

Locational/Geographical Mobility: This is the movement of entrepreneurs from one location to other locations in search of better business opportunities.

Occupational Mobility: Occupation mobility denotes movement or change in the occupation of entrepreneurs in search of better opportunities.

Reverse Brainstorming: This is an idea generation method that is similar to brainstorming, with the exception that criticism is allowed. The focus is on identifying the negative sides of every idea that has been generated through brainstorming.

Survey Method: This is an idea generation technique used to collect information by direct observation of a phenomenon or systematic gathering of data from a set of people.

The Gordon method: This is an idea generation technique using collective discussion to address every aspect of the planned product in an uninhibited solution-oriented manner for developing new ideas when the individuals are unaware of the problem.

Window of Opportunity: The term “window of opportunity” is a metaphor describing the time period in which a firm can realistically enter a new market.

CASE STUDY

Opportunity Identification—Byju Raveendran, Teacher—Entrepreneur

Introduction: Byju Raveendran, from Azhikode, a coastal village in Kerala, was an engineer with a UK-based shipping company when he began helping a few friends crack the entrance test to the IIMs using his shortcuts. He aced the test himself, scoring 100 percentile, but did not join any of the IIMs. Instead, he found his calling in teaching. Starting with small groups of students he graduated to teaching from large auditoriums and stadiums, and then via VSAT. He launched Byju's-The Learning App in 2015.

About Byju's: Byju Raveendran has created India's most valued ed-tech firm by spotting opportunities at every stage. In the year 2007 Raveendran founded Byju's Classes, the Education Technology firm whose tagline is “Fall in love with learning”. Byju classes help CAT aspirants crack the exam by understanding the concepts behind the questions, is now a giant in the Indian education technology space, teaching predominantly mathematics and science concepts to kids from classes 6 to 12 along with test prep for several entrance exams. There are an estimated 227 million students in India, and education is traditionally a priority for Indians, so it is no wonder that the Indian EdTech market is estimated to be worth \$40 million by 2017.

Raveendran Early Life: Both his parents were teachers. Though they wanted him to do well at school (what Indian parents don't?), his parents encouraged him to play sports, and he played six different sports, including football, cricket and badminton, at the university level. Byju's parents wanted him to become a doctor. But he joined the Government College of Engineering, Kannur, in northern Kerala. In 2003, during a vacation, he visited some friends in Bengaluru who insisted that he take a shot at the CAT. “My friends knew I had my own set of hacks and tricks when it came to mathematics, and they asked why I don't give it a try,” he recalled.

Identification of Business Opportunity: Raveendran was a self-learner. As a child, he says, he taught himself English. His school in Kerala's Azhikode village used Malayalam, the local language, as the medium of instruction. Years later, those self-learning techniques came handy when Byju appeared for the Common Aptitude Test (CAT) in 2003, the demanding entrance exam for the elite Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs). He aced the test with a 100 percentile—twice—but didn't bother to join any IIM. Instead, the mechanical engineer turned around and took up teaching.

Raveendran found that, CAT was an unavoidable nightmare for those seeking admission to the top B-schools of India. He identified the problem and converted into a business opportunity. He started coaching for CAT entrants in 2006. Byju's first informal session in Bengaluru, with friends

and others, had 40 participants. In 6 weeks, he was dealing with crowds of almost 1,000 students. His weekend workshops became so popular that soon students from Mumbai, Delhi, and Pune were dropping in. He began charging a small fee and turned it into a full-time job. One day he was in Pune, the next day in Mumbai, and the third day in Delhi. He even held his workshops in stadia with around 10,000 students attending his session at a time. Till 2011, he continued the “running around.”

In the following years, Raveendran founded Think and Learn, the company that owns the Byju's app. Some of the best students from his workshops—many of them IIM graduates joined him. His initial focus was only preparations for management entrance tests and the civil services exams. The flagship product is a smartphone app named BYJU'S-The Learning App that was made available since August 2015. The App serves educational content mainly to school students from classes 4 to 12 (primary to higher secondary level education). Besides, the company trains students for competitive examinations in India such as IIT-JEE, NEET, CAT, IAS as well as for international examinations such as GRE and GMAT.

Byju's focus is simple: change the way students learn. After speaking to some of the brightest students, he realized that most of them, unfortunately, study only because of the fear of exams. They are taught to solve a problem but aren't enabled to find a problem. He realized that if his strategy of self-learning was adopted in early years at school, it could potentially create a huge impact. “You learn the best when you learn on your own,” Byju said. The videos on the app don't need any guidance from teachers, students can watch and learn by themselves. The app also incorporates quizzes and games involving other students.

The massive Indian education sector, with over 315 million school students, has quickly become his target audience. The school vertical, which covers grades 4 through 12, is now bringing in 90% of revenue. In June 2016 alone, Byju's app generated Rs 30 crore. It is clear that Raveendran genuinely believes in making learning the focus of education. And while his approach may not be as subversive as his pitch likes to make it seem, he has succeeded in finding a way to turn it into a lucrative business with a huge potential for growth. That is where his genius truly lies.

Byju's Business Model: Raveendran's business model morphed from offline tutorials primarily for management students to a broader audience, including GMAT, IAS and similar courses, to the app-enabled online-centric one which encompasses K-12 students as well. Byju's has attracted investments from several investors: Aar in Capital (2013); Sequoia Capital, Sofina (2015 & 2016); InnoVen Capital & IFC (2016); Light Speed India partners (2016); Verlinvest (2017). In 2017 his efforts were noted by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative which decided to invest \$50 million in his Bengaluru-based EdTech startup. The historic development—the funding being Zuckerberg's first major investment in an Asian startup—was another stamp of approval in Byju's journey of running the most funded startup in the education sector in India.

Today, Raveendran is poised to take Byju's to the next level. On the anvil is a global push and, with the student population and internet usage set to explode, he is betting big on his ed-tech company being able to churn out substantial returns for his investors. He has also pulled off two important acquisitions in preparation for the global foray. It is clear that Raveendran genuinely believes in making learning the focus of education. And while his approach may not be as subversive as his pitch likes to make it seem, he has succeeded in finding a way to turn it into a lucrative business with a huge potential for growth. That is where his genius truly lies.

Success Formula: Raveendran was a teacher by choice and an entrepreneur by chance. The venture just took off. A successful entrepreneur has some attributes. First, he understands his strengths and how to make the most of them. Second, his ability to identify opportunities and ensure his business is relevant and timely. Third, and equally important, the skill to understand when to get into new markets or verticals or even pivot the business to scale up to the next level. By all these yardsticks, Byju Raveendran comes through as a sharp, smart, canny entrepreneur.

Questions:

1. How did Raveendran convert his idea into a business opportunity?
2. Analyze the business model of Byju's.
3. Comment on the statement “Byju Raveendran is a sharp, smart, canny entrepreneur”.