

Giving legs to your ideas : An interview with Praveen Karadiguddi

Paul Ferretti spoke to Praveen Karadiguddi, CEO and Co-Founder of Scrumconnect, about helping BAME and women founders, the importance of diversity and allowing your ideas to thrive.

Can you tell our readers more about the Scrumconnect mission?

Our mission is to make digital easy. We are a relatively new UK SME. We have done end to end transformation to the UK state pension, which is used by roughly 18 million UK citizens and pays roughly £110B to the UK government.

Along with that, we've been working with 16 of the service listed on the CDDO (Central Digital and Data Office), which ranks the top 75 UK services. So being an SME, we can proudly say that we are punching well above our weight, for we are working on 20% of the top 75 UK services. All the services we have built are used in the Ministry of Justice, for teaching services, in passport services, so we are reaching around 50 million UK citizens.

We have a very large impact. Our vision is to grow our company to 1000 people, and we want to create 50% of these roles in the North of England. Some of the factors which we are proud of are that the company is 50% owned by females, and 100% owned by BAME founders. We're also proud that 50% of

our company is made-up of female associates and employees.

Why do you think that diversity is important amongst entrepreneurs?

It's important because women represent 50% of the whole human population, and we can't be ignoring half the world.

Also, only 1.7% of the VC funding goes to all ethnic startups. And even within that, less than 1% of the funding goes towards all-female companies. So the numbers are quite startling.

Our company's ethos is to hire top talent regardless of gender, race or religion. For example, we are encouraging women coming from maternity leave rather than penalising them. We have a body system helping them ease into the onboarding.

Scrumconnect have been recently part of a BAME association group called KUK (KannadigarUK), an organisation that is promoting the Kannada culture and language across the UK.

So we have driven an initiative for BAME (Black and Minority Ethnic) founders. We want to create a platform for young Asian minority entrepreneurs, particularly female. They receive one to one coaching from me, Shilpa, who is the co-founder of Scrumconnect and Prahlad, our COO. We have pledged 1 to 1 mentoring, free of charge, incubates startups, along with mentoring them, guiding BAME and women founders with a particular focus on AI.

Entrepreneurship is a lonely journey.

It's so hard to get mentors, and I personally benefited a lot from them. We are now successful because we've reached out to others in the past.

To have a mentor is to learn from a giant, while avoiding doing the mistakes that they've done.

We are creating this platform for those who want to be entrepreneurs as well

as already experienced entrepreneurs, with a focus on women.

Do you think that this unity in diversity is a key factor for successful company?

Definitely.

We created this platform because we believe that BAME founders will help the UK economy to grow. This unity in diversity is going to play a big part in the UK economy.

The name Scrumconnect is inspired by a rugby match you've been to. On your website, you mentioned that your eyes were fixated on the scrum formation and the players. With the diversity of Scrumconnect, it feels like each individual provides a singular and unique way of solving a problem. In a rugby team, each player also has a certain role, a certain skill set, to bring to the team to win the game. Is that what you're trying to do?

Let's analyse the example of the Scrum formation. These players were all interlocking. They are collectively pushing with a single vision. It wasn't just a sport, it was a lesson in collaboration, strategy, and triumph. So that made us think; how can we get different communities collaborating and how do we win together? That's what triumph is all about.

The platform we are creating is meant to mirror how startups and consultancies can build a coherent team to achieve a shared goal. If one team member is a weak link, it kind of falls off, but it's how we come together as a group that matters.

Paul Scully said that the UK needs to mirror a US style of growing startups and entrepreneurship, and we need more platforms to do so. Scrumconnect wants to mirror this vision, and to help BAME founders and more specifically women.

Do you have any advice for new or future founders or entrepreneurs?

If you have an idea on Friday, don't let it die on Monday.

Basically, if you have an idea that you think might be filling a gap in the market, definitely give it a try.

Don't let your unachieved ideas become regrets when you're 80 years old.

Don't end up thinking "Oh, I should have given legs to my ideas". Give it legs and, if you want to, reach out to us. Although we are BAME focused, we are not limited to BAME.

Is there anyone who inspires you?

My biggest inspirations are Jeff Bezos and Steve Jobs.

Steve Jobs said that the only way to do great work is to love what you do. And if you haven't found it yet, keep looking for it. Don't settle for less. Once you find it, work becomes a holiday.

What's important is passion and perseverance. Because that's what will keep you going. When you have to face 99 "No", you'll be confronted to a leap of faith that can only be overcome by passion, love, and great work.

Praveen Karadiguddi is the CEO and Co-Founder of [Scrumconnect](#).

