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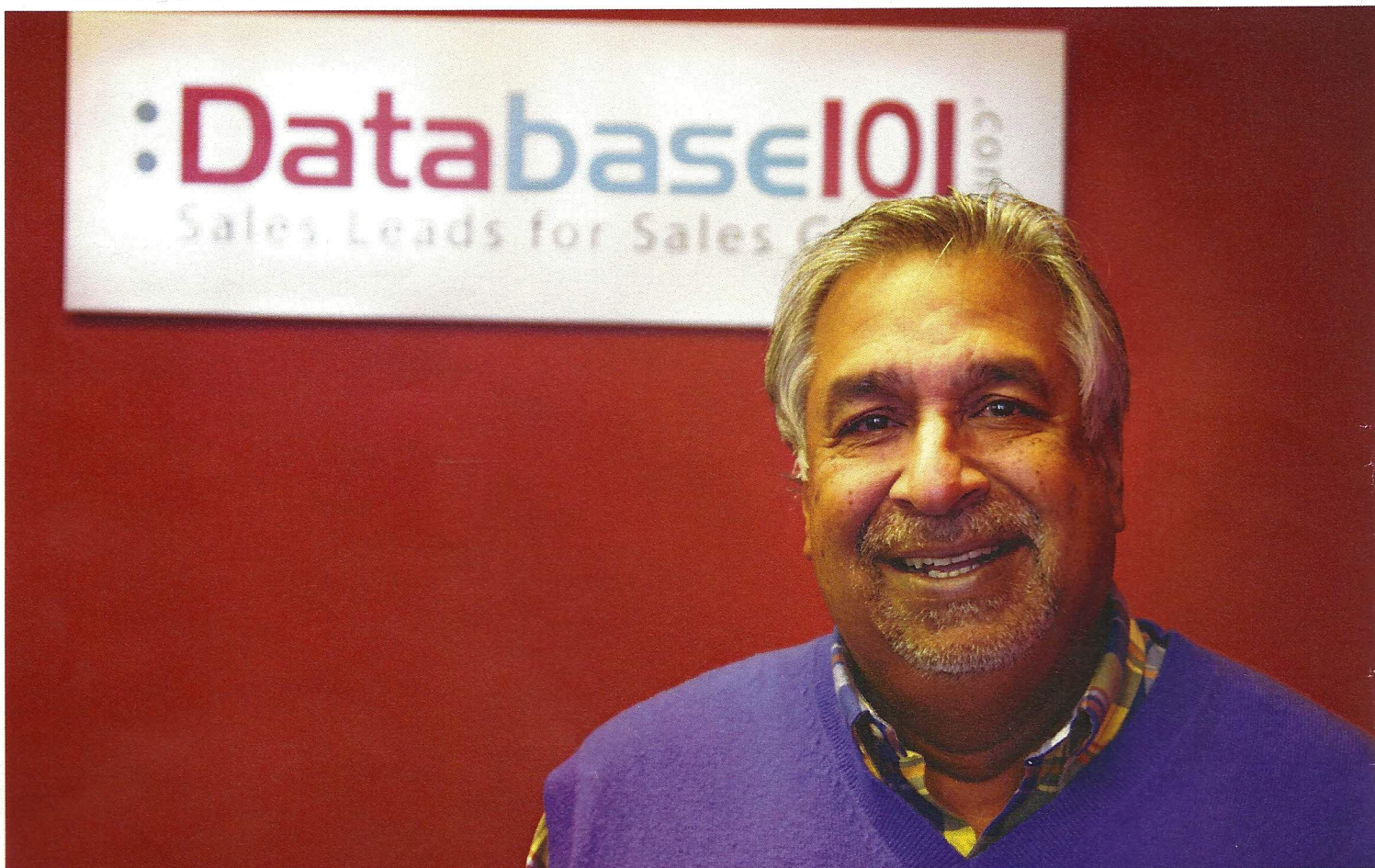
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BELOW: GUPTA: "EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO THE GROWTH OF CIVILIZATION." GUPTA HAS TWO MASTER'S DEGREES.



The Gupta Way

Database 101's guru, Vin Gupta, credits education for much of his business success

VINOD GUPTA GREW UP in a family of self-made success stories in his native India, where his elderly father still works as a physician. So it's no surprise a decade after coming to the United States Gupta realized the American Dream by forming his own company, Business Research Services.

The company morphed into American Business Information and launched its initial public offering in 1993. It eventually became branded as InfoUSA. When Gupta retired in 2008 as CEO and chairman of the board, his data processing firm employed 1,800 workers in Omaha alone. By 2010 the company, whose name by then was infogroup, sold for \$650 million.

Not content with sitting idle, Gupta soon started another business, Database101, whose management team includes former InfoUSA employees. In July, he and his team introduced Infofree.com.



innovation and courage. If he's learned anything, he says, business success follows "a singular focus in creating something new, something different, something people want, then being able to produce that product or service that fills that need, and doing it cheaper and better than what's available."

He followed that formula in the list field and is following it again, providing high-value, low-cost business and sales leads via Database101 and Infocore.com. It's all about delivering what he terms "the wow factor—when the customer says, 'This is great, this is what I've been looking for.' I think a passion to excel in that sense makes a person an entrepreneur. You have to have the vision, you have to be observant as to what need is there in the marketplace. And then, of course, you've got to be able to take a risk.

"Believe me, before I started InfoUSA, I had two other businesses where I failed—an Indian furniture import business and a semi-precious stone import business. I lost a bunch of money, I had a lot of debt. I never thought I would be able to repay that."

When the list business proved profitable its first year, he paid off his debt and never looked back. As he's discovered, setbacks are inevitable—it's what you do with them that matters.

"A failure is not a failure, it is like a learning experience," he says, "and just like I tell my employees and my sons, 'Never be afraid of failure.'"

Decades of success have not left him jaded. He still enjoys starting new ventures.

"It's always exciting to hire people and to create new opportunities and to gather together a family of talented people."

Though he takes "great satisfaction" in what he's accomplished, he says, "you cannot just look back, you have to keep on moving forward." **B2B**

Read more of Leo Adam Biga's work at leoadambiga.wordpress.com

Gupta's enjoyed high-profile peaks and valleys in his globe-hopping career. He regards education as key to opening doors in business and in life. He earned dual master's degrees at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He uses his wealth to give back to educational institutions in India and the States, including UNL.

"Education is the key to the growth of civilization," he says. "In the countries that have invested in education, their people have done very well. People get education, they get smarter, they create more new things. That's the way out of poverty. The reason India is growing the way it is is because they made a huge investment in the educational system—in language, science, math."

He doesn't agree with the contention American education is broken, but does say, "Our problem is we need more educated people, especially in science and math, to fuel our economy." As a high-tech employer, he says he's concerned the need for techie talent "far outstrips the supply."

Just as education and expertise are essential to entrepreneurial success, so are foresight,