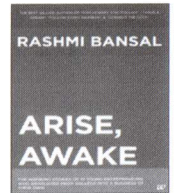


Arise, Awake

The inspiring stories of 10 young entrepreneurs who graduated from college into a business of their own

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Rashmi Bansal (2015) Arise, Awake - The inspiring stories of 10 young entrepreneurs who graduated from college into a business of their own Westland Ltd, India, Pages 190, ISBN 978/93/84030/87/2 MRP: || 200.00

Author's Profile

Rashmi Bansal is a writer, entrepreneur and youth expert. She is the author of 6 bestselling books on entrepreneurship: Stay Hungry Stay Foolish, Connect the Dots, I Have a dream, Poor Little Rich Slum, Follow Every Rainbow and Take Me Home, which have sold more than a million copies and been translated into 10 languages. Rashmi is the founder of Bloody Good Book (www.bloodygoodbook.com), a platform to discover and e-publish budding authors. She is also a motivational speaker and mentor to students and young entrepreneurs. Rashmi is an economics graduate from Sophia College, Mumbai, and an MBA from IIM Ahmedabad. Her USP is bringing real success stories into reality while reading it and feel the entrepreneurship in each book with one theme

Overview of the Book

Arise, Awake is the story of 10 young entrepreneurs who started a business while studying in college, or right after graduation. Turning their backs on lucrative placements, to pursue dreams of their own. The 10 startups profiled in her book are Practo Technologies, Magicrete, Sacred Moments, Bewakoof Brands, Innovese Technologies, Inopen Technologies, Bhukkad, Ganpati Facilities, Fraud Express and Dosamatic.

Rashmi classified student entrepreneurs into three types: rankers (toppers), repeaters (who failed initially but succeeded later) and rebels with a cause (mavericks who did weird but wonderful things). The 190-page book ends with contact information of the entrepreneurs, and a list of student business plan competitions such as Eureka (IIT Bombay), Empresario (IIT Kharagpur), Global Social Venture Challenge - HSB, UC Berkely, First Dot(NEN-Tata) and The TiE International Business Plan Competition. Many will say - wait till you graduate. I say - why waste time? Right now you are free - to experiment, to walk on different paths...

Review

Rankers are those who cracked the toughest entrance exams in the country. And then took on new challenges. Challenges for which there is no 'coaching class'. Repeaters are those dudes who tried - and failed - but had the will to try again. Because nothing that is worth anything comes easily. And giving up is not an option. Rebels with a cause are those mavericks strayed away from the beaten path into weird and wonderful places. Because who you are is more than a 'placement'. Each startup story ends with a page of advice from the founders for other aspiring entrepreneurs.

I. Rankers:

1. Life is a Beach:

It was the tenth out of the 10 ideas they had to start a new business, and it clicked. The startup, born in the final year of college, is now a ? 20 crore company, serving 10,000 doctors across India. Practo aims to be the one stop destination for patients to find their doctors, research about them and book online appointments. Practo Technologies was founded by Shashank ND and Abhinav Lal in their final year in NIT Suratkal, and it is a Rs 20 crore company serving 10,000 doctors across India. The campus entrepreneurship cell Eforea organized panels and events like the Ignition summit. The duo dreamt up ideas like software for marriage halls, and then hit upon the patient reminder service for doctors delivered via mobiles. They were nominated by Morpheus,

received funding from Sequoia, and expanded operations to Singapore.

Advice to young entrepreneurs:

In India, if you want a successful company, you have to give at least 75% of your time to sales. When I say sales, I mean 'face to face' meetings. Look at Justdial, Naukri or Zomato - they have made money through feet on street. Starting a business in college is the best way to use your time. Stick to your vision like "I am going to solve this problem", everything else is secondary.

