##### Small Business and Startups

Institution Affiliation

Date

**Introduction**

Rich Aberman, the lead consultant at WePay a technology company located in Palo Alto, California talks about what new entrepreneurs need to know on business startups. Aberman, the co-founder of the online payment platform explained the journey it has taken to get there and the various challenges WePay had to overcome. In addition to overcoming administrative challenges, Aberman highlighted the economic challenges that were brought about by the changing business environment and how the company struggled in the face of these difficulties.

**Entrepreneurship: No Experience Necessary**

You do not necessarily need to have experience in a specific field to start your business of choice. According to Aberman, the most crucial thing is to come up with a solution that can appeal to potential consumers. One can perfect in an industry that he is totally new to if he can identify a business opportunity. However, this would require taking some time to study the market dynamics of the particular industry of interest (Myler, 2016). Aberman stresses that for great business ideas to be transformed into reality there need to carry out market research. They offered a unique product which formed part of their strength.

Aberman who turned down a scholarship says that he does not think that experience in working as an employee in a tech company would have prepared him to face the challenges when starting WePay. To him, one may be very good at his job but fail as an entrepreneur. He believes that their success was possible due preparation, resilience, and hunger for achieving their dreams. “Accepting that you don’t know everything is the first step in startups”. He adds. One has to surround himself with knowledge and wisdom of other entrepreneurs who have made it. “There are so many high-profile entrepreneurs who are always willing to offer a helping hand”. He explains. This helped him achieve his potential and discover his strengths. Those mentors helped Aberman and his co-founder, Bill Clerico when they were going through thin and thick; it taught them the value of persistence.

**How the Business Changed Since Inception**

“We started with nothing,” says Aberman who doubles as the lead consultant and managing partner. According to him it took two years of serious training and learning to start realizing major gains and growth. "The business went for over three months without customers and it was tough." He explains. According to him, it was during this time that he learned the value of money, respect for other people and how best they could handle existing and potential customers. The business started with one employee and later expanded to employ 45 people over the last 8 years. According to Aberman, research and development are key to a good business strategy.

The company started with one product but has expanded to offer a range of products and services. The first customers were individuals from New York Cit. The company has since expanded to serve corporate customers and reach even those outside the country. Initially, WePay relied on word of mouth to market their service, however, the company has since expanded to market its services through an online platform a move aimed at reaching even a wider market in and outside the United States. That notwithstanding, Aberman says WePay still face massive competition for tech giants which is a major threat to its growth.

**Biggest Challenges for Start-Ups**

Challenges in startups range from hiring the right people to defining the brand that captures the attention in the market. Startups have to overcome these challenges if they have to be successful. The biggest challenges that WePay faced was getting customers due to the stiff competition from the already established brands in the market. It is always a challenge to convince customers to accept and try his product and WePay was no exemption. “Getting the right employees to support the new venture is a nerve-wracking experience,” Says Aberman. This is because finding the right talents is difficult having in mind the slim budget that startups have to work with. However, with focus, one can nurture talents and develop a young team that can drive the business agenda with a small budget than going for experienced people who would ask for so much in compensations.

Change in technology was also pointed as one of the challenges that startups face. According to Aberman, technological advancement and changing business environment is a challenge that requires young companies to stay ahead in innovation if they want to remain competitive. Additionally, since every market segment is different due to either geographical or administrative requirements, based on market conditions, one need to approach each market with a different strategy (Burns, 2010). WePay’s weaknesses, however, are interoperability problems as the firm is yet to integrate its platform with other online platform payment service providers.

**Change in Economic Climate Impacts**

Although economic conditions affect all businesses, Aberman believes that small businesses often feel the heat faster than large enterprises. In 2010, Aberman who says his partner Bill has supported him in a time of need recalls how bad economic climate affected their business. During that year, the company recorded very little in revenue. When the country experienced strong economy in 2015, the firm made significant gains and the business grew by over 10% in revenue compared to the previous years.

However, he is quick to point out that while this is a positive move, the downside is those small businesses find themselves overextended should the economy start to falter. Nevertheless, startups have huge advantages since they adapt to economic swings fast as they can quickly change the strategy to suit the prevailing economic status, unlike large corporates who may be required to have a board meeting before adapting to economic swings (Myler, 2016).

**Parting Short**

Whether one is new to the industry or has prior experience, it requires a lot of planning and resilience to be successful in business. Aberman reiterates that no barriers should be pegged on experience; whether gender, education or background. “Business is about carrying out a feasibility study and assessing the risks and benefits, and providing a product or service that offers a solution to the people”. Aberman believes that risks can be avoided only by making the necessary strategic plans and carefully implementing these strategies.

**Thank You Note**

Dear Aberman,

It was great meeting you at WePay office this Morning.

I am sincerely grateful for finding some time in the middle of your busy schedule to have an interview with me.

The interview was very fruitful and the information obtained will assist me in my studies, and future career engagements.

Sincerely,

[Student Name]

References

Burns, P. (2010). *Entrepreneurship and Small Business: Start-up. Growth and Maturity*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Meet your true partner in payments. (n.d.). Retrieved April 16, 2017, from https://go.wepay.com/payments-for-platforms

Myler, L. (2016, October 06). Tech Startups Face Headwinds, Challenges In 2016 And Beyond. Retrieved April 16, 2017, from [https://www.forbes.com/sites/larrymyler/2016/10/05/tech-startups-face-headwinds- challenges-in-2016-and-beyond/#28c62e623b60](https://www.forbes.com/sites/larrymyler/2016/10/05/tech-startups-face-headwinds-%09challenges-in-2016-and-beyond/#28c62e623b60)