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COVER
STORY

SETTING THE ASPIRATION FOR TECHNOLOGY LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE

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TOP 50

INDIAN ENTREPRENEURS IN US

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TOP 50 INDIAN ENTREPRENEUR IN US

RAJEEV RAI

A BELIEVER IN CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

Some entrepreneurs set out to change the world. For Rajeev Rai, entrepreneurship has always been about changing lives, one person at a time.

Rai, CEO and co-founder of Silicon Valley-based QASource - one of the world's leading software QA providers - has managed to weave business success together with a sense of social responsibility that demonstrates why his employee churn rate of 9 percent is one of the lowest in high tech.

"Being an entrepreneur is the only way I know how to be able to make a difference at a higher level, where I am able to impact many lives," Rai said. "As an entrepreneur, I can enable people to help realize their own dreams." Rai found his passion for entrepreneurship early. At age 11, he launched the first of several businesses, selling sweaters that his family - also full of entrepreneurs - manufactured in India. Once in the United States and trained as a software engineer, Rai served in a series of QA positions at Silicon Valley tech giants such as Apple, Informix and Macromedia/Adobe before once again returning to his entrepreneurial roots.

Rai and his wife, CFO Sonia Rai, founded QASource in 2002, with a focus on building a more human centric organization that could also carry out better QA expertise and innovation. A small team in Chandigarh, India, was hired to carry out the technical work for North American clients. Successful from the very beginning, QASource and its relationship-oriented approach began winning the business of several influential businesses. It also created a loyal workforce. The company leadership's personal relationships with employees, generous compensation, emphasis on work-life balance and family, project ownership and challenging work have attracted top talent, while Rai's emphasis on his employees growing along with the company has retained them. Most of the company's original employees continue to work at QASource, even as it has grown to thousands of professionals - or "family members," as Rai puts it. It is far from unusual to find engineers in the Chandigarh.

office who have been with the company for a decade or longer, in a field that normally combats sky-high churn rates. As the business grew, however, the Rais became increasingly distressed about the extreme economic gap between the technical professionals they employed in India, and the lower-paid employees hired to do non-skilled work — a gap that is quite pronounced in developing countries. Despite the fact that these employees are paid fairly and relatively well, the Rais knew salary alone isn't enough to make a measurable difference in their lives. As a result, they founded Gift of Shiksha in 2009, a philanthropic initiative that allows QASource to pay for the private education, books, uniforms and transportation for its low-skilled workers' children. More than 40 children are currently enrolled in the program and are thriving. QASource also undertakes a number of other corporate social responsibility initiatives in both its US and India offices.

Rai has leveraged his position in theSilicon Valley and India business worlds to urge fellow business leaders to use their influence and resources to make a difference in people's lives and stay true to their corporate responsibilities. "My leadership is driven by how I can help those around me, and this extends to both my employees and to my customers," he said.

Customers, of course, represent another success story. QASource holds a spectacularly high 94 percent customer retention rate. The company's hybrid onsite-offshore model resonates with companies looking for quality services and better team integration, while at a reduced cost. The company's high employee retention rate has created a workforce that is knowledgeable, offers consistency to clients, retains client institutional knowledge, and doesn't hesitate to proactively offer solutions and advice. The end result is that VC-funded startups and Fortune 500 companies alike look to QASource to help them offer better-quality software. Unsurprisingly, Rai's business philosophy tends to be human-centric. He believes entrepreneurs — and business in general — should behave ethically and represent a core set of values that puts people first. He also believes in leading by design, not necessarily by example. This means a leader should design and build an intentional culture of honesty, transparency and accountability that allows his or her team to thrive.

But he also has strong opinions about what entrepreneurs should not do. Don't quit too early. Don't work without a plan. Don't believe in your own baloney. Don't build a solution before you identify a problem. Don't solve a problem for just a handful of people. Don't surround yourself with "yes" people. Don't be afraid to go outside for help. And never, ever take your team for granted. Rai takes his own time-tested advice. Software testing is full of change and new technological trends. "But if you look back at history, the software testing methodologies that endure the test of time are driven by high-quality people who execute according to planned deliverables," Rai said. "At QASource, we do not sway with every new technological fad that is presented in the market. We stay true to building good people and promoting proven technologies and technological processes."

That's not to say that Rai doesn't value innovation. He absolutely does. QASource's innovation lab is constantly looking at the newest technologies and identifying which ones make sense to adopt as an organization. After careful market research and evaluation, they introduce

> **In the game of life, when the final buzzer sounds, the only stat you carry with you is the number of assists you made. So help other people put some points on the board.**
>
> **- New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg**

tools, processes, and technologies that add value to clients. This has enabled the company to become an early adopter of initiatives in mobile, Agile, cloud, and security testing; and it continues to drive proprietary QASource innovation in the areas of AI, VR and more.

All this business savvy, tech expertise and focus on relationships and people have put Rai at the head of a market-leading business that is expected to grow to 2,000 employees by 2022; and that is quietly attracting more and more attention from analysts and clients alike.

"QASource has never lost a customer because we have done a bad job. That is something that I am very proud of," Rai said. "Everything we do is focused around two questions: (1) How does this action help us take care of our customers better, and (2) How does this action help us take care of our employees better? By staying focused on my customers and my employees, I only execute on strategies and tactics that drive value, quality applications, speed to market, and happy engineers."