, calculated risk and saving is a must. For savings you have good scope in mutual funds. I read a book by Warren Buffet. Warren's father started a business when he was just 12 years old and he built an empire. My grandfather's policy is that where you live and where you work you should have a good relation with your peers. Keep on learning and specialize in the field you're good at!"

Interviewed by : Payal Agrawal





Financial management, passion and self believe are the three things that an entrepreneur should possess to be successful.
Long term success is always built on trust, goodwill and a burning desire. Your passion should never die.

Manoj Khatavkar
Confur Systems

The Man with a Burning Desire

Symbipreneurs

Manoj Khataavkar, Founder - Confur System Pvt. Ltd.

Year of Graduation : 1986

A passionate animals lover, Manoj wants to create an orphanage for destitute animals. Cricket, music, reading and socializing are his free time hobbies.

Confur Systems began with three friends, Manoj Khataavkar, Rajan Ghodse and Mushtak Memon. Each of them chipped in Rs.21,000 from their savings. They commenced this venture with Rs. 63,000.

"It all started when we were in the final year of graduation at Symbiosis. I worked in Parle Soft Drinks for two years and then joined Godrej where I worked till the year 2000. I did an internship for 2-3 years in Godrej because working in an organization and doing your own business are two different experiences. The decision to be an entrepreneur was like set in stone, when I was in Godrej in 1998. I decided that I am going to be my own boss. I always wanted to take up challenges and in Godrej too I worked as an entrepreneur. I viewed my job as my own business and fortunately the management at that time also gave us the freedom of decision making. Since we had the freedom to formulate our own policies, we had all the decision making powers in our hand in various departments like HR, marketing, sales. That's when the seeds of entrepreneurship were sown in me. It was freedom of thought and action that mattered and shaped my thought process." says Manoj.

Innovation - The essence of enterprise

"Innovation is imperative in terms of technology. You have to be dynamic to succeed. Only those who innovate will be successful in the long run. I have been one of the very few people in India who has been in this industry (Godrej) from 1994-2000 working for the same product line. But then the industry has evolved and so has the technology. Designs have changed and this all involved lot of engineering. When I started my venture, even though we were commerce students, we actually got to the crux of it and understood the logic.

We never had a problem because along with hard work, we aptly understood the customer requirement. The high value training from Godrej also helped. Today I can say, technology is not that difficult if you comprehend the logic.*



Did you face any problem in your professional life due to being from the commerce background?

"Logic and the passion to learn has helped me in understanding engineering. For example, everyone uses projectors in organization and we all are aware that projectors need to be connected to the laptop. Now the only thing left for us to do is to know what kind of projectors are there, what are the different technologies used such as like LCD and DLP technology etc. I've learnt all this through research. I still study. For me it is a continuous process therefore doing business becomes easier for me. There are some basic training skills which you acquire during your job for example selling skills. This is how we learn how to excel in the business of the technology. Today I am so technically equipped that I even know how a signal works. But the only thing you should understand is the complex technology. Believe me, it is not difficult for a commerce student to understand it as long as you have the passion for it."

What were the market conditions when you started this business and

what opportunities did you see in it?

"When Confur Systems started, we knew that technology was changing every day. We had to keep pace with the upgrading technology. India had started to adapt and move with the technology. From typewriters to trainer products to projectors, we saw the change in technology and its philosophy. There was a shift from the use of overhead projectors, computer to laptop and desktops, which lead to a change in the presentation technology. So as the market changed, we also updated ourselves. In case of projectors, we identified the customer needs and supplied the preferred latest technology. Then we realized the need to add a new product line, i.e. audio solutions and board room automation solutions. To sustain and succeed we took help of experts and in the process learnt from them. Studying and learning is an endless process."



Hurdles and lessons learnt

"To keep a business going, expansion is inevitable. Our major hurdle has been finance. When it's your own business, you don't have a backup plan. You build the foundation. This is a typical problem faced by all SMEs. When you work for big projects the finance gets locked up. You have to manage your finances stringently and strategically. You need to integrate your marketing goals with finance and this makes a person a successful entrepreneur."

Memorable Experiences

He loves the Tata's so much that when he got a chance to work with them, he was overwhelmed.

Reminiscing those delightful moments, he continues, "In 2010, we managed

to get our hands on a huge order for 80,000 USD from TATA Motors for high end applications. High end projectors were the 3D projectors. At that time 3D was just making its place in the market. This installation was in the Lake House, Mr. Ratan Tata's residence in Pune. Lake House is diagonally opposite to Tata motors. It was an old Victorian type of a structure. All the waste water from Tata motors which is around 1400 acres, is treated resulting in the creation of a manmade lake- artificial lake, where all the usable sewage water is made portable and a lot of migratory birds are seen there. It was an honor for us to work for the Tata's. During installation we met the Chief Technical Officer of Tata motor who controls all technical purchase departments. He was pleased by our service. While in a conversation with him, he briefed us about the present and future market scenario regarding the 3D VR. For us this was an eye opener. After that we spent two years learning new terminologies for our business. From the year 2010 to 2015 we invested all the earnings i.e. approx. 18000 USD in the business. A very big amount for a small company."

Inspiration

"One person who has made me passionate is Alexander and yes the Tata's, the Godrej, their values, their virtues, which have always been inspirational. I am also inspired by the Ambanis for their passion to become big and also Amitabh Bacchan the super star."

Budding Entrepreneurs, Listen!

"Financial management, passion and self believe are the three things that an entrepreneur should possess to be successful.

Long term success is always built on trust, goodwill and passion. Your passion should never die."

He loves his college because he believes it's not the studies but the environment that changes you. He continues to say, "Symbiosis is one institute which can develop confidence in everybody and make that nobody into somebody. I won't say that the degree helped me but, Symbiosis College helped me. The professors not only encouraged us to participate in the extracurricular activities but also ensured that our academic performance was good. Always remember it's the extra-curricular that gives you the needed exposure."

"Gain experience for new business, get into an internship, and don't bother about your earning, concentrate on learning. Learn self-confidence. You should be able to connect with your business." This the advice of this versatile entrepreneur.

As we reach the end of our conversation he says with eyes full of dreams yet to

achieve, "I want CONFUR SYSTEMS to be headquartered in Pune and then have branches in various cities"

Interviewed by : Payal Agrawal





*Innovation and perseverance together always wins. Follow
your heart and success will follow you.*

*Pradeep Joshi
Green Build Products*

BUILDING THE FUTURE OF NATURE

Symbiopreneurs

Pradeep Joshi, Founder - Green Build Products India Pvt. Ltd.

Year of Graduation : 1987

Mr. Pradeep Joshi and his wife Shilpa manufacture sustainable building and construction materials. The unique products offered by the company are self-curing. They provide hassle - free construction and saves water.

His heart never dreamt of a 9-5 job. He always wanted to become an entrepreneur. But as the story goes, not every entrepreneur has a successful beginning. After college, due to some unfavorable conditions he started taking small contracts for interiors and construction with college friends. He parted ways with his college friends in 1996 due to difference of opinion. Later with his wife who is an interior designer, he set up this firm and became a successful turn key project company in interiors.

He loves playing cricket, playing tabla and singing. With a dream of scaling up his business from a 5 Crore venture to a 100 Crore business. We kick started his venture for manufacturing paints and coatings in 2005 and in no time landed up with their innovation which is globally patented today. Union Bank of India lent a helping hand by providing a loan of Rs.25 lacs for setting a small scale industry.

Innovation - The Essential Ingredient

"Innovation plays a key role in my business. Now a days innovation is needed in every business. Innovation is a part and parcel of every business and it has become a necessity."

Pradeep as a product initiator and his wife as a formulator inventor created a range of innovative products which are completely free from cement, sand and water and essentially made from recycled and industrial byproducts and waste. These products are used in the construction business. These products create crack less walls. They help in improving the quality of construction and

extending the life of the building /substrate. The technology used is user-friendly, nonhazardous and water based. The unique solutions help in saving time, labor, machinery and precious natural resources such as water. The product performance has been evaluated to ensure safety for the user.

Perpetual innovations keep a business going. Innovation is an essential ingredient in business. Therefore, green build products is coming up with further innovative products as Shilpa being a head of R & D & exploring her brain on these formulations. They are also planning to establish satellite plants all over India.

How is Green Build Products Pvt. Ltd. helpful to the nature the years to come?

"In the construction process, the key ingredients used are cement, sand and water. Unfortunately, cement manufacturing releases large amounts of CO₂ into the atmosphere. The release of CO₂ is harmful to the environment, leading to greenhouse effect and global warming.

The sand required for good quality building is graded river bed sand. Increase in construction over the years has led to extensive excavations of river beds. This has adversely impacted the ecology. Graded river sand is scarcely found in many parts of India.

Large quantities of water are required during construction for mortar/plaster/concrete at different stages. Mixing of cement and sand is essentially done with water. The wetting of bricks prior to construction and curing of substrate is dependent on water. Further, the quality of water plays an important role in the construction process. When hard water is used, it deteriorates the quality of construction. The cement construction relies on water to remain firm and attain strength."

