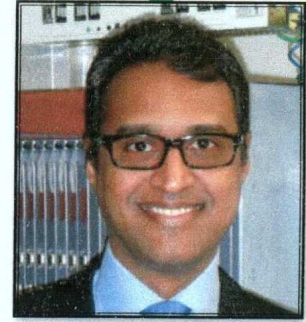


Speaking With Eagle.net Founder Kent Charugundla



TMC President Rich Tehrani recently spoke with Kent Charugundla, a well-known telecommunications entrepreneur and founder of the Eagle.net families of companies. Along with his experience in this field, he is also philanthropist well known for his contributions to various non-profit organizations as well as museums in the United States. Kent is also a recipient of several awards including the “Lifetime Achievement” award for his contributions in the telecom industry.

RT: What is your view on community support in the U.S. and India and what actions have you taken?

KC: I believe that in order to make the world a better place for us, and for our future generations, we all need to help our community and maintain our civic responsibilities. I consider myself extremely fortunate to be able to offer my civic and moral responsibility back to society.

My wife Marguerite and I started pondering a few years ago how we could make a major contribution in the coming years to social welfare. Humbly we decided to partake in charity work during the Katrina hurricane disaster in 2005 to support victims as well as organizations that had been providing aid to these sufferers. We offered our U.S.-based teleconferencing services free to both victims as well as non-profit organizations. Also, about a year ago, my wife and I founded Tamarind Arts Council (TAC), a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting art of Indian influence in North America. Our focus is to support all types of artistic expression, including performing and fine arts inspired by the arts of India. In addition to hosting artist interviews, producing art shows, and providing a creative outlet for performance artists, Tamarind Arts Council sponsors various art related activities and cross-cultural events throughout the year such as: film screenings & lectures, cultural dance performances, book launches and readings, artist performances, and Indian musical concerts. These events stir the interest of a wide variety of audiences to the Indian art scene. The Tamarind Arts Council provides fellowships and scholarship opportunities and we have also established an outreach program to art schools in India, which aims to maintain and improve art universities, while also creating a channel for creative connections between India and the U.S.

Tamarind Arts Council exemplifies how life can indeed revolve around the arts. Furthermore, our mission is to inspire the work of contemporary Indian artists and performers, to facilitate public appreciation of these unique cultural art forms and create dialogs between artists in India and the United States through a number of cultural programs and exchanges.

RT: What is your view on technology for non-profit organizations?

KC: For better or worse, the technological world is here to stay and the global society is being divided into two groups: the “communication rich” and the “communication poor.”

Because the Internet and telecommunications industry have profoundly affected the modern workplace and professionals in all fields are expected to be ‘Information and computer literate,’ emailing, teleconferencing, faxing, instant text messaging, and the cell phone cannot be overlooked. I believe we should provide the same tools to non-profit organizations so that they are not left behind.

As part of the telecom industry, we are very conscientious of our responsibility to society as a whole and feel that the time has come for us to deploy information and communications technology knowledge, tools, and experience towards solving the needs of the larger community in India. In the business world, face-to-face meetings produce the optimum results but in most cases it is not practical. Teleconferencing is a practical, secure, and economic business tool, available 24 hours/7 days a week.

We would like to bring these communications tools to non-profit organizations and work with other partners so that the full spectrum of available technologies can be provided to non-profit organizations.

RT: How does conferencing help the productivity of non-profit organizations?

KC: Teleconferencing is a turnkey solution and powerful productivity tool for non-profit organizations since objectives can be achieved without a face-to-face meeting. Telephone conferencing cuts operating costs, saves time (and as we all know, time is money), and saves cash flow that can be used for higher charitable priorities. It makes sound business sense to spend money wisely when it comes to daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual business telephone conferencing.

Conferencing is also a solid personal productivity tool to conduct business. In today’s competitive business environments, organizations around the world are searching for better and innovative ways to get the most of their meetings. We make it easier, and far more valuable and effective to collaborate with co-workers, partners, and customers locally and globally. It should be emphasized that audio conferencing is an enhancement to business communications, not a replacement.

RT: What are your future plans for serving the community?

KC: We are currently working with TechSoup in San Francisco to provide global conferencing to Indian non-profit organizations. We would like to offer free global conferencing to U.K. based non-profit organizations or donors who are working with Indian non-profit organizations. We are in the planning and implementation stages with the Charity Technology Trust of the U.K.

As you know, non-profit organizations are under constant financial pressure to manage their operating budget. We believe that this donated service will enhance communications and more specifically international conferencing. We will also continue to explore ways to bring technology to non-profit organizations. **CIS**