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CEO Stories

Lost and Founded Series - Abhinav Krishna

Abhinav Krishna, Co-founder of OurHealthMate, doesn't believe in starting a start-up with the singular aim of a successful exit.

DBS BusinessClass / Lost & Founded: Untold Entrepreneur Stories



Abhinav Krishna, Co-founder of OurHealthMate, doesn't believe in starting a start-up with the singular aim of a successful exit. He also checks into the office between 4-5am daily. Passion and commitment to his goal? We think he's brimming with both.

People say you are "Abhinav Krishna, the CEO and Co-founder of OurHealthMate." Who do you say you are?

There are 2 aspects of Abhinav Krishna. Firstly, as a family man who loves people in his life, and who gave birth to OurHealthMate (OHM), a start-up focusing on taking care of the health of your loved ones. Secondly, the sports lover who loves to stay fit, spends a bit of time with friends playing sports. Plus, almost all key skills to be a successful entrepreneur come from sports and long distance running. Did I mention, I met my girlfriend through sports? :)

What was the best moment in your startup life? It was so good you wanted to fly Business Class somewhere with someone, and pop open the most expensive bottle of champagne there.

We have popped a few bottles when we got our first round of funding, a few when we got our first customer and also when we crossed 10,000 doctors network in India. The last moment came very recently though, while I was in Bangalore, India for our new office opening (6th June 2015). I had been having trouble with my tooth for a while, which I had been ignoring that my team was fully aware of. My flight to Singapore was on 11th June night. My team booked and paid for my dental care via OurHealthMate and provided me support throughout till I received the service. That is the time you realize that you have built a caring product plus how close you have gotten to your team members. I still have the booking SMS with me.

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Have you ever cried? Or what was the lowest, crappiest moment in your start-up life? You wanted to give up everything. You wanted to kill someone. (During your startup career of course) Tell us more!

I can't think of anything quite as extreme, but in the early days, one of the founding team members had to leave unexpectedly which was a pretty severe blow. Or at least felt like it, in those early days of our three people team. The other incident happened during the very early days of our start-up. One of the initial bookings for a patient in a Tier 2 city in India (by a payer from Singapore) revealed the patient suffering from late stage of cancer, needing treatment in a bigger hospital in Mumbai or Chennai. That time OHM was only focusing on preventative care packages. OHM managed to get them an appointment, but those 3 days when I was personally working with the payer, patients and hospital was very stressful. The way emotions were flowing from all sides was personally a difficult time for me.

What secret did you hide from your co-founder or partner or parent for the longest time? Why?

My parents, for the longest time, had no idea that I quit my job at the Citibank and was working towards a start-up. Somehow at that point of time it appeared like a fantastic idea to hide as I thought they would be worried with "what the hell" I was doing with my life.

What's the most eccentric thing about you? If VCs found out, they won't have signed the term sheet then. But hell with that now.

VCs are these amazing people, everyone is so different. Something which might appear eccentric to one, might appear amazing to another. Surprisingly I'm a relatively normal man, just two things - I can't waste alcohol and I can't miss a run I've signed up for - no matter what that might entail.

What are you up to today? What gets you up in the morning?

OHM was started with a vision and what keeps me going everyday is making OHM fulfill that vision. We are making things transparent for our payers and patients, which requires a lot of effort in keeping the team together and working very closely. The other thing is my office is a 7-minute walk from my apartment and for a while I had no internet at home, which drove me to get up early in the morning and reach the office early around 4am/5am.

How do you keep yourself physically and mentally fit for start-up life?

My love of sports helps me keep physically fit. Example of sports include soccer, dragon boating, and running. And of course OHM keeps me on my toes all the time! You can find me at the Cage in Kallang on Wednesdays at 6pm. Mentally keeping fit - I enjoy some solo time. You would find me cooking with a glass of scotch in my hand. I also love to read. A lot. Oh, comics I mean! Also I love to go for Pub Quizzes once in a while.

Offer a life hack (or two) to a young founder.

I heard this somewhere recently and I think it's very apt, so I'll share - "starting a start-up with the singular aim of a successful exit is like getting into a marriage with the goal of sex." The equation just doesn't match up. On a practical level, you must feel passionate about what you are working on. There are highs as a founder but there are also millions of lows, and in those moments it's your personal commitment to your goal that keeps you going. Find time outside of your start-up; for family, friends and people who matter since it is really easy to get completely absorbed with work. They are strong support pillars when required and almost always provide refreshing moments.

Movie or song that best describes you.

"Best day of my life", a song by American Authors. I truly believe that every day is awesome and start the day thinking "this is gonna be the best day of my life". "Let it be" by John Lennon (the Beatles). I believe that you give your best to things as much as you can. Beyond that you've got to just "let it be" and move on. Each day is a new story :)

Favourite quote.

"The woods are lovely dark and deep, but I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep." It's

not really a quote but a line from the famous "Stopping by the woods on snowy evening" poem by Robert Frost.

"We never leave people behind. Part of them we take with us.. And part of us, we leave behind." - Paulo Coelho

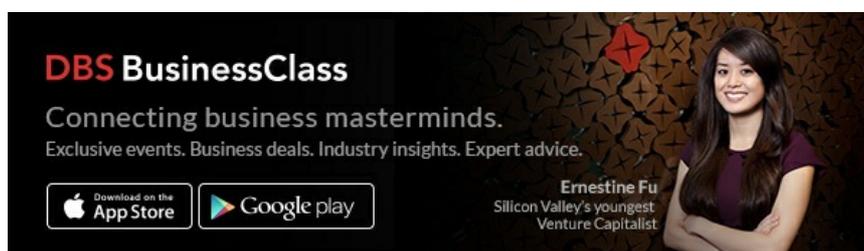
Who and what inspires you?

People who have forged their own path, done something new. Perhaps some comic book character?

Tell me about Abhinav Krishna in 2030.

Rich, famous & handsome (even more handsome I mean!) Jokes aside, Abhinav Krishna in 2030 will largely still be the same - working on building his passion into reality. A serial entrepreneur. Hopefully with a few more learnings and money from past experiences :)

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