

## ***Fostering an entrepreneurial spirit***

**Tete` a tete` with Subir Pal, CEO, Channel Mentor**

Mr Subir Pal is the CEO of Channel Mentor, an organization that operates in the product development space for corporate travel & expense management

Channel Mentor's started its journey in 2004, developing web-based solutions for industries that integrate a company with its partners, customers and vendors. This activity was soon expanded with process re-engineering solutions using superior technology and in depth domain knowledge. Today Channel Mentor has a wide range of offering for the industry and corporates in terms of solutions and services

**Sun:** Hello Mr Subir Pal and welcome to Sun start up essential chatroom.

**Sun:** All of us have a little bit of entrepreneurial spirit in us but only a handful of us are brave and passionate enough to follow our dreams and tread down the entrepreneurial path. Channel Mentor is one fine example of this entrepreneurial spirit. Can you share with us your experience as an entrepreneur?

**Subir Pal:** You are absolutely right on the entrepreneurial spirit. Going by my own experience I would strongly recommend to those who are passionate about this to go ahead and pursue their dreams as nothing gives me more satisfaction at the end of hard day's work than the fact that I have much greater freedom to follow my judgement on what makes better business sense. I set the long term and short term goals and visions and can immediately go about taking the necessary steps to make them happen. Of course getting to being an entrepreneur is not without its risks and hardships. But that suits the kind of people who like to think big and are willing to make the sacrifice that is necessary on the way. Moreover, today there is a strong eco system that helps incubate starts ups in the country, something that wasn't there until a few years ago.

**Sun:** Typically what are the requirements and painpoints that start up organizations face while getting their business started?

**Subir Pal:** It goes without saying that infusion of capital to start the business is the biggest requirement. In addition to money, start-ups also require technology support and consulting. Technology enablement is a painpoint that needs to be addressed right at the beginning as once this is done, technology will provide the right fillip to the business. Further, in today's market, early stage companies are challenged to quickly bring to market applications and to offer them with high scalability and availability within their limited IT budget. Startup companies are constantly looking for ways to become more efficient with their resources while they have to plan for success.

**Sun:** Channel Mentor has chosen to register with Sun's Start up Essentials (SSE) program, which is designed to help the startup community access to key technology and services to help them stay ahead of competition and get to market quickly. What were the factors that worked in Sun's favor?

**Subir Pal.-** Let me first elaborate on what my organization does and our history with Sun.

Channel Mentor is in Product development space for corporate Travel & Expense management. Our chosen platform is Java (J2EE). Sun happens to be the original champion of this platform. We were and are confident that with Sun's array of superior products and technologies, we can be rest assured on great performance and reliability. Additionally, while on the look out for suitable server platform for our product development and application hosting, we found Sun's SSE program was the most proactive and fitted the requirements of a start up company such as ours to a T. As mentioned earlier, start-ups also require technology support and consulting both of which are provided by Sun through the SSE Program

**Sun:** What are the specific benefits you expect to accrue from the SSE program, could you illustrate with a few anecdotal examples?

**Subir Pal-** We got great discounts on Sun range of products as well as web hosting. Deeply discounted rates on Web hosting is a necessity for us to run our travel management solution product demos over the web. In addition, we have the promise of direction and support on key industry leading technologies. This is a critical requirement for us to stay ahead of competition by reducing the time to market while keeping the costs low. More importantly, we have the assurance of invaluable technical assistance and product roadmaps from Sun. We find that the Sun team is always available for us, whenever we needed them and also constantly follow up with us on our needs. We are confident that the SSE program from Sun will help us in adopting and adapting technology to create a value proposition in the business environment. This program will also strengthen our relationship with Sun and help develop new opportunities to accelerate the growth of our business. Going forward, we plan to take the relationship forward with web hosting and also product migration from current OS to Solaris in near future.

**Sun:** Did you evaluate other similar offerings from other technology majors who also offer a suite of benefits from start-ups before zeroing in on Sun, if yes which where they and how do they compare with the Sun programme?

**Subir Pal:** We have looked at competing offerings from Microsoft, IBM, HP and found that while SSE differentiates itself as a program whose offers are extremely attractive and highly focused towards start-ups. Sun has a highly committed team driving this program. Further a reality check also made us aware of the real benefits that accrue to us, in terms of discounts from Sun.

**Sun:** Would you recommend the Sun SSE program to other start ups

**Subir Pal:** Of course! That goes without saying.

**Sun:** Thank you Mr Pal for talking to us

**Subir Pal:** Thank you