2. You Can Do Magic:

Magicrete co-founder Sourabh Bansal and his IIT-IIM team Puneet Mittal (CA) & Sidharth Bansal (IIT Delhi, IIM Lucknow) began in his father's quicklime manufacturing line, and spotted an opportunity in Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (AAC) blocks. They worked out the metrics of its construction advantages as compared to bricks, imported machinery from China, secured bank loans, and partnered with developers for contracts. Today, Magicrete is a ₹150 crore company which is changing the face of construction across the country. Sourabh says the idea came about when the founding team realized the opportunity that the construction industry presents.

Advice to young entrepreneurs:

Think Big. Put in all efforts, keep on innovating and striving toward your goal. Take the plunge early. And you need to have a roadmap for the first 2-3 years. Always run a tight and lean ship, don't burden the business with unnecessary costs, overheads etc.

3. Gift of the Gab:

Prakash Mundhra entered a business-plan competition, just for fun. He excited campus with a ready-to-launch business. Eight years on, he is the CEO of ₹4.5 crore company and has no regrets. Sacred Moments was founded by Prakash Mundhra who hatched the idea during business competitions when he was at SCMHRD in Pune. His involvement in college book circles and regular visits to the library led him to read about Zee TV's business idea show, 'Business Baazigar,' where he made it to the Top Ten. The idea looked small and not many were sure about the business model. Mundhra, on the other hand, was adamant. He knew that all he had to do is give the idea a shape and invest Rs.6 lakh and time of six months along with a positive attitude to start the venture. His ₹4.5 crore company now offers puja kits and corporate gifting to Indians and NRIs.

Advice to young entrepreneurs:

Don't hesitate to get into business directly after B-School or College, especially if your work area is such that corporate experience would not matter much.

II. Repeaters:

4. Two Idiots:

Bewakoof Brands was founded by IIT Bombay students Prabhkiran Singh and Siddharth Munot, who first began with selling a lassi outside their campus and then moved on to printing T-shirts and other merchandise with a 'funky irreverent' streak (the 'Ghanta Engineering' T-shirts were hugely popular at the Mood Indigo festival). They raised funding from a Gujarati angel investor, and ploughed ahead despite criticism that this was not high-tech enough for IIT students. The 'lassiwallah' now runs a ₹5 crore youth - focused online business.

Advice to young entrepreneurs:

Work hard persistently. You have to go out and you have to act, there is no other way to learn, no other way to be successful.

5. Locha-E-Business Ho Gaya:

Two friends came up with a cool idea and found a way to make it a business. Innovese Technologies was a

shining star in the startup sky, until interpersonal issues tore the company apart. But there's much you can learn - from their experience. Innovese Technologies was founded as a web hosting service by three BITS Pilani students Ankit gupta, Neeraj Agarwal & Dhruv Sogani who also created YoCaptcha, an interactive branding product based on Captcha. Another project of theirs was the social network Slambook, and they received funding from the Technology Business Incubator. They eventually sold the company to German multinational Gruner+Jahr, but one of the co-founders decided to split from the team and pursue a separate career.

Advice to young entrepreneurs:

I would advise college startups to sign a 'co-founder agreement'. This would be very useful in future. Believe in what you are doing, the desire to take a particular idea to the level where me, myself and the larger society is going to be proud of it.

6. Awara Paagal Deewana:

An internship at IIT Bombay changed the course of Rupesh Shah's life. A self-taught programmer, marketer and 'people person', his company, InOpen Technologies, now teaches computer science to over 5 lakh schoolchildren. InOpen Technologies was founded by Rupesh Shah, who fell in love with open source technology even while he failed some of his exams. He graduated from IET Alwar, but then pursued an internship at IIT Bombay. A professor helped and funded him with a model curriculum for teaching computer science in schools, which used open source software. The startup joined the IIT incubator SINE and raised external funds, and now targets state schools with its innovative teaching approach which can be extended to science education as well.

Advice to young entrepreneurs:

Enthusiasm and passion are the only keys to success. Identify what you like and focus on that even while you are a student.

