

# ET Entrepreneur & Innovation Conclave

The event was both informative and inspirational for aspiring entrepreneurs and those in small and medium businesses.

If entrepreneurship is about risk taking, then there was no dearth of risk takers at the ET Entrepreneur & Innovation Conclave held in Gurgaon on November 25. The event witnessed a wonderful mix of those entrepreneurs who brought with them substantial experience in running their own business, and those considering moving off the conveyor belt to start on their own.

Organized in the backdrop of the economic slowdown that is slowly fading into oblivion, the event saw innovation as the dominant theme. The participants, many of whom were prospective entrepreneurs, got a wonderful opportunity to interact with industry leaders. The guest of honor was H P Kumar, CMD, National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC). The special address was made by Anil Bharadwaj, Secretary General, Federation of Indian Micro and Small and Medium Enterprises (FISME). David Wittenberg, CEO, The Innovation Workgroup welcomed the participants and set the ball rolling.

The session on finance gave a good insight into the biggest pain point of any entrepreneur to raise funds. Some of the panelists felt that



(L-R): David Wittenberg, CEO, The Innovation Workgroup; Pradeep Gupta, CMD, CyberMedia; Rajiv Mittal, Group Director, SME, Microsoft; Sushil Mittal, CEO, Innovo Thinking; Dinesh Goel, CEO, Ideas Infinite & Deepak Woolens Group; Yogesh Bansal, CEO, ApnaCircle.com

banks should be more proactive in their approach towards SMEs. The event proved to be a useful platform to learn from veteran entrepreneurs on how best to manage finance. The panelists in this session were Rakesh Kapoor, MD, IFCI Factors; Vijay Shekhar Sharma, MD, One97 Communications; Lt Col HS Bedi, CMD, Tulip Telecom; and Navyug Mohnot, CEO & Founder, QAI India.

The session on technology was all about using technology as an enabler to help reduce cost of operations, improve employee engagement, provide a platform for powerful marketing campaigns, and deliver information to customers. The panelists included Pradeep Gupta, CMD, CyberMedia; Rajiv Mittal, Group Director, SME, Microsoft; Sushil Mittal, CEO, Innovo Thinking; Dinesh Goel, CEO, Ideas Infinite & Deepak Woolens Group; Yogesh Bansal, CEO, ApnaCircle.com. Some panelists pointed out that technology is the biggest leveler – all those applications that are avail-

able to large corporations are now at the disposal of SMEs. Yogesh Bansal of ApnaCircle.com shared with the participants his experience as an entrepreneur. Yogesh moved to India in 2006 to start ApnaCircle.com, the social and career networking website.

The panelists in the session on marketing were Puneet Batra, Managing Partner, Adglo, Kunwer Sachdev, MD, Su-Kam, Dinesh Agarwal, and CEO, IndiaMART.com. The discussion focused on frugal marketing strategies for startups. The panelists stressed the need for understanding your audience better and then making targeted marketing campaigns. The panelists also talked on segmentation, outdoor marketing and the power of social marketing. The concluding remarks were made by David Wittenberg. 

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