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ENTREPRENEURS SHARE THEIR STORIES ABOUT STARTING BUSINESS IN NEPAL

Here are some thoughts that will help you when you are thinking about starting a new business in Nepal. These are a few lessons gleaned from speakers who spoke at Entrepreneurs for Nepal Forums since January 2009.

By Entrepreneurs for Nepal

www.e4nepal.com



Entrepreneurs for Nepal (E4N) is a network for driven, creative and entrepreneurial minded individuals who have ideas to implement in Nepal. This network consists of over 2400 people (as of June 2010). With a low overhead and in a high frequency manner, the network operates through the Facebook group called “Entrepreneurs for Nepal”.

"Last Thursdays" Entrepreneurs Gatherings:

E4N hosts a monthly gathering on the last Thursday of every English month where an established entrepreneur or professional shares his/her experiences and insights to encourage aspiring and budding entrepreneurs. This is followed by a session for entrepreneurs and professionals to network with one another. A summary of the history and wisdom shared by the guest speakers from January 2009 to May 2010 is presented in this booklet so that a larger audience may be inspired towards positivity and entrepreneurship.

E4N Team:

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Partners:

Robin Sitoula & the team at Samriddhi, The Prosperity Foundation << <http://samriddhi.org> >>
Luna Shrestha Thakur & the team at ChangeFusion << <http://nepal.changeofusion.org> >>
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Mr. Mahendra Man Shakya returned to Kathmandu from Boston, USA in 1995, after spending seven years in the USA. In the US, he had seen how franchise-driven restaurants such as McDonald's, Burger King and others did well by selling fast food to billions of customers. On returning to Nepal, he saw that momos had become somewhat of a fast food in Kathmandu. This gave him an idea: Why not start a chain of momo restaurants, and expand by handing out franchise rights to local owners?

The idea, though simple, proved to be much harder to carry out in practice. In the restaurant business, location is all that matters. But landlords at most decent and commercially active locations were not keen to rent out space for momo restaurants. At the time, in the mid-90s, the image and the hygienic conditions of road-side momo restaurants left much to be desired. Despite having no background in running a restaurant, Mr. Shakya and his brothers jumped in.

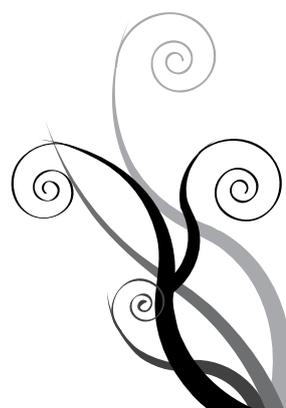
They ran into several problems:

First, the issue of workers: In the restaurant business, the hardest part is recruiting and retaining workers, and there's a high turnover. Most who come in are in their first jobs, and as soon as they get some experience, they leave to join other restaurants or go away to work in the Gulf and overseas. There were some who became political trouble-makers at the restaurant later on. But at the time of hiring, Mr. Shakya said that it was hard to understand who needed a job and who needed something to do so that they could continue their political activism in Kathmandu.

Second, the issue of landlords: Mr. Shakya had to move the restaurants to several locations because landlords would not abide by the contractual agreement. As soon as they saw the restaurant doing well by the buzz of customers, they would raise the rent. Negotiating these repeated changes proved to be difficult at times. For a restaurant, when you change locations a few times, it is difficult to run it well.

And third, the issue of partnerships: Mr. Shakya had teamed up with a local momo maker, who had an existing momo business. Mr. Shakya partnered with him, with an agreement that both would grow the business, expand and do well. Mr. Shakya had perfected a secret sauce, which he thought was the business' 'killer app'. But the partnership fell through, and the partner walked out with the secret recipe.

Mr. Shakya's advice was that when starting a location-based business in Nepal, spend a lot of time hiring good people, get everything in writing, use proper lawyers and accountants, and negotiate well with landlords. Of course, pay attention to who you are partnering with. This way, you save yourself a lot of grief.



Mr. Kiran Bhakta Joshi left his job of 18 years at the Walt Disney Studios in Los Angeles, USA to start his own studio in Kathmandu - Incessant Rain Animation Studios. Why, one may ask, would an established professional risk opening an animation studio for Hollywood production in politically-unstable Nepal, of all the places in the world? That is as rare as US First Lady Michelle Obama recently wearing a Nepali designer Prabal Gurung's creation. The answer lies in the strength of Nepali diaspora in creating opportunities in Nepal, and opening a new industry and career line for young Nepalis.

With a background in computer software, Mr. Joshi started working in Walt Disney as a graphics software developer. One of his projects was developing the animation system used for the movie "Beauty and the Beast", which went on to be nominated for the Best Picture at the 1992 Academy Awards. Leaving a rewarding 18 year old job with a post of Head of Production and a team of 250 artists and technologists working under him was not easy for Mr. Joshi. On top of that, he was aware of the doubts among his potential clients whether an animation studio in Nepal would deliver the quality and turnaround they were seeking.

The year 2007 was the turning point in his life. When he came to Nepal for the funeral of a relative, his friend Sanjib Rajbhandari suggested opening a studio in Nepal.

He then spent three weeks in small animation boutiques in Kathmandu. In one of his visits, Mr Joshi was impressed by a 19-year old boy's portfolio. However, the boy said "I am not able to pursue my passion in animation due to pressure from my parents. So, I am studying management. Would you be able to help me?". The question struck Mr. Joshi. Realizing the level of the boy's passion and impressed with the talent pool of the young artists in Kathmandu, he decided it was time to open an animation studio in Nepal.

Incessant Rain now employs around 60 young animators who work on computer graphics projects of Hollywood productions and US TV series. While majority of the company's business comes from the US, the company has also produced animation for Nepali firms like Ace Development Bank and World Food Program (WFP). Mr. Joshi believes that setting up of a business is easy but sustaining it is difficult. As he shuttles between Nepal and the US, he is finding it difficult to spend time in Nepal to ensure quality of the products. In the future, he hopes to find the right people to help him maintain quality.

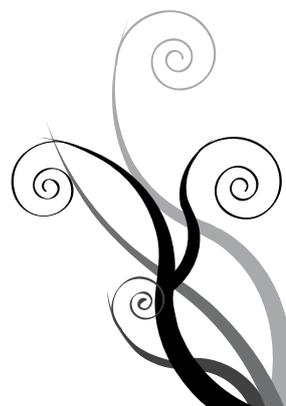
While doing business in Nepal, he is facing the challenge of meeting deadlines of international clients due to frequent bandhs (strikes) and load-shedding. Despite these challenges, he sees bright hope for Nepal due to cheaper labor force, untapped resources, rich culture and diversity. The goal of the studio is not just to work on projects from the US, but take the rich folk stories of Nepal to the world, just like "Jungle Book", a story from India that became a famous animation. He finds Nepal rich in tales of Yaks and Yetis and other folklores.

