

Interview of Mr. Syed Mamoon Hasan, CEO of A&B Advertising LLC.

Interview conducted by Pratulya Chand.



Excerpts from the interview:

Dimensions Member: How did your journey of entrepreneurship start? What are the challenges you faced on this journey, and how would you advice budding entrepreneurs.

Syed Mamoon Hasan: I started my journey by working in Odigma. When I was posted in Mumbai branch of Odigma, my work included starting branch operations right from the scratch and hiring people.

After working for close to three and a half years I left Odigma to start a venture of my own, which was where my passion was. Hence A&B Advertising was born. Challenges are multiple but there are more opportunities than problems. Earlier starting a business would have meant facing a flak from parents and society, but now the market is conducive and people look up to you if you have your own venture. If one is starting a venture they should keep costs and liabilities to a minimum. You see a lot of entrepreneurs spending unnecessarily on rent, branding etc. in the beginning. We started our venture from a flat and were dependent on interns for a long time. Gradually we found stability.

DM: With big data, algorithms and AI coming into the picture, how do you think that it is going to change the scenario of advertising in India?

SMH: The T.V. industry is close to a 100 billion \$ industry, and things are rapidly changing. If you notice, we no longer watch advertisements in between our television shows. Instead, we now check our social network accounts on our mobiles. This is the reason why now a lot of big brands are investing heavily in mobile advertisements. The advantage of digital form marketing is that a consumer can be targeted individually in the whole group of the target audience and a customized advertisement can be delivered. Now with help of consumer behavior, we can also ascertain what the consumer needs and cater to his/her behaviour. There is a huge scope in this field, and we in A&B Advertising are also carrying such operations.

DM: The urban market has come to a saturation point and rural markets have a huge untapped potential. Where do you think media and advertising are going to influence the rural market?

SMH: Media companies have caught up with the upcoming trends in the communication strategies but the brands are yet to adopt them. When Jio was launched, the internet penetration increased to 35%. The majority of the 10% increase is from tier-2, tie-3 cities, and rural areas combined. These areas are important because these areas are important for a brand's growth and now the marketer doesn't need to be at these spots to market the brand, he can target the consumer in the rural areas by relying upon digital marketing and/or by going with region and language specific offline media.

DM: Where does A&B advertising plans to go from here on?

SMH: We are trying to be ahead in our game. Our people are well versed in the SEO and we try to do things differently. For e.g. none of our competitors are advertising on Snapchat, whereas it has been long since we've been doing it. We encourage innovation and have something called A&B Labs, where our employees can materialize any idea. One of the successful outcomes of this initiative is [Rankmachine](#) which is a knowledge sharing platform. We have a long way to go and a lot of interesting things are coming up our way.