



POWERING BIG DATA ANALYTICS
AT THE POINT OF DECISION

AUREUS
ANALYTICS
Beyond The Numbers

EXPERT SPEAK

ASHISH T. INTERVIEWED BY SYED ESSAM RASHID

Essam Rashid is a first year MBA student at NMIMS. He loves to read, gorges on Yakhnai Pulao, reverses Roger Federer, follows football and is always on the lookout for a chance to play the beautiful game

Thank you for finding time for this interview. To get this started, can you tell us how NMIMS was back in your day?

I had the time of my life there. I met some of my best friends there whom I'm still in touch with. I remember the evening classes, going for vada pav and chai, occasionally bunking. But one thing that defined my stay there was that our thinking process changed at NM. I became serious after attending the course. With the teachers constantly pushing us to think differently, it all added to the learning.

Your journey has been very exciting,

working across multiple industries, from Steel to Healthcare to ITeS. How has this journey been?

The journey has been fascinating. I started working with my uncle, who was a steel supplier. He always prompted me to think about what the other party expects and then do it. Then by 1998-99, the healthcare transcription and BPO boom began. That is when Cbay was formed and I joined the BPO bandwagon. There, our prime focus was on US clients. The company grew from grassroots to being the world's largest transcription company. By 2012 I started thinking of what to do next.

The internet boom happened, mobile devices appeared, social media caught up, there was a lot of data. There were no business specific solutions that could help you solve your business problems using this data. I came into contact with

a different company. We decided on jumping into Big Data and started Aureus Analytics. This was more of a natural transition as compared to healthcare. We felt there was a gap and decided to get into the industry.

Your companies have mostly been in B2B space, what steps did you take for marketing your ventures?

One of the most important things is to let your work speak for you. For us the challenge in healthcare was to make the people sitting in US realize that India could do what others could do in terms of providing quality. Initially we were only given the overflow work that their vendors couldn't do. But whatever we got we made sure that it was excellent. Once you are able to penetrate 1-2 customers through your work and processes, the customer speaks for himself. Then of course there is the usual stuff like digital media, website, case studies and building the right culture.

Richard Branson recently said 'Starting new ventures takes a screw it let's do it attitude and the right partners to help achieve the unthinkable.' What's your take on this? How much of it is gut

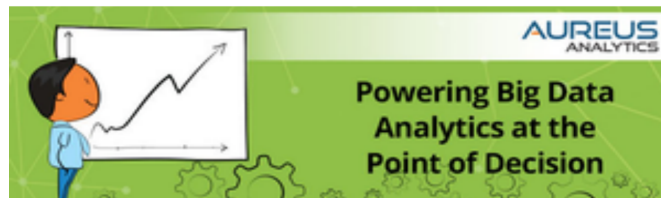
feeling and how much is research?

I would say 60% research and 40% gut feeling. I believe in following instincts. If there is something you feel you can contribute to and has potential to teach you something new, then jump in – you might fail but that helps you to realize what not to do.

Both my previous experiences told me what not to do. And an important part of it was having the right partner. It's important while marketing a B2B venture. As a company you cannot reach across all geographies, therefore a partner can help where they have already made some inroads. It also helps cut your lead time.

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There has always been a debate going on when it comes to promoting new ventures – owner first or company? What are your views on this?





It is always the company. Yes, the founder is important but unless you have a company brand that can speak for itself, your individual brand can only take you to a limited level. Take for example, Tata typically is the brand, and even without Ratan Tata, the brand is still running.

"Promotions are a necessity but at the same time you need to be patient and do the prerequisites."

Aggressive promos or waiting game?

It is a catch-22 situation - you have to balance both well. Promotions are a necessity but at the same time you need to be patient and do the prerequisites. For ensuring product life cycle sustenance, you need to develop MVP and test it with customers. Product and quality are important to check the scalability. The trust of customers follows automatically.

How difficult is it to sell your company and as a serial entrepreneur, when do

you realize that it is time to move on? For me, it is when you stop enjoying your work. Sometimes you reach a scale where you are only doing incremental addition and nothing substantially different. That's the time to put that energy into something else.

According to you, how should one go about generating funds for a venture?

You need to bootstrap yourself to a certain level. You may get money from your own funds, friends and family will also play a part. They won't demand money but you are answerable to the investors who are result-oriented in the short run.

Before approaching a VC, your idea should be formulated and 2-3 customers should be identified for the start-up, which will give a certain amount of trust. After this initial bootstrapping for a product, you may go to an MVP.

How critical is it to hire the right kind of people? What qualities do you look for while hiring?

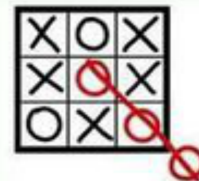
Hiring is a very critical part of start-ups. It is important to identify the right attitude because it is your team that takes you forward. It is important to have the foundation of the building right otherwise problems are inevitable. It took me 6-8 months to build the right kind of team. I hired a special recruitment agency for Big Data Analytics with a future aim of starting banking and eventually health care.

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Any message you'd like to give our readers?

Two things - Firstly, follow your instincts. In our society students are being forced to do what their parents want, but if you are not interested, then don't do it because you will not succeed. Secondly, dream big. Unless you dream you won't get a chance to fulfill them. It's a question of believing in yourself and then dreaming about where you want to be or what you want to do. My Uncle said to me 'you want to be a post man or you want to be a manager?' answer the question and your work will reflect that.

**THINK
OUTSIDE
THE BOX**



If you have liked this and have something to say, please get in touch with me at
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