

Giri 'Pickbrain' Balasubramaniam

Giri Balasubramaniam, affectionately called Pickbrain, heads Greycaps India Pvt Ltd; India's second largest quiz company. Pickbrain is known for his unique quiz shows and his trademark sense of humour.

Early Career

Giri started his career in 1992, with **The Economic Times**, and was later part of the brand team responsible for the successful re-launch of the Bangalore edition of The Times of India in 1996. He then had a three-year stint with the **Walt Disney Group**, for new business development. His last corporate assignment before launching his own knowledge services company was with **Indiainfo** as its youngest Vice President in-charge of Content and Strategy.

The Quizmaster

Giri is perhaps better known by his pseudonym, *Pickbrain*, and as an avid quizzer and noted quizmaster. Author of several quiz books he is also the mind behind the Global Awareness Program (GAP) one of India's first focused, structured knowledge enhancement programs for school children and Knowledge-Hub & Global Business Review (GBR) for management students. Over 25,000 children are part of these programs. He and his team have presented close to 1000 shows across 48 destinations of India, Sri Lanka, Oman, Singapore, London and USA to emerge as one of the fastest growing quiz hosts from the region.

Notable Quiz Landmarks

- **India's Biggest Business Quiz:** Tata Sons selected Pickbrain in 2004 to research and present Tata Crucible – the business quiz as part of the centenary celebrations of the Tatas. The quiz, now an annual event, has become India's biggest corporate quiz in just 5 years.
- **World's Biggest IT Quiz:** Pickbrain in association with the Government of Karnataka, India and IT giant TCS has created what would soon be recognized by the Guinness Book as the World's Biggest IT Quiz. Created for school kids, the quiz attracts over 1.3 million participants each year.
- **Redefining Quizzing in Oman:** Pickbrain was invited to the Sultanate of Oman to host a mega quiz with 6000 people on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Times of Oman, the leading English daily of that country. His style and brand of quizzing was an instant hit with both kids and adults and his shows are an annual feature ever since. He has also introduced IT quizzing in Oman.
- **Introducing Quizzing in Singapore & London:** Pickbrain became the first quizmaster in the world to host a live quiz in Singapore attended by a huge audience from the famous Universities of that country.

Recognition

- ♦ **Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam:** The former President of India, has appreciated and recognized the work done by Pickbrain and his team from Greycaps and has given them the honour of being associated with his new project for children in India titled "Billion Beats".
- ♦ **Dr. Edward De Bono:** The guru of lateral thinking Dr. Edward De Bono witnessed the national final of Tata Crucible hosted by Pickbrain and remarked humorously "With all my lateral thinking, I don't think I can crack Pickbrain". Subsequently, Peter De Bono (Edward's brother), also came to India and witnessed a Pickbrain Show and said "Brilliant is his middle name".

◆ **Prof. CK Prahalad:** The man who gave the world the concept of fortune at the bottom of the pyramid was impressed with the work done by Pickbrain and his team in rural areas of India and gave the quizmaster an audience to understand the quiz initiatives in these areas better.

Brand Pickbrain

Quizmaster Pickbrain has in his own way become an inspiration for several youngsters and families who value knowledge. He is a regular guest speaker at several prestigious B-schools, educational institutions and corporate houses. During his visits to Muscat, Oman - he has been invited regularly by leading schools in that country to address their students. He is / has been on the advisory panel of a few leading educational institutions in India.

In 2007, as recognition of his growing popularity and contribution to learning and development The Times of India identified him amongst '**Potential Future Leaders of India**' as part of its Lead India Initiative. This recognition echoed what the late Dewang Mehta of Nasscom fame had once remarked "We are moving into an era where education and knowledge will carry great value and people like Pickbrain will be the icons of that generation".

PERSONAL INSIGHT

A Post Graduate in Media Management, he draws his inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi and even holds a Master's Degree on Gandhian Thought and Philosophy from a leading university in India. He is married with one daughter and based at Bangalore.

Rewards

- ✓ *Nominated the Global Innovator Award 2005-06 by MIT - Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA.*
- ✓ *Recipient of Seven Limca Book of Records (Indian equivalent of Guinness) for quizzing achievements*
- ✓ *Nominated for an Internet Oscar in 2001 at the Asian Internet Awards Singapore.*
- ✓ *CM Asia Award 2004 / 2005*
- ✓ *Nomination to the prestigious Dewang Mehta Award given by the Ministry Of Information Technology Govt. of India.*