Increasing water scarcity of potable /usable water on the planet has prompted individuals to use water judiciously. Water harvesting methods and other methods of saving water have been adopted through many public-private partnerships. The need of the day is to use natural resources like water and sand judiciously.

Keeping this in mind, Green Build Products Pvt. Ltd. has developed a range of eco-friendly products to be used in construction. The solutions offered by the company substitute the existing materials wholly or partly, or simplify the existing construction process at an affordable rate. The range of green products have been designed and developed with conscious efforts to keep the environment clean.

All the products are designed to be environment-friendly. The company utilizes environmental pollutants such as fly ash and other renewable resources. All the products are available as wet mix ready to use materials and eliminate the need

for the application of water or chemicals on site. These products do not require water curing after application.

Environmental pollutants which are otherwise harmful and difficult to dispose, are utilized, with precaution, to reduce pollution. Special efforts have been taken to adopt ingredients which do not harm the ecology.



Green Build Products Pvt Ltd

Hurdles and failures

Opportunities were enormous as the construction business is a very huge market. Market conditions were absolutely conventional.

But For any new product or invention, the market is not ready to accept it. It takes time and patience for your product to enter the market. Patience is what kept this eco-preneur going.

He faced challenges relating to money, manpower and mental setup.

Reminiscing one of the major failures, he says: "Yes, we have faced failure. We took up a contract which we did not plan well. Things went wrong in managing finance and we weren't funded properly. The contract was huge in value and we could complete it only partially."

But he continues to say that "we learn from our mistakes. We learnt that being alert at every moment in terms of finance and especially in knowing where you stand in the market. Market research is a very important aspect of business."

Memorable experiences and success mantras

"The most memorable experience was when we got our first patent from Australia & currently we own six international patents including India. we have also been awarded prestigious industrial G S Parkhe by MCCA, Best women entrepreneur to Shilpa Joshi by Praveen Masale, Maharashtra Mitcon Udyogini as well as SME chambers of India for innovation."

Pradeep believes that passion, introspection and being calculative make a successful entrepreneur.

The only way to achieve long term success is to stick to the quality, not just in terms of your product but with your behavior, culture, organization, financial aspect and administrative factors. To run a successful business, ensure that along with the hard elements, soft elements are also present.

His Role models

The eco-preneur looks up to the iconic business tycoons, Mr.Ratan Tata and Narayan Murthy.

What is your favorite aspect of being an entrepreneur?

Pradeep says, "The favorite aspect of being an entrepreneur for me is to create employment. Because employment creates an organization then it creates a culture and then it builds a social aspect in the society."

A small tip for our budding entrepreneurs...

"I would like to tell the young entrepreneurs that they should own 3Ps- extra ordinary patience, consistency in persuasion & practical view while taking any business decisions."

If you had the chance to start your career over again, what would you do differently?

"I would become a musician."

Interviewed by : Aseem Puranik





I don't expect vague success. I plan my each and every step and make sure that this step brings me success and then I take risk. My experience gives me confidence, and when you are desperate for success you cannot sit idle, your dreams constantly keep pushing you.

*Vinay Gargate
Sohum Udyog*

SWEET SUCCESS

Symbiencours

Vinay Gargate, Founder - Sohum Udyog, Pune

Year of Graduation : 1987

Vinay is currently the founder and owner of Sohum Udyog - a Pune based food processing firm.

Innovation - The essence of enterprise

"Initially when Sohum Udyog started, we had very limited products. When I took over we did lot of innovations in product development. We analyzed the market conditions and started developing new products to satisfy the market demand. We literally made charts, mapped our target market and products and planned a growth strategy focusing on targeted market.

Quality, assured on time supply and innovation are my selling points. We make sure our product reaches customers no matter where they are. For example one of my customers from Delhi wanted our products in Dubai. We couriered the products from here to Dubai bearing the courier expenses just to satisfy our customer needs. And slowly this word spread, and we got a new customer who was so interested in our product that he started marketing and selling our products there. So now I have counters in Dubai as well. Same is the case with one of my Madras customer who now lives in UK, every two months I courier him my products. I always prioritize my customer needs over profit and try to satisfy them no matter where they are. This has helped me in generating trust in my customers.

Innovation is one of the most important aspects of success. Innovation not only in products but also in process, execution, and packaging is important. It is very difficult to achieve success without innovation. In 2004, we were the first one to have an international level barcode in Pune on our product. If I am not mistaken, my competitors adapted to this system 3-4 years later. People admire innovation and that's what helped our business flourish as people had a different approach towards us."

How much finance did you require to begin this business?

The businessman continued saying, "From the very beginning my investment strategy was to invest back profits in business and multiply it. So we kept on multiplying initial capital and till 2009, I did not require any financial aid from outside. But in 2007, I decided to set up a factory and scale my business 5 to 6 times to meet the market needs. I had my own land but the investment required for construction and machinery was huge i.e. about 60 lakh, thus I had to outsource finance in 2009 when we started construction.

During my college days, when I used to travel to and fro from Pune to Mumbai, I met a Gujarati guy in train. He said "We Gujarat is follow one golden rule. If we get 1 Rupee, we first take out 25 paisa for personal use and remaining 75 paisa we invest and multiply keeping our priorities in line". So in 1987 when I joined the business completely, I started following this rule. This policy helped me a lot in my business as well as in my personal life. 25% of my income was used to run my house and remaining 75% went back to business as an investment."

Sohum Udyog. The journey

"In 1987, the food industry was growing, people were skeptical about buying processed foods from market, and they preferred processing food at home. But future seemed different. Due to business, I frequently visited Mumbai. Even at that time, Mumbai was almost 20 years ahead of Pune and approx. 95 % of the female population was working. During 1987, I saw Poli Bhaji centers starting in Mumbai, near railway station. More and more educated class of people was getting involved in the food business analyzing the trend. That's when I saw this opportunity and decided to take up this line of business."



Thrilling and memorable experiences

Vinay recalls blissfully, "We went to London for an exhibition. I met a random guy there and we had a long chat about our products and the European food industry. The third day after our meeting, he called me and told me that he is

going to meet me in the evening. He said, "He had emailed his customers yesterday that we are in talks with owner of Sohum Udyog and we wish to bring some of their products to the UK market. So what is your feedback for the same?" He had a list of around 2000 Maharashtrian NRI customers living in the UK. He got 90% positive feedback from his customers and they knew us. This is how our product entered the European (UK) market. Within a year, a food nutritionist wrote a blog about our products quality. And many such experiences occurred. In fact some of my existing customers say that a business with the name "Sohum" would never do unethical business". (Sohum means suhana in hindi)

Hurdles, failures and lessons learnt

A planned and cautious approach in his business has helped him avoid hurdles. Vinay says "Only one hurdle which we faced recently in 2010 due to a mistake of one of our employees, is what I can recall. There was a misprint on one of the products in a shipment which we supplied to a very old customer of ours. Unfortunately, the customer launched a query and investigation gave us a setback for around 8 months. The business from that customer which was expected to grow around 5 to 6 times was hampered around this time. Except this experience there was never a major hurdle affecting my business. I always focused on daily needed products, which we need regularly from morning to evening. So due to this strategy there was never a major fall in demand."

"Fortunately, in my business I haven't seen any major failures. Small mistakes and failures were there but I learnt from them. A mistake is only committed once if it is repeated then it cannot be called a mistake. I convey this to my employees as well. When you are working with a lot of people sometimes mistakes happen and there is a setback, to avoid this you should constantly be in touch with your employees and try to minimize them."

"It is difficult to start a business" is a common notion that exists, what would be your comments on that? Do you agree with it?

"No, I do not agree with this. Fortunately for us, India has a huge population and lot of opportunities. If you enter the market with one innovative product and establish your name, then you can introduce many more routine products and people will buy it. Apart from the food line everything has now become service oriented. Due to this supply chain management has gained importance; People are willing to spend more for a doorstep delivery. Competition will always exist, but if you keep innovating and go out of the way to achieve your goals you will always win. For example, all students are equally intelligent in class, their study material is also the same but still there is only one topper. That is because of his hard work and will to do things differently and more effectively which is because of innovation. As simple as that. Don't wait for big

opportunities, grab whichever you get however small it is and grow. If you follow this then you will succeed for sure."



'Back to college' with Dr. Soman, Principal SCAC at the alumni meet

Education and enterprise.

When asked whether his degree from college had been of any good for his enterprise, Vinay, very thoughtfully says, "If you ask practically, accounts, banking these things which I had learned in college helped me a lot. But college is not only about a degree, it is another world in itself. It developed my personality, boosted my thinking and creativity. Meeting different people from different countries and states and learning with and from them was an amazing experience. Extracurricular activities motivated me and developed the much necessary leadership and presentation qualities. So the degree and the college life has helped me a lot in my entrepreneurial journey. And not having degree has its own losses which I have seen in many fellow entrepreneurs, the negative thoughts constantly limit you and your thinking is also different if you never go to a college."

Success mantras

"One should always focus on innovation that's what makes you stand out amongst your competitors. You should be able to understand your own liking

and enter a business which you like, because if you like it only then can you sell it. You should love your business more than your wife, if you do this you are bound to be successful.

