

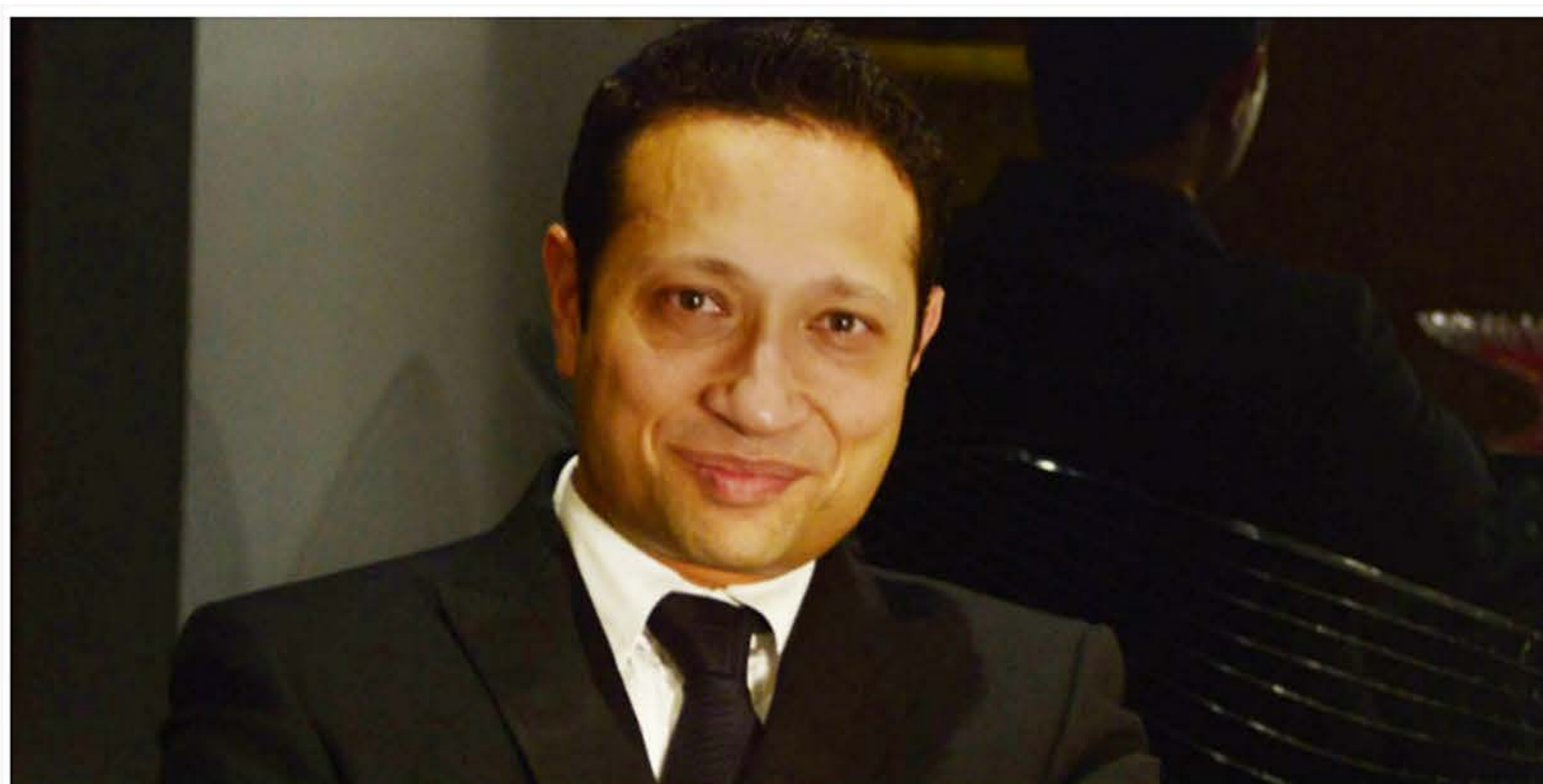
STORY

## From Rs 20,000 to a Rs 100-crore business: the journey of college dropout Jimmy Mistry

APARAJITA CHOUDHURY, 23 JANUARY 2017

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Education is very crucial, but the lack of it should not be an obstacle to chasing your dream. **Engineering dropout** Jimmy Mistry has always been a firm believer in self-learning and on-the-job training. He started out as a designer when he was just 19, without any formal degree in **design and architecture**.



Jimmy Mistry, Principal Designer and MD, Della Group

Talking about his journey as a designer, Jimmy attributes his stint as an importer with an Italian design firm as the one that gave him a real understanding of design. Today, 45-year-old Jimmy has more than 25 years of experience in architecture and interior design. Says Jimmy,

**I believe in self-teaching. Hence, I never hesitate to take risks as I know that I will learn what is needed to achieve success. Even today when I venture into a new business, I self-teach myself everything that is required for that business to succeed.”**

## The beginnings

Jimmy set out on his entrepreneurial journey in 1991 with Mistry Pest Control with just Rs 20,000. His passion for architectural design led him to start The Design Centre in 1993, an interior design firm. He then expanded into the office furniture space in 1995 with Tecnica Office Systems Pvt Ltd, and opened a modular office furniture factory in Nagpur.

