

voice of vrindavan



**Vrindavan
TechVillage**
SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE



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Building Business Communities

New Age Concepts for the Knowledge Economy

Business Parks are assuming another dimension in today's world. Especially in a high growth market like India, the concept of commercial spaces which are self-contained – a proven global concept first brought to India at the turn of the millennium - is fast gaining traction and helping several corporations offer highly differentiated workspaces to the knowledge worker.

Vrindavan TechVillage embodies the spirit of modern day business parks. We are striving hard to create business communities which work, play and contribute to society in harmony. For instance, our focus on eco-sustainability extends beyond activities in our immediate control to generating an environment where we contribute as a community – electric car charging points at our MLCP, planting of saplings on Environment Day, promoting the use of bicycles, conversion of brownfield areas to sports field, and many more.

We have endeavoured to bring as many amenities as possible to the Park to ensure the comfort of occupants. These range from ATMs and Food Courts to playgrounds and the organizing of promotions on a regular basis to ensure that every occupant at VTV gains from the power of communities in several ways.

This issue of the Voice of Vrindavan covers the emergence and concept of communities; and how we, as a group, can leverage on the power these communities create for us.

If you have any suggestions, we're keen to hear your feedback on feedback@assetzproperty.com

Mike Holland
Assetz Property Group

Featured Article

Communities In The Connected World



The thought of self-sustaining communities, where commerce and the society coexist in a balanced ecosystem, is in itself, not new to India – several examples exist, especially in the Public Sector Unit (PSU) workspaces from the 1970s and 1980s, where offices, residences, factories and all amenities – educational, healthcare, banking, recreational and social – came together in one large township.

Anyone who has lived in such self-contained townships knows instinctively their tremendous social and community advantages. The concepts of work-life balance; the ease associated with having a range of amenities close at hand, reduction in travel times and the camaraderie amongst the occupants of such ecosystems – all are factors that make such communities highly satisfying and beneficial at social, familial and personal levels.

Modern day self-contained developments differ from the older townships on two key fronts: i. they can as easily be located in major metropolises as in the remote areas that PSU townships were based in and ii. the spaces are infinitely more flexible, giving rise to the true concept of mixed usage.

Those who have lived in the India of the 70s and 80s would also recall the fact that most residential developments of the time comprised

stand-alone residences; and that the concept of “community” extended from locality to area to city and country. Today, given paucity of space, an accepted concept in urban India is that of apartment living, giving rise to another community microcosm. Large apartment complexes and “gated communities” (typically comprising villas / row-houses within a compound) are, therefore, further examples of the emergence of diverse communities in India.

There is another type of community, which today can be counted amongst the most popular – online communities. Geographically dispersed but connected through a set of common interests, online social networks are redefining the way we live and connect. Some of the most exciting business models of today are driven by the concept of creating online communities.

No matter what their source of formation or incentives for members, modern day communities reflect how our living has changed and how it will continue to over the next few years. Increasingly, social causes are being heralded by communities – giving people greater voice in the affairs of the world around them and using the power of unity for interesting initiatives like community buying. The new world order is collective living for mutual benefit.

In the News

Activities at VTV

Over the past quarter, Vrindavan TechVillage has witnessed a range of exciting events both at the Park and at tenant facilities. The focus during this quarter were initiatives around World Environment Day, which, given our drive for excellence on eco sustainability, assumes significant proportions at the Park.

The Electric Car Initiative Charges Up



VTV had launched electric car charging facilities in the MLCP area to promote the usage of electric cars - another step to contribute towards environmental sustainability. Surekha Rao of Ness Technologies is one of the beneficiaries of this convenience as she travels to work in her electric car. Prompted by the concepts of safety, compactness and, above all, energy efficiency to buy an electric car, Surekha gains from the tremendous advantages – low maintenance, ease of handling and very low running costs – of using one. She has struggled, though, on getting adequate facilities to charge the car – with a lack of charging points even in the parking lot of the apartment complex she lives in. However, with the new charging initiative provided at the Park, she is able to easily overcome this challenge. Surekha is an inspiration for all of us – by doing her bit to contribute to sustainability.

OPI Family Day

OPI celebrated Family Day in April 2010, which saw OPI employees bring in their families to the Park. The event focused on enhanced interaction between families, thereby promoting a community feel.

New Juice Outlet at Food Court

A new outlet was introduced at the Food Court in May, which offers occupants a wide range of juices and snacks. The menu at “Juice Joint” comprises fresh juices, milk shakes, fruit bowl, cold coffee, sandwiches and chats, amongst other items.

