

From road trips to forming Facebook, Google, Whatsapp groups, tech entrepreneurs don't mind sharing trade secrets

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http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-04-02/news/60756533_1_entrepreneurs-product-nation-freshdesk

BENGALURU: A sense of community is developing among tech entrepreneurs across the country. They are banding together to back their own kind, organising road trips, forming Whatsapp groups, catching up at coffee shops, and creating low-cost networking option aimed at sharing knowledge, trade secrets and learnings to help each other.

"In the past, people felt they are giving away their trade secret," said Satya Padmanabham, cofounder of Zap-Stitch, which enables small businesses automate their data flow across cloud business solutions.

"Now it is like, if I gave any information, tomorrow I can call the same people for help, we may collaborate or even form a company together." Padmanabham was among 40 tech entrepreneurs networking with each other on a bus trip from Bengaluru to Chennai for SaaSx, an event where about 100 software-as-a-service companies met to share knowledge.

Organised by software product think tank iSpirt and Microsoft Ventures, the entrepreneurs shared insights ranging from fund raisings, getting clients to product iteration and even how to send emails to the customers.

Padmanabham tracks about 20 entrepreneurs who are open to sharing knowledge onto pics such as hiring and dealing with employees on their blogs, through email and Twitter.

"Initially, I created the relationship by sending cold emails," said Padmanabham. Entrepreneurs are helping entrepreneurs over Facebook, Google and Whatsapp groups. Harshit Agarwal, cofounder of Appknox, a startup detecting vulnerabilities in mobile applications, is an administrator of a Facebook group called Bangalore Startups, which has over 40,000 members.

"Few years back when I was launching my firm I had a difficulty to find information about how to create a business model," said Agarwal, whose firm recently exposed chinks in the mobile app of India's largest cab aggregator, Ola. "Now I just meet few guys (entrepreneurs) over coffee to get insights."

Silicon Valley-based Aaron Ross, who helped tech firm Salesforce grow revenues of \$100 million, mentored about 100 firms on best practices for creating predictable revenues over Skype at the SaaSx event in Chennai.

"Everybody feels they are in the same boat. A single company cannot make India as the product nation," said Paras Chopra, founder of Wingify, a startup that provides technology to more than 4,000 customers in 80 countries to increase website sales, signups and downloads.

Chopra, whose firm is boot strapped, sought the help of peers such as Pallav Nadhani, cofounder of Fusion-Charts, and Girish Mathrubootham, founder of Freshdesk, when he was still building his product.

"I now just shoot a mail to forums like iSpirt to get a solution for a problem and get help. This was not possible a few years ago," said Vivek Subramanian, cofounder at retail technology startup Primaseller.