

AJVC SLACK CHANNEL

AMA#40 WITH RAGHAV CHANDRA DATED 25TH APRIL

SNEAK PEEK



With a pan-India presence, it has expanded to 30+ cities in India, Urban Company today is home to more than 25,000 trained professionals who earn a better livelihood through the platform. It provides these micro-entrepreneurs with financing, insurance, and product or consumables support. It has also expanded its presence to UAE, Australia, and

Raghav co-Founded Urban Company (formerly Singapore. The company had doubled its known as Urban Clap) in 2014 and leads the tech revenue to Rs 263 crore in FY20 from Rs 132.04 and product management vertical at UC along with co-founders Abhiraj Bhal and Varun Khaitan. Today Urban Company is the leading marketplace that offers home installation, maintenance, repair services, home beauty, and wellness services.

Prior to co-founding Urban Company, Raghav founded Buggi. Raghav graduated from UC Berkeley as an engineer. Having graduated in 2011, he worked at Twitter and Yelp as a software engineer.

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Hi Raghav! How are you guys managing the huge increase in load? Along different verticals under UrbanCompany?

Great question. It is true that by and large, this last year has made safety and hygiene a bigger concern, and as we have been able to structurally solve this well, we have had a good tail wind. However, it has its ups and downs. With lockdowns, some verticals come to a halt for good reason. While some accelerate given the essential nature of them.

Hi, UC is a lifesaver! How did you go about mobilising resources to organise the unorganised segment - the initial phase?

Well, first, we had a realisation that services is very very fragmented, and unorganised. And then on, it's been a journey of taking all kinds of problems and going super deep to solve it. As an example, to deal with poor quality and structure of the industry, we do our own training of every partner, we have lots of tech-enabled checks during the job to ensure the best job gets done. We even have our own warehouses and inventory management so that partners find it easy to buy cosmetics/etc, and we get to control quality.

What are the top 3 lessons you would want to share with early stage professionals?

1. Always always listen to your customers
2. Get them the product that they want at the price they want
3. Marketing does not need crores of rupees. Apply your mind to come up with great ideas

UC is a such a great platform! How do you ensure/manage/improve quality across so many categories.

Great question!

we do tons of things. we go super full-stack, cause we have realized that the market is fragmented, eg - we do our own training of partners, eg - we help partners do the job well via a lot of tech-led interventions, eg - we do lots of safety and hygiene checks like is the partner wearing a mask, etc, eg - we have our warehousing and centralize the cosmetics and spare parts ... to make it easy for partners to buy, and us to control quality. and a lot more (like financial help for partners, etc, etc)

Hi Raghav, what are a few factors you look at before deciding what categories to enter into?

Its easiest said. harder to do.

but it typically begins with:

- size of the overall category
- pain felt by the user
- our ability to actually create value / our strengths / etc

last one is more on us. the other two is what we need to get right first before even considering a punt.

Hey Raghav.. could you highlight how does UC cope with the supply-demand problem. Especially when you have such a variety of services available

well, id says supply-demand juggling is a reality of all businesses. especially when you are trying to grow. there is no rocket science here, tbh. a lot of science and math gets done to predict at a hyper-local level, what demand we will be getting, and hence onboard supply accordingly.it boils down to data intelligence to predict both sides accurately. supply needs to come first before taking demand. there is a funnel wherein they have to go through screening and training,.

What's different sector is UC planning to work upon in the next few years.

no different sector as such. there is just so much more to do in what we already do. so some city expansion will happen, some new categories might come up but the majority of our upcoming growth is in going deeper and improving our playbook. cracking different tiers of affordability and offering when we talk about consumers, there is no one kind. you have different kinds, all having a different price-to-value preference. so tiering our offering, innovating to further differentiate ourselves, working on improving our repeat ... these are some of the things we are working on.

Hi Raghav,Having one of the highest NPS for your partner's, what other major steps is UC taking to ensure safety for its employees & partners?

- **In these tough times, do you agree the employers should give some time off to the employees to process whats going out and feel a little less anxious?**
- **Is UC Planning for an IPO soon?**

last year itself, we realized that all of us are pretty stressed out. and that was because we all had no way to know when to switch off. we are all passionate folks after all. and continue to work. staying at home, not having other avenues made this worse. so since work from home started, we have been encouraging folks to take off especially the weekends. even doing the weekends was hard at first. we had to force a few days off a month so that we get into a healthy habit. the other part of anxiety comes with all the health emergency situations.we have done tons of things to ensure our employees and their families are safe and we are able to help them.

we have a covid task force set up to actively help us with any info, medicine, hospitalization, etc. for our employees. we are also tracking every employee daily on their health status, etc. these have really helped us all feel a part of a family, be helped when needed, and cope with this situation.



My question: In the purview of the current situation, how do you think ventures needs to adapt to ensure safety and health as one of crucial commitments to employees, consumers and to audience beyond?

unfortunately, there is no playbook.

we all got to do whatever we can, however we can to help. the two things that have been very helpful for us have been:

- 1.setting up a health tracker wherein we track all employees, and followup daily with those even slightly sick
- 2.setting up a covid task force comprising of leaders from across the org to urgently help through our employee families

besides this, there are a few other things ... like educating on what to do in these times, safety and health practices, helping in vaccination, etc.

we do similar things for our partners as well.

Hi I am an ex employee of UC and have worked for a year. Just wanted to ask you something which I didn't get a chance earlier.If you and the other 2 founders didn't belong to the IVY league schools and then if you have started UC. Would you be still successful ?Does education and school brand have that much of an impact while starting up ?

these tags don't change what is possible.there are tons of examples of folks who have done well regardless of their backgrounds.there is always someone else, honeslty, who on paper looks better.

though, id say, strong degrees, strong colleges, strong work experiences, etc..... are often used as proxies to how good a person might be. and so, to that extent, it does help.

Given that UC employees freelance service providers who work without any supervision, what measures does the company take to ensure quality and to keep the workers motivated?

great question. answered in part above.

basically, it boils to selecting good, trustworthy, skilled partners.

then helping them further upskill by training them.

solving their pain points ... like financial support (insurances, loans, etc) , procurement of inventory (cosmetics, spare parts, etc ... via our own product comm for partners)and yes, partners are happy when they earn. in general, partners make 2x more via UC than their typical offline industry. this is all due to the structural changes we bring in.

on the job... tons of things also need to happen.

like checking for fraud ... is it the right person?

like ensuring they did their diagnosis well, solved the right problem, and raised the right invoice.

like ensuring they are following safety protocols and hygiene protocols.

all this happens via a strong tech layer that works with the partner, helps them do the job well, and also checks them / gathers data for us to take the right actions.

as an example, we use image recognition to figure if its the right professional, if they are wearing a mask, if they have availed the right products on the job (facial kits?), etc.

if they are wearing a harness for their own protection! (when the ac technician has to climb to repair / service your ac)

Hey Raghav, how did UC win the trust of the customers? People are a bit reluctant in taking such services unless there is good marketing & word of mouth promotion.

haha. the most essential promise to customers.

ill skip writing an answer here. all work we do to improve the quality of partners and ensure a top-notch service is what goes into building trust. that trust is what fuels word of mouth.