



Born and brought up in Trichy in Tamil Nadu, Girish went on to study engineering in Chennai. Later, he got his MBA from the University of Chennai. He founded Freshworks in 2010 after working with AdventNet (now known as ZOHO) from 2001 to 2010.

Girish says, “When I returned from the US in 2010, as a customer I had a horrible customer service experience when I wasn’t able to get the support from a household goods company, despite calling or emailing the concerned department several times. It was only when I lambasted them on Twitter that the company did the right thing. That’s when I realized that there exists an opportunity to build a fresh helpdesk. It wasn’t difficult as I had built multiple helpdesks as a part of the management team at ZOHO. In customer support helpdesk was still something new. That’s why we called the company Freshworks.”

The actual push came — while Freshworks was in its ideation phase — when Zendesk, a customer services software company in the US increased its prices in May 2010. That’s when Girish thought to ride this wave. “I decided to get into the helpdesk market and I knew I could charge customers from day one. I didn’t realize who will fund Freshworks as I had never met a venture capitalist in my life,” says Girish.

Asked what advice he has for startups, Girish says, “My biggest advice to startups is that you have to understand your business model. For example, if a startup is really building something that doesn’t exist, I cannot advice them to advertise on Google because nobody will search for them. If they are going to sell to larger enterprises they can’t sit in Chennai and sell. They have to hire a VP Sales.”