



**Pradeep Agarwal, Chairman,  
Ventura Airconnect**

Commencing business & to run it successfully has multi-dimension needs. It begins as dream, to

then conceive a workable plan, assess the risks, challenges, market research, plan funds and so on. Inspite of applying all the tools, as well as evaluations the venture may still not take off. It is interesting that inspite of all the parameters applied the venture could fall apart. **If the project succeeds the entrepreneur would be coined as a 'Man with a magic wand' while the best of a promoter who fails would be condemned upon, as states Pradeep Agarwal of Ventura Airconnect-A Goldrush Group company.**

The editorial team of IIA news decided to search for successful entrepreneur with an innovative project, successfully implemented and present their success to readers with an objective to motivate them and learn out of their experiences.

To start this series, we present the success story of Mr. Pradeep Agarwal who displayed exemplary qualities of a successful entrepreneurship through the span of his career. His recent venture is to operate an Intra-state commercial airline in Madhya Pradesh, which depicts, as he says, that the entrepreneur is responsible to put in a place realistic project-wise managers/and team to ensure its implementation as well as convert the dream into reality.

**Mr. Agarwal is the first entrepreneur in India to conceptualize and run this venture successfully. He is an IIA member and we congratulate him for setting an example for**

# “An Entrepreneur should have a dare devil spirit”

## upcoming and existing entrepreneurs.

IIA NEWS editorial team met Mr. Pradeep Agarwal, Chairman, Ventura Airconnect Ltd to record his success story and present it to the readers as under:

**Q Can you share something about yourself?**

**A** I belong to a business family and did my schooling from Calcutta (senior cambridge), later graduated with BSc-PCM and then has been a student of business management .My induction into family business was around 1977. In 1988, out of the Blue, found myself to

**“Dream, to reach the stars”**

be on my own without a job. Suddenly realizing that I have to start from scratch, literally for two years I kept struggling to make a breakthrough. With meager finances there wasn't a possibility of setting up a business venture. I had to then assume a role of a marketing consultant. Then one fine day in 1990 having secured a representation to sell sugar plants and sugar machinery, the business world opened its doors, and I bagged, as a single man company, a contract for setting up a Cane crushing plant worth Rs.7 Cr. Subsequently, there was no looking back. The success propelled me to gradually pickup representations for boilers, turbines, digital wireless network, water treatment & effluent treatment plants, onshore petroleum drilling project, co-gen plants, micro hydel power and wind energy

etc.etc.of prestigious companies.

The core business being automobiles which I learnt as a part of family biz.,I pitched for Bojjo 2-wheeler dealership and then Tata Motors passenger car dealership. The drill was long, arduous & painful, before I could really stabilize. All over, its been 30 years in business though it is only 20 years independently, of roller-coasterride.

**Q Can you share with us something about 'Ventura Airconnect'?**

**A** To operate an airline was a distant dream, though it was incubating for years together. 2011, after considerable time I fell upon the idea of operating an Intra-state air service. The company Ventura Airconnect picked up 2 brand new Cessna caravan, 9 seats, turbo prop engine and an 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2011, THE HON'BLE CM,MR SHIV RAJ CHAUHAN launched the first flight from Bhopal to Gwalior. The principle was that the 2 tier & 3 tier cities within the states need to be well connected and the scheme could be a catalyst to the economic development as well as tourism development, by providing daily services, near schedule and provide travelers from different segments to commute faster, safer & in comfort. Since then we have been connecting 7 cities of the state. This was a pioneering business model, now well established, drawing attention from other state governments. Shortly, we hope to begin Gujarat with 4 aircrafts (2-Land & 2 Seaplanes) as well as Andaman & Nicobar with a twin engine 19 seater amphibian. Several states now , are in dialogue with us for

similar operation in their respective states.

**Q In which cities of MP, can people avail such unique facility?**

**A** Ventura now connects Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur, Gwalior, Khajuraho, and Nagpur & Rewa, daily. 12- 13 flights a day on exactly on the same principal & mechanism of selling individual seats as done by large commercial carriers. Seats are booked on portals, through agents as well as passengers directly. Portals like makemytrip.com, via.com book seats for Ventura passengers. Today their a large numbers of frequent flyers and the company has transported almost 20,000 people having flown more than 0.75 mln km (15 lks kms)with almost 4000 landing in last 15 months.

**Q Can a common man think about it? or is it economical?**

**A** Currently not .but with the growth in the Indian economy as well as the growing per capita it would in due course attract the so termed "common man"...

**Q How far can this compete with railways connecting those cities?**

**A** Essentially, the product/services in the world are available in different price range, quality and convenience. Similarly here too transport connectivity is available to different strata of society in different forms and a different price. There are no comparison as I said, different product and services at different price is available to different people. Here the commuter gets a faster, convenient and safe mode of transport which certainly costs more but appeals to people who have greater value for time. All said and done Ventura can be addressed as a small scale unit in aviation industry, operating on the same pattern and principal as the large airline companies.

