

Get the Perfect Mix

Understand the right ingredients for a successful business.

By Vikram Upadhyaya

IF we look at the past success stories in the internet startups universe, we find that very few have grown beyond borders and gone global. Sabeer Bhatia's startup Hotmail in the mid-'90s is one of the finest example of an internet startup that grew beyond cultures, countries and continents. Hotmail, through its viral marketing, acquired the first 30 million users in the first 30 months. In my view, internet startups are an offshoot of the ubiquitous phenomenon of the information revolution. Internet startups are bound to grow exponentially viz-à-viz a normal business or a startup that grows linearly.

The big question, then, is: What are the ingredients for creating a success story, a venture that transcends borders? The precise answer would be: The perfect mix of a good idea, team, technology, scalability, business plan and fund raising.



THE IDEA

All that's required is a great idea! Find a need that's not being met and address it. The idea should be a very specific solution in terms of offering a product or service over the net. It should address at least one of the most commonly discussed pain areas at the public or private levels, like global warming.

THE TEAM

The team referred to here comprises the founding members and those who are passionate about executing it together till success is ensured.

THE TECHNOLOGY

Today, various internet technologies can make a startup's tasks easier by optimizing the marketing, promotion and sales efforts. Several open-source utilities can help in building reliable, user-friendly, rich functionality features that can be quickly made SEO-friendly. Simple but critical technology

deployments are a must in your internet startup to build speedy user base and to achieve beyond-borders scalability. Interesting technologies are evolving in and around the internet that suggest cost-effective ways to develop your business in geographically-challenged scenarios.

THE BUSINESS PLAN

Your business plan should be based on the "LILO" (Little In, Lot Out) model. By using the right mix of internet technologies for fast, reliable, scalable and rich functionality and user-friendliness, one can easily build a LILO-based plan.

SCALABILITY

The scalability factor is all about attaining great reach by multi-geography customer acquisition in the shortest possible time. Experience and culture are critically important in designing systems to scale. Scalability should not be

restricted to the domestic market alone—it should, ideally, go beyond the borders too.

FUND RAISING

Fund raising should be strategically planned. You should contact a set of angels before you approach VCs. One, it improves your aptitude for interfacing the VC round. And two, the extensive knowledge and network that angels have would help you in achieving your targets.

Hence, if you are all set with a passion for creating a successful business, you've first got to know the ingredients of the recipe. Now, try it out with best of your skills—at the right time and with the right set of people. ■

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