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PROFILE

Firing up an imagination

Globsyn's Bikram Dasgupta is once again trying to fulfill his dreams

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CALL it the call of the mentor. Arjun Malhotra, one of the finest marketing men in the Indian information technology industry, had once said that a real entrepreneur never owns anything permanently. The passion for creativity drives an entrepreneur from one business to another without any kind of attachment.

Perhaps no one has followed these words better than his one-time junior colleague in HCL, Mr Bikram Dasgupta. Call it "Minds on Fire" or a restless spirit of an ever young professional, Dasgupta never settled down to a particular set of business activity.

Like his guru, Arjun Malhotra, who taught him the basics of marketing and how to run a business during his four-year stint at HCL in the early eighties, Mr Dasgupta has a history of creative entrepreneurship.

As a graduate of the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, he had the distinc-

tion of being one of the promoters of PCL, the hardware company that became a leading PC company in Indian market. "In 1994, we were a 10-year-old company. It was a combination of hard work and innovative marketing practices that made us possible to achieve the distinction," said Mr Dasgupta. And, then, he left PCL in a huff.

Making a difference

Mr Dasgupta always wanted to be different. Everybody expected that he would start another hardware company or join a large establishment. And as expected he had several big offers from desi as well as foreign companies. Dell Computers Ltd offered him a plum post for its Indian operation. Mr Dasgupta did not consider it.

In 1996, he formed his second company, Global Synthesis Ltd, to start his business consultancy practice. Consultancy business brought him good money. He bought a BMW in Delhi and set up his office at Green Park. But he wanted more. "I never consider rev-

enue figure as one of the fundamentals to identify a good entrepreneur from a bad one. Rather for it is the courage to dream that matters most.

Rather he wanted to play with his ideas like developing an intelligent city and a finishing school to produce young software managers for the industry. Both were challenging concepts and probably a little ahead of time. So there were few takers.

The dream was to set up an intelligent building in a place like Kolkata. Many thought Mr Dasgupta's plan was crazy. But as a man who loves venturing, Mr Dasgupta saw the future of Bengal as the next favoured IT destination much before the national IT players started looking at the place positively.

To top it all, Bengal then was the pariah of national and international investors. It was tough for him to convince the investors to fund money for the building that was to be set up in Bengal.

But Mr Dasgupta had a different charter. "What I set about

to do is to participate in the attitudinal and mindset change of Bengal," said Mr Dasgupta.

The first phase of Infinity was launched in February 2000 and it got fully booked within the next 30 days according to Mr Dasgupta.

Infinity was a success. So too, his Globsyn campus where in association with IBM, he started providing training to young engineering graduates to turn them into software managers for the IT companies. Along with the business of infrastructure building and IT training, Mr Dasgupta ventured into software services business.

So from hardware, he is now in infrastructure, technical training and IT services with an annual revenue around Rs 22 crore. In February 2001, he decided to go for a public with his company Globsys Technologies. The issue size was Rs 22 crore with a premium of Rs 30 on a face value Rs 10 per share.

But the timing was bad as the recession gripped the entire market. Moreover IT industry was severely hit as dotcoms came crashing down. The issue was aborted.

Coming back

But undaunted by criticism, Mr Dasgupta continued his activities of building new business. In 2002, he launched the Globsyn business school and there after courses to train students for the entertainment industry.

Now with a revenue of Rs 18 crore, he expects his Globsyn's revenue to touch Rs 22 crore by the end of current financial year. Did he fulfill the initial promise he showed during his and HCL and PCL days as a man who can do miracles with IT products? "If to be a successful entrepreneur it means to create a company with large revenue, I am certainly not. But to me the definition of a successful entrepreneur is the one who can think big and can play with imagination."

The latest initiative of Mr Dasgupta is build another 5 lakh sqft intelligent building on his existing campus called Globsyn Crystals which he feels would be a landmark in Kolkata. ♦