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NASSCOM EMERGEOUT Startup 26: Sanjay Vijayakumar, MobME

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Sanjay Vijayakumar belongs to the new breed of Indian youth who are unheard but fearless. Starting an entrepreneurial journey at the age of 22 while in fifth semester of engineering, Sanjay led and created a team of engineering graduates



who were passionate about technology to build up MobME, one of India's most exciting and innovative mobile companies.

MobME raised half a million dollars from angel investors based out of Dubai and Silicon Valley including the ex-GM and VP of Nortel. Defying convention in India, Sanjay dropped out in final semester and turning down jobs at MS and Yahoo to scale up MobME, building a team of 60 spread across offices in Trivandrum, Cochin, Mumbai, and Delhi.

MobME has a slew of innovative products ranging from sms to voice to a media factory churning out mobile content. The company is focused on developing its mobile content sharing platform christened Mobshare, which is the leading and preferred platform by leading mobile operators, media companies, and marketing

agencies for mobile community, photo and video sharing solutions powering Airtel, Vodafone, BSNL, and MTNL.

In 2006, the company was rated as one of India's 100 Innovative Startups by NASSCOM and in 2007 was the youngest of the NASSCOM 100 IT Innovators alongside TI, HP, and Infosys. MobME was also amongst the *Wall Street Journal* 10 Startups to watch for in India in 2008 and was voted winner by NASSCOM as India's Most Innovative Company for 2009. **MobME is today rated amongst the 50 Emerging IT Companies in India.**

Sanjay is a regular speaker at national and international conferences including the 3rd 3G International Conference and the Web Innovation 2.0 and is amongst the Board of Governors of Technopark Technology Business Incubator and the World HR Forum. He is currently setting up the Indian Telecom Innovation Hub at Cochin including a telecom focused technology business incubator along with the Department of Science and Technology, GoI in Cochin, Kerala. Sanjay is also selected for the Star Entrepreneurship Award at the 3rd International India Innovation Summit 2010.



A national and university basketball player, Sanjay has led the college team to various tournaments and played professional basketball in Kerala before being bit by the entrepreneur bug. He now dreams of the day when the sun sets in the Valley at dusk, it would rise to see the dawn of a Silicon Coast in India.

MobME Wireless is one of India's most innovative technology companies in the telecom vertical. The company provides value added services, core network solutions and enterprise solutions to telecom operators, enterprises and government organizations. Innovation has been in the DNA of this young and exciting company. MobME has been voted as the best ICT startup by ISBA.

Sanjay did something unexpected. He saw opportunities while in college and founded a business just out of passion. On top of it, he has achieved success. We are eager to know his entrepreneurial viewpoint that he puts across to Indian startup EMERGEOUT initiative by NASSCOM.

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1. Why did you take up entrepreneurship journey?

Sanjay: The co-founders of MobME Wireless were from similar backgrounds in Kerala. Coming from middle class families, education and employment were the most sought after social parameters. The team found each other while doing a marketing activity for a mobile operator in 2005, which sparked the different strengths.

The urge to do something different was the primary driving force behind treading the entrepreneur route.

2. What keeps you going (how and where do you find your motivation levels)?

Sanjay: Our mentors are our guides and we continuously interact with senior people in the industry. It is very important to carry a very positive frame of mind as well.

3. What is your advice to wannabe entrepreneurs in India?

Sanjay: It's never too late and it's never too early for striking out as an entrepreneur. All that you need is the fire in your belly, the guts to make a decision, and the courage to face the consequences of your decisions. The team that is MobME is just like anyone of you. We belong to normal middle class families and have nothing out of the world in us. We live in this amazing country and opportunities are endless here for all of us. When we dreamed of starting a company, the entire society right from Mammotty to Kris Gopalakrishnan was there to extend their support to us.

There are many people out there who will support any young entrepreneur and together it is possible to dream of a day when the sun sets at dusk in the valley, it will rise to see the dawn of a silicon coast in India. The opportunity is out there. Grab it, Seize it! Be an Entrepreneur!

4. What success means to you and your organization?

Sanjay: Success to us means to be able to create a change in the lives of others. Today when we are able to support a few bright young minds with educational scholarships from the very same college we graduated from, it gives a great sense of pride and joy.

In the next few years, we hope to have an IPO, which would be one of the strong milestones and something that would be a success for us.

5. What are your learnings from the failures?

Sanjay: Being an entrepreneur is great as the real life learning never stops. Everyday we face challenges and the fact that over the last four years, we have been successfully able to overcome these challenges give us confidence to make the next big moves.

We have learnt to keep failures behind us as if we are not failing, we may not be trying hard enough.

Sanjay is a daring entrepreneur. Being able to start a company while in college needs "fire in your belly ... and courage to face the consequences of your decisions" in his own words. Maybe he is the harbinger of the entrepreneurial revolution in India where college grads get bitten by the entrepreneurial bug.

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