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HOUSTON INNOVATORS PODCAST EPISODE 234

Houston tech founder shines spotlight on small businesses with new awards initiative



Natalie Harms May 2, 2024, 9:01 am





Rushi Patel, co-founder and COO of Homebase, joins the Houston Innovators Podcast in honor of National Small Business Week. *Photo courtesy of Homebase*

For decades, small businesses have operated in essentially the same manner — handwritten notes to request time off, manual punch cards to clock in, and verbal agreements to swap shifts. And 10 years ago, Houstonian Rushi Patel thought it was time to upgrade these local shops, eateries, and other businesses.

Homebase, which was founded in San Francisco in 2014 and has its largest office in Houston, provides a suite of software tools for employee scheduling, time tracking, communication, and task management for its users, most of which are small businesses.

After a decade of growing its technology and clientbase, Patel, co-founder and COO of the company, explains the unique challenges these small businesses face on the Houston Innovators Podcast — as well as how Homebase helps.

"It's a bit of an orchestra in terms of what entrepreneurs have to do. Your job is to compose a little, but conduct as well," Patel says on the show. "You've built the song of what you want to have happen, but you're conducting lots of different things to make it a reality as a small business owner."

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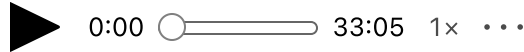
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Patel explains how optimizing these personnel aspects of the business frees up founders and managers and improves the employee experience too. Currently, the job market is competitive for these types of businesses, and retention and hiring are major focus points for entrepreneurs.

With 10 years of data and experience of working with small businesses, Homebase introduced a new awards program this week in honor of National Small Business Week. The inaugural

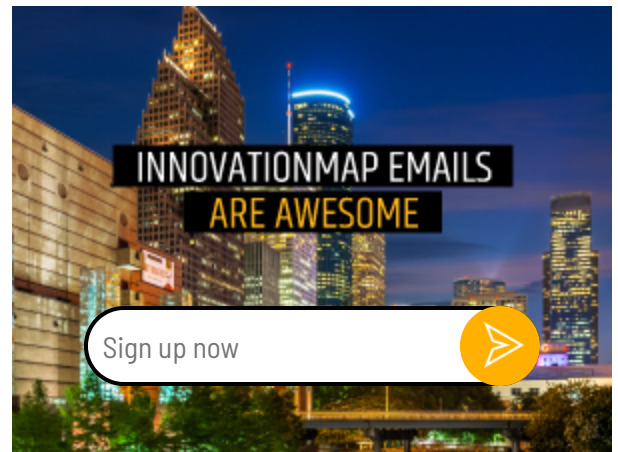
[Top Local Workplace Awards](#) honored over 50,000 businesses across the country for a range of positive workplace factors — like pay transparency and employee engagement.

"There are over 2 million employee-centric, main street type of businesses in the United States," Patel says, "these are the restaurants, the retailers, and the service providers. They employ north of 70 million people, so there's a lot of impact that these businesses can have. But what we found was they deserve recognition, and there wasn't recognition for the good practices that these employers were doing."

Using its data, which includes over 2.5 million hourly worker data points, Homebase's team implemented the awards to highlight the companies providing

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their employees — who are in most cases considered a work family, as Patel says — with a great experience.