

## 40 Under 40: Shaheen Majeed

Shaheen Majeed  
Marketing Director  
Sabinsa Corp.  
Age: 30

At just 30 years old, Shaheen Majeed has already earned the title of marketing director at his father's company, Sabinsa Corp., which produces phytonutrients, Ayurvedic herbal extracts and other ingredients. Starting at 17, he worked his way up through the warehouse, customer service and sales, taking on marketing after graduating from Rutgers University. By 2001, Majeed had opened the Sabinsa for Latin America division, which has seen growth rates as high as 300 percent during some years. From 2002 to 2004 he brought Sabinsa's herbal cosmetics to the forefront of the market, and he's currently opening the food division for the company.



Majeed has deep ties to family, including to his father and extended family in India, as well as to his wife of four years and 18-month-old son who, Majeed says, "unfortunately looks just like me." Oh, and he's got a good sense of humor, too.

**What do you enjoy most about what you do?** I love the challenges the industry brings, like figuring out what you can and can't say, and finding out what our competitors are up to. I also enjoy working with our scientific team in India on new products, getting our sales team up-to-date, and talking to customers about what's new.

**What was your inspiration when you were getting started?** Almost solely my father. As an Indian, my culture says that as the only son, I need to follow in my father's footsteps. So while my friends in college were grooming themselves for Wall Street, I chose to play my role in my family. I am extremely happy with my choice—I have been gifted and lucky and given many opportunities at Sabinsa.

**What would you like to see change in the naturals industry in the next five years?** I would like to see some regulation by the Food and Drug Administration to limit exploitation of natural products markets by savvy marketing companies—a little more evaluation of the science behind products. The Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act was a great start, but some products could use a little more scrutiny.

**What's the one natural product you can't live without?** BioPerine®, our black-pepper extract. It enhances the uptake of anything else you are taking, including vitamin and mineral supplements. We also use it on the cosmetic side as it helps nutrients absorb into the skin.

**What's next for you?** As director of marketing, there are still a couple of things I need to get done. I started off helping market Sabinsa Europe and USA, and toward the second quarter of next year, I will take on giving Sabinsa around the world one consistent marketing look. So I will have my hands full for a while.

**What are you afraid of?** On the business side, probably not fulfilling the customer's expectations. Personally, I'm scared of karaoke. And every time I get around crazy media people, they always want to take me out for karaoke.

**If you had one piece of advice for natural products retailers, what would it be?** Read the label. The back-of-the-box kind of thing, not just the front. I can't tell you how many times I've seen flashy advertising with 1 mg of the active ingredient and 99 mg of placebo for \$29 or more.