



SVCE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

PRESENTS SPOTLIGHT SERIES

An initiative in which student volunteers interview prominent SVCE alumni from different walks of life



Interview Number 1:

Sashi Sairaman

MD, MTAB Technology Center Pvt. Ltd
2000 Graduate, Dept. Of EEE

Tell us a bit about MTAB Technology Center

I run an engineering services firm focussed on Industry 4.0. We set up large skill development centres across India in the area of advanced manufacturing technology, primarily in premier educational institutes set up by the central government or the state government.

How did you come up with an idea to start this company?

The primary problem identified was that there was a huge gap between what the industry wants in an employee and the skills possessed by people entering the work force. Most industries did not find it viable to conduct GET training programs. We solved the problem by providing co-curricular courses which focusses on building industry relevant skills, that sophomores can take on.

How did you figure out what you were going to do after college?

I never figured out anything in life. But I have some very core value systems and I steered my life according to them. I've valued principles right from the beginning and

I've stuck to them. I've never followed a herd. I've been an outlier all my life. If someone says I have to conform because society expects me to conform, I would do the exact opposite. That has resulted in different choices. When almost 90% of my batch wrote their GRE and went abroad, I didn't. I finished college not knowing what I wanted to do. When everyone had their lives completely sorted out, I hadn't. I had a job opportunity at TCS which I decided to pursue.

What values do you think an entrepreneur should possess?

Integrity. You have to have confidence in yourself that you're doing the right thing. When you start off as an entrepreneur, the whole world is going to tell you that you're crazy for taking up this career choice. Because you're taking a path that lot of people have chosen not to and it's a very lonely path.

You have to build your support systems and the most important support system you can build is yourself. When you run an organisation, you take upon a huge responsibility and with that responsibility, you have authority and accountability. There is a lot uncertainty in the future and it is phenomenally scary. That is why integrity is most important. It is about being integral with yourself, being able to accept that you're scared and that mistakes can happen. You don't have room for ego.

How do you take proper decisions when running a huge company?

This has been a learning from experience. I have been in a very powerful position being the CEO of a firm. So, one of the most important things I've learned in the 20 years that I've worked is to engage with people who know better than me on some aspect. I ask their expert opinion. Sometimes you just need to ask questions and figure things out.

What do you think is the secret to success?

It is about pursuing what you want. I have friends who run one-man shows and are incredibly happy people. And I have friends who run thousand headcount organisations and they aren't happy. It boils down to a pursuit of happiness. It's okay for you to say no. It is important that you don't compromise. Because if you do, that is going to lead to a series of outcomes which you will regret. Every quarter, I review myself and I evaluate my cost of failure. It opens my eyes to different choices and allows me to say no to decision I don't want to take.

What are some struggles you faced in life and have they taught you?

I'm a single parent. I went back to study at IIM Calcutta with a young kid at home. Time management was tough. I was constantly pushed around saying I have to make

time for everybody and in that process I never had time for myself. I was out of a job from a very senior position. It was very scary whenever I thought to myself, “ I have a kid I have to provide for. What am I going to do?”. That changed a lot of things. I realised that I don’t want to hold up a pretence and I just want to be happy.

I wanted to lead a lifestyle for myself, not for others. It made me look around and realise that even though I can afford luxury, I wanted no part of it. Nobody can push their agenda with me. Nobody can push me to run a rat race. I learned to live life on my terms and at my pace.

To all the students out there, what advice would you offer?

You’re in a generation wherein you have the luxury to not have to be financially independent by the age of 22. Maybe take a year off after college and figure out what you want to do. Very few students realise that it is fine to do things at their own pace. You’re running a race but ask yourself, “Is this the race I want to run?”. Twenty years down the line you will realise that you enjoyed all the difficult choices that you made and the difficult experiences you had. You cannot take decisions without making mistakes. It is important to realise that it is okay to fail and to accept failure . It is one of the best experiences. People only see my success. But I endured a hundred times more failure to achieve it. Just don’t make the same mistakes again. Make new mistakes and learn from them.

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Student Interviewers:

Sudarsshan Krishna (Student Council President)
Adarshya (Second year CS)