



Amit Kaushal, the Managing Director at **Rubikscube Consulting** says that companies are now looking for sustainable results through value for money consulting services – which is exactly what his company provides.

Being a first generation entrepreneur from a middle class family is something to be proud of and happy about. Amit Kaushal, the Managing Director of Rubikscube Consulting, is indeed a proud and happy man. What started off as a proprietorship concern called Ace Consulting Services has today grown into Rubikscube Consulting Private Limited. Soon after Kaushal completed his Chemical Engineering from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT, Roorkee) and an MBA from S. P. Jain Institute of Management and Research, he went on to work on critical positions at leading companies such as Reliance Industries, Colgate Palmolive, Grasim Industries, PWC Consulting and Deloitte.

During his stint at a 9 to 5 job, Kaushal silently observed many companies and found out that they needed a significant change in the way they were operating on the market. Many companies, he says, weren't quite operating the way the market, customers, competitors and even employees would have expected them to. Hence, some ended up losing the competitive edge and did not survive in the "hyper competitive global village." Also, many such companies were finding it difficult to attract organised management consultants on account of many reasons.

"These reasons included their inability to invest big money on consulting, because most of the big consulting companies do not look at low value and low margin consulting contracts. Many companies also feared of not getting the desired Return on Investment (ROI) from consulting services, because most of the consulting companies were perceived as companies that 'took the watch from the client and told time to clients'," explained Kaushal. "Also, many small and medium companies had the inability to attract high quality talent and in the process struggled with quality of management."

Hence, says Kaushal, in order to address such issues, Rubikscube Consulting was born. The company started its operations in October 2008 with three business leads. Since too much of startup capital isn't required for a consulting services business, the initial funding of cost of operations was done through Kaushal's savings. "We never wanted to get stuck on the company registration issues and other paper work," added Kaushal. "We wanted to first test the depth of our idea and therefore started off as a proprietary firm named as Ace Consulting Services."

Once the company completed a year of operations, the company was registered as a private limited by renaming it as Rubikscube Consulting Private Limited. "This was done because by 2009, we got a good amount of traction on the market and were able to afford other costs associated with registering a private limited company," said Kaushal. "We were only two partners initially and both of us were hands-on, since we were responsible for every aspect of running our company. I was leading the business development front, while my other partner was focused on the back end of operations. We managed initial work load by hiring MBA interns and after our first year of operations hired our first employee, who is now a partner in the company."

So did Kaushal encounter any hurdles when setting up his business? "Yes," he says. "There were many. When we started off, we had to struggle a lot to get business because we had no credentials initially. Some companies could not give business to us and instead offered the same to more reputed and high price consulting players who were charging three times of what we were ready to offer.

We also had the inability of charging above cost consulting fees. We also had to face zero cash flow situations for more than three months into our operation. However, due to our continued efforts, we could grow very fast on account of our very attractive service offerings. Our growth in last financial year was 900+% with good profitability. But then, it also took us one year for breaking even, even though we had become cash positive after almost 8 months of hard work and struggle."

Kaushal says that he intends to grow his business slowly and steadily. He plans to focus on the company's current service offerings while exploring opportunities of adding one more new service line – preferably Integrated Marketing Services. "However, doing this will need lots of investment in terms of time and related efforts. There are a few things I would like to say to budding entrepreneurs. Start a business in the area you are most passionate about, because when times are not good, it is only your passion that keeps you going.

Also, be very careful with your expenses and investments. Every penny counts a lot in the initial days when cash outflows are more and inflows are hard to come by. Start small and then scale up – I have seen businesses starting with a big bang, running under losses and then folding up. Also, do not hesitate to take up business if you are getting your cost covered. This is because you are investing in your business and you will eventually get the returns. It is important for you to have credentials with less money rather than no credentials and zero money,” concludes Kaushal.