

Rogério Gabriel

Grupo Prepara



“ I saw an opportunity to contribute to the personal and professional progress of our students, enabling them to achieve their dreams. ”

COUNTRY	Brazil
INDUSTRY	Non-Profit & Gov.
EMPLOYEES	51
YEAR SELECTED	2012
WEBSITE	www.preparacursos.com.br

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

Rogério Gabriel is helping Brazil's youth prepare for a future as bright as that of their country. Since 2004, Prepara Cursos has educated and trained young Brazilians in the lower to middle classes in over 70 vocational courses in hundreds of franchised educational centers around the country. In doing so, the company has helped increase the number of qualified employees available for hire—an important ingredient to growth in a market that has seen millions of company vacancies go unfilled each year due to a lack of qualified applicants. Given that there are more than 19 million young people in Brazil's emerging classes, Prepara Cursos has no shortage of customers: today, the company has 200,000 enrolled students in 25 of Brazil's 26 states. Prepara Cursos' strong management model has enabled the company, in seven years, to open the second largest number of classrooms of any vocational education company in Brazil. As a result, the company has been awarded best franchise in the sector three times.

Rogério was inspired to become an entrepreneur after years of watching his grandfather, an Italian immigrant, and his father run their own coffee distribution business and manage a number of agricultural properties in the interior of São Paulo. In high school, Rogério's interest was piqued by the rising use of computers, and so he pursued a degree in Computer Science from the State University of Campinas. Upon graduating in 1987, he worked at two IT consulting companies before feeling that it was time to embark on his own venture. At 25, he sold his motorcycle and car to found Precisão Informática, a retailer specializing in developing and selling software and computer hardware. The company found a fair amount of success with medium-sized enterprises, at one point running ten stores throughout São Paulo state and being named one of the 100 best IT companies in Brazil.

However, the dot-com crash forced Rogério to re-think his business model. He noticed that although sales had generally declined, Precisão Informática's computer training courses were still in demand; computers had become commonplace in business, and were used by secretaries and CEOs alike. Brazilians who were just entering the workforce—particularly those with a lower level of education—had a harder time adjusting to this new reality. Rogério saw an opportunity to reinvent his company by offering IT courses to the youth of Brazil's lower income classes so they could secure jobs. To mark the shift in strategy, Rogério changed the company's name to Prepara Cursos and opened an educational center in 2004. With little marketing, the school registered 150 students for its first course. As students inquired about different types of courses such as graphic design and telemarketing, Rogério began to partner with educational specialists and used his software development expertise to create computer-based courses. Over the next two years, the company developed 25 different courses and opened five more centers.

Today, Prepara Cursos offers more than 70 courses, divided into four main groups: computing, business/services, languages, and industry-focused. These courses run the gamut from basic to advanced computing, graphic design, introductions to "Oil and Gas," and English classes. The company also provides free career guidance and job interview training in all of its centers. Prepara Cursos' individualized teaching methodology, in which each student completes their course on an individual computer, makes vocational education convenient and affordable for its students.
