

## **Real Image Media Technologies, that brought out the REAL me !**

It was 6<sup>th</sup> August 2015, the day when Real Image Media Technologies had come for Campus Placement drive to SSN, I knew this company's name just a couple of weeks back and was not even sure of what kind of company they were and what they did. They were coming to SSN for the first time now, and from the salary package they offered, it was quite sure that they were about to offer a dream job. The pre-placement talk (PPT) was scheduled at 8:30AM in the Main Auditorium, I was all formally dressed and well groomed when I left from the hostel, which was completely out of SSN's norms! In my way to the auditorium and inside the auditorium too a couple of my friends were talking to me and they told to me of how sure they were that I will get placed today in RI (Real Image), I laughed back at them and said, I was an utter flop yesterday and lost my entry into Amazon without knowing how to find the length of a string and you come up to me tell that, it was a sure shot that I am the one who is going to get the offer. (Yeah you read that right I was not sure of the syntax for finding the string length in C, C++ or Java). I was one among those dilemmatic MS aspirants who was planning to take up a dream company job offer, if I get one, for two years and then continue with my MS or pursue with my MS abroad at a stretch after UG and then take up a job. Contrastingly, I had been so much into, preparing myself for my MS application and did completely nothing to prepare myself for the campus placement drive to get a dream company job offer. So this explains why I failed to get an entry into Amazon, just because I missed out to brush up all the stuff I had learned till date.

Actually RI had a quite unique kind of PPT, rather than boring all the students with the plain old slides and boasting of their company; They had split up the PPT into 3 parts – the Introduction, Quiz and Coffee with RI. In the introduction phase, they were trying to lay out the kind of work that Real Image does, their various flagship products (QUBE Cinemas, AVID, etc.), their new products in the IT space (MoiveBuff, JusTickets, etc.), etc. They discussed the various stages of the movie from starting a new movie shoot to getting it pictured to theater screens and about all the nodes and places in between were the need for a skilled IT professional and his skillsets arises. They also illustrated on how they were founded back in 1986 as an audio post-production facility and how they had diversified themselves into what they are now and they also gave us a glimpse of what RI will be doing for the next 10 years and how they expect to revolutionize the movie industry with their current and future products and services. Once this was done they had a Quiz, this was basically an ice breaking session where they split up the entire group into 3 and they had a Tech Logo quiz and Movie names quiz. They didn't grade any student based on their answers in this round, it was just to tell that how all the technologies in the Tech logo quiz were related and used in making the movies in the Movie names quiz. At last they had something called Coffee with RI, it was a Q&A session with the students and RI professionals. By the end of all this, I should say that RI had succeeded in taking me from zero knowledge about them to getting a clear idea of what they do and how they do it in just a few hours. Towards the end of the PPT they were briefing everyone out regarding the interview process and the compensation details, that is when they made a point that even if a student doesn't perform well at any stage and get out of the process they can always approach the RI people in person with their projects and code and prove them why they are more worthy than the rest of the gang and why they should be a part of RI than anybody else. This just gave me a ray of hope, because, I had prepared nothing for placements sake and was in a very bad state in which I was not even capable of clearing the online test. For a second, I even thought of skipping the first round and directly talking to them, but, something stopped me from doing that and I decided to do that if I don't get through the first round, this was maybe because somewhere deep inside I had a gut feeling that this was my kind of

company and that I would get an offer for sure in it, I just have no idea of why I felt like that. Then all 133 of us had to take up the first round – the online test, that tested our technical aptitude in areas like OS, Networks, Data Structures, Algorithms, Basic concepts in OOPs and C, It had totally 40 questions and 60 minutes time. I felt I did the online test fairly well and was expecting my name to be shortlisted for the next round! Then after lunch they declared the results, according to which they had shortlisted 33 from 133 people for the next round and fortunately I was one among the 33, I am not sure whether it was luck or it was my hard work that had paid off finally, but this gave me some confidence that I am worth something.