Then in 1996, Jimmy set up the first Italian **furniture showroom** in Mumbai, which housed residential and office furniture. The same year, Jimmy and his team also organised the first ever Italian Furniture Exhibition in Nehru Centre, Mumbai showcasing 27 Italian companies.

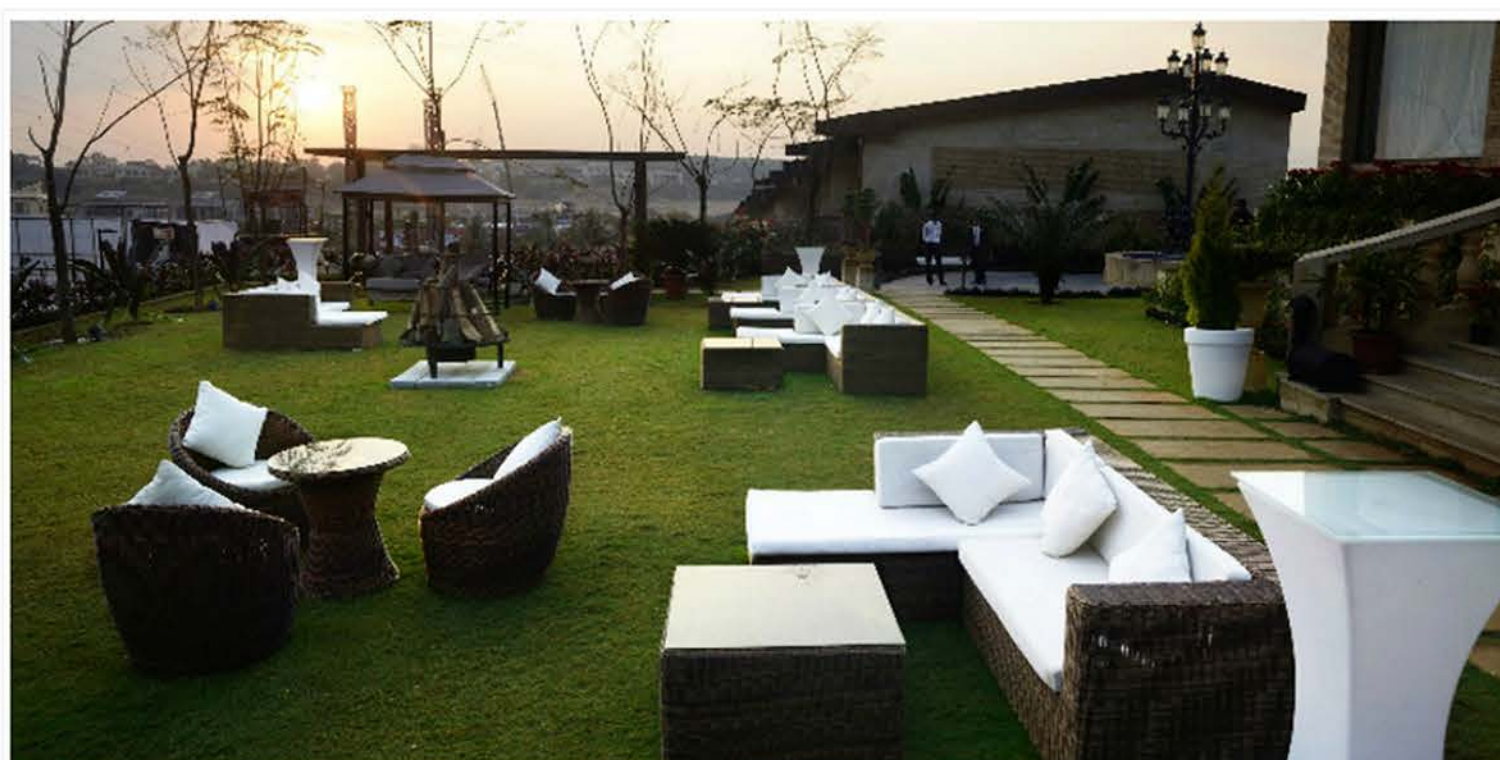
In 1998 and 1999, Jimmy opened showrooms in Delhi, Pune, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai, and the first International showroom in Dubai. In 1999, the brand name was changed from Tecnica to Della Tecnica Office Systems Pvt Ltd.

"I started on my own way back in 1991. And then I hired two people for my small pest control company that I used to run. Today, we have 1,500 employees across businesses such as **manufacturing**, resorts, adventure park, data, and real estate," says Jimmy.

In 2000, Jimmy ventured into the turnkey interior business when he won a project from Star India to remodel the Star News building in Mumbai. The defining moment for Jimmy came in 2008 with luxury second homes project, which laid the foundation for Della Adventure Resorts and Spa.

Since Jimmy fancied good food and **Michelin** starred restaurants across the world, he always wanted to get into the hospitality business. The opportunity came with the recession in 2009; the slowdown forced Jimmy to shift focus from **commercial designing** to hospitality and he started Della Adventure.

