

# A New Solution: e-Learning For the World's Medical Community

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*CPM spoke with Dr. Vikas Bhushan of Medschool.com about his company's unique mixture of technology and expertise and the resulting new approach to education in the world of medicine.*

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**Dr. Vikas Bhushan**  
*CEO and Founder*

- *Please trace your career path to your current position with Medschool.com.*

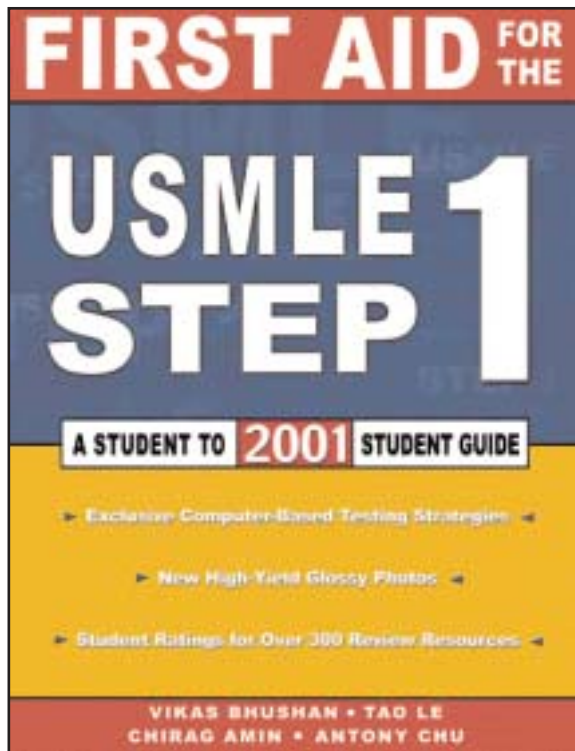
**Dr. Bhushan:** I studied biochemistry at the University of California, Berkeley, and did research in molecular evolution. I came to medicine from a hard science background. That was just before the Human Genome Project got started.

I then took a year off and started a software company. I got the chance to travel throughout the world, right when the IBM PC began to take off.

I then went to medical school at University of California, San Francisco pursuing research in medical informatics. At the same time, I wrote a series of books that have, luckily, become the most popular medical review books in the world. The first book was called First Aid for the USMLE Step 1, which is the medical licensing exam in the US for all doctors. It's actually used in Canada as well. These books became so popular that we've updated them every year. They are used by nearly 100% of US medical students and over 50% of foreign medical students in the major English-speaking countries. We have four books, one is for the Step 1, one is for the Step 2, one is for the Wards, and one is for the matching process whereby you get a residency.

I did my residency in diagnostic radiology at the University of California, Los Angeles. There I did research in medical imaging and user interface design for medical work stations. At the same time, my writing partners and I wrote about 20 more books and started a small medical publishing company called Student to Student Medical Publishing.

I finished a residency at UCLA and did two years of part-time clinical practice in diagnostic radiology. It was at that time that we saw the convergence of the Internet and medical education as an opportunity to build an e-learning platform for rich media medical education, combining the best of audio, video, text and animation to do things that we just can't do with books, and to do them in a scalable fashion that just can't be done with CD-ROMs.



• **How does Medschool.com work? When somebody logs on to it, what happens?**

**Dr. Bhushan:** Well, there are two parts to the company. First, we are a leading medical student community, education and e-learning portal. Second, our company provides e-learning services to corporations and institutions that need to educate their members, their work force and health-care professionals. So, if you go to Medschool.com you can learn about the services we offer institutions and, if you're a medical student or a resident, then you can actually participate in the on-line community that we've built.

• **What is the average user going to do with this tool?**

students and residents, then it could reside on the Medschool.com community site.

• **What are your future goals for Medschool.com?**

**Dr. Bhushan:** We are building sophisticated e-learning technology that allows personalized rich media education so that each learner, anywhere in the world, can access high-quality education with audio, video and high resolution medical images. They can track their learning for themselves or for their employer.

We also have collected patient videos of the major medical diseases from around the world and we own tens of thousands of medical images. We've built a digital asset management system with

**Dr. Bhushan:** At Medschool.com we develop customized e-learning solutions for corporations and institutions. For example, we are working with pharmaceutical companies and medical devices companies to develop education in the basic sciences as well as clinical education for their own employees, including doctors, nurses and technologists. That education can be on their Intranet, or be delivered through different places on the Web. If they're interested in educating medical

medical "concept-based" indexing so that when we need to set up e-learning modules, we can create them rapidly with very high-quality content. Some of that content can be re-used for other modules.

