

Innovative Prosthetics & Orthotics

Omaha, Nebraska

www.innovativeprosthetics.net

“My dream was to create a smarter, less expensive prosthetic and a better clinical experience.”

Rakesh Srivastava has carried that vision since childhood. It’s what drove him to found Innovative Prosthetics & Orthotics, both as a product developer and manufacturer but also as a clinic.

When Rakesh was ten years old, he lost his left leg above the knee in a road accident in India. He was fitted with a prosthetic, but even then, he knew that it could be better. That became his life-long goal — to make sure everyone who found themselves in his position had the best possible experience and was fitted with the best possible product.



He wanted to create a company that would offer prosthetic and orthotic products that were lighter, smarter and less expensive than what was currently available as well as provide a far better, more patient-centric clinical experience. That mission became Innovative Prosthetics & Orthotics, located in Hastings, Nebraska.

Mr. Srivastava earned his degree in India at the National Institute of Rehabilitation Training and Research (NIRTAR). In 1997, he moved to the United States, attended the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) for Graduate School, completed his residency and soon became an American Board Certified Prosthetists and Orthotist. He also holds a certification for working with Microprocessor knees, Scoliosis Bracing and Cascade DAFO for Pediatrics, among others.

Rakesh sees a huge need worldwide for better prosthetic devices fitted to patients through a better clinical experience. “Prosthetics have been limited, especially for children,” said Mr. Srivastava. “They are usually fitted with a heavy, bulky hand that can only be operated by moving a shoulder. Those often wind up sitting in a closet, not being used.”

“We have created a product and an experience that is more kid-friendly, more functional. There’s nothing like seeing the smile of a child who has regained — or gained for the first time — the use of a hand,” he said. “And we help ‘kids’ from four months to 100 years old.”

But to solidify his business and grow it, he knew he would need more help. “I had confidence in my abilities as a clinician, but I knew I could use help with grant writing.”

Rakesh also believed that 3D printing was the key to his manufacturing process. That search led him to a contact in Ohio who referred him to Dr. Jorge Zuniga. Dr. Zuniga was the director

of the 3D innovation lab at Creighton University, conveniently located in Omaha, not far from Rakesh.

The 3D manufacturing process became essential to the company's eventual success. But Mr. Srivastava needed to have a better understanding of how to get his invention to market and get the funding to accomplish that. To that end, he felt that it was important to know what the state and the university community had to offer. His association with Dr. Zuniga led Rakesh to SHARPhub.

The SHARPhub program provided an entrepreneurial environment, bringing together resources and expertise Mr. Srivastava acknowledged would have been exceedingly difficult for his company to create. "We're not a large company," he said. "It would have cost far too much to hire all of that expertise individually."

SHARPhub helped Innovative Prosthetics & Orthotics prepare a proposal to get funding through the federal government's SBIR/STTR (Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer Resource) program. "Without SHARPhub, it really wouldn't have been possible to apply for grant money because we simply didn't have the resources."

In addition, SHARPhub has provided opportunities for training and mentoring, getting access to university researchers and resources as well as what the participating states offer, and more.

"Working with SHARPhub is like having the resources we normally couldn't afford or access as well as a larger staff," said Rakesh.

