Louis Schena: Simplicity Scales

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> Swipii is the cashback app bringing shoppers the easiest way to save money when they support local businesses. We provide retailers with a simple and automated marketing tool which will grow their audience and increase their revenue.
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> For both shoppers and business owners alike, Swipii promises to be the solution that is x10 easier to use and x10 the value.
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> Our mission is to better connect consumers with businesses; whilst we envision building the world's largest local marketplace, connecting business, consumers and brands.

What inspired you to start?

From a very young age I'd always had a passion for building and tinkering. If I could then sell whatever I was doing I found that very satisfying. As I grew up, I discovered that starting a business is nothing different. You're just older. I think a lot of people don't start because they never realise how simple the start can be and should be.

I founded Swipii whilst completing my MSc in International Marketing at the University of Strathclyde in 2014 on the back of my dissertation "An international comparison of factors influencing the behaviours of online group-buying during the 2008 recession and years to come."

I was very curious about this new group-buying model and how it could better serve the brick-and-mortar market. Unfortunately, it did not deliver what businesses and consumers were looking for over time.

90% of all global purchases still happen offline and yet technology mostly serves the online space. Past technologies were never able to enhance the in-store experience seamlessly enough to get traction. Especially in a way to serve the fragmented market of SMEs, which represent 99% of most countries' economies. Today it exists, Swipii has it and is first in line to deliver it to the world!"

What are the main drivers of change (macro-economic forces) that are influencing your business?

Swipii qualifies as a Fintech, so naturally financial technology has been one of the main drivers of change for the company. A few years ago it was unthinkable to earn cashback with any of your debit cards by simply linking it to an app.

Further technology development in open banking will undoubtedly enable Swipii to develop great new tools which will help consumers save/earn money and businesses drive more revenue.

The current economic environment will also be interesting for Swipii. As the economy contracts into a recession, we will want to save money and businesses will want to attract more revenues. We're proud to be able to answer these needs during these challenging times.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=

Who is doing something really innovative just now? And has it influenced your future plans?

At the risk of being cliche, I think Tesla has really forced the automobile industry to innovate and accelerate the transition towards electric vehicles.

Whilst electric vehicles are not directly related to Swipii, Tesla's chase for simplicity has always been something I've tried to incorporate into Swipii's company culture. Simplicity scales, complexity doesn't. You can buy a Tesla on your mobile phone in 4 or 5 steps. It's really quite remarkable. Everything is reduced to the bare minimum. E.g.: they only have 4 or 5 colours available and that's enough as the values elsewhere. It allows them to focus on quality and price.

At Swipii, we aim to be x10 easier to use and x10 the value for both consumers and businesses compared to other offerings. That's what it's going to take to be at the top. It's also what consumers and businesses want.

What's your vision of the future of your sector?

The high street and local is here to stay, but it needs help to become better and more sustainable. There is currently a very high churn of local businesses. A few reasons why it will always stay and an online-only world is unlikely:

- Local is greener. As the world realises that our current carbon footprint isn't sustainable, local behaviours should grow in adoption.
- Brick-and-mortar is about the experience not just the good. We often compare online and offline as competitors, but they solve different needs. Online is for convenience and maybe lower prices, but offline is about the experience. They should work hand in hand.
- We are social creatures. Socialising, especially in close communities is part of Maslow's hierarchy of needs: love and belonging. Human interaction is paramount (not just digitally).

The fact it will constantly exist doesn't mean it's easy. Businesses need support, especially with automation and data to drive consistent and sustainable revenues. Tools that currently only exist online due to the ease of data collection across the web. Swipii's card-linking technology solves this offline.

Any advice for future entrepreneurs?

If you imagine the journey from starting a business to a successful exit as a conversion funnel, I'd say that the biggest dropoff rate is from idea to physical conception. The very top of the funnel is leaking. I've heard so many great ideas, seen so many business plans never come to life. Not because of a lack of money or ambition, but a fear of the unknown. More specifically, not knowing where to start or how to follow the 'official process'. What is this darn 'official process'?!

There is none! Build it as you would or as it is, as a hobby. Sell it to a friend, on Amazon, Ebay, Etsy. Sell it out of your garage. Use your personal bank account. Build a website with a fake button to see if people actually want it… etc…

There are no rules apart from the ones you set yourself to get it done. It's only at scale that you need to worry about 'official' processes. By then, you've done half the battle. It's as easy or as hard as you decide to make it. No excuses!

– Louis Schena, Swipii