

Google Made Me Rich

The story of web entrepreneurs who made plenty of money, thanks to Google and a great idea



ALANKAR

:: Nupur Amarnath

At 27, Amit Agarwal grew restless. A techie working in Bangalore, he wanted to live with his family in Agra. But what about the monthly pay cheque? Idea: a tech blog that will help him get freelance assignments. So in 2004, labnol.blogspot.com was born. The first post was the review of a new printer he had bought. And soon he was fielding questions from people who had the printer or any other gadgets.

Agarwal didn't know it then but the blog would become his full-time profession. Seven years later, he is still writing the blog (now labnol.org), and no longer looking for freelancing. The blog with 4.5 million page views per month has him clocking in 14-hour workdays. The only difference: he works from home. "Back then, I didn't think

or know that a blog could be my source of income," he confesses. His source of revenue: Google AdSense, the Google service that places contextual ads on blogs. The blog and Google stay his chief source of income, with 75% of the revenue coming from it.

With little to no capital required, taking your business to the web is clearly the way forward. But decoding the web is not that easy. As yet another tech blogger, 27-year-old Amit Bhawani, found out. Starting as a personal blogger (amitbhawani.com now techadvices.com), the MBA graduate from Hyderabad has 300 domain names registered under his company Digital World Solutions with 40 sites and blogs operational, covering technology, health, education and automobiles. Bhawani started blogging as a

22-year-old in 2006 and soon realised that it's the only business where there's an assured 100% year-on-year growth. Last year he made ₹1.2 crore from his blog with 70% of the revenue coming from Google AdSense.

Unlike Agarwal, Bhawani has a team of content writers (four on the rolls) and is soon planning to move out of his home office and set up a team of 16 writers to feed his 40 websites. "It's easy to make money online and you keep hearing offhand stories of webpreneurship. But it's difficult to find any guidance," he says. There are no agencies telling you what to do, and competition will misguide you. The web is the only source. But as Mitch Kapur, founder of Lotus Development and supporter of many internet-oriented businesses, famously

said, "Getting information off the Internet is like taking a drink from a fire hydrant."

In his five years as a web entrepreneur, Bhawani says the three Ps that help you are passion, persistence and patience. But a few pointers never hurt.

Find a Niche

While studying to be an engineer, which he never got down to pursuing, Rishi Sachdeva, 27, realised that there's no specific service that caters to NRIs who wish to deliver flowers to India. His mother had a small florist business catering to local clients. His idea: to provide "similar or better virtual environment". He started aryanflorist.com in 2004, when he was studying engineering. Based out of Yamuna Nagar, he built a

SPINNING MONEY ON THE WEB

Seven webpreneurs on how to make the online format work for you



Saameer Mody | 40

Location: Mumbai
Company: 1takemedia
YouTube Channel: youtube.com/1takemedia
Business: Distribution of "alternate content" ie. short films, documentaries, indie films, etc

Started in: 2006; **Joined YouTube:** 2008
Before Google: Less than 1,500 viewers a day
After Google: 14 million views, adding 50,000 views a day
Service Used: YouTube Partner Programme
Money Matters: ₹9,460 a day*



"Being online doesn't get traffic. You have to network offline. We are present at all film festivals, take part in seminars and connect via social media"



Rishi Sachdev | 27

Location: Yamuna Nagar
Company: Aryan Florist
Website: aryanflorist.com
Business: Worldwide flower and gift delivery
Started in: 2004

After Google: 30-fold increase in order volumes
Service Used: AdWords
Money Matters: ₹46,000 a day*



"Google should keep an eye on clicks from network partners to ensure that they are not spamming to generate more business for themselves. Once you have established your credentials, channelise towards search engine optimisation. The idea is to feature on the first page of Google for key search words"

*Figures are business estimates by online research agencies based on the adspend and traffic on the website. The entrepreneurs refused to share actual business figures