I don't expect vague success. I plan my each and every step and make sure that this step brings me success and then I take risk. My experience gives me confidence, and when you are desperate for success you cannot sit idle, your dreams constantly keep pushing you.

On a very reflective note, he adds, "Consistency is the key to long term success. If you constantly keep on hopping from one business to another then success is less likely. You should be very focused and clear about your goals and plan accordingly to achieve them. When I was in college and the first time I came to Mumbai to deliver my product I was very happy that my product crossed the borders of Pune. So when in 1987, I joined in I had set up goal that within next 15-20 years my product should sell in international market. After constant hardwork and clear goals I was able to export my product in 2005 and expand my business internationally. I don't consider this goal as achieved, it will be achieved when I am able to convert packets to containers supplied to foreign markets."

Success does not have any fixed pathway. Every person is different and so is his journey. So, there is no fixed pattern or a formulae to become a successful entrepreneur."

Entrepreneurship, the chosen one.

"I always wanted to be my own boss instead of someone telling me what to do and then I doing it. I would rather do something innovative and challenging that interests me. So I took up entrepreneurship as a career choice during my college days itself."

What do you feel is the major difference between entrepreneurs and employees?

"There are a lot of difference between entrepreneurs and employees. For eg. Entrepreneurs are more daring when it comes to taking risks, When you are an employee, you have much lesser responsibilities. You are only answer able to your superior. But, that's not the case with entrepreneurs. And the major difference between the two is of the thought process. Entrepreneurs are totally independent and have the freedom to think. That's Why they are able to think out of the box and come up with more liberal ideas.."

The social side

"We donate some percent of our profits to some NGOs. Sonali Kulkarni is our brand ambassador, whenever she is having some function in any social organization we render support in this activity. In fact we supply our product on their cost not on ours. There are organizations like Manavyya who work for the education of children of prostitutes. We supply the products to them free of cost. We are also associated with some NGOs working for the police force."

Budding Entrepreneurs, Ears Up !

Very firmly he says, "100% become entrepreneurs, instead of begging for jobs, you should be able to give jobs. It gives you immense pleasure."

He continues, "Always be aware of whatever you are doing. This helps to avoid mistakes. Success achieved by unethical ways lives a very short life in the long run, if you want to be successful you have to work ethically."

"The most important is the satisfaction of the work done. Whatever we do, we should do it so perfectly that we are 100% satisfied. If we use a shortcut or unethical means to achieve our goals then there is no satisfaction. So to ensure you are working in right direction and in right way, 100% satisfaction is necessary."

Interviewed by : Abhinandan Chavan





Hard work, dedication and being consistent and committed will definitely help you to achieve success. There is no specific rule of becoming a successful Entrepreneur; but once you are into business, you definitely learn the success mantra.

Live your dreams and never give up. Executing imagination into reality is my favorite aspect of being an entrepreneur.

"THINK BIG, BE BIG"

Mr. Hitendra Surattwala
Surattwala Housing Pvt.Ltd.

The Weaver Bird

Symbiopreneurs

Hitendra Suratwala, Founder - Suratwala Housing Pvt. Ltd.

Year of Graduation : 1987

Hitendra, a successful entrepreneur in the construction industry is a first generation entrepreneur. In the beginning, he did laundry business because it required less investment. He has also worked in hotels as a Manager. He owned cosmetics and jewelry stores and boutique in Sagar arcade as well.

How did you come up with the idea?

He always wanted to be in businessman and was never interested in jobs and his cousin had a site where construction was going on and he used to go there very often. That's how the idea was born and he started his own construction company by the name of Suratwala Housing Pvt.Ltd.

Hurdles and opportunities...

When he started the construction business, he had to face competition from renowned and established builders, but with his unique style, optimistic approach, tremendous hard work and dedication he managed to create his unique identity. Opportunities were less but the desire was invincible and that was the success formula.

Entrepreneurs are piled up with hurdles, that's what Hitendra thinks. The journey of entrepreneurs is fill with difficulties but what really matters is sustaining and not giving up. Finance and labour management was a major issue but with time he could overcome that problem too.

Was funds a crucial problem?

Yes, gathering funds initially was a problem. But his supportive family and

friends helped him to overcome this problem. In 2008, he entered in the business of construction and received an award by "CREDAI" for his debut project in Baner.

What was your USP?

Word of mouth was the only USP. No media, posters, banners or marketing strategies were used, only word of mouth was his weapon. He started his project on a 9000 sq. ft Plot area and he achieved success in it and was also awarded for his debut project. At present he has completed number of residential and commercial projects in and around Pune including Baner and Hinjewadi. He is working hard on his Dream Bungalow Project of over 300 acres at Temghar Dam near Lavasa Mulshi and he is confident that this project will be a glorious land mark.



'It is difficult to start a business' is a common notion that exists, what would be your comments on that?

Since he had decided from his college days that he wanted to be in businessman, it hardly mattered to him. Also he thinks that the benefit of being an entrepreneur is that there is enormous money. A salaried person can earn maximum in lakh. But for an entrepreneur, the sky is the limit. He always wanted to create his own brand as name and work satisfaction is more important than money and as an entrepreneur he wanted to create employment and play a small part in growth of our Indian economy.

Strong determination is necessary to start a business along with the ability of taking risk.

Did you think of being an entrepreneur when you were in Symbiosis?

"Yes, as I mentioned before I had already decided earlier that I was going to be an entrepreneur as I want to make my own path and never liked to work under anyone."

As an entrepreneur you must have had many thrilling and memorable experiences, can you share any such instance?

Hitendra recalled his experience. In his Hinjewadi project-A commercial tower was to be constructed and the permission was only of 2 floors but he wanted it to be an eleven storey commercial complex, so with the extra efforts and his soft skills he made it possible and that became a memory.

What would you say are the top three skills needed to be a successful entrepreneur?

"To be successful, I believe what is necessary is a strong view, imagination, innovation and strategic financial planning."

What do you feel is the difference between entrepreneurs and employee?

"Entrepreneurs are their own boss and the authority to take decision lies with them whereas if you are working under someone you are only allowed to do what you have been told too."

People working under someone have a fixed working hours and hence they can spend a lot of time with their family. But for entrepreneurs, there are no fixed working hours."

Budding entrepreneurs, Listen!

"Hard work, dedication and being consistent and committed will definitely help you to achieve success. There is no specific rule of becoming a successful entrepreneur. But once you are into the business you definitely learn the success mantra while facing and overcoming failure. Executing imagination into reality is my favorite aspect of being an entrepreneur. Live your dreams and never give up."

Interviewed by: Anuj Bagade





Be straight forward in your business. Do not promise something that you cannot give. Every business requires risk. Take calculated risks. Believe in yourself and be positive. One should always be positive while working and never lose hope. Work hard towards your goal and you will achieve it one day. Just give time some time.

Suhas Paranjape
Confur Systems

THE DISCIPLINED TRADER

Symbiopreneurs

Suhas Paranjape, Co-Founder - Confur Systems

Year of Graduation : 1988

A true believer of innovation and discipline, he loves working for himself and enjoys the flexibility in running his own enterprise.

A capitalist entrepreneur but social by heart, Suhas believes he still has a lot of achieve

Suhas Paranjape is one of the three friends who started Confur Systems and presently is the director of this organization.

With the aim of becoming the No. 1 service provider in India, Suhas promises his company that their turnover will hit 10 crores this year. He wishes that all the partners should have one BMW each & that too the high class model.

He is a cricket lover and spends his free time researching about historical things. He loves to cook and dreams of starting his own restaurant in the future.



Innovation - The essential Ingredient

"Innovation is necessary in our business. It is very important to have innovation because business then becomes easier. Technologies like WhatsApp and other

social networking sites have made it easier for us to send pictures of important products or services to other vendors avoiding any sort of confusion."

"I have started the system of record keeping in my business. We make a record of deal failure and do a root cause analysis of that failure because we believe that failures are the biggest books of learning. Once we know where we have gone wrong, then we change our methods accordingly and make it business friendly. We keep updating ourselves according to this dynamic environment. We have recently made our office paper less. We make sure our brochures are delivered to every company, regardless of whether they order from us or not."

Confur Systems Pvt. Ltd.

Thrilling and memorable experiences

Suhas narrates an incident that happened a long time ago, "15 years back, once when I was travelling from Pune to Miraj with an old couple in my compartment beside me. I got down at some station and got vadapav for them. They hesitated at first but I convinced them to take it and the conversation started. After sometime the old lady said that it will be better if her husband would die before her, that shook me and I asked the lady why did she say that, and in reply she said their children had left them and there was nobody to look after them and if her husband dies she can survive but if she died who will look after her husband." Suhas inducted this theory to his entrepreneurial life that we should live for others also and help others at times so they can help you at your crucial times. He said, "For instance, when I get an order, and I realize that there is some other vendor in need of the order, I pass it on to him."

"The next time when he gets an order for a service that he doesn't provide. He still takes it. This way he builds his network as the vendor to whom he helped will give goods to him at a concessional rate and he can supply the same to his customer base and have his customer."

