

CONNECTED

DECEMBER 2022

LOCAL ECOMMERCE

The coming tie is about local ecommerce only, from *Pakistan to Pakistan* and rest of the world.

TEAM DEPLOYERS

How 3 entrepreneurs combine to *uplift the local ecommerce* knowledge in Pakistan



Obaid Arshad

CEO & Co Founder
Ginkgo



Naveed Ahmed

Creative Consultant &
Top Rated Freelancer

**AWARD WINNING SaaS BASED
PRODUCT MADE IN PAKISTAN**

**FREELANCER
OF THE MONTH**



ZAKRIA FAWAD



OMER MUBEEN



HAIDER AHMED

Local Ecommerce in Pakistan

In Pakistani ecommerce, next big thing now days is, local ecommerce. The demand is rising for local ecommerce and aspirants are moving to learn from Pakistan to Pakistan and rest of the world, selling through own ecommerce platforms.

When Amazon banned the 13,000+ accounts of Pakistani sellers in which mostly were those who put their every savings on the line, in order to start their own ecommerce business, Pakistan's young entrepreneurs and small business owners became hopeless to start anything in the ecommerce field.

This was the time when nobody knows that local ecommerce market is not only booming, but also serving millions of

STORY BEHIND DEPLOYERS.PK

At this time, the local ecommerce industry veterans Omer Mubeen and Haider Ahmed Qazi stood up and started a venture Deployers.pk in order to enhance the awareness of local ecommerce in Pakistan.

Both were already sharing the knowledge of local ecommerce to their students via online classes, physical meetups and through their trainings. Initially they were supporting aspirants to fill the market gaps and get good salary jobs in the corporate. Currently, multiple head of ecommerce are already settled in top Pakistani brands like Saya, Chase Up etc.

But soon after the failure of institutes to train for amazon selling, the demand of local ecommerce got increased and they started a venture called deployers.pk.

The first success of deployers.pk was in the form of joining Mr Zakria Fawad as a cofounder to Deployers. Zakria Fawad has vast experience in brand lifting. Through Zakria,



ZAKRIA FAWAD

A Game Changer In Pakistan's E-commerce Industry

Through Zakria, deployers went into another level of journey and the time came when commercial launch of deployers.pk came into being and they held a massive event in PC Lahore in August 22.

Through this event, deployers.pk was launched, both at a physical location as well as online sessions finally started, under the umbrella of deployers.pk

With the passage of time, deployers held back to back 2 more successful events. One was in Islamabad Ramada Hotel in October 22 and next was in Multan in November 22.

The response and thirst for local ecommerce reached another level after successful events and deployers launched online session free of cost for aspirants who want to have grip on local ecommerce in Pakistan.

Currently they have trained almost 600+ students via physical and online sessions.



The way deployers.pk is conducting these sessions is absolutely miraculous

On successful launch of Local Ecommerce event in PC Lahore, IT Minister Dr. Arslan Khalid expresses that I am seeing a very bright future of youth of Pakistan because platforms like deployers are here to serve you and train you.

Dr. Arslan Khalid
IT Minister
Punjab Government, Pakistan



SENATOR IJAZ CHAUDHRY

Senator Ijaz Chaudhry from PTI was also Chief Guest and Zain Qureshi MPA Punjab Assembly, son of Shah Mehmood Qureshi also sent a video message for youth of Pakistan and shared their best wishes for Deployers.pk.

After the successful launch, deployers.pk team went to set their mission and vision to empower youth with even more energy. A large number of partners joined deployers.pk journey in which Gingko retail and spreading local ecommerce awareness sessions, Ovee labs, OPay, Beyond East, Mehmood Group, Dankash, Daraz, PITB, Plan 9, CPC, Facebook, Dial Zero, Daraz University, Trax Logistics, social bakers also participated in the journey of deployers.pk.





Enter The Local-Ecommerce TODAY!

