

Garage entrepreneur to an automation guru: Farook Merchant

Written by Faiz Askari, Editor, Small Enterprise India.com
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Entrepreneurs are risk takers, willing to roll the dice with their lives in support of an idea or enterprise. A living example of this doctrine is the journey of Farook Merchant, Chairman and Managing Director, Messung Group of Companies. Here's a peek into the entrepreneur who began his success story from a garage.

While asking the first question -- how it feels to be known as the pioneer of Programme Logic Controller (PLC) technology in India; Mr Merchant drift back to the images of 1980 when he was a fresher out of college starting his career with Electronica Machine Tool Ltd. Convinced about utilizing automation technology to common benefit, he was determined to do the unthinkable.

Mr Merchant exhausted his first salary of Rs. 400 (which was a very big amount back then) to buy the equipment and wires necessary for his experiments. During the career span in Electronica, he designed a product called Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) in his house as he wanted to make something new. "I then resigned from the company and decided to make this product as my own. I gave up my job and began to live my dream, toiling in my garage," said Farook Merchant, CMD of Messung Group of Companies. He further said, "At a time when most youngsters of my age yearn for a settled job and seek marital bliss, giving up a well earned job created a stir in my community. Undeterred by the odds facing me, I kept giving my best to the task at hand. Eventually gaining confidence on the product, I decided to realize my automation dream in 1981 through my own venture, Messung Systems."

Like a typical start up, he had also faced innumerable challenges along in this path; however faith and self belief motivated him to keep the efforts going. "I started taking part in exhibitions to show my product to people. My persistence finally bore fruits, when the Relay Contractor Logic was replaced by my PLC called Meprolog-H in 1984. And then in 1987-88, I designed a new product using micro-processors. Since our overheads were very less, we could sell our products at a much competitive price. Hence, we grew at a very fast pace. Having started in a garage, we then moved to a leased shed in Parvati Industrial area, before finally shifting the company's base to Bhosari in 1988," stated Mr Merchant. With a manufacturing and R&D facility for their Indigenous Products and an equally large set up for the Distribution business for Mitsubishi FA

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products; spread over 5,000 sq. mtrs., Messung has robust expansion plans to become the most preferred automation solutions provider to various industries.

Mr Merchant happily mentioned, "I take pride in saying that having grown from a modest capital of one thousand rupees then, Messung today is one of the leading brands in industrial automation products." With an established presence in diverse industry verticals such as automotive, pharmaceuticals, textiles, plastic and printing and packaging, the organization have strong plans to enter other verticals in the near future.

This success story will surely inspire the younger generation as it proves that success is not about where you start from but where you get to at the end of the journey.