

connecting
the un-connected

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faces power of self-belief
focus sailing away
far sight market in your pocket
from the field heroes unknown



Market in your Pocket

A 'deshi' chicken, a washing machine and a 2000 sq ft apartment all have something in common! Interestingly, they are all for sale under a single roof. To be more precise, they are available at the touch of a button on our cell phones, creating a market in our pockets. The concept behind CellBazaar is so simple yet revolutionary, that even though being ideated at MIT Sloan School of Management in the USA, it found its true calling in rural Bangladesh. The brain-machine behind its success, Kamal Quadir, does not forget the humble beginnings that led him to where his idea is now. "As a child growing up in Jessore, I would see hundreds of ads in our local papers and hear news of what seemed like outrageously low prices for items such as grains,



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- Kamal Quadir

vegetables and fruit. What I could not understand was how those prices increased drastically by the time they reached us, the end consumers", says Quadir.

Quadir spent most of the following two decades studying and working abroad, and it was only when he went for his postgraduate studies that he came to see the cell phone as more than just a simple communication tool. **With a screen, typing pad and the ability to be wireless, he soon saw no difference between a cell phone and a laptop.** With that in mind, he dreamed up CellBazaar, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Currently, CellBazaar users register via a simple procedure and can then post items for sale via mobile or computer. For buyers interested in purchasing items or services, the process is just as easy. A simple search through an SMS, or browsing with WAP

(Wireless Application Protocol) and WEB (cellbazaar.com), or even through IVR (call 3838) gives access to the listed available items with their respective price and the address of purchase. Quadir continues, "One would normally think a service like this would only be used by the educated and informed, but as we have seen, a majority of our items posted have come from rural farmers. This reveals the real power of CellBazaar." **Every imaginable product is listed on CellBazaar, from poultry in Habiganj to fridges in Rangamati, opening up a world of possibilities for all involved.** A mango-grower from Rajshahi can now get the best price for his produce from anywhere in the country, and for the first time ever, he is not at the mercy of the wholesalers. Buyers and sellers can now gather market information and make smart, informed decisions while staying at home and simply using the cell phone. CellBazaar both connects and empowers.

Nuran Nabi is a rice-seller from Dinajpur. After posting his prices and information on CellBazaar, he was soon inundated with calls from Dhaka and now sells most of his rice in the capital city. He says, "In Dinajpur, I never got a reasonable price for my rice. The wholesalers would haggle me down."

“ After CellBazaar, I no longer need the middle men. I get the price I want and ship most of my rice to Dhaka. This is nothing short of a miracle ”

- Nuran Nabi

Md. Ferdous Sheikh from Dhanmondi has a success story of his own as he explains, "I had been desperately looking for a car for three months but found nothing. Then after going through CellBazaar, I found an '89 Starlet which seemed perfect. One phone call later I secured the deal and now I've forgotten what life was like without a car."

With over 90,000 hits a day, 600 new items daily and 688 categories, CellBazaar has taken Bangladesh and the world by storm. It recently received the 3GSMA Global Mobile Award 2008 in the category of "Best Use of Mobile for Social and Economic Development", along with Telecom Asia Awards 2008 in the category of "Asian Telecom Innovation of the Year". Seemingly, there is no looking back and now one can buy a car, food and a house all from the palm of one's hand.



Kamal Quadir
Founder of CellBazaar

