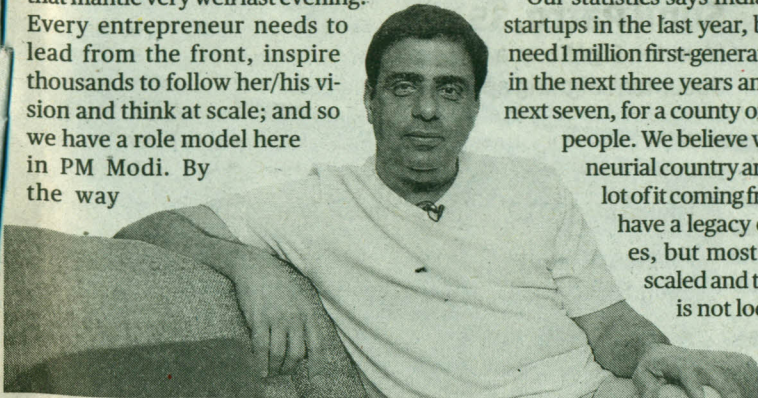


"Entrepreneurs Don't Really Need the Government, Sops and Schemes"

:: Ronnie Screwvala

Every strong initiative needs an evangelist...and for entrepreneurship in India, our prime minister donned that mantle very well last evening.

Every entrepreneur needs to lead from the front, inspire thousands to follow her/his vision and think at scale; and so we have a role model here in PM Modi. By the way



his last disclosure as per the RTI Act said he has never taken a day off since becoming the PM – something all of you looking to start up in India would need to get used to.

Our statistics says India had about 5,000 startups in the last year, but let's face it: we need 1 million first-generation entrepreneurs in the next three years and 10 million in the next seven, for a country of close to 1.3 billion people. We believe we are an entrepreneurial country and it's in our DNA, a lot of it coming from the fact that we have a legacy of family businesses, but most of them have not scaled and the next generation is not looking to take it forward. Not much has changed

from when I decided I wanted to be an entrepreneur more than 30 years back. It was very tough then. No funding, no VC or PE. Family pressure was to get a good degree and job and tread the safe path.

I believe we do not need sops from the government nor funding from VCs to jump into the world of startups; you need to get over your fear of failure. Once we cross that red line, knowing we will fail – not once but 100 times and learn how to get up and go forward – that's when we will be a nation of many million startups.

Entrepreneurship is about courage and the ability to take risks and then stay with it. Entrepreneurship is about people and teams and culture. Then comes capital and funding. My deepest concern of late is the

benchmark everyone has: "for starting up I need to be funded." But if you see the real success stories, they're of people who failed many many times before they succeeded and the same ones who started with no funding and yet learnt to bootstrap.

As an entrepreneur you do not really need the government or the sops. We need the government to make it easy to do business and we are heading in the right direction.

For all of you waiting to startup – bring your own bugle (or drum or sitar) and running shoes, set your sights on the peak and settle for nothing else. As a country we have this one more big chance. The odds are an even 50/50. And remember: it is not just about starting up; it's about staying the course. Are you ready?

(The writer is founder, Unilazer Ventures)