*Join hands with **Deployers.pk** to learn updated skills and techniques to master local e-commerce business.*



DEPLOYERS.PK

Vision Statement

Deploy Pakistani made Local Ecommerce brands & platforms in the international markets to boost e-exports for Pakistan.

Their Mission

To successfully establish 1 million+ local ecommerce platforms so that our local industry can grow to the extent of selling local products into international market from Pakistani ecommerce platforms.

Taking this vision and mission, deployers cofounder, Omer Mubeen, Zakria Fawad and Haider Ahmed Qazi are empowering youth to become self-sufficient and start their own e-business in Pakistan which will not only uplift the local ecommerce landscape and business in Pakistan but also enhance the local productivity to export level in international markets.



Khawaja Jawad

Director

Mehmood Group & Beyond East

Khawaja Jawad, Director of Mehmood Group who recently started Beyond East, was invited as Chief Guest in Deployers.pk Local Ecommerce event in Pakistan. Through beyond east, Khawaja Sb shared his experience of how Omer Mubeen lifted their ecommerce sales in Local Ecommerce Market in Pakistan that was even more than their retail offline shops sales.

Khawaja Jawad also expressed that:

"I see no other better than Deployers.pk to know the Local Ecommerce landscape more and deeper in Pakistan."



SYED ARSALAN ALI SHAH



TANVEER NANDLA

Syed Arslan Ali Shah CEO of Connected Pakistan, Tanveer Nandla, Ismail blogger, Asber Ali and many more gems from Freelancing industry of Pakistan joined the event and expressed their wishes for deployers.pk. By looking at the students responses, the energy level of deployers team, management and event highlights, people are accepting and praising deployers.pk a lot and considering it as a game changer in Pakistan.

The upcoming plans of deployers.pk are quite aggressive. They have already announced their new session which will be held in Karachi, tentatively in January 2023. Karachi is a big market and local e-commerce is at extreme level in Karachi.

Multiple corporate companies are awaiting for their sessions as the local industry is struggling for right skills and agencies to serve them. This also opens the door of deployers to expand their services at corporate trainings and digital marketing services which they might launch very soon.

Currently, the team deployers are not charging anything for their classes. For offline session they ask a very minimal fees for those who wish to attend the event with hi tea and time with mentors.

Their events started in PC Lahore, then went to Islamabad at Ramada Hotel. Third event was held at Faletti's Hotel Multan.

Deployers.pk is a ventures cofounder by Omer Mubeen, Haider Qazi & Zakria Fawad & current HO is in Lahore, Pakistan.

www.deployers.pk

FREELANCER OF THE MONTH



Our Pick for our first ever freelancer of the month is *Mr. Naveed Ahmed*. He is a well-known name in the freelancing industry now, but he had very humble beginnings. He comes from a very small town in South Punjab called Chishtian Mandi, where his father worked at a petrol pump to support his family. Naveed went to government school, college and university and had no generational wealth, no special privileges but his father had a faith in education. His father sent him to The Islamia University of Bahawalpur walnagar campus for his bachelor's degree where Naveed started his freelancing journey during his undergrad education.

Naveed has been freelancing since 2014 and has built a huge international clientele over the years. He now works as an Independent Creative Consultant with big names of the world like Loadsmart, 51Talk, Superlegal and Swift Beauty. **He is a top-rated freelancer on Fiverr as well with more than one thousand five-star reviews.** He runs his own remote first design studio where he has a global team of people mainly from Pakistan but also from Bangladesh, Dubai and India.



He also has been working with e-Rozgaar Program of PITB for more than 5 years to train the unemployed youth in freelancing and digital skills and has trained thousands of young freelancers who are bringing in the much-needed foreign exchange to the country.

He briefly worked at ITU as a Teaching Assistant for the courses of "Design Lab" and "Science Fiction in The Contemporary World" and voluntarily mentored with TCF for 2 years!