His firm has successfully used the yaks and the one-horned rhino for the animation advertisements of World Food Program (WFP) and Ace Development Bank, respectively. He believes these would help to showcase the country's local identity. In the long-term, he hopes to focus on brand building and creating intellectual property.

At the E4N interaction program organized by Entrepreneurs for Nepal, Mr. Joshi shared his experience of opening and running a business in Nepal with international clientèle. Some of his thoughts are :



1. Employees are the most valuable assets of a business. He says that it is very important to connect with every employee because even a single person with an ego can jeopardize the work process.
2. Young employees are easier to train than experienced employees due to their willingness to accept new ideas.
3. It is important to make sure the employees are having fun during work but at the same time discipline should be enforced.
4. Salaries at his studio are based on the productivity and the quality of the animation that his staff can create. He even helps his staff to go abroad if they want because he believes those people will gain better knowledge and return.
5. Networking is very important for entrepreneurs and no one should underestimate its power. Most of Mr. Joshi's clients in the US are established due to networking.
6. Hunting for talent is an arduous process and he looks forward to collaborate with the universities in Kathmandu to start an animation academy to nurture fresh talents inside Nepal.



Bal Krishna Joshi argues that he is likely to be the most famous “goat-seller” in the world. Bal is the co-founder of **thamel.com**, an internet e-commerce portal that sells goods online – enabling expatriate Nepalis to purchase gifts, which are then delivered in Nepal by the staff of thamel.com, including goats during the annual Dashain festival.

What made Bal an entrepreneur? Quite simply this: His dislike for a regular nine-to-five job, and his reluctance to work for a corporation.

His search for new opportunities led him to the IT industry. With a friend, Bal thought of building an information portal. That was how thamel.com came about. The duo’s initial step was to cater to the needs of the site visitors by creating a chat platform.

The platform was also intended for the vendors to connect to their prospective customers to sell their products. But to the founders’ surprise, they found that most of the users consisted of Nepali students studying abroad. These students used the platform to connect to their relatives and friends in Nepal. Bal remembered a website called 1800flowers.com which used to sell flowers online, and had made millions while going public. He and his friend thought of starting something similar in Nepal to sell goods on the web.

It was the Dashain festival of 2001 that gave Bal the lucky break he deserved. Driven to the brink of shutdown, he and his partners had made a decision to give the portal one last chance. If the business failed to pick up during the then upcoming Dashain-Tihar sales season, they would return to their old jobs. While discussing their business plan at a bar, a friend who was a bit tipsy suggested that they start selling ‘Khasi’ (live goats) online. Bal got most excited by this seemingly crazy idea, and he quickly implemented it. Though it started with much skepticism, today this idea has made him perhaps the most famous goat seller in the country, even in the world.

When thamel.com started taking orders from Nepalis abroad to deliver goats to their families in Nepal, their customers asked what if the goat died. How would the customers know that they really got the goat that their sons and daughters had ordered from abroad? Plagued by uncertainty, Bal went to observe and study the goat selling process by goat traders in Kathmandu. He solved the problem of information uncertainty by arranging to take and send digital pictures of the ordered goats to customers.

By the third week, thamel.com sold goats worth 50,000 US dollars. Not only did this idea of selling goats online to US- UK-based Nepalis for their families in Nepal took off, it also made Bal and his company financially successful. The added bonus was that it also got him famous all over the world when he was featured by TV channels such as the BBC World Service. “Bhai Tika”, another religious festival, also drove business up, as every present thamel.com delivered carried sentiment of sisters for their brothers. Moved by the sentimental value of gifts, Bal changed the slogan of thamel.com to “Messenger of Sentiments”.

Some thoughts from Bal Krishna Joshi for aspiring entrepreneurs:

1. Always think what the final consumer sees and thinks when designing a product or service.
2. Don’t complain about the obstacles along your way. Try to turn them into opportunities.
3. Keep seeking new opportunities.
4. While hiring people make sure they believe in the cause you are working on.
5. Finding a talented workforce is hard and retaining them is even harder.
6. Never ignore the social cost of your economic activities.



“Sherpa Adventure Gear”, the name itself gave goose bumps to the Marketing and Brand Manager of another global apparel company when it was first mentioned in a discussion. “That’s the effect a brand name should have”, says Tashi Sherpa, the owner of Sherpa Adventure Gear (SAG).

SAG is a globally competitive company, which counts North Face and Eastern Mountain Sports as its competitors. It manufactures and sells adventure clothes and trekking gears-- all manufactured by Nepalis in Nepal. Presently, the company is exporting to 13 countries around the world from its headquarters in a swanky new five-storey building in Naxal, Kathmandu. The flagship store has a research and development unit, and a bed and breakfast outfit that caters to their visiting foreign buyers.

The story behind how SAG happened is a story of luck meeting an opportunity, according to Mr. Sherpa. His uncle was one of the original Sherpas on Sir Edmund Hillary’s celebrated expedition in 1953. He knew that as high-altitude porters and skilled technical climbers, Sherpas’ contributions are immense to mountaineering expeditions. Unlike the mountaineers, the work of Sherpas is not heralded, and they often live in poor economic conditions.

He wanted to do something to honor these unsung heroes. That’s when the name Sherpa Adventure Gear came to his mind, as he started making a transition from his ready-made garment business (which did not do too well because of the phasing out of the global quota on ready-made garments) to high-end sports wear business.

Since its founding, SAG has been sponsoring the best high altitude climbers in the world, the Sherpas, to test its products. The Sherpa Brand Ambassador is paid a royalty based on sales, and up to \$0.50 from every product sold goes to a special fund for the education of the underprivileged Sherpa children in Nepal.

Although he had always been in the garment industry it was not easy for him to operate SAG because the clothes made in SAG are of superior quality. He did not have the technical knowledge of manufacturing adventure clothes and trekking gear. But he said that it is never too late to learn, especially when one is passionate.

So, once he saw the market potential of Sherpa-brand adventure clothes, he learned all the functions such as designing, manufacturing, sourcing the raw materials, packaging, marketing and exporting. “Having knowledge of all this is important but getting your hands into everything might create disorder in your business”, states Mr. Sherpa. As your company grows, you must learn to delegate work, and trust your employees.

The first business he started was without any proper planning but it was a learning experience. He shared his learning as follows:

Lesson #1: A proper business plan is the initial step to establish any business.

Lesson #2: Never get into a price war but focus on differentiating your product from competitors.

Lesson #3: Delegate responsibility and emphasize on hiring honest and passionate people.

Despite the political turbulence going inside and outside the country, Mr. Sherpa seems cool and confident to compete in the world market with the label “Made in Nepal”. He believes that a businessperson should have control over the quality of the products, and take control of the sales and marketing. This is his secret of success as he plans to keep the “Made in Nepal” flag flying high.

Mr. Lindblom is from Sweden. He's married to a Nepali woman, and considers Nepal as his karmabhoomi. He's been active getting the entrepreneurship going in Kathmandu, with his opening two showrooms of Isadora Cosmetics in Kathmandu.

