



RALEIGH, NC

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Innovative solutions for water purification and desalination, ensuring a sustainable future for our planet.

- 2015 NC IDEA LABS COMPANY
- 2015 NC IDEA SEED GRANT RECIPIENT
- 2018 NC IDEA LEAD COMPANY



I still work with my hands; I still fix everything. I take things apart to understand how they work, and I enjoy putting them back together. I did my undergraduate at UC Irvine and got a degree in biology. I then attended graduate school at NC State, where I got my PhD in genetics. After that, I stayed in North Carolina and worked for a little biotech company called Embrex, which was then bought by Pfizer. I worked my way up to being the industrial agriculture R&D lead for about 15 years, and then one day they decided to close shop locally.

I was thinking about what to do next when I came up with an idea on purifying water. I couldn't stop talking about it; when finally, my

wife said I needed to do something about it or shut-up. That was about four years ago, and I've been pursuing my idea full-time ever since.

My initial steps were total failures. I had this vision—which is still the same—to create a sustainable source of water for humanity. I went around talking to people about how great my idea was, and no one was interested.

As I dove into my idea further and began to understand what it really took to launch a business, I soon realized that people who were paying money for water—which is a huge market—

My first job was working in a bicycle shop. In that job, I learned problem solving—how to take things apart and put them back together again.

—DIPAK MAHATO, CEO AND FOUNDER



didn't want to try anything new. And anyone who really needed it, didn't have any money. I had to do something different to get to that vision. I had to find a market that needed water treatment and was willing to try something new.

I applied for a lot of grants, and I lost. But I kept at it because I truly believed I had something of value. I met with some advisors, and I actually listened to them. One of those was John Austin. He was running a little program called 'Next' by Google. John and I met once a week. This was when I got my introduction to pitching and putting together a business plan. At the end of the three-week program John didn't think we were going to make it, but he was still encouraging.

Taking the lessons learned on pitching and developing a plan, I started winning. I reached back out to John and told him we won \$50,000 from the University of Texas of Energy Institute startup competition. He recommended I apply to Groundwork Labs (now NC IDEA LABS).

After being accepted into NC IDEA LABS, we were pitching and conducting customer interviews every week. That was eye opening. I learned the right questions to ask, and how to find the answers that could make for a powerful story to pitch. I then went on to apply for and received an NC IDEA SEED grant.

For the past few years, we have been focused on developing a solution for oil and gas companies to dispose of wastewater generated during production. It's an \$80 billion market looking for a solution. We could solve the problem better than anyone, but one of the biggest challenges is that there's not a single oil or gas well in North Carolina. There are no customers here, therefore getting visibility and access is a challenge.

But because of our involvement with NC IDEA and the invaluable network and introductions they have provided, I made some invaluable connections into the apparel industry, also desparately in search of technologies to eliminate production waste.

I love NC IDEA. The entire team, and the many interns we have had the opportunity to work with, has helped me to shape my business in more ways than I can count. There's no way that we could have made it without them.

Because of their help, this idea of how to purify water, is becoming a reality. We're building the machine to make it happen. Simply put, we're taking something apart and putting it back together again. I cannot count the number of times I have had to do that along this journey to get to where we are now.

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MANUFACTURING, REDUCING
WASTE MASS BY 95%**

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