



**Kiran Datar**  
**MD, WebEx Communications India Private Ltd.**

Kiran Datar has over **12 years** of experience in various high technology and finance positions. He co-introduced the concept of Conferencing Services in India and has a wealth of experience in the emerging Indian telecom scenario.

Kiran has also worked as a Strategist (International Economics and Foreign Exchange) at the Treasury Department of ABN AMRO, Chicago and at the Emerging Markets Department of Credit Suisse First Boston in fixed income & equity fields with focus on analyzing companies in the telecom space.

Kiran holds a B.S. (Physics & Economics) from Middlebury College, VT and an M.S. (Operations Research) from Columbia University, New York. Kiran Datar at 39 years sits at the helm of a business that has the largest market share of 65% and a list comprising of over 2600 satisfied customers from India's top companies.

Armed with a M.S. from Columbia University, New York, the proverbial "entrepreneurial bug" claimed Kiran's successful and high growth career. Leaving behind lucrative assignments at global banks, Kiran set out with a dream to ride the internet wave in India in the 90's. Joining hands with his friends, he endeavoured to establish an innovative, global, technology driven service based in India.

Under Kiran's stewardship, a business plan for an Internet Service Provider (ISP) was put together. Kiran intended to provide a full suite of services in the Internet domain under the brand "CyberBazaar". As luck would have it, the prevailing regulations prevented them from entering the government monopolised ISP space.

The adage "necessity is the mother of invention" was proven true in Kiran's first operational business. While devising business plans, Kiran and his friends communicated via teleconference calls to exchange ideas from destinations across the globe. This provided the launch pad for an idea of an Audio Conference service. They tested the market and found a huge upcoming surge in telecom availability but an absence of collaboration services that could help people across multiple locations communicate with each other at the same time. Given that the Indian IT

revolution was just around the corner, it was evident that there would be a pressing need for efficient collaboration systems.

Two years from the time their initial business plan was put on paper, the Audio Conferencing Solution by CyberBazaar was born. It was a unique service that provided end-to-end audio conferencing services. Through this solution, it was possible for multiple people at multiple locations to be connected to a single conference call. The first customer of CyberBazaar was Veriphone which was later acquired by Hewlett Packard (HP).

Although they were finally on track they still faced a lot of scepticism from potential customers. One of today's IT giants had then told them that they may use the service 4 to 5 times a year. The same entity now clocks over 200,000 minutes a month!

The never-say-die spirit of Kiran and the team saw CyberBazaar emerging as a market leader in the conferencing solutions space and in due course CyberBazaar became a way of life for India Inc. CyberBazaar rode the boom in the software wave and very quickly became profitable. In the days of the dotcom boom, Kiran soon saw volume increases of up to 30% for his service, month on month.

The acquisition of CyberBazaar by WebEx Inc, a venture by a US based seasoned NRI entrepreneur, Subrah Iyar, for \$4million came about in 2005. WebEx Inc. is a venture set up by Indian origin Subrah. S. Iyer and Min Zhu in US in the year 1997. From a mere 2000 minutes of calls in the first year of its operation, WebEx today clocks over **200,000,000 minutes of collaboration** a year. With a 65% market share in the web collaboration market and growing, Kiran has played a large role in the communication revolution among corporate India today.

In 2007, Cisco acquired WebEx with their respective visions aligned to provide web collaboration with a view to accelerating business processes. Ten years from the launch of CyberBazaar, Kiran's vision was finally validated when Cisco bought WebEx for USD 3.2 billion. Kiran had very early on recognized that collaboration was the only way the IT industry would reach the heights it was destined to and now Cisco subscribed to that belief.

Kiran's understanding of telecom and communication comes from his stints as business analyst and strategist with leading banks in the US. His biggest challenge today is to stay focused on the prize, even as bigger are gunning for a share in the conferencing pie.