Another incident that left him awestruck and has been the biggest learning experience for him. He then continues to Narate "Long back we went to purchase a tractor and along with us there was a man from a nearby village who was dressed in old clothes. We were well greeted with tea and coffee. And after several minutes, the villager told the dealer that he was getting late & needed to rush back and in reply the dealer rudely ordered him to wait for some time. What happened next was a shock for everyone. After 45 min the villager aggressively shouted "What is your owners' price". And the shocking thing was he came to buy two trucks and got the entire amount in cash. That left us awestruck. We made that person sit in our chair and tried to calm him down. We just went with a cheque of Rs.10,000 but we were given so much of respect because we were well dressed and professional."

"So as the famous proverb goes, 'Don't judge a book by its cover.' That day, I learnt that never measure the ability of a person by his appearance, instead see what the best you can take from him. Each and every person will help you. This is very essential to maintain business relations."

Success Mantras

"Discipline is very important. It is the best damage control method in the service industry. One requires discipline in customer follow ups. Keep a customer follow up always. Ask them their needs because you never know how their need can become a business opportunity for you.

Bank transactions is another aspect where one has to be very careful with. Pay your vendors on time. Then they will deliver the goods on time.

Provide the best quality service to your customer at the best price. On time service and product assurance will in turn help you create a loyal customer base. Customer retention is of extreme importance in the business."

Inspirations and role models....

*My role model is my mother.

I am also inspired by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.

Savarkar advocated dismantling the caste system in Hindu culture, and reconversion of the converted Hindus back to Hindu religion. Savarkar was sentenced to two life terms of imprisonment totaling fifty years and was moved to the Cellular Jail in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. He believed in hindutva and because of him today we have Andaman and we have our Indian naval base in Andaman. Just one hour speech by him given in England and Madan Lal Dhingra bombed the assembly. Just by his 1 hour speech if he can change the psychology of many people. So imagine if you have this talking skill in your business it is obvious you will be successful."

Perks of being an Entrepreneur

When asked about his favorite aspect of being an entrepreneur, with a relieved expression he says, "I enjoy the flexibility of time, I can go home anytime. If I am working for someone else, I would have to take permission and then salary cut. I am very glad I don't have to go through this as an entrepreneur."

Budding Entrepreneurs! Ears Up!

"Read good books which give basic knowledge about life. Be a disciplined

person and respect everyone in your business.

Observation is a must in the business. Observe how other people do their business, learn from their business tactics and use it for your business if it's good.

Be straight forward in your business. Do not promise something that you cannot give. Every business requires risk. Take calculated risks. Believe in yourself and be positive. One should always be positive while working and never lose hope. Work hard towards your goal and you will definitely achieve them one day. Just give time some time"

He adds, "kaam karte jao, phal ki chinta mat karo"

(Keep working hard, don't worry about the outcome)



With current chief minister Devendra Fadnis

Hurdles failures and lessons learned ?

"Garware nylon and Centurian tied up to put up the plant of steel cord. But it failed it was shut in 1988. And the company had borne the loss of 500crores. Garware nylons used to dispatch 12 trucks of nylon after the payment was done. Then came reliance who gave the nylon with pay them later policy. Garware also did unnecessary expenses and relied on obsequious people who deceived them eventually. "

So we should never rely on obsequious people. And should not give much frills to customers.

You're never too old to dread. And one such enthusiastic dreamer, Manoj concludes by saying, "I always wanted to open a hotel and that is still my ambition and I will make it successful one day".

Interviewed by: Anuj Bagade



Stay consistent in the services you are rendering and keep your business flexible so it can adapt to the changes. Innovate, because if you don't adapt yourself according to the environment, the chances of failing are huge. There is no pattern or formula to become a successful entrepreneur. Make your goal your focal point and work hard. Success will follow you.

Anuj Khare
Nature Walk Outdoors

A WALK INTO THE WILD...

SymbiPrencurs

Anuj Khare, Founder - Nature Walk

Year of Graduation : 2001

A first generation entrepreneur, Anuj Khare kick started his venture, Nature Walk in 2001 out of his love for nature. The wild life explorer also loves playing tabla and listening to classical Music.

He was always inclined towards wild life forestry. While in college he decided that he will start a business in which he will be taking tours through the wild life sanctuaries across India because India is a nation with immense diversity and he believes that the world should know about it. He believed, that people should be aware of the beautiful habitat but people lack knowledge about the animals in India. Thus, he decided to venture out in this field. 30% of his profit is for the people living in forests. He spends it on medical camps, health checkups and medicines for them.

Nature Walk

Nature Walk Outdoors is committed to make you aware about environment and the need for its conservation. But they do it differently. When they talk to you about Nature, you are there in the midst of it. So they do not "teach" you environment, you "experience" it.

To enhance the outdoor knowledge, they conduct Nature Trails, Resident Jungle Safaris or camps and other outdoor activities. Nature walk is also engaged in In-house Management, Training Programs (Soft Skills Trainings), Outbound Training Programs (Leadership, Motivation, and Team Building Exercises etc.), Recreational Exercise and events.

Innovation - The essence of enterprise

When he started this wild life touring business, his competitors were doing well

and were already established. But, this did not stop the nature lover from taking a step forward. After doing his research, he came up with an innovative business module. Since he had good relations with the Forest Department, he set up camps in the forest so you can be close to nature all the time while others use to set up their camp in a hotel. This made his venture stand out. He thought that this way, even the tribal people would get a chance to make some money. Not only would the tourists enjoy this but even indigenous people would benefit from this and prosper.

He never organized tours with the motive of earning money, but to make people explore the beauty of our wild life habitats. He also wanted to see that the local community benefits in some or the other way. He used to set up medical camps for regular checkups for the local people.

His favorite Activity

He narrates one of his happy memories, "We have an interesting group activity called the 'KATTA' where all the nature lovers gather at a central location and share their vivid experience regarding the tour and their experiences. Sometimes, we even invite some well-known speakers and this activity has no age restriction. It is open to all with no charges. It just makes me happy listening to everyone's description of nature and makes me feel as though I am reading a fairytale."

Success Mantras

Innovation and preplanning were the reasons his venture broke even within a year. A lot of research, organized functioning and his love for the nature has made him victorious today.

He advises our young bunch to stay focused on their dreams and keep expanding their knowledge base. Excellent communication skills with a good research ability will prevent them from making a mistake. He says, "One should always do a SWOT analysis as it will help you keep up with the pace of the business world and expand your opportunity band width."

"It is difficult to start a business" is a common notion that exists, what would be your comments on that? Do you agree with it?

Anuj gives a firm, positive and precise reply, "Yes, it is but if you are focused and confident then nothing matters."

Budding Entrepreneurs, Listen !

"Stay consistent in the services you are rendering and keep your business flexible so it can adapt to the changes", says the dynamic Entrepreneur.

"Innovate, because if you don't adapt yourself according to the environment, the chances of failing are huge."

"There is no pattern or formula to become a successful entrepreneur. Make your goal your focal point and work hard. Success will follow you."

He dreams of starting an academy where he can teach and train students for wild life forestry.



His achievements

Working in the field of Nature Education since last 17 years.

Working closely with Forest Department, Govt. of Maharashtra State and as an advisor to many NGOs.

Delivered more than 400 talks on Indian Wildlife and has organized more than 200 Nature Camps in and out of Maharashtra State.

He does his marketing through word of mouth and social media.

Partnered with companies and institutions such as:

- Forbes Marshal

- Spirax Marshal
- BMC Software
- Daimler Chrysler
- Tata Motors
- HSBC Software
- Alpha Enterprises
- Symbiosis College
- AksharNandan School
- Rotary Club of Pune
- UTI (Axis Bank)
- Indira Institute of Management Studies
- Tejgyan Foundation
- Forest Department, Govt. of Maharashtra



Interviewed by : Anuj Bagade, Namrata Kale, Revati Bajaj, Krinjal Lalwani and Chandra Mehta





If you have a dream, then go out there and make it happen. As a young college graduate, experiment with your career, fail and learn from that process. Placements can happen after few years. In fact, the person who will give you a job will value your experiments and experiences. Don't let the fear of failure ever stop you from taking the leap of faith. Mistakes are spell books of success. Study them hard.

Rohit Lalwani
Tradex - Inventryx Systems Pvt. Ltd.

STORY OF A PARALLEL ENTREPRENEUR

Symbypreneurs

Rohit Lalwani, Founder - Tradexs - Inventryx Systems Pvt. Ltd.

Year of Graduation : 2004

"'Startups', today have become a buzz word in India and it is an encouraging time to choose entrepreneurship as a career option. There is a well-deserved respect for entrepreneurs, public celebration of entrepreneurial heroes and acceptance of failure in entrepreneurial ventures in today's time. However, there is a long way to go. Young aspirants still need to be coached, guided and require hand holding on building sustainable and profitable startups. Starting up is not about a billion dollar valuation company or raising funding only. It's about taking a roller coaster ride which you will enjoy with its highs and lows. Fortunately, I have had experience across the spectrum of doing a corporate job, managing my family business, launching few startups and also mentoring other entrepreneurs. Currently, I share the learning and experiences that I have had over a period of time with young aspirants which helps them in their journey of startingup."

What have been the Hurdles, failures, and lessons learned for you as an entrepreneur?