High Level Delegations



The month of June saw visits to VTV by two high level governmental delegations. VTV is an example of the successful implementation of the concept of business parks and the delegations were interested in witnessing, first-hand, factors that have made it successful. As part of their visit, the delegations were taken around the Park and given an insight into diverse aspects of its functioning. The first visit was by high level representatives of the Royal Government of Bhutan, led by the Honorable Minister for IT&C. As part of this visit, a sapling planting event was organized to commemorate World Environment Day. In June we also welcomed representatives from the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India.

Bringing The Bank to your Doorstep



As part of offering enhanced amenities to users at VTV, an ATM was introduced at the Park. This ATM is operated by SBI and accepts Visa & Mastercard credit, debit & ATM cards. The ATM is located in Tower 2B and offers a wide range of banking functionalities to VTV occupants. Another ATM has now been approved under the SEZ Unit Approval Committee and this Standard Chartered Bank ATM which will be operational in July 2010.

In the News Continued..

BMS Operations Enhancement Initiatives

The BMS team launched a series of initiatives in April targeted at enhancing user experience. The first of such initiatives was the User Satisfaction Survey, as part of which feedback was obtained on diverse aspects of BMS services, providing a strong framework for enhancement of service delivery initiatives. In addition, Col. Chengappa, the Safety & Security Head of BMS, led the introduction of Visitor Management Systems and the creation of a comprehensive Security Manual for the Park. These initiatives have been designed as part of the Continuous Improvement initiative at BMS.

The Umbrellas Rise Again

With the onset of monsoon, VTV reintroduced the umbrella facility to help occupants and visitors get around the Park easily.

“So What Now” Tees Event

“So What Now” is a leading NGO which supports underprivileged communities through education related initiatives. As part of their fund-raising initiatives, the foundation sells exciting t-shirts with designs from upcoming artists. “So What Now” held a sales expo at the campus with their Consume With A Cause promotion.

In addition, several discount schemes, such as discounts on Hyundai vehicles, were offered to Park occupants.



Celebrating Environmental Conservation

Our commitment to environment sustainability as a community was celebrated with enthusiasm in the month of June, including special events to mark World Environment Day. One of the initiatives was the organizing of free emission testing for all vehicles at the Park, which saw tremendous response from many occupants. Occupant representatives also participated in the planting of saplings at the campus. We also held a bicycling promotion event in association with the RideACycle Foundation, who brought a range of exciting bikes to the campus for display and for sale to VTV occupants on special discounts.

In Focus Helpdesk Team

The community initiative at Vrindavan TechVillage is ably supported by the Helpdesk function – a practice which helps us be accessible, seamlessly, to users at the Park and address their requests and complaints. This issue of Voice of Vrindavan profiles the Helpdesk Executives who work tirelessly in association with the BMS staff to deliver a superior community experience at VTV.



Suman Sharma has a background in education, providing her with the training and management insights to ensure sound helpdesk operations. Armed with a master's degree in education, Suman has worked with leading schools through the course of her career spanning over 15 years. Post her stint with schools, Suman has also worked in

property management operations and held the responsibility for managing the delivery of soft services for a large mixed use estate. As part of this role, Suman played a key role in understanding user requirements from soft services and ensuring delivery – through management of in-house resources and vendors – of services to expected standards.



Raghavendra comes with a background in customer relationship management by virtue of having worked with leading hospitality chains for over 5 years. His rich experience with hotel chains such as ITC Welcomgroup, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts and Royal Inn, in diverse customer focused functions have provided him with tremendous insights

into setting and maintaining high level standards for customer relationship management. Raghav has also worked extensively on team development through providing training, coaching and counselling; in addition to working on Intellectual Data Systems, giving him the ideal background to ensure smooth Helpdesk operations.



In Conversation with Capt. Rajagopal Jayaraman, Facilities Services, Cisco



Q: Please give us a brief overview of Cisco's operations in India.

A: Cisco's primary activities in India revolve around R&D and client advocacy. A majority of our staff in India - between 60% and 70% of our total strength - belong to the R&D and CA practice.

Q: Please tell us more about your team in India in general and Bangalore in particular

A: Cisco is known the world over for the quality of the people we employ. Our focus on integration, innovation, quality and efficiency adds tremendous value to our customers and enhances our ability to create the next generation development environment. As a result of this, we are able to draw industry leading talent across the globe and India is no exception. Cisco employs over 6,000 people in India; and over 70% of our India workforce is based in Bangalore.

