ssg daily!   saturday, april 4, 2015

==**This is a crowdsourced founder interview so please, everyone feel free to jump in with questions. When completed, we'll save as PDF and also post on http://startupstudygroup.com .**==

Founder interview on Google Drive/Docs seemed like the quickest way to get info about founder and startup on April 4, 2015. Meerkat/Periscope -- possibly in future but for now, this works. Not a complete AMA as it should be focused on founder and startup business. For more detailed questions, please contact the founder whose contact information is below:

Founder contact info:
http://idlinker.co
Dmitry Strelchenko
ds@idlinker.co
http://facebook.com/idlinker

Format:
Questions in bold (by contact info)
Answers in regular font

Founder interview:
1. **Elevator pitch of startup? (asked by Charles Jo @charlesjo)**
   a. The easiest way to tell your friends what kind of app and web services you use and how to find your account there.
2. **Why should anyone use our product? (asked by Charles Jo)**
   a. I think that here comes the age of when we asking how to find you in Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc., instead of phone number when making new friends or other connections. So it should be appropriate tool to make us able to quickly share all of our contacts.
3. **What's your personal story and startup story? (asked by Charles Jo)**
   a. As a child I can't answer the question of who I want to be when grow up but I always trying to invent something extraordinary that never was before. I wasn't a tech guy I'm just visionary =)
   b. 1st thing I've invented was BMX bikes dedicated web site in Russian language at 16yo
   c. then at 22, I founded 1st company and became CEO at 1st Russian language BMX magazine. After several typical mistakes I had to close it after pilot issue.
   d. At 24, I have dived in autosport, drifting specifically. Won local competition and begin proctated car rebuild into professional competitions accordance. Than sell and spend a year and a half to find myself and way I wanted to evolve.

e. It took me to a local hackathon to find a CTO for my car assistant project. And when hackathon host fout out that he didn't have a business card to give me I thought something like: "WTF?! We are living in 21 century and still tied to paper scrap". Later that night I could not sleep and idLinker idea capture my mind.

f. I start to visit any kind of local meetups, events, conferences and hackathons. Trying to pitch and collect a team. **How did this go? (asked by @yangterrence)**

g. Thats was terrible. I was shy, blushing and stumble.

h. In august 2014, I graduated from Startup Academy of Skolkovo Moscow School of Management and visit SF Bay Area as investigator.

i. Two of Skolkovo classmates had invested $55k in idLinker and we initiate development.

j. One of classmate angels introduced me to software developing company based in Belarus. Founder of this company became our co-founder and decreased developing costs.

    i. **What else is your cofounder working on? (asked by @yangterrence) Is he or she working for below market for a Belarus developer? Cap table?**

k. So we have great scalable developing team up to 16 teammates depends on sprint difficulty.

l. Right now we are testing our iOS app and you can subscribe at http://idlinker.co

4. **You had mentioned interest in moving to Silicon Valley/San Francisco Bay Area. What are the top reasons? (asked by Charles Jo)**

a. I totally agree with influencers I've met during my SF Bay Area discovering who repeatedly pointed that if you want to build successful company focused in US/global market you should be there. Working on product-market fit, networking and be in appropriate environment.

5. **Would your entire team relocate to Silicon Valley? (asked by Charles Jo)**

a. In order to hold burn rate at lower level we are not intent to move entire team.

6. **How can SSG community and others help you and your startup? (asked by Charles Jo)**

a. We need to prove some assumptions **(like what? asked by @yangterrence)** and will appreciate any feedback from beta testers and PR Buzz.

b. @yangterrence: like do we understand people needs correctly in context of holding and sharing their contacts. Can we satisfy their pain and does it exist. Do users want to separate their contacts by theme for example home, work, friends, friends1. friends2 etc. Does our invention is more convenient than sheet of paper or any kind of messenger to share contacts.

    i. *(Side note from Charles Jo: when we were using Slack to discuss the same topics prior to getting on the interview, the app proved itself because I didn't remember Dmitry's ID on Twitter nor the URL for the app. After scrolling on Slack, I gave up and just went for the idLinker app and there he was -- all his web info.)*

7. **What are your top priorities? (asked by Charles Jo)**

a. productivity, user satisfaction, simpleness, attractive ui

8. **What kind of timeline are you working with now? (asked by Charles Jo)**

a. We set app launch on April 10-14 and it depends on AppStore review time. idLinker attend in TechCrunch Disrupt NYC Startup Alley and should be launch until this event. Then at June 10-11 we will attend in SVOD.

b. We intend to soft launch at middle of april and plan gradual pushes of growth combine it with experiments.

