



# NAVIGATING AI WITH CONFIDENCE

ADI KURUGANTI CREDITS SKILLS HONED AT NORTHWESTERN—CRITICAL THINKING, COLLABORATIVE ACTION, DATA-FUELED ITERATION—FOR HIS SUCCESS IN DISCOVERING NEW AI SOLUTIONS.

On a warm August afternoon in northern California, Adi Kuruganti ('99, MBA '06) sits in a nondescript office. He is calm and confident, his words thoughtful and precise.

It counters the typical pace in Silicon Valley, where business generally runs at two speeds: fast and faster. Ironically, as the AI revolution takes off, Kuruganti's patience and control are helping to propel his company to new heights faster.

As chief product and technology officer at Automation Anywhere, a San Jose-based company providing AI-powered automation solutions, Kuruganti directs teams developing specialized offerings for clients across diverse industries—financial services, healthcare, and manufacturing among them. The work requires collaboration, a skill Kuruganti learned back at Northwestern.

"This is exactly what I did as an electrical engineering student," he says. "We collaborated to build a model, returned to the data to see what we could improve, and learned to win as a team."

In 1995, Kuruganti traveled 7,800 miles from his native India to Evanston to pursue a top-tier education. A self-described "STEM person," Kuruganti fretted about his exact direction. He spent his first two years on campus exploring computer engineering, industrial engineering, and computer science before finding electrical engineering to be a compelling blend of various disciplines.

In Kuruganti's newfound discipline, a cohort of smart students who valued connections and collective progress elevated his experience. He pored over projects with his peers and participated in design competitions. He sharpened his ability to cooperate with others and honed his data-driven decision-making. He learned how to endure struggle and discern new paths.

"I credit Northwestern for giving me the flexibility to discover," he says.

After graduation, Kuruganti spent four years consulting. Even as he studied and applied his tech skills in a variety of industries, he yearned to own product development from end to end. He returned to school, secured an MBA from Northwestern, and joined Salesforce, a global leader in customer relationship management software.

During his 15 years with Salesforce, Kuruganti helped to launch multiple product lines, including Sales Cloud, Chatter, and B2B Commerce. In 2013, he led the creation of Experience Cloud, a platform for clients to build branded, personalized digital experiences, and steered it from inception to \$1.5 billion in revenue and more than 28,000 customers.

Kuruganti departed Salesforce in 2021 for a position with Automation Anywhere, excited to help businesses leverage AI to reduce operating costs, heighten efficiency, accelerate revenue, and improve customer service. Competing against tech powerhouses like Microsoft, Kuruganti unlocks opportunities for clients to automate mission-critical operations. It's a disruptive endeavor demanding critical thinking, collaborative action, and data-fueled iteration—a challenge Kuruganti has embraced since his undergraduate years.

"It all starts with Northwestern," he says. "That's where I developed the foundational skills to navigate a competitive, fast-paced world with confidence."

DANIEL P. SMITH

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