“The market in India is very complicated and it is difficult to do business there. There are many middlemen in India and various agents are involved in almost every sector. But in Nepal, it's much simpler to do business. There are fewer entrepreneurs, and everyone knows one another. Nepal is easier to navigate for a foreigner like me and it's much easier to do business in Nepal. That's why I came here,” said Swedish entrepreneur, Mr. Lindblom.

Mr. Lindblom is running two companies in Nepal - Artamus Nepal (P) Ltd., and L&L House of Commerce (P) Ltd. Artamus Nepal is an internet marketing for European clients while L&L House of Commerce is a trading and investment company. The latter company focuses on introducing high quality products from Scandinavia and exporting unique Nepali products to the European market. It also concentrates on importing cosmetic items under the brand name of Isadora, which recently opened a showroom in Durbar Marg, Kathmandu.

Mr. Lindblom has started different businesses with his family. They have continued to invest in different sectors such as coffee, IT, cosmetics, while running an import and export business. He thinks that companies of Nepal are small so they need to work together otherwise they cannot succeed in both the local and global markets.

However, there is a culture of mistrust among entrepreneurs in Nepal, which hinders their growth. While competition is the mother of invention in an open capitalist market, there is a fine line between competition and collaboration that benefit both competitors. Nepali entrepreneurs have to learn the difference between the two if they want to succeed.

Mr. Lindblom feels that eradication of corruption and political violence will help Nepal achieve the prosperity enjoyed by Switzerland, and he sees Nepal as a potential Asian Switzerland. He believes the market in Nepal is expanding, and that brand awareness is gradually growing among people. He also recommends that since Nepal has a very small market, it is a perfect situation to use the blue ocean strategy, which is a way of testing new products in new markets so that mistakes are small, and payoffs are potentially huge. He gives the example of Tata Nano as a typical blue ocean product.

Mr. Lindblom says entrepreneurs of Nepal are facing difficulty mainly due to miscommunication. Comparing Swedish people to Nepalis, he finds the former more direct. He feels that Nepalis have a tendency of beating around the bush until finally they get to a point. This kind of uncertainty is what he thinks a lot of Nepali business people have to deal with.

Answering a question on how to bring back people who have left the country, he thinks that a joint effort between the government and private institutions can create an environment where there is possibility of people coming back. “They use the word consensus but there does not seem to be any compromise,” laments Mr. Lindblom.

In summary, Mr. Lindblom shared the following words of wisdom for Nepali entrepreneurs:

1. Collaboration among competing entrepreneurs is key to uplift the market for all involved.
2. Quick returns, in two-three years, in business is unrealistic in most cases. In Nepal, entrepreneurs tend to seek returns in five to six months.
3. Nepal could be the blue ocean, or testbed for products in new markets so that mistakes are small.
4. The Nepali culture of not being straight forward in business is inefficient and very harmful for entrepreneurs.

As the CEO, Mr. Tiwari's priority at Himalmedia was to turn around the company both operationally and financially. Leading a team of senior managers to focus on the results, he accomplished the turnaround task in 20 months, though he admits that any business is always an unfinished business, and that much work remains to be done at any given time at Himalmedia for further success.

Over a period of 14 months, he also negotiated with two Labor Unions, one of which was violently hostile. One day in December 2008, the national members of the violent union stormed into the building and physically attacked Mr. Tiwari and his editorial and marketing colleagues when they were having a weekly corporate meeting. A big public uproar ensued. "Had ours been an instant noodles company, perhaps nobody would have cared as much about the attack. But the attack on a media house and on journalists such as Mr. Kunda Dixit was nationally and globally condemned, and that backlash hurt the attacking party."

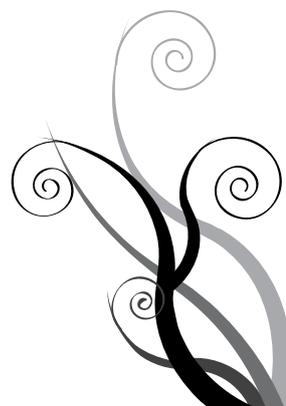
Mr. Tiwari lamented that the process of turning around the company inevitably meant letting go of some competent and loyal staff since the management was not in a position to raise salaries and benefits. The survival of the company was at stake.

"The staff members asked to leave were understandably angry and emotional. The pressure on me was enormous. But I couldn't take it personally, and I couldn't let it all get to me. I had to be calm and focused to be persuasive, sympathetic and persistent – all of which I found difficult to be at times", he shares. He said that with the support from the Himalmedia Board and the remaining staff, he let a total of 60 staff leave the company with generous severance packages and as humanly as possible, helping them with job searches, reference letters and networking calls on their behalf. "I had never worked directly with labor unions before, so dealing with them from start to finish in this case was an experience which tested me as a manager every single day" he shares.

Due to his regular and good communication with the staffs, it became easier for him to complete the mandate given by the Board. To win staff's trust, he would often hold several meetings, be persistent about getting the results and make things clear and transparent to staff. He says, "Managers get defensive and are easily agitated when labour union leaders start thumping their fists on the table. Often, a manager's anger, impatience and immaturity make an already bad situation even worse."

Mr. Tiwari thinks that most trade unions are good; but some of their leaders are cunning politicians who use every means to advance their own political careers at the expense of hapless and clueless private sector owners and managers. The demands of the trade unions should be, he says, in line with Nepal's Labour Laws. "Play straight, and stick to what the Labour Laws say" opines Mr. Tiwari. "You do not have to like the laws. You just have to follow them so that your position as a manager is legally and morally explainable when it comes to negotiating with Union leaders," he says. Mr. Tiwari says that he believes that any success is only up to a point, and to keep on succeeding at anything, you have to keep on working hard and push ahead.

(After completing what he was hired to do as the turnaround CEO, Mr. Tiwari left Himalmedia in December 2009. He continues to write a column for Nepali Times newsweekly.)



Min Bahadur Gurung is to Bhatbhateni, what Sam Walton is to Walmart: a visionary founder of supermarkets around the world.

Mr. Gurung is the owner of the Bhatbhateni chain of supermarkets with a story of entrepreneurship that is inspiring for all. An ever optimistic and humble entrepreneur, he hails from a remote village in Khotang. He started his venture with \$1135 by opening a small grocery store. Today he is a multimillionaire with the retail super market chain “Bhatbhateni” with plans to expand across the country.

He sees a lot of opportunities in Nepal and encourages young professionals to start things. He says that old investors like him are ready to back young groups of capable professionals to start business.

He wants young people to enter the Nepali market which has a lot of opportunities and a lot of room for innovation. His idea of biggest social service in Nepal is to give fair employment to as many Nepalis as possible. He employs about 900 people now, and is planning on employing about 50,000 people directly in retail and agriculture businesses. He says that hydro power and agriculture are fields he would personally invest in anytime.

His advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is as follows:

- a) It is “THE” best time to be an entrepreneur in Nepal. He says history has proved that a lot of big companies in the world are the ones who started right after a big/ civil war.
- b) Be patient. Mr. Gurung waited 9 years before he turned his small grocery store into a retail store.
- c) Imbibe honesty. Mr. Gurung emphasizes entrepreneurship is about relationships. Therefore honesty is a must specially in matters of money. Have a honest relationship with your financial institutions, your creditors, debtors, co-workers, employees.
- d) Share. If you share much, you gain in doing business in Nepal.

“It is “THE” best time to be an entrepreneur in Nepal.”



Mrs. Ambica Shrestha is the figure behind Dwarika's Hotel, which is perhaps the world's only hotel to be constructed for the expressed purpose of preserving the unique architecture and art of its culturally rich environs.

At the Last Thursday's interaction organized by Entrepreneurs for Nepal, Mrs. Shrestha provided inspirational words to the 50 or so young entrepreneurs gathered at the event. She encouraged the young guns to change the conventional mindsets from being job seekers to job creators. That would stop so many young people going abroad. "Employee mindset tends to make your vision limited whereas sky is the limit for entrepreneurs", she said. "Besides it's very hard to find a job these days. So come out of universities not as employees but as employers and entrepreneurs, create a job of your own, be it small but be innovative and imaginative", she adds. According to Mrs. Shrestha one lesson for aspiring entrepreneurs is that hard work & determination are essential to success. Riches don't come overnight neither does success. One needs to love their work invariably if he/she really wants to succeed.

Hospitality, IT, travel and tourism are some of the areas she finds worthwhile for investing time and resources. Mrs. Shrestha gives the example of Spain which was quite a poor country until a few decades ago but found its riches by promoting what they had: beaches, islands and their rich culture. Low labour costs spearheaded the transformation of Spain from a poor country to a highly industrialized economy. "Nepal can also benefit from its cheap labour and natural resources," says Mrs. Shrestha.

She states that hospitality business doesn't just profit the top level entrepreneurs. The profit and benefits trickle down to all the participants of the business regardless of their level. A vegetable grower or a transport service provider benefits equally like hoteliers if hospitality business grows.

Mrs. Shrestha chose to break traditional convention by working after marriage. Mrs. Shrestha remembers her struggling days in a male-dominated Nepalese society and encourages young girls of today to work very hard and break the glass ceiling society imposed on them.

She started teaching for a monthly salary of Rs. 80, worked with USIS in 1959 and then as Managing Director of Kathmandu Travel & Tours, one of the first travel agencies in Nepal, which was started by her husband, Dwarika Das Shrestha. During a jog, her husband observed intricately carved and engraved wooden pillars of an old building being demolished to make way for a contemporary structure.

He convinced the workmen to exchange the damaged pillars for money plus new lumber, which was followed by further collection of such wooden structures. A friend staying in their cowshed with an old carved window was highly impressed and word of mouth brought more people to observe the carvings. Someone suggested the duo to build more of such rooms and hence preserve the carvings and make money as well. This led to the commencement of a successful lodging business.

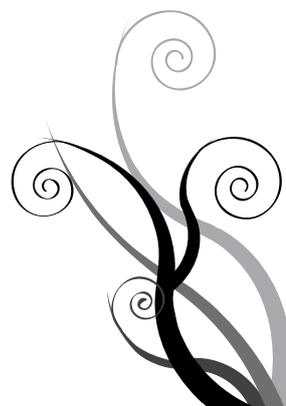
When her beloved husband passed away in 1991, Mrs. Shrestha persevered to fulfill her husband's dream to use all the artifacts and build a huge hotel. Due to her dedication, today Dwarika's hotel portrays itself as a mansion of artifacts, carved windows and our traditional arts allowing guests to live among the architectural and artistic beauty of the past. Through hard work, perseverance and support of her daughter, she travelled all over the world marketing her hotel.



She also introduced Dachi appa which is a traditional way of making carved bricks. Mrs. Shrestha also found innovative ways to prevent any damages to the traditional structures from earthquake. Besides her hotel, Mrs. Shrestha currently works towards helping women through various organisations and charities. T Women are empowered through literacy, skills enhancement and loans for starting their own ventures.

Mrs. Shrestha opines that it's the young people and all the stakeholders who should unite and protest against strikes and bandas that threaten the survival of the hospitality industry. She believes it's the inaction of the good people that's letting the strikes go on as only a handful of people easily hamper the daily life of the others by blocking the roads and traffic. "Don't expect and wait for the government to set things straight. It's your life and your country. Stop them from ruining your life," she appeals to all of us.

"Don't expect and wait for the government to set things straight. It's your life and your country. Stop them from ruining your life,"



Anil Keshari Shah, currently the CEO of Mega Bank and a household name in Nepal, in his own words 'loves change, thrives in change'. In fact, change has been the mantra of his living. As a kid, he went to seven different schools in Nepal and India, then he left to Washington for his college; when he came back to Nepal to do something, he worked for a Walt-Disney production movie. But this was just the beginning of changing environments and places for a young Anil Shah, who attributes the experience and outlook gathered in all those years of change for making him the one of the best suited people to live in a country like Nepal right now which is going through not an evolutionary but a revolutionary change.

When he first set foot in the banking sector, Anil Shah joined Nepal Grindlays Bank which would later become Standard Chartered Bank in an assisting position with a starting salary of Rs.3,500 to later become the Head of consumer bank and Chief Operating Officer there. Yet again, change was his calling as from Standard Chartered bank, he moved on to Nabil Bank and became the CEO in one year. In his five years as a CEO in Nabil Bank, the institution saw unprecedented success and it became the number one bank in Nepal.

Being a successful entrepreneur or a business person in Nepal is not everyone's cup of tea and according to Shah, when you are doing business in Nepal, the first thing to realize is that you are doing business in Nepal; complaining and blaming the conditions won't do you any good. Stepping out of the comfort zone and trying to work in the system is the formula to success. 'Until you work in the system you will not succeed and once you learn to work in the system the success is yours' says Shah. Giving his own example he adds 'I have not invented any wheels by myself, I have taken out different wheels from different places and put it in the proper places and I have succeeded. I see which things work where and put the right wheel in right place and make a move. If you want to be one step ahead of your competitors, you must be able to learn from others mistakes, others success.'

His philosophy on the leadership he has taken over the years in different places is that if the institution or the team he headed were a band or an orchestra, he considers himself a conductor. He explains he has succeeded because he has believed in his orchestra and everybody who played the instruments in an orchestra knew how to play their respective instruments better than him. His job was to bring all of them together and deliver the result by coordinating them. According to him, as a leader, there are only three things one should focus on. First, understand the person you are working with, then understand the work, the task and the time you want to deliver, and lastly, determine what leadership style you want to implement to get your goals done.

Shah says, we are completely over banked in a classical market, so big businesses have 28 banks running after them so you have to find a new market and that market is Small and Medium Enterprises (SME). In Nepal every house has at least one shutter and each shutter has a SME. If you are in SME than, its the time for you, because its time for banks to search for new markets.

