

# Interview Platform Magazine

Fresh Thinking from Notable Authors & Experts

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## Mardan Afrasiabi: Attract & Admit Immigration Reform

Tech notables including Mark Zuckerberg and elected officials are taking notice of a Mardan Afrasiabi call to action on immigration reform. Here is our conversation.

**IP: Why did you write *Restart Entrepreneurial Immigration*?**

Mardan Afrasiabi: Well, I initially started thinking about the ideas behind *Restart Entrepreneurial Immigration* in the 2005 time-frame after I sold my company Stonehouse Technologies to a global outsourcing firm called Symphony Services. In my various visits to India, I saw first-hand the unbelievable entrepreneurial spirit of the young people there.

**IP: You are an immigration success story yourself, tell us your story.**

Mardan Afrasiabi: We immigrated to the US from Iran in 1979, when I was 12. As a good friend of mine always says, “chaos and political havoc in the third world ends up benefiting America, as the middle class escape their country to find a better life in the US”. I just hope that this tradition did not end with 9/11.

**IP: What is the Homeland Security and Immigration tie?**

“The impact of certain types of skill shortages in the US is far greater on small companies than it is on large companies. It is the smaller, entrepreneurial companies in the US who suffer greatly, when the immigration faucet is shut off. Small companies don’t have the resources to compete with the large global players. As a result, they end up with far less efficient solutions.”

- Mardan “Dan” Afrasiabi  
Author, *Restart Entrepreneurial Immigration*



Mardan “Dan” Afrasiabi

Mardan Afrasiabi: Well, this is an interesting topic and a main thesis of my book. If you look at the history of immigration into this country, you will find that while it was generally viewed through an economic prism. Of course, during certain periods such as World War II and now post 9/11, national security concerns took center stage.

**IP: Could you please expand on that? What exactly do you mean?**

Mardan Afrasiabi: Starting in 1891 immigration was under various departments: Treasury, Commerce, Labor, and finally Justice. During this time,

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immigration was an economic issue. When the DHS was created, its foremost objective was keeping the homeland safe and secure. That changed the entire debate over immigration.

**IP: What do you see as the #1 most important change to current immigration policy?**

Mardan Afrasiabi: I believe that in the post 9/11 world, it will be difficult to return to the old economic debate. I can only hope that I can keep this debate alive. While as a patriot American I obviously want to see our country safe, I believe that in the grand scheme of things we have more to lose than to gain, by over-reacting due to these events.

**IP: As a tech entrepreneur yourself, how is the present policy affecting your companies?**

Mardan Afrasiabi: The impact of certain types of skill shortages in the US is far greater on small companies than it is on large companies. It is the smaller, entrepreneurial companies in the US who suffer greatly, when the immigration faucet is shut off. Small companies don't have the resources to compete with the large global players. As a result, they end up with far less efficient solutions.

**IP: Where will the U.S. be in 2015 on this issue?**

Mardan Afrasiabi: We no longer have credible politicians who can cross party lines, and talk common sense to the American public. Reagan was able to pass the '86 immigration act, legalizing 3 million illegal aliens. We need a courageous President who can speak directly to the American people and bring Congress in line. As we look down the line, it's hard to imagine that happening again in the near future. ■