Awarded as Top Freelancer of Pakistan

He was recently awarded as one of the Top Freelancer and Most Accomplished Professional of South Punjab awards by Tech Nation Digital Conference. He was also awarded as one of the Top 10 Freelancers of Pakistan by PAFLA!



Having spoken at prestigious events like Connected Pakistan Conference, Young Leaders Conference, Future Fest, TechNation Conference, Digital South Punjab Roadshow, Taaleem or Hunnar Sath Sath, Freelance Fest, Pakistan Innovation Roadshow and big universities like BNU, UET, UMT, BZU, IUB and PU, Naveed has vast public speaking experience.

In a recent story on his Instagram account, Naveed shared how he used to travel in Lahore on a shared rickshaw because he could not even afford to rent a dedicated rickshaw, he then was able to buy a decade old motorcycle, then a new motorcycle, then an old Sedan car but now he drives a new crossover Car.



“

Connected Pakistan is very proud of Naveed's achievements and takes pride to celebrate local success stories who defied all odds, did not believe in becoming a product of their circumstances but made them a product of their choices

HEAR OUT LOUD

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO BECOME A FREELANCER?

I started freelancing during my undergrad to finance my education and bear my own expenses. The only motivation back then was just to earn the bare minimum amount so I could pay my university and hostel expenses. I later on turned into a proper profession when I realized the full potential of it.



WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY AS A FREELANCER?

Being able to travel and work from anywhere makes me super happy about the freelance lifestyle. As challenging as it sounds, it is liberating to be able to work from airports, hotel lobbies, hospital rooms and motor way rest areas. Moreover, it is not less than a blessing to earn in dollars since one can not only earn a very handsome income for them but also contribute positively in the economy of the country.

WHAT WERE/ARE THE MOST CHALLENGING THINGS IN FREELANCING AS A PAKISTANI FREELANCER?

The biggest challenge I face working from a small city in Pakistan is the availability of good internet. I have the best possible option of internet service installed in my home office but I still sometimes struggle with voice/video quality issues while having online meetings with my clients or any other live sessions on social media. The second biggest challenge was to hire good resources locally, because good resources usually move to bigger cities, but I was able to sort this challenge but shifting to all-remote work and it has been great since then. I can hire resources from anywhere in the world but still most of my team is from Pakistan. The most talked after challenge by most Pakistani freelancers is the availability of PayPal but I honestly face this very rarely. Payoneer and Wise have been working great from me, while PayPal would be a big plus but not having it does not stop me from doing things.



HOW COULD PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT CAN SUPPORT YOU, WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?

The government can work on improving the infrastructure of the internet so it can work in good speed all around the country. It will help everyone to work easily on the go and people will not have to move to bigger cities just for getting good internet. This will in turn create more opportunities in the smaller cities and reduce the population load on bigger cities.

The government should also look into creating IT parks in smaller cities or at least second tier cities so SMBs like me can afford to have good offices on subsidized rate with good internet and electricity.



DO YOU PREFER WORKING ON FREELANCING PLATFORM OR DIRECT? WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR CHOOSING ANY?

I have a famous saying that I tell to my students all the time. It goes like: “Direct clients Allah ki nemat hain, unki qadar kren”. I cannot emphasize this enough. While having a great freelancing profile with new clients coming regularly is a huge blessing, but this system can collapse anytime and any small algorithmic or policy change can affect your profile badly. Therefore, I recommend thriving for repeat/direct clients who can give you work regularly. I do not recommend trying to bring every client out of the platforms because if you are ever caught doing so, you can get your profile banned.

By direct clients, I mean to say the clients you can win from LinkedIn, Facebook, personal or professional connections. A good clientele is ideally a mixture of platform clients and direct clients because as they say, “Never put all your eggs in one basket” similarly relying on just one channel of clients is not a good approach.

WHAT IS YOUR STRATEGY IN MANAGING CLIENT’S DISPUTE?

