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# Startups Seek to Create Entrepreneurs

Founders begin to tap the next generation of employees to create innovation and ideation talent pools across hierarchies

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**Bengaluru:** Startups aren't looking for worker bees waiting for directions to flow from the top. Instead, they are seeking innovative part-owners in their employees, who would match the founders in their appetite for risk and results.

"We want to create a pipeline of people who can function almost as co-founders, and are actively grooming those with strong risk appetite, a vision to work independently, and an ability to focus on long-term challenges," said Amit Agarwal, co-founder of home-rental startup

## New Kids on the Block

Urban Ladder co-founders Rajiv Srivatsa and Ashish Goel start programme called 'UL Next' to support & mentor about 20 people across five projects on brand, distribution & design

**At NoBroker,** about 10 senior employees work with co-founder Amit Agarwal on projects related to maximising revenue, & driving operational efficiency

**At Furlenco,** employees across teams volunteer to take up projects related to company growth & expansion, with leadership team working closely with them to provide strategic vision

**At Jombay,** co-founder Mohit Gundecha focuses on fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, underpinned by an enabling organisational structure



NoBroker.  
Agarwal's company is among an

**RAJIV SRIVATSA**  
Urban Ladder Co-founder

Attrition is always a risk but... employees working on these projects have been energised by the exposure they're getting

expanding list of startups such as customised furniture maker Urban Ladder and furniture rental company Furlenco that have expunged the job-description straitjacket to create innovation and ideation talent-pools across hierarchies, harnessing the creative-solutioning ability of employees to hurdle the typical barriers these companies face in their current stage of evolution.

At the heart of the desired startup skill-sets, therefore, is entrepre-

neurship, important attributes of which are creativity and a sense of ownership. At Bengaluru-based home-decor company Urban Ladder, co-founders Rajiv Srivatsa and Ashish Goel set up a live-projects mentoring programme called 'UL Next' in December: "The idea came from an employee's suggestion that not enough was being done toward innovation and risk-taking. It made us realise that we needed to weave the culture of entrepreneurship right into the fabric of the company," Srivatsa told ET.

Srivatsa and Goel pass on their learnings as entrepreneurs to 20 employees who are part of the projects related to brands and design.

At home rental startup NoBroker, about ten senior employees work with Agarwal on projects related to maximising revenue, and driving operational efficiencies. They meet every three days to examine data and finalise action points.

"Colleagues sometimes use the learnings I gathered during my days in the consulting industry to further their own entrepreneurial mindset," said Agarwal, who pulled out a few of his old assignments during his days at one of the Big Four consulting firms, and used them to build a framework around his teaching techniques.

At talent assessment and analytics firm Jombay, co-founder Mohit Gundecha focuses on not only fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, but also on having an enabling organisational structure: Both, he believes, are appropriate vehicles to foster ownership. "I don't make judgements or definite statements whether something will or will not work. Instead, I focus my energies on mentoring employees with a minimum level of interference," he told ET.

At Furlenco, employees across teams volunteer to take up projects related to company growth and expansion, with the leadership team working closely with them to provide strategic vision. There are weekly 'growth huddles', where teams discuss their progress and share data.

"Founders and CEOs need to be psychologically ready and have support of investors to be able to give time to impart their learnings and skills," said Jappreet Sethi, co-founder of YoStartups, which provides consultation services to new-age firms.

Urban Ladder's Srivatsa is unfazed by the possibility that grooming employees to think entrepreneurially might cause the flight of talent.