

From Security Officer to CEO

NEW GATEWAY SECURITY TOP OFFICER PROVES HARD WORK PAYS OFF

By **ASHLEY ROE**

Gateway Security CEO Krus Elavia has a simple explanation for how he achieved his new position.

"I came, I worked hard, I got the job," he says. In 1988, Elavia was hired to work as a loading dock security officer at Gateway Security Inc., Newark, N.J. He made \$6.50 an hour, and the company was an \$11 million firm. Nearly 20 years later, he has been promoted to chief executive officer of the now-\$70 million, 4,000-employee company. Elavia, 41, says his success has everything to do with hard work and with learning the security business from the ground up.

At 23, Elavia relocated to New York from his home in Bombay, India. He had received graduate degrees in business and accounting from

Bombay University and planned to teach martial arts courses in Manhattan. Elavia was considering other career options when a friend suggested he apply for a security officer position with Gateway Security. "I remember being interviewed by the president and founder of the company, and on the back of my application, he wrote 'The kid has some potential - hire him,'" Elavia recalls. "I still have that application."

Throughout the years, Elavia worked his way from a security officer to a manager, learning the components of the business on the job and attending multiple seminars and training courses. He was working as chief operating officer when he was chosen to be the new CEO of the company. "I was honestly humbled upon learning that I would become CEO," Elavia says. "I felt a lot of humility in the fact that I was now the ambassador of this enterprise. It is an awesome responsibility."

Elavia believes that working his way up the ranks of Gateway Security has given him a valuable perspective and unique understanding of each employee's contribution and meaning to the company. "Unless you've worked Christmas day, you don't know what it means to be a security officer," he explains. "Having been in that position and on the front

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line, I understand." Elavia admits he has now become the company's "poster child" for success. "I want every employee to feel that there is a good chance for him or her to succeed with this company," he says. "My plan is to build upon the legacy that was given to me, and I am honored and excited to lead Gateway Security."

Elavia was recently nominated as an NJBIZ Executive of the Year finalist. NJBIZ is a weekly business journal published in New Jersey.

Gateway Security has offered security services and protection, consulting, technology solutions and surveys since 1979. Currently, it delivers security and customer services to major airports, large healthcare facilities and numerous Fortune 50 companies. It has been recognized as the Fastest Growing Urban Company for three consecutive years by Inc. magazine. ■

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