The next round was a Programming Challenge that was for 4 hours, now again the Amazon fear started haunting me that, what if I don't have access to programming languages other than C, C++ or Java as it did happen in Amazon, like my favorite language Python, in which I have been coding for 2 years now and nearly every single day of it. So, the first thing I did was to clarify with the RI people that, whether all languages allowed and can we use Python, the moment they said any language any platform is fine with them, I ran off to the system assigned to me and started installing Python in it and setting up the environment, when I was installing Python, I felt like wanting to literally ace that round and prove myself to be worthy of something too, I just wanted to make Amazon feel that they had missed such a nice a programmer! The questions were announced and we were given the URL where it was hosted, they told that, it was an open challenge for nearly 10 years now ([URL - http://realimage.github.io/challenges/](http://realimage.github.io/challenges/) - Just incase someone wants to try out the questions). By the time I had setup my system with Python, everyone had already started coding, the question basically involved 2 sections and 4 additional functionalities to be implemented, you can refer to the link I just mentioned to get an idea of what kind of question it was. On seeing the question I was too excited, it was more like text processing, this was something I had been doing for nearly 6 months then, so by then I was sure that I was having all chances and capabilities of getting the job, this is what was missing in my Amazon interview! Then I started to code, in nearly just an hour and half I was done with the two basic sections of indexing and searching the files as mentioned and was also done with two additional functionalities. I called one of the RI people for verifying my code, one of them came at first, and he was checking whether my code worked as specified and he was not interested in my logic. Later he redirected me to another person, he was kind of their Python expert, he came up to me and I started explaining him on how the logic worked in my code and why my code was more efficient than others. I had used certain pythonic constructs that only anyone who has been coding for a long time or is an expert in Python would know, he was quite impressed with all that I had done. Then he allowed me to complete the rest of the functionalities, It took me another 45 mins to an hour to get that over and then I called him back to verify my entire code, this time I was also questioned by Sudhir Jonathan, one of our alumni who currently worked in RI. Soon I saw that, literally, everyone from RI who had come that day had gathered around me including the CTO of RI and all of them started firing questions at me, it was quite challenging to handle that, but it all went out well. By then I was damn sure that, I had impressed all of them and was certain of getting atleast an Intern with RI. They asked me to make some performance tweaks to make my current code work more efficiently than it did and also gave me some questions to work offline and get back to them with the answer in the rounds that followed. By the end I noticed that I was the only person to have implemented all 6 sections plus performance tweaks while others had done only 2 basic sections.

Then the results were announced and we had 3 rounds more, actually for me it was just one! They made me bypass the two technical interviews that my other friends were attending. I

should thank Python that made all this possible, it is a very expressive language and it is really easy to write efficient code and by far it is the fastest prototyping tool available out there, just because I did my coding challenge impressively I was allowed to skip the two technical interviews. I was waiting jobless from 4 PM till 6:40PM while all of my friends were taking up the tech interviews, during this time I was interacting with one of the HR people from RI and got to know about their companies work culture and stuff. Atlast I was called for my HR interview, I had two people in my panel, one was the CTO and the other was a HR person. This round had questions like, "Why didn't you get placed in Amazon yesterday?", "What was the most dissapointing moment in your life, how did you handle it and what did you learn out of it?", "Where do you see yourself in 5 years from now?", "What was the latest movie that you saw and what did you like in it?", "Why are you the only Python developer in your batch and what made you learn Python?", A lots of questions about my projects (I had nearly 6-7 of them), More questions from my resume, "What was the most toughest and complex problem that you have solved and what did you learn out of it?", "How do you prove yourself as a team player?", "What do you do when you get angry and do you get angry often?", "How do you handle extemely stressful situations?", "What would you have become if not for a Computer Science Engineere and Why?", "Do you have any questions for us?", etc. They even asked me about the offline questions and their solutions, then, I started asking them some questions regarding my work and stuff and unknowingly became more possesive of their products MovieBuff and JusTickets and started giving some sugestions on how to improve it, this was one of the main reasons as of why they were impressed with me. By the end of this interview, I was quite sure that the job was mine, mainly because the CTO seemed quite impressed with me and my interests and projects in Machine Learning had set myself apart from others competing with me.

Then finally it was time for the results to be announced, two people from the HR team took me into a room to reveal my results, they were damn happy when they were talking to me and as they briefed me about the stuff I need to know before joining RI, all that time I was waiting for them to put it in words that I got the job, and finally they told "We are really privileged and happy to have you on board Real Image as a full time employee, and are really looking forward to seeing you at RI!". This was THE moment I have been waiting for all day, and even all my life! Then finally, I asked them, "Is everything happening now a dream or am I really getting a Job offer from Real Image?", the HR replied, "**Just shut up and go start partying!**".

**-Satish Palaniappan, 4th Year.**