

# 5 QUESTIONS with

Dean OGAN

Owner, Rocky Top Hospitality



**Q** What is the best piece of business advice you have ever received?

To not confuse efforts with results. In my business, all that matters is that our guests leave excited about their experience with us!

**Q** What accomplishments are you most proud of from the past year?

Being ranked on TB's list of top corporate philanthropists for the third time. Running a great business is only rewarding if you can share that success with others, especially those in your community who need assistance.

**Q** What are some top-of-mind goals that you are looking to achieve in the next year?

We would like to open a minimum of two new Tribeca Tavern locations in the next year, adding to our current Cary and Raleigh locations. Another goal is to increase the percentage of N.C. raised and produced items on our menus as much as possible. Supporting North Carolina businesses is incredibly important in our opinion.

**Q** How has business been affected during the economic slowdown?

Our higher-end restaurants certainly saw the biggest effects of the economic downturn, turning into mostly special occasion restaurants. We closed Bogarts when the lease expired, and converted Michael Deans to our second Tribeca Tavern location, which is more reasonably priced, family friendly and "everyday." After two years of the recession, we decided it was time for a new plan that fit today's economic climate. We believe the Tribeca brand is exactly what people want, and it supports local economic growth.

**Q** What are you doing to increase business during the summer months?

We are offering discounts at our newest concept, Draft Carolina Burgers & Beers, which opened in our former HES space at 510 Glenwood Ave. Given the challenges with the location being in a basement, our marketing strategy has been to offer BOGO specials and fantastic craft beer specials. The response has been excellent, and we plan to extend these grand opening specials through August.

# MONEY MATTERS



Shail Jain and his wife Sucheta Jain founded their company in 1992 and have grown it to nearly \$7 million in revenue.

STEW WILSON

## Couple Builds for the Long Haul

*Working hard, learning lessons behind success of Farragut Systems*

By Olivia Barrow

**RALEIGH** – When 2002 arrives, Durham software design company Farragut Systems plans to still be around, clinging to its fundamental principles but changing with the times.

That's because Shail Jain and Sucheta Jain founded the company to last 100 years or more. The couple, who immigrated from India in 1978 with \$7 to their name, started the company in 1992 with a business philosophy based on studies of long-lasting companies published in the *Harvard Business Review*.

"The capital my wife and I use is our values and determination to work hard," says Shail Jain.

Those values, plus a rigid application of the lessons Jim Collins offers in his books *Good to Great* and *Built to Last*, have helped the couple build a company from two employees to 57 and survive two economic crises.

"They're one of these textbook cases for best business practices internally and externally," says Jack Harris, chair of the Sociology Department at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. Harris evaluated Farragut as a consultant to Guilford and Orange counties when those counties were searching for software to streamline management of property taxes.

Harris was so impressed by the company that he has asked the Jains to speak to his classes as a real-life example of the theories presented in the textbooks.

"They are not afraid to look at the truth," Harris says of the Jains. Farragut was founded as IIS, a consulting service that helped companies transition to using modern technology. One of the founding values

for Jain was financial conservatism – a lesson he and his wife put to work to start their company.

"Instead of borrowing money, we cut our expenses," Jain says. "We made a big lifestyle adjustment and bootstrapped ourselves."

The dot-com bust year of 2001 hit the company as hard as it hit any other software company, but what kept the Jains afloat were long-term customer relationships.

They tailored their company to their customers' needs, and developed new products.

"Our key word here is transformational," Jain says. "To prove that concept, we went to a long-term customer and asked what we could build to transform (its) field agents' lives."

This philosophy led the company to develop software to improve the workflow for organizations with extensive paperwork, especially local governments.

When local government work slowed in the Great Recession, the company had to reinvent once again.

"The tech trend we identified was mobile devices," Jain says. "Anyone doing work in any field – appraisers, insurance agents – could be helped by having the work on the mobile device synced with a home computer in real time."

Concluding that mobile apps would be the future of their business, the Jains in 2009 acquired a company with a specialty in the field called Farragut Systems and took on that name.

The company still has room to grow in its work with local governments. Jain wants to grow 100-fold to serve 2,000 counties by 2035, which, in keeping with his Collins-influenced philosophy, is a big, hairy, audacious goal.

But at Farragut, tenacity to hold to a long-term vision is built into the foundation.

"Of all the companies I've done business with the last 25 years, I think these folks are at the top of the chart," Harris says of the Jains.

### FARRAGUT SYSTEMS

- Specialty: Software development for local governments, and mobile apps
- Founded: 1992
- CEO: Shail Jain
- Employees: 57
- Revenue: \$6.8 million in 2010
- Website: www.farragut.com