"In my entire professional journey, I have experienced varied kinds of hurdles and failures. I remember the time of giving up my fat paying, lucrative job at Asian Paints as their projects sales head for Karnataka. It was a tough decision to make. However, the enthusiasm of being on my own, motivated me to take that leap. Further, relocating to family business was another experience. It was not a fancy, resourceful environment and no backing of a large brand on your business card. And by the time I started up, all that I had was my learning and experiences. The most important lesson I have learned. In my personal as well as professional life is that of aligning with the right set of people. A passionate team that shares the same values and people who are economically aligned with you is very important. I believe, life is about finding right people around you. But don't invest your time in finding the perfect ones. Collaborate with

raw people and mould them as per your requirements. "

"The other important lesson that I learned is, life was to always take inputs from a mentor. Someone who believes in you and a person whom you believe in, the one who can guide you in your personal and professional journey. A mentor's inputs are always valuable and you can learn from their wisdom. At the same time, it is important to do what you believe is right. You might land up doing something exactly opposite of what your mentor has suggested you, but, that's fine since you are executing what you believe in. "

"Lastly, the most important asset that you have is your passion and enthusiasm to build something, to achieve and never let this run out. Don't let the practical and rational aspects takeover your personal passions and paralyze you. As an entrepreneur, don't be in a rush, though do keep a check on the time and money you are investing. Every overnight success that I have spoken to, took 10-12 years to get there. However, that's also happened because they celebrated small successes along the way."



How do you think your guidance to aspiring entrepreneur is different from that of others?

"I think mentoring to an aspiring entrepreneur is like being a Sherpa's; we should take the valley of death along with the entrepreneur and keep moving forward. It's easy to stand at the bay and give suggestions, but it's another challenge to take the journey along with those entrepreneurs. That's when I also enjoy the journey as a mentor. I believe in a milestone-based mentoring to startup aspirants and early stage startups. Also never ever contribute anything for free. Unfortunately, it's not respected."

Can you tell us something about your path of being a serial entrepreneur?

"I believe, in planting seeds. There is a simple math of gardening 1% seeds turn into 50% of the flowers. And it's important to keep planting a lot of seeds. It

becomes challenging at times to manage various assignments at the same time however, that's where the fun is. All entrepreneurs need to be multitasking and I practice that skill every day. Currently, I am busy growing my child, Tradexs, a B2B platform to trade excess inventory. Apart from this, I am an academician and help students look at entrepreneurship as a career option. I also mentor about half a dozen startups in which I hold advisory positions and consult mid-size companies in new product development."

Has a degree helped you in your enterprise?

"I think more than the degree, the experiences that I have had at Symbiosis have helped me the most. At Symbiosis there was an equal amount of emphasis on extra-curricular activities which always helped me in building my skills and personality. During my 5 years at SCAC, I built great relationships, network and connects apart from my skills which are helping me even today in my career."

Do you think Innovation is an essential ingredient in a business?

"Innovation is a misused word. Although innovation has different meanings to various sets of people but it is something that one can't escape. You will need to innovate to survive your life and an entrepreneurial journey. However, don't focus on the innovation only, make sure you are also able to implement the it successfully."

What have been the most Thrilling and memorable experiences for you in this journey?

"Thrilling experiences have been moving out of the businesses that I started myself or the one that I was actively associated with. I think it's an emotional separation that one experiences since 24x7 you keep dreaming, eating, sleeping and thinking of your startup idea. Another memorable experience I have had is developing the entrepreneurial course that I teach at various education institutes. It took me hundreds of hours of work, interactions with various stakeholders, reading quite a few books and interviewing many entrepreneurs to develop that course. Now, it's a great feeling to meet few of my students who have become successful entrepreneurs."

What are your success mantras?

"Passion! Passion! Passion! If you are passionate about something, you will work towards making it happen. Focus on the execution of that passion. I have seen quite a few brilliant ideas fail due to poor execution. Also, always keep your arms open to collaborate with new folks who can add value to your



journey as mentors, co-founders or employees. Focus should be on "now" rather than few years ahead. The present will always impact your long-term success.

Who or what do you think has been your inspiration?

"My family has been my greatest inspiration and support. My uncle is the one person whom I always looked up to. My partner in crime has been my wife, Teena, without her support I wouldn't be conducting so many experiments in my career. I have also been inspired by the journey of people like Steve Jobs, Lelacocca, and many others."

"It is difficult to start a business" is a common notion that exists, what would be your comments on that? Do you agree with it?

"I disagree. In India, we have too many opportunities available to start and build successfully. In our culture, unfortunately, we have a habit of blaming or complaining. However, as an entrepreneur we can't afford to do that. There are lots of problems that haven't been addressed and we require young entrepreneurs to creatively solve those problems."

What do you feel is the major difference between entrepreneurs and regular employees?

"It's the difference between being a lion in front of a ringmaster in the circus

and being a lion in the forest. People who work for others have a more risky career as compared to people who work for themselves. Entrepreneurs know what they are going to be doing next and are in total charge and control of their present and future, which is not the case with people who are doing jobs since the control always lies with someone else. Doing a job is taking a merry-go-round ride which simply keeps going round and round. Being an entrepreneur is taking a roller coaster ride. Now you need to decide which one would you enjoy the most!"



Mentoring Session

Budding Entrepreneurs, Ears Up !

"Stay focused; listen to your heart over placement figures. If your heart is in building something just go ahead and do it. Do not fool yourself that you will take a 2-3 years' experience and that's going to help you. It doesn't help. Also, don't waste your time, it's the most important and scarce resource you have. Never prevent failure, just go ahead and embrace them, failure are a part of your life as much as success. It's good to make mistakes and it's great to make a lot of them.

Interviewed by : Abhinandan Chavan





There is no shortcut to success. you can achieve success in the 1st year of business, you can achieve success 5 years down or even 10 year down the line. The only thing is that you have to be clear about your vision and goal. You have to be persistent and if you believe in that vision and that goal and give your best shot always, everything automatically falls in the place.

*Naman Shah
Cuero*

THE CREATIVE SOLE

Symbipreneurs

Naman Shah, Founder - CUERO

Year of Graduation : 2004

"A great pair of shoes adds character to your clothing and personality," says 23-year-old Pune-based Naman Shah who started Cuero - Handcrafted Luxury, a premium brand in the footwear industry. An inherent passion for shoes imbibed from his father coupled with the big market for handcrafted leather shoes made him start Cuero last year. He wanted to offer customized, affordable shoes with a 'Made in India' tag.

Cuero believes in the idea of understanding the wearer's personality and then suggest designs.

Naman has showcased his creations at Lakme Fashion Week 2014 in collaboration with Quirk Box. He believes in blending traditional technique with modern designs. From classic patterns to sporty colors and edgy shapes, Cuero has it all.

Naman Shah is a travel bug. He loves to explore new places. He also likes to have his own peace of mind by spending time with himself. Sometimes he would probably also go and movie alone for his peace of mind. Other than swimming in the evenings, he also enjoys cycling in the morning with school friends as it brings back joyous memories and a blissful smile to start the day with.

Are you a first generation entrepreneur?

"No, not really, if you go to see my grandfather started his own business, my dad started his own business and I started my own business. So, in that context, being an entrepreneur is in our genes."

So when did you decide to be an entrepreneur & continue with the business stream itself?

"There was no decision as to whether I wanted to be an entrepreneur because it just happened I was just sitting in college once and I said I wanted to do something in shoe making and that was it. With that thought I went ahead. It took me a while to start a company, but that's how I started. It was never in my mind. It was more of a eureka for me and Cuero came into the picture."

Has a degree helped you in your enterprise?

"More than the college degree, I believe the college experience helped me in my enterprise. I took part in extracurricular activities and that's how I learned how to network with people, everybody from the Peon to the Principal knows me even today and it taught me planning and organizing and what not apart from studies."

Do you think Innovation is an essential Ingredient in an enterprise?

Naman says, "Innovation is of utmost importance. Creativity is required as to what the customer has ordered for because it's a product based service and we specialize in custom made shoes so innovation and creativity is our USP."



What have been your most memorable experiences?

Naman went 2 years back in history, and continued "When I started the firm I was only restricted to the city of Pune in terms of shoe making and we had not ventured into Mumbai and I got an e-mail from a person called Rahul Bajaj once from there for an order and I had replied to him saying for a single order I won't

come to Mumbai but he said later you come to my office and I'll make sure you go back with a few dozen orders and when I entered it was an office in Bandra-Kurla Complex and he turned out to be the CEO of that company and till today they are my most valuable customers and I would say they recommend me to people and almost 50% of the business in Mumbai has grown because of them. So, that's the most memorable experience of my entrepreneurial life."

What are your success mantras?

"You will need persistence, a lot of courage and most importantly patience. These are the only three things you will need in each and every phase of your business."

There is no sure shortcut to success I would say that you can achieve success in the 1st year of business, you can achieve success 5 years down or even 10 year down the line the only thing is that you have to be clear about your vision, goal and you have to be persistent and if you believe in that vision and that goal and give your best shot always everything automatically falls in the line."



Presenting Mr. Sanjiv Bajaj - MD Bajaj FinServ with a pair of Bespoke Cuero's

Why did you choose to be an entrepreneur?

