

TATA-NEN AWARDS

Top 30 start-up nominees cut across sectors, cities

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MUMBAI

Agri-business, software testing, sports management, education and tele-radiology all rub shoulders in a shortlist of 30 nominees in the Tata-NEN Hottest Startup Awards conducted by the National Entrepreneurship Network (NEN), a not-for-profit organization that aims to nurture entrepreneurship in the country.

The 30 were chosen from a list of 588 nominees with maximum public votes and the highest expert ratings. The competition, of which *Mint* is an exclusive print partner, attracted 200,000 votes across all nominees and 100,000 registered users on its website (users could vote online and via text messages).

A majority of the shortlisted companies were started in the last three years and are headquartered in big cities such as Bangalore, Mumbai and New Delhi as well as smaller towns such as Jaipur, Patiala and Belgaum.

Delving a little deeper into what the 30 do shows that 60%, or 18 companies—based on their activities—are addressing the India market; six are aiming for the global market and six want to start in India first and then go overseas later. "This is interesting as it shows up a lot of opportunities here, which may not be as affected by the downturn if they solve real issues addressing agriculture or unemployment," says Laura Parkin, executive director, Wadhvani Foundation and NEN.

Another key trend was that entrepreneurs who made it to the list were older and more experienced. Of the 588 nominees, only one in 10 was aged above 40 while nearly half of them were in their 20s. Of the Top 30 in the shortlist, one in four entrepreneurs was above 40. Academic qualification also shone on the shortlist; two-thirds of the entrepreneurs had postgraduate education, nine held bachelor's degrees and one has not studied beyond high school.

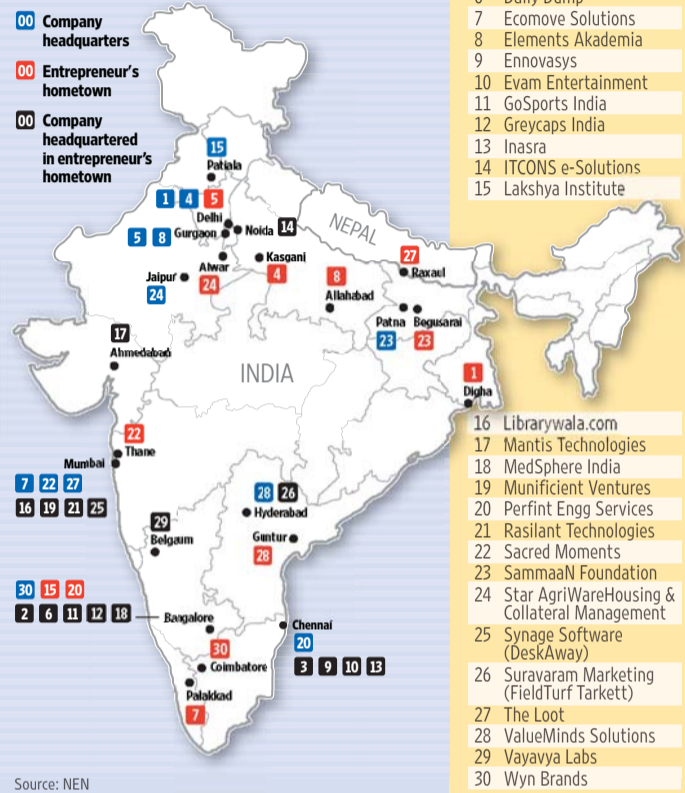
Public voting on the 30 shortlisted firms will open again from 25 November. Five start-ups that garner maximum votes before 23 December will win the competition.

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START-UPS ALL AROUND

How to read the graphic:

A2Z Applications.com, top in the alphabetical listing, is run by an entrepreneur hailing from Digha in West Bengal, denoted by 1 in the graphic, and runs the company in New Delhi (1). Daily Dump, on the other hand, is started up and run both in Bangalore (represented by 4).



Source: NEN

SANDEEP BHATNAGAR/MINT

A2Z Applications.com



Kantanu Kundu, CEO.

Founded in: 2006
Industry: Software as a service (SaaS) via the Internet
Funding: Self-funded
Revenue bracket: Less than Rs10 lakh
Description: Services small and medium enterprises that do not have to pay the traditional expensive IT (information technology) licensing and maintenance costs. Service is more affordable to customers. Earns revenues over the term of relationship through subscription fees.

Activecubes Solutions



Rajesh Varrier, CEO.

Founded in: 2007
Industry: Business and technology consulting
Funding: Self-funded
Revenue bracket: Rs1-5 crore
Description: Helps firms harness information to understand customers better. Differentiates itself by using the power of analytics to find solutions for clients. Earns revenues through a fee charged for consulting, data modelling and business intelligence solutions.

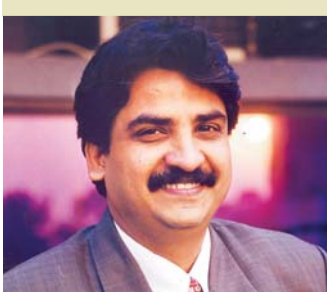
Anantara Solutions



G.B. Prabhat, founder CEO.

