

Life changed for DAYAKAR PUSKOOOR, executive chairman, NetXcell, when he bagged a deal to develop a solution for NYSE



INNOVATION IS THE BEST TECH

HE BELIEVES INNOVATION IS THE BEST MEDICINE TO TACKLE A crisis. And this belief helped him tide over the dotcom bust and the global slow-down at the start of the 21st century. No wonder then, serial entrepreneur Dayakar Puskoor, executive chairman of NetXcell, loves incubating technologies and nurturing start-ups. Set up in 2000, NetXcell is Puskoor's second entrepreneurial venture. But he does not want to confine himself to a single technology venture. "NetXcell is engaged in telecom application services, which is one of the fastest growing technology segments. I am looking at other emerging areas including communication and wireless and social networking on mobility platform as potential areas of investment," he says.

While Puskoor's entrepreneurial journey officially began over a decade ago, his tryst with technology started in 1986 when he joined the product development team at Motorola. He was among the first group of 10 people to move to Motorola's Bangalore centre. "Motorola was engaged in developing pager devices in the early 90s. In 1996, I put forth a proposal to develop wireless technology that could ensure seamless transfer of data. But Motorola rejected it and I quit the firm," he said. After leaving Motorola, he dabbled in real estate along with his brothers-in-law for a while. They run the Prathima Group in Hyderabad. He used this opportunity to gain business experience as he did not have any formal training in managing businesses.

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The turning point of his life came when he bagged a deal to develop a solution for NYSE. This led to the birth of his new firm JP System in 1996-97. His brothers-in-law helped him set up the firm. The company raised around \$55 million venture capital from various players including JP Morgan Chase in 2000. It survived the crisis in 2000-01 and invested in innovation. During this time, he along with Prathima Group started NetXcell. "I knew that telecom and communication are going to be the next big wave. So, we decided to nurture it simultaneously," he says. In July 2005, the management team of the firm decided to sell JP Mobile to Good Technologies for over \$70 million. Puskoor joined Microsoft as the firm's mobility division head. In 2007, he quit Microsoft to join NetXcell as a full-time member. NetXcell has completed the first round of fund raising and has received \$1 million from US-based Ike Lee and Ruderman Capital. The Rs 5 crore firm has launched the country's first hosted voice exchange — Mobismart — which enables one to communicate with any number of people regardless of the location, language or mobile device.

While NetXcell is on the growth path with an outlook of Rs 18 crore revenues next fiscal, Puskoor is busy sewing plans for his future ventures. "I want to explore new areas in an effort to keep pace with the rapidly expanding boundaries of technology," he says.

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