

CEO SPEAK

## Kerala an amazing place for a startup company



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Thiruvananthapuram: MobME CEO, Sanjay Vijaykumar has described Kerala as an amazing place to a startup company. The low cost for setting up operations here is definitely a big advantage when compared to other cities in India, he told Manoramaonline in an exclusive interview.

**Q: Being one of the most successful companies incubated in Technopark, can you share with us your experience at the incubation facility?**

A: MobME Wireless was the first Technology Business Incubated Company at Technopark TBI in the year 2006. It has been a very fruitful association that we had with Technopark as it is one of the best playgrounds that a startup can have in its early days.

We have developed our technology and honed our marketing skills under the active guidance and mentoring of some brilliant minds in the industry through the linkages that was brought by

Technopark.

From building business plans to brainstorming, to technical support and technology guidance, advice is invaluable and essential. The Technopark TBI has helped us build our first business plan and raise investment from a band of NRI angel investors.

**Q: How far you been benefited by your decision to set foot in the IT map in Kerala?**

A: Kerala is an amazing place to a startup company. The low cost for setting up operations here is definitely a big advantage when compared to other cities in India.

We are very happy that there has been considerable support from the press in Kerala for Entrepreneurs. Press is a massive medium that has caused a sea change in the thought process of the normal Malayalee.

When we started off in 2006, while in college, it was very much unheard of for middle class students to think that they can be job creators than job seekers. Our families were very apprehensive and the society was not tuned to accept the fact of starting a business.

However, when we look back today, Technopark TBI has 80 companies in its fold and these were all started after MobME Wireless was born. In the last three years, the TBI was voted as the best National Incubator in the country beating the performance of IIT and IIM incubators as well.

This became possible because of the combined effort of the Government, The Press and The Technopark team which has together setup the platform for young and innovative companies to be born and nurtured. The accolades we have achieved nationally and internationally would stand testimony to our decision to set foot in the IT Map of Kerala.

In 2006, MobME was voted as one of India's 100 Innovative Startups by Nasscom. In 2007, the company moved in the league of the Nasscom 100 IT Innovators, a list of all 100 IT Technology Innovative Companies in India alongside Wipro, TCS, Texas Instruments, HP and Infosys.

In 2008, MobME was rated as one of India's 10 Startups to watch for by the Wall Street Journal and in 2009 MobME was Voted Winner of the Prestigious Nasscom Award for India's Most Innovative Company in the Startup Category.

Today MobME Wireless is rated by Nasscom as one of India's 50 Emerging IT Companies.

**Q: Not many companies in Kerala are into mobile vertical. How come the decision and how far you proved right in the business?**

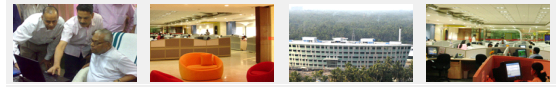
A: All of us being engineers, Mobile Technology was in our blood right from the day we started. Being young and half the country being in our age group, it was a device and technology that we could easily relate to.

The device is accessible to all and a lot of open source technology is available. The fact that Kerala is a state which promoted Open Source Technology has also helped us to a great extent as our core platforms are based on 100% Open Source Technologies.

The Mobile Industry is growing at a scorching pace and India is witnessing the world's largest number of Mobile additions per month at over 12Million new connections. This growth will continue for the next three years and thus the industry continues to expand. As more and more people have a mobile phone, the number of services and products that are required keeps increasing in demand and MobME has been able to leverage this growth. The fact that the digital divide between the Mobile Phone, a Personal Computer and the Internet is merging to a single device augurs well for the business we are in.

Revenues have grown consistently up and we are annually growing at over 300%. Team MobME is a mix of the youth and experience. We are mentored by some of the most brilliant minds in the Wireless

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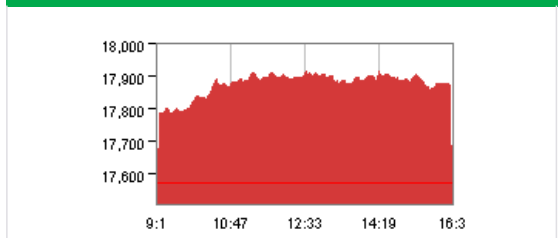
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