III. Rebels with a Cause:

7. The Hunger Game:

As a third year student at National Law School, Bengaluru, Aruj Garg started a takeaway food joint, to cater to the many 'bhukkads' on the campus. He now plans to take the Bhukkad brand of 'natural fast food' to people everywhere. Bhukkad was founded as a 'natural fast food' chain by Aruj Garg while he was a third-year student at National Law School, Bengaluru. He earned some money during his internship at Akosha, which was founded by his senior. Aruj also learnt the ropes of the food business from a stint at Faaso's. Despite others questioning whether this line was appropriate for a law student, Aruj went ahead and hired a five-star hotel chef to design his menu. His sudden diagnosis with high cholesterol at such an early age led him to discover 'natural' fast food.

Advice to young entrepreneurs:

The world conspires to help you in your quest of doing something bold and big. Don't forget academics - getting your degree is important. Believe me, it's not that hard to strike a balance.

8. Feels Like Home:

As an outstation student, Anurag faced accommodation issues when he joined college in Pune. He seized the opportunity to set up a hostel business, Ganapati facilities for the next batch while still a second year MBA student. In its second year, Ganapati Facilities made ₹25 lakh in profit - 5 times the salary he could have got through placement. Ganapati Facilities was founded by Anurag Arora when he was at ICFAI Business School in Pune. The atrocious hostel facilities led him to launch his own hostel for fellow-students, by renting local apartments. Taking good care of the students led to positive referrals and social media endorsements for subsequent batches, and Anurag now plans to approach other colleges as well.

Advice to young entrepreneurs:

You have to think of creative ways and means to fund your idea. Entrepreneurship is independence. Think of doing something with a good heart and an intention to help people and success will come to you along the way.

9. To Catch A Thief:

During her articleship, Apurva entered the unusual domain of forensic accounting. After working on dozens of cases, at the age of 24, she launched a university -recognized course in the field of fraud-risk assessment. FraudExpress was founded by Apurva Joshi when she was a CA final student in Maharashtra. An internship at the startup IndiaForensic, exposed her to the intriguing world of fraud detection and reporting, and she launched her own startup FraudExpress to offer fraud risk assessment services and a course via Solapur University. The backdrop of the Satyam scam also boosted market awareness about this field.

Advice to young entrepreneurs:

When challenges come, you have to accept them. Go, explore and find out for yourself how to do the work. Be daring, be bold, do not be afraid of anyone or anything.

10. Holy Rava Masala:

Two young engineers set out to create an automatic dosa machine. 3 years later, they have succeeded in producing the world's first tabletop 'dosa printer' and secured orders from 100 restaurant owners. Dosamatic was founded by Eshwar Vikas and Sudeep Sabat when they were batch mates at SRM Engineering College in Chennai. They caught the startup bug during entrepreneurship cell activities, and explored their fascination as tinkerers at local factories and markets. On a visit to Delhi, they were shocked to discover that dosas cost an astronomical Rs. 130 - and decided to make a dosa machine. They were mentored by the Indian Angel Network, and finally had a sound tabletop product in 2013.

Advice to young entrepreneurs:

Start when you are in college, don't think - "I will start something after I passout ". An idea is not enough, you need to develop a prototype. Then you go out and test in the real world. Not just in college where everyone knows you. You need to have lot of patience. It has to be commercial, somebody must be willing to pay for your product.

Conclusion

Make the most of the energy and dynamism of the youth years. There is no substitute for hard work, positive thinking and perseverance. Entrepreneurship is not about working just for yourself, but working to solve a problem others face. Practical knowledge is as important as classroom knowledge. Learn as much as possible and take internships. Work with a startup during vacations to understand what it is all about and see if that's the kind of life you want to lead. As a young entrepreneur you have to work extra hard to prove yourself because you have no past track record, money, products or results. But you have no commitments and low expenses so you can experiment more, provided you can accept and learn from failures. College is a great time to shed inhibitions and do unusual things. Many of the entrepreneurs featured in this book say they were inspired by Rahmai Bansal's earlier books, and this book itself is bound to inspire a new wave of startups. The ability to start a business is not defined by age or education. It takes energy and passion, an idea and an internet connection. "Your first 'office' could be your very own room" - Rashmi Bansal