

A JOURNEY of 1,000 miles begins with a single step, and we have already taken a few. Our creative ideas result in inventions, which in turn lead to innovations. It is a personal endeavour, with few markers along the way.

We keep the ultimate destination in sight though we may have to walk many more miles before it becomes visible or better yet becomes a reality in our lives. We see further and farther than anyone else.

Our focus is value creation rather than technology creation. We make greater contributions than most and seek greater recognition and rewards for ourselves. We are not selfish, we are entrepreneurs!

Appreciation and admiration will always follow though they are never sought directly. We do this and much more with a song in our hearts and smile on our face. We remain humble as the competition crumbles all around us.

A classical challenge that one faces as an entrepreneur is, "I am only an engineer." For business, one needs to have skill sets that span multiple disciplines — business, marketing, finance, technology, law, accounting, to name a few. The list is practically endless. We have seen that one invents in technology, uses inventions in business and seeks competitive advantage by seeking intellectual property rights using legal means. Does one need to be a master of so many trades?



Team up for the innovation journey

First, there is no single right answer to the questions that get asked. We have to use "common sense" to find answers for ourselves. Each situation and each person is unique, and so are the answers. Yet we do our best to provide a few pointers in expectation that they will help you, the reader, to reach the best answer for your situation.

A business requires a variety of skills. It is not humanly possible to have all the skills; no college or school prepares you for all of them either. We are seeking practical answers here and not falling for a nature-vs-nurture debate.

So either you learn these skills on your own or you find people who have them. That is where individual chemistry and team formation come in. Look around you. It is not a surprise that college campuses are buzzing with entrepreneurial activities. They are the best breeding grounds for like-minded people with complementary skill-sets. Friendships get formed that may last a lifetime. It is common for these friends to pool their ambitions together and take their relationship to the next level

by starting a business together. It requires a shift in our own thinking. The guy sitting next to us ought to be treated as our "best partner in enterprise" rather than "worst competitor for grades".

Intelligence adds up and stupidity cancels out. This is a law of human nature. If you are good in English and your partner is good in Chinese, then the team with the two of you is good in both taken together. And that is for starters. Your chemistry together will make you not only better in both but also good in many other skills. You could achieve more, in fact much more, as a team than you can as individuals. One and one indeed make eleven in this game of life.

Those of us, who have revelled at the no-look-pass in basketball, know that teamwork makes each person better at their skills than they are individually at them. In other words, the team as a whole is better than sum total of its parts. The trust among team members is the magic glue that keeps the team going through the ups and downs of enterprise activity. Remember the comic book Asterix? It takes the genius of Asterix and sheer power of Obelix to come together as a team that makes Gauls tough as nails in their fight against the Ro-

mans. All along they were powered by the magic potion made by Getafix, the druid. A more recent example would be the immortal music created by the team of four called Beatles. Who can ever forget!

Even if you are really darn good at multiple skills, you still have only 24 hours. So you might as well spend that time doing what is best for the enterprise and let others do their part. That is called "comparative advantage" in a more technical lingo. You get the idea. The journey will make you do things you can never anticipate, make you manage people as they do things, and finally make you manage those who manage those who do things. The perils are plenty, so are the rewards.

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