
ENTREPRENEUR SPOTLIGHT: KRISH SUTHANTHIRAN, Founder of Best Theratronics

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By JS Communications

After losing his father to cancer, Krish Suthanthiran wanted to dedicate his life to pursuing a career in cancer research and treatment.

“I saw his constant suffering and slow death, and this was all very painful,” he says.

In 1969, almost one year after his father lost his battle with cancer, Suthanthiran moved to Ottawa from India, where he graduated from Carleton University two years later with a master’s degree in mechanical engineering. Suthanthiran was disappointed when he was unable to find a job in the medical field after graduation, so he set out to begin a PhD program in the fall of 1972.

His luck changed in the summer of 1972, however, when he was offered a job with an oncologist at the former Freedmen’s Hospital as a development engineer while travelling in the United States. Five years later, he founded Best Medical International in Springfield, Virginia.

“I was saddened to realize the global health care delivery system is really a disease care system without any hope for containment of cost or improvement,” he says. “I wanted to make it a goal for my company to change that.”

Best Medical International provides oncology and radiotherapy products and services to clinicians, and contains a family of trusted companies, including Kanata’s own Best Theratronics Ltd.

Suthanthiran says he purchased Theratronics from Nordion in March 2008 because he was fascinated with the manufacturing facility and its capabilities.

Being amidst a financial crisis during this time, Suthanthiran says he was faced with two choices: invest heavily and innovate, or plummet.

“I bought the company because I was proud of its previous accomplishments, with a strong 60-year reputation in saving lives, so I decided to invest nearly \$30 million in new product developments,” he says.

This faith in the company paid off, as the 2009 shutdown of a nuclear reactor in Chalk River paved the way for Best Theratronic's success with its cyclotrons, as they offered a non-nuclear solution to developing medical isotopes.



As a result, the company is now a leader in manufacturing external beam therapy units and self-contained blood irradiators, and is experiencing a major expansion. In the last three-and-a-half years alone it has added 160 new employees to its roster, with almost one new employee per week, and is currently increasing its operations in India, the Middle East, China and Brazil and will ship various cyclotrons to Europe this year.

“The race is on for prevention, early detection, effective treatment and a total cure of cancer,” says Suthanthiran. “Our goal is to be the dominant company in the next two years in the global manufacture of cyclotrons for research and radioisotope production.”