Q: What are the driving factors behind your decisions on real estate and how did this lead to your choice of Vrindavan TechVillage for one of your facilities?

A: We place a lot of emphasis on the quality of our workplace - in terms of initial parameters which lead to choice of the facility and ongoing maintenance parameters. The initial parameters to choose a facility include i. Special Economic Zone status; ii. quality of construction, finishes and fittings; iii. suitability to Cisco's operational requirements; iv. infrastructure including parameters such as power; and v. fit into our BCP process, amongst others.

The other primary area of focus is eco-friendliness. Cisco places a big thrust on environmental sustainability and, as a responsible corporate citizen, we have implemented a range of sustainability initiatives. For instance, Cisco was amongst the first facilities in India to be rated at the LEED Platinum level for fit-out. Therefore, suitability to our sustainability initiative forms another major parameter in terms of our choice of facility.

VTV satisfied all parameters of our decision making process. As a LEED Platinum certified estate and an SEZ, VTV helps us achieve our commercial objectives and our corporate social responsibility targets at the same time. Further, our analysis on a wide variety of factors such as accessibility, location, amenities and other relevant

fronts led to our decision to locate a facility in the Park. Our choice has been reinforced through our experience at the Park including support during the set-up and fit-out stages and, in particular, the shared utilities concept we benefit from at Vrindavan TechVillage.

Q: Can you please provide some examples of initiatives that Cisco undertakes to enhance commitment to eco sustainability.

A: We implement a wide range of ongoing initiatives towards environmental sustainability. Our choice of chemicals for facility management operations is one example of this thrust. Another example is our printing solution which is highly controlled and ensures that people print only what is required by them in a hard-copy format - enhanced by the fact that double-sided print is a default setting on all machines.

We have also focused on transport related initiatives for sustainability by introducing cycle-stands to promote the use of bicycles as a mode of transport; and by using buses for employee transport instead of cars.

Q: Our focus for this issue of Voice of Vrindavan is the concept of business communities and business parks. What are your views on the emergence and relevance of such communities?

A: I believe that self-contained business parks, especially those which do not have a residential component in them, work very well as a concept. It is also very encouraging to see the range of amenities that such parks offer to employees including fitness centres, entertainment facilities, sports facilities and easily accessible healthcare through onsite clinics.

The emergence of such communities also provides a platform for personal growth and community contribution for all employees. For instance, Cisco has been able to leverage on the power of communities to introduce a variety of programs including a recent program where employees brought e-waste from home for recycling. Over 4 tonnes of e-waste was handed over to a specialist company for disposal.

VTV showcase OPI Family Day

"The only rock I know that stays steady, the only institution I know that works is the family."

- Lee Iacocca

The importance of families can never be underestimated; and the basic concept of families being the cornerstone of everything we do as professionals can never be understated. To celebrate the involvement of families in understanding our workplaces, Outsource partners International Pvt. Ltd. (OPI) held a Family Day in March and April. "Pariwar Devo Bhavah" (literally "Family is God") was the theme around which the Family Day was held at all OPI facilities, including their campus at VTV, Bangalore. To enhance the ability of the event to touch the lives of as many OPI employees and their families as possible, OPI organized the event over 3 weekends. The objective of the event was to foster enhanced interaction between OPI employees and their families; and to showcase the workplace to them.

OPI employee families were taken on a tour of the facility and employees were able to show their families their workstations and the work atmosphere. In addition, fun games were organized for the visitors; and kiosks were set up. Everyone had lunch together at the buffet organized at the OPI Café. As part of the event, representatives from various verticals within OPI also explained the working of these verticals to the visitors.

The event was organized by OPI's Sports & Cultural committee and put together by a professional event management agency. Aakash Arora, Senior Manager – Administration of OPI says, "The Family Day at OPI was very well appreciated with overwhelming response from employees; and people of all ages gave new life and vigor the OPI office, which had a completely different look. Appreciation for the OPI facility and infrastructure was very evident on the faces of family members. It was very satisfying to see the workplace filled with enthusiasm of kids and pride of parents. I am confident family photos taken with the backdrop of 'I was here on the The Day of Incredible OPI' will be part of family albums. We thank the VTV management for their support in helping us put together a very successful event."

If you have any ideas for activities for us to continue to build a balanced, sustainable business community at VTV, do email us at feedback@bmsindia.in





Knowledge blog

The Battle at Kruger ... and communities

With our focus in this issue on building business communities, we invited Tarun Hukku, who has developed an expertise in building special interest groups and communities to share his thoughts on what drives the formation of thriving communities. Tarun has been an active proponent of social media networks and communities since 2003; and has developed varied communities benefitting thousands. He has over 20 years of entrepreneurial and corporate experience and is currently the Head of Support Services at Microland Ltd., a Leadership Committee Member at TiE Bangalore and Founder of a leading golf community portal in India – www.chotaGolf.com.

