

Modernized bus travel in india



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" Bus travel" - the words conjure up a troublesome picture in mind, one that is even more pronounced in the minds of one billion Indians, for whom travel by bus equates to an evil of last resort. Against this populist norm, one young entrepreneur is fervently working to repaint the inconvenient portrait that bus travel has drawn for itself in India. Yourstory caught up with Phanindra Sama, the man behind redBus. in, on how redBus. in is seeking to unsettle rooted cultural beliefs by popularizing bus travel through its innovative business model. " redBus. in seeks to modernize bus travel in India by bringing in the convenience factor - akin to how the airline and rail ticketing industry has evolved in India. redBus. in aggregates bus tickets inventory from hundreds of bus operators and makes it available online for consumers. Add to this, we distribute our bus inventory to thousands of retailers like travel agents, large retail chains like Sify cyber cafes, post offices, OTAs like MakeMyTrip, Yatra, and mobile VAS providers like OnMobile etc."

Founded in late 2006, redBus. in is a market leader in the industry (a category that it has literally created and organized) with an inventory featuring 500+ bus operators for 5000+ services covering over 15 states in the country. We serve customers from 7 call centers spread across South, West and North India. Services :

" We work like an agent to bus operators. The bus operator pays us a commission for the seats we sell." Scale of business And the commuter response has been more than just merely encouraging. In the past two and a half years redBus. in has been exponentially grown as reflected in their numbers. From a meager amount of Rs 50 lakh of gross bookings in their

first financial year-end of Mar 07, redBus. in clocked over Rs 30 crore in gross booking this financial year end. In the meanwhile, redBus. in has gone from people in a single location to about 150 direct employees spread across 7 locations in India.

Phanindra says “ the biggest achievement in the growth of the organization has been that we were able to grow every month consistently. We have an extremely good team which is honest, mature and hardworking. We enjoy great trust from our suppliers (bus operators) as well as consumers (passengers).”

Plans for expansion : Mr. phanindra also plan for expansion. He revealed is saying about his plan “ We plan to scale up the business by understanding customers better and creating products/processes to serve them better. I believe that having greater emphasis on the consumer is a foundation for scaling up a business like ours.

Why he took to entrepreneurship: Phnindra Sama says “ I think I chose entrepreneurship to explore learning outside technology. I was always curious to understand and experiment with things such as branding, product pricing, advertising, HR activities etc. Entrepreneurship provides unrestricted opportunity to explore such things.” And Phanindra has seized the unrestricted opportunities well indeed. Besides clocking a steady month-on-month increase, he has also won accolades - being recognized as India’s Most Promising Entrepreneurs: No#3 by Business World, selected as Endeavor Entrepreneurs ([www. endeavor. org](http://www.endeavor.org)) and TiE Entrepreneurs ([www. tie.org](http://www.tie.org)).

tie. org). After meeting with him, we are sure this is but a start of the things to come for this steely entrepreneur.

The biggest challenge for him has been to keep his management and business expertise at par with the company's growth. He says " I am trying to overcome it by seeking advice from mentors, reading up books on management, leadership, biographies and psychology". Like most young entrepreneurs he has had a spot of self doubt too... Phanindra reveals his past misgivings saying " I had not internalized early enough that I ought to be a leader. A leader has many qualities such as courage, maturity, forgiveness, trustworthiness etc. Until I internalized this, I behaved like a young 20 something with a juvenile myopic view of things and lost time and opportunity. When I told myself that I was a leader, the world changed for me."

He says " We want to continue to be known as a respected company and cross INR 150 Crore in gross bookings." Your story asked him what he considers to be his most prestigious recognition. He says " It is being recognized as an Endeavor Entrepreneur. Endeavor has a rigorous selection process and a very good selection criteria. I am happy to be selected after having been put to that strict a test."

Yourstory also received a parting word or two of advice from Phanindra, he says " Choose your advisors carefully. Then seek advice and trust it unconditionally. " We wish Phanindra and redBus. in travel not just in our nation but beyond too.