

PCU Rountable with Josh Miller

„When I would have another business, I will try to think really small“. Josh Miller has always been thinking only one step ahead and is convinced that this was one of the most important factors that lead to their success. It started when he dropped school in his last year at the Princeton University. He didn't have a plan yet, he just knew he wanted to spend more time developing his startup with his Co-Founder. Step-by-step they developed their media platform Branch. They wanted to connect people who had an opinion about a topic and reach a broad audience. To win more famous bloggers to start using the platform, Josh wrote emails to them directly. After short time, the platform was used by a wide range. „We were targeting a market which no one really aimed“.

With a successful business they became more and more famous and their environment celebrated the Branch team. „That's when we got very distracted and lost our short-term thinking.“, he admitted.

Josh Miller, now twenty-four years old, succeeded to have an intro with Evan Williams in San Francisco. After having tried to reach him through connections, Josh took the initiative and texted Evan by himself. „I wanted to be strategic but everything just happend“. The introduction of their startup was successful most likely because they were themselves and showed the passion they had about Branch. „We didn't come and told them that we are going to tell them something about the future.“. The Branch team approached their potential investors with humility and so the investors wanted to help them more. They moved to San Francisco to work with Evan Williams where Josh could learn a lot from him.

The first offer for Branch came from Yahoo. But Facebook came with a better deal right away. „The hardest part was to decide whether to sell or not to sell“. But he knew it was the right decision to sell Branch to Facebook and work for them. He is young and wanted to learn from people and get the experience of working for a big company. The M&A process was done in two weeks.

Josh Miller works now for Facebook in London as a Product Manager. He works still together with the core team of Branch. He likes the fact that London is away from the Head Quarters so he can focus on developing new products. Soon there will be a new product launched. He is very excited about it but the biggest fear is the reaction from the media. „Going into a launch that is well meant will be taken by the media differently and that's not under our control.“.

During the M&A process he got to know Mark Zuckerberg. Josh experienced that investors mostly don't have a strong opinion about something you present and that's why they don't react much during a presentation. „They would listen to you and then there is one point they would go for and talk over it.“. Zuckerberg himself started also with a startup. In comparison to Josh Miller, he is looking at the big perspective. „Mark told me: if we still want to be there in ten years we need to think out of the box. Let's throw some crazy things at the people.“, Josh told us. With this different way of thinking Mark enriches Miller's focused work environment. „Great - Mark got's the future and I am going to ship his Apps“.

Josh Miller captivated us with his story of success and showed us that it is sometimes better to think step-by-step and keep the initial goal in mind. His young spirit and his passion to enriching people's life are the key to his success. „I am proud of my work when I see someone in Zurich using our App.“.