

Source, close and relocate top healthcare talents with TERN

As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Avinav Nigam, CEO and Co-Founder of TERN about global recruitment, talent dislocation and building an ethical supply of healthcare professionals.

Temps de lecture : minute

10 July 2024

TERN is revolutionising international migration with technology, particularly in addressing the UK's healthcare talent shortage crisis. We are the world's first full-stack platform to facilitate upskilling, global migration, and job placement for skilled healthcare professionals. Our digital platform streamlines the process for individuals to upskill, migrate, and secure top jobs, while enabling employers worldwide to find, relocate, and integrate top-tier international talent seamlessly.

What was the catalyst for launching the product? Why are you doing what you're doing?

The catalyst for founding TERN was the stories I heard first-hand from Indian healthcare professionals being financially scammed with fake job offers in the UK. I realised that the structural information asymmetry and lack of transparency in international recruitment opens it up for abuse. We want to change that.

Krishna, my co-founder, and I then started to realise the scale of the global talent dislocation problem. Many countries are experiencing

growing talent shortages in key sectors like healthcare. India is projected to be the only country with a talent surplus by 2030, with the government pushing international talent migration as a key strategic objective as part of the “Heal by India” Initiative. We believe that technology has a key role to play in accelerating international hiring and relocation in an ethical way to fill these talent gaps.

Tell me about the product - what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers, USP and so on?

Our platform is designed to accelerate international hiring and relocation in an ethical way. For a candidate, it enables you to be onboarded, verified and directly find and apply for international jobs that fit your profile. For employers, it enables direct access to talent through the platform, leveraging AI to match the best candidates to your vacancies and streamlining the process. In the UK, we work with the NHS and private healthcare providers to fill the healthcare professionals gap by providing top quality vetted candidates. We have several government and private partnerships in India which have helped us build our supply of healthcare professionals.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

We have grown in size exponentially since our inception, approximately 10x and now have a 50 person team across four countries. We are collaborating with a few NHS Trusts to solve their hardest vacancies as well as actively relocating healthcare professionals to Germany. We are currently launching our platform in Japan too.

What is your favourite thing about being a founder?

I think there's so many, for me. I think the number one thing is, my brain works in terms of trying to solve. I'm a constant problem solver. I'm obsessed about it. If I find something, when somebody says that this is impossible, that is the thing I want to do. I'm looking for problem statements almost obsessively that nobody's attempted before, and everybody thinks is never going to work. That's what I'm drawn towards. So, I guess the one thing I really enjoy about being a founder is the ability to solve the toughest, most pressing problem. And almost as a hobby for free, I'm able to create incredible value out of it. The other thing that brings me the greatest joy is seeing and helping people unlock their full potential. It's a privilege to hand pick the top talent in the world to come along for the ride. As much as I'm on my own journey of self growth and self improvement, I'm also trying and hoping to help people to do things that they thought were impossible for them. The fact that I get to solve one of the toughest problems and most pressing needs around healthcare worker shortages combined with the delight I get by helping people achieve their aspirations in life is pretty exciting.

Which founders or businesses do you see as being the most inspirational?

A person I really look up to, even though it's controversial, is Elon Musk. I genuinely think he's somebody who has done incredible things, like landing a rocket 300 times and building a driverless car. His mindset that nothing is impossible is something I admire.

Which other figures in your life inspire you?

Honestly, family. I do have to say, my wife is someone I deeply respect and admire for the simple reason that she embodies a lot of what I'm not. She has an incredible amount of stability. She is my rock. Whenever I'm in a very difficult position, I tend to ask her what her opinion is, and she ends up giving some of the best advice ever. I think it's important as a founder to take that step back regularly because we do tend to get caught up, and can lose perspective, and she helps me to rebalance. I think she plays or thinks about the long-term picture a lot. My family has been extremely supportive, and I've learned tremendously from both my parents. My father had a successful career as a senior civil servant, one of the most senior people in the Indian railways. My mother was an economics professor and corporate trainer. They both got into social service, which inspired me to seek more meaning from my work.

What has been your biggest business fail?

My biggest business fail was my first company, which has also been my biggest success in terms of learning. It was a company called Zaza Box Foods, where in 2012, we were doing plant-based meats in Asia before people knew what vegan was. We had an R&D facility and were doing incredible stuff, but the market wasn't ready. We were way too early. If we had done it 10 years later, it would have been a different outcome. It taught me the importance of product-market fit and timing.

What are the things you're really good at as a leader?

I think the one critical factor that I believe I'm really good at is instilling hope in the organisation. I think of it like instilling hope and belief, helping people to come along the journey, see the future, and believe in

themselves. It's about creating a vision of reality that they cannot see themselves and making them believe they are the ones to achieve it.

Which areas do you need to improve on?

Patience is definitely something I don't have. I can be testy and impatient, and that's something I've been working on. As a founder, your mindset and mental health resonate and get transmitted across the organisation. So it's crucial to improve on patience and understand your impact on the company.

What's in store for the future of the business?

We are building a global platform that is agnostic of country (both talent source and destination) and industry. The core building blocks will be the same with some small configurations to localise for different countries and tailor to specific sectors. Hence, we aim to build a global technology platform that enables 1 million talented professionals to relocate to advance their careers.

And finally, a more personal question! We like to ask everyone we interview about their daily routine and the rules they live by. Is it up at 4am for yoga, or something a little more traditional?

I think I'm obsessed about the company to the point that I sometimes can't sleep for several days. I make it a point to note my ideas no matter when they come, and keep a notebook by my bed to that effect. Another thing I do intentionally is have food at home with the family at least 80%

of the time. I've been intentional about that because it's important for building the company sustainably. Lastly, I've been working on meditation. I believe mental health is crucial, and meditation has been a significant unlock for me.

Avinav Nigam is the CEO and cofounder of TERN.



MADDYNEWS UK

The newsletter you need for all the latest from the startup ecosystem

[SIGN UP](#)

Article by Avinav Nigam