Dispute management is a very important skill and it helps you save a lot of projects and save a lot of headache too sometimes. I believe in the power of communication and always prefer trying to talk to my client and sort the problem by mutual understanding. First, I try to get into a video meeting with the client whenever a conflict or dispute arises. The face-to-face interaction works like magic and helps you and your client to get the human perspective of the problem. The written communication can sometimes create unwanted misunderstanding because your client cannot see your facial expressions and they may take very normal words of yours offensively. I always refund my clients if the mistake is on my end and they are not ready to allow more time to fix it. One should have a big heart to admit their mistakes and pay back for them. However, sometimes, the client is wrong and they are not ready to listen, in that case, I always reach out to customer care and explain the whole scenario. I can say for sure that we feel reluctant in going to customer care because we think they always side with the client. I do not believe in this because I have been compensated by platform fully or partially multiple times.

DID YOU HAVE ANY TRAINING TO GET YOUR FREELANCING JOURNEY EASIER? YOUR THOUGHTS ON THIS?

When I started freelancing, there were no institutes providing the freelance training. YouTube was banned in Pakistan and even though we were able to access it through proxies, the speed was super slow and a 10-minute video took an hour to buffer. There were no GFXmentors and Hisham Sarwars of the world making great content on YouTube. However, platforms like Coursera, Udemy and Udacity were a big help. I took a lot of online courses but couldn’t afford to pay for the certification so I would just take the whole course, do the assignments and skip the certification because I believed in skills. Today, there is great content everywhere and especially on YouTube. It is easier than ever to learn a skill now so if somebody complains about the opportunities or their circumstance, it does not make sense. Internet has levelled the play field for everyone and it is a true equal opportunity platform for everyone regardless of their nationality, color, gender or cast.

HOW DID YOU SCALE UP YOUR FREELANCING BUSINESS, WAS IT EASY?

I worked solo for many years and always thought that nobody can handle my clients better than me and if I give work to someone, I will end up losing the clients. It was a big misconception. I started building my team in 2019 and it has been great since then. I saw new heights of growth and liberty. I was able to travel, meet new people, learn new things, all while making good income. There's a spiritual side to this too because I believe when you associate someone's rizq with you, Allah Ta'ala start giving you more because the other person's rizq has to go through you. It is not easy to experiment the outsourcing or getting things done by team, it comes with its own challenges, so sometimes I had to do all the work by myself at the last day but if I kept working alone, I would have never seen the growth that I was able to see.



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A SUCCESSFUL FREELANCER?

It takes commitment. It takes a lot of other things but commitment more than anything else. If you are committed, you will be consistent, dedicated, self-motivated. You will not get tired. Setbacks will not be able to set you back. Hurdles will not stop you but give you more strength and hardworking attitude. Once you start working hard, it is addictive. You cannot stop. It gives you the dopamine releases like nothing else. This commitment, hunger for learning, growing and reaching new heights will eventually make you a successful freelancer.



PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

According to statistics, in Pakistan, the trend of eCommerce purchasing pattern has increased by multiple folds that too, quarter over quarter which implies a drastic positive shift in this industry, especially in the era of post-pandemic Covid-19.



However, the biggest challenge that has been observed in the traditional ecommerce orders processing is, lack of automation, which leads to higher dependency on manual work causing redundant tasks, errors, or even little to no control of the merchant over the inventory management.

Considering the challenges in the ecommerce industry of Pakistan, **Mr. Obaid Arshad** (CEO and Cofounder Ginkgo Retail) and **Mr. Hassan Sajjad** (CTO & Cofounder Ginkgo Retail) being

an ecommerce and technology veteran, stepped ahead to bridge the crucial gap in the market. The ecommerce industry of Pakistan was disrupted back in 2020, by the needful SaaS based product **"Ginkgo"**; an ecommerce operating system which is now also an award winning SaaS based software providing services to more than 100 ecommerce merchants for the past 3 years and the number keeps growing.

