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Second batch of start-ups graduates from Microsoft Accelerator

CEO-in-residence Mukund Mohan says the accelerator adjusted its programme based on lessons from its first round

Mark Bergen

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Many of the demo day start-ups also used the accelerator to springboard globally. Photo: Hemant Mishra/Mint

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Bangalore: Last Friday, a standing-room only crowd came to witness the "demo day" for nine start-ups from the **Microsoft** Accelerator Bangalore, the software giant's first early-stage programme in India.

The event marked the graduation of the accelerator's second batch, following its initial class of 11 companies, which departed in January. **Adepto**, one of the 13 start-ups selected in the second batch, was acquired in April by **Minjar Cloud Solutions**. Another company disbanded and two were left out of the demo day.

With the second batch hand-picked from over 450 applicants, the accelerator adjusted its programme based on lessons from its first round, said CEO-in-residence **Mukund Mohan**.

"We made several improvements in our programme, including more seed stage (and) angel investors as lead mentors, sharper focus on product definition and roadmap and stronger UX (user experience) design," he said.



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Nine founders took five minutes to present their products, following introductions by individual mentors, primarily investors. One mentor, **Raj Chinai**, co-founder of Harvard Alumni Angels, noted how the second batch included far more seasoned entrepreneurs. “The maturity is one clear difference,” he said.

Visarity, makers of 3D mobile ads; **SupportBee**, which builds an enterprise email support platform; and **i7 Networks**, an agent-less device security provider, all include founders with prior start-up experience.

Many of the demo day start-ups also used the accelerator to springboard globally. **Deck app**, a simple tool for building presentations, is one of the top downloaded business mobile applications across multiple devices. **Santosh Panda**, founder of **Explara**, an online event ticketing platform previously called Ayojak, announced the change as the start-up is “rebranded to go global.”

At the demo day, **Harness**, an e-learning platform creator, unfurled its new product, **Unio**, built for US education markets. **TableGrabber**, soon bound for the accelerator **Startup Chile**, announced its expansion into Brazil, making the start-up the first online restaurant reservation system there and in Argentina.

While the nine start-ups are at various levels of product development, the most nascent have garnered some traction. Before it launched its newest version, **Tuebora**, which creates information assets security system, received praise from market analysts **Gartner**. **Idos**, creator of a software platform for business accounting, had yet to launch its product during the accelerator, yet reported a wait-list of eager potential customers internationally.

Industry veterans on hand spoke of the swift changes in the start-up landscape the companies reflected.

“There is a fundamental change that is happening,” said **Raman Roy**, co-founder of **Indian Angel Network**. “People are giving up lucrative job offers; successful executives are leaving high-paying jobs as the entrepreneurial bug bits them.”

The Accelerator is currently soliciting applications for its third batch of up to 15 start-ups, which will begin on 15 July.

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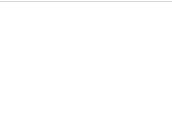
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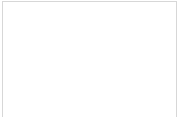
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