

We recently had the pleasure of interviewing Sravan, founder and chief executive of iGoWise, a highly valued member of the XEN community. Dive into our conversation to explore insights and perspectives shared by Sravan. Check out the full interview

Ques: Can you tell us about your role in iGoWise and your contributions in not just your company but in the EV sector as a whole?

Ans: We are into EV space but just not into EVs because we think smart mobility is much bigger than just the EV sector. We consider ourselves as automobile startups, hardcore engineers and entrepreneurs. We strongly believe that smart mobility is much bigger. Our mission is to provide dignified mobility-sustainable mobility. That's how we define space. Electric mobility comes under sustainable mobility. Beyond sustainable mobility, there's smart mobility which is using technology to help humans move not only from point A to point B, but also, with a small environmental footprint, in a more efficient, productive and safe way. We don't want to reduce just the carbon footprint, but the road footprint too. These are some key aspects that we want to bring attention to.

Ques: The BeiGo X4 eBike was developed in just nine months. What key strategies did you implement to achieve such rapid development?

Ans: In essence, yes 9 months but we have been working on the technology for almost 4 years. From initial prototyping to getting the novel design of the world's first twin wheeled motorcycle certified legally, that was a 9 month process. We wanted to show to the world how fast and effective it can be when we build our own modular NTT light EV platform.

Ques: iGoWise emphasizes sustainability with solar-powered manufacturing and using metal instead of plastic for its scooter panels. Can you share more about how these efforts have impacted your production process, and what future sustainability initiatives iGoWise has planned?

Ans: We use solar for RnD but we are not completely reliant on it. We try to minimize the usage of plastics or materials that have plastic because first sustainability, also it makes more sense for us to use metals because we are building what we call a rugged utility vehicle, we rely on frugal innovation and engineering. We are not planning production on a mass scale or making us mainstream. Most importantly, We have managed to light weight our structure and panels in a very unique way even while using metallic panels.

Ques: iGoWise has ambitious plans to set up 1,000 micro-factories globally. Could you elaborate on the benefits of this model?



Ans: It's part of our mission. We don't believe that everything has to be built in a mega factory. What makes sense to us, especially in emerging markets like India, is making things more contextual. More localized, creating local employment and keeping the process closer to the consumer because the closer your consumer is, faster is the feedback loop and hence you are able to better suit the needs of the customer. Democratized manufacturing is the next big thing. We are just trying to play our part in a collaborative way.

Ques: do you think other players in the EV sector are more competitive than collaborative?

Ans: Competition is always good. It's better for the customers and it's good for the entrepreneurs also because it helps them be better. But it's important to have a balance between collaboration and competition. Looking at the big vehicle space, Toyota and Suzuki are partnering, so if these players can collaborate, why can't smaller players as well. Yes, it's partly true, The sense of collaboration is yet to come. The market is so big, especially on the consumer side, it's the supply that's the real constraint. But we need more players in the market. Many people think that it's already too crowded but we feel that we have barely scratched the surface.

Ques: How do you see pricing models are influencing consumer adoption in both urban and rural areas, and what steps are you taking to ensure widespread accessibility of EVs?

Ans: it's a myth that Indian consumers run after cheap alternatives. For example, most sold cars are SUVs. Finance is a bigger matter for someone from rural areas. Some of them may not be very comfortable with high upfront costs, but if you package it well most are ready to pay a premium for high quality. Providing the right kind of subscription, like we provide "pay as you go subscription" i.e. "pay as much as you have used", is what is going to enable people to upgrade their vehicle without worrying about burning their pocket.

Ques: How does iGowise work with government policies or incentives to drive EV adoption?

Ans: things are slowly changing for the better yet, we still have a long way to go i think. The rules and regulations need to be simplified for more entrepreneurs to come on board to try out new things. But you have to play by the existing framework and guidelines and sometimes it gets frustrating but you do your best and you hope everything turns out well. Adoption incentives (subsidies) and manufacturing incentives like PLI are okay for a start but the real incentives are needed for ventures doing core R&D work! Bharat cannot become a leader without investing in core R&D.

Ques: As a leader, how do you foster a culture of innovation and sustainability at iGoWise?

Ans: in my understanding, leadership is nothing different from parenthood. If you can put the needs of your employees, partners, vendors and shareholders, before yours, you can move forward. But just like with your kids, pampering is not a solution either. Sometimes saying no to your customers, partners and investors could be the right step ahead.

Ques: What do you think are the biggest challenges EV startups face in India, and how do you see companies like iGoWise tackling them?

Ans: It's been a journey but that's what the rollercoaster of entrepreneurship is. When we started, there was so much hype around EV, Too many Investors went overboard with some investments with unreal expectations, Then came the over-correction phase or the funding winter as they call it. Now things have gone full circle and are looking up. Bringing something radical to market, getting the regulator approvals was incredibly challenging. Changing people's perception and getting them onboard, making them understand why it makes sense has been challenging too. The biggest challenge we had to overcome and still are overcoming was the ecosystem itself. During the RnD phase, getting components from suppliers can be very difficult, hardly anybody will support you. But having a good understanding of the market and getting strong customer support helped. But there are good challenges too. When we started showcasing our product, we were bombarded with phone calls and enquiries and it happened so quickly and in such a big number that we had to cut our telephone.

Ques: What advice would you like to give someone who wants to enter the EV sector?

Ans: I would say don't start, because it is not the fairly tale that the media portrays. But people who discard this advice are certainly most welcome. There is a lot of free advice out there. You have to figure out what works for you. And the folks who ignore this free advice actually make it in the real world. Also, everybody trying to make another scooter, another bike or another charge point operations software is the biggest problem. Distinguish yourself. There are a lot of completely undressed markets for example luxury touring markets so maybe do that.

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