GAME CHANGER OF E-COMMERCE INDUSTRY



Ginkgo Retail is a one-stop solution for merchants who want to increase their efficiency and maintain control over their business through automation. From Order Management, Inventory Management, Logistic Management, Warehouse Management, BI Reporting, CRM, Multi-sales and Multi-vendor modules, Product Management System, and Track It, Ginkgo got us all for smooth ecommerce operations.

The disruptive technology of Ginkgo has not only increased the growth of the ecommerce industry to a higher level but one biggest plus point the merchants are experiencing is that Ginkgo is a tailored product according to the needs of the merchants.

By 2022, Ginkgo Retail being a renowned name in the ecommerce industry, was offered to plan and manage one of the biggest ecommerce conferences at *Future Fest 22* (Zindagi by JS Bank). *Mr. Obaid Arshad* took the opportunity and brought the conference to another leap where a huge number of technology and ecommerce industry experts shared their narratives and had a very successful conference.



"Ginkgo is not an option, but has become a mandatory tool to execute successful ecommerce operations in such a fast paced market."

Recent merchants' survey



To pace things technologically a step ahead, Ginkgo Retail, acquired *Unified Courier Logistic Application* by *Alchemative*, a market initiator in logistics automation, As Ginkgo Retail itself has a strong market positioning with a substantial record of 15 million successful processed orders handling worth 50 billion PKR.

The success journey of Ginkgo Retail seems everlasting to us as this product is evolving every single day. **The merchants of an immense scale such as PCB (Pakistan Cricket Board), Nishat Linen, Sapphire, Ndure, Outfitters, Bata, Minnie Minors, and more than 100 others are now using Ginkgo as their one stop solution.**

Obaid Arshad being an entrepreneur and a tech enthusiast finds every opportunity to play around and make it fruitful for the industry or the youth of Pakistan.



He took multiple initiatives and projects to enable and promote local ecommerce in Pakistan. Later, he made a collaboration with *Deployers.pk* (Ginkgo x Deployers.pk) to serve the youth of Pakistan, to guide and teach the ecommerce enthusiasts.

As ecommerce is booming in Pakistan, and there is a need for training the young enthusiasts about the roadmap and technicalities. *Ginkgo x Deployers.pk*, organized number of successful training sessions in Lahore, Islamabad/Rawalpindi, and Multan so far.

Ginkgo Retail keeps a fair balance between evolving its own product to ease the life of merchants, as well as paying back to the society in any possible way. Whether it's enabling local ecommerce and helping the economy of Pakistan to boost, or protecting the environment with 'Go green' mechanisms.



GINKGO IS THE FUTURE OF THE ECOMMERCE INDUSTRY!

Ginkgo Retail has already come across with an exceptional concept of saying goodbye to paper receipts and supporting *smarter, greener, and digital receipts - ZeroSlip*. Since, Ginkgo Retail enables the centralized experience between your retail and online channels. Therefore, Ginkgo Retail joined hands with ZeroSlip for an official partnership to provide a global package of adding value to merchants with escalating digital space to another tier with eco-friendly mechanisms.

An MOU signed between Ginkgo Retail and ZeroSlip to RIP paper receipts. The founder & CEO Obaid Arshad (Ginkgo Retail) and founder & CEO Khurram Bashir (ZeroSlip) exchanged the idea, how they can bring and build a centralized experience through ZeroSlip.

The promised narrative of Ginkgo Retail for adding value to the merchants' e-commerce operations is yet once again not compromised. As Ginkgo Retail is proactively forecasting ecommerce industry gaps and introducing dynamic and impactful solutions for the merchants in the market. Furthermore, a promising self-steering solution which will ultimately result in increase of customer satisfaction and reduction in operational costs in this fast paced ecommerce omni-channel era. Any successful ecommerce business and its integration with Ginkgo has now become a game changing pair to work simultaneously to be profitable for the merchants in the evolving e-commerce market.



Connected Pakistan is a Tech Social Enterprise, a movement to Empower Pakistan's Future through Technology, Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Leadership!



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