



# Alkesh Patel

Rockledge, Florida

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## *Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Alkesh Patel:*

Born in India, Alkesh Patel, President and Founder of Rudram Engineering, Inc. (REI), moved to Indianapolis, IN, during his late teen years. Following undergraduate and graduate degrees in Electrical and Computer Engineering from Purdue University, Patel pursued a career in Systems Engineering. He eventually landed at Raytheon, a major U.S. defense contractor, where he served as Sr. Systems Engineer in charge of New Business Initiatives and Product Development. In 2014, Patel relocated to Brevard County, a location he chose for great weather and numerous opportunities along the Space Coast, and spent two and a half years with GE Transportation before launching his own consulting company.

"I really wanted to do something on my own," Patel said. "I had

experience working on a variety of commercial and military related programs so, even though I was nervous about leaving a steady job, I felt good about starting my own business."

### From Startup to Second Stage

The business was initially Rudram Consulting before Patel changed the name to Rudram Engineering, Inc. (REI). What started in a home office quickly grew to a 500 sq ft office, to 1,200 sq ft to the present day office which occupies 5,000 sq ft. The initial focus was primarily on small Software Systems Engineering projects. However, as Patel shared, this proved to be a challenge when it came to growth.

"Small projects don't last very long," he said. "In order to keep the ball rolling, you need the pipeline full. This certainly presented us with some early challenges. Determining how many employees to hire and how many of them should be contractors both had an effect on cash flow. Nevertheless, we stayed focused on delivering an exceptional product and continued to grow"

At its core, REI is still a Software Systems Engineering company. However, they've expanded to include a wider variety of service offerings. These include Systems Integration, Web Application Development, Business Analysis, Web Services, Software Testing & Maintenance, User Interface Design, R&D, Big Data Analytics, Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), Prototyping, Manufacturing and more. REI's software engineers have advanced programming expertise in Java/J2EE, JSP, JDBC, Hibernate, JSTL, CSS, SOAP, RESETFUL Web Services, C# to asp.NET, C/C++, VB, Cold Fusion, Python, UX, Validation and Verification, HW-SW integration, JBoss, Apache, PHP, AJAX, AXIS,

and much more. REI's data scientists have expertise in many technologies and platforms including: Python, R, Pig, Hadoop, Splunk, Spark, AWS, MapReduce, Bash, MongoDB, Zookeeper, and Bokeh. REI certainly has the experience and expertise to deliver a variety of projects, but their secret sauce lies in the fact that they're quick and that they do everything with integrity.

"We're extremely agile and our turnaround time is exceptionally good for our industry," Patel said. "We're constantly receiving praise for our speed, integrity, and transparency. If a key employee on a particular project happens to leave or something happens to them, we're the first to let our clients know. We're immediately mitigating the situation."

When it comes to marketing, REI focuses on "target" marketing as oppose to "wide angle" marketing. They follow well-researched leads and target very specific customers. It's challenging in the sense that, if they don't land that customer, it can be a significant setback, but knowing what they want and who they want to work with will ultimately pay off in the end.

REI has a set of eight core employees. Depending on the amount of projects, total workforce can swell to 20. Patel shared that, based on immediate growth needs, they currently have 11 openings for full-time positions. When it comes to company culture, it's a true work-life balance that defines the team.

"We're extremely open," Patel said. "If someone has an issue or something they're dealing with, they're encouraged to talk about it. I don't believe in micro-management. I hire based on talent. If you have a family emergency, you can leave and take care of your work the next

day. Work-life balance is very important."

When it comes to philanthropy, Patel is actively involved in the local community. He serves as President of the Indian Association of the Space Coast, where he leads a community of 1,000+ citizens of Indian origin. Events and gatherings are designed to preserve cultural heritage and to give back to the Space Coast. They've led volunteering efforts for Habitat for Humanity, beach cleanups and the construction of children's parks.

As Patel shared, Central Florida, in particular the Space Coast, is a great place to work and live. "We're really primed for technology-driven growth," he said. "It's a great location with many opportunities and lots of local talent. We use the Florida Institute of Technology to recruit new engineers. We attend their job expos; and many former students, who are now employees, help us recruit new students."

What it Means to be a Florida Companies to Watch Honoree

"It's a huge achievement," Patel said. "It's an honor for us, as a small company, that our hard work and core values have been recognized. Hard work definitely pays off. Our employees are extremely happy."

Patel continued, "I think we were ultimately selected because we stick to our core values of transparency, honesty, on-time deliveries and keeping customers involved throughout all stages of a project. Our loyal customers and our amazing team made this possible. They're responsible for our success."

Looking ahead, Patel is keen on developing REI's brand recognition and

breaking into the world of government contracting. They've had tremendous success on the commercial side, but would like to increase their business with the federal government. With a team of highly trained engineers, delivering quality results, Patel expects to have 50 employees over the next two to three years. He's already started the process of "passively" looking for bigger locations.

### Advice for Aspiring Entrepreneurs

"First of all, don't do anything without establishing a goal," he said. "Set short and long-term goals. That's what will keep you going. If you work with the plan, you'll make it. There will be times when things won't go your way. You'll make mistakes in the beginning and that's okay. Learn from them, take a step back and think about what went wrong. Slow and steady is the way to go. The last piece of advice I'll give is related to hiring. Don't look for fancy educations and years' worth of experience. When you meet with a prospective employee, make sure they have strong problem-solving skills and that they have a method to their madness."

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