Chapter 17
Interview with Kumar Damania, Managing Director of IT Operations at United Airlines

Peter Miller
University of Texas – Dallas, USA

Alicia Therneau
University of Texas – Dallas, USA

Marthe Haile
University of Texas – Dallas, USA

1. Where did you grow up? Do you think that it has any impact on your life’s work?

I grew up in Bombay, India. Growing up in India certainly made me appreciate the struggle that many people have to go through just to survive, while most Americans take the same things for granted.

2. Where did you go to school? Why there?

I graduated from California State University in Fresno. It was one of the best experiences of my life. California has a lot to offer in terms of nature, although on my most recent visit to the Los Angeles area, I could sense the pollution in the air.

3. What did you do after your first degree (if second degree, where was that done, what did you do after that?) How did you get into your first major area?

After graduating from CSUF in 1994, I returned home to Bombay to join the family business. My father had just received government approval to set up a brewery in his home state. Government approvals, especially for alcohol-related industries, were extremely rare and difficult to procure during what is referred to as the “license raj”. This basically refers to the high levels of bureaucratic “red