

Strap Your Boots on... You are at Basecamp!

Written by Nidhi Arora



Kavitha Reddy is one impressive lady who is soft spoken, elegant and unassuming, you'd have no idea that she's the epitome of the modern day Female Entrepreneur with super powers. Kavitha is Co-Founder of basecampindia.com. BASECAMP is an integrated Outbound Training and Adventure Travel organisation, an offspring of avid, well-trained and certified professionals from Adventure sports and Human Resource field.

The organisation with a vision 'Evolve adventure as the most effective learning tool, to revive the spirit of adventure among people from all walks of life, and be environment cognizant' comprises of exceptional team and a great leader. Excerpts from the interview with Kavitha...

Can you tell a bit about yourself?

I am a Bangaloren, did my graduation from Bangalore University, I have worked for over 14+ years in Finance, BPO & Staffing Industry with companies like Kotak Mahindra, IndiaLife Hewitt & TeamLease Services in Sr Management roles. I have been part of 2 start-up companies that actually influenced me to do something different as and when I wanted to start my own. I had taken up roles in Marketing, PR, Staffing, Training and Operations which in a way helped me to understand the organisation holistically.

I am a qualified mountaineer from Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, an Associate Member of Indian Mountaineering Foundation (the governing body of mountaineering in India). I am also a certified Outdoor Trainer.

Can you tell us bit about BASECAMP?

BASECAMP is an integrated Outbound Training and Adventure Travel organisation, an offspring of avid, well-trained and certified professionals from Adventure sports and Human Resource field.

Our undying zeal to live on the edge coupled with the passion to promote adventure as a

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learning tool and to inculcate the spirit of adventure among people from all walks of life had enabled us to develop programs to suit the needs of one and all. It is imperative to be environmentally aware and help in conserving nature, all activities strictly follow clear conventional guidelines.

Our work spirit is “BASECAMP – The Outdoor People”

What services do you offer?

BASECAMP services is aligned with its vision, we have Outdoor programs for people from all walks of life, services include:

1. Outbound Training Programs (Team Building, Leadership, Management Development, Stress Management etc) for Corporate
2. Adventure Travel for Corporate and Individuals
3. Experiential Learning Programs for Management Institutions
4. Adventure Consulting for Institutions
5. Summer Camps for Children

Why Outbound Training/ Experiential Learning?

Outbound training is one of the most preferred training options among the HR fraternity; it is also an effective employee engagement model. Outbound Training enables participants to learn and experience the challenges in an unfamiliar ground. It helps to enhance behavioral skills and qualities of an individual, bringing out latent facets of one's personality.

Why Adventure Travel?

Adventure seekers are a constantly increasing tribe, be it a trek across the mountains, a climb of steep rocky cliffs, adrenaline rush in white waters it is never enough to explore and conquer for those who with an inclination to adventure.

Do you use any social networking tools for marketing the organisation?

Not just social networking, in fact Technology is a key aspect of our business from both Marketing and PR perspective. We approach our prospects (corporate, institutions & individuals) from different age groups through various channels. We have invested time and money in creating a presence and communication via Websites, Blogs, Social Networking sites, SMS, Mailers etc.

Going forward we also plan to set up an inbound call-center integrated with e-mailing and SMS system.

Since your venture is one of its kind, what prompted you to begin your current venture, and what initial challenges did you face?

India's biggest opportunity is its demography. India is the only place in the world with Mountains, Rocks, Forests, Beaches, Desert and Rivers making it more exciting for an

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adventure seeker. India can offer adventure activities all 365 days a year given the geographic spread.

Indian tourism over the last few years with its 'Incredible India' campaign has seen a tremendous increase both in revenue and foreign exchange. The Adventure travel industry accounts to around 450 crores with a 20% increase in the last 2 years.

Foreign travelers mainly back-packers and mountaineering enthusiasts contribute largely to the revenue and foreign exchange, given the longer duration of their stay. There has been a 25% increase in Indian adventure travelers . The adventure space will stand to gain over the next 3-5 years.

Start-up is full of challenges; the biggest so far has been getting the team that shares the dream. Recession has definitely hit the travel industry at large and getting the early big start has not happened, but the brighter side is due to recession we are able to approach marketing and market segments very differently which would not have happened if the going was easy.

What books or events or people have inspired you the most?

It's difficult to name one single person; my role models are people whom I have worked/work with, my friends and family who have inspired me all the time. Over the years many people have played a role in my life and making me who I am today and who I will be tomorrow. I believe that altitude of your aspirations is directly proportional to the number of people who believe in you.

What five things would you advise to aspiring women entrepreneurs?

- Dare to Dream, because dreams can come true only if you have dreams
- Build a team at the early stage
- Keep an open mind, be prepared to change course when required
- Build a personal profile along with the company profile
- Don't give up

What is one of the biggest hurdles that female entrepreneurs face in the current landscape?

Nothing, if one caves in to external factors which most of the times are irrelevant one can never make a beginning. I believe that women entrepreneurs should not waste time thinking about the hurdles when they believe in themselves and what they are doing. In reality hurdles are gender neutral and if one has a strong business plan and the will to make it happen then world is the play ground.