

STARTUP STORY OF redBus & CHALLENGES OF INDIAN STARTUPS

SPEAKER: Mr. PHANINDRA SAMA

DATE: 16th October, 2014

VENUE: Telepresence room



ABSTRACT:

The interaction proved to be very informative and helpful for all students. Mr. Sama spoke about his journey with redBus. He elaborated how an EEE pass out from BITS Pilani started the country's largest bus ticketing company. He shared his experiences and the struggles he faced in starting his idea of redbus.in and making it a Rs. 1000 crore company in 7-8 years time. In the end was a question and answer session where all doubts were thoroughly explained. It proved to be a very engaging talk right till the end.

SPEAKER'S PROFILE:

Mr. Sama is the Founder and CEO of redBus, India's First and largest Online Bus Ticket Booking Service. He received his Electrical Engineering degree from BITS Pilani and Post- Graduation from Indian Institute of Science. Prior to redBus, he worked at ST Electronics and Texas Instruments. He hails from Nizamabad, Andhra Pradesh.

LECTURE SUMMARY:

Mr. Sama went on to explain how the earlier bus ticket booking system was tedious and full of hassle, which involved calling agents who might not have prior information of all the buses. redBus was an innovative idea to solve a bigger problem of getting tickets of buses comfortably. The founders, Mr. Sama, Mr. Sudhakar and Mr. Charan, friends from BITS Pilani, used to work in Bangalore at the time.

Started in 2005, today redBus is the largest online bus ticketing company in India. It has the largest network of bus operators. It offers over 4500 routes across the Indian map. Customers can book tickets as per their convenience – be it the phone, home delivery, physical outlets or even SMS. The company saw an exponential growth of about 25% per annum which was a huge motivation for Mr. Sama.

Mr. Sama said, however none of the founders were from computer science, but their education from BITS helped them a lot in terms of confidence level. Major push for the decision of red bus was when they were selected by TiE for incubation program.

Finally, Mr. Sama's exit came a year after the Bangalore-based ticketing portal got acquired by travel aggregator Ibibo Group, owned by South African investment firm Naspers, for Rs. 780-crore. The acquisition was termed by investors and market watchers as the most successful exit for any entrepreneur in the ecommerce space so far.

By: Tejas Agrawal