2019 HFTP
International Hospitality Technology
Hall of Fame

Sudharshan Chary

Co-founder and president of Datavision Technologies, Sudharshan has helped drive the evolution of business intelligence for hospitality.

Innovative developments and applications in technology have propelled the hospitality industry forward, the result of hard work and creative thinking by a few people who had the vision to see what technology could mean to the future of the hospitality industry. In recognition of these visionaries and their impact on the hospitality industry, HFTP established the International Hospitality Technology Hall of Fame in 1989.

The Hall of Fame is HFTP's highest level of recognition in the area of technology. Since 1989, 45 individuals have received this award as a reflection of their contributions to the hospitality industry. Hall of Fame members have been selected by their peers as representing the best in innovation and application and as leaders in their profession.

2019 Inductee Sudharshan Chary

Sudharshan Chary has influenced the evolution of business intelligence in the global hospitality industry for over two decades. But, what truly sets Sudharshan apart in the field of technology is his ability to seamlessly integrate employment with enjoyment, and business with friendship.

"I am deeply honored to be recognized for my contributions to the hospitality industry," says Sudharshan. "To be part of a select group that includes some of the biggest names in hospitality is very rewarding and quite humbling."

As co-founders of Datavision Technologies, Inc., Sudharshan and his partner Sherry Marek have spent their careers solving a problem they noted early on, at a time when hotels still struggled with basic reporting.

Honor the 2019 Inductee at HITEC Minneapolis
Tuesday, June 18 • General Session • 8:30 a.m.

They recognized the need to automate data collection, and thus the Datavision Business Intelligence system was created.

Sudharshan is that rare kind of individual who can convert his technical knowledge into a language that users across the organization can understand, because he recognizes that technology is only useful if the users know how to effectively use it.

Most importantly, Sudharshan has the ability to form genuine, long-lasting friendships with his customers, vendors and colleagues. Whether throwing cigar parties or climbing mountains with friends, he enjoys life to the fullest. This highlights his personality as someone who is passionate about both life and people — which defines hospitality at its core. Here's a conversation with Sudharshan about the genesis of his career and professional achievements.

Excerpted from the HITEC Bytes 2019 Special Report

When did you first know you wanted to be in the hospitality industry?

My first job out of college was with InterContinental Hotels' corporate IT office working on their global reservations system in Stamford, Connecticut under John Cahill *(an inductee to the Hall of Fame)*. Initially, I did not understand much about hotels since I was working on the back-end systems. But then I met Sherry Marek, who was director of front office systems in the same office. She and I had many conversations over coffee on how hotels work and I was fascinated with hospitality.

One of the challenges she repeatedly mentioned was the hotels' inability to streamline reporting and data analysis. She provided the concept of what a hospitality business intelligence (BI) system should do, and I brought it to life with my software engineering background. When we started Datavision together in 1996, HITEC did not have a cate-gory for 'business intelligence' and we had to request HFTP to add it in. Sherry and I ended up getting married and had three kids — but that's another story, titled, "Pie Charts and Champagne, Successfully Combining Romance and Business Intelligence."

What have been some of your biggest goals throughout your career?

Sherry and I have always wanted to make information the great equalizer. Having the correct data on hand puts anyone in a position to make the right decisions. We have tons of data available today, along with the computing power to properly harness it. The goal of business intelligence is quite simple — to turn raw data into actionable information. It does no good to a department manager to get a report at the end of the month showing they were over budget last month. It is far better to deliver a daily labor report that shows a projection of where they will finish the month and allow them to actively improve the bottom line in advance. Very early on, Sherry and I realized that information is power. Getting the right information into the right hands at the right time is critical to proper decision making.

What has helped contribute to your professional success along the way?

I love going to conferences and hanging out with friends who also happen to be business colleagues. I hate the word networking. I don't network. I go out with my customers to eat and drink. We go to basketball and hockey games. I throw cigar parties. I climb mountains with them. Somewhere in there, we try to fit in some shop talk (as little as possible). I have found that you don't need to work too hard at being successful. Be passionate, show integrity, create something that people want and most importantly, be a nice person and success usually follows. ✳

Industry Perspective

In support of Sudharshan's nomination, industry colleagues submitted letters writing why they considered Sudharshan deserving of induction into the Hall of Fame. Here are some select quotes.

"In every capacity and over the course of our friendship, I witnessed Sudharshan's dedication to our industry, relentless support of his customers, and an unwavering commitment to integrity and ethical behavior. I also witnessed his extraordinary generosity, kindness and sense of humor, which make Sudharshan one of the most endearing executives I have come to know over the course of my 39-year career in hospitality."

Lawrence Hall • CEO • Pure Wellness

"His authentic personality, integrity, passion for people, and relentless drive to improve knowledge and people's lives define hospitality at its core."

William Visser • General Manager Grand Lisboa Macau

"*Sudharshan founded, and continues to lead, a successful technology company focused on the hospitality industry. What makes this noteworthy is that 23 years ago Sudharshan could see the potential of combining data from various hotel systems and business intelligence tools to improve hotel operations well before this became an accepted practice. And because BI tools did not exist for hospitality, Sudharshan built the models and the technology to support and demonstrate his vision.*"

Bob Bennett • Co-founder and COO • Kalibri Labs