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KARTIK AHLAWAT

A YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR TRANSFORMING TECH EDUCATION FOR SMALL-TOWN INDIA TO COMPETE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

Anjali Sharma | The CEO Magazine



KARTIK AHLAWAT

Founder & CEO - VaultofCodes



Opportunities in education shouldn't be defined by geography, privilege, or background. Yet for millions of students, the lack of industry exposure and practical skills often becomes an invisible barrier to growth. Challenging this very gap is **Kartik Ahlawat, Founder & CEO of VaultofCodes**, who has built an edtech platform that empowers learners from small towns to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with those from premier institutions.

THE TALE OF INCEPTION

Great ventures are often born from personal struggles. What once felt like limitations in Kartik Ahlawat's own student journey became the foundation of VaultofCodes. Growing up in Bareilly with roots in Bijnor, Kartik never fit the mould of a "bright student". His school years were marked by average grades and constant criticism over something as simple as his handwriting. Yet, what seemed like a weakness soon became a blessing in disguise. Struggling with pen and paper pushed him toward the keyboard, where typing felt liberating, and gradually, technology became his world.

The turning point came in 2007 when his father brought home their first computer. For Kartik, that bulky desktop running on Windows XP was a gateway to an entirely new universe. He would spend hours exploring its features, and that curiosity was what pushed him toward new fields, new learnings, and new opportunities. Whether it was exploring e-commerce, diving into cybersecurity, or mastering new platforms, his hunger to learn shaped him far more than any grades ever could. As he grew, Kartik recognised a glaring gap in India's education system. Degrees and marksheets were celebrated, but real-world skills were largely ignored.

This left even the brightest students underprepared for industry demands. Having felt this gap himself, he knew something had to change. Borrowing ₹2,500 from his mother, he took the leap and founded VaultofCodes in 2023, with a simple yet powerful goal: to make skill-based, practical learning accessible to every student, regardless of background.

Although they began small, VaultofCodes has impacted 25,000+ students, collaborated with over 80 colleges, and built partnerships with leading institutions in just two years. For Kartik, however, the venture was never just about building a company; it was about building hope. Hope for every student who might feel "average" but carries within them the potential to achieve something extraordinary.

WHAT DRIVES VAULTOFCODES

VaultofCodes is an edtech startup reshaping the way students learn and prepare for careers. Headquartered in Bareilly, the company operates at the intersection of education and technology, offering hands-on training, internships, and coding programs that focus on industry-relevant skills like web development, Python, data structures & algorithms, AI, and prompt engineering.

At its core, VaultofCodes stands on a simple mission to democratise tech education by making it accessible, affordable, and impactful. Its vision is to become one of India's most

trusted platforms, creating a world where students from small towns have the same opportunities as those from premier universities, where equal access to practical knowledge and industry exposure is the norm. Driven by the values of quality, innovation, integrity, and community, the platform emphasises learning by doing. Students don't just learn but actually build projects under the guidance of industry professionals, graduating with portfolios instead of just certificates.

What began with a single student has now grown into a trusted community of thousands across India, proving that quality education doesn't need to be confined to classrooms or big cities. Looking ahead, VaultofCodes aims to reach millions of students and thousands of colleges in the next five years while remaining affordable, accessible, and authentic.

NAVIGATING SETBACKS

VaultofCodes began without investors, offices, or elaborate plans, just the determination of a 19-year-old holding on to a dream. Early experiments failed, ads flopped, and resources were scarce, but quitting was never an option. With the help of passionate interns and sheer persistence, the first website and community were built in a month, proving that limitations often fuel creativity.

The toughest hurdle was credibility. In an industry where experience is everything, being 19 could have been a disadvantage. "I often thought, who would pay to learn from a teenager?" Kartik recalls. Instead of teaching himself, he brought in working professionals as mentors, giving students real-world insights rather than textbook theory. That single decision saved costs, gave learners better exposure, and set VaultofCodes apart in the crowded edtech space. The journey reinforced powerful lessons. As Kartik puts it, "Action defeats self-doubt, resourcefulness is more powerful than resources, and consistency outweighs talent."

DEFINING SUCCESS

For Kartik, success isn't about titles, money or recognition; it's about impact. "Every time I see a student who once doubted themselves build a project, crack an interview, or proudly share their journey, that, to me, is success," he reflects. Professionally, he defines it as building systems and communities that outlive him and creating sustainable models of education and mentorship that bridge the gap between knowledge and industry readiness.

Kartik's journey has been marked by several milestones and recognitions, including:

- 38,000+ app downloads within just two years of inception.
- Classplus Silver Educator Award (June 2024) – for achieving 5,000 app downloads.
- Classplus Golden Educator Award (June 2025) – for crossing 25,000 app downloads.
- Edtech Entrepreneurship Award (January 2024) – for innovation in affordable education.
- Students' Choice Award (January 2024) – for the highest number of verified student testimonials.
- A strong digital presence with 12,000+ LinkedIn followers, 3,000+ YouTube subscribers, and 2,000 Instagram followers.

THE ROLE OF MENTORSHIP

For Kartik, mentorship offers guidance, perspective, and the ability to learn from others' experiences. "Every interaction, whether with industry leaders, peers, or even my students, has acted as a form of mentorship, teaching me valuable lessons in

resilience, adaptability, and innovation," he says. One moment stands out vividly from his college days. In July 2022, a guest lecturer asked students to write down their short-, mid-, and long-term goals. Kartik jotted this down, tucked the paper away, and forgot about it. Two years later, while flipping through his notes, he found the list and realised he had already achieved four of the five goals, including financial independence at 20 and building something of his own, which became VaultofCodes.

"THAT MOMENT GAVE ME GOOSEBUMPS. IT WASN'T LUCK; IT WAS PROOF THAT WHEN YOU COMBINE INTENTION WITH RELENTLESS ACTION, DREAMS MANIFEST INTO REALITY," KARTIK REFLECTS.

LEADERSHIP MANTRA

While VaultofCodes was taking shape, Kartik was still in his final semester of college, juggling exams, classes, and a growing business with barely 50% attendance. "It was chaotic and stressful, but consistency and resilience kept me going," he recalls. Over time, he learned to prioritise, delegate, and set boundaries, though he admits balance is still a work in progress. He also credits the support of Invertis University, Bareilly and its faculty for giving him the space to focus on his entrepreneurial journey while completing his degree.

Reflecting on his journey, Kartik offers one piece of advice to aspiring entrepreneurs: "Don't wait for the perfect time; it doesn't exist. I started as a student, barely managing 50% attendance and studying just a day before exams. It was messy, but that's how you learn. Discipline will take you further than motivation, and failures will teach you more than success ever can. So my advice? Start now, stay consistent, and don't quit." ■