"My favorite aspect of being an entrepreneur is 'you are your boss' and it's a thrill that you have to take decisions very wisely. The pros and cons affect your business very significantly."

There is a major difference between being an entrepreneur and an employee.

When you're an entrepreneur, you have to manage everything on your own from manufacturing to production to purchase to sales. It's like everything in one box, you have to manage your clients, make sure your marketing team is doing well. It's a holistic approach that you have to use. But, when you are working for someone else it's a whole different ball game. You have limited work and limited responsibilities"

Do you believe there is some sort of pattern or formula to becoming a successful entrepreneur?

"Absolutely not. There never was and never will be any pattern to become successful. You just have to trust your inner conscious and have faith and believe in yourself and always be prepared to face challenges because running your own business is like doing a 24 hours job and that's how you become successful."

What or who has been your greatest inspiration ?

"In terms of business I really admire the TATA's. The way they do business and their philosophy.

In life, my parents are my greatest motivation and my mom is my role model. Though she is a home maker she manages the kids, make sure they grow up in a good environment. She runs the house in a budget provided by my dad and if you break it down to the small details, it's not less than running a business and it's the most complicated business ever you will have to run. "

To what do you most attribute your success? What would say are the five key elements for starting and running a successful business?

"I personally attribute my success to my family because in business, the support by family matters the most and I have a peaceful and calm atmosphere at home. So I rate family support as most crucial and the second most important is the right team because you are nothing without your team."

What are Hurdles, failures and lessons learnt in your journey so far?

"Cuero is a manufacturing unit and it is product based, we faced quality issues in the beginning. We faced customer dissatisfaction, rejections due to size issues purchase issues etc. We couldn't buy good leather in bulk because we didn't want to stock that much so getting the right kind of suppliers and right people to work for us was a challenge and overcoming them step by step throughout was what the journey was all about.

My failures taught me a lot of things. They taught me how to be patient. You need time to accept failure. You think you are the best and you work according to your ways but life and business never work that way."



Budding Entrepreneurs, Ears Up !

"I would say, if you believe in a particular idea you should just go ahead and start it. Don't worry about failures and what will happen if it doesn't work out. Have faith & trust. These things will keep you bonded to yourself in the days of progress. Always remember if you win you can lead and if lose you can guide others."

The young creative bud plans to go online in the upcoming years and have a full-fledged independent website and android plans. He also plans to open up franchise systems in the few nearby cities in the coming 2-3 years and export shoes in future decade.

This year again, Cuero is going to showcase their collection in collaboration with The Quirk Box at the Lakme Fashion Week.

Interviewed by : Pranay Rajani





The best part of being an entrepreneur is the journey, the hurdles and the risks. If there are no risks and hurdles, he feels like he is on auto mode. He feels it's the risks and hurdles that add spice to his life.

Abhishek Kawitkar
Tree Public

PLANTING TREES. PLANTING IDEAS

Symbiopreneurs

Abhishek Kawitkar, Founder Tree Public

Year of Graduation : 2006

Social entrepreneur Abhishek Kawitkar wanted to be a part of the change. That's why Tree Public.

"The Environment : My Enterprise"

While the world is in a race to earn money and success at the cost of the environment, Abhishek thought the other way around.

He says, "I started the business because I wanted to be a part of a change. I believe, we need to be the change we want to see. Although mother nature, with all her bounties existed way before the dawn of humanity, has flourished with the ages and will live on with all her might for several years post human beings, I realized that she is being continuously degraded and neglected due to numerous reasons. Keeping this in mind, I decided to become a part of the solution that is bigger than usual and will leave a greater impact."

Tree Public

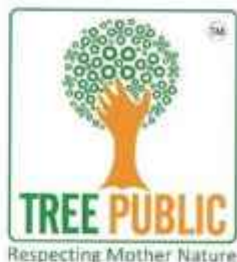
Tree Public is a registered environmental NGO in Pune, methodically working towards afforestation by way of macro scale tree plantation. Their core focus is on working towards reduction of carbon footprints by planting native Indian trees known for their properties of purifying the atmosphere and producing clean breathing air.

The efforts put towards this mission of creating 'Green Lungs' of the city has resulted in a milestone achievement for Tree Public. They planted and sustained over 60,000 trees in a span of 4 years with a tree survival ratio of over 85% across Pune. Tree Public is also extensively working on environment protection by generating and implementing green ideas through the efforts of school children by way of interactive training and learning programs like zero garbage, zero plastic, eco library, green thoughts via theatrical performances and various corporate programs for integrated awareness.

The Debut

Abhishek began Tree Public with zero capital. When he started off, the market conditions were tough. Firstly, there were already established NGOs in this field. Because of which nobody took them seriously in the beginning. Everyone mocked at their idea but the investors believed in them. They thought of it as a noble cause, but were not ready to put their money into it.

The initial hurdles did not shake their belief in the mission. It was a difficult task. "When your belief is right and you work towards it with 100% commitment nothing can stop you." We moved ahead with the execution of our idea and "within just a year we broke even", says Abhishek with a wide grin.



Innovation - The essential ingredient

Abhishek says, "Innovation is of 200% importance in any business. In a highly competitive business environment like ours, You always have to be innovative because all your clients are different and you have to sell your products differently to them. Innovation keeps me updated and motivated and makes me do something different otherwise, I will be doing what my competitors are already doing."

'It is difficult to start a business' is a common notion that exists, what would be your comments on that? Do you agree with it?

"I completely agree with it. Starting something is not difficult, the thought process that goes into it before starting is crucial. The key aspect is that you think just not for today, but also for the years ahead. Unless you don't think about them and about the adjustments that could fit into them, you will not be able to go far. Most of the businesses fail because they think of today's opportunities and they don't know how they should adapt with tomorrow's requirements and that leads to their closure. Starting a business is difficult, you have to be all by yourself. You have to be the owner, you have to be the worker, and you have to be thinking tank and the executioner. The initial years of the business are the most difficult ones."

Did you think of being an entrepreneur when you were in Symbiosis?

"I never thought of doing anything. I thought I will be doing nothing. Being an entrepreneur never struck my head then, even now if I would not have been planting trees, I don't know what I would have been doing."

Education and enterprise?

Abhishek had a dual perspective about the significance of his education in the enterprise. When asked whether his degree from SCAC was of help in the



Awarded as Alumnus Social Entrepreneur by the hands of Padma Bhushan Dr. S.B. Mujumdar, Founder, Symbiosis

functioning of his enterprise, he said, "Both, yes and no. Yes, because here at SCAC I made a lot of friends who now are my business contacts and No, because the practicality of my degree and that my business are poles apart."

As an entrepreneur, you must have had many exciting experiences. Can you share any such experience with us which came as a breakthrough in your business?

"Yes, it was my first order. I wrote a mail to a client whom I used to write to when I was working for 24 Fusion Media Ltd. Her name was Mrs. Erica D'Souza and she was the corporate communication head of Premier Ltd. I used to mail her because her email address was on their website. Till that date I had never received a reply from her. But when she received a mail from Tree Public, saying we need sponsorship for a tree plantation program, we immediately received her reply asking for a meeting. Without a second's thought, I picked up my bike and went to Mumbai where they had their office. I explained to them what I do, and they said as they have their headquarters in Pune, they want to plant trees there. After a lot of negotiation we settled down for 40,000 trees in 4 years, which was Tree Public's first breakthrough."

Success Mantras for our budding entrepreneurs

Eco-preneur Abhishek believes that an entrepreneur must possess these skills to be successful in life.

1. Self-belief
2. Persistence and Patience
3. Ice on the head & Sugar in the mouth

He feels the best part of being an entrepreneur is the journey, the hurdles and



Tree Plantation

risk. If there are no risks and hurdles, he feels like he is on auto mode. He feels it's the risks and hurdles that add spice to his life.

He continues to say, "I have failures every day, some cost me and some don't. They come with a lesson. My biggest failure was when my whole tree plantation burnt to ashes due to forest fire and it made me learn how to tackle forest fire and to prevent it with technical ways."

If you had the chance to start your career over again, what would you do differently?

He says confidently, "I would be planting trees only. If I am reborn 10 times, I will do the same thing."

Budding entrepreneurs! Ears Up !

Inspired by Sir Richard Branson and his book "Screw It! Just Do It", he tells all the budding entrepreneurs to listen to their hearts and follow it.

"'Just do it' because we think a lot and a lot of thinking leads to paralysis. Good analysis is good and over analysis will lead to mental paralysis.

So, screw it and just do it.", says Abhishek.

With a dream to plant 10,00,000 trees by 2018 and one billion by 2021 in 2-3 cities. He sees himself sitting with the UN and World Bank in another 10 years' time. Abhishek believes he still has a long way to go. Recently Tree Public was conferred upon by a Global Award "Environment Challenge Award 2015-16" for its relentless work in the field of Environment and Biodiversity Conservation.

Interviewed by: Vineeta Singh and Mehazbin Parvin



First, you have to be very genuine, true and loyal to yourself. It is very important because only if you're genuine to yourself, will you be genuine to others. Secondly, you should be passionate about your work. Third is to be street smart.