Anil Shah urges youngsters to "Get involved". It doesn't mean drop every thing and jump into politics but get involved and again it doesn't mean just talking about it from your room over a drink. We have to get involved and talk, because if we continue to stay in the sideline, we don't have the right to say others have not done good. We should be involved not against any one but for our voice to be heard.

"I generally love to come to Nepal because I can see everyone happy. Everyone is smiling all the time even when we have to walk six hours to get water or when we are dying from diarrhea because of lack of medicine. Because our satisfaction is too low, we have the highest mountain in the world but we summit too early. Unconsciously we have huge inferiority complex with our two big neighbors. We go for our study in India, go for tourism in India, we used to go to die in India between Baranasi, but as soon as we return from India we start calling them bad names. But I am very happy to see the young generation right now, I think the culture is changing."

“I feel very pleased to see so many entrepreneurial brains in Nepal these days. I find that many youngsters are pursuing their studies in entrepreneurship. I haven’t studied management or economics though. I am a conservationist. I studied forestry and worked for the forestry department until 1970 when I left my job to become an entrepreneur”, said Karna Sakya, an accomplished tourism entrepreneur of Nepal and an accomplished writer of two hugely successful books “Soch” and “Khoj” to his credit and his third book titled “Ma sakchhu” due to be released soon.

As Mr. Shakya shared his experience with young entrepreneurs gathered during the Last Thursday’s event organized by Entrepreneurs for Nepal, he gave his first lesson: Experience is critical for an entrepreneur, more than the academic qualification as it is the experience that teaches you better on how to manage time, motivate people towards your vision, develop your human resources, get the loan approved, deal with unions etc. Nepali entrepreneurs have to learn more from the context of Nepal rather than from international books on entrepreneurship.

He cited examples such as Laxmi Sharma, who has been to a school for not more than three days but became the first woman “Tempo Driver” of Nepal and has then created an internationally sprawling business of handicraft, and is now known as “the button queen on Nepal” for her unique designs of buttons made from animal bones. Shakya talked about a 25 years old widow in Bhaktapur who was making enough money to feed her children through begging but through sheer persistence started a successful organic vegetable farming business.

In 1971, when Mr. Shakya started the legendary Kathmandu Guest House with just 12 rooms, he didn’t think it would develop into a sprawling hotel in Thamel.

As one runner wouldn’t make a marathon, a single Kathmandu Guest House wouldn’t have made Thamel the tourist hub it is today. Realizing this, he asked other entrepreneurs to build hotels in the vicinity of his guest house. Though people criticized his move to ask a competitor to put up a hotel beside his, his wisdom paid off.

Present day Thamel enjoys myriads of hotels and restaurants, and is always buzzing with tourists from all over the world and Thamel has become a brand in itself! Lesson 2: “An entrepreneur must never be scared of competition, it must be embraced. Competition shouldn’t be treated as a threat but as a necessity. Competition makes you more efficient and fitter for survival. Don’t think of finding success alone”, he shares.

“Tourism is a dream industry. You need to dream and sell your dreams”,

Mr. Shakya opined about the trade his life has been devoted to. Though Nepal has a huge potential in tourism industry, conventional mindset of tourism entrepreneurs of Nepal is one of the main reasons for holding it back. Tourists who visit Nepal have already had enough of hotels, rafting, mountain climbing, trekking. They want something new now. There are many hidden paradises in Nepal where tourists are yet to be taken to, many adventures tourists are yet to experience. The problem is we are not being “innovative”, he feels.

He believes that knowledge and sweat should never be sold for free and there isn’t anything called free lunch. He adds,

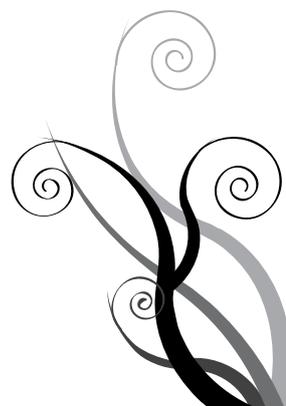
“Selfishness is not wrong, if it does not harm others”.



He believes self-interest makes people work towards helping others to earn profit in return. Self-interest is an inevitable aspect of entrepreneurship. Drive for success, not wealth, makes a person successful. Many once successful business houses have been driven to oblivion as the first generation failed to transmit the entrepreneurial drive to the following generation. Mr. Shakya feels that Nepal doesn't need any more political leaders. On the other hand, we need much more entrepreneurs who are generating wealth and creating jobs for tens and hundreds of people.

Mr. Shakya emphasizes on the need to utilize every paisa efficiently as an entrepreneur. After being successful, he feels that time becomes the most valuable resource and the focus must be on the most efficient use of time and networks.

For aspiring entrepreneurs, he says, is: "Evaluate yourself. Be passionate about your work, have the enthusiasm to be consistent. A person must love his work to be successful. Without love for your work, you can be an employee but never an entrepreneur. Love for your work generates passion. An entrepreneurship is similar to riding a bicycle or swimming. You won't learn them by reading books about them. You need to experience them yourself, commit some mistakes and learn from them."



Gyanendra Lal Pradhan, an electrical engineer and a business entrepreneur, is widely known for his contribution in areas of hydroelectricity and clean water. Mr. Pradhan is the Patron/ Chief strategist of Hydro Solutions which is currently working on about 15 hydro projects capable of producing more than 360 Mega Watts (MW) of electricity.

According to Mr. Pradhan, entrepreneurship doesn't benefit an individual alone but the whole society and the country by creating employment opportunities and generating wealth. Mr. Pradhan believes Nepal is full of life. Nepal has 20000 liters of per capita water and enough potential for generating electricity to meet the demands of India and Bangladesh.

Nepal has both water and the potential to generate electricity and the market to sell them as well. He suggests everyone to learn from Norway which is the fifth largest producer of oil but uses electricity for its domestic use and exports all the oil. Norway started electricity projects when it was too poor by calling on foreign investment and safeguarding the investments.

The abundant production of cheap electricity caused foreign aluminium companies to come to Norway and soon it also became a large producer of aluminium and due to the rising demands many foreign companies came to Norway to create a huge shipping industry. Similarly Nepal can be as prosperous as Norway if it utilizes its water resources properly.

Despite the potential, Nepal's resources are being poorly managed; we have no oil with Oil Corporation, no water with Nepal Drinking Water Corporation, no electricity with NEA. All of these problems are self made. So, what's the process of bridging the gap between potential and reality? He thinks the younger generations have a great role in the process.

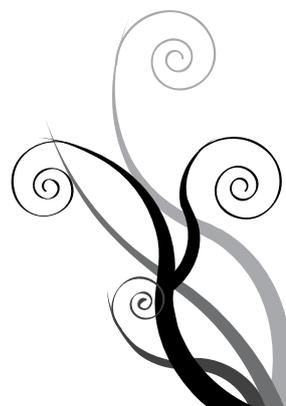
Talking about the environment for business in Nepal, he doesn't find it secure enough owing to the fact that the country has had a decade of internal conflict between the Maoists and the government. He had only just bought the Butwal Hydropower Company when the then rebels blasted his station. Extreme depression made him give a serious thought of moving to Canada to settle there but he abandoned the thought later. He now works closely with disgruntled groups to understand their concern and provide for their needs as much as possible.