National Geographic's Jason Schlosberg and David Budzinski found themselves in an amazing filming opportunity in South Africa's Kruger National Park when a group of lionesses attacked a young water buffalo at a watering hole. As the lionesses began to drag the buffalo out, a crocodile found interest in the situation and snapped at the lions and young calf. Angered by the attack on their calf, the herd of water buffalo sprang into action and managed to rescue the young fellow. The video received rave reviews from professional photographers, was analyzed by wildlife experts on animal behavior and attracted audiences of millions of viewers.

In this instance alone we see how communities affect lives and the environment. The 8 minute film and the happenings post that revolved around several communities: i. wildlife conservationists that created the park ; ii. wildlife enthusiasts who waited by the lakeside after their safari; iii. herd of buffaloes that came to the lake for a drink; iv. pride of lions that waited at the lake to attack the buffaloes; v. photographers & wildlife experts who hailed the video and created a legend; and vi. community of online viewers on Youtube and Facebook and other social networking sites

Few such powerful instances so graphically demonstrate the collective power of communities. However, all we have to do is look around to see several communities affecting our daily lives, irrespective of whether we are part of them or not.

Communities – survival through the ages

Communities and their influence on daily lives have existed since cavemen came together to hunt. Communities have been created to help living creatures achieve what they couldn't do alone and in many ways, the evolution of life forms over the centuries has been determined by how each community ensured its survival or failed in doing so.

Community Types

By birth each person automatically gets absorbed into social - race, community or caste based - communities . These are closed hereditary networks and you can only be born into these networks. Through life, each person acquires networks from school, college, groups, organizations etc. These are relatively open networks compared to the hereditary networks and relationships of people in such "acquired networks" can be leveraged for professional advantage.

Acquired networks can be classified into 5 broad categories: interest,

region, industry, institution and profession. Each of these offer a significant potential for businesses to build, tap into communities **to manage perceptions, gather behavioural data, recruit, do surrogate advertising and influence direct / indirect business growth**. Essentially what organizations need to do is simply to understand the communities they need to influence; and build and create environments in which these communities can thrive. For example, if you wish to build a local community then you need to establish a regional network – eg. "Bangalore Business Network". This would work well for local developers, hospitality players and others who cater to a sharply focused regional community. Similarly, targeting a particular industry for potential business works best through developing an industry network. This would allow high visibility to a focused industry audience. Some examples would be CII, NASSCOM or smaller industry networks. One could also look at developing other focussed communities based around professions (HR, Marketing etc.) or on a specific interest (eg: photography, music, biking); and institutions can also have their own communities a la Old Boys networks.

Making Communities Effective

The first step to creating a powerful community is to stick to an agenda and avoid changes in the purpose of the network. Communities thrive if most people in the network are fair and transparent. Incentives and exclusive offers help enhance the appeal of the community. However, at the end of it all, the key to creating a successful community is clearly driven by vision, integrity, commitment, teamwork

Examples of Successful Communities

The Grameen Bank is a microfinance organization and community development bank in Bangladesh that makes small loans ("microcredit" or "grameencredit") to the impoverished without collateral . This banking system is based on the idea that the poor have skills that are underutilized. A group-based credit approach is applied which utilizes peer pressure within the group to ensure the borrowers follow through and use caution in conducting their financial affairs with strict discipline, ensuring repayment eventually and allowing the borrowers to develop good credit standing. The bank also accepts deposits, provides other services, and runs several development-oriented businesses including fabric, telephone and energy companies. By the beginning of 2005, the bank had loaned over USD 4.7 billion and by the end of 2008, USD 7.6 billion to the poor.

Knowledge blog

The Battle at Kruger and communities

AMUL is based in Anand, Gujarat and is an example of a co-operative organization's success in the long term. It is one of the best examples of co-operative achievement in the developing economy. Formed in 1946, it today is jointly owned by some 2.8 million milk producers. The Amul Pattern has established itself as a uniquely appropriate model for rural development and has spurred the White Revolution, which has made India the largest producer of milk and milk products in the world. Amul is the largest food brand in India and world's Largest Pouched Milk Brand with annual turnover of US \$1050 million (2006–07).

This article represents the author's personal & independent views and are not reflective of the views of any of the organizations he is associated with.

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