

Raj Manek '94: An Intrepid Entrepreneur In a World of Opportunity

LOCALLY GLOBAL

Suffice it to say that Raj Manek '94 is curious. He's also intrepid – and not easily satisfied. While a student at Cal State Fullerton, Manek changed his major three times. “I felt boxed in when having to declare a major with a singular discipline,” explains Manek. So after stints in finance and marketing, he landed on management with a focus on entrepreneurship at the Mihaylo College of Business and Economics. That's when he knew he'd found exactly the right fit.

“After some poignant discussions with the dean at the time, I was pointed to the new focus of entrepreneurship; it was still a very small endeavor then,” says Manek, now a vice president of international sales of Deltron Inc., based in Brea, Calif. The new department was

“like hand in glove,” he recalls. “I loved it. This holistic approach is what business schools should teach every student. Students at Mihaylo are prepared to handle business *life* after school, not just a *career*.”

Manek's professors clearly saw great things in the budding entrepreneur: He was selected Student of the Year by the business college's department of management and Outstanding Student of the Year by the college's Executive Council, among other accolades. So it's no surprise to hear that Manek's boundless curiosity and energy now regularly take him around the world – first, in his career with Deltron, which supports regional airlines and aircraft operators globally (the company provides spare parts and repairs aircraft on nearly every continent). And he racks up even more frequent-flyer miles doing charity work in eastern Africa with organizations like Rotary International.

Manek's “transformative” time at Cal State Fullerton is still never far from his day-to-day business life. Despite a grueling travel schedule, he serves on the board of Mihaylo's Center for Entrepreneurship, which he calls nothing less than a “guiding angel to assist and nurture ideas into viable businesses that are the very future of America.” It's clear that the young business student who thought big years ago is still alive and well.

“Being part of a group who wish for future business-school graduates to be more savvy and bold, armed with the knowledge and tools that will ensure their success, is very important to me,” he says. “Entrepreneurship is a common thread that touches every Cal State Fullerton student.”

His advice to fledgling entrepreneurs is delivered with his trademark energy and optimism: “Work hard, be bold and as Steve Jobs said, ‘stay hungry, stay foolish.’ Don't feel like you have to hit a home run [when starting a business]; just reaching first base is also good enough. But first get to the plate and swing the bat!” **M** *Lorie A. Parch*



In July 2011, Raj Manek '94 visited a giraffe sanctuary in Nairobi, Kenya, and was neck-and-neck with a Rothschild giraffe, an endangered species. Boundless curiosity takes Manek around the world, both with his career at Deltron Inc. and his charity work in eastern Africa.