• **How do you plan to achieve this?**

**Dr. Bhushan:** Our company is very unique in that it's a hybrid between very experienced medical educators (we have about a dozen MDs or MD/PhDs in the company), senior technology professionals who understand streaming media and the enterprise delivery of e-learning, and people from the medical communications and pharmaceutical and devices industry who understand the learning needs of health care corporations. We try to bring medical school quality learning to all learners, rather than just medical students or residents at a few exclusive school.

• **To whom do you have to sell your ideas for the future?**

**Dr. Bhushan:** We've recently presented our vision to investors who have invested significant amounts of capital in our company. They see it as a relatively unique and credible group of bright people who have come together with a shared vision.

Secondly, we continue to build credibility through delivering high-quality education to medical students and by maintaining a top-notch academic advisory board. When we go to clients, be they academic, corporate or folks like the military, we sell them the ability to deliver medical education to their constituencies that's high-quality, engaging and customized.

- **How do you go about doing that?**

**Dr. Bhushan:** Well I think one of the clearest ways is to show them examples of the actual learning modules. Most people find the modules to be very engaging. They're not just roll and scroll. They often include compelling video

- **I'm wondering if you face much competition from similar companies.**

**Dr. Bhushan:** We think we're relatively unique in terms of being a hybrid between sophisticated medical educators and business professionals. There are many e-learning companies that don't have a particular focus in health care and there are many health-care communications companies, that do specific projects for the pharmaceutical and devices industry. However, they do not tend to be medically credible or particularly scalable

- **What keeps you ahead of the pack?**

**Dr. Bhushan:** First, I think it's credibility. We are among the educators of the world's medical students through our books. Secondly, technology. We've invested in state-of-the-art, e-learning technology. Thirdly, there is our compelling content. We have proprietary medical videos from around the world.

- **Keeping in mind that we are focusing this on Canadians, what projects are currently being undertaken by Medschool.com?**

**Dr. Bhushan:** We're working with pharmaceutical and devices compa-

nies that are based in Canada, or the Canadian divisions of international companies, in exploring the needs for educating their work force. This includes sales rep training and continuing education for doctors. We're also serving the needs of Canadian medical students through our community site.

- **Into what other countries are you looking at expanding?**

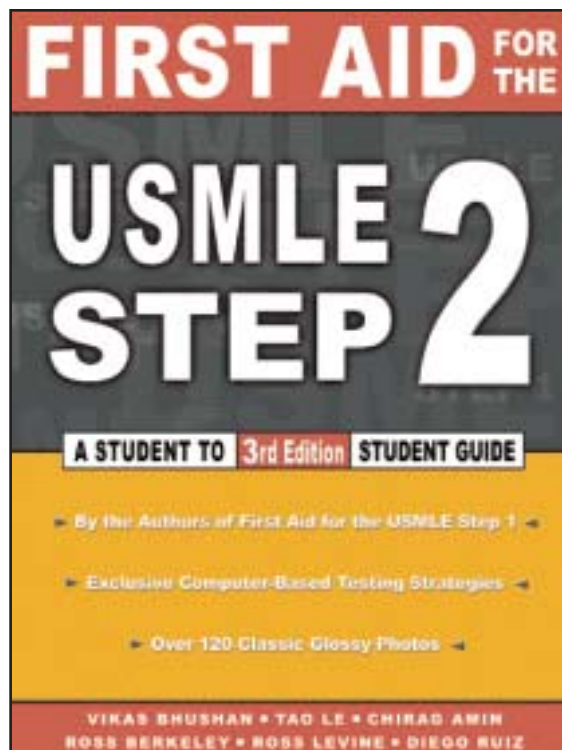
**Dr. Bhushan:** The UK and Europe are our major focal areas outside of North America.

- **Do you have any future plans in Asia?**

**Dr. Bhushan:** We do. First, we are collecting video and image content in Asia and also South Africa. We also have medical students around the world who are part of our community site.

- **How do you plan to work with Canadian pharmaceutical companies?**

**Dr. Bhushan:** Well, one way is to partner with a Canadian medical communications company. For instance, we have formed a strategic alliance with STA HealthCare Communications to develop educational materials and to deliver



e-learning content using our platform. We will prepare STA's educational programs for delivery over the Web and, thereby, provide on-line, case-based learning modules. Our technology will allow health-care professionals to access on-line education, to monitor progress and receive CME and other professional credits for completion of the modules.

We feel we can comfortably address the Canadian medical education market because it overlaps so closely with the American market and our work in the UK. We're very comfortable with Commonwealth medical education standards. We are trying really hard to be an international medical education company. CPM