Mr. Pradhan said it is the most significant time in the history of hydroelectricity in Nepal now as more than 50 thousand crore rupees are currently being invested in hydropower. The fate of the current investments will determine the future of hydroelectricity in Nepal. Hence we need to make the investment environment friendly.

As an advice to young entrepreneurs, he suggests them to take some calculated risks and do something new rather than copying from someone because copying from someone always makes one inferior to the original entrepreneur. Organizing capacity is another very important skill needed by an entrepreneur because he believes even the most capable entrepreneurs cannot exceed certain level without organization. Organizing skills involve networking and connecting with people who are crucial to the success of the organization. According to him, partnership is a better form of business ventures and competition between partners promotes the interest of the organization rather than sole trading concern where the sole owner enjoys monopoly.

Mr. Pradhan outlines the primary characteristics of successful entrepreneurs as follows:

- Think differently, be day dreamers
- Be independent, tough and creative
- Be extremely optimistic
- Be prompt decision makers if you have enough facts/ information
- Have a vision to drive enterprise
- Have a habit of analyzing past actions and learn from them
- Have determination and strategies to turn vision into reality



Ajay Ghimire is the CEO of Vibor Bank, a national level category B financial institution licensed from Nepal Rastra Bank. Mr. Ghimire is also the founder of Ace Institute of Management and Ace Finance.

He shared that during an exam at MIT where he was doing his MBA, he faced an incident which later inspired him to establish Ace Institute of Management. “I had answered a question wrong but towards the end of exam I realized my mistake. I put a short note at the end of the answer sheet explaining my wrong assumption that led to the wrong answer along with the conclusion that I would have reached had I made the right assumptions. To my surprise, I was awarded full marks. Later when I enquired, my teacher told me that what counts is the right knowledge I had and not the exact answer. The incident had a profound impact on me as being a student in the Nepalese educational system I was habituated to the opposite situation. I later returned to Nepal and established Ace Institute of Management which unlike the traditional Nepalese educational system focuses on practical and up-to-date education.”

After establishing the Ace Institute of Management as a pioneer educational institution of Nepal, Mr. Ghimire began to realize that it was time to support entrepreneurs, so he worked on bringing the concept of consumer finance while he was working for Nabil Bank.

But before he could implement his concept, the ownership of Nabil Bank changed. This led to the establishment of Ace Finance which was initiated to support the entrepreneurship activities in Nepal. Besides this, Ace Finance also came up with the concept of apartments in Nepal with Ace Apartments.

In 2000, Mr. Ghimire began to feel very agitated by the conflict and instability in the country hence decided to pursue his studies in Public Policy. While studying at John Hopkins University he learned the lesson that “All you can do is create your own world and try to make it as better as possible and don’t worry about anything else.”

After returning to Nepal, Mr. Ghimire started Vibor Investment in partnership which didn’t work out. He pointed out that the lack of habit of writing down agreements and poor legal system makes it difficult for partnerships to work in Nepal. Then he established Vibor Bank and is currently the Chairperson/CEO of the bank.

He believes that traditional banks are risk averse and cannot provide enough support to entrepreneurs. He describes Vibor Bank as an institution that envisions proliferation of entrepreneurs in Nepal and has the mission of making capital accessible to more and more entrepreneurs in order to enhance their productivity.

Mr. Ghimire believes lack of capital shouldn’t be the constraint to entrepreneurs, what really matters is the idea and persistence of the person. He said that in order to promote entrepreneurship in Nepal, there is a need for strong enforcement of contracts, finding the right people to invest on, strong rule of law and development of platforms where young entrepreneurs can share and learn.

He also said it was important to have networks in politics in order to do business and the importance of having someone working in the organization who is good at dealing with bureaucracy. Mr. Ghimire highlighted that the basic qualities that an entrepreneur should possess are persistence, ability to sell an idea, ability to connect with people and convince them of the idea, passion about the cause, deep understanding of the business environment and politics.

Ichhya Tamang is the founder and the chairperson of “Civil Group”, one of the Nepal’s largest and rapidly growing business conglomerates, that operates Civil Homes Pvt. Ltd., Civil Merchant Bittiya Sanstha, Civil Saving & Credit Co-operative Ltd., Civil Business Complex Pvt. Ltd., Civil Trading Company Pvt. Ltd, Civil International Consultant Pvt. Ltd, with a bank venture in its pipeline. Born in Okhaldhunga district of North eastern Nepal, he studied hydropower engineering in the then Soviet Russia, where he had the first hand experience of the collapse of USSR and the economic hardship that followed in 1989.

With the severe devaluation of the Ruble, Ichhya dai who had been studying there on a scholarship found it hard to cope up with the rising prices of goods. “So, I started business as a means of living. Nepali students sold the Chinese goods they brought to Russians. My friends also brought 15 computers and sold them to Russians. After the collapse, the Russians were eager to develop their English language skills; we helped them to make money. Hence, we completed our studies from the profit of such ventures. That was the beginning of my career as an entrepreneur”, he says.

After returning to Nepal, he started working as an engineering consultant but the ongoing civil war made his job difficult. Convinced that business would be the only means of surviving in times of such crisis, he formed a group of 12 engineers and started Civil Cooperative which later developed into a firm called Civil Group. Civil Group introduced the housing concept for the first time in Nepal which was quickly followed by other business houses as well. The success of housing concept also resulted in financial institutions providing loans for the purchase of other accessories such as vehicles, land etc.

When Civil Homes started its operation with 25 ropanis of land in Bhaisepati, they were in no and His secrets of motivating his staff

An entrepreneur has to have the knowledge of all the aspects of his business and must get involved in the overall operation of his business.

An entrepreneur needs to brainstorm and sort out works according to the strength of the people working for him/her.

Equal participation and equal responsibility for every person involved is a good strategy for motivation.

A starting entrepreneur should be able to work as jack of all trades when the need arises.



At 28, Björn is a young social entrepreneur with three successfully running companies; two in Nepal and one in Sweden.

In search of an experience that was exciting, challenging and different from that in Sweden, Björn Söderberg came to Nepal as a volunteer when he was 19 years old and lived in Bal Mandir. During his stay, he saw the potential for exciting new things in the hands of the young people in the country. In contrary to the trend of the youngsters finding their way to the U.S and abroad, Björn started off in Nepal with paper recycling (Watabaran Pvt. Ltd.) and IT outsourcing (Websearch Professionals Pvt. Ltd.).

Despite the Swedish Government urging its citizens not to travel to Nepal for security reasons, Mr. Söderberg was determined and he started approaching for loans in banks for the initial capital of \$20,000. But through his struggle in the initial days, what he learnt was exciting!

