

From Nothing to Something - An Interview with a Foreign National on How to Get There in Tech

Poverty, family turmoil, and brain surgery are not enough to stop a man armed with hard work, dedication, and a spirit of innovation from succeeding.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, UNITED STATES, April 26, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Mr. Arun Nagpal is a world class software engineer. He's produced and directed the creation and maintenance of some of the most important database and cloud storage systems in the world. Arun has lent his talents to cutting-edge tech companies and Fortune 500 companies. After more than 22 years of industry experience at the front-lines of software innovation, Arun reflects back on his career and sat down with us to discuss his start, his career highlights, and his future plans in the industry.

Q: Arun, thanks for your time this afternoon. You're now working as a big shot Principal Devops Engineer for Fidelity Investments. Did you ever envision you would be in this type of professional position as a child?

A: Oh not at all, no way. I could not have imagined this in my wildest dreams. Growing up in India, my father made about \$3 a day as a bike driver and supported our whole family on his income. I grew up in a household of five as the youngest of three boys. I got by on scraps. Although we didn't have much, I really owe my parents and brothers for sacrificing themselves physically and financially to help me get through primary school.

Q: Growing up in such a competitive environment, what was it like going to school?

A: It is hard to put into words the level of stressful competition that exists in India. Growing up as the youngest child in my family, I saw firsthand from my brothers what happens to those who don't apply themselves. I really think I learned firsthand the need to give 110% effort because of my school experience. If you are not in the top 10-percent of your class, you do not have the hope of making it into a good university. If you don't make it into a good university, it is nearly impossible to climb out of poverty.

Q: Ok, so you make it to the top of your class, and then you get into Madurai Kamraj University. Was getting into your career everything you thought it would be?

A: I was incredibly grateful to get a job out of college. Unfortunately, the job offer I received out of school was rescinded, and I had no other offers. I literally just started knocking on the doors of any IT companies I could find. Eventually, I found a company called CMC Limited, an IT company in my area, that I begged for an opportunity. They had zero job positions open, but they did allow me to take a position as an apprentice where I moved boxes and helped in their computer warehouse until a full-time position opened up about two months later. It was humbling, but I was just happy to have an opportunity to get by financially. Once I got in as a Network Engineer I felt like I hit my stride. I received several promotions as I moved across major companies in India, and was eventually transferred to work in Luxemburg and obviously now in the United States. It's been a great career, I can't complain.

Q: Wow. So already out of school you are encountering setbacks but you stuck with it. What helped you keep going?

A: Honestly, I have just always had the ability to compartmentalize my duties in a way that I just tell myself there is no excuse for failure. While I was living in Luxemburg, I noticed that my vision in my right eye was blurred. I went to the doctor for it, who informed me that I had a significant brain infection and needed immediate operation. Although I was obviously scared at this diagnosis I refused to do the operation at that time because I was afraid of leaving my wife and my three-year old son alone in a foreign country. I went back home to India to get the surgery and was back to work four months later.

Q: Wait, what? You went back to work after having brain surgery only four months later?

A: Like I said, I simply told myself that I had no choice but to succeed. I had eight surgeries in total, but I told myself I could not die because I had dreams to fulfill. I wanted more than anything to leave a legacy for my son to be proud of and to have an impact on the software industry. I've dedicated my life to it.

Q: At this point, where do you see your career going from here?

A: I am just so grateful for the path I have had. I've spent the last 22 years working at the ground level of software and network development. I've seen and been fortunate enough to have been a part of the advancement of technology. I've produced cutting edge design and support for servers for some of the world's biggest companies, including Tata Consultancy, Sling TV, Symantec, and Fidelity Investments. I've received a lot of respect and recognition for my work. Right now the thing I love to do is to work in the continued advancement of network technology. Frankly, I love the puzzle of tech, and want to see how far mankind can push the envelope to improve society as a whole.

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