Founded in: 2006
Industry: Business consulting and outsourcing
Funding: Syndicate led by Helion Venture Partners
Revenue bracket: Rs5-15 crore
Description: Delivers business solutions, as opposed to competitors' technology solutions, in collaboration with a global network of specialist companies. Gets paid for service delivery and gets a share of the business gains of clients.

Corporate Professionals (India) (TakeoverCode.com)



Pavan Kumar Vijay, MD.

Founded in: 2003
Industry: Legal consultancy
Funding: Self-funded
Revenue bracket: Rs1-5 crore
Description: On its website Takeovercode.com, the firm provides legal, financial and management consultancy to businesses using IT tools. What sets it apart is its positioning in the converged techno-legal space. It earns revenues through subscriptions and fees charged for usage of functions on the website.

Crazypricing eTail (Cafegadgets.in)



Hitesh Dhingra, business head.

Founded in: 2006
Industry: E-commerce
Funding: Crazypricing Online Services Pvt. Ltd
Revenue bracket: Rs1-5 crore
Description: Helps firms in the IT and digital lifestyle categories sell products online. Sells only branded products with original manufacturer warranty and low acquisition cost. Earns through online transactions, brand stores, ad sales and physical presence in major metros.

Daily Dump



Poonam Bir Kasturi, founder.

Founded in: 2006
Industry: Cleantech
Funding: Self-funded
Revenue bracket: Less than Rs10 lakh
Description: Designs and sells products made of terracotta to convert kitchen waste into compost. It retro-fits composters at homes and other establishments, and provides maintenance advice and assistance through its service plans. Revenue earned by way of selling the product and service.

Ecomove Solutions



V. Ramesh, founder CEO.

Founded in: 2008
Industry: Bicycle rental service for economical and eco-friendly transportation
Funding: Angel investors
Revenue bracket: Pre-revenue
Description: First such service in the country. The business hopes to make money through membership fees and advertisements on rented vehicles. It may be eligible for carbon credits too.

Elements Akademia



Nishant Saxena, CEO.

Founded in: 2007
Industry: Vocational education
Funding: Angel investors
Revenue bracket: Rs1-5 crore
Description: The company is a finishing school to bridge the gap between academic theory and industry requirements. At least 70% of the students recover the entire course fee in two months of work. Earns by way of tuition fee from students and placement fee from companies.

Ennovasys



Uday Shankar, CEO.

Founded in: 2007
Industry: IT solutions for supply-chain management
Funding: Self-funded
Revenue bracket: Less than Rs10 lakh
Description: Partners with solution providers and hardware providers to create business solutions that can be launched in the global market. Receives royalty for the solutions distributed. Also charges a fee for solutions sold online via the SaaS (software as a service) model.

Evam Entertainment



(left) Sunil Vishnu and Karthik Kumar, co-founders.

Founded in: 2003
Industry: Entertainment (theatre)
Funding: Self-funded
Revenue bracket: Rs51 lakh-1 crore
Description: Stages English plays, conducts theatre workshops at corporate offices, organizes student interactions on theatre, theatre festivals and drama of sound and lights. Earns revenues from all these activities.

GoSports India



Hakimuddin Habibulla, co-founder.

Founded in: 2006
Industry: Sports management
Funding: Self-funded
Revenue bracket: Pre-revenue
Description: Emphasis on identification and grooming of young talent in India, and the encouragement of less popular sports. Unlike other sports management firms that largely deal with the marketing and endorsements of sportspeople. Whenever young talent trained and managed by the company become sports icons, the firm will start making money.

Greycaps India



Giri Balasubramaniam, co-founder.

Founded in: 2005
Industry: Design of education tools
Funding: Self-funded
Revenue bracket: Rs1-5 crore
Description: The company works on multiple verticals—publishing books, organizing quiz shows, on-campus learning programmes and Internet-based learning tools. Competitors have not integrated all these learning methods into one. Services come at a fee, while products such as CDs and books collect royalties.

Inasra



(right) Yogendra Vasupal, CEO.

Founded in: 2005
Industry: Hospitality
Funding: Self-funded
Revenue bracket: Less than Rs10 lakh
Description: The company provides an online and offline platform to search for accommodation service providers anywhere in India. Its reach into less-known cities and towns is the differentiator. Revenue comes from the commissions offered by its hotel partners.

ITCONS e-Solutions



Gaurav Mittal, co-founder.

Founded in: 2007
Industry: Software products development for the HR space
Funding: Self-funded
Revenue bracket: Rs11-50 lakh
Description: Provides software to human resource firms in order to manage and streamline search for the numerous resumes in their database. Its solution puts unstructured candidate data from various file formats into structured data. The firm hopes to earn revenues from those it sells to, and has also entered into revenue sharing agreements with clients.

Lakshya Institute



Saurabh Saxena, director.

Founded in: 2006
Industry: Educational institute focused on test preparation
Funding: Self-funded
Revenue bracket: Rs1-5 crore
Description: Patiala-headquartered Lakshya was started by four Indian Institute of Technology graduates to prepare class X-XII students for school and college entrance exams. It differentiates itself through the use of interactive digital content and working with schools to eliminate the need for external coaching. Charges schools and students for services.