Lesson No: 1. One does not need money to be an entrepreneur, s/he needs customers. You don't spend money to start a company; you start a company to earn money. And with this learning in mind, he went to Sweden and confirmed two clients by promising them to deliver the same service they were already getting, but at half the price. His first two customers were his market research. In his way of doing things, he believes more in learning by doing rather than trying to focus too much in theory as he says "Most people believe you need to follow a certain process and make business plans to start a company. But the matter of fact is you don't need websites, business plans or brochures to start your company, just start making money. Once you have your first customer, you have your market research, you have your company."

Speaking of the struggle people go through to find that one bright idea to start up a venture, he points out that having a good or a great idea is not a guarantee for the success of the business.

Lesson No. 2: Having the drive and the guts is more important than the idea itself. The passion associated with the work can naturally make any idea a good one. The old formula is if you enjoy your work, you don't even feel you are working. He explains that entrepreneurship is about getting an idea and working very hard to realize it because it takes time to build up a business. Thus during that time, an entrepreneur must have two qualities; patience and hard work .

While most people are apprehensive about starting up a business for the fear of failure, he takes a different approach saying, **Lesson No. 3:** "Never be afraid to fail. Rather be afraid of never failing. Those who never fail have never tried anything new and never be afraid of creating new things. Because creating new things and translating new ideas to action, even if they are small ones is what entrepreneurs do."

What are the problems in starting up a business in Nepal?

Corruption is one of the major discouragements in starting up a business in Nepal. Bureaucrats try to squeeze money out of you here which is a different scenario than in Sweden.

Do you think foreign investors are safe enough to invest in Nepal?

Given a few things, a safe environment for foreign investment can be created in Nepal. Some suggestions are:

Documents should be in English.

Load shedding should cease.

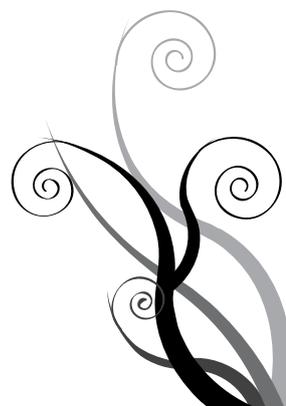
Hindrances from involuntary Bandas and strikes should stop.

Have you faced or felt any conflict between the social contribution and economic aspects of a business?

I haven't faced many clashes as such. I provide scholarships to talented students to study in KU and ask them to work for me for 4 years. Besides, I am always trying to take the middle way in finding profitability and contributing to society.

In a certain business situation if a client asks more and more services and in the end refuses to pay the prices pointing out it was very high, what can one do in such a situation?

To avoid unprofessional situations like these, making everything about the deal clear beforehand is important. Give your client a sample or a prototype of your service and product and ask them to test it. If they like it then mention your prices. But remember some clients are unworkable and sometimes in those cases you have to let them go.



“I would rather make a mistake than live with the regret that I never tried.” Prabal Gurung’s essence can be captured with the above quote as much today, while full stride in his New York fashion career, as back in time when he was a young boy in Nepal. His dreams started at a young age while in St. Xavier’s School in Kathmandu even though he acknowledges that he was never one of the ‘brilliant’ students. With the support of his family, he stayed true to his calling, and was always immersed in his own world. He recalls sketching his ideas and designs wherever he could, be it in school books, drawing sheets or walls.

One of the first admirers of his work was his mother who always encouraged his creativity. This support, Prabal believes, is the root of all his success which gives constant inspiration and the strength to stand his ground in the competitive world of high fashion.

One of the most courageous steps in pursuit of his dreams can be traced back to the time he went to India to start his career by studying at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in New Delhi. While studying, he also worked with various local productions and fashion houses, and designed alongside established names such as Manish Arora at the wake of India’s booming fashion industry. With his wealth of experience in India and other countries, Prabal decided to embark on the greatest risk of his career and moved to New York. The city, which is arguably the fashion capital of the world, presented formidable challenges but he was determined to follow his dreams and carve a niche for himself. He was aware that moving to New York could turn out to be a mistake, however he decided that he would rather live with that mistake than live with the regret that he never gave it a shot.

Fortunately, his decision to move to New York was a winning one. After years of hard work and patience backed by the support and encouragement of his family, his labour is bearing fruit and he has made his impact in the world of high-fashion. From interning for Donna Karan while attending Parson’s School of Design to being a part of Cynthia Rowley’s design team, to being the design director at Bill Blass and having the US First Lady Michelle Obama wear his design, Prabal Gurung has come a long way. He materialized his dream when he launched his own collection PRABAL GURUNG in 2009 even though it was in the midst of an economic recession. Prabal recollects that the modeling industry, the production houses and people from the fashion fraternity in New York have been very supportive in this journey. This could be the reason why Prabal feels right at home in New York and its fashion houses.

For a person who has achieved success and a celebrity status, Prabal remains humble, modest and grounded. He is proud of his heritage and makes sure that Nepal is mentioned in all his interviews, which is his small way of helping his country gain recognition globally. However, he is also aware of the problems afflicting our country like power cuts, traffic, pollution and the like. He attributes his ability to compete anywhere in the world to growing up in Nepal. He says that anyone can complain about what is not right in our country; the crux lies in what we choose to do about it. His message for all young Nepalis is to follow your dreams; hard work and patience are the key ingredients for success. He also urges Nepalis to celebrate the successes of one another so that we can collectively move forward together.

Chandra Tiwari is a household name in the Nepali meat processing market, shared his experience and journey as an entrepreneur at the Last Thursday's program held on May 27th 2010, organized by Entrepreneurs of Nepal and Samriddhi, the Prosperity Foundation.

Starting his business from a small meat shop to selling a brand name like Nina and Hager in Nepali market, was not an overnight job. It was 15 years of hard work and his dedication in delivering quality products to the consumers that made him successful.

“Cooking is my hobby and that is what brought me to meat products sector.”

Having received no formal training in meat processing, he recounts going to libraries to search for books on the subject and seeking any help he could find. During that time, sausages were new and popular in Kathmandu and Chandra dai was curious as to how they were made. His interest took him to Calcutta where he was told that he could watch how sausages were prepared when he went to buy them. Unfortunately, when he did go to Calcutta to see the production method himself, the sausage makers had become, according to him “clever” and had been selling the product without showing how they were made. So he returned back without any knowledge. This did not discourage him; he went back home and started experimenting in his kitchen with his wife's help. He also had a shed which he used for making sausages but he did most of the work in the kitchen itself. He had two refrigerators where he stored his homemade products. He then started selling the sausages in the market. “It was like daily practice for me and I kept on improving my methods to make them better”, recalls Mr. Tiwari. This brought him in contact with a German, Hager, introduced to him by one of his friends. They started talking about the meat processing business and preparation methods.