9. **Do you see competitors in this space now? (asked by Charles Jo)**

a. I can't say that i see straight competitors but there are a lot of attempts of to solve contact sharing problem. I can pick out similar concepts in iid-app.com, handleshare, evernote hello (does not supporting more), stacks.co, inigoapp.com, swapcard.com and more and more. But all of them are business focused. I want say, that idLinker is focused in whole market of contacts sharing. We assume that you shouldn't be a businessmen with balls full of steel to share contacts. We figure out a lot of idLinker usage pattern daily and most of them is not linking with business. For example you can create few subprofiles called "Cards" for a different types of connections like if you a bmx/sk8 etc rider you can create on filling with links to you youtube channel, instagram and etc services. Then when you share it with friend he able to save it to his Cards slot, edit it by adding his own channels and forwarding it to someone else generating community source list. At the end you can receive your card back filled with huge list of cool sources.

   i. **Can I have 1 ID and multiple profiles like 1 for my hobby startupstudygroup.com and maybe another 1 for my church info? (asked by Charles Jo)**

      1. Sure. Just swipe to right from your main profile and tap at "Add New" and create one. This is a part of our business model assumption. We want to try to sell slots for these cards and give one for free.

      2. One of the main priorities of idLinker that we trying to decrease data that you should type by your hands. So as you can figure out we implementing oAuth everywhere it possible. And when you are creating new Card you able to select which twitter account for example you want to link in from those which is verified by your installed Twitter account. This function available in Card only right now.

10. **Why are you and your finding team the ones to deliver this product to the world? (asked by Charles Jo)**

a. I can't answer this question in the way that most wants to see but i can say that the first thoughts that i catch up in my mind after waking up it's idLinker and when i goes to sleep it the same. I saw the next question about how many hours we are spending a day for a project and a can say that all hours when we are awake. idLinker is not a job for us and we working on it because we dream to make something extra useful and worthy for humanity. Otherwise what is the purpose of our birth.

11. **Who are your top competitors and why? (asked by @yangterrence)**

a. Should i answer it again?

   i. *Not if answered already (Charles Jo).*

12. **How are you different from Rapportive and Refresh? (asked by @yangterrence)**

a. It's all about positioning. i've mentioned it on questions above. We are not focusing on entrepreneurs only.

13. **What is the startup climate (is the govt business friendly, providing support, etc?) like in Russia in regards to sanctions (etc)(asked by @startupdreams).**

   a. I can't make some relevant conclusions about whole climate because I'm trying to stay away from any politics thing, I do not watching TV and Crimea situation is doesn't make any sense to me. But I should be honest to say that after discovering SFBA last summer I catch myself at never ending thoughts of how to emigrate to USA. You can't imagine how differents Russia and USA citizens mentality and it's not in Russian favor for me IMHO.

   b. What about startup ecosystem I can say that it's in very early stage. There are some incubators and even with government support like iidf.ru

   c. I'm really sorry but I am not a person who can give you a full canvas of Russian ecosystem because all my mind is in USA and I'm seeking ways to understand US market and how to build successful project here.

14. **How many users have you talked to? (asked by @yangterrence)**

   a. It's less than 100.

15. **What have you learned from talking to users? (asked by @yangterrence)**

   a. I understand that discussions were not in proper way. I was showing prototype or telling about concept to friends and friends of them and surely they tells me that idea is great and we should hold on. A have to agree with fact that I've discovered customer development too late and should to fix it now.

16. **Do you have any co-founders? How well do you know them? (asked by @yangterrence)**

   a. We are two co-founders, one hands-on angel and one early investor. We all met at Skolkovo Moscow school of management except CTO. We was introduced to me by my Skolkovo teammate who become angel and had a lot of deals with that guy. At the begin i've struggle with that fact trying to find team in Russia even haven't talk with introduced guy. But after few skype calls we've been inspired by each other and after couple month of developing and tons of great ideas he make me an offer to became co-founder and decrease development to prime cost.

17. **On average, how many hours a day do you and your team spend total on idLinker? (asked by @yangterrence)**

   a. I try to sleep 8 hours and take one day in week for rest but it's not always comes out especially when idLinker moves between stages.

18. **This question seems repetitive, the purpose was to see how the culture is and how that affects the entrepreneurs or to be entrepreneurs.**

   a. It depends of each entrepreneur purposes. I dont' want to outrage anyone but i suppose that most of Russian entrepreneurs are blind or something about that. Instead of trying to build something useful and global most of them attempts to just seems not like the others. Of course there are some cool and extra motivated guys like Dmitry Dumik (CatNip - 500.co graduated) and other but they moving to SFBA who is smarter.

Thanks for questions and chance to English practice and excuse me for mistakes=)

Thanks Dmitry!