

CREATING CREATIVE DESIGNS

Zubin Cooper has over two decades of experience in the architecture and real estate development sector and brings with him a wealth of knowledge in the design and development of urban planning, hospitality and retail projects. Zubin is a graduate from Oxford Brookes University as an Architect and Urban Designer. In conversation with Dominic Rebello, Zubin reveals the challenges he faces in India and South Africa.



Zubin Cooper,
(CEO) Bentel Associates Realty Design Consultants

What is the USP of Bentel Associates Realty Design Consultants?

Very simply we are the most successful International Architects with the strongest "local" based footprint in India. The office in India has been active now for 12 years and we are currently a team of 75 people and growing. In that time we have built approximately 24,000,000 sq ft, which amounts to 35 projects in 7 states across India. With the "local" office so strong we can provide our premium quality designs at prices that our other top International practices cannot compete with given the price sensitivity of the market.

What are the challenges being faced in the Indian market in comparison to the functioning in SA?

Well SA has its own challenges. For example, when doing retail projects in SA, you can be all up to schematic design before you get paid; work is done at what we call "risk." It is only when all the tenants are in place and the shops fully leased that the project is given the green signal and the banks release funds to the developer. So we can go months before we get paid in SA working on retail mall projects.

India's challenges are: It's price sensitivity - Negotiations can be lengthy and aggressive. Quality in the detailing and workmanship can be lacking due to reasons of skill or valued engineering. Changes in FSI, regulatory procedures or rights of land ownership etc can halt or stop a project. We have seen that happen more than once. Lack of knowledge of the

client body. To prepare in depth programs, and understanding the building process and having design experience. Of course this is changing all the time as more architects and real estate professionals come back to India after having foreign work experience and/or education.

Finding talented design architects - This is not exclusive to India, finding the right talent at whatever level you are hiring at, will always be a challenge regardless of where you work in the world. But the mentoring and reward process seems to work better in larger foreign based practices. This ensures that staff stay longer in any given office and learn more.

What are the latest trend in the industry?

A few of the much talked about trends in the industry: Sustainability is much talked about but much more implementation in India. Smart Cities, the Chinese and Japanese will help pave way for the 98 planned in India. New methods of construction, such as prefabrication sand steel construction for mid-rise buildings. The growth of mixed use

developments. We are seeing more of a need for this self-contained communities, where people can live, work and play all within a square mile. BENTEL are proudly working on many such exciting projects.

What would you say makes Bentel different from others?

Well in India it's essentially the quality and thought of design, depth of service and production information we produce for the price we charge.

Where do you see Bentel five years down the road?

We are more in demand than ever and only recently had our best month with new projects being awarded. As we go through this rapid growth we will further build on our Planning and Urban Design studio, our Store Planning, environmental graphics and way finding team.

Work more on government and public private partnership bids, as we start beginning to identify the right partners. In a nut shell we want to be known, not perhaps as India's largest international practice but certainly "The Best."

BUSINESS SHOTS

India, Israel to intensify defence, anti-terror cooperation



PM Narendra Modi and Israeli President Reuven Rivlin before a meeting at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi yesterday

Reflecting their growing proximity, India and Israel yesterday decided to further "broad-base" their already close defence partnership and intensify cooperation in combating radicalisation and extremism, while calling upon global community to act tough against terror networks and States harbouring them. The two countries also agreed to deepen their cooperation in a variety of areas including trade and investment, agriculture, water resources and cyber crime during extensive talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, who is on his first visit to India.

Tata Steel plunges 8%; mcap erodes by Rs 3,234 cr

Shares of Tata Steel yesterday plunged nearly 8%, wiping out Rs 3,234 crore from its market valuation, after the company reported consolidated net loss of Rs 49.38 crore for the September quarter. The stock tumbled 7.80% to end at Rs 393.55 on BSE. During the day, it had tanked 8.26% to Rs 391.55. On NSE, it dropped 7.84% to settle at Rs 393.05.