Observing his work, Hager suggested that the method he had been using was 100% wrong and that if he really wanted to learn and work in this business he should go to Germany. He even offered to arrange for the visit and told him to arrange the paperwork. It took Mr. Tiwari 2 years to go to Germany on a scholarship on livestock training where he trained for two long years and practiced the trade-skill for the following one year in Germany. His two-year course consisted of one year training on the old method of meat processing and the following year on the advanced technology. Equipments for both methodologies are currently used in his factory in Kathmandu.

After completing his two years training he had a sense of accomplishment since many people fail the course and some even take 5-6 years to complete it. His interest and age as well as his hard work garnered appreciation and he became a butcher chef. He decided to return home and practice instead of working in Germany as he thought he'd be making a lot more impact back home.

Coming from a Brahmin family and working as a butcher chef earned him many taunts from his relatives when he was just starting. However, his success and establishment of Nina and Hager product as a household name has now changed all that.

Starting his business was not an easy task since he was not financially stable at that time. He had to rely on his bicycle to make deliveries of his products. After the production stage, marketing was another challenge. Supplying his products in the market where the people questioned the high price, was a tough job. Eventually, the products started selling and were supplied to other markets in the capital. It took another 4-5 years before he could taste any success.

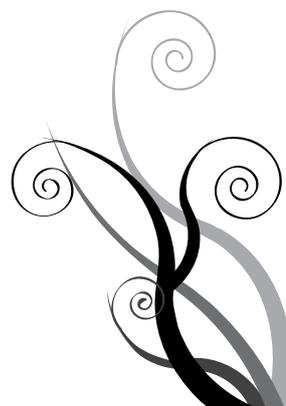
“The hardest part was that even if my products were selling well, I was not receiving any money,” recalls Mr. Tiwari. With only accounts receivables but no cash, he was forced to put a hold on his

work for a while. This proved to be fortunate because when he came back home he received many phone calls asking him why he had not been sending supplies and that if it was due to withheld payments, they'll pay the money. It was then he found out that his products were selling quite well in the market.

Although he now has a very good market and is more established than he had imagined, he still has not been able to meet the market demand because of the need to maintain quality and not quantity. He believes that in the food processing business if one is not directly involved in the process, then the quality can be compromised which can lead to failure of a business. "People at first thought my products were expensive but I had always been focused on the quality and I never compromised it", says Mr. Tiwari.

Regarding the problems he faced, he says entrepreneurs like him experience problems of margin rate. He's had to face many issues with distributors who try to increase their margin at every given opportunity which puts suppliers under pressure. His words to young entrepreneurs:

"If you're strong and confident that your products are of good quality, then you don't need to be scared of anyone."



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Entrepreneurs for Nepal (E4N) is run by volunteers. Volunteers, by definition, donate time, knowledge, skills, contacts, ideas and even money to causes they believe in. E4N volunteers do all that and more. That's because they believe in promoting an ecosystem which helps entrepreneurship flourish in Nepal. E4N is one platform to help create networks, contacts and, ultimately, jobs that produce goods and services in and for Nepal. In addition, entrepreneurship also promotes the tenets of self-respect and success among Nepalis and friends of Nepal everywhere.

E4N is grateful to the following individuals and the institutions they are part of for support and help.

Mrs. Ambica Shrestha of Dwarika's Hotel, Battisputali, Kathmandu
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for turning in excellent draft summaries of E4N talk programs

All past speakers (whose talk summaries appear in this book) to date
for donating their time, sharing their experiences, and opening their networks and contacts to E4N members

All E4N Facebook members and all those who attended the monthly gatherings
for their time, interest, ideas and encouragement

ABOUT E4N CORE GROUP MEMBERS

JAYA BURATHOKI

Jaya completed her higher studies from India and Australia and has worked in the media and banking sectors in Nepal. She enjoys new experiences and believes in following her heart.

SAGAR ONTA

Sagar believes that unleashing entrepreneurial energy of the Nepali youth is one of the keys to changing the Nepali society. He is focused on building sustainable institutions and organizations to do the same, and is always looking for opportunity to grow and learn. He grew up in Kathmandu and received his engineering education in Bangkok and US. After working for eight years as a consultant in US, e-commerce owner and community organizer, he is now focused on entrepreneurship projects that combine the resources of the west with the creativity of Nepali youth. He divides his time between Nepal and US.

ROBIN SITOULA

Robin is a democracy and public policy activist based in Kathmandu. He has been actively involved in various social movements in the last 10 years. He believes that economic development of a country should be the priority of all nation states and that sound public policy can lead to prosperity. Apart from running his own enterprise, Robin works for Samriddhi, The Prosperity Foundation as Executive Director. He can be contacted at robin@samriddhi.org

SANJIB SUBBA

Sanjib grew up in Kathmandu in inclusive family. Naively as a child he dreamed being a tycoon one day but the destiny led him to wear the safety net of middle class mentality so he sneaked in white collar job.

Sanjib started his real life journey with the then Gindlays back in 1991 and after eight years of banking stint he moved to Thailand to be part of the brand new American University. He called Thailand his home for 10 years before finally relocating back to Nepal in 2009 to kick start a ambitious project of Banking Academy, namely National Banking Training Institute (NBTI). Sanjib does not have notable success in starting his own venture nor does he qualify to preach on entrepreneurship however socially responsible entrepreneurship spirit sits close to his heart. He strongly believes the entrepreneurship is the way forward to solve majority of Nepal's political, social and cultural issues and to make a complete inclusive Nepal.

Sanjib has respect for socially responsible entrepreneurs who has risked their time and investment to create employment and wealth so that the society we live could be a better place.

UJWAL THAPA

Ujwal loves to build. From building innovative businesses to online branding, from making eco-systems of budding entrepreneurs (e4nepal.com) to groups of anti-bandh activists (nobandh.org), from growing organic coffee in his village (shangrilacoffee.com) to building international quality websites on the internet (digital.com.np).

Often restless and traveling all around Nepal, he spends most of his time, contemplating on how the world will look like 50 years from now, and how fusion of technology and common sense can bring positive change to Nepal (and the world).

He is currently busy working on how to start a Nepali common sense led revolution to bring positive change in Nepal. Visit <http://whynepal.com> to read his thoughts to change Nepal.

ASHUTOSH TIWARI

Ashu started his career in Nepal as a grassroots activist in villages. In 2000, working with and at Backward Society Education (BASE), he assisted Dilli Bahadur Chaudhary (UK's Anti-Slavery Award winner) with the launch of a social movement that freed up to 200,000 bonded farm laborers from debt bondage in Dang, Bardiya, Kailali, Kanchanpur and Banke districts.

Convinced that for-profit businesses enabled the poor to take charge of their lives, he became a small business advisor. From 2001 to 2007, he worked with small businesses in Nepal and Bangladesh as an employee of the German Technical Co-operation (GTZ), and of World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) respectively.

In 2007, he joined Himalmedia as its CEO. His main tasks were to negotiate with trade unions and turn around the company -- both missions he accomplished with the staff's and the board's support. At present, he is WaterAid's country head -- a job that gives him a front-row seat to understand how development is done or not done in Nepal. He spends his free time writing stand-up comedy materials and juggling five balls.