

How E-Fill Electric Partnered with T-Hub to Reimagine E-Mobility

India's Electric Vehicle (EV) Market is in its nascent phase. The industry's growth in the coming years will largely depend on advancements in battery technology, infrastructure development, and supportive government policies. Startups, such as E-Fill Electric, are aiding such growth and innovation.

Mayank Jain and Rupak Jha founded E-Fill Electric in 2019. Their initiative was driven by their collective expertise in automotive research and development and a shared passion for sustainable mobility solutions.. While researching the EV industry, they recognised India's pressing need for reliable charging infrastructure and localised e-mobility solutions.

ABOUT THE FOUNDERS

Mayank Jain and Rupak Jha are both mechanical and automotive engineers. Mayank Jain is a member of the International Federation of Inventors' Associations and a mechanical and automation engineer with over a decade of experience in R&D. Mayank began working in the research and development team at Sandhar Centre for Innovation and Development. He honed his engineering skills and secured a patent related to emission control regulations. He held a position in Yamaha's core engine design team. He delved into the intricacies of powertrains and worked on international electric scooter projects, which sparked his interest in the EV space.

Meanwhile, Rupak Jha has gained experience in the oil and gas industry. He started his career in a leading oil and gas company in India and was later deputed to the US branch as part of a new sales arm.

After working there for several years, he joined forces with a colleague to establish a trading entity focused on oil and gas components in the US. This experience gave Rupak a well-rounded understanding of everything from product design to operations.

OVERCOMING OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

The initial foray into the EV space focused on charging solutions. Mayank says, "We soon discovered that the existing charging infrastructure was unreliable and underutilised." The low charger utilisation indicated a lack of market demand, while faulty hardware posed safety and efficiency concerns. He continues, "The setback forced us to re-evaluate our approach and explore alternative segments within the EV market."

"We, then, settled on the Indian e-rickshaw market," mentions Rupak. "Though the industry has been thriving for over a decade, it's dominated by unorganised players. These players often rely heavily on imported components, leading to issues with quality control and parts availability."

Mayank and Rupak recognised an opportunity to disrupt this market by offering a wholly localised, high-quality electric rickshaw. However, establishing themselves amongst reputed players with potentially lower costs due to imported parts and differentiating E-Fill Electric amidst fierce competition in the e-mobility sector presented a significant challenge.

Other challenges they faced included compliance with regulatory complexities in the automotive sector and in building a reliable supply chain.



JOINING AIC T-HUB'S FIRST MOBILITY COHORT

E-Fill joined AIC T-Hub's first mobility cohort in December 2021. At that point, they were in the early stages of onboarding dealers for their electric three-wheeler. Their decision to join AIC T-Hub stemmed from a clear desire to bridge the gap between their innovative idea and the realities of the startup ecosystem. "We wanted industry connections to understand how the startup space works," explains Mayank. They sought guidance on establishing their brand, developing effective marketing strategies and connecting with the right investors and partners.

"There is a value in being associated with AIC T-Hub," shares Rupak. "Being a 'T-Hub incubated startup' instills confidence in the minds of customers, investors and other strategic partners. It helps us validate our ideas and gives us peace knowing we are moving in the right direction."

The three-month program was a transformative journey for Mayank and Rupak, equipping them with valuable lessons. AIC T-Hub's Mobility program provided crucial guidance on crafting compelling presentations. "We learned how to make the right pitch decks, understanding what points to cover when presenting to investors, industry players or even customers."

AIC T-Hub also holds mentor connect sessions, which help foster a deep understanding of the market.

"The mentor connect sessions proved invaluable, providing insights into marketing strategies, government relations, customer connections and overall industry trends. The comprehensive knowledge base empowered us to make informed decisions and navigate the complexities of the EV landscape with greater confidence."

Rupak shares, "AIC T-Hub also offers a collaborative environment to foster connections with other startups in the e-mobility space. We collaborated with Hala Mobility, a two-wheeler ride-sharing platform, with whom we ran a pilot program involving charging stations." AIC T-Hub also facilitated access to valuable platforms that would have been difficult for a young startup to reach independently. "T-Hub provided insights on navigating and gaining access to government platforms and policymakers," says Rupak. The most significant impact of AIC T-Hub lies in refining the business model. Mayank says, "Our initial focus on a retail dealership model for e-rickshaws evolves into a business-to-business-to-customer (B2B2C) model, where dealerships handle sales to end customers. It allows us to focus on product development and innovation."

"We now target automotive OEMs and other businesses, creating a robust distribution network that sets us apart from our competitors," says Rupak. "We are the only player with a strong distribution network. This key differentiator, identified and honed through AIC T-Hub's guidance, is a major asset in the marketplace."



(Left) Rupak Jha, Co-founder - (Right) Mayak Jain, CEO and Founder, E-Fill Electric

OUTCOME OF THE AIC T-HUB MOBILITY PROGRAM



Achieved significant revenue growth, from INR 3.5 crores in 2021-2022 to around **INR 26 crores in 2023-2024**



Increased market visibility and recognition, leading to collaborations with automotive OEMs such as **Tata Motors, Maruti Suzuki and Mahindra**



Onboarded **32 business-to-business (B2B)** customers, showcasing expanding market presence



Expanded into the US market, tapping into new growth opportunities and **enhancing global outreach.**

Mayank and Rupak's story showcases the transformative power of AIC T-Hub's programs. By providing startups with access to industry connections, mentorship and a supportive ecosystem, T-Hub, India's largest incubator, accelerates innovation and fosters the growth of the startup ecosystem, paving the way for a sustainable future powered by clean mobility solutions.