Emmbi Industries H1'2016-17 profits rise 43%

Emmbi Industries Ltd. is an established brand in polymer processing and a niche player with advance applications in the areas of water conservation, logistics, agriculture, packaging, geo-textiles and various other polymer based material. Emmbi enjoys a prudent track record of more than two decades business. Emmbi Industries came out with a record half yearly performance in Q2'17 results declared by the company. The highlights of Q2'-17 performances are that PAT and EPS grew by 43.05% on YOY basis to 6.25 crores and Rs. 3.53 per share respectively. The company's Gross Sales for the 6 months of FY 2016-17 has increased to Rs. 115.71 cr from Rs. 102.17 cr from 6 months of FY 2015-16, recording an increase of 13.25% over previous year.

BMJ Awards South Asia 2016

After the success of British Medical Journal (BMJ) Awards South Asia 2015, BMJ has announced BMJ Awards South Asia 2016 on 19 November 2016 in New Delhi. This year too, nominations have been invited from the south Asia region in numerous categories like healthcare quality, medical education etc. In 2015, doctors across South Asia participated in the second edition of the Awards and BMJ received

more than 900 high-quality nominations and felicitated 13 individuals and teams that demonstrated remarkable passion and commitment to medicine.

Commercial messaging will be big for us in 2017: WhatsApp

Popular messaging app WhatsApp will focus on rolling out commercial messaging next year for businesses as it looks to tap enterprises for monetising its platform. Earlier this year, WhatsApp had said it will stop charging USD 1 per year subscription fee to go completely free for its users across the world. While WhatsApp maintained that it will not introduce any third-party ads for monetisation, it said it will test tools that allows users to communicate with businesses and organisations like banks and airlines through its platform.

PE, VC investments slip 27% in Oct to \$1.19 bn: EY

Private equity and venture capital investments declined 27% to USD 1.19 billion in October due to decline in big ticket transactions, says a report. PE/VC transactions worth USD 1.63 billion had been announced in October last year, said the EY report. On month-on-month basis, there was a marginal increase of 5.3% in value terms in October this year.

Over 32 mn smartphones shipped in India in Q3: IDC

Smartphone shipments in India grew 11% to 32.3 million smartphones in July-September quarter compared to the year-ago period, driven by distributors gearing up for festive season and online sales, research firm IDC yesterday said. This is the first time that smartphone shipment has crossed the 30-million mark in a quarter. According to IDC's quarterly mobile phone tracker, 29.1 million smartphones were shipped to India in the third quarter of 2015. The shipment was higher by 17.4% than April-June 2016 quarter when shipment stood at 27.5 million units.

Federal Bank dispenses Rs 2,000 note through recalibrated ATMs

Kerala-based Federal Bank yesterday claimed that it was one of the earliest in the country to dispense Rs 2,000 notes through its re-calibrated ATMs. "The Federal Bank ATM at Thevara in Kochi successfully dispensed Rs 2,000 denomination notes to customers," the Bank said in a release. Five ATMs of the bank have been re-calibrated to dispense the larger denomination notes, it said, adding, the bank was among the earliest in the country to dispense Rs,2000 notes through its ATMs.

Reliance Group launches IoT services venture 'UNLIMIT'

Anil Ambani promoted Reliance Group today announced a strategic partnership with Cisco Jasper for the launch of its new venture "UNLIMIT" to provide Internet of Things (IoT) services to enterprise customers across India. "The outlook for IoT services in India is virtually UNLIMITED, with the number of connected devices projected to rise from 200 million today to around 3 billion by 2020, and revenues set to increase from USD 5.6 billion today to USD 15 billion in 2020," Amitabh Jhunjhunwala, Group Managing Director, Reliance Group said.

Mumbai is the city of dreams turning into realities. Follow the stories of successful and driven entrepreneurs every day in the **Afternoon D&C's 'Open for Business'** column for some inspiration of your own. If you know someone who just 'has' to feature here, write to our Senior Business Correspondent, dominic.rebello@afternoondc.in