

Eureka Moments Leads Purdue Alum to Great Success



While working on a summer fellowship at The National Institutes of Health in 1986, Jay P. Desai decided that he liked working with people more than with molecules. With this in mind, after graduating with his MS in Biological Sciences in 1987, Jay went on to Willamette University where he earned his MBA. Jay felt that earning his MBA would broaden his perspective and provide him with more career options. In 1989, after returning to his home country of India, Jay joined Arthur Andersen & Company. In June of 1993 while staffed on an atypical Andersen Consulting project for a small garments company, Jay had his “eureka” moment. It was then that he realized there was a big market to provide management consulting services to mid-sized businesses. In 1994 at the age of 30, Jay left Andersen Consulting with a little over 4 years of work experience to set up Universal Consulting India with a total capital of \$1,000 (USD).

Since 1994, Jay has been the Founder & Chief Executive Officer of Universal Consulting India Pvt Ltd. He currently has over 21 years of management consulting experience and since the inception, of Universal Consulting has built it into one of the largest boutique strategy consulting firms in India, with a team of 60+ people in their Mumbai and New Delhi offices. Mr. Desai has directed more than 685 consulting projects for over 270 clients across the manufacturing and service sectors, in industry verticals as diverse as Life Sciences & Health Care, Industrial Products, Power & Energy, Financial Services, Rural Markets & Agri-Business and Retail & Consumer Goods.

Jay’s role involves the following:

1. Internal strategy formulation and implementation
2. Marketing of consulting services and building the UC brand
3. Steering committee-level involvement for major client projects

4. Managing finances at an overall level
5. Developing and motivating people
6. Conducting research as part of the UC Centre for Strategic Synthesis.

Currently, Jay is in the final stages of writing a book on "The Accountability Deficit" in India's public administration, based on a 2 year research project he undertook internally within the Firm. This book will be published by Pearson in late 2011. Mr. Desai also has active research interests in evolutionary biology (sparked by Peter Waser's courses at Purdue Bio) and its application to the world of business strategy.

When asked how his biological sciences degree and/or Purdue experience has proven valuable in his profession or pursuits? Mr. Desai's response was, "The background in biology and the Purdue experience has been invaluable. The broad exposure to all aspects of living systems, from the micro to the macro, provided me a more holistic perspective with which to examine the genotype and phenotype of businesses whose performance we seek to improve." Mr. Desai has attended a number of executive programs at The Wharton School, INSEAD and the Harvard Business School which have proved helpful in crafting his firm's strategy. He will also complete the AMP degree at the Harvard Business School in May 2011. Due to his experiences, Jay would recommend internships with Management Consulting Firms that have a focus on Life Sciences if you are interested in a career path such as his. His advice/encouragement to current Biological Sciences students is this, "It is clear now, that as the 19th century was for chemistry and the 20th century was for physics, the 21st century will be for biology. I see a Purdue Biology degree as an insurance against the rapid changes in the world over the next 20-30 years."

If you would like to learn more about Mr. Jay P. Desai and his business Universal Consulting please visit them on the web at www.universalconsulting.com.