

Biography of a Software Engineer

By Tanmay Kaushik

There are so many people in the world that have inspired me through different stages of life. This includes Steve Jobs, Michael Dell, Bill Gates, Elon Musk and so many more. But there is one person whose work has inspired me the most. He was responsible for creating a revolution in the field of communication by launching a free access webmail services - Sabeer Bhatia.

He was the founder and co-creator of Hotmail.

Hotmail was launched in 1996 by Sabeer Bhatia and Jack Smith. It was one of the very first webmail application in the world which was available to the public and which was absolutely free to use. This was a wonderful service for people at that time who wanted to communicate with their friends, family and colleagues all over the world in seconds. This service became hugely popular among the people because there was no other alternative to communicate quickly other than expensive telegrams or international calls.

Imagine sending a post to your parents from US to UK and waiting for a reply for weeks - this gets replaced by an instant email in and out and that too free of charge.

Within the first six months of the launch, Hotmail attracted more than 1 million subscribers. Hotmail became such a sensation that in two years of the launch, the company had more than 12 million users and was bought by

Microsoft for a large sum of 400 Million Dollars. Hotmail later transitioned into Microsoft Outlook which is one of the most used tool in today's time.

I believe the biggest success of Sabeer's Hotmail was not its monetary value or their large user base; it was the creation of a service so advanced which was accessible to anyone for free who has an internet connection. Hotmail allowed anyone in the world to have their personal email address for free and talk to anyone in the world whenever they want. This fuelled the popularity of the internet even more, specially among the people who were not part of the IT industry. This brought general people to use the world wide web.

I was not even born when Hotmail was developed. But I learned the story of Sabeer Bhatia from my father who himself has been a part of the IT industry for more than 25 years. He explained to me how this idea of communication was beyond imagination. I was inspired from Sabeer's story because I could very much relate to his early life before he became a sensation. He was born and brought up in India and did his early education from a very prestigious Indian college - BITS Pilani. Later, he studied in Caltech in the States and did his masters from Stanford University. He later went on to work for Apple Computers before starting his own businesses.

I found this story very inspiring as how he started from a normal Indian family and went on to become such an innovator. He has done it all - studied in prestigious universities, worked in one of the most innovative companies and then became a successful entrepreneur.

Sabeer Bhatia along with other people like Sam Pitroda (who is a telecom entrepreneur involved in launching IT companies in India) was the reason that

Information Technology sector was introduced and popularised in India. The success of Sabeer Bhatia attracted thousands of people in India to enter this industry and create new technologies.

If one looks at Sabeer's life, one can see that he succeeded because he was ahead of the curve and had an idea that solved a lot of problems and a business model which was liked by the public. Hotmail attracted millions of people to internet which created a platform for people to create new products on internet and this revolution is still going on.

The way he changed the way people interact forever, I want to develop a product to improve quality of human life further and bring technology enablement to poorest of poor.

For many Hotmail is an old webmail service, but for people who were there to witness the change, Hotmail is a product that changed the face of communication and brought people together making a huge impact on human life.