**Q Which is the main target group of people for Ventura Airconnect?**

**A** Every segment of the society which uses large carrier for long hauls, utilizes the services of Ventura which includes- domestic and overseas tourist , doctors, scientist , researchers , sportsmen's, religious gurus , film industry , government officials ,justices and legal experts ,industrialists , business and trade & others, politicians.

**A What were the main factors which led you to think about such innovative project? Or what made you think about this unique project?**

**A** Visualizing that Indian states ,consequent to the proactive policies

of GOI of liberalization, deregulations and open economy have ventured to develop the economy of the respective state. My long term interest in aviation permitted me to plunge into this business activity. Observing that every town of city of an individual state is yet to be targeted. I found this to be an opportune moment to provide faster transport. The whole process was a struggle of more than 9 to 10 month to market and sell new concept, develop sufficient confidence in the market by providing a good ,new reliable business model which appeals and was accepted only after proving the merits of the facility.

**Q Is there any other business run by you successfully?**

**A** Keeping automobile sector as the main stream of business, I continued exploration to bring in international concepts time and again. Several times I found my self, to be with

**"Failures are never a waste, they only make the resolve stronger "**

projects such as mass bus rapid transport systems, garbage management (end to end solutions), much before the end-users or the government was ready; and I faced frustrations/dejection.. However we are working on two old time projects along with a Colombian company as well as projects for emergency response system with a European company besides projects like upgrading two and three tier airports which are lying unutilized in the country.

*In the project of BRTS -Gujarat lacks several basic features which need to be upgraded and needs to be operated in the right spirit with adequate infrastructure to make it complete.*

**A What were your basic steps while starting your business?**

- ✓ Identifying the product/services
- ✓ Brain storming sessions, using consultants who may or may not be the experts in the specific field.
- ✓ Designing a detailed business plan
- ✓ Market research
- ✓ To know the product /service well enough- we defined the service as intrastate connectivity.
- ✓ Putting the right people on the right job
- ✓ Finally launching the project

**Q As we know that entrepreneurs tackle with many challenges in their day to day life. What were the earlier challenges you've faced while starting your business?**

**A** Challenges are a part of life; it must in no way deter a promoter. One continues his journey, inspite of all the bottle necks he may face, with the conviction of never giving up. Several challenges keep coming your way namely viz finances, a worthwhile idea which may succeed or fail, government regulations, procedure and red-tape present, but then they are bound to come. It is as the saying goes "tough times don't lasts-tough people do"

✓ Challenges as I say are there though over the last decade there have been dilution and simplification in many but then to transit from a closed to open economy the government, bureaucratic tapism, having a autocratic outlook still have a dominant role to play, in my opinion, the government needs to understand that de-regulations, simplifications, liberalism must play a pivotal role to take the country forward and become a leading player in global perspective; Believing in the interest of the nation give the following quote a serious thought; "the best government is one which governs the least"

✓ Ventura essentially has three major aspects to make it successful -Right timings, the right routing & the right passenger fare. The amalgamation & the right mix results into an acceptable products/ service /or a good cocktail.

✓ Creating wide spread awareness and through marketing.

✓ Finally the success lies in "eating the pudding "which means only quality backed by the right value can make it taste perfect and can make it successful.

**Q How did you handle it?**

**A** One has to have passion, dare devil spirit and diligence to make a project successful. This venture involves high risks but the belief, trust and patience are ingredients to succeed. The Ventura team and myself thanks Mr. Shivraj Singh Chauhan Hon'ble CM-Madhya Pradesh for supporting the project to the extent of ensuring its success and proving its utility

✓ Foresee business opportunities, have faith and belief in your projects undaunting courage never to say [give-up] attitude.

**Q What is the most important thing for an entrepreneur to consider at the beginning of his/her business?**

**A** I would say that for an entrepreneur, the priorities to be considered are -

✓ Identifying the right product/services - right product means to think about its worth and usefulness for the market or more.. on PG-16

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target group.

- ✓ Keep a watch on what's happening in the country, which give innumerable ideas to start a business
- ✓ Continuous unflinching belief in your project and yourself.
- ✓ Continuous commitment and passion to succeed and reach your goal.

**Q What is 'Growth of an enterprise' in your words?**

**A** A successful enterprise can be defined as:

- ✓ Increase in assets or companies worth
- ✓ Continuous up gradation of quality
- ✓ Acceptance by the consumer achieved through reliability, confidence and spotless service
- ✓ Faith and a feeling of ownership amongst the employee of organization.
- ✓ Decision making participation of the team, would by itself create the-brand equity.

**Q Any suggestion you would like to give to 'New Entrepreneurs' to make their business successful?**

**A** Entrepreneurs/promoter must know that there is no substitute to hard work, fair business practices, and consistencies and there are no shortcuts to be an overnight billionaire. There are always solutions to problems. Never say die approach. Quit emotions in a project and exit only if you find a dead end. ■