



Vancouver Startup Weekend 2011 Winner MyBestHelper Still Going Strong

by John Gray on Jun 21, 2012 | Startups

Startup Weekend offers a great learning experience. While learning is good, actually launching at startup is even better—and doing it in 54 hours is head spinning.

It's been estimated that startups incubated at these events have raised more than \$30 million in outside funding. Some of the funded include Zaarly, Scanadu, LaunchRock, Foodspotting, and Cloudbot. And two companies even got acquired: Keepstream and Volly.

With Vancouver StartupWeekend planning its third event in August 17, a question comes up: "what's happening with the winners from November's event?" We caught up with Rob Atwell one of the co-founders of MyBestHelper. After topping 13 other teams and winning the November event they're still going strong.

With the genesis of the idea (an eHarmony-like approach for sourcing the right caregiver) co-founder Alexandra Greenhill and Rob came into the weekend with a game plan. They were ready to pitch, ready to build a technical team, and ready to execute with a sound understanding of Lean startup methodology. As much as the weekend is a collective and collaborative learning experience, it is a competition, and the MyBestHelper co-founders came prepared to maximize their experience.

They've been executing the game plan since Alexandra delivered one of the best pitches of the Friday night, and achieved a key goal: the team secured their technical co-founder, Francois Deschenes.

With 54 hours of putting theory into reality behind them, the celebration was fleeting, and there wasn't any time to rest. The team kept rolling right into the Global StartupWeekend competition, finishing 10th. Chew on these numbers—a 10th place finish is an exceptional accomplishment.

- 68: The number of Startup Weekends that took place during GEW (Global Entrepreneur Week).
- 50: The number of winning SW teams who participated in GSB (Global Startup Battle).
- 29: The number of countries represented in GSB.

The team was also a little taken by surprise at the exposure they received. They're really pleased how many people outside of Vancouver are familiar with them. Rob mentioned a trip to Seattle for the meeting of a local Angel group, noting that "we weren't an unknown team." Accolades are nice, some swag is great, and extra exposure is a huge bonus too—but sustaining a startup needs more than this for fuel.

Distractions aside, the team launched the beta version of MyBestHelper.com on February 14.

Continuing to focus on the task at hand, Alexandra, Rob, and Francois grabbed the opportunity to get the most value out of additional entrepreneurial resources. Startup Weekend helped them prepare, gain acceptance, valuable advice, mentorship, and even more exposure courtesy of the BCIC Mentor program, BCTIA Centre for Growth, and AceTech Market Valuation program.

Looking to the future, they are making plans for MyBestHelper.com next significant release by the end of June (stay tuned).

The significant development for the team was recently announced at the Canadian Venture Capital Association Conference in Montreal and at the FounderFuel Demo Day on May 23. MyBestHelper is one of three startups accepted to the The Canadian Innovation Exchange (CIX). The Consulate-operated Canadian Technology Accelerator give the team the opportunity to work at RocketSpace. Free rent is great, but working closely with the Canadian Trade Commissioners, and gaining access to the C100, Angels, VC's, and other companies they want to meet is "priceless."

Alexandra, Rob, and Francois will be packing their bags, and will be Silicon Valley bound for September 1.

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John Gray

John jumped into the startup world in early 2009, bringing his experience in business development and sales to companies creating new software products. He was co-founder and CEO of Mentionmapp, a visual analytics company that was acquired by OverInteractive Media in October 2011. Before that, he sold legal software and services (LexisNexis), medical devices (Auto Control Medical) and... » more



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Honestly, they were amazing. The idea was great, the pitches were excellent, and in all honesty if I was a parent and really needed a day off I would give their service a try with a credible baby sitter. This is definitely one startup that I'm really proud that came out of Vancouver. I'm sure that this third Startup Weekend will have some innovative ideas. Looking forward to being a part of it. You're an excellent writer John, your stuff is easy and enjoyable to read.

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Thanks... this rookie writer, appreciates the encouragement! I'm really looking forward to the next Startup Weekend too.

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Actually, not true at all. A lot of these companies now have \$5M - 30M in revenue and are scaling fast. Definitely not BlackBerry yet, but you need a funnel of smaller companies (many failing, some...)

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