



## INTERVIEW



### Mr. Anuj Prasad

CEO & Founder Director, Desmania Design Pvt. Ltd.

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**PackagingConnections:** What is your educational background? How long have you been associated with the Packaging industry?

**Mr. Prasad:** I am an Industrial Designer (MDes from NID) and Engineer (Production Engineering). I have been associated with the packaging industry from the last 16 years. Initially the association was with paper packaging, but from the last 10 years it is versatile and cuts across the sectors.

**PackagingConnections:** Your key activities at work? What is the most rewarding part of your work?

**Mr. Prasad:** As a CEO, my job is to run the business profitably, while keeping my people motivated and happy with the quality of work and opportunities that the organization offers. At the same time as an entrepreneur I constantly innovate and startegise on new businesses. Most rewarding part of my work is to enjoy the imbedded creativity in the profession. The variety of work and the risks involved in the business are also very challenging.

**PackagingConnections:** The most prestigious awards you have received? And the awards which meant the most to you.

**Mr. Prasad:** Until now the most prestigious award that we have won is the NID Business Design Excellence Award, where Desmania was awareder the Excellence Award for the best FMCG Packaging. This was a true recognition to the magnificent work done by team Desmania in achieving the challenges of brand equity and the structural semantics.

**PackagingConnections:** Your key achievements? Have you, or your organization, been recognized in any way for your great work?

**Mr. Prasad:** Deamania has created a complete infrastructure for delivering end to end design solutions that also include a prudent design strategy for the business success. Large MNCs have been using Desmania's services on a global platform. Desmania has been recognised in various forums for the great work done in the area of packaging. There has been periodic coverage of Desmania and its work I the renowned international media like Impackt Packaging magazine in Italy, Businessweek in the US. The design industry in India is still in a fledgling state and we se a loot of challenges. Desmania's work has been recognised by the clients as 'at par' with the international design agencies of repute.

**PackagingConnections:** What unexpected costs and headaches have you had to deal with?

**Mr. Prasad:** As in any enterprise, there are huge risks involved, but yet the entprenaur has to keep moving ahead with new ideas and risks. We invested in a Rapid prototyping machine, unlike any other design agency. The apital cost and the running cost are both high.

This investment has not done commercial justice but nevertheless added a great facility for quick turnaround of the ideas. On a day to day basis grooming the talent and retaining them has posed a big challenge for us.

**PackagingConnections:** What is one thing about the industry that you would change?

**Mr. Prasad:** Creating in-house technical strength in product development and understanding the holistic perspective could be taken as key drivers for the packaging industry. A strong internal team helps in innovation and also in faster implementation. This also mitigates the blame game during and at the end of the design cycle.

**PackagingConnections:** Where do you see the packaging industry in next 5 years?

**Mr. Prasad:** Packaging will be the most critical touchpoint for the consumers at the retail as well as experience level. Hence packaging will play a critical role in the product sales. Yet, packaging is perceived as an extra from the eco standpoint. Hence we will have to focus our energies into the reusable and recyclable packaging solutions. Environment issues will be the biggest innovation opportunity for the packaging industry, in the next 5 years.

**PackagingConnections:** Could you share with us your key plans for the future?

**Mr. Prasad:** We plan to expand our operations further and offer Innovation in packaging and total product development solutions to the industry. In this regard we have built up



resources and infrastructure to give concurrent creative solutions to the customers.

**PackagingConnections:** What has been your biggest challenge? How did you overcome?

**Mr. Prasad:** Our biggest challenge is to convince the industry that design is not only in the looks but needs to be carried through the experiential level. This requires an in-depth understanding of the consumer and thereafter giving excitement through innovation. Industry plays very safe on innovation and ends up doing lot of mundane work. Innovation needs to be driven from the top, and like quality, innovation should be a concurrent activity at all levels. We try to overcome this by partnering closely with the clients on a strategic level and gradually infuse ideas that can be pursued for taking leaps.

**Packaging Connections:** What are three important tenets (Principles) that you work by when beginning a new packaging project?

- **Mr. Prasad:**
  1. Understanding the brand equity and mandates
  2. Understanding the consumer psyche
  3. Evaluating the stakeholders' capabilities and expectations

**Packaging Connections:** Your packaging dream?

**Mr. Prasad:** To create packaging like fruit peels (outer skin). It looks great, feels great and dissolves in the soil, after protecting the flesh through the cycle. One can also consume

it in many cases! We may need a lot of bio engineering in creating the right material for packaging of the future.

**Packaging Connections:** Any tips you want to share with the packaging professionals across globe?

**Mr. Prasad:** We need to create larger communities and try to realize ideas through collective thinking using the unique knowledge of the domain experts. Packaging inspirations are best found in the nature, even if can emulate a fraction of it, it will be a great achievement.

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