Parichit Parmar
I-Attire

THE BUSINESS ENTHUSIAST

Symbiopreneurs

Parichit Parmar, Founder - I-Attire Pvt. Ltd.

Year of Graduation : 2006

"I-attire Pvt. Ltd. is an in-house team of highly skilled tailors and designers who use their expertise to achieve superior product quality with constant focus on product innovation."

"Our objective is to deliver impeccable service to our reputed customers through an on time delivery and pre and post-sale services.", says Parichit.

An MBA, a job in the bank was Parichit's life before he ventured out and started I-attire Private Limited. It is a premium supplier of Retail Garments and Corporate Uniforms. Bagging his first order from Jamnalal Bajaj, he set out on a journey which he cherishes.

Parichit loves playing sports, trekking on the weekends and spending time with his family. But, at the same time, he is also very passionate about his business and never fails to give it his 100%.

Memorable Experiences

"My partner and I started this business in a small room. All we took was only Rs.25000 per month without any salary and the profit we earned, we used to put that amount back in our business. Rs.15000 was rent and Rs.10000 was for our living. We survived like that for two years."

"Until the second year of our business, the turnover was Rs. 55 lakhs and we wanted some big orders so that we could grow. The happiest day was when we got his first big order from TATA Cummins. This day saw no end to our happiness" narrates Parichit with a wide grin on his face.

Further he says, "Initially they weren't going to give us the order. But there was one guy from the purchase department who saw the dedication and spark in us and said that he would give us the order no matter whether his counterparts

agree to it or not. Later his counterparts also showed interest and trusted us. This not only increased our turnover from Rs 55 lakhs to Rs 1.5 cr but also helped the company grow."

Hurdles, Failures and lessons learnt

"The initial problem was debtors, because I wasn't earning enough. In the beginning, I used to outsource the work and sometimes the work wasn't up to my expectations but nevertheless if the clients demanded it, I gave it to them.

"Even funds was a crucial problem. I took specific orders and I took orders based on a cycle. You need money for rotation. Even if you don't have money in your account that's ok, but you need money for the cycle."

"As I said that my investment was only 1 lakh, my breakeven was on the 3rd order. We started the company in the month of August and we reached our breakeven point in the month of January."

"One should always accept one's mistakes. You may not be able to prevent those situations from happening, but you can always cope up with them by accepting them, learning from them and then not repeating them again. This will help you in gaining respect and that is very important. People will value you more and more and understand you better. They will understand that you are not here for short term. Instead, you value long term relationships."



Success Mantras

"First, you have to be very genuine, true and loyal to yourself. It is very

important because only if you're genuine to yourself, will you be genuine to others. Second, you should be passionate about your work. Third is to be street smart."

"While running your business, it is very essential that one knows how to manage one's finances. One should know who his/her clients are and what their needs are. Another way to succeed in your business is to have long term vision for your business. Otherwise, you may get short term success but that may fall out in the long run. You should always focus on the long term success and act according to it."

Education and enterprise.

When asked about how his education and scholarly life at Symbiosis had helped him in his enterprise, he said with his usual optimism: "The level that was required to be in Symbiosis during our time was really tough. Symbiosis gave me the opportunity to meet so many different people and learn so many new things which I wasn't aware of. Symbiosis has been one of the turning points of my life."

The formula to a successful entrepreneur.

"For me it is extremely important to go step by step. This is what we have learnt in economics as well. The faster you go up the faster you come down. So you should do things step by step."

i-allire

"It is difficult to start a business" is a common notion that exists, what would be your comments on that? Do you agree with it?

"It is difficult to start a business unless you have a passion for it and if you are ready to put in all your hard work. Otherwise there is nothing difficult."

What is your favorite aspect of being an entrepreneur?

"I really don't like waking up early in the morning, so I like that I can start my work as per the time I want, which is 10.30 am."

Who or what has been your inspiration?

"My Grandfather was a true inspiration for me. He had never thought I would do well and become a businessman. He wondered why didn't I take any financial help for starting the business and always had negative things in his mind regarding my work. So I asked him to continue being negative because this kept on inspiring me."

The social side to I-attire

"I-attire private limited works on the social front also. Angoniwaan is a non-governmental organization for blind people. I-attire uses the rejected, unused and damaged clothes of their own company and gives it to this NGO. They have already given an approximate of 100 sets of clothing."

Budding Entrepreneurs, Ears Up!

"Never give up on any idea just because people tell you it will not work. When I started, a lot of people told me that this model will not work because of immense competition. But I wanted to organize this market and provide quality products which my customers would love! So here I am running a successful and profitable company."

"One should not take short cuts to success, it looks short but it may not lead to anywhere in future. I think it is very important to be slow and steady and go towards success. Please don't look at shortcuts."

In the next 10 years, Parichit wants to see his company as a brand. A brand not only for retail wear but also for corporate uniforms. And in the next 20 years, he wants to shift his base to Singapore or Dubai entering the export sector.

Interviewed by: Srishti Shrivastava and Rupal





A teacher is one of the most influential person in a child's life. She is looked upon as a role model. Moreover she lays a strong foundation of love, trust, building curiosity and love of learning in every child.

Madhura Gogte
Little Loving Children.

LOVING CHILDREN. GROWING CHAMPIONS

Symbiopreneurs

Madhura Gogte, Founder - Little Miracles

Year of Graduation : 2008

Her love for children has been an inspiration in setting up one of the first holistic children's activity center in Pune. At her activity center, Little Miracles, they promote innovative learning.

"Children should have the freedom to express. We at Little Miracles believe that every child in today's world should enjoy the innocence of childhood but should still be able to explore ideas, opportunities, concepts, activities and fields that are meant for them" says Madhura, founder of Little Miracles.



Madhura loves to sing, listen to all sorts of music, go on tricks, play badminton, swim and catch up with friends.

Blessed with a beautiful voice, she wanted to be a singer but realized that she belonged to the kids after teaching at a play school. After gaining some experience by working at Sapling Nursery, Madhura had a desire to start something of her own. That's how she started Little Miracles five years back, in April 2011.

She kick started her venture at a place that belonged to her grandparents. Her set up cost being Rs.50,000-70,000.

"When I started of, there was no such activity centre in proximity. In fact, No activity centre in the city provided a platform for the holistic development of the children. So, you could call Little Miracles as one of it's kind. I realised that the gen next would while away their entire vacation in front of screen which was unlike our generation and this was absolutely unacceptable to me. And that's where I got my motivation to come up with a place where children would have a plethora of skills to choose from and thus have an edge over the others, while having a lot of fun simultaneously."

Are studies important?

Without a second's pause, she says "YES! Whatever you learn in life can be put to use." AnArts graduate in English Literature with a Diploma in Liberal Arts, Madhura says that, "Liberal Arts is an eye opener, which helps you expand your perspective." The love of learning and studying got Madhura to study further in the field of Child Development. She says, "For me studying doesn't stop here. Reading, participating in various conferences, workshop and research is an ongoing activity. I am always inquisitive to know the latest happenings in my field and try my best to gain international exposure that help me to adopt latest findings at work with the children."

The hurdles and failures.

Monthly fee structure was one of the hurdles, which she faced during the initial stage but then she thought of some other alternatives and decided to make it a quarterly fee structure which made her work easy. It also gave an opportunity to observe each child's progress over the term.

Raising Funds is a common obstacle faced by entrepreneurs but not for this confident and dedicated woman. Since, the ancestral land had helped her, funds required were not too high and therefore, she was able to break even in 6 months.

"I am a person who is extremely dedicated to her work. For me Little Miracles is like my baby. I groom it with all the love, care and nurture it with goodness and maybe that's why it's got such positive vibes and children and we teachers don't want to miss a single day of our sessions."

Even after hurdles, she never resorted to unethical practices. A stern believer of ethical values, she runs her business in a 100% ethical manner.

A Lesson learnt...

Madhura says, "I am a person who can't say no, and I am a very sensitive person. I have given some ideas to someone hoping that they will come and

start the activities here but then they started their own thing out of our joint idea and I learned to say no. Failures instead teach one to be smart, vigilant and a bit shrewd."

Her Inspiration and support system

The love for children has got her a long way. Her mother, family, dear friends and well-wishers have been her strength. For her, the children she interacts with have been her guide and Mrs. Kamalaldjungi founder of sapling nursery has been my inspiration.

Success mantras

She would attribute her success to children and their parents. Without them she says, "My journey was impossible".

"Five key elements of success - patience, self-confidence, convincing skills, commitment, hard work, dedication. For a long term success, one requires lots of commitment, hard work and dedication," says Madhura.



Alumni Meet



"It is difficult to start a business" is a common notion that exists, what would be your comments on that? Do you agree with it?

The confident lady responds, "It depends on what kind of business it is, what is your location, what is your target audience. If you know what you really want and if you are clear with the idea, then anybody can start a business, obviously it is difficult but then it depends on each individual's capacity."

A risky business over a secured job. Why?

"The best part of being an entrepreneur is you get to be your own boss. Entrepreneurs are the leaders and while working for someone else you are pressured by someone else's idea, you have to work for someone else's dreams and if you are an entrepreneur you get the chance of working on your idea and making a difference."

