



Gururaj "Desh" Deshpande
Chairman
Sparta Group LLC

Gururaj "Desh" Deshpande is the chairman of Sparta Group LLC, A123 Systems, Sycamore Networks, Tejas Networks, Sandstone Capital, and HiveFire. He is an influential technology entrepreneur and visionary whose companies and ideas often reshape entire industries.

Deshpande co-founded Sycamore Networks in 1998, with the vision of creating next-generation optical networking technology. Prior to co-founding Sycamore Networks, he founded and was chairman of Cascade Communications. Between 1991 and 1997, Cascade grew from a one-person startup to a company with \$500 million in revenue and 900 employees. In 1997, Cascade was acquired by Ascend Communications for \$3.7 billion.

A member of the MIT Corporation, Deshpande's generous donations have made possible MIT's Deshpande Center for Technological Innovation. The Deshpande Center supports a wide range of emerging technologies including biotechnology, biomedical devices, information technology, new materials, tiny tech, and energy innovations. Since 2002, the Deshpande Center has funded more than 90 projects with more than \$11 million in grants. Twenty-six projects have spun out of the center into commercial ventures, having collectively raised more than \$350 million in outside financing.

Deshpande earned a BTech in electrical engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology–Madras, an ME from the University of New Brunswick in Canada, and a PhD from Queens University in Canada. He and his wife, Jaishree, are the trustees of the Deshpande Foundation, and are involved in several nonprofit initiatives that include support for MIT, IIT, Akshaya Patra Foundation, and the Social Entrepreneurship Sandboxes in India and the United States. Additionally, he co-chairs a national council to support President Barack Obama's innovation and entrepreneurship strategy with Mary Sue Coleman, president of the University of Michigan, and Steve Case, co-founder of AOL.