Like all other businesses squished by the slowdown, Jimmy also had to downsize the number of employees from 1,300 to 600.



Della Adventure Resort Lounge

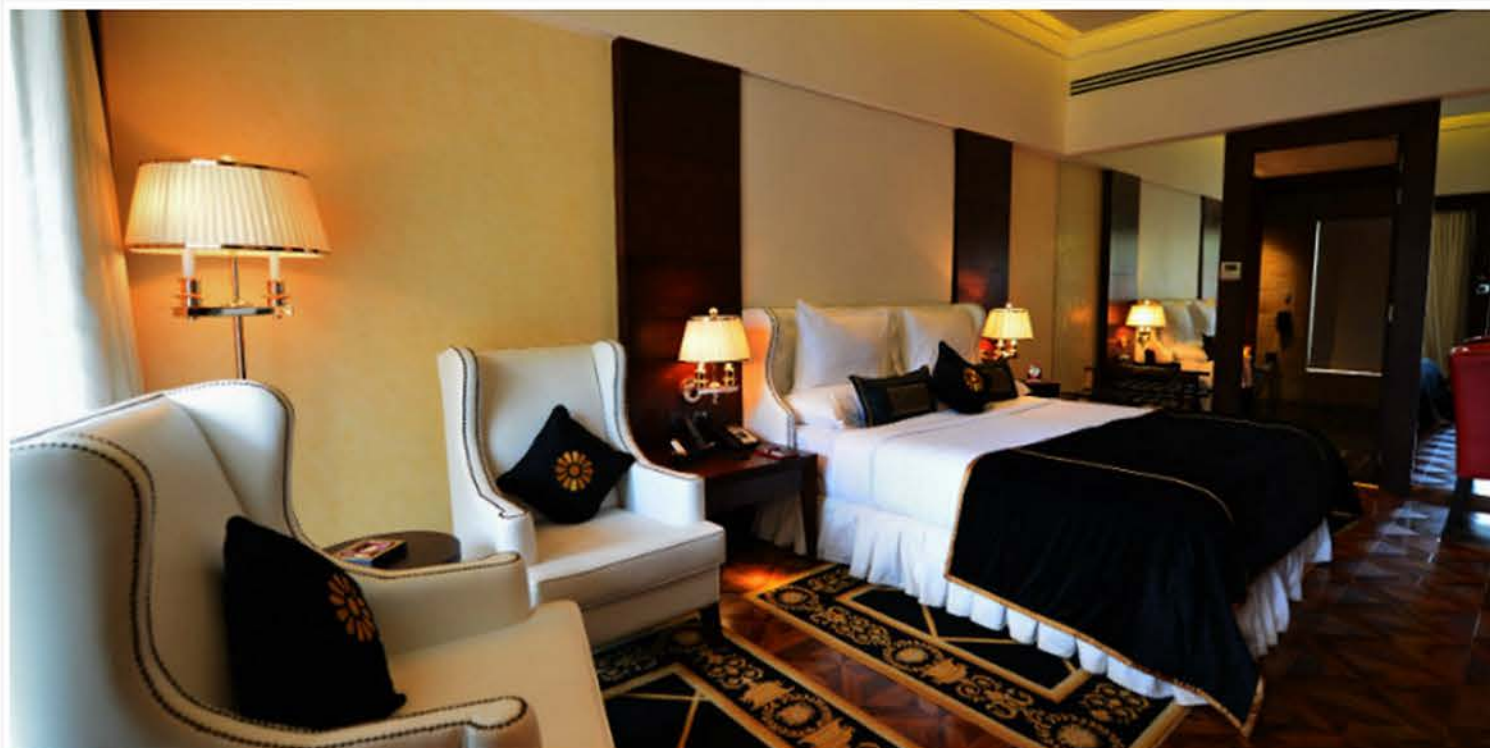
## Investments so far

Mumbai-based Della Group was ISO 9001 and 14001 certified for Quality Systems and Environmental Management in 2002.

Jimmy pumped Rs 250 crore into his real estate and construction business as he wanted to be in the niche luxe segment of signature villas.

After the success of signature villas, Jimmy turned his attention to the adventure business. Della Adventure Park, located in Lonavla near Mumbai, boasts facilities such as adventure, camp stay, banquets for corporate events, and a picturesque locale for a dream wedding.

Talking about funding and investments, Jimmy says the best way to fund a business is to plough what you earn back into the business. He believes that the most secured investment one can do is in oneself. This comes as a refreshing change from today's [startup funding scenario](#), where businesses keep looking for investors to invest in them.



Della Luxury Resort

## No dearth of talent

Jimmy's long stint in the field of design and architecture has ensured that his businesses have always attracted talent in large numbers. Today, Della Group employs 1,500 people and has a pan-India presence with sales offices in Gurgaon, Ahmedabad, Surat, and Baroda.

The group's revenue in the last fiscal year was close to Rs 100 crore and it is projected to be Rs 140 crore in the current fiscal. Says Jimmy:

**"We are expanding the number of villas, banquet halls, resort rooms, and suites to accommodate the growing numbers of visitors. We are also coming up with Della stores which will offer everything under the interior and furnishing space."**