The love for children keeps me going. Being with children is the most amazing experience, their love makes me do more for them."

Madhura's take on social responsibility...

Helping the society is what everyone should do in their own little way. She always donates toys, clothes, money to Sofosh (a NGO for kids in Sassoon hospital).

Recently she is also teaching a child, Sarthak, free of cost. She smiled and said,

"He's a very sweet boy." Happiness is evident on her face when she talks about kids.

A small tip for our budding entrepreneurs?

"Make a mark of all the good and bad things, positive and negative so that in future you don't repeat any of such things. "As an entrepreneur one should be smart enough to learn from others mistakes. Don't wait till you do it yourself."

"Being genuine is also very essential. One should realize that if you are an entrepreneur you are setting a trend not disrupting the morals of our culture. Be ethical because that's what will give you a good night sleep." explains Mathura.

A decade from now, Mathura sees herself running a big school or an institution. Her love for kids has no bounds. A woman so passionate about kids and her work, will surely make it big one day. She ends by saying, "I love the initiative by symbiosis, proud to be a part of the symbiosis family, Best wishes."

Interviewed by: Vineeta Singh and Mehazbin Parvin





As an entrepreneur, there are times when you feel let down but you have to keep your spirits high and keep going. We've also been fooled a lot of times. When you set up a business, you need a lot of things. Especially, for e-commerce, you need someone to make a website. People have overcharged us but it's a process of learning. Entrepreneurship is a journey where you grow, fall and learn. But it's a joyful ride.

Aanchal Aggarwal
Secondrow.com
Rejuvenating Garments

REJUVENATING GARMENTS

Symbiprency's

Aanchal Aggarwal, Founder - Secondrow

Year of Graduation : 2010

Aanchal Agarwal, a student of SCAC graduated with a dream of becoming an entrepreneur. A student of Milan fashion school, Aanchal is the co-owner of the www.secondrow.com, India's first online marketplace for clothing resale. Secondrow could be referred to as a social enterprise, as it offers a chance to all the Indian users to sell their old clothes and buy new ones! It offers a collection of second hand clothes of the top clothing and designer brands.

A cross fit lover and an avid reader, Aanchal is that confident and elegant woman who wants to change the way Indians think of used clothes. Through Secondrow, she believes in promoting the concept of bonding and companionship among the Indians.

"It's an online community that enables you to buy & sell curated luxury & fashion pieces. It's like a community on the internet where we have women coming together to swap wardrobes and re-invent their style." says Aanchal.

How did you come up with the idea?

Sipping onto her smoothie, she says, "When I was in Milan, there were a lot of 'thrift stores' where we could go and buy clothes. I loved this concept and it stuck onto me till I came back to India.

Then one day I realized, we have so many clothes that we wear only once or sometimes, we've never ever worn them. So I wanted to bring the concept of thrift stores to India but in the form of an e-commerce. That's when I shared the idea of Secondrow with Sanjeevani. She also loved the idea and that's where Secondrow came into existence! For the first six months, we did all the registration work and finally started second row in December 2014."

How important do you think Innovation is to your business ?

"Innovation, in any business is of utmost importance. Continuous innovation is required to connect with the people who in our case are the women. They connect over the things we love the most - clothing, shoes and bags.

At Secondrow, we accept only designer, vintage articles and the top luxury brand like Zara as they are of better quality and last longer. We do not accept brands like Forever 21 as they are already cheap and not long lasting. So, if we accept it, we need to curate it which adds extra cost.

We believe in sophistication and hygiene. So, we follow a strict procedure at Secondrow.

First, the customer can send in their designer, vintage and branded clothing. We then curate and sanitize it. Every article at Secondrow is carefully inspected after which we evaluate it. We then repackage it. And then via Secondrow, we help our customers find the right buyer for their product. The customer thus not only gets rid of their unused clothing but also earns a quick buck out of it.

THE SECOND ROW

Handpicked.Designer.Vintage.

What are the Hurdles, failures and lessons learnt in your journey so far?

"As soon as one says, 'second hand clothes', there are faces that turn away. It's a challenge to make people realize that these are not worn out clothes but carefully inspected and curated designer clothes that still have a life. In India, it's a little difficult to change people's minds but we've come a long way.

We already have a competitor but the good part about this is, when someone starts the same business, you know it's what people want and need. So, we know we're satisfying people's needs somewhere.

We can't work with vendors right now since we can't work with huge orders. That's a major limitation. Especially since this is a niche market that we are looking at. So we do it all by ourselves. Even when it comes to deliveries."

"As an entrepreneur, there are times when you feel let down but you have to keep your spirits high and keep going. We've also been fooled a lot of times. When you set up a business, you need a lot of things. Especially for an e-commerce, you need someone to make a website. People have overcharged us, but it's a process of learning. Entrepreneurship is a journey where you grow, fall and learn. But it's a joyful ride."

What have been your most memorable experiences ? What are your success mantras ?

"I remember it took a long time for Secondrow to get its first customer, but the day we got it Sanjeevani and I were jumping with joy. The entire journey of Secondrow has been amazing and we've seen it grow. Perseverance is the key to a successful business. Consistency in your efforts and continuous improvement has made Secondrow what it is today."

What according to you is the social side of second row?

"It's surprising how a fashion resale venture can contribute to the society. We believe that one cannot make money without giving back to the society. When customers put up their clothing for sale and someone buys it, they have the option of getting back the money or donating it to charity. Once a woman wanted us to donate the proceeds to an NGO for dogs."

Aanchal is a first in her house to start a business that is so dynamic. Her role model, her father is a trader in the iron and steel industry. She's seen him sweat to make his business grow and now she's following his footsteps.

She concludes by saying that, "Consistency and perseverance is what keeps a business going because there will always be times that will let you down but you have to pick yourself up and believe in yourself to make it work."

Aanchal has dared to be different setting an example for the younger generation, especially girls.

Interviewed by: Sakshi Choraria





Dedication and motivation towards one's goal, being optimistic instead of being pessimistic and by one's foresight, try to research and analyze the market thoroughly. Setting achievable goals and targets, sticking to your plan, and executing the plan in the wisest manner, and the most vital being, to listen to your parents.

Sandeep Sahijwani
Frittes
The Fast Food Junkie

THE FAST FOOD JUNKIE

Symbiopreneurs

Sandeep Sahijwani, Founder - Fritters

Year of Graduation : 2010

The concept of selling fast food through a truck is a totally distinct concept in Pune. Taking at this as a business opportunity, Sandeep set up a fast food truck which serves various types of fries and dips. The various dips and flavors that are served with differently shaped fries and the Spanish snack Churros which seldom people must have heard about added is his USP today.

Coming from a family of entrepreneurs and inspired by his father, he went ahead with this business idea.

Sandeep Sahijwani graduated from SCAC in 2008. He worked in a BPO while he was doing graduation and saved this money which he later invested in his business. After graduating from SCAC he worked for 3 years and then thought of taking a break of 1 year and that was the time when he decided to become an Entrepreneur.

Sandeep is a Music lover, basketball player and firmly believes that humans, being a gregarious animal lover to socialize and interact with people.

Innovation - The essence of enterprise

Sandeep believes that every business needs innovation and being a fast food link, innovation is inevitable and significant.

Being a fast food provider, it is essential for him to have a variety of offerings. He keeps coming up with different flavored dips (some of which you might have never heard of!). His business is one of its kind with a wide variety in fries, dips and churros.





Failures and lessons learnt

He started his business during election time which proved to be a big loop, so now if he goes back in time to rectify his mistake, and consider to start his business all over again, he would have to look out for the proper time.

The main hindrance were language barriers, lots of legal formalities, problem of traffic jam on roads and constant scrutiny by PMC.

Not knowing the behavior and the nature of labor caused him lots of problems. The lesson he learnt was that every labor has a different motto to work and has to be dealt accordingly.

"I was ready to embrace failures, but first I prevent mistakes."

"Having foresight of the market conditions, trends, taste and preferences of mass and alertness and working in the most legitimate manner as far as possible was the key to prevent mistakes."

Memorable Experiences

Sandeep says with beaming happiness, "A lady chef providing one of the best home catering services, called 'The secret chef next door' visited my food truck and tasted the Spanish churros and the honey mustard dip which gob smacked her and even proposed an offer to supply the dip on a regular basis, which made my day. After the end of a hard working day, when someone appreciates you, not only do you get happy but it assures you that you are in the right direction."

Employing or being employed : The choice is yours

According to him, "Working under someone is a kind of donkey work and has minimal chances of growth, but on the contrary, being an entrepreneur, gives an individual great chances of growth and development."



Tips from the young entrepreneur

He says, "Dedication and motivation towards one's goal, being optimistic instead of being pessimistic and by one's foresight, try to research and analyze the market thoroughly is important. Setting achievable goals and targets, sticking to your plan, and executing the plan in the wisest manner, and the most vital, being, to listen to your parents. According to me the 5 factors for being successful are seeking of opportunities, planning, and calculation of risks, execution and organizing. Entrepreneurship has no formula or pattern. Learning to be responsible is the best practical learning experience."

Interviewed by : Nikhil Jain





Anuj Khare



Rohit Lalwani



Naman Shah

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