

The Fast Track to Success

Yoni Assia chose to study at the Open University so that he could seek his fortune in a start-up at the same time. He succeeded in business – and also graduated with distinction.



Initiating a start-up company can be likened to a roller coaster kind of ride, but in Yoni Assia's case, that's what it was, literally. Yoni, who graduated from the Open University with distinction, did most of his course work for his degree in Management and Computer Science at the same time that he was setting up the firm WiTech Communications (CDRide) with several partners. This firm uses state of the art wireless video technology to film people on amusement park thrill rides and then sells the resulting films as a souvenir of the ride.

The son of David Assia, founder of Magic Softwear and of Naomi Assia, who heads one of the leading law offices in Israel, Yoni is a young man in a hurry. While still serving his post-high school IDF stint in a prestigious Intelligence unit, he began taking courses at the Open University and in the summer following his release, took an additional two courses. Then, he had to make a decision about his future. On one hand, he had a bright idea for a start-up company that would combine his love for computers, electronics and business, and he didn't want to wait to start work on it. On the other hand, he also wanted to complete a university degree.

Yoni applied and was accepted by various Israeli universities, including the Technion and Tel Aviv University, but not all of them met his particular requirements. His major concern was whether it was possible to undertake study for a degree in Management and Computer Science while at the same time traveling extensively to set up his firm. He weighed various parameters, such as whether studying at that institution would allow him to work as well; the courses themselves; whether he would be given credit for his studies during his army service; and the relationship between lecturer and student. After comparing what each institution had to offer, he decided that the Open University ranked first.

Not only could he study while he was out of the country on business, but he could complete his degree – and he aimed to obtain a degree with distinction – in two years or less, compared to the three years it would take at other institutions. In fact, it ended up taking him only a year and a half and he achieved grades in most of his courses of over 90. During that time, he was out of Israel for some four months.

Distance Learning

"I wasn't the ideal student," he smiles. While he was taking a course in Communications Networks, he recalls, he was out of the country so much that he was unable to attend a single class. Yet he earned a final grade of 100. The reason, he says, is that "the Open University textbook was so comprehensive that it was like a bible on the subject. It was comprehensive