

Stepping Out of the Corporate Box

With degrees from the top B-schools in the country, these men and women had a ticket to high-flying corporate careers, but chose to strike out on their own. From making music to setting up a theatre group; from helping farmers to churning out fresh food products, these young leaders have done it all and made a success of it – on their terms, says Sreeradha D Basu

Splash in the Pool

Travel is Vipul Kasera's passion and profession. Having set up a strong base in South India, this ISB Hyderabad graduate is now looking to make inroads into the North



↑ Vipul Kasera, 29

BUSINESS MODEL

CommuteEasy: Start custom car pool platforms for companies
LifeOutside.com: Organise weekend getaways and short breaks, offsites for corporate and individual clients

Current Job: Founder of www.lifeoutside.com and www.commuteeasy.com. The first specialises in short breaks, while the second is India's largest car pool network, with over 20,000 users

TURNOVER: ₹1.8 crore

The number of unique visitors per month is over 30,000. Clients for LJO include Tesco, Yahoo, LG, Vodafone, Dell and Ericsson

FUTURE VISION

Kasera has increased the depth and breadth of coverage across India and created a strong presence in the South Indian market. Over the next 12 months, he wants to consolidate his position and make substantial inroads into the North Indian market

Why He Chose the Path Less Travelled

"I chose the path that I believed in. It just happened to be the path less travelled."



Pursuit of Happiness

The former software engineer is creating sustainability in the countryside with Desta, which hopes to give rural households and farmers a prosperous future

← Nishant Banore, 28

BUSINESS MODEL

Desta plans to build a huge franchisee network to help companies expand their reach in remote rural areas at a low cost. It earns through margins from wholesale goods trading

FUNDING: Desta is supported in equity funding by co-founders Ron and Marlys Boehm. It is looking for debt to scale up operations and grants for development research

Hitting the Right Note

She turned down a ₹1-crore salary offer from Goldman Sachs in 2007 to pursue her passion for music and dance. She travels the world doing that, and is project director for India's first planned interactive music museum

→ Manasi Prasad, 30

BUSINESS MODEL

This is a non-profit initiative of the Indian Music Experience Trust. Annual memberships, revenue from the cafe and gift store at the museum and lease rentals from the auditorium will help sustain it

FUNDING

Land and building support from the Brigade Group. Each of the eight exhibits and areas in the museum are being underwritten by donors. The project also has the support of the National Culture Fund

Current Job

Project head for the Centre for Indian Music Experience, India's first interactive music museum set to open in Bangalore by 2013-end

Educational Qualifications

- BE (Information Science) from BMS College, Bangalore
- PGP (MBA degree) from IIM Bangalore

FUTURE VISION

Prasad believes all children should have the opportunity to experience the beauty of Indian music. "The ultimate goal is the continued search for that perfect note each time I sing," she says

Why She Chose the Path Less Travelled

"Because there's too much traffic on the other side! Also, so I could bring my passion and profession together."



Stirring up a Fortune

Musthafa PC was the first graduate from his village. Today, the boy from a poor family in Wayanad, Kerala runs a flourishing food business with a ₹30-crore turnover

→ Musthafa PC, 39

BUSINESS MODEL

Best Food prepares ready-to-cook food products daily and services them to India kitchens through 5,000-plus retailers in 10 cities

Educational Qualifications

- B Tech in Computer Science from National Institute of Technology, Calicut
- MBA from IIM Bangalore

Work Experience

A total of 12 years with MNCs in India, Ireland and the Middle East as core techie. In 2007, ventured into a food processing venture along with his cousins

FUNDING

₹15 lakh
Musthafa invested his savings from overseas jobs

Current Job

Co-founder & MD of Best Food Enterprises, which manufactures and markets a range of fresh food products under the brand name, ID Special

Why He Chose the Path Less Travelled

"One of the core objectives was to create decent jobs for unskilled, uneducated youths from our remote village."



Stage a Play while You Work

The call of the arclights proved hard to resist for this IIM Calcutta graduate. He still runs a legal and financial consultancy, but most of the time, for him and his theatre group, work is about plays

→ Deepak Dhamija, 29

BUSINESS MODEL

Workshop, events, corporate shows, public shows and sponsorship for festivals

Educational Qualifications

MBA from IIM Calcutta

FUNDING
Self-funded

Work Experience

4 years

Current Job

Runs a theatre group called Shoelace Productions based out of Delhi; working on evolving a sustainable business model for theatre in India. Co-founder of Aristotle Consultancy, which works with SMEs and start-ups to resolve legal and financial issues

FUTURE VISION

To create more stories and curate platforms in performing art space, where storytellers can focus on innovative narrations without worrying about market forces

Why He Chose the Path Less Travelled

"When I chose theatre, I was walking on a path close to my heart. The simplest thing for humans is to do what they like. So, the question to be asked of others is, 'Why did they decide not to do so?'"