

SMALLBIZ**Joe Jewell, Karan Goel, Avichal Garg**
PrepMe

Chicago, with an engineering office in Mountain View, Calif.

www.prepme.com

Ages: 24, 23, and 23

Looking to ace the SAT but don't want to hire a coach? Karan Goel, Avichal Garg, and Joe Jewell have created an online SAT preparation course that does just that. Though online tutoring is an optional part of the service, it starts with a diagnostic test to create a customized lesson plan, then uses artificial intelligence to adapt to each customer's strengths and weaknesses, automatically adjusting the types of questions asked based on the taker's answers. The best part of the course, which generally takes between three and four months to complete, is its efficiency, say the founders, because it eliminates needlessly repetitive exercises by constantly updating to focus on areas that really need improvement.



The founders of PrepMe are serious brainiacs. Goel, CEO, is a University of Chicago MBA grad. Garg, the chief technical officer, holds degrees from Stanford in computer science and management and is also a product manager at Google. Jewell, who heads up curriculum development and content creation, got his degree in Aeronautical Engineering at Caltech with an M.S. in Aeronautical Engineering at the University of Michigan and is finishing a Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford. To further allay any doubts about their credentials, the three won the University of Chicago New Venture Challenge, a business plan contest, in May, 2005.

Even though only about 1,000 students have used the service since PrepMe launched in early 2005, the guys are keen to take on heavyweight competitors Princeton Review and Kaplan in an industry worth \$730 million. In fact, the tough competition is one of the most exciting parts about building the business for the founders. "That's what makes it fun," says Goel.

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