

Pravasi Herald

In the spotlight - Deepa Bhate



Deepa Bhate is the Founder & President of Building & Earth Sciences Inc., a Birmingham based consulting engineering firm specializing in geotechnical, environmental, and construction materials testing and special inspection services.

Deepa started the firm in 1999 and today it has grown to 180 employees in 10 offices in eight states. Building & Earth Sciences Inc. with Deepa Bhate at the helms has been ranked the

63rd fastest growing engineering firm in the nation with estimated annual sales of over \$17 million.

Deepa came to America in 1985 and the transition was very difficult; “the first ten years were the toughest of my life” per Deepa. “But in this country, you have the freedom and infra-structure to become anything you set your mind to be. The opportunities here are far greater than any other country in the world”, says Deepa.

Building and Earth Sciences, Inc. has experience in foundation investigations for major shopping malls, strip shopping centers, industrial and institutional facilities, office buildings, medical facilities, and other commercial developments. Each project has specific requirements and challenges, and *Bldg & Earth* engineers and scientists have the mix of abilities and experience to match these opportunities. *Bldg & Earth* carries out engineering evaluation analysis of soil and rock mechanics, and forensic evaluations of distressed structures.

Bhate says her company's mission has always been to provide large-company advantage with a small-company feel, and she says she feels *Bldg & Earth* has achieved that.



Photo by Todd Hornsby

“When I started the company, my vision was a company where clients and potential employees would want to break the doors down and we are seeing that happen. We did not start out saying we want to be the biggest or have the highest profit margins or any of these things, but the growth is very satisfying.” Bhate has stopped being surprised by her company's success. “Every year I have said we are not going to be able to repeat this, but we have”.

These days the company is carving out a niche in the wind farm development industry in Midwest. It is wrapping up work on the first phase of a \$240 million wind farm project in Iowa which will produce electricity for more than 50,000 homes when completed.

The company will soon start begin materials testing on another large wind farm for the same developer. The company is currently providing materials testing and inspection services for 121 wind turbine foundations and roads in the first phase of the Whispering Willow wind farm, developed by Interstate Power and Light Corp. of Wisconsin.

Deepa Bhate share her views with Pravasi Herald Chief Editor Kusum Singh.

What are the key element in achieving entrepreneurial success?

Relationships, Reputation, loyalty and good financing.

What is your strongest inspiration?

To do well so that all the people that took a risk by supporting Bldg & Earth are not let down.

Best advice you have ever received?

Endeavour to speak well. People judge you by how you speak.

Worst advice you have ever received?

Consider the jobs you create as your community service

Lessons learned by being business for more than ten years?

Work hard to preserve relationships. R before I except after T.
R= Relationship I = Issues T=Trust

Nuggets of wisdom for aspiring entrepreneurs especially Indians?

Think of yourself as an entrepreneur. Don't identify yourself by your ethnicity or gender. None of that matters if you know what you are doing and will do a good job. And don't try to beat people down to "get a good deal". Treat others with respect and value what they bring to the table.

Dreams for your company?

To be a bench mark of success for others to emulate.

Balancing career and family?



That rarely happens. Sometimes the business gets the short end of the stick sometimes the family does. It is important to have a solid support system at work and at home so that others can step in to cover for you when needed. It is important to plan & be organized.

How do you define success?

By the happiness of my husband, children & parents. By my partners' feeling that they made the right decision when they decided to go into business with me. Personally, by feeling contentment and peace.

What are thoughts on giving back to the community?

This is extremely important. We all must give back. We all are capable of doing something to give back to the country & community that has given us so much. For me right now it is by giving through United Way. In the future when I have more time I will give more time & money.

Favourite quote/Personal motto?

It is what it is; deal with it.

Pet Peeve?

People who won't own their problems. You have to be able to look in the mirror and accept responsibly for your part in a problem. It is easier to blame circumstances or whatever else for what is happening to you.

Share with us your personal business philosophy and values?

WE RECOGNIZE THE CLIENT AS THE SOLE REASON FOR OUR EXISTENCE
We are always responsive and accountable to our clients. We feel a sense of urgency on any matter related to our clients. We will exceed our clients' expectations!

WE EXPECT EXCELLENCE FROM OURSELVES
We consistently strive to meet and exceed the highest standard in client service, project management, personnel management, technical quality, and in the conduct of our business.

WE VALUE ALL OUR EMPLOYEES
We believe that our employees make the company and contribute to its success. We respect the individual, and believe that individuals who are treated with respect and given responsibility respond by giving their best. We will support this personal and professional growth. We believe that employees with balance in their lives (work, family, society) are both productive and fun to be around.

WE SEEK TO ACHIEVE HIGH PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH A POSITIVE CORPORATE CULTURE
We will promote and maintain a positive atmosphere in the Company. We expect and

support teamwork, a high work ethic, and high productivity. We cultivate trust, tolerance and honesty. We expect loyalty to the company, its associates and its leaders.

WE WILL MANAGE OUR TIME WELL AND MEET ALL SCHEDULES

We will make commitments with care and then live up to them. We will establish clear schedules and then live up to them. In all things, we will do what we say we are going to do. We do what has to be done, when it has to be done - whether we like it or not and whether we feel like it or not.

WE WILL ACHIEVE MANAGED GROWTH

We will use effective and professional management practices to achieve managed growth without compromising our corporate principles.

WE WILL OPTIMIZE OUR PROFIT MARGINS

We understand that we are all here to make money. We must do well before we can do good. We will operate with strict financial discipline and low overhead without sacrificing our commitment to excellence and to our corporate principles.

WE BELIEVE IN EMPLOYEE BALANCE

Employees with balance in their lives, work, family and society are more productive and fun to be around.