

## ASHRAE Interview Series Part IV



Mr. Deepak Pahwa with the Editor AIC Newsletter Ashwini Mehra

### Interview with Deepak Pahwa

#### Deepak : The lamp of knowledge

This is based on the interview Mr. Deepak Pahwa (DP), Chairman of Pahwa Enterprises, an Indian multinational, had with the Editor, AIC Newsletter.

Deepak comes across as a person with knowledge possessed! He is knowledgeable, still hungers for knowledge, shares & spreads his knowledge, encourages, acknowledges and promotes knowledge – much like a Deepak that spreads light, far & wide!

**Seeks – knowledge** : “My Kashmiri Pandit”, is what his charming mother affectionately calls him, not merely because he was born in Kashmir (1947) but possibly because in her assessment he is as wise & learned as a Pandit. How true!

DP’s pursuit of knowledge took him to St. Xavier’s School in Jaipur where the disciplined Jesuit priests left a strong impression on his young mind. This was followed by 5 years (’64-’69) in the renowned Banaras Hindu University, studying Electrical Engineering. BHU helped widen his knowledge of India, through interaction with classmates drawn from all over India and blending well in a cosmopolitan atmosphere.

He made up his mind early in life, to be an entrepreneur and the die-hard optimist that he is, he achieved his objective. After college for about 3 years he worked for a British firm, & then with his brother in Air conditioning. That is when he first entered HVAC&R Industry.

In 1979, DP set up his own venture & in 1981 had set up the JV with Bry-Air. The urge to learn, made him study chemistry so that he could master the field of Chemical Dehumidification & Desiccant Technology. What certainly helped was his high level of energy that also took him on long sales tours. (Once for 61 days at a stretch!)

The thirst for knowledge made him delve deep into their areas of activity, & what he acquired helped the Organisation grow faster. As he says, “Depth creates Height” – the deeper you go to master a subject, greater the chances of your scaling the summits of success. “See & seize opportunity to create your Luck”, is another of his mantra.

**Shares – Knowledge** : In 1980, he was one of the founding fathers to start ISHRAE, which was a forum to share & exchange knowledge among HVAC&R professionals. DP narrates with immense pride, that he was chosen among all to present the 1st Technical lecture for ISHRAE on his favorite subject “Chemical Dehumidification”. In 1987 he joined ASHRAE, motivated to get the famous Handbook which was well “money’s worth”. He rose to become Secretary AIC but never felt the need to become President, which he feels is more of an ‘administrative/political’ position. His focus on sharing knowledge led him to become member of several Technical Committees of ASHRAE, & has over 25 years association with ASHRAE Committee on Desiccants. ASHRAE made him a coveted “Fellow” in 2006 and he was then one among the only 250 living Fellows

world-wide, out of a membership of 55000! (less than 10 Fellows in India).

He has also set-up a world-class Testing Facility at his Works, which shares knowledge acquired through R&D efforts, at International Seminars/Symposia.

For our readers, it would be interesting to know that the AIC Newsletter was first started by him, & he ran it for a few years – a great medium to share & spread knowledge.

**Promotes – Knowledge** : DP has several initiatives to encourage and promote knowledge in HVAC&R field.

The forerunner to the ISHRAE Institutes of Excellence, was DP’s BALI initiative : Bry-Air Learning Institute.

BALI conducted Teaching/Training course for experienced personnel in HVAC & was a learning “University” having 3 levels of courses HVAC 1-2-3. Over 300 person benefited from BALI.

In Feb. 2006, DP distributed the first prestigious Bry-Air Awards that encourage Innovation in Technology and Systems, and now even Products. The Awards also have a student category to promote HVAC ideas generation among youth. An independent Jury selects the winners, and Bry-Air finances it. The patriot in DP, was always keen to encourage R&D, aimed at import substitution.

DP is ever willing to contribute US\$ to ASHRAE Research Promotion, & has been consistently among the top donors. He is very enthusiastic to join AIC initiative in bidding for ASHRAE Research Projects, which AIC BOG is contemplating with Institutes like, IIT Chennai.

**Energy Recovery** : DP says, “ The process (work) can only be as good as regeneration (sleep)”. So to re-charge his batteries he sleeps for 8 hours daily, takes a 45 minutes walk and enjoys frequent vacations. To broad-base his information pool & to share experiences, he has been associated with the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (Past President) and is an active member of the managing committee of PHDCCI.

It is with great satisfaction that DP recounts how they have made Pahwa Enterprises, into a nearly Rs. 300 crore turnover group, that is the largest Indian Private Co. in HVAC&R industry. The Deepak of knowledge keeps encouraging his team for higher growth and to embrace his work ethic : INTEC - Innovation, Teamwork, Communication.