

Satish Kataria, 37  
 Managing director, Catapoolt

**COWORKS OUT OF**  
**The Playce, Mumbai**

**WHAT HE DOES** Helps people, companies seeking crowd funding. Clients include tennis player Yuki Bhambri

**WHY COWORK** References from within the office have led him to people who signed up as clients and when he needed PR, there was a consultant in the next cubicle

**“Flexibility is the key, and you don’t have to block your money in capex”**



BHARAT CHANDA



Niranjan Kanvinde, 40  
 co-founder, Drawtyme Moments

**COWORKS OUT OF**  
**Startup Warehouse, Bangalore**

**WHAT HE DOES** His start-up is building a platform that makes videos searchable

**WHY COWORK** Deep ties with the industry and investors is a big help for start-ups

**“Mentors’ insights help finetune our business ideas”**

**Ashok Madaravally**  
 senior manager,  
 Startup Warehouse

**ACCOMMODATES**  
 68 people, 28 start-ups

**USP** Set up by Nasscom and Karnataka government, its deep IT industry linkages and low rates are a big draw. It only takes in start-ups whose products are in the beta stage



and happening to boot. He is planning to set up 150 cafe-coworking hubs in three years.

At first glance Stirring Minds, located in the middle of the hustle and bustle of Old Delhi, looks like an unlikely place for cool start-ups. But one of its biggest attractions is its location bang in the middle of the city. Pranav Bhatia, founder of Stirring Minds, got back the space last year after a legal battle with a tenant. Around 80 people from some 20 start-ups work there. Pushkar Soni, 28, who is growing his online venture, Docsuggest Healthcare Services, says the location was the biggest plus for him. His salespeople visit hospitals and doctors so a centrally located office was a must.

Being in a central location also has its downside – the high real estate costs. That perhaps is the biggest challenge for those setting up coworking hubs. After all, it’s the rentals that decide the economics. To solve the problem some hubs like The Playce or 91Springboard have roped in the realty owner as a revenue-sharing partner.

Those running coffee shops or bars may appear to have an advantage as they already have the property. But then don’t forget: they’re two different businesses – albeit with synergies – and each calls for a different kind of expertise.

In the West, coworking is a more evolved concept, particularly in San Francisco and the Bay Area. A report by Intuit, a software service provider for small businesses, says that over 40% of the US workforce will be either freelance, temporary, part-time, contract, or specialists by 2020.

Something similar is happening in India, too, aided in no small measure by a young, vibrant population that’s keen to work differently from the way the earlier generations did. Freelancers, designers, artists, lifestyle entrepreneurs...today’s youth want to be flexible with their options for work, as well as the places they work out of. India may yet be waiting for its Apple or Google, but when they do hit the big time, they might as well have a different story to tell about their beginnings: Unlike Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, and Larry Page and Sergey Brin, the founders of India’s Next Big Thing may well have begun in one of the country’s bustling coworking hubs than in a humble garage. ■